

UPPER CLUTHA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY (INC.)

**MEMORANDUM IN REGARD TO THE HEARING PANEL MEMORANDUM
PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN MATTERS AFFECTING WAKATIPU BASIN**

To: The Chairman, District Plan Hearing Panel.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the memorandum received yesterday. The Society sees considerable merit in the memorandum where it says:

“We are concerned that, without careful assessment, further development within the Wakatipu Basin has the potential to cumulatively and irreversibly damage the character and amenity values which attracts residents and other activities to the area.

In addition, we consider there is some merit in the proposition that the rural character and amenity values of the Wakatipu Basin do not derive predominantly from farming and agricultural activities

The Hearing Panel has reached the preliminary view that what is required is a detailed study of the Wakatipu Basin floor so as to:

- a) Identify the environmental characteristics and amenity values of the area that should be maintained and enhanced, noting that these will vary across the Wakatipu Basin floor;*
- b) Identify those areas able to absorb development without adversely affecting the values derived in (a) and without adversely affecting the values associated with the surrounding Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features;*
- c) Identify those areas that are unable to absorb such development;*
- d) Determine whether, given the residual development already consented, there is any capacity for further development in the Wakatipu Basin floor and, if there is, where it should be located and what form it should take.”*

While the Society can see that problems relating to subdivision and development in the Wakatipu Basin, especially in relation to cumulative effects, have the potential to significantly degrade landscape values in some parts of the Wakatipu Basin, the submitters to the Proposed District Plan appear to be trying to say that the adverse effects in the Wakatipu Basin have gone beyond the point of no return. The Society strongly disagrees with the submitters. It agrees with the Hearing Panel that this is not the case, and that, therefore, a study of the basin floor is needed as described above.

However, the Society is concerned at the Queenstown-centric nature of the memorandum. In relation to the specific issue addressed by the memorandum, rural living in the Rural Zone, Council planner Mr. Barr expresses his opinion in his right of reply on Chapter 21 Rural where he says¹:

“6.10...I also do not support it [rezoning of parts of the Wakatipu Basin in the Rural Zone for rural living] because it singles out the Wakatipu Basin and there are other areas within the Rural Zone where this matter is applicable, or could become similarly applicable,

¹ Reply on Chapter 21-Rural dated 3rd June 2016

within the life of the Proposed District Plan such as parts of the Wanaka Basin and Hawea Flat.

6.11 I acknowledge that rural living is one of the broad range of other activities that could seek to locate within the Rural Zone, but do not support reference to the Wakatipu Basin alone.”

It is clear that Mr. Barr does not see that separate rules for the Wakatipu Basin are appropriate because in the lifetime of this plan, perhaps as long as 17 years from now, the same issue will arise in other parts of the district. We agree with the conclusion reached by Mr. Barr.

In fact this issue is already extant in the Upper Clutha Basin. The Society has submitted evidence on the cumulative effects of development now being experienced in the Upper Clutha Basin²:

“It has also been the Society’s experience that in relation to the issue of cumulative effects the Operative District Plan is not always “effective”. The large number of building platforms granted consent...east of Wanaka and south of the Clutha River is testimony to this..... Within the 3880 ha marked area I have counted 195 building platforms and the extensive Wanaka Airport complex is also within this area. It follows that development density within this area is already below 20 ha per residential building platform, a density that in my opinion degrades landscape values.....93 of the platforms shown have not yet been developed.”

The memorandum makes the point in relation to the Wakatipu Basin:

“...it is apparent to us from those maps that a considerable residual potential to erect residential units on RBPs exists in the Wakatipu Basin at present.”

The same “considerable residual potential” exists in relation to the 93 building platforms yet to be developed in the area east of Wanaka described above.

It appears to the Society that if a “detailed study of the Wakatipu Basin floor” is to be carried out in the manner described above, then the same study should also be carried out in the Upper Clutha Basin floor.

Julian Haworth
Secretary/Treasurer
Upper Clutha Environmental Society

2nd July 2017