

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER

the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER

of the review of parts of the Queenstown Lakes District Council's District Plan under the First Schedule of the Act

AND

IN THE MATTER

of submissions and further submissions by
REMARKABLES PARK LIMITED AND
QUEENSTOWN PARK LIMITED

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ALASTAIR FINLAY PORTER ON BEHALF OF
REMARKABLES PARK LIMITED AND QUEENSTOWN PARK LIMITED**

(DIRECTOR OF RPL AND QPL)

STREAM 13 REZONING HEARINGS

12 June 2017

**BROOKFIELDS
LAWYERS**

J D Young / M Broekman
Telephone No. 09 379 2155
Fax No. 09 379 3224
P O Box 240
DX CP24134
AUCKLAND

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Alastair Finlay Porter. I am resident of Queenstown. I am currently Chairman and CEO of the following operating companies with businesses in Queenstown; Porter Group Limited (**PGL**), Queenstown Park Limited (**QPL**), Remarkables Park Limited (**RPL**), Shotover Park Limited (**SPL**), and Remarkables Park Stud Farm Limited. The other directors of Porter Group Limited companies are my brothers John Leslie Porter and Robert Neville Porter.
- 1.2 I have a BCom from Auckland University and an ACA qualification. I am a Fellow of the Institute of Directors and hold a Certificate of Completion from Harvard University Graduate School of Design in Urban Retail, Essential Planning Design and management practices. I have held many other executive and non-executive directorships in property, marketing and farming sectors (My qualifications and experience is **attached** and marked "**A**"). I have experience in urban and rural residential property development both as a principal and a consultant.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 In section 3 I summarise those parts of my business expertise and experience that particularly support my ability to address development opportunities and sustainability issues at Queenstown Park.
- 2.2 In section 4 I outline:
- (a) The background to the reasons to expand the land uses at Queenstown Park although on a relatively small area (less than 5%) of the total land; and
 - (b) The vision that has preceded the development of the Queenstown Park Special Zone (**QPSZ**), including the Queenstown Gondola proposal.

3. EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

- 3.1 I have extensive business, property development and farming experience (**attachment A**). Of particular relevance to the submission seeking to create the QPSZ is the following:
- (a) Agriculture and related activities:

- (i) Marketing including added value NZ agricultural products;
 - (ii) Farm management and active farming;
 - (iii) On-Farm research and genetics programs;
 - (iv) Environmental and farm enhancement programs;
 - (v) Advance Party Farms a government funded, science based programme. The base interest of this programme is in the environment and AP Farm's decreasing environmental footprint. A new AP group in the lower South Island / Otago region is being established that QPL have agreed to join. Queenstown Park's contribution will in particular relate to interest in the interdependent health of water, environment, animals and people.
- (b) Property and Environmental Development and Research. I have extensive experience in urban and rural development including:
- (i) Previous rural land development and environmental enhancement;
 - (ii) Repositioning of rural land including farming intensification and rezoning to secure more appropriate/sustainable land uses;
 - (iii) High quality, intensive property developments;
 - (iv) Research internationally of resort development options.
- (c) Business: Extensive business experience and qualifications, a good understanding of Queenstown's business fundamentals, highly qualified supporting staff and expert advisors, substantial companies with an unblemished and proven track record in marketing, property development and agricultural businesses, together with strong contacts and credibility to attract joint venture partners and investors to further develop the QPSZ.

3.2 My evidence is based on my tertiary qualifications and experience in property development, farming and business. I am actively involved in enhancing natural and built environments and outdoor sport, in particular skiing and biking. I am an active supporter of maintaining the Queenstown Lakes District's exceptional character and appeal.

- 3.3 The vision for the QPSZ including the Gondola corridor arises from a unique set of circumstances that have been able to be brought together by the knowledge and experience of the principals of QPL and RPL in conjunction with the benefit of expert advice from leading advisers in a wide range of disciplines.

4. VISION FOR THE COMPONENTS OF QUEENSTOWN PARK SPECIAL ZONE (QPSZ)

- 4.1 The QPSZ spans 4 discrete activity nodes linked by the proposed Queenstown Gondola.

Remarkables Park

- 4.2 The zoned scale of Remarkables Park enables a wide range of uses, including Queenstown's largest twin town centre providing shop, work, play and educational facilities. Its zoning enables a convention centre (for which resource consent has been granted), recreational activities (including ferry and gondola terminals), and multiple trail access extending along the Kawarau River to connect to the Shotover River.

Queenstown Park

- 4.3 The western end of Queenstown Park, which was purchased in 2014, is located diagonally opposite Remarkables Park. As a result of this close proximity there is significant potential for Remarkables Park and Queenstown Park properties to be developed in complementary ways.
- 4.4 At purchase it was seriously rundown, and was deteriorating rapidly both as a farming unit and environmentally. Factors contributing to its decline include:
- (a) Decreasing commodity prices for wool, sheep, beef and deer products;
 - (b) With decreasing farming in the Wakatipu Basin a reduction in services available to support farmers; and
 - (c) Increasing regulatory requirements in terms of farming activities including nutrient runoff effects, water quality and the spread of weeds from the publicly owned river edge and wilding pines.

- 4.5 Current farming operations alone are not a sustainable land use of the Queenstown Park land. The property is only currently being able to be run and new riverside, other fencing and other environmental improvements to be undertaken by virtue of the financial and advisory support of QPL's shareholders, the Porter Trust.
- 4.6 With a rapidly growing tourism sector requiring increasing supply of visitor accommodation and tourist infrastructure to extend and enhance Queenstown as New Zealand's leading tourist destination, an obvious consideration for Queenstown Park was to investigate options that could provide alternative sources of income from tourism. The close proximity of the site to Queenstown and Remarkables Park's Town Centres, and being virtually surrounded by tourist activities (with the Kawarau and Shotover rivers, nearby trails on the other side of the rivers on its northern boundary, the Chard Farm Winery and Bungy to the east, and the Remarkables Alpine recreation area to the south) mean that it already sits within a strongly orientated tourism environment.
- 4.7 The desirability of not increasing farming intensity on the easier contour lower terraces if a better land use could be substituted led to a review of land use options. The review showed that these warm north facing areas were ideally suited to both visitor accommodation and tourism facilities in conjunction with remaining farming activities and rural residential housing. All would provide higher returns, have lower environmental impact than farming and would result in more landscape planting in these areas.

Public Land South of Lake Hayes Estate

- 4.8 The significant area of Council owned land at this river edge location provides the opportunity for an access point and park and ride that could be linked into a gondola to provide a public commuter facility between Remarkables Park's multi-use town centre (retail, offices, visitor and school facilities) and Lake Hayes Estate, Shotover Country and Bridesdale residential communities.

The Remarkables Mountain Alpine Recreation Area

- 4.9 This important and immensely popular recreation area is zoned for tourist activity. Its appeal and ability to expand are to an extent constrained by the limited room to expand parking, and the challenging alpine nature of the road access. The facilities on the mountain are all of extremely high quality and would benefit in terms of additional (4 season) use from the support that would be given by alternative high volume access that

could be provided by a gondola. Gondolas are an internationally recognised, appealing form of sightseeing and mountain access.

Queenstown Gondola

- 4.10 Notwithstanding that gondolas need to run in straight lines with changes in direction needing (by virtue of economics) to be limited to only a few 'bend' or mid stations, it has been possible to determine a highly scenic, albeit low visibility, alignment that can link all of the forgoing locations including Remarkables Park (including extensive car parking), public land below Lake Hayes Estate, Queenstown Park and the Remarkables Alpine Recreation Area.

5. CONCLUSION

Environment

- 5.1 The QPSZ vision is to provide the opportunity to enable a wide range of international visitors and New Zealanders to enjoy and better understand New Zealand's exceptional landscapes, how these need to be managed to be a sustainable asset for current future generations, and where appropriate be managed for agri-food production.

Facilities

- 5.2 The key QPSZ facilities the Gondola, Rural Visitor Village and the Rural Residential pods all combine to provide:
- (a) Complementary opportunities to enable efficient and memorable access; and
 - (b) A more diverse range of accommodation and adjacent facilities including food & beverages, arts & crafts, tourist shopping, mini-conferencing breakout destination facilities and wedding options, environmental education relating to the natural environment, and to agri production.
- 5.3 The Gondola in terms of views afforded to the rivers and landscapes, the excitement of its ride particularly on the uphill section, safety benefits, and access to Queenstown Park's accommodation/environmental tourism facilities and its commuter potential all present a potentially enormous addition to Queenstown's facilities infrastructure.

Key support

- 5.4 Queenstown Park has received various letters of support and media coverage for its gondola proposal. These are **attached** and marked “**B**”.

Interdependence

- 5.5 The individual components of the QPSZ each provide opportunities to complement existing activities and to enable new activities that will further support and enhance the Queenstown Lakes District as one of New Zealand's most exceptional places to live, work, visit and enjoy, including:
- (a) The sum of all of the parts of the QPSZ provide an extraordinary combination of interdependent activities, synergies and opportunities that provide exceptional outcomes; and
 - (b) The interdependence of people and their environments is a key theme underpinning the QPSZ vision.

ATTACHMENT A: QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Previous Positions & Roles

Marketing (including added value Agricultural products)

Marketing Founding Partner of Porter Brothers Textiles (5 years)

Importer and Marketer of Thai Cottons and Silks this business was merged into Porter Holding Marketing Limited.

Co-Founder, Co-Managing Director - Porter Holdings Marketing Ltd

Key brand Greatmats – Wool Bedding and clothing products, including exporting wool to Europe to make into woolpile products for footwear, outdoor wear clothing and bedding.

Asian and Pacific Export Ltd (4 years)

A high volume New Zealand fruit and vegetable exporter to Australia, Asia and Pacific Rim countries including Japan and North America. The business was highly successful and sold as a going concern after 4 years.

Porter & Porter Ltd & Porter Galleries

Direct Marketing business including food and collectables, jewellery, porcelain, crystal, limited edition art and sculptures.

Inaugural Director (3 years) - Cervena NZ Ltd

I was the initiator of the successful strategy to rebrand New Zealand farmed venison and high quality products as Cervena, including proposing the Cervena name, I led the process to establish and register the new name and hire a new Chief Executive to manage the New Zealand Game Industry and Cervena NZ Ltd.

Inaugural Director (3 years) -Deer Improvement Ltd

This is the leading genetics business in the New Zealand deer industry. It was a whole owned subsidiary of New Zealand's largest genetics company Livestock Improvement Ltd until it became an in-house division of that company.

National Committee Member (approx. 3 years) – New Zealand Game Export Advisory Committee (GEAC)

This was the forerunner of the New Zealand Game Industry Board and ultimately Cervena NZ Ltd.

Foundation Board Member (6 years) & Deputy Chairman (4 years) – New Zealand Game Industry Board

I was a member of a committee of 4 (including Ruth Richardson, then lawyer for Federated Farmers) to establish the New Zealand Game Industry Board. I travelled extensively on marketing trips for the NZ Game Industry and also chaired the Board's Quality Assurance Committee and Research Funding Allocation Committee.

Farming

Founding Managing Partner - Porter Holdings Farms (1976) & Porter Holdings Deer Operations

Owners & Developers -Ototoa Park, South Kaipara Head

- 620 acre sheep, beef and deer – a significantly run down unit at purchase, it was redeveloped to become one of the pioneers and well known deer farms in New Zealand. The property was the venue for pioneering deer research with Massey University and regularly entertained international VIP visitors for the NZ Government.
- Red Hill Farms, South Kaipara Head – 500 acres
- Deer Farm Helensville – 120 acres
- Matiatia, Waiheke Island – 320 acres as sheep and beef

Founding Managing Director – Antla Corporation Ltd

A joint venture partnership that took over Ototoa Park (2,600 deer) and the lease of the large deer unit on Haldon Station in the Mackenzie Basin (3,000 deer). After 3 years Haldon Station owners had financial problems so Antla Corporation was wholly taken over by Porter Group Ltd. The lease and stock at Haldon Station were sold to the new owners.

Ototoa Park, Red Hills and Helensville & Waiheke Farms were all eventually subdivided into a mix of smaller farming blocks and/or rural residential units and sold.

Company Director & CEO

- Remarkables Park Farm, 150 ha unit (1988 –current) was bought and added to in 1993 and initially farmed intensively (in conjunction with property development activities) until 2015 as a deer (and sheep) unit. It has been fully rezoned for a mixed use urban development and in excess of 3m visitors have annually visited the Remarkables Park Town Centre.

- Shotover Park Ltd, 1993, 30 ha farm land grazed and cropped while it was redeveloped into Queenstown's largest light industrial and bulk store precinct (including Mitre 10 MEGA and Pak'n Save)

which has been completed in 2017.

- Malaghan Park Farms Ltd, approx. 2004, 80ha Porter Trust owned farm

Again a completely run down farming unit that was redeveloped into a high quality deer unit and has subsequently been sold, and under new ownership has become Queenstown's first Polo operation.

Property Development

Property Development, Foundation Director (3 years)

Intermont Pty Ltd and jointly owned property redevelopment company operations in Sydney. Co-founder and Company Secretary Bridge Property Group Ltd, a highly successful property development and dairy farming group, specialized in redeveloping greenfield properties.

Accountant and Associated Securities Ltd (2 years)

An Auckland based, listed property development, specializing in large scale residential and industrial developments.

Porter Group Limited

Primarily an Auckland based developer; this company undertakes the redevelopment of the group's rural properties.

Remarkables Park Limited and Shotover Park Limited

Those two companies are both subsidiaries of Porter Group Limited and have undertaken very successful large-scale property development projects in Queenstown.

Queenstown Roles

Chairman, Queenstown Chamber of Commerce (2008 – 2012)

Led the expansion of this organisation as the leading business advocate and organisation in Queenstown, including hiring a highly capable new CEO.

Deputy Chair and Founding Member of the Shaping Our Future Organisation

Strategy group managing the Queenstown and Wanaka district

An apolitical organisation that enables community-led investigation and recommendations relating to key issues affecting the future of Queenstown Lakes District. The organisation has successfully engaged the wider community in many issues and produced reports and recommendations relating to the future.

Organisation and Leader, Resort Study Research (together with Porter Group Directors)

We have organised four Resort/Community study and research trips to North America. The last three of these trips included 3 to 5 Councilors and staff from Queenstown Lakes District Council. One of these trips was the catalyst for the formation of Queenstown Trails Trust by the QLDC CEO Duncan Field and those trips also investigated Council and development issues relating to resort marketing, resort master-planning development and architecture construction issues, related planning, affordable housing and other related issues including visits to the Aspen Institute, Rocky Mountain Institute, Aspen Council Colorado, Whistler Council, Whistler Resort marketing association and two of North America's leading development companies Intrawest Construction Limited and Vail Associates and many other appointments.

Research and Property Development

I have also undertaken extensive travel including attending conferences primarily in China, Malaysia, Singapore, North America, Europe and Australasia researching property developments in particular those that are relevant to Queenstown. Those (amongst many others) include The Eden Project Cornwall UK, affordable housing in Whistler BC, Vancouver, Colorado; non-urban development including the renowned development designed by Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) at Seaside and Rosemary Beach Florida.

ATTACHMENT B: LETTERS OF SUPPORT



**QUEENSTOWN
TRAILS TRUST**

Tuesday, 15 December 2015

*Alastair Porter
Co-Managing Director
Remarkables Park Ltd
Level 3, Von House
Remarkables Park Town Centre
Hawthorne Drive
Queenstown*

Dear Alastair

Re: New Gondola Proposed for Queenstown

At our recently held Board of Trustees meeting we discussed the November 19, 2015 announcement by Remarkables Park Ltd (RPL) for a proposed new gondola development which is planned to link Remarkables Park to The Remarkables alpine recreation area.

The Queenstown Trails Trust is supportive of business expansion and product development which enhances the experience of users and encourages new users to engage and enjoy the variety of trails throughout the Wakatipu. The opportunity of mountain bikers and hikers utilising the new terrain the gondola would offer is a great asset to Queenstown. We believe this project would add even more weight to the viability of the previously discussed construction of a cycle trail running alongside the true right of the Kawarau River from Boyd Road to Chard Farm incorporating Cone Peak Station.



**QUEENSTOWN
TRAILS TRUST**

We wish you and the RPL team all of the very best as this project progresses.

Yours sincerely

Tony McQuitkin

Chairman

Queenstown Trails Trust

07 June 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Queenstown Park Gondola

Destination Queenstown (DQ) is the Regional Tourism Organisation responsible for promoting Queenstown as a visitor destination. Our role is to promote Queenstown to both international and domestic markets to motivate travel to our region. One of DQ's interests is the quality of the visitor experience in Queenstown and is something we monitor through regular research. We support initiatives and investment in projects that serve to improve the overall Queenstown visitor experience.

It is Destination Queenstown's view that the proposed Queenstown Park Gondola is a major piece of new tourism infrastructure that will further strengthen Queenstown's international visitor appeal and we are pleased to provide this letter of support for the project.

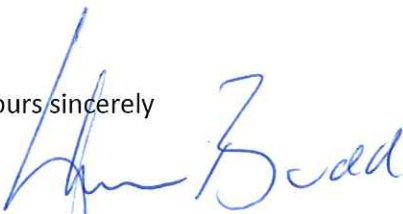
The continued development of new tourism products, experiences and venues is essential to continue to leverage the growth in tourism and deliver a world-class visitor experience. New tourism infrastructure provides additional capacity for the industry, additional reasons to visit as well as providing an incentive for repeat visitation.

The new Queenstown Park Gondola will undoubtedly appeal to both the leisure and conference and incentive visitor markets and would provide a year-round, four season attraction, assisting with driving visitor numbers and spend in the region.

Strengthening Queenstown and New Zealand's tourism appeal amidst strong international competition is crucial and new tourism product strongly assists in this matter.

If you would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Graham Budd
Chief Executive
Destination Queenstown

Destination Queenstown
PO Box 353, Queenstown 9300, New Zealand
+64 3 441 0700



QUEENSTOWN TRAILS TRUST

Thursday, 8 June 2017

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Letter of Support for RPL to form a trail through Queenstown Park Station

On behalf of the Queenstown Trails Trust, it gives me great pleasure to write a letter in support of the submission from Remarkables Park Limited to form a recreational trail and associated bridges from Boyd road, through Queenstown Park Station to Owens Creek and ultimately all the way to Chard Farm.

The Queenstown Trails Trust, formed in 2002, are responsible for the development and maintenance of over 120kms of cycling and walking Trails in the Wakatipu Basin. In 2012, we opened the Queenstown Trail which is one of the 22 Great Rides of the Nga Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails network. Our 10yr strategic plan 'Queenstown Trails for the Future 2015-2025' identifies a need for connectivity between our communities, multi-modal transport opportunities and maintenance of a world class visitor experience

The opportunities afforded by this trail would be a very welcome addition to the existing trail network. Queenstown Park Station enjoys a northern aspect with good sunshine for a fantastic year-round recreational experience, as well as playing a pivotal role in connecting the fast-growing communities of Lake Hayes, Bridesdale Farm and Shotover Country with a proposed new commuter trail from Jacks Point and Hanley's Farm to Boyd Road.

We also wish to lend our support to the provision of pedestrian bridges over the Kawarau river, which will allow for an essential commuter corridor for children to commute to the new Wakatipu High School.

We look forward to working closely with Remarkables Park Limited on any opportunities for the development of trails which bring a tangible benefit to future generations of Queenstown's and the region's economic success as a world class tourist destination.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams
CEO
Queenstown Trails Trust

June 2017

To Whom It May Concern

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is pleased to write in support of the proposal for a new Queenstown Park Gondola and associated developments.

TIA is the peak body for the tourism industry in New Zealand. With over 1500 members responsible for 85% of the industry's direct revenue, TIA represents a range of tourism-related activities including hospitality, accommodation, adventure and activities, attractions and retail, airports and airlines, as well as related tourism services.

The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry. This includes working for members on advocacy, policy, communication, events, membership and business capability. The team I lead is based in Wellington.

New Zealand is enjoying a tourism boom. We are one of the most appealing countries in the world to visit. Ensuring that sufficient infrastructure is in place to manage and take best advantage of that popularity is the top priority for the tourism industry.

The Queenstown Park Gondola is a piece of major new tourism infrastructure, which promises to:

- Deliver a world-class tourism experience
- Appeal to all market segments
- Provide a year round attraction
- Strengthen New Zealand's international appeal
- Increase tourism spend

Private sector investment on this scale is to be applauded. The Gondola is part of an overall vision to develop world-class facilities at Remarkables Park, linked to a High Country station, Queenstown Park and the Remarkables skifield.

TIA views these plans as being complementary to the existing Queenstown attractions.

In Queenstown, New Zealand's most popular destination, new product, venues and experiences are essential if we are to fully capitalise on the unprecedented growth opportunities that tourism presents.

Yours sincerely



Chris Roberts

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA
Level 4, 79 Boulcott Street, PO Box 1697
Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Strategic Partners supporting the TIA and the tourism industry

P +64 4 499 0104 E info@tia.org.nz W tia.org.nz

9 June 2017

Kia ora,

I am writing in support of the significant new tourism infrastructure that is proposed for the Queenstown region as the Chief Executive of Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ). We are an association with over 300 members from the Business Events Industry including Hotels, Convention Bureaux, Venues, Theming, Catering, AV, Attractions, covering New Zealand.

We work with a number of partners here in NZ and Australia and have MOU's with Air NZ and TNZ to work to promote the Business Events capability in particular Australia and here in New Zealand.

We own and operate MEETINGS, recently attended by the Acting Prime Minister, Minister Bennett, and the leading Business Events Trade show in Auckland. This is attended by the regions including Queenstown Bureau, hosted buyers from Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, Asia and China.

CINZ's role in the industry is to Educate, have a strong Industry Voice, provide Insights to our members and provide business Opportunities to assist in making the members ROI that much stronger.

Another part and an extremely important part of our role is to support the industry as they seek to bring new opportunities to market. It is for this reason that I write. The Queenstown Park Gondola is a piece of infrastructure that we, CINZ, support.

New Zealand is in a competitive environment in the Conferencing and Incentive market. We continually need to develop and innovate our offering to ensure that we attract Conferences and Incentives of the highest value to New Zealand.

We know that our delegates spend almost double that of a FIT Tourist per day, they are high value and in many instances repeat visitors. Queenstown is seen as a destination that many aspire to. The positioning of the proposed Queenstown Park Gondola strengthens Queenstown and New Zealand on the International Stage.

I am sure you will all be aware of the capacity constraints that the industry experiences. The C&I Delegates in most instances arrive in the shoulder to off season. The already consented Convention Centre will maximize this important sector when fully functional. The addition of the Gondola will add a component to the offering that in many instances cannot be replicated. The ability for

delegates to access a year round high quality high country tourism experience within close proximity to the conference venue and hotel accommodation is something quite unique

Should you wish to discuss this further I am happy to speak in person or email.
Nga mihi,

Sue Sullivan

Chief Executive

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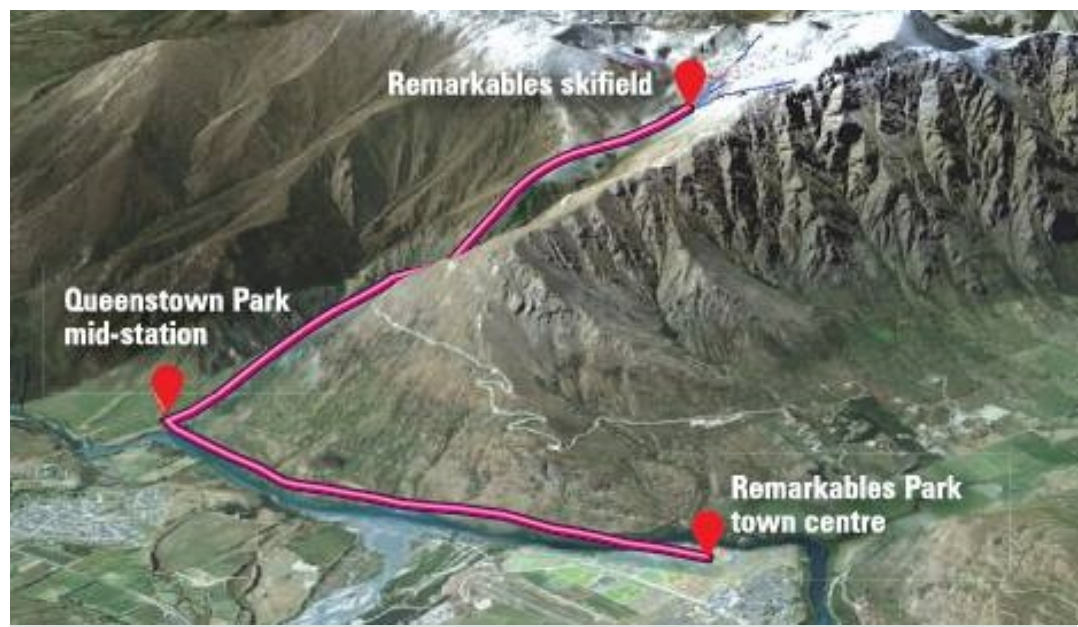
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Competitor praises \$50m gondola plan

Home » News » Queenstown Lakes
By Guy Williams on Fri, 20 Nov 2015
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The proposed route. Graphic: ODT

The proposed route. Graphic: ODT

The company behind a \$50 million plan to build a gondola on the Remarkables has won plaudits from its main competitor.
Porter Group's proposed 10km gondola from the Remarkables Park Town Centre in Frankton to the Remarkables skifield's base building is "ambitious" and deserves to be congratulated, Skyline Enterprises chairman Mark Quickfall says.

"That was despite the prospect of competition for the gondola it has operated above Queenstown's CBD for nearly 50 years.

"Competition is a reality, and if Skyline was afraid of it we wouldn't be in business."

Doubt over gondolas

Queenstown was in competition with the rest of the world, and offering visitors more options was good for tourism in the area.

But the consenting process would be a challenge, and success was not guaranteed, Mr Quickfall said.

The gondola would start by the Porter Group's proposed conference centre and run across and along the Kawarau River before heading



Mark Quickfall

Mark Quickfall

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up to the ski area.

The company expects to lodge a consent application with the Queenstown Lakes District Council early next year.

Porter Group chairman Alastair Porter said the response since yesterday's announcement had been overwhelmingly positive, and he revealed more details of the plan.

The gondola's base station and the convention centre would be sited on a "gondola events plaza" that he expected to become the focus of hotel and retail development.

With hotel occupancy rates in central Queenstown running at more than 90%, the new facilities would act as a "catalyst" for new hotels, and Porter Group was already in discussions with several operators.

The gondola would have a mid-station where visitors would have the option of getting off. Tourist activities would eventually be developed there, including a farm-visit operation.

His staff had held "good, constructive discussions" about the plan with the Otago Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and Queenstown Lakes District Council in the past few days, Mr Porter said.

Queenstown Lakes Mayor Vanessa van Uden could not be reached for comment, while Minister of Conservation Maggie Barry said in a statement she could not talk about the proposal because Doc had yet to receive an application for a concession.

Doc statutory manager for Central Otago John Roberts said he had attended a briefing on the project with the developers this week.

He confirmed the gondola would require a Doc concession because it extended up into the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve, but did not have an opinion on the project's merits.

"We just have to let the process run," Mr Roberts said.

Tourism New Zealand chief executive Kevin Bowler said the gondola could deliver significant benefits to the region.

The tourism industry was experiencing spectacular growth at the moment but there were constraints on how much growth the region could accommodate.

"We consider new investment a key part of the solution, so it's exciting to see some lateral thinking and new ideas being brought to the table."

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Reaction: new gondola 'exactly what's needed'

PHILIP CHANDLER

TOURISM NZ boss Kevin Bowler believes the gondola could deliver significant benefit to the region.

"The tourism industry is experiencing spectacular growth at the moment but as everyone in Queenstown will know, there are constraints to how much growth the region can accommodate.

"We consider new investment a key part of the solution so it is exciting to see some lateral thinking and new ideas being brought to the table.

"We look forward to hearing the response from the community and seeing how this proposal progresses."

Destination Queenstown boss Graham Budd says Porter Group's proposal is "fabulous for our destination but also exactly what's needed in tourism infrastructure".

"Tourism is very competitive internationally,

Key numbers

Estimated \$50m cost

9.8km long

27-minute trip

Travels 6m a second

Capacity 1100 passengers an hour

Vertical climb 1270m

140 detachable eight-seater cabins

Includes bend station and mid-station

Summer price about \$70-\$75

Winter price (for ski pass holders) about \$25-\$30

and we cannot rest on our laurels.

"The fabulous thing about gondolas in general is they open up access to areas that people otherwise wouldn't be able to see or be a part of.

"Unless you're a skier or a reasonably hardy climber you don't typically get up into the Remarkables, and this is just going to open that up for many more people to see and experience."

The Remarkables ski field's access road will be sealed to the 10km mark in time for next winter.

That'll cap off \$45 million of improvements by owner NZSki over the past two years, including installing a new chairlift and completing the new base building in June.

NZSki chairman Sir John Davies says the proposed gondola comes at a time of significant tourism growth —

both present and predicted.

"Obviously it will be an attraction."

It will also mean NZSki can use its new base building 365 days a year, rather than just during the ski season.

Leading NZ tourism consultant Stephen Hamilton says the gondola will further boost Queenstown's world-class visitor experience.

"It has the potential to deliver immeasurable economic benefits to the resort's many businesses."

NZ Tourism Research Institute director Professor Simon Milne says it will add value to The Remarkables' winter experience.

"Perhaps even more significant is the opportunity to create a new iconic year-round visitor experience in the Queenstown region, an experience that also offers opportunities for numerous spinoff activities including mountain biking and walks.

scoop@scene.co.nz

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