



Interesting and thought-provoking aspects of the Auditor-General's work and public reports, presented as case studies for teachers and students.

Paraparaumu Aerodrome

The sale of a state-owned aerodrome isn't popular with everyone.

In 1990, the government introduced policies to encourage its departments to sell uneconomic assets. Paraparaumu Aerodrome, run by the Ministry of Transport (MOT), was assessed as being uneconomic and therefore suitable for sale.

In 1995, the government completed the sale to a private owner – but not without controversy. Some community members were concerned that the aerodrome might close after the sale. Questions were also raised about the adequacy of consultation with Māori and former owners of aerodrome land. (Legally, those former owners had the first option to buy back surplus land.)

In the years after the sale, the new owner sold some surplus land, and users again worried about the aerodrome's future. In 2002, they petitioned Parliament to safeguard the airport's long-term viability. As a result, the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) investigated the sale – 10 years after the fact.

This case study covers the options for the aerodrome that the government considered and its approach to balancing its interests with the community's interests. The OAG's findings support students to explore key issues, including the adequacy of the consultation process (in relation to legal and Treaty of Waitangi obligations) and the appropriateness of the sale process. Questions around state versus private ownership of assets form the backdrop to the case study.

Curriculum links

National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

Economics, Level 1	AS 90987 (1.5) – Demonstrate understanding of a government choice where affected groups have different viewpoints
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New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)

Social sciences, Level 6	Economics – Understand that, as a result of scarcity, consumers, producers, and government make choices that affect New Zealand society
Social sciences, Level 7	Economics – Understand how government policies and contemporary issues interact

References

Office of the Auditor-General (2005), *Inquiry into the sale of Paraparaumu Aerodrome by the Ministry of Transport*, Wellington: Office of the Auditor-General.