

Multi-Million dollar development of Pukaki nears an end

INSTALLATION OF an aviation fuel dispensing facility has commenced at Pukaki Airport, bringing an extensive capital development programme to an end.

Contractor Paul Smith Earthmoving (Timaru) who constructed the final Stage 5-6 subdivision of 20 sections and associated sealed taxiways and roads, commenced work in November on a dual fuel facility.

BP has supplied the twin cell fuel tank which will be located above ground adjacent to the access road at the northern end of the airfield. A layby will be created for the fuel tanker to pull in and refuel the facility, while on the airfield a concrete pad is being constructed over which aircraft will park for refueling.

In November the Board reported to the Mackenzie District Council that all capital invested by the Council into the Airport land, buildings and runway had been repaid. The Board is also holding in excess of \$500,000 in an airport fund from sale of sections and the Council has approved the fund remaining for the future operation of the Airport.

Board chairman Derek Kirke said

the surplus had been achieved through a successful subdivision development and the sale of 33 Lots. There are 18 Lots remaining to be sold and titles were recently issued for the latest development. All sections have access to sealed taxiways and sealed roads, and telephone, power, water, and sewage reticulation to the boundary. The sewer system is connected into the Twizel reticulation.

Landowners are able to build both homes and hangars on the site “as of right” within certain criteria. Derek says that while the recession has slowed down a number of plans, the first building consents are lodged so building activity is anticipated soon.

While the recent subdivision development took place, the Board took the opportunity to re-seal the runway and its associated taxiways. The original seal was wearing and had been patched over the years so a complete re-seal was carried out by Isaac Construction while they were on-site sealing the new parallel taxiway, lateral taxiways and roads. “The new surface with its markings has met with very positive comments from aviators” says Derek.

There is a rolled and mown grass

runway parallel with the sealed runway and the Board is currently investigating a grass crosswind runway at the northern end to assist during easterly and south-easterly conditions.

Commercial activity bases owned by Air Safaris and the Helicopter Line are well established at Pukaki and Derek says that the Airport Board believes there are many commercial opportunities for further growth including skydiving, aircraft maintenance and potential for a flight training facility. The Met Service has recently established a new automated weather station and the Board has access rights which it hopes to connect to a new website for aviators.

“The development at Pukaki has put in place the Aviation Strategy worked out by the Council and the Aviation Industry in the 1990’s. The Strategy recognised that there should be an open public airfield in the Mackenzie Basin, and that it should be at Pukaki.”, says Derek. “I am proud that the Board has achieved this at no cost to the Mackenzie District ratepayers, and that we have room for expansion with titled sections available now.”

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