

**Before Independent Commissioners appointed by
The Queenstown Lakes District Council**

In the Matter of

the Resource Management
Act 1991 (**Act**)

And

In the Matter of

Variation to the Proposed
District Plan: Priority
Landscape Schedules

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SCOTT ANTHONY FREEMAN (PLANNING)
ON BEHALF OF TREESPACE NO.1 LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (SUBMITTER #96)**

11 SEPTEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Scott Anthony Freeman. I reside in Queenstown. I am a Director of Southern Planning Group Limited, a Queenstown based resource management planning consultancy. I hold the degree of Bachelor of Planning from the University of Auckland. I have 26 years' experience in the field of resource management planning.
2. I have previously worked for the Queenstown Lakes District Council and later Civic Corporation Limited from 1997–1999. During this period I was employed as a consents planner responsible for processing a variety of land use and subdivision consents on behalf of the Council.
3. Since late 1999, I have been practising as a resource management planning consultant, primarily within the Queenstown Lakes District. I formed Southern Planning Group in 2003.
4. Throughout my professional career, I have been involved in a range of resource consent and policy matters. I have made numerous appearances in front of various district and regional councils and the Environment Court.
5. From the variety of working roles that I have performed as described in the preceding paragraphs, I have acquired a sound knowledge and experience of the resource management planning issues that are faced in the Queenstown area and the wider District. I have prepared and overseen numerous subdivision and development proposals for land contained in the rural zones within the Queenstown rural environment, both under the Operative and Proposed District Plans.

Code of Conduct

6. Whilst this is not an Environment Court hearing I confirm I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014 and that I have complied with it when preparing my evidence. Other than when I state I am relying on the advice of another person, this evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to

consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

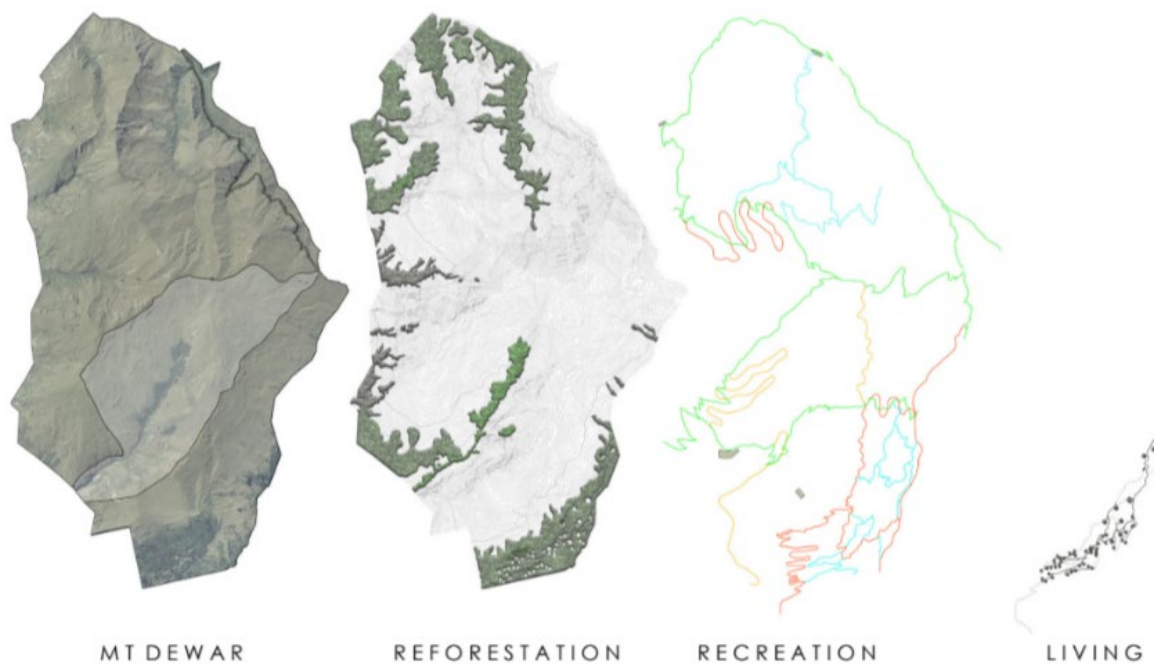
7. This Statement of Evidence is prepared on behalf of Treespace No.1 Limited Partnership (The Submitter). The submitter lodged a submission on the Variation to the Proposed District Plan (PDP): Priority Area Landscape Schedules (The Variation). This submission related directly to the Central Wakatipu Basin Priority Area ONL (21.22.15). The submission has the reference number of 96.
8. The topics covered in my evidence are as follows:
 - a. The Submitters land
 - b. Resource Management Planning Background
 - c. Central Wakatipu Basin Priority Area ONL (21.22.15)
 - d. Conclusion

THE SUBMITTERS LAND

9. The submitter is the owner of the land that is contained within Mt Dewar Station (Mt Dewar). Mt Dewar encompasses 1,768 hectares of land that adjoins the residential settlement of Arthurs Point and is also bounded by Coronet Peak Road, Skippers Road, and the Shotover River.
10. The legal description of the land contained within Mt Dewar is described as Section 2-6 Survey Office Plan 24648 and Section 1 Survey Office Plan 345973 and Lot 7 Deposited Plan 477149 and Lot 2 Deposited Plan 481806.
11. Mt Dewar is contained within the 'Central Wakatipu Basin Priority Area ONL' (21.22.15) in terms of the Variation to the PDP.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING BACKGROUND

12. The submitter (via Treespace Queenstown Limited) obtained resource consent (RM181638) that authorised a comprehensive undertaking for the land contained within Mt Dewar (the Treespace development).
13. RM181638 involved the re-establishment of a beech forest on Mt Dewar, together with regenerating the balance of the property.
14. The subdivision associated with RM181638 also allowed for the future development of 37 small footprint cabin sites, 10 large chalet sites, a lodge site, an amenity building and associated infrastructure and four landscape encampments across the back-country zone. Aside from the encampments, all of the building development proposed would be located on the lower part of the front faces, to the north of Arthurs Point village and west of Coronet Peak Road. The front faces are within the smaller portion of the property south of the Devils Creek Conservation Area.
15. The consent holder is currently in the process of giving effect to RM181638, including the establishment over 70 hectares of beech trees on the front Wakatipu-face of Mt Dewar, removal of wilding pines, pest eradication, and finally, civil works.
16. The plan below illustrates the area of land to be reforested, recreation areas and finally the land that can be developed in accordance with RM181638.



CENTRAL WAKATIPU BASIN PRIORITY AREA ONL (21.22.15)

17. The submission requested a number of changes to the text contained within the Central Wakatipu Basin Priority Area ONL (CWB-PA), and in particular to the capacity ratings for this area.
18. It is noted that Ms Yvonne Pfluger (landscape architect) provided direct input into the Submitters submission. I also note that Ms Pfluger was the landscape architect who provided landscape evidence for the Treespace development on Mt Dewar. Due to the unavailability of Ms Pfluger (she is presently overseas), Mr Steve Skelton will instead provide landscape evidence for the submitter. Mr Skelton has also worked on the Treespace development in a professional capacity.
19. In summary, the Submitter requested changes and additions to the following in terms of the notified version of the CWB-PA:
 - a. Point 21
 - b. Point 65

- c. Point 69
 - d. Point 75
 - e. Point 76
 - f. Point 81
 - g. Amendments to various ratings within the Landscape Capacity, namely when dealing with visitor accommodation and tourism related activities, earthworks, renewable energy generation, and finally rural living.
20. I have reviewed the recommended changes to the CWB-PA as promulgated by Ms Gilbert on behalf of the Council, and note that Ms Gilbert has either accepted (in part or in full) or rejected the Submitters recommended changes. The recommendation changes by Ms Gilbert have been adopted by the author of the Section 42A Report, Ms Ruth Evans.
21. Mr Skelton and I have reviewed the latest recommended version of the CWB-PA. Following on from this assessment, we have produced another version of the CWB-PA, with this document being contained within Mr Skelton's evidence. The following comments are made in relation to the points raised in the Submitters submission.

Point 21 (Important Land-use patterns and features)

22. In relation to Point 21, Ms Gilbert has added the following text (underlined):

Built development patterning which includes a ~~very~~ limited scattering of rural and rural living dwellings around the margins of Arthurs Point; the scattering of small-scale rural living and visitor accommodation development (including commercial recreation uses, cabins, chalets, amenity facilities and a lodge) within regenerating beech forest ~~at~~ across the lower southern slopes of Mount Dewar along with approximately 50km of publicly accessible hiking and biking trails; and the occasional farm building or dwelling towards the eastern end of the unit (adjacent the southern boundary of the PA). Generally, development is characterised by

very carefully located and designed buildings that are well integrated by plantings and remain subservient to the more 'natural' landscape patterns. Elsewhere, the modest scale of buildings, together with their distinctly working rural character and sparse arrangement, ensures that they sit comfortably into the setting.

23. Mr Skelton and I are comfortable with the recommended changes that Ms Gilbert has promoted in terms of Point 21, as such largely reflect the recommended changes as contained within the Submitters submission.
24. However, Mr Skelton has recommended that the word 'very' (double strikethrough) is deleted when referring to the scattering of rural and rural living dwellings around the margins of Arthurs Point.
25. In Mr Skelton's opinion, the entirety of the Treespace development combined with other existing rural living development within the CWB-PA, means in his view that the existing and consented rural living development is limited as opposed to very limited. I agree with this opinion.

Point 65 (Naturalness attributes and values)

26. In relation to Point 65, Ms Gilbert has added the following text (underlined text):

The 'seemingly' undeveloped character of Central Whakatipu Basin PA ONL set within an urban (Arthurs Point and Arrowtown) or mixed working rural and rural living (Whakatipu Basin) context, which conveys a relatively high perception of naturalness. While modifications related to its forestry, pastoral (including farm buildings, rural dwellings, ponds, fencing, tracks, shelterbelts and the like), rural living/visitor accommodation (including the consented development across the lower southern slopes of Mount Dewar), recreational (including the ski area and access road), and infrastructure uses are visible, the sheer scale of the continuous high mountain-scape and extent of restoration planting that forms part of the consented development at Mount Dewar recreational, and infrastructure uses are visible, the sheer scale of the continuous high mountain-scape

ensures that, for the most part, these elements remain subservient to more natural landscape elements, patterns, and processes.

27. Mr Skelton and I are generally comfortable with the recommended changes that Ms Gilbert has promoted for Point 65, as such largely reflect the recommended changes as contained within the Submitters submission, However, Mr Skelton has recommended the following additional changes (double strikethrough/bold underline):

The ~~'seemingly' undeveloped~~ predominantly open character of Central Whakatipu Basin PA ONL is set adjacent to an urban (Arthurs Point and Arrowtown) or mixed working rural and rural living (Whakatipu Basin) context, which conveys a relatively high perception of naturalness. While modifications related to its forestry, pastoral (including farm buildings, rural dwellings, ponds, fencing, tracks, shelterbelts and the like) rural living/visitor accommodation (including the consented development across the lower southern slopes of Mount Dewar), recreational (including the ski area and access road), and infrastructure uses are visible, the sheer scale of the continuous high mountain-scape and extent of restoration planting that forms part of the consented development at Mount Dewar recreational, and infrastructure uses are visible, the sheer scale of the continuous high mountain-scape ensures that, for the most part, these elements remain subservient to more natural landscape elements, patterns, and processes.

28. It is proposed that the text 'seemingly undeveloped' is sought to be removed and replaced with 'predominantly open character'. I agree with Mr Skelton, in that due to the existing/consented development described above, plus all the activities associated with the Coronet Ski Area and the various hiking and mountain bike tracks, that the CWB-PA is not seemingly undeveloped, and that human modification is clearly evident.
29. Mr Skelton also seeks to acknowledge that the CWB-PA is set 'adjacent to' rather than 'within an urban (Arthurs Point and Arrowtown) or mixed working rural and rural living (Whakatipu Basin) context'. I agree with the rationale as promoted by Mr Skelton for this recommended change.

Point 69 (Memorability attributes and values)

30. In relation to Point 69, Ms Gilbert considered the Submitters submission, however, no changes were made to this point.
31. Mr Skelton and I consider there is merit to alter Point 69 as follows (double strikethrough/bold underline):

The appealing and engaging views of the continuous ~~'wall—of'~~ mountains framing the north side of the Whakatipu Basin and the interplay of the mountain's humps and hollows with diurnal and seasonal variations from a wide variety of public vantage points. The juxtaposition of the large-scale and continuous ~~rugged~~ mountain sequence beside the basin landform, along with the magnificent broader mountain and lake context within which it is seen in many views, are also factors that contribute to its memorability.

32. Mr Skelton does not consider that the CWB-PA reads as a 'wall of mountains', rather this landform is continuous mountains that frame this northern side of the Wakatipu Basin. Mr Skelton also suggests the addition of the words 'and the interplay of the mountains humps and hollows with diurnal and seasonal variations'. Unlike the examples that Mr Skelton refers to when dealing with a wall of mountains (for example, the Remarkables and certain parts of Gorge Road), I agree that the CWB-PA forms a continuous mountain form, but is not a 'wall' when compared to the other examples. The addition of 'humps and hollows' as proposed by Mr Skelton also reflects the true landform characteristics of this area.

Points 75 & 76 (Remoteness and wildness attributes)

33. In relation to Point 75, Ms Gilbert has recommended the following changes (underline):

A strong sense of remoteness across the northern slopes at the western end of the PA and at the north-eastern ends of the PA despite their respective proximity to Arthurs Point and Arrowtown, due to the

contained nature of the area and the limited level of built development evident.

34. However, in Mr Skelton's opinion, there is a more limited sense of remoteness, as opposed to a strong sense of remoteness. As such, it is considered that Point 75 should be amended as follows (double strikethrough/bold underline):

~~A limited sense of remoteness attributed to the PA's proximity to and accessibility from Arthurs Point, Arrowtown and the wider Whakatipu Basin and its associated recreation and tourism based activities. The vast network of popular trails, the presence of Coronet Peak Road, Skipper Road, the Coronet Peak Ski Area and other uses such as white-water rafting, off-roading, paragliding, mountain biking, hiking and skiing, reduce the PA's remoteness values, particularly during peak seasonal use. The PA's northern slopes, upper ridges and summits (excluding Coronet Peak) the western end of the PA (near Devils Creek) and the eastern end of the PA (north of Bush Creek) provide for a slightly higher remoteness values. strong sense of remoteness across the northern slopes at the western end of the PA and at the north-eastern ends of the PA despite their respective proximity to Arthurs Point and Arrowtown, due to the contained nature of the area and the limited level of built development evident.~~

35. Mr Skelton does not agree that the CWB-PA has a strong sense of remoteness. This opinion is based on the accessibility of the area plus the associated network of recreation and tourism activities/infrastructure. I agree, while there are some remoteness attributes and values in certain areas of the CWB-PA, it is not a strong sense of remoteness. I consider that Point 75 should be altered as proposed by Mr Skelton.
36. In relation to Point 76, Ms Gilbert has made the following changes (underlined):

A sense of wildness across much of the PA as a consequence of the large scale and continuity of the majestic mountain range framing the northern side of the basin along with its generally 'undeveloped' and in places, seemingly unkempt character. The contrast with the 'settled' and more manicured character of the basin plays an important role in this regard. Such feelings are lesser in the parts of the PA where forestry

and the ski field/access road are located and across the lower southern slopes of Mount Dewar where rural living and visitor accommodation development is consented.

37. Mr Skelton has reviewed the amendments to Point 76, and considers the follows changes should be made (double strikeout/bold underlined):

A limited sense of wildness across ~~much~~ parts of the PA as a consequence of the large scale and continuity of the ~~majestic~~ mountain range framing the northern side of the basin along with its generally ~~'undeveloped'~~ open and in places, ~~seemingly unkempt~~ rugged character. The contrast with the 'settled' and more manicured character of the basin plays an important role in this regard. Such ~~feelings~~ wildness attributes and values are lesser in the parts of the PA where forestry, ~~and the ski field~~ area/access road, Skipper Road and mountain bike tracks and other recreation uses such as paragliding are ~~located~~ present and across the lower, southern slopes of Mount Dewar where rural living and visitor accommodation development is consented

38. I agree with the opinion of Mr Skelton that the CWB-PA has a limited sense of wildness.
39. Mr Skelton also considers that unlike say the Remarkables, Cecil Peak and Walter Peak, that the CWB-PA is not majestic, and that 'rugged' should be used instead of 'unkempt'. I agree with both these observations.

Point 81 (Summary of Landscape Values)

40. In relation to Point 81(c), Ms Gilbert has recommended no changes to the following values:

A moderate-high to high perception of naturalness arising from the dominance of natural landscape elements and patterns across the PA.

41. On the other hand, Mr Skelton has recommended the following changes to this value (double strikethrough/bold underlined):

A moderate-high to high perception of naturalness arising from the dominance of natural landscape elements and patterns in parts of the

PA which are not affected by forestry, ski area activity, or other tourism and recreational activities across the PA.

42. I agree with the recommended changes as proposed by Mr Skelton, in that the naturalness in certain areas of the CWB-PA is reduced by forestry, ski area activity and other tourism and recreational activities such as paragliding, mountain biking, hiking, sightseeing and off-roading.

43. In relation to Point 81 (d), Ms Gilbert has recommended the following changes:

A strong sense of remoteness and wildness throughout the north facing slopes at the western end and the north-eastern portions of the PA.

44. Mr Skelton has amended Point 81(d) as follows (double strikeout/bold underlined):

A ~~strong~~ sense of remoteness and wildness can be experienced in parts of the PA including the ridges and summits, the western area near Devils Creek and the beech forest clad slopes and gullies north of Bush Creek. ~~throughout the north facing slopes at the western end and the north-eastern portions of the PA.~~

45. Mr Skelton does not consider that the CWB-PA has a strong sense of remoteness or wildness, and such factors are only experienced on the ridges summits, in the western area near Devils Creek and the beech forest clad slopes and gullies north of Bush Creek.

Landscape Capacity

46. As stated above, the Submitters submission recommended changes to the landscape capacity ratings when dealing with visitor accommodation and tourism related activities, earthworks, renewable energy generation, and finally rural living.

Visitor Accommodation and tourism related activities

47. Mr Skelton and I accept the changes to visitor accommodation as proposed by Ms Gilbert.

48. In the Treespace submission, it was requested that there be limited capacity (as opposed to no capacity) for tourism related activities. As noted by Ms Evans in the Section 42A report, 'tourism related activities' do not have a PDP definition, and that such a land use is captured by the PDP definition of 'Resort', which is defined as:

Means an integrated and planned development involving low average density of residential development (as a proportion of the developed area) principally providing temporary visitor accommodation and forming part of an overall development focused on onsite visitor activities.

49. While I consider it best practice to define a certain activity, I do not consider that a tourism related activity comfortably sits under the umbrella definition of a 'resort'. While I am not opposed to labelling this activity as a resort, the better approach might be to just delete tourism related activities from the landscape capacity ratings, because other categories capture activities such as visitor accommodation and commercial recreational activities (which in my opinion are tourism related activities).

Earthworks

50. Mr Skelton and I are generally comfortable with the amendments proposed by Ms Gilbert. However, Mr Skelton has deleted 'very' from the capacity rating for earthworks associated with farming, existing recreational facilities, consented rural living and visitor accommodation development or public tracks, with this change indicated below (double strikethrough):

Earthworks – ~~very limited~~ landscape capacity for earthworks associated with farming, existing recreational facilities, consented rural living and visitor accommodation development, or public access tracks, that protect naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values and are sympathetically designed to integrate with natural landform patterns. Some landscape capacity for earthworks associated with the Coronet Peak Ski Area that protect naturalness and expressiveness attributes and

values; and are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing natural landform patterns.

51. Mr Skelton addresses this recommended change in his evidence.

Renewable energy generation

52. Mr Skelton and I are generally comfortable with the amendments proposed by Ms Gilbert. However, we consider that there should be further clarification for 'community' energy generation. As such, we recommend the following amendment (double strikethrough/bold underline):

Renewable energy generation – no landscape capacity for large scale renewable energy developments. ~~Very Limited~~ landscape capacity for discreetly located community and small-scale renewable energy generation. A community scheme means a scheme that supplies 100 or less residential dwellings.

53. Mr Skelton addresses this recommended change in his evidence. Defining what a community scheme is provides significantly more certainty in my opinion.

Rural living

54. Mr Skelton and I are comfortable with the amendments proposed by Ms Gilbert. S

CONCLUSION

55. Mr Skelton and I acknowledge the proactiveness of Ms Gilbert in recommending a number of changes that affect the CWB-PA. These changes, coupled with the further changes proposed by Mr Skelton and I will in my opinion, give effect to the strategic objectives and policies in Chapter 3 of the PDP.