

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER of the review of parts of the Queenstown Lakes District Council's District Plan under the First Schedule of the Act

AND

IN THE MATTER of submissions and further submissions by **REMARKABLES PARK LIMITED AND QUEENSTOWN PARK LIMITED**

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN KENNETH BROWN ON BEHALF OF
REMARKABLES PARK LIMITED AND QUEENSTOWN PARK LIMITED**

(LANDSCAPE EFFECTS)

STREAM 13 REZONING HEARINGS

4 September 2017

**BROOKFIELDS
LAWYERS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Stephen Kenneth Brown. My qualifications and experience are as set out in my EIC, and this statement has been prepared on behalf of Remarkables Park Ltd (**RPL**) and Queenstown Park Ltd (**QPL**). It briefly summarises my EIC, but also refers to recent changes to the proposed Queenstown Park Special Zone (**QPSZ**) provisions to address matters raised by Helen Mellsop.

2. MY EVIDENCE

2.1 My statement addresses the landscape implications of the two interrelated projects that would be accommodated by the proposed QPSZ provisions:

- (a) A gondola system running for some 10km from the Remarkables Park Zone, near Queenstown Airport, down the Kawarau River valley, then up the northern side of The Remarkables to The Remarkables Ski Area; and
- (b) The creation of a series of nodes designed to accommodate both tourism / visitor activities and rural-residential development – to be located on the southern side of the Kawarau River, extending from near Lake Hayes Estate and past Morven Hill, towards Chard Farm.

2.2 I have assessed the landscape implications of these proposals bearing in mind that The Remarkables Range and, in particular, its serrated line of west aligned peaks and slopes facing Queenstown, is one of NZ's truly iconic landscape features and statements. This status is reflected in the delineation of an ONL across the range – both within the Operative and Proposed District Plans – that extends towards Lake Wakatipu and northwards, across the Kawarau River to the margins of the recently developed Shotover Country and Lake Hayes residential estates.

2.3 My assessment of effects addresses the degree to which both the proposed gondola scheme and the combined tourism / rural-residential development concepts would affect The Remarkables, the Kawarau River valley and the ONL that embraces them jointly.

2.4 Importantly, the gondola project would not affect the iconic, western faces of The Remarkables, but would instead focus on the Kawarau River valley and the range's more peripheral, northern slopes around the Rastus Burn stream catchment. These extend upwards to culminate in the existing Remarkables Ski Area. The various

tourism and rural-residential nodes proposed would primarily occupy the terraces next to the Kawarau River, well below the main slopes of the northern Remarkables.

- 2.5 The gondola proposal has the potential to affect a large number of receiving environments and a broad range of both public and private audiences. However, because of various environmental factors pertaining to the gondola's location, its landscape setting and backdrop, and the nature of its key structural elements, this does not translate into a high level of visibility or effects. Instead, the gondola would have a low to very low level of impact on most areas conceivably exposed to the system. Viewed at quite close range – from areas including Lake Hayes Estate and the Arrowtown / Gibbston Valley cycle trail – it would remain a relatively lightweight, even ephemeral, component of the Kawarau River valley. Even where elevated well above the river corridor, traversing the higher slopes that flank the Rastus Burn, the gondola system would float relatively lightly above its alpine setting and would have little impact on public perception and appreciation of The Remarkables.
- 2.6 The proposed RV and RR development areas would be more substantial. Yet, they would also be more discretely located within the river corridor below The Remarkables' main slopes and more elevated tussock grasslands. As such, they would primarily impact productive rural land close to the river and would – with the exception of the RV3 tourist village – be substantially buffered from most areas of significant public activity. Although visible from Lake Hayes Estate, in particular, views of the proposed tourist village would frequently be contextualised by the existing residential properties and dwellings next to most vantage points. Existing riverside trees, terrace banks above and lining the Kawarau River, together with a range of other factors, would further contribute to both screening of the proposed development and its integration into parts of the valley landscape that become increasingly enclosed and difficult to access – both visually and physically – as one progresses towards Chard Farm.

3. REVISED PROVISIONS

- 3.1 In my EIC, I also state that I feel the proposed QPSZ provisions offer Council the means to achieve integration of this development into its landscape setting. However, in this regard I must acknowledge some of the concerns raised by Ms Mellsop – both in her Rebuttal Statement and at the expert conferencing with myself and Rebecca Skidmore. This has resulted in recent amendments to the proposed provisions – most notably to Rule 44.4.8 addressing activities within the Rural Visitor Activity Areas and RR3, and the development of additional criteria for subdivision under Rule 27.5.7. From my point of view, these changes address the gaps identified by Ms Mellsop.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Ms Mellsop has raised a number of concerns about both proposals and has taken issue with some of my assessment findings in her Rebuttal Evidence. I have responded to the concerns raised by Ms Mellsop in my own Supplementary Statement and, in particular, I have acknowledged those that pertain to the proposed QPSZ rules, as described above.
- 4.2 Even so, it would be fair to say that Ms Mellsop and myself have 'agreed to continue to disagree' in relation to some of my findings. Notwithstanding some of the points raised by Ms Mellsop, it therefore remains my opinion that the QPL proposals must inevitably alter parts of the landscape in the vicinity of the northern Remarkables – more so in closer proximity to the Kawarau River – but that such changes would occur without degrading or appreciably eroding the core values associated with The Remarkables ONL. As such, it remains my view that the combined QPL / RPL proposals is acceptable from a landscape standpoint.

Stephen Brown

4 September 2017