

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL
FOR THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource
Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Hearing Stream 12 –
Upper Clutha Mapping
Annotations and Rezoning
Requests

Summary of evidence of Robert James Greenaway
For Submitter 149 (M Beresford)

Dated: 14 June 2017

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Summary of Evidence of Robert Greenaway

- 1 My name is Robert James Greenaway. I am an independent consultant recreation and tourism researcher and planner with the experience as set out in the evidence in chief (EIC) dated 4 March 2017.
- 2 My evidence considers:
 - 2.1 My references to Sticky Forest in previous evidence and the basis for my support for the deferred zone change proposal;
 - 2.2 The values of Sticky Forest to recreation and tourism in Wanaka;
 - 2.3 The relevance of specific zone provisions to those recreation lands and a zoning recommendation;
 - 2.4 Ownership and management options for recreation lands at Sticky Forest.
- 3 I have referred to Sticky Forest in previous evidence prepared for developments at Peninsula Bay. In this work I have considered the Forest to be privately-owned but also an important local – if not national – recreation resource, largely for mountain biking. I am well-aware, however, that the owners of the Block have the right to close all public access at any time.
- 4 The ability to develop a management and planning framework for Sticky Forest which secures public access and use is therefore quite exciting. Having been engaged with the process of identifying a development envelope for the Block, and reviewing the large scale of land offered for public use, I am unreserved in my opinion that the proposal now before the Panel offers significant and secured benefits to recreation and tourism in Wanaka; considering the alternative of a loss of the existing public amenity for, predominantly, mountain biking, walking and running.
- 5 Sticky Forest is currently treated as a very important public recreation space. Users are predominantly mountain bikers, but include walkers, runners and dog walkers. Trails have been built by volunteer – and largely unregulated – effort.
- 6 The result has been the comprehensive development of the site, with a wide variety of track grades, jumps and information services – to the point where further development has been restricted by the forestry management agency, PF Olsen.
- 7 Mountain biking is very important form of recreation for NZ and local residents, and supports a significant and growing level of interest from international visitors.

- 8 There is no comparable mountain biking setting in Wanaka. Sticky Forest is probably the most intensely developed mountain biking setting in the QLDC area, and certainly the most heavily developed by volunteers.
- 9 The proposal will result in the majority of Sticky Forest retaining a Rural zone which enables its continuing use for public recreation – currently represented by, in the main, mountain biking – and an agreement by the landowners to secure this area as public recreation space in perpetuity.
- 10 The alternative is for the entire block to remain in private ownership (once fully transferred from the Crown) with the potential for it to be no longer available for public use. This may result from the identification of alternative land uses under existing zoning rules by the new private – or future – land owners.
- 11 Loss of public access to Sticky Forest would be a significant loss to recreation values in Wanaka.
- 12 The proposed zoning framework proposed, which is subject to a number of requirements including securing the provision of public cycle and pedestrian access to the Rural zoned area and the retention of the forestry is shown in the evidence of Mr Dean Chrystal.
- 13 This shows just over 60% of the Block retained outside a residential development envelope with 30.7 ha essentially as proposed public open space. The open space area borders the full length of the reserves to the east of Peninsula Bay. The proposed residential area occupies land currently developed for mountain biking, requiring a redesign of the trail network and a reduction in the scale of the existing riding opportunity. This is a trade-off to secure access in perpetuity over a large portion of the Block. It would be appropriate to secure riding and walking access through the area marked for Large Lot Residential (most likely an ‘easy’ ride) to better link the north-eastern and south-western parts of the public space, and to directly link the open space with legal road access once this has been secured.
- 14 The proposal allows sufficient flexibility for the residual land to be managed by a public agency as public recreation land.
- 15 Otherwise the land will remain in private ownership¹ with a realistic prospect of no public access.
- 16 The preferred options for management as public land within a Rural zone may include its management via:

¹ AI understand that it is currently held by the Crown on trust for its beneficial owners, and that in due course, title will transfer once the settlement process with the Crown has been completed.

- 16.1 A reserve management plan prepared under the Reserves Act, subsequent to its gazettal as, most likely, either a recreation or local purpose reserve (the latter offers more leasing options);
- 16.2 A management plan prepared by a trust or society in accordance with their deed and/or constitution;
- 16.3 A business plan prepared by a private management agency.
- 17 In any case, the final zone option is unlikely to restrict any of these management or ownership options. An effective management plan based on a formal process of public consultation will assist, however, with consent applications for any preferred developments.
- 18 I understand that managing the land as commercial forest would result – in the not too far distant future – in the removal of the exotic forest cover in two stages (radiata followed by the fir). This would result in the destruction of the existing mountain bike trails, closure of the Block to public access for 3-4 years during the harvest and early replanting stages, and many years of biking in an exposed setting.
- 19 Managing the forest for recreation purposes would more likely involve coupe harvesting of small areas, or selective removal of individual trees as they become senescent and/or dangerous (consider Victoria Park in Wellington). A non-commercial forest treatment can sustain access to most of the public area in perpetuity and support the core value of recreating within forest cover.
- 20 I understand there is interest from the Panel in understanding the viability of operating the Forest as a commercial mountain bike park. In short, this is an unlikely option. Critically, the setting has quite low topography and there is no need to instal a lift, which would underpin a commercial biking venture. Compare the Skyline lifts in Rotorua and Queenstown and the Christchurch Adventure Park², with The Redwoods in Whakarewarewa Forest in Rotorua which has free entry. Otherwise, there is little to charge for and little scope to recover the costs of taking entrance-fees (staff), as well as the fencing and gates needed to control entry, track development and maintenance, tree maintenance, and insurance and rates, in addition to getting a decent return on the value of the property. Without a core attraction like a lift as an anchor, there is less likelihood of being able to add a café or other commercial service. A coffee cart on the park boundary would effectively compete with any capital-intensive development on-site. There would also be a

² I worked on the consent application for the Adventure Park and had previously developed a management plan for the area on the premise that it could be publicly owned.

displacement of existing riders who have put in the volunteer effort to create the resource and would just develop or use free rides in other locations. A club could charge a nominal fee or require membership to use the park, but such income would only service the activity and not make a return on the value of the land. Most international visitors to Wanaka will be drawn to mountain bike trails of grade 1 or 2 (all of which are free to use) and will not form a substantial market for paid, short tracks of grade 3 to 5, particularly with competition from Skyline in Queenstown for the latter (which has a 400m climb compared with a maximum of about 60m at Sticky Forest).

- 21 In summary, I am professionally excited by the proposal to secure, finally, Sticky Forest as a public recreation setting. In my opinion, the proposal presents an acceptable compromise between the needs of the land-owners to secure a long-promised economic benefit from the Block, while offering security of access to a critical component of the Wanaka recreation scene.
- 22 The proposed recreation component of Sticky Forest in my view should retain its current zoning as Rural, but with provision to allow for the retention of forest cover via replanting in the future within the ONL boundary.