

Before the Hearing Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of submissions on variation to introduce landscape schedules 21.22 and 21.23 into Chapter 21 Rural Zone of the Proposed District Plan.

Statement of Evidence of Russell Lloyd Williams and Sharon Lynn Poulson

31 August 2026

Submitter's solicitors:

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May it please the Panel

- 1 Our full names are Russell Lloyd Williams and Sharon Lynn Poulson.
- 2 We own 192 Stevenson Road, legally described as Lot 17 DP325795 as identified in Appendix 1. Our land comprises approximately 33 hectares on Stevenson Road Wanaka and is part of the Poplar Beach Rural Subdivision.
- 3 While we did not lodge a submission on the Upper Clutha Landscape Schedules Variation, we provide this evidence as neighbours of Dirk and Becky Venter,¹ and Mr Vaughn Howard Woodfield & Mrs Kathryn Maree Woodfield.² We support the concerns raised by Dirk and Becky and Vaughn and Kathryn, and the outcomes they seek through their submission. Our evidence is intended to assist the Panel by explaining our experience as neighbouring rural landowners on the Poplar Beach/Stevenson Road terrace, including the productive rural use, land stewardship, pest management and future land use flexibility that we consider should be recognised in this landscape context.
- 4 We provide this evidence based on our extensive knowledge of our property and our farming and improvement activities undertaken over the past 16 years.
- 5 Our evidence is limited to matters within our personal knowledge, including the condition and use of our property, the farming and improvement activities undertaken since we purchased it, our participation in earlier planning processes affecting the land, and our plans for its future management. Our evidence is intended to provide the Panel with factual context about our property and the practical implications that the proposed Schedule may have for its continued rural use.
- 6 Although we did not lodge our own submission on the Variation, our property forms part of the same intermediate Poplar Beach terrace as the Venter and Woodfield properties. We support the amendments they seek to the extent that those amendments more accurately recognise the terrace's existing rural use, subdivision pattern, infrastructure, modification and capacity for continued productive activity.

¹ Who own the nearby property at 213 Stevenson Road and have lodged a submission (#47) on the variation.

² Who own the nearby property at 216 Stevenson Road and have lodged a submission (#39) on the variation.

Current activities on the Site

- 7 We purchased the property in 2010 with the intention of establishing a long-term family home and associated farm buildings. We chose this property because of its outstanding location and its proximity to the Mata-au Clutha River. As this was to be our retirement home, a key consideration for us was the wide range of potential future uses that such a property would offer, ranging from lifestyle, viticulture and farming, through to environmental, recreational and small-scale ecotourism.
- 8 We have invested substantially in purchasing and developing our dream property. From the outset we were very careful to ensure that the planning framework pertaining to the area was one which gave us confidence that we would be able to develop and manage our property in a range of different ways as our long-term vision evolved.
- 9 When we purchased the property, it was a “bare block” (no buildings) zoned Rural General. Although the land had once been used for cropping it was no longer actively farmed. The boundary fences were in poor repair, and the property was infested with rabbits, which were at plague proportions and had caused significant damage to the stands of kanuka and other tree species.
- 10 Since purchase of the property in 2010 we have constructed our family home (consisting of separate main house, cottage and garage) and invested a very significant amount of time and money in landscaping, irrigation, road upgrades, fencing, pest and noxious weed control and new plantings.
- 11 To protect landscaping and re-growth of kanuka we rabbit fenced and irrigated a significant perimeter around our home buildings. Inside this we have planted many hundreds of kanuka to regenerate existing stands.
- 12 We have established a small vineyard by transplanting 300 old vines from one of Wanaka’s oldest established vineyards.
- 13 Further-afield on the property we have also established new stands of the traditional poplars as well as maintaining efforts to control invasive species such as broom, briar rose and wilding pine.
- 14 We have invested heavily to control rabbit populations. This included a neighbourhood-wide eradication programme as well as maintenance shooting. We also worked with our previous neighbours in adjacent Lot 7 to re-establish rabbit fencing between our properties.

- 15 We have upgraded the existing farm track to provide safe access to our new home and also to the surrounding property.
- 16 Through the work and investment described above we believe we have significantly improved the land since we acquired it in 2010. In undertaking this we have tried hard to honour the character of the landscape.
- 17 We see the property as an evolving long-term vision, and we wish to retain the flexibility that first attracted us here. We wish to have options to continue developing the property in a responsible manner, whether this be for expansion of the current viticulture, for other farming activities, or for establishing low-impact eco-tourism and associated recreational activity.
- 18 In more detail, we require flexibility to establish practical rural infrastructure including vineyard sheds, farm storage facilities, irrigation and fire-fighting resilience (including lakes and ponds) and other associated investments.
- 19 We also require flexibility to use our property for low-impact ecotourism and recreational activities.
- 20 We also wish to retain flexibility to preserve and enhance the historic character of the land, including continued planting of historic trees both native and exotics (such as kanuka, poplars, oaks, maples and fruit trees), as well as preservation of gold mining era features.

Background

- 21 The land was subdivided via RM20018 into 17 lots from a 380-hectare property in November 2002, with each proposed lot being over 20 hectares. The site was originally zoned Rural General in the operative district plan (ODP) and is now in the Rural Zone under the Proposed District Plan (PDP).
- 22 The lower terrace was subdivided into rural lifestyle blocks with the intention that they could be developed into productive lifestyle properties and were supplied with building platforms, water to site and water allocations as well as electricity to site.

Concerns with the Proposed Variation

- 23 Our primary concern with the proposed Landscape Schedule is that it introduces substantial uncertainty regarding the future use of our land. We purchased this property with reasonable expectations as to its future flexibility and on this basis have invested heavily in its improvement.

- 24 We are now faced with a planning framework that appears to be moving toward significantly more restrictive controls over rural land use. We do not consider it fair nor reasonable that landowners who have invested heavily in their property should subsequently face increasing restrictions and uncertainty regarding ordinary farming activities and other rural lifestyle development.
- 25 The proposed changes would also restrict the rights of any future owners to further develop the land as they see fit with an associated negative impact on property values.

Changes to the sought to the Schedule

- 26 We support the relief and changes sought to the Schedule by both Dirk and Rebecca Venter & Kathryn and Vaughn Woodfield.

31 August 2026

Russell Williams and Sharon Poulson

Appendix 1 – Map of Russell Lloyd Williams and Sharon Lynn Poulson's land in the context of the Upper Clutha Rural Character Landscape Schedules overlay

