BEFORE THE AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010 – Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan

AND

IN THE MATTER of a Submission on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan.

Submitter: 4931 North Shore Aero Club

Topic/No: 016&017 RUB North/West and RUB South

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF

Joe Herbert Smith

(HISTORY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS)

Dated 16 November 2015

MY FULL NAME IS JOSEPH HERBERT SMITH and I say as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. I am the President and past Manager of the North Shore Aero Club Incorporated (**NSAC**). I was in the Manager role for 4 years. I am authorised by the NSAC to provide this evidence in support of its submissions.

2. The NSAC was established on 26 September 1963 and celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2013. It was originally established as non-profit amateur flying club to provide facilities for its members as an alternative to a long trek to aerodromes and other facilities on the south side of Auckland City.

3. The NSAC owns and operates the North Shore Airport at Postman Road, Dairy Flat, Auckland (**Airport**).

4. I note that due to the nature of its operations (discussed below), the site is officially recognised as an Airport by the Auckland Council (**Council**). Agreement was reached on this issue as part of the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (**PAUP**) process. Accordingly, the site has been referred to as an Airport throughout this process.

5. The Airport is on Lots 1, 2 and 3 on Deposited Plan 80783 and Lots 4 and 5 on Deposited Plan 66352.

6. The Airport is approximately 25km north of the Auckland CBD. Throughout the last 50 years NSAC has grown to be one of the biggest aero clubs in New Zealand. It currently has over 450 members and 207 aircraft registered on the Airport.

7. There are two critical issues in terms of the Airport's operations. First, the NSAC has developed a strong reputation as one of the best places to learn to fly. Therefore the training programme at the Airport is very strong and pilots wishing to learn to fly are heavily involved with the NSAC. Within that training programme, the primary purpose of the NSAC is to provide the best facilities it can for its members, and also to foster aviation and aviation related practices.

8. Secondly, the Airport conduct ever increasing commercial operations –flights to Great barrier with Great Barrier Airlines for example. Commercial operations work very well from the Airport and the NSAC sees great potential for such activities in the future.

9. The economic implications of the Airport's operation cannot be ignored. The Airport is a critical player in the economy of North Auckland and also has the potential for unlocking economic activity in the area and beyond, given the growth north of Auckland.

10. The issues confronting the NSAC and the Airport are set out in the NSAC submission on the notified version of the PAUP. I have reviewed that document again in preparing this evidence, and can confirm the truth and accuracy of the matters recorded therein.

11. Since filing that submission, the NSAC advisers have been reviewing and debating ways to overcome the potential difficulties by what is proposed in the PAUP.

NORTH SHORE AERO PARK

12. The issue with the RUB location is the potential conflict created between the land required for the safe operational use of the Airport, and the desire from the Council to use the land for future urban development.

13. The NSAC has confronted this issue previously in relation to the implementation of Special 17 (North Shore Aero Park) Zone in the Auckland Council District Plan (Rodney Section) 2011 (**Special Zone 17**).

14. This zone has been included in the PAUP under Chapter K5.9 as the Dairy Flat Precinct in more or less same form.

15. A key issue in the formulation of the Special Zone 17 was reaching agreement in advance, about how the land adjacent to the Airport would be developed, together with other controls that were necessary on the new titles on the adjacent land. The primary issues were of course, to avoid any issues of reverse sensitivity arising, particularly from noise, but also from all aspects of the Airport's operations.

16. The new development was called the North Shore Aero Park (**Aero Park**). Eventually, the appeals (on the Plan Change proceedings) were resolved by agreement and the key elements were that:

    a) The nature, intensity and structure of development of the Aero Park was broadly agreed in advance through the implementation of a comprehensive development plan (CDP);

    b) Any changes to that CDP were required to be notified to the NSAC as an effected party so that the NSAC could fully participate in any discussions about whether such alterations ought to be approved or not; and

    c) No complaints covenant (and other controls) were recorded on the new titles within the Aero Park subdivision.

17. These three key measures ensured that NSAC was part of the negotiations to determine the final form of the subdivision, and was regarded as an affected party if there were any changes to that proposal, and the developers agreed in advance that a no complaints covenant could be utilised to sustain the rights of the NSAC, and the operation of the Airport. However even these measures did not prevent operational problems for the airport arising, from ground levels in the subdivision causing flooding of the runway at times. These issues reinforce the need for the airport to be consulted right through the development process.

18. The underlying theme of the settlement was to ensure all parties understood in advance what development could occur, and what controls would be necessary to ensure the sustainable operations of the Airport. It was a comprehensive plan, catching all the land and the new titles created.

19. While the same level of precision could not be replicated in all the land within the RUB proposed for future urban zoning, it would greatly assist future development if a few simple concepts were endorsed.

20. Development of the Aero Park has shown that integrated development, worked out so far as possible in advance is the key. The essential ingredient is for Council to undertake resource consents with the objectives of the zone at the forefront and the operational needs of the airport understood. This has to be done by discussing with NSAC which land aircraft fly over, what is critical to its operations, in particular the training programmes and commercial operations. There also needs to be recognition that, unless all the details of any development are agreed in advance, that NSAC needs to be notified and matters discussed.

21. Finally, some controls (possibly in the form of no complaints covenant) need to be foreshadowed.

22. Accordingly, I believe it is critical to the confirmed survival of the Airport and to ensure sustainable development that the relief proposed in the NSAC planning evidence be adopted.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE AIRPORT

23. Airports play an important role in enabling air transportation. Without airport infrastructure, air movements would not be possible. In New Zealand, aviation plays a crucial role in linking parts of the country, unlocking economic opportunities, and bringing prosperity to all regions. It allows visitors to our country to explore quickly and efficiently parts of the country not on the usual agenda.

24. Besides being a training facility, North Shore Airport plays an important social role by connecting individuals, families and communities from different locations. This facilitates and assists in reducing the isolation of distance.

<u>The importance of NSA to the region</u>.

25. North Shore Airport is an important business contributor. Businesses located in the airport environ support either the Airport or the associated operations thereby assisting the airport systems to operate without interruption. Examples of these are Smith Tec Air, Flightline Aviation, Sport Aircraft Limited, Composite Helicopters, Barrier Air, North Shore Air, North Shore Helicopters, North Shore Helicopters Training Ltd, ME Helicopters, NSAC Flight Training School, Monz Ltd. These firms generate and support business activity locally and outside the region, and need to be protected and enhanced by having an efficient airport system.

26. The airport plays a crucial role in connecting people. With advances in air travel the effective travel time between cities and tourist destinations have decreased. At the core, the social contribution of airports is through increasing travel. The social contributions are in the form of a greater variety and choice taking different forms such as:
    - Greater access to regional performers and artists,
    - More frequent regional sporting events per sporting code and a wider array of multi-region sport competitions,
    - Cultural exchanges allowing communities to access and view more cultural (and art) exhibitions,
    - Greater global exposure of NZ training and education facilities thereby supporting an important industry (i.e. Universities and training institutions)

27. At North Shore Airport these connections are provided through the training of overseas students, travelling to the CBD by helicopter on a daily basis, hosting of aviation enthusiasts, and the movement of people to and from destinations such as Great Barrier Island. The airport also hosts national competitions for precision flying, including competing visitors from overseas.

28. The airport infrastructure supports and enables critical emergency services by allowing critically or injured people to be transported to specialise medical facilities. Three times per week doctors are flown to Northland, to provide specialist services to the region. The airport also transports emergency patients from Northland to be treated at North Shore Hospital.

<u>Economic impact on the region</u>

- The North Shore Airport has an economic impact on the region by its very existence.
- North Shore Aero Club is one of several organisations that operate at the airport.
- Collectively there are 100 people directly employed on the field.
- The airport is continually being upgraded, employing local tradesmen and professionals for small and medium sized contracts amounting to $100,000.00 this last year alone.
- The collective dollar value that the airport generates in the region is in the order of $7,000,000.00 per annum.
- The dollar value that the airport generates from ancillary business is difficult to evaluate, however it is reasonable to assume it would be in the region $4,000,000.00 per annum.
- Composite Helicopters Ltd is the only New Zealand manufacturer of helicopters that have pioneered the building of aircraft using composite materials. The export potential is estimated to be huge.
- The NSAC has plans to develop the airport to accommodate future growth. Due to the advancement in technology and materials making aircraft ever lighter, aircraft will have the ability to operate from smaller regional airports. Public expectation will inevitably put pressure on the airport to provide ever more regional routes.

DATED 16 November 2015.