

Helen Mellsop for QLDC – Hearing Stream 14 - Landscape

1. I have prepared landscape evidence in relation to requests for changes to the ONL or ONF boundaries and a number of rezoning submissions in the Wakatipu Basin.
2. In assessing the landscape boundary changes sought by submitters I have referred to Dr Marion Read's Landscape Boundaries Report (**Report**) that formed part of the section 32 report and to previous Environment Court decisions. Following on-site assessment I have recommended changes to the notified boundaries where they do not correspond to the Report or to previous decisions, where there is no detailed evaluation in the Report, or where an Environment Court decision did not specifically discuss the particular landscape boundary.
3. Relatively minor changes are recommended to the notified landscape boundaries at Slope Hill, Morven Hill, the Kawarau River and the Crown Escarpment. The only substantial recommended change is the exclusion of the elevated plateau on the eastern side of Morven Hill from the ONL. In my assessment, this area of land is similar in attributes, character and values to the plateau land north of State Highway 6. Like that land, the plateau east of Morven Hill would in my view be appropriately zoned Amenity Zone rather than the Rural Residential, Rural Lifestyle or Rural Visitor zones sought by submitters (401, 664, 666, 670 and 690). The plateau forms part of LCU 18 and has a low absorption capacity, as a result of its role as a transition between the mountain ONL and the more developed river terraces to the east.
4. I have provided evidence on a limited number of rezoning requests within the Basin.
5. From a landscape perspective, I support Rural Lifestyle zoning of the Ladies Mile Flats outside of the Queenstown Country Club, as long as setbacks were maintained from the highway and further development avoided in areas visible from Lake Hayes. Such zoning would maintain elements of spaciousness and rural amenity in the approach to Queenstown on SH6 and protect views towards the surrounding mountains from the highway and the scenic values of Lake Hayes. I also support Medium Density Residential Zoning (655) for those areas of the Bridesdale Farm Special Housing Area that are outside the ONL. However I consider that the special provisions of the proposed Bridesdale Farm Overlay do not provide sufficient protection for the natural values of Hayes Creek or the adjacent ONL.
6. I do not support the Hogans Gully Special Zone sought by Hogans Gully Farm Limited (2313) in LCU 15 and LCU 17. In my view, it would compromise the remaining rural character of the eastern part of the Basin and appear as sporadic urban-style development within the rural area. The Special Zone has the potential to read as an intensive urban settlement in a pastoral or indigenous vegetation setting. I also consider that the rural living zoning sought by Morven Ferry Limited (2449) and Barnhill Corporate Trustee and others (2509) in LCU 18 would significantly degrade the rural character, amenity and particular landscape values of the Morven Eastern 'Foothills'. There is some potential for this landscape unit to absorb appropriate rural visitor development, as sought by these submitters, but I consider that the notified Amenity Zone provides the most appropriate assessment framework for these activities.
7. In relation to Arrowtown's urban area, I do not oppose the extension sought by Queenstown Community Housing Trust (2299) at Jopp Street. Unlike the rezoning sought on the western side of McDonnell Road by A Feeley and others (2379), which I do not support, the extension would not breach the current containment of urban form by either landform or defined road boundaries. In my view, the zoning sought west of McDonnell Road could provide a precedent for further inappropriate spread of urban development into the rural land west of Arrowtown.