

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan –
Chapter 21 – Rural, Hearing Stream T02.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE - SEAN DENT ON BEHALF OF NZSKI LIMITED

(#572)

Dated: 25th May 2016

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My name is Sean Dent. I am a resource management planning consultant with Southern Planning Group and I am here today presenting expert planning evidence on behalf of NZSki Limited. My primary evidence has already been pre-circulated in accordance with the directions of the Hearings Chairman.
- 1.2. The primary matters which have been addressed in my pre-circulated evidence relate to three separate areas of the PDP. Specifically, the Definitions section in respect of Ski Area Activities and Public Conservation Land, the provisions for activities in Ski Area Sub-Zones in Chapter 21 and the provisions for clearance of indigenous vegetation in Alpine Environments in Chapter 33.
- 1.3. I have considerable experience in the application of the District Plan provisions with respect to development and vegetation clearance in the Ski Area Sub-Zones. Specifically, I have prepared and overseen the processing of 11 ORC consent applications, 9 QLDC consent applications and two notified DOC Concession applications for works in and in close proximity to the Remarkables Ski Area since 2011.
- 1.4. In my experience the Operative provisions for buildings and passenger lift systems have worked appropriately and afforded NZSki Limited with sufficient certainty to embark upon large scale re-development whilst remaining cognisant of the Council's matters of control. I am not aware of any significant issues that have arisen in the processing of their respective resource consents with the QLDC or concerns raised post their development in terms of adverse landscape effects. As such, I support the retention of these provisions which the Council has "rolled over" in the PDP.
- 1.5. In my opinion, only minor modifications are required to the provisions as notified to recognise and provide for the year round use of the Ski Area Sub-Zones for Ski Area Activities but also appropriately scaled Commercial, Commercial Recreation and Visitor Accommodation Activities. I consider that allowing a diversified year round use of these areas (subject to control over the scale nature and intensity of such use) is a more efficient use of these consolidated hubs of alpine infrastructure. I also note that such matters are recognised in the Proposed CMS 2015-2025 which is currently before the Conservation Authority for final sign off.

- 1.6. In regards to Indigenous Vegetation Clearance I have identified in appendix [B] of my primary evidence that NZSki Limited in particular has extensive protocols in place with the DOC in respect to terrain modification and indigenous vegetation clearance. Further, through the Concession applications I have been involved in the DOC are provided with comprehensive ecological assessments of the impacts of any proposed works. When the QLDC consents are sought, these same assessments are provided to Council and DOC's affected party approval will stipulate compliance with these protocols or the conditions derived from them on the relevant Concession. Council in my experience then tend to proceed and accept this expert advice and issue consents that replicate these conditions.
- 1.7. In my opinion, this is an inefficient process with no net benefit for indigenous biodiversity values. As such, I support a Permitted Activity status for vegetation clearance in Ski Area Sub-Zones on Public Conservation Land. Whilst DOC initially opposed this position, I met with the Operations Manager and later liaised with their planner Mr Geoff Deavoll and explained NZSki Limited's position in detail. With a more detailed explanation DOC have now agreed to the withdrawal of their opposing submission on this matter.
- 1.8. I am aware that the Hearings Panel requested the Council to consider wording for a Permitted Activity Rule as I have suggested on behalf of NZSki Limited and I have read their memorandum dated 16 May 2016. With respect I don't consider the proposed wording to be appropriate for a Permitted Activity. Specifically, parts (b) and (b) require the submission of information to the Council and relies on the satisfaction of the Council as to the quality of the Concession application and the assessment of effects.
- 1.9. There is no certainty in that proposed rule for ski field operators and no efficiency if documentation must still be submitted to the Council for some form of approval. I therefore consider that my proposed Permitted Activity Rule described at paragraph 164 of my evidence is more appropriate as it is concise, clear and efficient.
- 1.10. I am happy to answer questions from the Panel that are within my area of expertise.