

Glenn Davis for QLDC – Summary of Evidence, 3 May 2017

Ski Area Sub Zones – Hearing Stream 11

1. I have been engaged by Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) to provide evidence in relation to ecological matters regarding proposed extensions to the Cardrona and Treble Cone Ski Area Sub Zones (**SASZ**) in the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**).
2. A total of four extensions to the Cardrona SASZ have been requested from Cardrona Alpine Resort Limited (**CARL**) (615), Mount Cardrona Station Limited (**MCSL**) (407), Soho Ski Area Limited and Blackmans Creek No 1 LP (**Soho**) (610), and Anderson Branch Creek Limited (**Anderson**) (829).
3. The CARL, MCSL and Soho submissions are on land that has a long history of pastoral activity including burning, grazing, oversowing, topdressing and in some areas cultivation. These activities have resulted in the complete removal of indigenous vegetation or the significant modification of indigenous systems.
4. Regarding the extension sought by Soho, I have identified shrubland communities within Little Meg Creek and Callaghans Creek that in my view have significant ecological values. The shrublands are a degraded representative of the original pre-settlement vegetation and contain threatened plant species (*Olearia lineata* 'at risk-declining').¹ The shrublands are important communities that support passerines and the eastern falcon ('at risk-recovering')² and a distinctive endemic invertebrate community. I consider the ecological values of the shrublands would be better protected within the Rural Zone. Provided the shrublands are excluded from the rezoning, I do not oppose the extension sought by Soho.
5. I have no issues with the CARL and MCSL extensions from an ecological perspective.
6. The Anderson submission seeks an extension to the SASZ within the alpine zone, ranging in altitude from 900 metres above sea level (**masl**) to approximately 1800 masl. The area contains a relatively intact altitudinal sequence of ecological communities, which includes tall tussock grassland to an elevation of 1750 masl where the grassland grades into alpine wetlands and fellfields. The vegetation

1 "New Zealand Threat Classification Series" by Hugh Robertson, John Dowding, Graeme Elliott, Rod Hitchmough, Colin Miskelly, Colin O'Donnell, Ralph Powlesland, Paul Sagar, Paul Scofield, Graeme Taylor (2013).

2 Ibid.

communities are representative of vegetation that would have been present prior to human settlement and will support a range of indigenous invertebrates, lizards and birds including the 'nationally threatened' kea and 'at risk – recovering' eastern falcon. Given the high ecological values present within the proposed area and the fragile alpine communities present, I consider that permitting such activities as installation of passenger lifts, snow making infrastructure and earthworks could result in significant ecological effects such as removal of habitat, providing opportunities for weed invasion, erosion and subsequent loss of habitat through deposition of sediment onto wetlands. Given the ecological values and sensitivity of the alpine environment, I oppose the Anderson submission and consider it is more appropriate to consider any proposals to extend Ski Area Activities into this environment through the non-complying activity status as set out in Rule 21.4.19 (or for Passenger Lift Systems, as a restricted discretionary activity).

7. Treble Cone Investments Ltd (613) have sought to extend the Treble Cone SASZ to accommodate the installation of a gondola. The extension area covers an altitudinal range from the valley floor at 300 masl to approximately 1000 masl. The area has had a long history of pastoral activity including burning and grazing and has been oversown and topdressed up to about 1000 masl. This has resulted in significant modification to the indigenous communities across the site. However, the area has some indigenous values including a beech forest and shrubland community on the northern boundary of the proposed rezoning, an area of matagouri shrubland situated close to the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road, and small areas of shrubland and wetlands. The beech forest and shrubland community on the northern boundary is highly representative of the pre-settlement vegetation and in my view should be excluded from the extension area. Providing this area is excluded, I do not oppose the extension sought by Treble Cone SASZ.