

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991
SUBMISSION ON PUBLICLY NOTIFIED PLAN CHANGE 48**

SIGNS

TO: QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

AND TO: Queenstown Lakes District Council
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Remarkables Park Limited makes this submission on Plan Change 48: Signs.

1. GENERAL

Explanation

RPL supports the aim of the Plan Change to reduce the current complexity of the District signs provisions and in particular as they relate to the RPZ. However, there are further improvements that can be made to reduce complexity and cost, while retaining the high level of amenity anticipated in the RPZ.

The Plan Change alters the signage provisions as they relate to the RPZ. The Section 32 analysis fails to consider or analyse the effects of the Plan Change on the RPZ. This is discussed further in section 2 below.

The Plan Change fails to recognise that it is the quality of signage that is important, not necessarily the quantity. By retaining the same approach as previously provided in the District Plan; which is to impose a strict set of standards controlling size and location of signs, the Plan Change fails to reduce resource consent requirements. All that is changed is that if a sign fails to comply with the proposed standards, it is discretionary rather than non-complying.

The Plan Change does not address the issue of the quality of signs and their construction and visibility. Instead, the Plan Change principally relates to controlling the installation of the sign, with no regard for the purpose of signs from the viewer's perspective or position. Good signage from a way finding requirement is much more important in a resort town such as Queenstown where the parties benefiting from effective directional signage change frequently and where English may not necessarily be their first language. This makes it important to achieve clarity and simplicity, and more signs rather than less may be an advantage. Against this perspective the quantity of signs as in their size or multiplicity are very secondary issues yet they are the only issues being addressed by the Plan Change.

The signage standards are too inflexible and do not take account of the need to direct people into shops; under veranda signs should be encouraged for that purpose. In addition, the standards fail to recognise and provide for tenancies with more than one entrance.

Other aspects of the Plan Change not supported by RPL are that it:

- does not accord with, or assist the territorial authority to carry out its functions to achieve, the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the "Act");
- does not promote sustainable management;
- does not meet section 32 of the Act;
- does not represent integrated management or sound resource management practice;
- does not implement the settled objectives and policies of the RPZ;
- is not the most appropriate method for achieving the objectives of the District Plan having regard to its efficiency and effectiveness, and taking into account the costs and benefits.

Relief sought:

1. Amend the Plan Change so that it reflects the importance of the quality of signage, rather than the number of signs, and their size.
2. Amend the Plan Change so that it is effective in reducing the need to make applications for resource consents for signage.
3. Amend the signs plan change to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Amend the Section 32 analysis so that it considers and analyses the effects of the Plan Change on RPZ.
5. Any further and consequential relief to give effect to this submission

2. SIGNAGE RULES FOR THE RPZ

Explanation

The purpose of the Plan Change is to 'simplify and streamline' the signage provisions within the District Plan. However, as proposed, the plan change will result in a significant 'double up' in resource consent requirements for buildings and signage within the RPZ.

All buildings require at least controlled activity consent within the RPZ, and approval by the Design Review Board (DRB). As currently provided by Plan Change 48, this is in addition to a separate consent for signage. The signage provisions apply a set of standards depending on which activity area the signage is located.

Double-up of consent requirements

RPZ is a mixed use zone providing for a range of activities. All buildings within the RPZ require a controlled activity consent. The matters over which control is reserved include external appearance, relation to roads, and effects on landscape and visual amenity. Any building over 500m² in size must be assessed by a DRB. If an application has not been assessed by a DRB it triggers non-complying activity consent. The terms of reference for the DRB require that signage is included on elevations, ensuring that it is assessed as part of the building design.

Signage is an important component of the external appearance of a building, and is appropriately assessed at the time the external appearance is assessed. As currently drafted, the signage rules require a two-step approach to signage approval; first obtain approval for the building (controlled activity) then apply for signage (under the new rules, likely to be discretionary). It would be more

efficient, and beneficial from an environmental outcomes perspective, if signage were assessed as part of the building application in a single, integrated manner. As currently drafted, it will be preferable for the developer to apply for signage once consent has been issued for the building. Otherwise the activity status for the building becomes discretionary rather than controlled.

Requiring an additional resource consent for signage, when all buildings require consent in any case, is an unnecessary double-up and adds complexity and cost. That outcome is the antithesis of the stated objective of the Plan Change.

Consistency between Special Zones

Jacks Point and Mount Cardrona Station are special zones, providing a range of activities. For the Mount Cardrona Station and Jacks Point zones all signage that complies with the design guidelines is a controlled activity. There is no list of standards that apply across the different uses or activity areas, instead, the same signage rules apply to the activity areas identified for residential, as those that apply to the areas identified for village or commercial activities. This approach reflects the controls placed on all buildings (including signage) and the need to provide flexibility for the range of potential uses.

In order to achieve a consistent approach for Special Zones, it is submitted that the RPZ should be managed in a similar way to Mount Cardrona Station and Jacks Point. This also reflects the fact that applying a complex range of standards against which to determine compliance is not appropriate for a mixed use zone.

Current standards applying to a mixed use zone

The rules proposed by the Plan Change provide separately for Activity Areas 3, 5 and 8, identifying these as commercial areas; whereas Activity Areas 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 are identified as residential areas.

However, each of the Activity Areas in the RPZ provide for a range of activities, and while Areas 3 and 5 do provide primarily for commercial activities, the other activity areas provide a range of activities far broader than residential, and these activities have different signage requirements. This range of uses is not provided for by the proposed rules.

For example, Activity Area 6 provides for hospitals, residential, commercial recreation activities, educational activities, health and day care facilities, and visitor accommodation, all as controlled activities. It is unrealistic to expect that commercial recreation activities will have the same signage requirements as residential activities. However, as currently drafted, the rules would require that a sign greater than 0.5m² for a commercial recreation activity in Activity Area 6 would require discretionary activity consent, when the activity and building require controlled activity consent.

Conclusion

Given the mixed use nature of the RPZ, and the fact that design and external appearance is controlled via resource consent for all buildings, and the DRB process, it is submitted that the rules as currently proposed are not effective, and nor are they efficient. Instead, the controlled activity rule for all buildings should be relied upon for ensuring appropriate signage. This is consistent with the Jacks Point and Mount Cardrona Station special zones.

Relief sought

1. That all signage in the RPZ is assessed as part of the controlled activity resource consent for the building.
2. That signage platforms are approved at the time of any resource consent for the building. Any signage within a signage platform is a permitted activity.

2. RULES FOR MIXED USE NON RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES, E.G. VISITOR ACCOMMODATION – SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Explanation

Further to the comments above regarding the signage provisions as they relate to the RPZ, these comments use visitor accommodation in the RPZ as an example of the application of the rules, identifying the problems with the provisions as currently proposed.

Within Activity Areas 3, 5 and 8 all signs located within the Ground Floor Area of a building which do not cumulatively exceed a total area of 15% of the Ground area a controlled activity. Above ground floor signs are also allowed, as long as they are less than 2m². Any sign that doesn't comply with these standards is Discretionary.

However, within Activity Areas 4, 6 and 7, where visitor accommodation is also a controlled activity, visitor accommodation can have no more than two signs, one identifying the Visitor accommodation and measuring no more than 2m² in area and the other containing only the words "No" and "Vacancy" and measuring no more than 0.15m² in area.

This creates inconsistency and complexity where it is not needed. The proposed rules also fail to take into account the fact that a building may have a mix of uses, and reinforces the issue that a set of rules for a residential zone should not be applied to the RPZ, which is mixed use.

It is unclear as to how the visitor accommodation rules relate to Table 4, which seems to apply to all zones. For example, do free standing signage rules apply to visitor accommodation? Or is visitor accommodation limited by the number of signs allowed by Table 2?

In summary, the plan change needs amendment to correct anomalies, and provide greater clarity. Its drafting fails to recognise and provide for the mix of activities and uses enabled by the Remarkables Park zone. The amount of signage allowed for various activities, using visitor accommodation as one example, demonstrate that the Plan Change as currently drafted fails to provide an efficient and effective mechanism for managing the effects of signs.

Relief sought

1. That all signage in the RPZ is assessed as part of the resource consent for the building.
2. That signage platforms are approved at the time of any resource consent for the building. Any signage within a signage platform is a permitted activity.

SUBMISSION 3- REMOVAL OF THE SIGNS BYLAW – SECTION 32 ANALYSIS

Explanation:

The removal of the Signs Bylaw has implications that do not appear to have been assessed. It is understood that the Signs Bylaw was put in place to better enable enforcement, provide certainty, and enable greater efficiency. A signs permit is much cheaper than resource consent, and can be better enforced.

Relief sought:

The public notice for the Plan Change identifies that the signs bylaw has been discontinued. Explanation and consideration of the implications of this change need to be provided.

Remarkables Park Limited wishes to be heard in support of this submission.

REMARKABLES PARK LIMITED

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Carter', is written over a solid black horizontal line.

Jenny Carter
9 April 2014