

**BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL APPOINTED BY THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Under of the Resource Management Act
1991

In the Matter of a request under clause 21 of the
First Schedule to the Act for a
Change to the Queenstown Lakes
Proposed District Plan (Private Plan
Change 1)

By **THE HILLS RESORT LIMITED**

**Evidence of Emma Jane Hill for The Hills
Resort Limited**

Dated: 13 March 2026

INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Emma Jane Hill. I am a director of The Hills Limited, The Hills Holdings Limited and The Hills Resort Limited, which are the partnership entities responsible for The Hills golf club and the development of The Hills residential and visitor accommodation. I am also a director of Trojan Helmet Limited and Boxer Hill Trust the land owner of the Resort Zone land surrounding the Golf Course.
2. My family has owned and cared for this land for several decades. My parents, Sir Michael and Lady Christine Hill, gradually assembled the property beginning in the 1980s after falling in love with the Arrowtown area while on holiday. Over time they expanded the landholding and began shaping the landscape that is now known as The Hills.
3. My evidence provides context for the proposed plan change from the perspective of the landowner and outlines the evolution of The Hills and the reasons the Hills Resort Zone structure plan now requires refinement.
4. I am authorised to give this evidence on THRLS's behalf.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

5. In this evidence I will provide an overview of:
 - (a) The evolution of the Hills;
 - (b) The partnership with Ric Kayne and Jim Roharstaff;
 - (c) Investment and development now underway;
 - (d) The golf course design;
 - (e) The need to refine the HRZ Structure Plan;
 - (f) The Farm Course and Hogans Gully Homesite;
 - (g) Member facilities including sport courts;
 - (h) The benefits of golf to the region;

EVOLUTION OF THE HILLS

6. The Hills developed organically from modest beginnings. My father initially created a small putting green and several short holes near the family home. The idea of a full golf course emerged gradually as the unique terrain of the property became more apparent.
7. Working with golf course architect John Darby, the concept evolved into a full championship golf course which opened in 2007. Over time The Hills became recognised internationally and has hosted the New Zealand Open.
8. The property was also developed as a sculpture park, reflecting my parents' passion for art and their desire to create something distinctive that combined landscape, golf and creativity.
9. From the outset the approach to development has been careful and landscape-led. Buildings such as the clubhouse, designed by architect Andrew Patterson, were intentionally integrated into the landform so that the natural landscape remains the dominant feature of the property.

PARTNERSHIP WITH RIC KAYNE AND JIM ROHRSTAFF

10. In 2023 our family formed a partnership with Ric Kayne and Jim Rohrstaff.
11. Ric and Jim are internationally respected golf developers. Ric developed Tara Iti which is rated in the world's top 20 courses. Ric and Jim developed two courses and associated amenities at Te Arai Links, with both courses being rated in the world's top 100 courses. Tara Iti, Te Arai Links North Course and Te Arai Links South Course are rated number 1, 2 and 3 in New Zealand and are major contributors to golf and tourism in New Zealand.
12. The partnership arose from years of getting to know one another and recognising that we shared similar values about golf, architecture, landscape and club culture.
13. It was important to our family that the future development of The Hills would maintain the same commitment to quality and design integrity that has guided the project since its beginning.

14. Ric, Jim and their team bring deep expertise in creating world-class golf environments and member clubs, and we believe the partnership provides the right stewardship to take The Hills into its next phase.
15. Together we share a vision to deliver one of the finest golf club and lifestyle communities in the world — a special club in a remarkable landscape that enriches the lives of its members and visitors.

INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT NOW UNDERWAY

16. The partnership is investing significantly in the future of the club.
17. This includes a major renovation of the championship golf course, an extension of the clubhouse, a new golf training facility including a gym and social spaces, and visitor accommodation..
18. Construction of the first visitor accommodation units, known as the Clubhouse Suites, has already commenced.
19. The clubhouse extension is being designed by Andrew Patterson, the original architect of the clubhouse, ensuring the new building complements the existing architectural language of the club.
20. These investments represent a significant commitment to the long-term future of The Hills.

GOLF COURSE REDESIGN

21. The championship course is currently being redeveloped by the internationally recognised golf design firm Ogilvy Cocking Mead. OCM is widely regarded as one of the leading golf course architecture practices in the world and has undertaken acclaimed design and renovation work on many highly ranked courses internationally.
22. The aim of the redesign is to elevate the quality of the course, allowing the golf holes to sit more naturally within the landscape while enhancing strategy, walkability and the overall golf experience.

23. The redesign retains the same overall land area but introduces a revised routing and wider playing corridors that better respond to the natural landforms.
24. The revised routing also improves the walkability of the course by reducing the distances between greens and tees. The intention is to create a course that feels naturally connected and enjoyable to walk, which is an important element of great golf courses around the world.
25. Several holes are being repositioned to achieve this. For example, the 16th is being relocated inside a ridgeline and moves over an existing Activity Area. This change improves the cohesion of the course and significantly shortens the walk from the 15th green to the 16th tee. It also improves the views experienced by players, which are currently directed toward neighbouring development rather than the dramatic mountain landscape.
26. A significant improvement occurs around the clubhouse precinct. The first fairway is being relocated over the existing A1 activity area so that players will tee off only a few steps from the clubhouse. This creates a far stronger connection between the clubhouse and the course, allowing members and visitors to watch play unfold.

NEED TO REFINE THE STRUCTURE PLAN

27. The existing structure plan was prepared before the current redesign of the golf course.
28. As the new routing was developed it became clear that some activity areas identified in the structure plan conflicted with the golf corridors and ball dispersion areas.
29. As a result, a number of activity areas need to be relocated or adjusted so that development sits safely outside the areas used for golf.
30. These changes are practical adjustments that ensure the planning framework works properly with the improved golf course design.

THE FARM COURSE AND HOMESITES

31. The existing short course known as the Farm Course has experienced very limited member or guest play over time and has proven difficult to operate economically as a golf facility.
32. The proposed homesites in this area largely reinstate development that had previously been consented but which has since lapsed.
33. These homesites will be carefully integrated into the landscape and remain consistent with the low-density character anticipated by the Resort Zone.

MEMBER FACILITIES INCLUDING SPORTS COURTS

34. The plan change also provides for additional member facilities, including a garden and sports courts.
35. These courts are intended for use by The Hills members and visitors and are not a public sports facility.
36. They are similar to recreational amenities commonly provided at private clubs and resorts and are expected to be used intermittently.
37. In my view they represent a modest and appropriate addition to the club facilities and will enhance the overall experience.

BENEFITS TO THE REGION

38. The continued evolution of The Hills contributes to the wider Queenstown Lakes region by strengthening its position as an international golf destination.
39. Golf visitors are typically high-value tourists who stay longer and contribute to the local economy through accommodation, dining and outdoor recreation.
40. The investment now underway will further enhance the reputation of the region as one of the world's premier golf destinations.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

41. The partnership with Ric Kayne and Jim Rohrstaff represents an important step in the evolution of The Hills. Together we share a long-term commitment to creating a golf club that respects the landscape, celebrates the traditions of the game, and delivers an exceptional experience for members and visitors.
42. Our ambition is not simply to develop property, but to build a club that will endure for generations, one that enhances the landscape, contributes positively to the region, and stands comfortably alongside the great golf destinations of the world.
43. My family has always regarded ourselves as fortunate custodians of a very special landscape.
44. My father set the tone for The Hills, that the land should be cared for, that architecture should respect the environment, and that the club should have a distinctive culture. I believe he would be immensely proud of the next chapter now underway.
45. The proposed plan change simply ensures that the planning framework can support the improved golf course design and the long-term vision for The Hills as a world-class golf and lifestyle destination.

Emma Hill

13 March 2026