Proposed Amendments to Queenstown Control Zone, Designation of 3 additional Transit Lanes and Visual Reporting Point Changes

– airspace user consultation

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Introduction

Airways New Zealand Proposal to Amend Queenstown Control Zone areas, introduce 3 additional Transit Lanes, amend 3 existing Transit Lanes and VRP changes.

On 5 May 2025 Airways New Zealand submitted an application for changes to the Queenstown Control Zone. The application seeks to reduce the size of the existing Queenstown Control Zone (CTR), introduce 3 additional Transit Lanes, amend 3 existing Transit Lanes, withdraw 3 Visual Reporting Points (VRP), move 1 VRP and designate 7 additional VRPs.

Consequential changes include but are not limited to: adjustments to the Common Frequency Zone (CFZ), updates to the applicable Aeronautical Information Pages, changes to Queenstown VFR arrival and departure procedures, Queenstown ATC procedures.

Background

Airways NZ advised the rationale for the proposed changes is to better manage Queenstown ATS and VFR pilot workloads. Airways New Zealand advise they completed a thematic review of ATS operations at Queenstown in the latter part of 2024, including a series of meetings between Airways staff, the Queenstown Milford User Group (QMUG) and Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC) to address items raised in the review.

In early 2025 Airways applied an Interested Based Problem Solving (IBPS) methodology in workshops to better focus on aviation challenges, interests and resolutions. These IBPS workshops included senior QMUG members, QAC and Airways management.

Airways New Zealand is seeking to implement changes in the Aeronautical Information Publication 25/12 cycle, effective 27 November 2025.

Note: CAA cutoff for the 25/12 cycle was 24 April 2025 – the application was submitted on 5 May 2025.

Civil Aviation Rule Context

Civil Aviation Rule (CAR) Part 71 provides the regulatory context to designate and classify airspace. Specifically, 71.57 prescribes the criteria that the Director must consider in designating transit lanes:

71.57 VFR transit lanes

(a) The Director may designate a portion of controlled airspace as a VFR transit lane for either or both of the following purposes:

(1) separating transiting VFR traffic from arriving and departing IFR flights:

(2) permitting transiting VFR traffic to operate within the VFR transit lane without requiring an ATC clearance.

(b) A VFR transit lane must be clear of airspace that encompasses IFR arrival and departure procedures within that controlled airspace.

(c) The Director must—

(1) ensure that buffer zones are provided between the nominal flight paths of arriving and departing IFR flights and each VFR transit lane; and

(2) identify each VFR transit lane by the ICAO nationality letters of the State providing the air traffic control service followed by the letter "T" followed by a number.

(d) A VFR transit lane is class G airspace and may only be active during the day.

This application further seeks to introduce Transponder Mandatory (TM) in the Transit Lane areas. CAR Part 71, Sub Part E covers the criteria the Director must consider in designating TM airspace.

71.201 Transponder mandatory airspace within controlled airspace

The Director may designate a control area or a control zone, or any portion of a control area or a control zone, as transponder mandatory airspace if—

(1) the operation of transponders is required for the provision of an air traffic control surveillance service; or

(2) the Director determines that the traffic density in the airspace requires the operation of transponders to reduce the risk of an airborne collision with those aircraft that are required to be fitted with an airborne collision avoidance system.

CAA Note: The application opines the Transit Lanes could be designated as coincident Special Use Airspace, Mandatory Broadcast Zones TM; a further Airways NZ interpretation is the areas are a 'portion of a control zone' and therefore could be designated TM. Civil Aviation Rule Part 71 criteria do not currently enable Class G airspace (Transit Lanes) to be designated TM.

CAR Part 71, Sub Part C, covers the criteria for classification of airspace. Queenstown Control Zone (NZA756), lower limit is the surface extending to the upper limit, 7500 ft AMSL, and is classified Class C airspace. Rule part 71.105 requirements are:

> *71.105 Class C airspace Any portion of airspace that is designated as a control area or control zone under rules 71.51(a) or (b) must be classified as Class C airspace if the Director considers it necessary in the interests of aviation safety that—*
>
> *(1) separation is required between—*
>
> *(i) IFR flights; and*
> *(ii) IFR and VFR flights; and*
> *(iii) IFR and special VFR flights; and*
> *(iv) special VFR flights when the flight visibility is reported to be less than 5km; and*
>
> *(2) traffic information must be provided to VFR flights about other VFR flights; and*
>
> *(3) traffic avoidance advice must be provided to VFR flights on request*
>
> CAA Note: The proposed changes approximately double the lateral extent of the VFR Transit Lanes; these areas becoming Glass G airspace during the day, no air traffic service provided during daylight hours.

The indicative current and proposed Transit Lane areas in the Queenstown CTR are shown at Appendix B; in addition, the three current General Aviation Areas also within the CTR are depicted.

Consultation

Prior to designating airspace, Civil Aviation Rule 71.9 requires the Director to consult independently with affected persons, organisations, and representative groups within the aviation industry before making a designation or classification of airspace.

The Director invites feedback regarding the Airways NZ Queenstown Control Zone airspace changes; for full application information, see Annex A - Queenstown Airspace Petition Volume One Version 2.0 dated 29 May 2025 (attached separately due to sizing).

This document will be sent directly to the organisations listed below. It would be appreciated if you would kindly forward the document to your members and stakeholders, for consideration and comment as appropriate:

Operators, Organisations and User Groups

Aeropath
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association of New Zealand
Canterbury Airspace User Group
Canterbury Gliding Club
Flying New Zealand
Gliding New Zealand
Model Flying New Zealand
Mid-Canterbury Aero Club
New Zealand Aviation Federation
New Zealand Airline Pilots Association
New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association
New Zealand Helicopter Association
New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association
New Zealand Defence Force
New Zealand Army
New Zealand Parachute Federation
New Zealand Parachute Industry Association
Recreational Aircraft Association of New Zealand
Sports Aircraft Association of New Zealand
Sports Aviation Corps
Queenstown Milford User Group
UAV New Zealand
Air New Zealand
Jetstar
Qantas
Virgin Australia
GE Flight Efficiency Services, LLC

Aerodrome Operators

Milford Sound
Glenorchy
Cromwell
Cromwell Racecourse
Wanaka
Alexandra
Roxburgh
Te Anau / Manapouri
Queenstown

This document is available on the CAA website at the following link:

2025 Airspace Review

Notifications will be sent to CAA email notification subscribers to Airspace Notifications – Briefing Areas 7, 8, 9 and 10.

To discuss further with Airways NZ staff, in the first instance contact:

Phil Rakena
Operations Development Specialist Phil.Rakena@airways.co.nz

Submissions

This document forms part of the consultation process. Submissions are sought from any interested person, organisation, or representative group.

Submissions are accepted either electronically or via mail.

Please address submissions to:

Team Coordinator
Aviation Infrastructure and Personnel
Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand
PO Box 3555
Wellington 6140

Email: aeronautical.services@caa.govt.nz
Reference – **2025-00680 NZQN Airspace Petition**

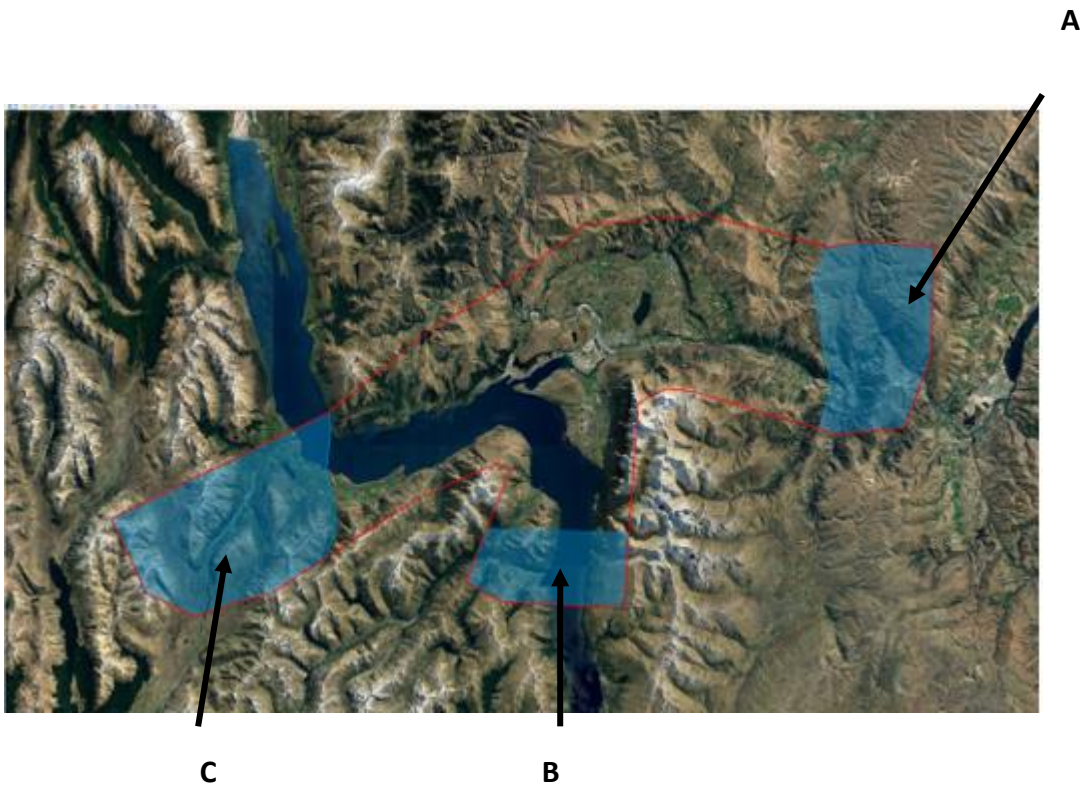
Closing date for submissions is **Monday 30th June 2025**

Annex A - Queenstown Airspace Petition Volume One, Version 2.0, dated 29 May 2025
Annex B - Indicative current and proposed Transit Lane areas in the Queenstown CTR

Annex B

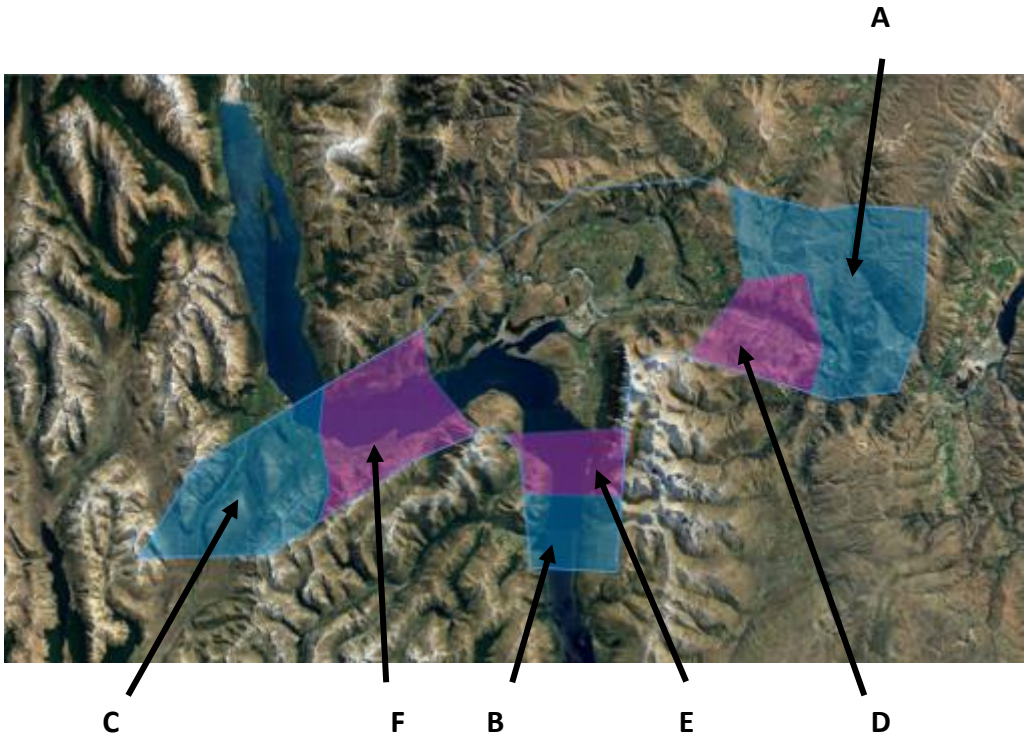
Indicative current and proposed Transit Lane areas in the Queenstown CTR

Current: Transit Lanes = approximately 36.8% of CTR lateral area.



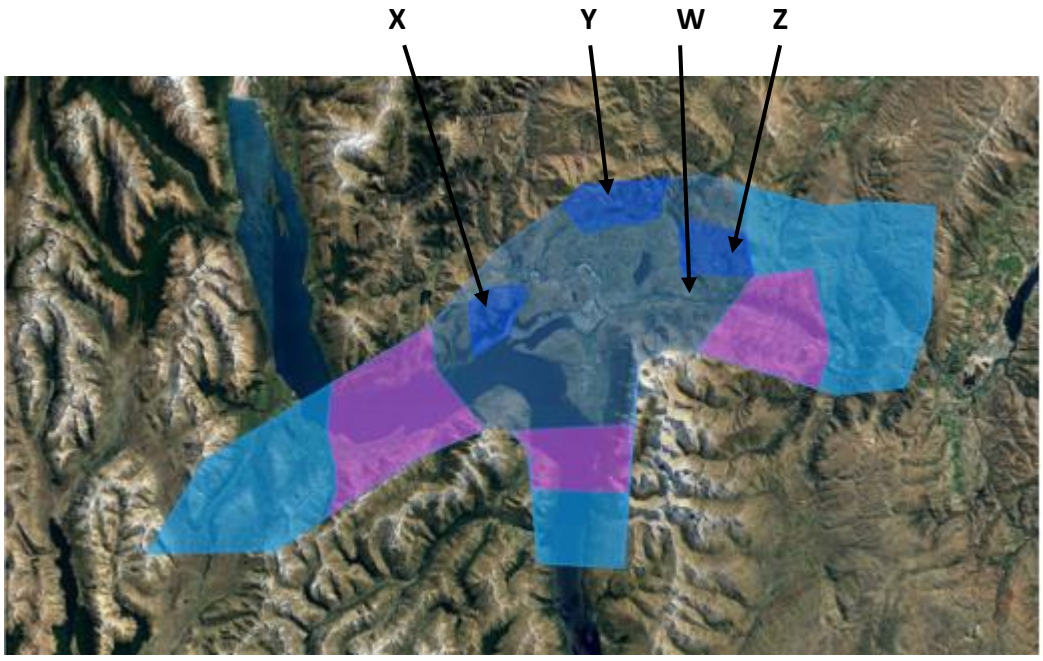
NZA756	QN CTR/C	346.0 sq NM
NZT750 **A**	Kawarau Transit Lane	43.3 sq NM
NZT751 **B**	Kingston Transit Lane	24.1 sq NM
NZT753 **C**	Ridge Peak Transit Lane	60.0 sq NM

Proposed: Transit Lanes = approximately 59.7% of CTR lateral area.



NZA756		QN CTR/C	306.0 sq NM
NZT750	**A**	Kawarau Transit Lane	56.1 sq NM
NZT751	**B**	Kingston Transit Lane	15.0 sq NM
NZT753	**C**	Ridge Peak Transit Lane	40.0 sq NM
NZTxxx	**D**	Proposed Gibbston Transit Lane	22.7 sq NM
NZTxxx	**E**	Proposed Remarkables Transit Lane	15.0 sq NM
NZTxxx	**F**	Proposed Walter Peak Transit Lane	34.0 sq NM

<u>Proposed:</u> Transit Lanes and GAA = approximately 66.5% of CTR lateral area



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NZTxxx	Proposed Remarkables Transit Lane	15.0 sq NM
NZTxxx	Proposed Walter Peak Transit Lane	34.0 sq NM
NZG752 **Z**	Crown Terrace	6.8 sq NM
NZG755 **Y**	Coronet Peak	8.5 sq NM
NZG756 **X**	Skyline	5.3 sq NM
NZG758 **W**	Arrow Junction	0.2 sq NM