

Thursday, 31 May 2018

# Former WW2 airfield on market

By **Mark Price** (/author/Mark%20Price)

2472

18

---

[Regions \(/regions\)](#) > [West Coast \(/regions/west-coast\)](#)

---



**The Haast Airfield, built for military purposes in World War 2, is for sale. Photo: Harcourts**

The New Zealand airfield closest to Melbourne and Sydney is for sale.

The Haast Airfield was built as a military air base in the early part of World War 2 and torpedo bombers were stationed there for a time.

The site was chosen for its proximity to Australia.

The Haast Airfield is 2124km from Melbourne - 17km nearer than Invercargill Airport - and 1895km from Sydney - 82km nearer than Hokitika Airport.

Airfield owner Laurie McGuire told the Otago Daily Times yesterday the airfield was used just twice "in anger" - once looking for a Japanese submarine and once for a Japanese ship, neither of which was found.

Mr McGuire said the airfield had an "amazing history" that few knew about.

Those who built it brought five bulldozers by ship into the mouth of the Okuru River to clear and drain the swampy site, next to the Haast River.

They created six vectors so planes could take off in any direction.

Mr McGuire said he had found the big concrete blocks used to secure planes against strong winds.

After the war, de Havilland Dominie aircraft operated by the National Airways Corporation used it until the Haast road was completed in the 1960s.

Since then, it had been little used and was overgrown and swampy when Mr McGuire bought it from helicopter operator Dave Saxton just over two years ago.

Mr McGuire owns the Top 10 Holiday Park in Haast and has re-established the 900m clay and gravel runway and other facilities, including fuel tanks to cater for both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

With Milford Sound and Mt Cook being half an hour by air from the airfield, he believed it had the potential value for a bigger tourist operator to "take it to the next level".

"You can fly to Milford just about 90% of the time where you can't fly out of Wanaka or Queenstown because of fog.

"You can go straight down the coast."

Mr McGuire declined to say what he believed the 13ha property was worth.

[mark.price@odt.co.nz](mailto:mark.price@odt.co.nz) (<mailto:mark.price@odt.co.nz>)

RELATED STORIES

