
2017 West Coast Airspace Review

Summary of Submissions

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Overview

As outlined in the CAA 2015-2018 Airspace Review Plan document, airspace over the West Coast of the South Island is under review with changes to be effective 9 November 2017.

This review comprises all that airspace detailed on the C9, C10 and C12 visual navigation charts covering the area westward of the Southern Alps between Wekakura Point and Jackson Bay.

Airspace includes:

- controlled airspace
- VFR transit lanes
- general aviation areas
- restricted areas
- military operating areas
- danger areas
- low flying zones
- mandatory broadcast zones
- VFR reporting points
- common frequency zones

Initial consultation commenced with airspace users in June 2016. Cut-off for submissions was 5 September 2016.

Submissions received

There were eleven submissions received.

Summary of requested airspace changes

Controlled airspace

Airways submitted a petition to amend the lower level of controlled airspace NZA740, between Fox Glacier and south of Barn Bay, from FL245 to FL175. This would align with NZA948 to share a common lower limit of FL175.

NZA740 is the area shaded in red in Figure 1 below.

In support of their application, Airways stated:

'The benefits of implementing this change are outlined below:

1. *Allow turbo-prop traffic to transit in and out of Queenstown Aerodrome west of Mt. Cook whilst remaining in controlled airspace, on routes Y320 and Y569.*
2. *Enable an alternative routing for turbo-prop traffic for weather avoidance, remaining in controlled airspace on routes Y320 and Y569.*

3. Lowering the controlled airspace would make it consistent with the Christchurch CTA/C NZA948 (above the Queenstown CTA/C). Consistency leaves less room for error.
4. Enables a better climb profile for traffic departing Queenstown tracking via Y569.
5. Traffic can be vectored above FL180 (currently FL250) for weather avoidance.
6. Traffic can be vectored above FL180 (currently FL250) for ATM and sequencing into Queenstown.'

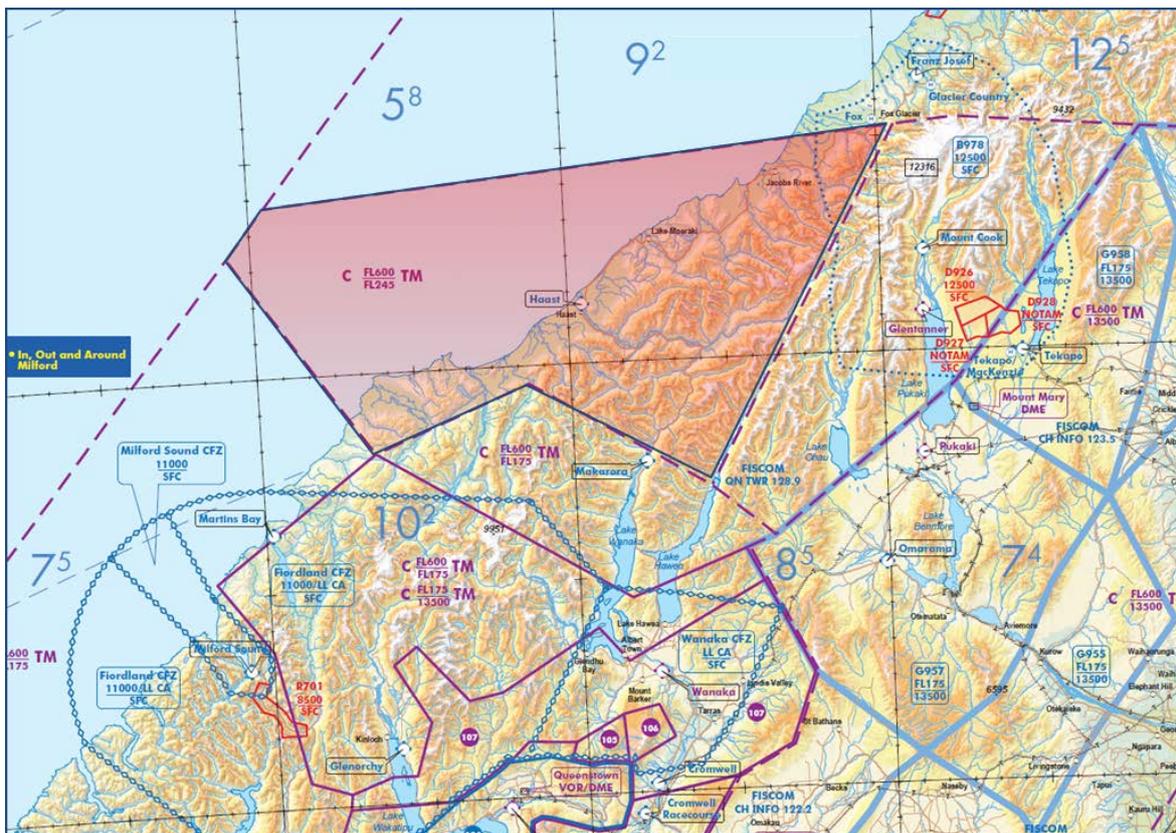


Figure 1 – NZA740

VFR transit lanes

There are no VFR transit lanes in the review area.

General aviation areas

There are no general aviation areas (GAA) in the review area and no proposals were received for the establishment of new GAAs.

Restricted areas

There were no requests for new, or changes to existing, restricted areas within the review area.

Military operating areas

There are no military operating areas (MOA) within the review area and no proposals were received for the establishment of new MOAs.

Mandatory broadcast zones

There were requests for amendments to both of the existing mandatory broadcast zones (MBZ) within the review area.

1. NZB978 Southern Alps

The Mount Cook and Westland National Parks User Group submitted a petition to amend the eastern and south-western boundaries of NZB978.

a) Eastern boundary

The proposal is to extend the eastern boundary to along the ridge of the Two Thumb Range. The reasons stated are:

'This is a natural barrier to Mackenzie basin from the east and is more defined boundary than the current one. The main purpose however is as a safety barrier for the flights operating at Tekapo aerodrome and Mackenzie heliport. Currently aircraft using runway 11 for departure and landing on runway 29 at Tekapo leave the boundary on an extended circuit around the village (for noise purposes) potentially causing conflict by other aircraft skirting the boundary not using the MBZ frequency. Helicopters also frequently land in Tekapo Skifield, Mt Dobson Skifield and other locations on the western side of the Two Thumb Mountains and it is better for these aircraft to remain on the MBZ frequency for situational awareness inside the MBZ, the usual departure point for helicopters landing in this area.'

The amended boundary shown by the red dotted line in Figure 2.

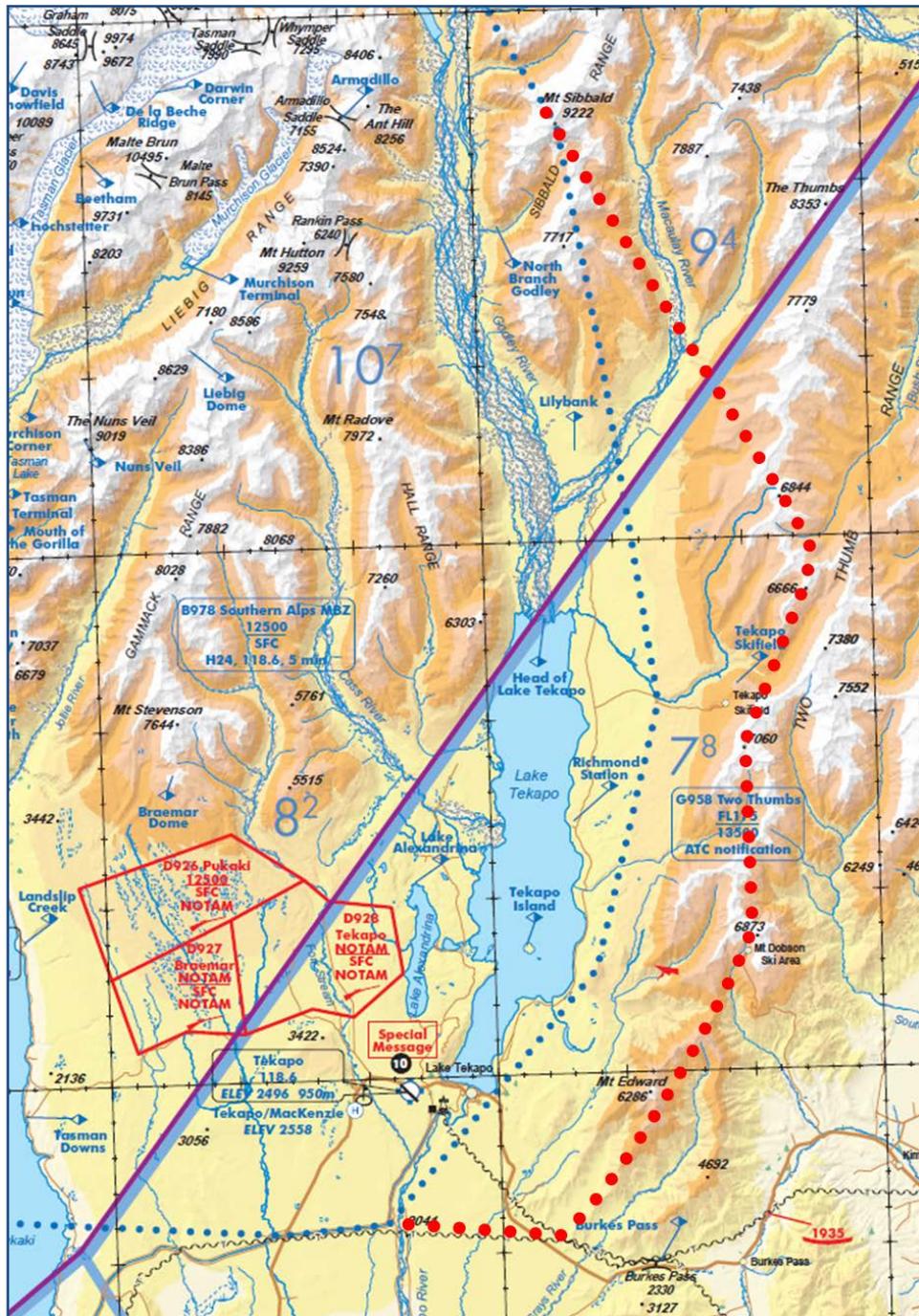


Figure 2 – Southern Alps MBZ amended eastern boundary

b) South-western boundary

It is proposed to extend the south-western boundary corner out to encompass most of the Gladstone Valley, particularly the Gladstone Saddle. The purpose of the change is to ensure that northbound gliders from Omarama and aircraft departing from Pukaki tracking north-west through the Gladstone Saddle are on the same frequency.

The amended boundary is shown by the red dotted line in Figure 3.

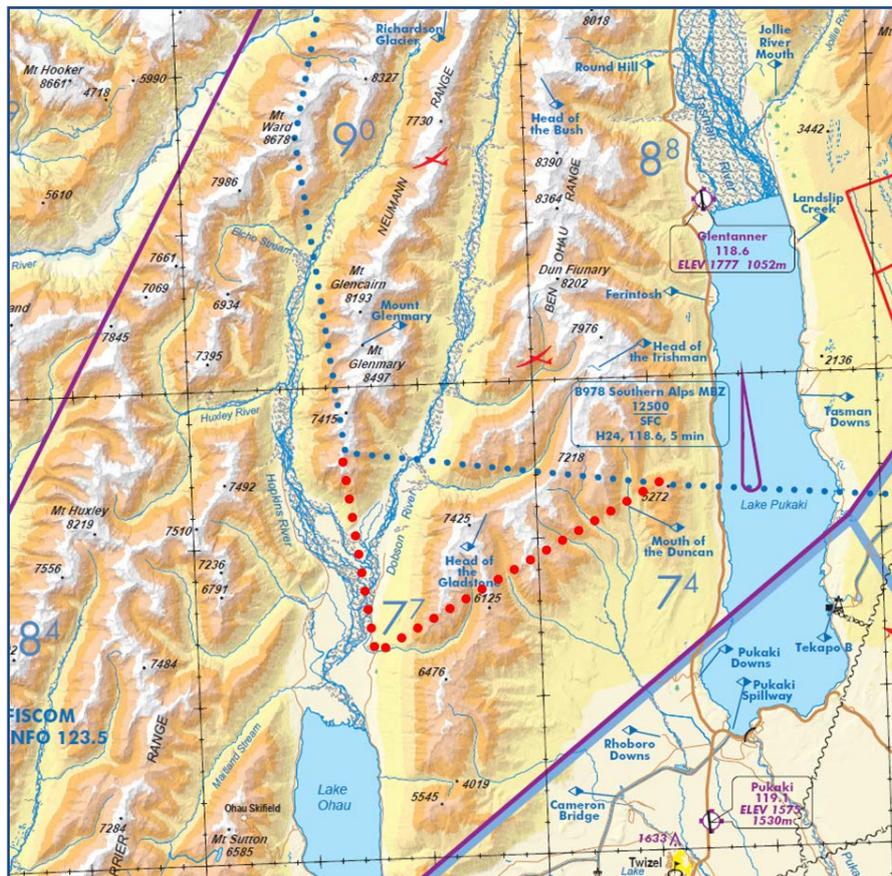


Figure 3 – Southern Alps MBZ south-western boundary amendment

2. NZB774 Hokitika

Refer to Appendix A – Figures 5 and 6 for diagrams of the requested airspace.

Air Nelson submitted a petition to extend the boundaries of NZB774 for the following reasons:

- Increased number of IFR corporate and air ambulance flights, as well as VFR aeroplane and helicopter traffic.
- Proximity of Hokitika and Greymouth aerodromes with RNAV IFR procedures overlapping. While the aerodromes share a common frequency of 119.1 MHz, Hokitika is within the MBZ, but Greymouth is not.
- Hokitika MBZ does not fully encompass the RNAV arrivals and approaches for both aerodromes.
- Air Nelson is concerned that IFR traffic for both Greymouth and Hokitika may encounter VFR traffic during the arrival procedures that may not be using a radio or transponder.

- (e) IFR aircraft once outside controlled airspace have to monitor both FISCOM frequency and the Hokitika MBZ frequency.

The proposal is to have a common MBZ encompassing both Hokitika and Greymouth aerodromes and include the arrival, approach, hold and departure procedures for both aerodromes.

The design would be a tiered MBZ to incorporate:

- (i) A normal descent profile of 300 ft per NM up to the lower limit of controlled airspace – 13,500 ft.
- (ii) Enable flight crews to monitor only one other frequency (the MBZ frequency) prior to leaving controlled airspace.
- (iii) Air Nelson provided the following rationale for the eastern boundaries and the upper limit:

"The boundaries of the tiered MBZ to the East are a little hard to geographically define. However we have attempted to one, give a reasonable buffer between the arrival/departure tracks and profile altitudes, and two, lining up or close to reasonably prominent geographical features.."

The rational [sic] for extending the MBZ upper limit to the LLCA 13,500ft is that the high en-route MSAs and weather or other traffic arriving and departing can often necessitate either staying at or climbing to cruise altitudes to the West of the main divide."

- (iv) The MBZ would not encompass arrival procedures from the south.

CAA comment:

The current frequency is the unattended aerodrome frequency 119.1 MHz. Due to the topography of the West Coast, when operating at lower levels, this would not be an issue with other unattended aerodromes. However, at higher altitudes there is the potential for the frequency to become cluttered by receiving transmissions from all over the country.

At present pilots are required to report every five minutes inside the MBZ. This is not onerous in a small MBZ of approximately 20 NM by 6 NM (120 NM²), as it equates to normal reporting intervals when operating within the vicinity of an aerodrome. If the MBZ is extended in size, it will become approximately 35 NM by 30 NM (1050 NM²).

Prior to May 2004, the Director was able to designate an approach conditional area (ACA). An ACA was uncontrolled special use airspace where the Director required VFR pilots to —

- operate at least 1000 ft vertically and 2 NM horizontally from cloud, even when at or below 3000 ft AMSL (or 1000 ft above terrain, which is higher). This was to

provide additional buffer when an IFR aircraft would be descending below cloud;
and

- maintain two-way radio communications on a specified frequency; and
- operate outside the ACA when an IFR aircraft was conducting an instrument approach procedure.

ACAs were always within 10 NM of an uncontrolled aerodrome, where IFR aircraft are generally commencing the instrument approach from approximately 3000 ft AGL. When ACAs were removed from Part 71, MBZs were designated in these locations to provide pilots with traffic situational awareness. The additional meteorological requirements were no longer able to be applied.

When designating uncontrolled airspace as transponder mandatory, the lower limit is generally at 1500 ft AGL or above for the following reasons:

- limitations in airborne collision avoidance system (ACAS) design and parameters. ICAO and European documents highlight these limitations when operating within aerodrome circuits and below 900 ft AGL. Eurocontrol's ACAS Bulletin No.6 describes the problem:
'The TCAS II traffic display can be misinterpreted, since it provides only partial information, it has limited accuracy, and it is based upon a moving reference. It has not been designed for the purposes of self-separation or sequencing, and using it for these purposes is inappropriate, and could also be hazardous. Although the ACAS traffic display assists to detect the presence of intruders in the close vicinity, flight crews should not be over-reliant on this display. It supports visual acquisition; it is not a replacement for the out-of-window scan.' (Emphasis is original.)
- There is no provision in existing rules for aircraft with an inoperable transponder to obtain approval to operate within a transponder mandatory airspace to enable the aircraft to be flown to a maintenance base which may be located within the MBZ for repairs.

Any transponder mandatory airspace lower limit would be set at a minimum of 1500 ft AGL for if the MBZ is amended.

Danger areas

There were two submissions made in relation to existing danger areas within the review area.

1. NZD723 Cape Foulwind

One submitter advised that blasting ceased at the danger area in July 2016, and that the area is now a lake.

This has been confirmed by the using agency, Holcim NZ Ltd, and NZD723 will be disestablished.

2. NZD715 Strongman Mine

The New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (NZHGPA) has requested that the western boundary of NZD715 is realigned behind the ridge line.

A local paraglider pilot has contacted the using agency, Solid Energy NZ Ltd, and the site manager has advised that only limited mining operations are taking place and that no blasting is occurring at present or planned for the future.

CAA will clarify with Solid Energy NZ Ltd the ongoing need for the danger area and if the boundary can be amended without there being a hazard to aviation.

Low flying zones

There were no requests for new, or changes to existing, low flying zones in the review area.

Common frequency zones

There are no common frequency zones (CFZ) within the review area and no proposals were received for the establishment of new CFZs.

Visual reporting points

The Mount Cook and Westland National Parks User Group has requested the designation of three new visual reporting points (VRP). The VRP are located at commonly used points used by local operators.

Refer to Figure 4 below.

In support of the application, the user group explained the reasons for the requested points as follows:

- Tekapo Saddle

'It is a natural change-over point from east to west (and vice-versa) for aircraft entering the Mackenzie basin on a track Christchurch to Tekapo and used reasonably frequently due to the low defined saddle. It will also become a perfect boundary point with the proposed MBZ boundary extension (our other attached application).'

- Mt Joseph

'Used very frequently on a daily basis by both Tekapo based operators on all their standard flight paths. Has come to a point where itinerant aircraft have repeatedly specifically asked where it is due to the frequency of use.'

- Irishman Creek Station

'Another commonly used reporting point by Tekapo based operators when tracking between the Tekapo area and Twizel/Pukaki airport. An identifiable point located beside the canal bridge that will make perfect entry point into the MBZ from the south for itinerant aircraft too.'

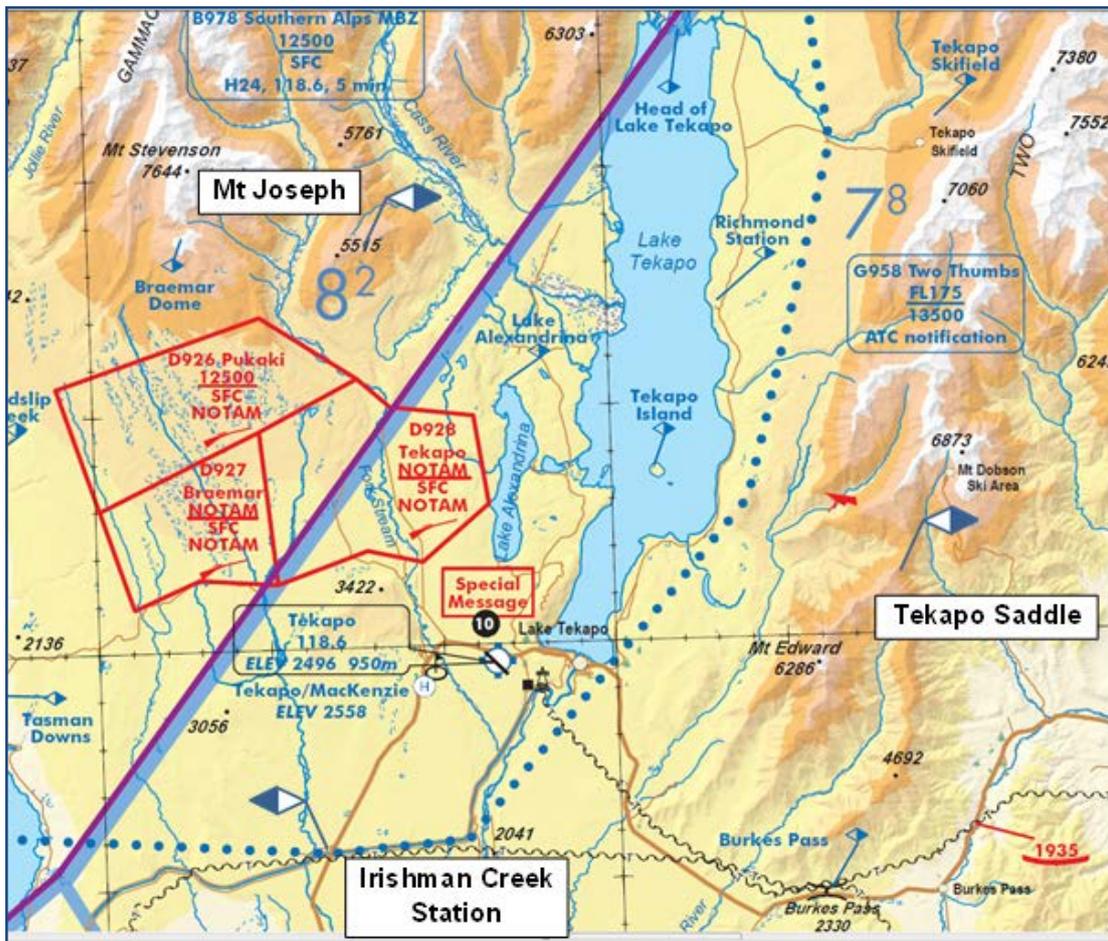


Figure 4 – requested VRPs

Miscellaneous

The NZHGPA has requested the addition of hang gliding symbols to advise pilots of hang gliding and paragliding activity at the following locations:

Location	VNC
Sherry River	C9
Mt Murchison	C9
Stockton	C9
Denniston	C9
9 Mile Beach	C9, C12
Sewell Peak	C9, C12
Mt Cheesman	C13
Ohaui Skifield	C12

Following actions

Comment is now invited from airspace users regarding the submissions made so far. It is intended for meetings to be held with airspace users later in March before the cut-off date for submissions. The venues and dates are yet to be confirmed.

Once the airspace user consultation meetings have taken place, there will be an opportunity to make further submissions prior to the visual navigation chart update cut-off date on 20 April 2017.

Further consultation

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 for consideration and comment.

Aerodrome operators (charted aerodromes only)

- Fox heliport (Glacier Southern Lakes Helicopters Ltd)
- Franz Josef aerodrome (Air Safaris and Services (NZ) Ltd)
- Glacier Country heliport (Hokitika Airport Ltd)
- Glentanner aerodrome (Glentanner Park Ltd)
- Greymouth aerodrome (Grey District Council)
- Haast aerodrome
- Hokitika aerodrome (Hokitika Airport Ltd)
- Karamea aerodrome (Karamea Airport (Inc))
- Lake Haupiri aerodrome (Air West Coast Ltd)
- Makarora aerodrome (Southern Alps Air Ltd)
- Mount Cook aerodrome (Aoraki Mount Cook Ltd)
- Murchison aerodrome
- Murchison Hospital heliport (Nelson-Marlborough District Health Board)
- Pukaki aerodrome (Pukaki Airport Board)
- Tekapo aerodrome (Air Safaris and Services (NZ) Ltd)
- Westport aerodrome (Westport Airport Authority)

Operators, Organisations and User Groups

Major operators, organisations and users have been identified as:

- Air New Zealand Group – includes Mount Cook and Air Nelson
- Air Safaris and Services (NZ) Ltd
- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Airways Corporation of New Zealand
- Balloon Association of New Zealand

- Canterbury Airspace User Group
- Flying New Zealand
- Gliding New Zealand
- Golden Bay Air
- Hokitika Airspace User Group
- Model Flying New Zealand
- Mount Cook and Westland National Parks Resident Aircraft User Group
- Nelson Airspace User Group
- New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association
- New Zealand Airline Pilots Association
- New Zealand Aviation Federation
- New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association
- New Zealand Helicopter Association
- New Zealand Parachute Federation
- New Zealand Parachute Industry Association
- Recreational Aircraft Association of New Zealand
- Royal New Zealand Air Force
- Sport Aircraft Association New Zealand
- Sport Aviation Corp

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

<http://www.caa.govt.nz/airspace/airspace-review/>

Notifications will be sent to CAA email notification subscribers to Airspace Notifications – Briefing Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

If there are any further questions regarding the review process, please contact Paula Moore – contact details below.

Submissions

Prior to making a designation or classification of airspace, Civil Aviation Rule 71.9 requires the Director to consult with all parties that may be affected within the aviation industry. 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:

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Aviation Infrastructure and Personnel
2017 West Coast Airspace Review
Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand

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Wellington 6140
Fax: 04-569-2024

Email: dianne.parker@caa.govt.nz

Reference – 2017 West Coast Airspace Review

Closing date for submissions is **Thursday 6 April 2017**.

Further information

For further information contact:

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S-D180-20-13 (DW1340043-0)

Appendix A – Hokitika MBZ amendment

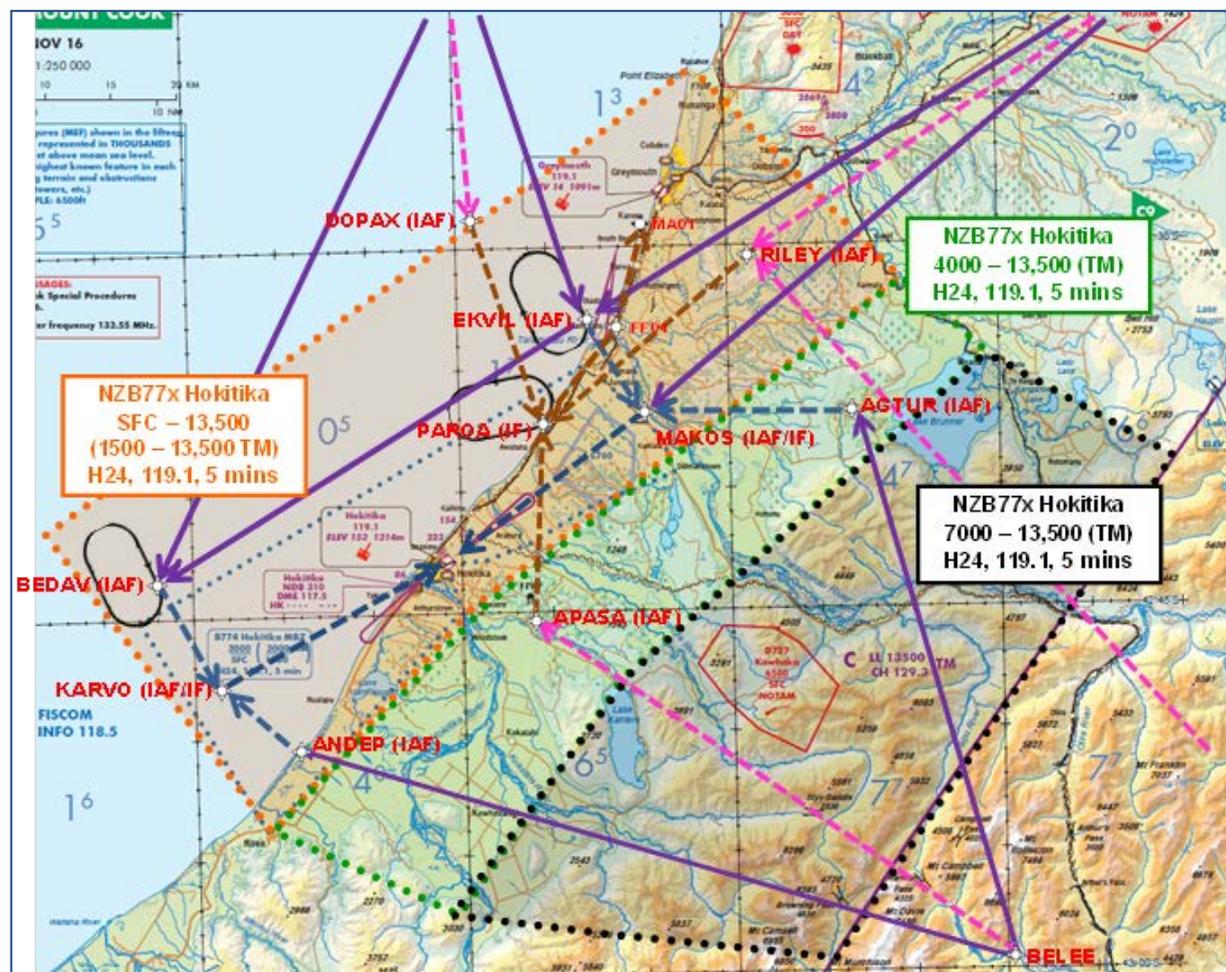


Figure 5 – Hokitika MBZ proposed amendment plan view

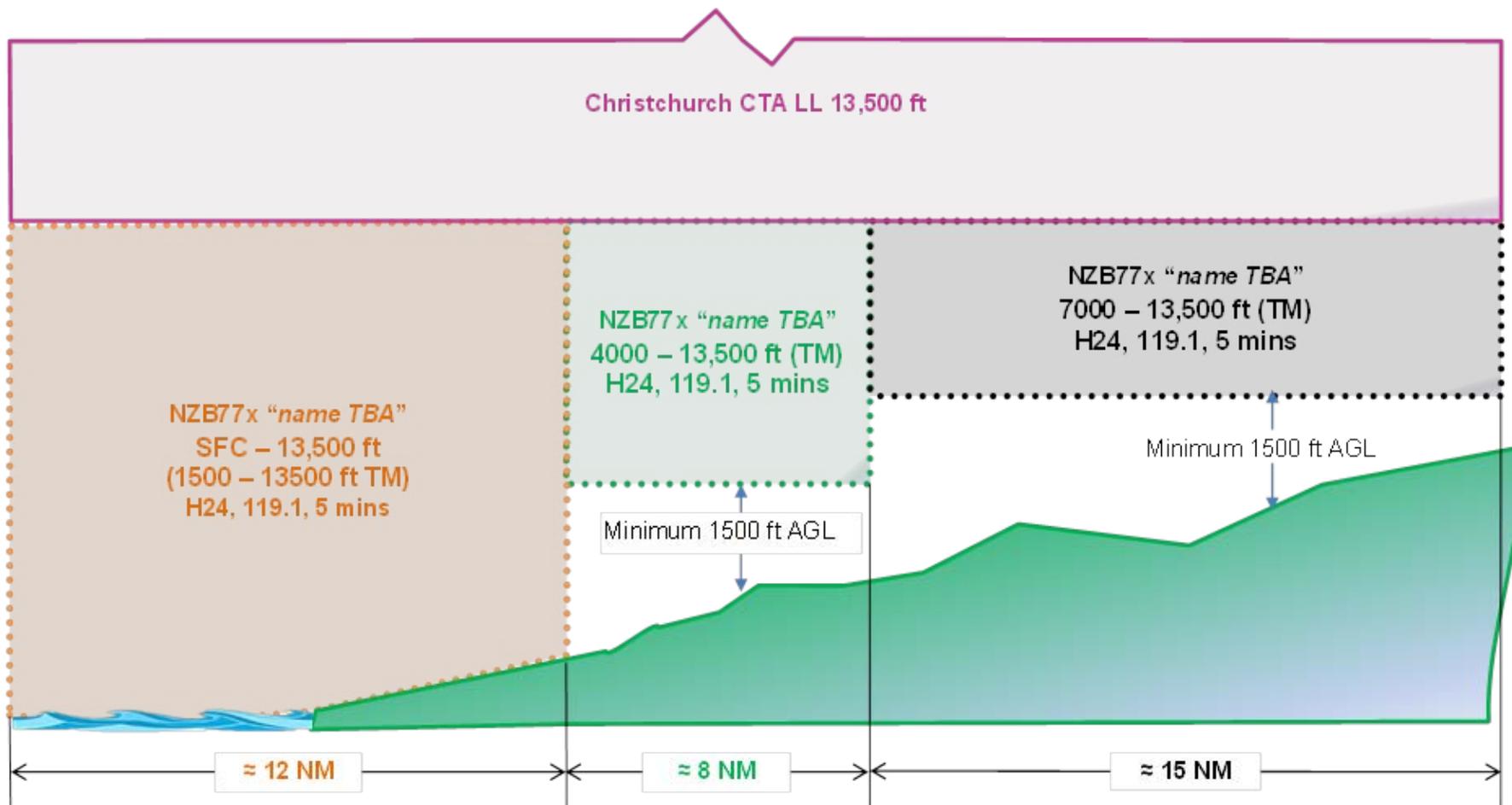


Figure 6 – Hokitika MBZ proposed amendment elevation view