

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan – Upper Clutha  
Mapping

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SCOTT SNEDDON EDGAR**

**ON BEHALF OF THE FOLLOWING SUBMITTER:**

**LONGVIEW ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST (FURTHER SUBMISSION #1282)**

**4<sup>TH</sup> April 2017**



**SOUTHERN LAND**

SURVEYING | PLANNING | LAND DEVELOPMENT

## **Introduction**

- 1 My name is Scott Sneddon Edgar. I am a Resource Management Planner and hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Honours) in Town and Country Planning from Strathclyde University in Glasgow, Scotland. I am an Associate Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 2 I have been employed by Southern Land Limited, a Wanaka based survey and planning consultancy, since October 2006. During my time at Southern Land I have been involved principally with the preparation of resource consent applications and the presentation of planning evidence at Council hearings.
- 3 Prior to relocating to New Zealand in 2005 I worked as a development control planner with various Scottish local authorities in both rural and urban regions.
- 4 Upon my arrival in New Zealand I was employed as a resource consents planner in the Wanaka office of Civic Corporation Limited before taking my current position with Southern Land Limited. I have a total of 17 years' planning experience, 11 of which have been gained in New Zealand.
- 5 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014 and I agree to comply with it. In that regard I confirm that this evidence is written within my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## **Scope of Evidence**

- 6 I have been engaged by Longview Environmental Trust (further submitter 1282) to provide expert planning evidence relating to the submission of Solobio Limited (submitter 325) which seeks the removal of the Outstanding Natural Landscape classification from the flats and downs of Matukituki Station. Longview Environmental Trust opposes the submission of Solobio Limited in that regard.
- 7 In preparing this evidence I have read Mr. Barr's s42A Reports (Strategic Overview and Common Themes and Group 3 Rural), the supporting landscape evidence of Dr. Read and the background s32 material. In addition I have had the benefit of Mr. Kruger's evidence on behalf of Longview Environmental Trust.

8 My brief of evidence is set out as follows:

- Statutory Framework
- Landscape Classification
- Effects of Landscape Classification on Farming Activities
- Part 2 Assessment
- Conclusion

### **Statutory Framework**

#### The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)(the Act)

9 The RMA requires Council's to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources through the management of use, development and protection of natural and physical resources to provide for the social, economic and cultural well-being and health and safety of people, communities and future generations.

10 The following matter of national importance, as set out under section 6 of the RMA, is of relevance to this submission:

*(b) the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*

11 In addition the following other matters, as set out under section 7 of the Act, are of relevance to this submission:

*(b) the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources:*

*(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:*

*(f) the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:*

12 Section 79 of the Act directs that a district plan must be reviewed in the manner set out in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Act. In making changes to a district plan the local authority is required to:

- "give effect to" any national policy statement;

- “give effect to” any regional policy statement;
- “must not be inconsistent with” a regional plan;
- “have regard to” any proposed regional policy statement.

Operative Regional Policy Statement for Otago (ORPS)

13 The Objectives and Policies of the ORPS that are of particular relevance to the consideration of this submission are as follows:

**5.4 Objectives**

5.4.1 *To promote the sustainable management of Otago’s land resources in order:*

- (a) *To maintain and enhance the primary productive capacity and life-supporting capacity of land resources; and*
- (b) *To meet the present and reasonably foreseeable needs of Otago’s people and communities.*

5.4.2 *To avoid, remedy or mitigate degradation of Otago’s natural and physical resources resulting from activities utilising the land resource.*

5.4.3 *To protect Otago’s outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

**5.5 Policies**

5.5.6 *To recognise and provide for the protection of Otago’s outstanding natural features and landscapes which:*

- (a) *Are unique to or characteristic of the region; or*
- (b) *Are representative of a particular landform or land cover occurring in the Otago Region or of the collective characteristics which give Otago its particular character; or*
- (c) *Represent areas of cultural or historic significance in Otago; or*
- (d) *Contain visually or scientifically significant geological features; or*

- (e) *Have characteristics of cultural, historical and spiritual value that are regionally significant for Tangata Whenua and have been identified in accordance with Tikanga Maori.*

Proposed Regional Policy Statement (PRPS)

- 14 The PRPS was notified on 23 May 2015 with decisions on submissions being released on 1st October 2016. The objectives and policies of the PRPS that are of particular relevance are as follows:

***Objective 3.2 Otago’s significant and highly-valued natural resources are identified, and protected or enhanced***

***Policy 3.2.3 Identifying outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes***

*Identify areas and values of outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes, using the attributes in Schedule 3.*

***Policy 3.2.4 Managing outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes***

*Protect, enhance and restore outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes, by all of the following:*

- a) Avoiding adverse effects on those values which contribute to the significance of the natural feature, landscape or seascape;*
- b) Avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects;*
- c) Recognising and providing for the positive contributions of existing introduced species to those values;*
- d) Controlling the adverse effects of pest species, preventing their introduction and reducing their spread;*
- e) Encouraging enhancement of those areas and values which contribute to the significance of the natural feature, landscape or seascape.*

Higher Order Proposed District Plan Provisions

15 The Strategic Direction Chapter of the Proposed District Plan establishes a policy framework which seeks to, amongst other things, identify and protect Outstanding Natural Landscapes while acknowledging the contribution farming makes to the management of the District's landscapes. The following objectives and policies are of particular relevance:

**Goal 5** – *Our distinctive landscapes are protected from inappropriate development.*

**Objective 3.2.5.1**

*Protect the natural character of Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features from subdivision, use and development.*

**Policies**

3.2.5.1.1 *Identify the district's Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features on the district plan maps, and protect them from the adverse effects of subdivision and development.*

**Objective 3.2.5.5**

*Recognise that agricultural land use is fundamental to the character of our landscapes.*

**Policies**

3.2.5.5.1 *Give preference to farming activity in rural areas except where it conflicts with significant nature conservation values.*

3.2.5.5.2 *Recognise that the retention of the character of rural areas is often dependent on the ongoing viability of farming and that evolving forms of agricultural land use which may change the landscape are anticipated.*

16 The Landscapes Chapter of the PDP is also of relevance to the consideration of this submission with the following objectives and policies being of particular relevance:

**Objective 6.3.1**

*The District contains and values Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes, and Rural Landscapes that require protection from inappropriate subdivision and development.*

## **Policies**

6.3.1.1 *Identify the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features on the Planning Maps.*

6.3.1.2 *Classify the Rural Zoned landscapes in the District as:*

- *Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF)*
- *Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)*
- *Rural Landscape Classification (RLC)*

6.3.1.3 *That subdivision and development proposals located within the Outstanding Natural Landscape, or an Outstanding Natural Feature, be assessed against the assessment matters in provisions 21.7.1 and 21.7.3 because subdivision and development is inappropriate in almost all locations, meaning successful applications will be exceptional cases.*

6.3.1.10 *Recognise that low-intensity pastoral farming on large landholdings contributes to the District's landscape character.*

6.3.1.11 *Recognise the importance of protecting the landscape character and visual amenity values, particularly as viewed from public places.*

6.3.1.12 *Recognise and provide for the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes with particular regard to values relating to cultural and historic elements, geological features and matters of cultural and spiritual value to Tangata Whenua, including Tōpuni.*

## **Objective 6.3.4**

*Protect, maintain or enhance the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL).*

## **Policies**

6.3.4.1 *Avoid subdivision and development that would degrade the important qualities of the landscape character and amenity, particularly where there is no or little capacity to absorb change.*

6.3.4.2 *Recognise that large parts of the District's Outstanding Natural Landscapes include working farms and accept that viable farming involves activities which may modify the landscape, providing the quality and character of the Outstanding Natural Landscape is not adversely affected.*

6.3.4.3 *Have regard to adverse effects on landscape character, and visual amenity values as viewed from public places, with emphasis on views from formed roads.*

17 I agree with and support these higher order provisions of the PDP and consider that they appropriately give effect to the ORPS and have appropriate regard to the PRPS and achieve the purpose of the Act. In addition I consider that the provisions of the Rural Chapter appropriately achieve the relevant higher order provisions of the Proposed District Plan.

#### **Landscape Classification**

18 The subject site is described in detail in the evidence of Dr. Read and Mr. Kruger who appear to be in agreement that the downs and flats of Matukituki Station cannot be classified as a landscape in their own right and are an indivisible part of the much larger 'embedding' Outstanding Natural Landscape. Dr. Read points out that this assessment is consistent with the Dart, Rees and Cardrona Valleys and the Fern Burn flats.

19 I rely on the assessments and opinions of Dr. Read and Mr. Kruger in this regard and consider that the downs and flats of Matukituki Station are appropriately classified as Outstanding Natural Landscape on Proposed Planning Map 7.

20 Based on the opinions of Dr. Read and Mr. Kruger I consider that the relief sought in the submission of Solobio Limited, being that the downs and flats of Matukituki Station are classified as Rural Landscape Classification, is inappropriate and contrary to the objectives and policies of the Strategic Direction and Landscapes Chapters of the Proposed District Plan.

#### **Effects of Landscape Classification on Farming Activities**

21 The submission of Solobio Limited seeks the removal of the Outstanding Natural Landscape classification from the flats and downs of Matukituki Station in order to facilitate continued agricultural activities. While that may be good reason to review landscape classifications and ensure that landscapes are appropriately classified I do not consider that the enabling of farming activities is justification in itself to amend the landscape classification.



- 22 The flats and downs of Matukituki Station are either part of the ONL or they are not. The classification of landscapes requires a detailed landscape assessment which does not include an assessment of the effects of the classification on certain activities. I consider that it is not the landscape classification itself that inhibits or enables farming activities but the objectives, policies, rules and assessment matters associated with the landscape classification.
- 23 The Proposed District Plan acknowledges the role that farming plays in managing the District's landscapes and includes objectives, policies and rules which enable farming activities, including buildings, within the Outstanding Natural Landscape. These provisions are supported by the submission of Solobio Limited.
- 24 I therefore consider that the enabling of farming activities is not appropriate justification for the re-classification of the flats and downs of Matukituki Station as Rural Landscape Classification.

#### **Part 2 Assessment**

- 25 I consider that the relief sought in the submission of Solobio Limited as it relates to the landscape classification of the downs and flats of Matukituki Station is inconsistent with Section 5 of the Act and does not recognise and provide for the matters of national importance set out in Section 6, specifically the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (*s6(b)*).
- 26 I therefore consider that the relief sought by Solobio Limited does not achieve the purpose of the Act in this regard and consequently I support the further submission of Longview Environmental Trust that the submission of Solobio Limited as it relates to the landscape classification of the downs and flats of Matukituki Station is rejected.

#### **Conclusion**

- 27 Based on the assessments and evidence of Dr. Read and Mr. Kruger I consider that the classification of the flats and downs of Matukituki Station as Outstanding Natural Landscape is appropriate and I agree with Mr. Barr in his recommendation that the submission of Solobio Limited, as it relates to landscape classification, should be rejected.



Scott Sneddon Edgar  
4<sup>th</sup> April 2017