

Submission by: Andrew Davis

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1. I fully support QLDCs overall objective to protect the rural landscape of the Wakatipu Basin:

"A primary focus of the new Zone is on protecting, maintaining and enhancing rural landscape and amenity values"

2. However, the development of the newly proposed Wakatipu Basin Lifestyle Precinct is totally inconsistent with the overall objective of this new Zone. The new Precinct, very simply, just encourages sprawl across the landscapes it is seeking to protect.
3. According to the Wakatipu Basin Chapter Fact Sheet by Council, this new proposal has been prepared in response to concerns expressed by the July 2016 Hearing Panel "... *that without careful assessment, further development within the Wakatipu Basin could potentially cause irreversible damage the character and amenity values which make the area so special*". I agree with the concerns of the July 2016 Hearings Panel, but I do not believe that this new variation will address their concerns. In my view, if the Wakatipu Basin Lifestyle Precinct is implemented as proposed, irreversible damage **will** occur.
4. The original plan issued by QLDC in 2016 proposed an increase in density at the North end of Lake Hayes (see Exhibit 1), whereby subdivision size would be reduced from 8,000m² to 4,000m². This was limited to the area where there was already existing residential development. Importantly the original plan did not propose to open up new farm land for development.
5. This original proposal could be rationalized as:
 - (i) there are already many existing section sizes of 4,000m² to 5,000m² at the North end of Lake Hayes, so decreasing the existing limits was not unprecedented;
 - (ii) this area is already developed, it is not carving up new farm land;
 - (iii) the additional development would not materially change the views from the roads, as there are already existing dwellings and any new sections would be set back from the road, behind existing properties.

So for these reasons, I considered the original proposal in relation the North end of Lake Hayes was consistent with the objectives for the Wakatipu Basin. I could therefore rationalize and support the proposal.

6. The new Precinct, however, is directly contradictory to the stated objectives for the Wakatipu Basin:
 - (i) the new Precinct carves up farm-land, thereby not protecting, maintaining or enhancing existing rural landscapes;

- (ii) not only does the new Precinct carve up farm land, but this farm-land fronts the main thorough-fare, this directly contradicts the goals of the new Zone i.e. *(The Precinct provides for rural residential living opportunities within areas where additional development can be absorbed without detracting from the landscape and visual amenity values.)* Development in this area will significantly detract from the rural landscape and visual amenity values of the Wakatipu Basin;
- (iii) there are other hidden places in the basin where farmland could potentially be developed that are not visible from the main thorough-fare;
- (iv) if you drive from Queenstown to Arrowtown via Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road, this will soon be the last area of farm-land that you will drive through; many tourists stop at these paddocks and take photos of sheep, this is because this is the only area where there is a rural landscape on this route;
- (v) the proposed Precinct will destroy a highly valued amenity which the community has already fought to retain over 3 times in the last few years;
- (vi) not only does the new Precinct carve up highly valued farm-land, it also increases the existing subdivision density at the North end of Lake Hayes to an average 10,000m² (currently it is 8,000m², original QLDC proposal in 2017 was 4,000m²), thereby reducing density and eliminating the potential to consolidate residential development in an area where QLDC had originally identified could absorb development.

7. The contradictions in the proposed Wakatipu Basin chapter do not stop there. There are also clear contradictions between the values, opportunities and constraints identified for Landscape Character Units and the proposed zoning for these areas. These contradictions give me no confidence that the proposed zoning has been properly thought through or that it will protect the environmental or visual amenity values of these areas. For example:

- (i) the environmental and visual amenity values identified to be maintained and enhanced in LCU 8 include a "*Sense of openness and spaciousness as a 'foil' for the more intensively developed rural residential areas nearby*". Yet the chapter proposes that key sections of LCU8 are included in the proposed Wakatipu Basin Lifestyle Precinct, which will enable this open, spacious farm-land to be carved up for rural residential development;
- (ii) the assessment states that there is potential for subdivision around **the edges** of the Lake Hayes Residential Unit (LCU 12). Yet the new Precinct proposes rural residential sprawl well beyond these edges into the rural landscape;
- (iii) the assessments for LCU 8 and LCU 12 identify the Lake Hayes Residential Unit (LCU 12) as having high capacity to absorb additional development. Yet, inexplicably, the current proposal reduces the capacity for infill or consolidation in LCU 12. Instead it enables rural residential sprawl into LCU 8 – an area identified as having low capacity to absorb development.

Summary:

I strongly support the objectives to protect, maintain and enhance the amenity values and characteristics that distinguish the Wakatipu Basin from other parts of the District.

To do this, development should be consolidated into existing rural residential nodes and should not be allowed to sprawl out into the rural landscape.

The area where development can be absorbed is where there is existing housing at the North end of Lake Hayes, and where there are existing small parcels of land. Encouraging development here would clearly be in alignment with the objective of the new Zone and would protect the environmental and landscape values of rural areas. This is also consistent with what QLDC proposed in their original plan in 2016.

The new Precinct does not achieve the overall objective of "*maintaining and enhancing rural landscape and amenity values*". The Precinct carves up precious farm-land in an area which is highly visible, farm-land which is the very essence of what the new Zone wishes to preserve.

Recommendation:

1. Re-instate the original plan's sub-division size of 4,000m2 **but only** for the existing area at the North-end of Lake Hayes.
2. All farm-land within LCU 8 should be preserved through inclusion in the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone.



