

Regional Aerodrome Air Traffic Services Review FAQs

Question	Answer
Why are you withdrawing air traffic services from these airports?	<p>Airways' focus is on supporting the long-term recovery of our aviation industry and its services to New Zealand by safely matching our services to the aviation sector now and into the future.</p> <p>Air traffic volumes have collapsed as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, and we are expecting it will take up to two years for traffic to return to just 60 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Maintaining our current services would have imposed an unjustifiable and unsustainable cost on airline operators without any corresponding passenger safety or regional connectivity benefits.</p> <p>Technological and other developments are enabling alternatives to controlled airspace that are safe, fit-for purpose and commercially viable.</p>
Which airports are you withdrawing services from?	<p>We are withdrawing our air traffic control services at Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Rotorua and Invercargill airport, and flight information services (AFIS) at Kapiti Coast Airport and Milford Sound Piopiotahi Aerodrome.</p>
How did you select the aerodromes you're withdrawing services from?	<p>The seven regional aerodromes we are withdrawing our services from are those that have had low traffic volumes even before Covid-19.</p> <p>Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact on air traffic levels nationally and we are anticipating it will take up to two years to recover to just 60 per cent of what they were prior to Covid-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Graphs available for each aerodrome illustrating the traffic decline.</i>
What are the next steps to withdraw services from the airports?	<p>Over approximately the next six months Airways will collaborate with a working party that includes the affected airports, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Air New Zealand to plan a safe and orderly transition. The working group will identify when the current services will be withdrawn from each airport and what type of service, if any they may be replaced with.</p>
When will you stop providing ATC services at the airports?	<p>There may be different timeframes for withdrawal dependent on the requirements identified for each airport as part of the planning phase.</p> <p>We anticipate being in a position to begin withdrawing from these airports later this year.</p> <p>It will be a rolling withdrawal.</p>
Who have you consulted with and how?	<p>Airways consulted with staff and their representative unions, NZALPA and the PSA. Discussions were held with the affected airports, airlines and the Civil Aviation Authority on the proposal. We will now collaborate as a working group to determine when the current services will be withdrawn from each airport and what type of service, if any they may be replaced with.</p>
Was the consultation period long enough?	<p>Yes. The consultation period is in line with normal process. We extended the timeframe for consulting with and gathering feedback from our people to one month.</p>

<p>How do traffic volumes in these places compare with elsewhere?</p>	<p>These locations had low traffic volumes before the pandemic. Below is a breakdown of all units for the 12 months preceding COVID-19:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="497 347 1129 1187"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">ATTENDED TOWERS, Apr19 - Mar20</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="4">Total movements, last 12mo</th> <th colspan="3">Total changes, last 12mo</th> </tr> <tr> <th>IFR</th> <th>VFR</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Airport</th> <th>IFR▼</th> <th>VFR▼</th> <th>Total▼</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>166,797</td> <td>5,710</td> <td>172,507</td> <td>Auckland▼</td> <td>-6,182</td> <td>-696</td> <td>-6,878</td> </tr> <tr> <td>79,330</td> <td>26,773</td> <td>106,103</td> <td>Christchur▼</td> <td>-2,366</td> <td>1,385</td> <td>-981</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12,077</td> <td>23,274</td> <td>35,351</td> <td>Dunedin▲</td> <td>-58</td> <td>4,818</td> <td>4,760</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7,811</td> <td>26,022</td> <td>33,833</td> <td>Gisborne▲</td> <td>131</td> <td>4,030</td> <td>4,161</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21,922</td> <td>102,993</td> <td>124,915</td> <td>Hamilton▼</td> <td>-3,049</td> <td>-8,476</td> <td>-11,525</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6,872</td> <td>11,887</td> <td>18,759</td> <td>Invercargi▼</td> <td>-67</td> <td>-556</td> <td>-623</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>14,652</td> <td>14,656</td> <td>MilfordSou▼</td> <td>2</td> <td>-3,296</td> <td>-3,294</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17,821</td> <td>5,989</td> <td>23,810</td> <td>Napier▼</td> <td>-1,047</td> <td>-102</td> <td>-1,149</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26,447</td> <td>19,023</td> <td>45,470</td> <td>Nelson▼</td> <td>-1,788</td> <td>-2,314</td> <td>-4,102</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13,180</td> <td>5,786</td> <td>18,966</td> <td>NewPlymout▼</td> <td>-45</td> <td>-1,047</td> <td>-1,092</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11,667</td> <td>0</td> <td>11,667</td> <td>OceanicOve▲</td> <td>16</td> <td>0</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13,171</td> <td>13,838</td> <td>27,009</td> <td>Ohakea▲</td> <td>1,107</td> <td>1,781</td> <td>2,888</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16,977</td> <td>29,597</td> <td>46,574</td> <td>Palmerston▲</td> <td>-859</td> <td>1,783</td> <td>924</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3,028</td> <td>21,792</td> <td>24,820</td> <td>Paraparaum▲</td> <td>591</td> <td>2,521</td> <td>3,112</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19,065</td> <td>34,409</td> <td>53,474</td> <td>Queenstown▼</td> <td>526</td> <td>-7,645</td> <td>-7,119</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8,837</td> <td>10,358</td> <td>19,195</td> <td>Rotorua▼</td> <td>-652</td> <td>-1,095</td> <td>-1,747</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14,137</td> <td>49,889</td> <td>64,026</td> <td>Tauranga▲</td> <td>-355</td> <td>533</td> <td>178</td> </tr> <tr> <td>87,648</td> <td>11,296</td> <td>98,944</td> <td>Wellington▲</td> <td>-1,535</td> <td>2,161</td> <td>626</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4,998</td> <td>5,052</td> <td>10,050</td> <td>Whenuapai▼</td> <td>-12</td> <td>-75</td> <td>-87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16,326</td> <td>2,653</td> <td>18,979</td> <td>Woodbourne▼</td> <td>-557</td> <td>-2,020</td> <td>-2,577</td> </tr> <tr> <td>548,115</td> <td>420,993</td> <td>969,108</td> <td>Totals</td> <td>-16,199</td> <td>-8,310</td> <td>-24,509</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>AAGR=</td> <td>-2.9%</td> <td>-1.9%</td> <td>-2.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ATTENDED TOWERS, Apr19 - Mar20							Total movements, last 12mo				Total changes, last 12mo			IFR	VFR	Total	Airport	IFR▼	VFR▼	Total▼	166,797	5,710	172,507	Auckland▼	-6,182	-696	-6,878	79,330	26,773	106,103	Christchur▼	-2,366	1,385	-981	12,077	23,274	35,351	Dunedin▲	-58	4,818	4,760	7,811	26,022	33,833	Gisborne▲	131	4,030	4,161	21,922	102,993	124,915	Hamilton▼	-3,049	-8,476	-11,525	6,872	11,887	18,759	Invercargi▼	-67	-556	-623	4	14,652	14,656	MilfordSou▼	2	-3,296	-3,294	17,821	5,989	23,810	Napier▼	-1,047	-102	-1,149	26,447	19,023	45,470	Nelson▼	-1,788	-2,314	-4,102	13,180	5,786	18,966	NewPlymout▼	-45	-1,047	-1,092	11,667	0	11,667	OceanicOve▲	16	0	16	13,171	13,838	27,009	Ohakea▲	1,107	1,781	2,888	16,977	29,597	46,574	Palmerston▲	-859	1,783	924	3,028	21,792	24,820	Paraparaum▲	591	2,521	3,112	19,065	34,409	53,474	Queenstown▼	526	-7,645	-7,119	8,837	10,358	19,195	Rotorua▼	-652	-1,095	-1,747	14,137	49,889	64,026	Tauranga▲	-355	533	178	87,648	11,296	98,944	Wellington▲	-1,535	2,161	626	4,998	5,052	10,050	Whenuapai▼	-12	-75	-87	16,326	2,653	18,979	Woodbourne▼	-557	-2,020	-2,577	548,115	420,993	969,108	Totals	-16,199	-8,310	-24,509				AAGR=	-2.9%	-1.9%	-2.5%
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<p>What did pre-lockdown flight movements look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphs available to illustrate the traffic decline over time at each location. 																																																																																																																																																																															
<p>How much money will Airways save by withdrawing services?</p>	<p>We would expect to see savings of \$4.5m per year following the withdrawal of the services from the seven aerodromes.</p> <p>Airlines tell us their savings would be well in excess of ours as a result of the change.</p>																																																																																																																																																																															
<p>Are you planning to introduce digital air traffic control towers at some airports?</p>	<p>Ultimately, we do want to provide modern and fit for purpose services at all of our locations. Digital tower technologies are one of a range of options we would actively consider as traffic levels begin to recover.</p>																																																																																																																																																																															
<p>Will you be continuing on with Invercargill’s digital tower?</p>	<p>Right now all of Airways’ capital project are on hold. The Invercargill digital tower R&D project was an exciting step forward for our sector. Going forward we would require sufficient traffic volumes to conduct a credible trial that will stand up to regulatory scrutiny. We’ll need to reassess the viability of the project as we begin to recover.</p>																																																																																																																																																																															
<p>What is the rationale for withdrawing service from Milford Sound Piopiotahi?</p>	<p>Services at Milford have been regularly reviewed for a number of years. Numerous operators in the area have downsized and given the challenges facing the tourism sector we don’t anticipate the demand for flights into Milford picking up again in the foreseeable future.</p>																																																																																																																																																																															

What happens when traffic levels recover?	Ultimately, we do want to provide services that are safe, affordable and appropriately matched to the aviation sector now and into the future. We will begin working with our customers and the regulator now to plan for this future state.
How does this decision align with your responsibilities as an SOE?	The expectations of Airways as a SOE are very clearly set out by our Shareholder. In light of the Covid-19 crisis, Airways is expected to take steps to right size our operation and realign our business to meet customer demand.
What safety assessments will be undertaken to support this decision?	<p>Airways must undertake a safety assessment before making changes to our operations. Our assessment will focus on the changes that result from the withdrawal that Airways is accountable for. This accountability is clarified through the CAA Rule part certificates that we operate within.</p> <p>Safety assessments for the aerodromes is an activity that will be led by the airport operators, who are the 139 certificate holders. Airways will support this process by providing specialist advice.</p>
NZALPA have raised serious safety concerns, have these been taken onboard?	<p>The repeated claims and inferences in the NZALPA media statement that safety was at risk as a result of the proposal to withdraw current air traffic services from seven regional aerodromes are rejected by Airways. They are also at odds with public statements made by Air New Zealand who has no safety concerns with operating at the aerodromes under review without Airways' services. We have responded to ALPA's claims in detail which can be found here.</p> <p>All safety related issues will be thoroughly addressed as the transition plan develops.</p>
Is Airways putting cost saving ahead of safety?	No. Airways does not compromise on safety, and our decision is based on this fundamental underpinning.
Will all planes still be able to land at these airports without air traffic control?	<p>Air New Zealand has publicly stated that it can continue to operate at these aerodromes, as it does at other unattended aerodromes (Whangarei, Hokitika, Timaru and Kerikeri).</p> <p>Unattended aerodromes experienced more than 37,000 aircraft movements in New Zealand in 2019.</p> <p>There are also many examples of unattended regional aerodromes in Australia that have regular passenger transport traffic, including jets, despite being unattended.</p> <p>Australian Airports with comparable regular passenger transport numbers include NSW:</p> <p>Port Macquire , NSW Wagawagga Airport, NSW Dubbo City Regional Airport , NSW Port Lincoln in South Australia Ballina Byron Bay Airport , NSW Mildura Airport, Melbourne, Victoria</p>
What about larger aircraft, including jets?	Air New Zealand has confirmed that jets will still be able to operate at Invercargill Airport without an air traffic control service.

	Ballina and Port Macquire Airports in New South Wales and Mildura Airport in Victoria are three Australian examples where jet operations are routine despite the aerodromes being unattended.
How do aircraft land and take off at an unattended airport?	Pilots flying into unattended airfields are specifically trained to use the appropriate flight rules. They maintain situational awareness using traffic information and pilot reports until they enter controlled airspace. There were more than 37,000 aircraft movements at New Zealand unattended aerodromes in 2019.
What is a flight information service?	Flight information service (FIS) is used in uncontrolled (Class G) airspace. It is different to air traffic control in that FIS officers do not issue instructions to pilots. Instead they provide pilots with information that is used by the pilots to maintain situational awareness and to safely operate in Class G airspace. It can be specific to a certain aerodrome or it can cover a large area of Class G airspace.
How will drone pilots get air traffic control clearance at these aerodromes?	For drone operations at unattended aerodromes, drone users get the approval of the airport. They also need to have an observer watching for aircraft while they are operating.
What happens when traffic levels recover?	Ultimately, we do want to provide services that are safe, affordable and appropriately matched to the aviation sector now and into the future. We will work with our customers and the regulator to plan for this future state.
What alternatives to air traffic control are currently available?	There are currently a number of alternatives to an air traffic control service. These include a Flight Information Service (FIS), Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS) and operating as an unattended aerodrome. Kerikeri, Kaitaia, Taupo and Hokitika are examples of airports in New Zealand that Air New Zealand flies or has flown to where that are unattended. Digital Tower technology is operating elsewhere in the world where regular passenger transport aircraft are flying.
How many jobs will be lost?	Once we have completed the consultation, planning and design stages of the programme plan to withdraw our services, we will understand if and what surplus of roles there might be. We will then work with the affected people and their union representatives to consider next steps if there is a surplus.
Could the government support Airways has received protect these jobs?	Airways revenue has dropped by 95%. To reduce our reliance on taxpayer money in the future Airways is expected to take steps to right size our operation and realign our business to meet customer demand. Airways gratefully received a \$70 million equity injection in March as part of the Government's aviation relief package to support our operations in the short term. Included in the Government's wider aviation support package was an estimated \$37m assistance for airlines, which was intended to cover Airways' fees over coming months. But, based on very low flight volumes, we are unlikely to receive much of the \$37 million through fees.

	In line with Government guidelines and the very clear expectation of our shareholder, Airways has accessed the wage subsidy as a lifeline to support our business in the short term.
What will happen to any of the subsidy that was allocated to a salary of a staff member made redundant?	Airways has an obligation to pay back any wage subsidy related to staff who exit the business within the 12-week duration. Our payroll team are monitoring this on behalf of the company, and we will report back to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on any variations.
Did you consider other options for saving jobs?	Airways put constructive and workable proposals to the union's leadership which would have guaranteed their members' employment for 12 months in exchange for a 25% pay reduction. It is unfortunate that our people were not given the opportunity to vote on this proposal. Supporting and respecting our workmates is central to who Airways is as a company. Telling people who have served us and our industry so well that the services they provide are no longer viable is very difficult.
Will this plan affect economic development and regional connectivity?	Airways is committed to supporting economic recovery from Covid-19. By removing cost barriers for the airlines, we believe they will be better positioned to resume services to those airports we have under review. Air New Zealand has publicly stated that it can continue to operate at these aerodromes without an air traffic control service, as it does at other unattended aerodromes (Whangarei, Hokitika, Timaru and Kerikeri). Therefore, we believe the proposal works to preserve regional connectivity as the airlines begin to rebuild their networks.
How will reducing services in some locations support the aviation industry to regrow?	By removing cost barriers for the airlines, we believe they will be better positioned to resume services. Air New Zealand has publicly stated that it can continue to operate at aerodromes without an air traffic control service. Therefore, we believe withdrawing our services from the airports identified works to preserve regional connectivity as the airlines begin to rebuild their networks.
Is there anything within the Civil Aviation Act that says we must provide these services?	The Act allows for Airways to withdraw from providing this service.
Can Airways decide what services it should provide at a regional airport?	The CAA decides what services airports must have. Airways decides whether to provide those services based on a number of factors, including customer demand and the viability of the service.
What process will the working group follow to determine when and how services will transition?	The group will work through a number of phases to determine how services would transition. These include clarifying the process for changing services at each airport, completing aeronautical studies for each airport, and a detailed design and planning for phase for the transition of services.