

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 Steve Skelton

26 June 2026

Submitter's solicitors:

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**anderson
lloyd.**

May it please the Panel

Qualifications and experience

- 1 My full name is Stephen Russell Skelton.
- 2 I am the Director of Patch Limited (Patch), a landscape architecture and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown.
- 3 I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Landscape Architecture (First Class Honours) from Lincoln University. I have been a Registered Member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) for approximately 10 years.
- 4 I have worked in the landscape architecture and landscape planning profession in New Zealand for approximately 13 years, undertaking work across both the public and private sectors. Prior to establishing Patch, I held the position of Landscape Planner with Lakes Environmental, the planning arm of Queenstown Lakes District Council at the time, and subsequently worked as a Landscape Architect with an established Queenstown-based landscape architecture practice.
- 5 I founded Patch in 2016. Since that time I have led a wide range of landscape architecture, landscape planning and urban design projects throughout Otago and Southland. The practice provides services across the full spectrum of landscape architecture and landscape planning, including master planning, residential and commercial landscape design, landscape management planning, ecological restoration planning, visual simulations and the preparation of landscape and visual assessments in support of resource consent, plan change and Environment Court processes.
- 6 A significant component of my professional practice involves the assessment of landscape and visual effects associated with development within Outstanding Natural Landscapes, Outstanding Natural Features and other highly sensitive landscapes. I have prepared expert evidence and participated in Environment Court proceedings, mediation processes, expert conferencing and council hearings relating to landscape planning matters throughout the Queenstown Lakes District and wider Otago region.
- 7 Notable projects I have been involved with include Treespace, Queenstown, the Kāramata Peak urban development on Queenstown Hill, Emerald Bluffs in West Wanaka, the Northlake and Northbrook developments in Wanaka, the Kīrimoko Summit Edition in Wanaka, and

numerous other plan change, rezoning and resource consent projects and designs throughout the district.

- 8 I have also been closely involved in a number of strategic planning and landscape assessment processes within the Queenstown Lakes District that have required detailed consideration of landscape character, landscape values, landscape capacity and the identification of appropriate locations for growth and development. These include the Wakatipu Basin's Schedule 24.8 process, Walter Peak Rural Tourism Zone, the Ladies Mile Masterplan, the Queenstown Hill Urban Growth Boundary extension, the Northlake and Northbrook developments, the Kīrimoko Summit Edition, and numerous private plan changes, rezoning proposals and resource consent applications within the District. This work has involved the assessment of landscape sensitivity and capacity at both site-specific and district-wide scales and has provided me with extensive experience in evaluating the relationship between landscape values, development potential and planning provisions.
- 9 I first came to the Queenstown Lakes District in 2002 and have developed a detailed familiarity with the landscapes of the Upper Clutha and Wakatipu Basins. I have visited the Mata-au Clutha River corridor on numerous occasions over many years and have experienced the landscape from a variety of perspectives, including from public roads, recreation trails, the river itself and from the air.
- 10 In relation to this matter, I undertook site visits on 23 June 2026. These site visits included observations from within the Priority Area, surrounding public roads, recreation trails and adjoining properties, together with a review of aerial photography, topographic information, planning provisions and the evidence prepared by other expert witnesses.

Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses

- 11 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with that Code and I agree to comply with it. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

Scope of Evidence

- 12 My evidence addresses matters raised in the submissions lodged by Dirk and Rebecca Venter (**Venter**), the NW & DJ Pittaway Family Trust

(Pittaway), and Kathryn and Vaughn Woodfield (**Woodfield**) in relation to the Upper Clutha Landscape Priority Area Schedules.

13 My evidence relates to the general area that includes land owned by the Pittaways, Venters and Woodfields as well as the following Poplar Beach landowners, who I understand support the submissions of the Venters and Woodfields in particular, as neighbouring owners in the Poplar Beach area that I address in my evidence. The Poplar Beach landowners intend to present lay evidence in support of the Venter's and Woodfield's submissions and in support of the concerns about, and changes sought to the Schedule:

(a) Lloyd Williams and Sharon Poulson: Lot 17 DP 325795.

(b) Chris and Jenny Prebble: Lot 5 DP 325795.

(c) Nathan and Shelley Simon: Lot 3 DP 325795.

(d) Tim and Vicky Barke: Lot 2 DP 325795.

(e) Colin and Dawn Pollard: Lot 1 DP 325795.

14 I refer to these collectively as, **the Poplar Beach landowners**.

15 In relation to the Venter and Woodfield submissions and the Poplar Beach Landowners, my evidence addresses the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule (Schedule 21.22.25). In relation to the Pittaway Family Trust submission, my evidence addresses both the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule (Schedule 21.22.25) and the Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area Schedule (Schedule 21.23.9).

16 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed and considered the following documents:

(a) The notified Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule (Schedule 21.22.25);

(b) The notified Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area Schedule (Schedule 21.23.9);

(c) The submissions lodged by Dirk and Rebecca Venter, the NW & DJ Pittaway Family Trust, and Kathryn and Vaughn Woodfield;

(d) The evidence of Ms Bridget Gilbert prepared on behalf of Queenstown Lakes District Council;

- (e) The amendments to the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule recommended by Ms Gilbert;
 - (f) The relief sought by the submitters and the associated tracked changes prepared in response to the notified Schedule;
 - (g) Relevant provisions of the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan, including Chapters 3, 6, and 21.
 - (h) Aerial photography, topographic information and publicly available mapping relating to the Mata-au Clutha River corridor and surrounding landscapes;
 - (i) Site observations undertaken on 23 June 2026; and
 - (j) My own professional knowledge and experience of the Upper Clutha Basin and Queenstown Lakes District landscapes gained over more than two decades living and working within the district.
- 17 For ease of reference, my evidence first addresses the Pittaway Family Trust submission insofar as it relates to the Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area. I then address the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule and the relief sought by the Venter, Pittaway and Woodfield submissions and the Poplar Beach Landowners in relation to that Priority Area.

Summary of considerations

- 18 In summary, my evidence concludes that:
- (a) The Mata-au Clutha River is appropriately identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature, and I generally agree with the majority of the attributes and values identified in the Schedule and by Ms Gilbert.
 - (b) The Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area is strongly influenced by the presence of the airport and associated development, and aspects of the Schedule overstate the extent to which gateway, greenbelt, naturalness, tranquility and rural approach values are experienced in this part of the Basin.
 - (c) The portion of Pittaway land captured within the Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area is of limited significance to the wider landscape area and there is merit in refining the Schedule extent and character descriptions applying to that locality.

- (d) The Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area contains a number of distinct character areas, including the Poplar Beach terrace and Horseshoe Bend peninsula landscapes, which exhibit differing character, levels of modification, sensitivity and landscape capacity.
- (e) The Schedule overstates the consistency of naturalness, remoteness and wildness across the entirety of the Priority Area and does not adequately reflect the varying landscape conditions that exist on the ground.
- (f) The Poplar Beach terrace exhibits an established rural living and productive landscape character that differs materially from the active river corridor and warrants more specific recognition within the Schedule.
- (g) The Horseshoe Bend peninsula exhibits a combination of natural character, vegetation, landform containment and visual separation that creates a more varied landscape capacity profile than is currently recognised.
- (h) The Schedule's capacity ratings should more appropriately reflect the differing character, sensitivity and levels of modification present across the Priority Area. Where relevant the capacity ratings should also acknowledge site specific capacity that has already been provided for through decision making by the Courts.
- (i) Parts of the landscape, particularly within the Horseshoe Bend peninsula and established rural living environments, possess a greater ability to absorb certain activities than is presently recognised by the Schedule, provided those activities are carefully located, designed and integrated with existing landform and vegetation patterns.
- (j) The amendments sought by Dirk and Rebecca Venter, the NW & DJ Pittaway Family Trust and Kathryn and Vaughn Woodfield would improve the accuracy and internal consistency of the Schedule while continuing to appropriately recognise and protect the values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF.

19 The following sections of my evidence address the specific matters raised by the submitters and the extent to which I agree or disagree with the notified Schedule and the evidence of Ms Gilbert. I first address the Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area insofar as it relates to the Pittaway Family Trust submission. I then turn to the Mata-au Clutha

River Priority Area and the relief sought by the Venter, Pittaway and Woodfield submissions as supported by the Poplar Beach landowners.

Wānaka Airport Environs Priority Area

- 20 I have reviewed the Pittaway Family Trust submission in relation to the Wānaka Airport Environs and undertaken a review of the mapped extent of the Schedule in the vicinity of the submitter's land. In my opinion, there is merit in retaining landscape boundaries that generally follow recognisable landscape and geomorphological features rather than cadastral boundaries. This typically results in a more coherent and defensible landscape assessment framework and avoids arbitrary distinctions arising solely from land ownership patterns.
- 21 However, I also acknowledge that the portion of the Pittaway land captured within the Schedule is relatively small in the context of the wider landscape area and does not appear to make a significant contribution to the overall integrity or legibility of the mapped landscape. In my opinion, excluding Lot 1 DP 25276 from the Schedule would not materially alter the character, values or functioning of the wider Wānaka Airport Environs Rural Character Landscape Area. Conversely, retaining only a small portion of the property within the Schedule has the potential to create unnecessary complexity and uncertainty for future land management and development of the site.
- 22 I also agree with a number of the submitter's observations regarding the existing character of the wider airport environs. The landscape is influenced by the presence of Wānaka Airport, associated airport infrastructure, aviation activities, surrounding road networks, rural industrial activities and a range of other existing rural, commercial and consented activities. Collectively these elements contribute to a landscape that is more modified and developed in character than many other rural landscapes within the Upper Clutha Basin.
- 23 In my opinion, the airport forms the dominant organising feature within this part of the basin and has a substantial influence on the way the landscape is experienced. As a consequence, I consider references to high levels of naturalness, remoteness, tranquillity or quietness should be treated with caution given the proximity to the airport and urban areas. While open rural landscapes remain present, the landscape experience is strongly influenced by aircraft movements, airport infrastructure, surrounding roads and the wider pattern of development that has occurred in proximity to the airport.
- 24 I also question the extent to which the area continues to function as a memorable gateway and greenbelt approach to Wānaka in the manner

described within the Schedule. While the rural land surrounding the airport undoubtedly contributes to the wider rural setting of the Upper Clutha Basin, the growth of Wānaka, the establishment and expansion of airport-related activities, and the increasing concentration of commercial, recreational, rural living and infrastructure activities in this vicinity have altered the way in which people experience arrival into the township. In my opinion, many residents and visitors now perceive themselves as having effectively arrived at Wānaka upon reaching the airport environment, rather than experiencing a prolonged transition through a distinctly rural gateway landscape. Accordingly, while the area contributes to the broader rural setting of Wānaka, I consider the gateway and greenbelt attributes described in the Schedule are less pronounced than they may have been historically and should be considered in the context of the airport's strong influence on the character and experience of the area.

- 25 Notwithstanding these observations, I do not consider the landscape lacks value. Rather, I consider its values arise from a different combination of attributes than those identified elsewhere in the district. The open rural character, views towards the surrounding mountain ranges and the spatial separation between urban areas continue to contribute positively to landscape character. However, these values exist alongside, and are influenced by, the airport and other established development patterns.
- 26 Overall, I consider the small area of Pittaway land captured within the Schedule is of limited significance to the wider landscape area, while its inclusion will have a disproportionate effect on the submitter. For that reason, I consider there is merit in the relief sought by the submitter in relation to the mapped extent of the Schedule and in refining aspects of the character assessment to better reflect the influence of the airport and surrounding development patterns. I also agree that parts of the flat terrace land above the Mata-au Clutha River possess **some** landscape capacity for activities such as visitor accommodation, tourism activities, earthworks, rural living and transport infrastructure, provided those activities are appropriately located and designed having regard to the existing character, openness and landscape values of the area.

Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area

- 27 I now turn to the submissions of Dirk and Rebecca Venter, the NW & DJ Pittaway Family Trust and Kathryn and Vaughn Woodfield, supported by the Poplar Beach Landowners, in relation to the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area (Schedule 21.22.25).

- 28 While each submission seeks different relief, there are a number of common themes. Broadly, the submitters seek amendments to the Schedule to better recognise the varying character and levels of modification present across the Priority Area, to refine aspects of the identified attributes and values, and to provide a more nuanced assessment of landscape capacity. The Woodfield submission also seeks recognition of an existing site-specific earthworks rule applying to their property and raises concerns regarding the way the Schedule describes the naturalness and character of the terrace environments within the Priority Area.
- 29 In preparing my evidence, I have considered the relief sought by each submitter together with the notified Schedule, the amendments recommended by Ms Gilbert and my own observations of the Priority Area. While I do not necessarily agree with every aspect of the relief sought, I have assessed the matters raised from a landscape perspective and formed my own independent opinions regarding the character, values and landscape capacity of the Priority Area.
- 30 To assist the Hearing Panel, I first identify those matters where I generally agree with the evidence of Ms Bridget Gilbert and the Schedule. I then set out the areas where my opinion differs and explain the basis for those differences. Following this, I provide a more detailed assessment of the Poplar Beach terrace and Horseshoe Bend peninsula character areas, which I consider warrant greater recognition within the Schedule. Finally, I address the landscape capacity ratings and the specific amendments sought by the submitters.

Areas of Agreement with Ms Gilbert

- 31 I have reviewed the evidence of Ms Gilbert together with the amendments she recommends to the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule. In broad terms, I agree with much of Ms Gilbert's assessment of the Priority Area and the values she identifies. My evidence should not be interpreted as challenging the identification of the Mata-au Clutha River as an Outstanding Natural Feature ("ONF"), nor as opposition to the majority of the attributes and values identified within the Schedule. Rather, my evidence focuses on several specific areas where I consider the Schedule would benefit from a more refined assessment of landscape character, naturalness and landscape capacity.
- 32 I agree with the Schedule's conclusion that the Mata-au Clutha River is one of the defining landscape features of the Upper Clutha Basin and possesses outstanding natural feature values. I generally agree with the description of the physical attributes and values of the Priority Area as set

out in Ms Gilbert's Evidence in Chief, including her discussion of the scale, clarity, flow characteristics and visual prominence of the river and the contribution these make to the area's outstanding qualities.

- 33 I agree with the Schedule's assessment of the hydrological significance of the Mata-au Clutha River and the important role that the river plays in defining the character and identity of the Upper Clutha landscape. In particular, I agree with the recognition of the river as New Zealand's highest-volume river, the significance of its distinctive turquoise waters, its meandering planform, horseshoe bends and associated fluvial processes. These characteristics contribute strongly to the distinctiveness of the landscape and are appropriately recognised in both the Schedule and Ms Gilbert's evidence.
- 34 I also agree with the Schedule's assessment of the geomorphological significance of the Priority Area. The river corridor, escarpments, alluvial landforms and associated geomorphic features provide a highly legible expression of the natural processes that have shaped the Upper Clutha Basin. I agree that these landforms contribute significantly to the expressiveness, coherence and memorability of the landscape and form an important component of the ONF values identified by Ms Gilbert and in the Schedule.
- 35 I agree with the Schedule's assessment that the Mata-au Clutha River corridor possesses important ecological values. In particular, I agree with the recognition of the ecological significance of the indigenous vegetation communities, kānuka woodland, grey shrublands, dryland vegetation communities and habitat values associated with the river corridor. I also agree that these ecological attributes contribute positively to the landscape values of the Priority Area.
- 36 I further agree the Schedule's assessment of the strong cultural and associative values present within the Priority Area. I agree with her recognition of the significance of Mata-au to Kāi Tahu, including the river's role as a Statutory Acknowledgement Area and its association with mahika kai, wāhi tūpuna and traditional travel routes. I similarly agree with Ms Gilbert's recognition of the area's rich historic associations, including its role in gold mining, early European settlement, transportation routes, historic bridges, ferries and other heritage features which contribute to the Priority Area's associative values.
- 37 I also agree with the Schedule's assessment that the Mata-au Clutha River corridor is an important recreational resource and supports a wide range of recreational activities including walking, cycling, fishing, kayaking, rafting,

jet boating, swimming and camping. I agree that these activities contribute significantly to the way in which both residents and visitors experience and value the landscape and form an important component of the area's recognised landscape values.

- 38 I generally agree with the Schedule's conclusions regarding the coherence, legibility and aesthetic appeal of the Priority Area. In my opinion, the relationship between the river, escarpments and vegetation patterns creates a landscape that is visually readily understood. The scale of the river corridor, together with the contrast between the river and surrounding landforms, contributes to a highly memorable landscape experience. I generally adopt the Schedule's conclusions in this regard.
- 39 I also agree with the Schedule's that portions of the river corridor can provide a strong sense of immersion within the landscape and that experiences from within the river corridor itself are often distinct from those experienced from surrounding terraces and elevated landforms. However, as discussed later in my evidence, I differ from the Schedule's regarding the extent to which perceptions of naturalness, wildness, remoteness and seclusion are consistently experienced throughout the entirety of the mapped Priority Area. While I do not consider these qualities are uniformly present across the broader range of modified terrace environments included within the ONF.
- 40 Accordingly, my evidence should not be interpreted as a fundamental disagreement with Ms Gilbert's assessment of the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. I agree with the majority of the physical, associative and perceptual values identified by Ms Gilbert and generally support her description of the river corridor as an Outstanding Natural Feature of exceptional significance. My differences arise principally from the extent to which differing character areas are recognised within the Schedule, the degree of naturalness attributed to some modified terrace environments, and the resulting conclusions reached regarding landscape capacity within those locations. In my opinion, a more fine-grained assessment of character and capacity would better reflect the existing landscape while continuing to appropriately recognise and protect the outstanding values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF.

Character Differentiation Within the Priority Area

- 41 While I generally agree with the Schedule's assessment of the values associated with the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area, I differ with regard to the extent to which the Schedule recognises variation in character, sensitivity and landscape capacity across the Priority Area.

- 42 In my opinion, both the Schedule and Ms Gilbert's evidence tend to assess the Priority Area as a largely unified landscape. While I agree that the Mata-au Clutha River itself forms the defining element of the Priority Area and provides a common thread linking the various parts of the landscape, I do not consider the entirety of the mapped Priority Area exhibits the same landscape character, perceptual qualities or development capacity.
- 43 The Schedule identifies and specifically references a number of distinct landforms and landscape components including the Poplar Beach terrace, the Airport escarpment and terrace environment, the Hāwea moraine scarp, and the Horseshoe Bend peninsulas. I consider the inclusion of these distinct landforms within the Schedule acknowledges that the Priority Area is comprised of a series of different landscape attributes and values rather than a single homogeneous landscape unit.
- 44 While these landforms are generally all physically associated with the Mata-au Clutha River and contribute to the wider ONF, they are experienced differently, display differing patterns of vegetation and land use, and exhibit varying levels of modification and human influence. They also differ in terms of visibility, enclosure, legibility and their ability to absorb change.
- 45 For example, the experience of the active river corridor, its immediate escarpments, its moving surface and associated recreational trails is materially different from that experienced within the Poplar Beach terrace environment or from within highly modified productive farming environments. Similarly, the broad terrace and peninsula landscapes located between the Airport escarpment and Horseshoe Bend exhibit a different character from both the confined river corridor and the more developed rural living environments evident elsewhere within the Priority Area.
- 46 In my opinion, these differences are important because landscape character is intrinsically linked to landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity. Landscapes that exhibit differing levels of modification, differing degrees of naturalness, and differing visual and experiential characteristics will often display differing capacities to accommodate change.
- 47 While Ms Gilbert acknowledges the existence of these differing landforms and landscape components in parts of her evidence and the amended Schedule, the resulting assessment of values and capacity generally treats the Priority Area as a single landscape with relatively consistent characteristics and sensitivities.
- 48 In my opinion, a more fine-grained assessment is warranted. While I acknowledge that the landscape schedules are intended to be at a

broader, landscape scale, as this schedule has already acknowledged the presence of distinct landforms within this priority area, it is only appropriate that a more fine-grained assessment be undertaken. Such an assessment would continue to recognise the outstanding values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF while also acknowledging that certain parts of the Priority Area exhibit materially different character attributes, differing levels of modification, and consequently differing landscape capacities.

- 49 This issue is particularly relevant to the Poplar Beach terrace environment and the peninsula and terrace landscapes associated with the Horseshoe Bend area. In my opinion, these areas exhibit characteristics that distinguish them from the wider river corridor and warrant more specific recognition within both the descriptive and capacity components of the Schedule. I discuss these areas in greater detail below in my evidence.

Poplar Beach Character Area

- 50 In my opinion, the Poplar Beach terrace (**Attachment A**) represents one of the most distinctive and differentiated landscape environments within the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. While physically connected to the wider river corridor and contributing to the values of the ONF, it exhibits a markedly different character from the active river corridor, escarpments and more natural sections of the Priority Area. The Poplar Beach terrace displays a landscape character that has evolved through a combination of natural processes, productive land use, ecological restoration and most relevant rural living development. As such, it warrants more specific recognition within the Schedule than is currently provided.
- 51 The Poplar Beach terrace occupies a broad intermediate terrace positioned between the Mata-au Clutha River and the elevated terrace landscapes to the south. It is readily identifiable in the landscape due to its relatively flat landform, distinct escarpment edges, established pattern of rural living subdivision and increasing concentration of rural living development. The terrace is physically contained by the river corridor to the north and by the terrace escarpments and rising landforms to the south, creating a landscape that is both visually and functionally distinct from surrounding areas.
- 52 Unlike many other parts of the Priority Area, the dominant pattern of land ownership and occupation within Poplar Beach is one of large rural living holdings. The area contains a series of established lots generally ranging between approximately 20 and 40 hectares in size. Significantly, Council's recommended amendments to the Schedule now expressly acknowledge that "low density rural living and small farming on lots of 20–40ha is present

on the intermediate terrace at Poplar Beach". In my opinion, this amendment is important as it formally recognises what is readily apparent on the ground; namely that rural living is not simply an isolated or emerging activity within this part of the Priority Area, but rather forms a defining component of its existing landscape character.

- 53 The pattern of development within the Poplar Beach terrace differs materially from the character experienced within much of the river corridor itself. Numerous rural living dwellings, farm buildings, sheds, ancillary structures, accessways and associated curtilage areas are already established throughout the terrace environment. In addition, the upper terraces immediately beyond the Priority Area contain a number of rural living dwellings, many of which are visible on skylines, ridgelines and elevated terrace edges above the Poplar Beach terrace. While these dwellings sit outside the mapped Priority Area, they nonetheless form part of the landscape context within which the terrace is experienced and contribute to the settled rural living character evident throughout this part of the Mata-au Clutha River corridor. In my opinion, the character of Poplar Beach cannot be understood in isolation from these surrounding rural living environments.
- 54 These existing and anticipated patterns of development are not experienced as isolated intrusions within an otherwise natural landscape. Rather, they collectively contribute to a settled rural living character that is increasingly evident throughout the terrace. In my opinion, and excluding those parts of the Priority Area immediately adjoining the urban environments of Wānaka and Albert Town, the Poplar Beach terrace represents the most evident example of an established settlement pattern occurring within the Priority Area. The combination of large-lot rural living development, associated farm and residential buildings, established access networks, shelter planting, productive land uses and existing development rights creates a landscape that is experienced differently from the more natural and less developed sections of the river corridor.
- 55 The terrace also displays a broad range of productive and managed land uses including grazing, cropping, productive woodlots, orchard planting, shelterbelts, avenue tree planting, amenity landscaping, rural access tracks and associated land management infrastructure. Individual landowners have responded differently to the opportunities presented by these large rural living allotments, resulting in a landscape mosaic comprising varying degrees of development, ecological restoration, productive use and landscape modification. Collectively, these activities have created a landscape that exhibits a greater degree of domestication and human influence than many other parts of the Priority Area. While these

modifications do not diminish the contribution that the terrace makes to the wider ONF, they do influence how the landscape is experienced and contribute to a character that is more reflective of a managed rural living and productive landscape than a predominantly natural environment.

- 56 Importantly, several allotments remain undeveloped despite possessing existing development rights. In my opinion, the presence of undeveloped land should not be interpreted as evidence of a highly natural or undeveloped landscape. Rather, it reflects the staged manner in which rural living development is occurring across the terrace. The anticipated future establishment of additional dwellings, landscaping, rural buildings and associated activities is already embedded within the existing subdivision pattern and contributes to an evolving character that differs materially from the more natural and less developed parts of the river corridor.
- 57 Another distinguishing characteristic of the Poplar Beach terrace is the change in character that occurs between the immediate river margin and the intermediate terrace environment. While the river edge retains a stronger association with the natural and recreational qualities of the Mata-au Clutha River corridor and is well enclosed by willows trees and a kanuka clad terrace riser, the intermediate terrace is experienced quite differently. Here, the influence of rural living, productive land use and land management practices becomes increasingly apparent. This creates a discernible change in character moving from the river corridor onto the terrace itself.
- 58 Public accessibility also contributes to the character of the area. Unlike more remote sections of the river corridor, the Poplar Beach terrace is readily accessed via formed public roads and local road networks. The terrace is therefore experienced as part of a settled and occupied rural landscape rather than a remote or isolated natural environment. In my opinion, it also functions as an important transition landscape between the more developed rural and urban environments of the Upper Clutha Basin and the river corridor itself. For many residents and visitors approaching from the south and eastern parts of the Basin, the Poplar Beach terrace provides one of the most accessible opportunities to experience the Mata-au Clutha River within the context of the wider settled and productive landscape. In my opinion, this accessibility is an important component of the character and experiential qualities of this part of the Priority Area.
- 59 I also consider the influence of nearby airport operations to be relevant to the character of the area. While the airport is not a dominant visual feature throughout the terrace, the proximity of airport infrastructure and associated aircraft activity contributes to an awareness of the broader settled and

developed context of the Upper Clutha Basin. In my opinion, this further distinguishes the Poplar Beach terrace from landscapes such as the river corridor where perceptions of remoteness, seclusion or wildness are more strongly experienced.

- 60 Having reviewed both the Schedule and Ms Gilbert's evidence, I consider there is an inconsistency between the description of the Mata-au Clutha River landscape, the existing landscape character of Poplar Beach and the capacity ratings subsequently applied to that landscape. The Schedule acknowledges the presence of low-density rural living and small farming activities on 20–40 hectare lots as being land use patterns and features that are present within this Priority Area. It also acknowledges the modified nature of portions of the terrace environment and the presence of existing development. However, the capacity assessment generally continues to attribute very limited capacity to a broad range of activities throughout the area.
- 61 In my opinion, the existence of an established rural living landscape indicates that the landscape possesses a different character, sensitivity and ability to absorb change than parts of the Priority Area where naturalness, enclosure and ecological values are more dominant. It follows that landscape capacity should be informed not only by the presence of ONF values but also by the existing character and level of modification present within a particular part of the Priority Area.
- 62 For these reasons, I consider the Poplar Beach terrace warrants recognition as a distinct character area within the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area Schedule. In my opinion, the existing pattern of rural living development, productive land use, landscape modification and anticipated future development distinguishes this landscape from the wider river corridor and justifies a more nuanced assessment of both landscape values and landscape capacity.
- 63 I therefore consider that this part of the Priority Area should be specifically identified and described within the Schedule, and that the associated capacity ratings should more appropriately reflect the existing character and development pattern of that environment. While the area continues to contribute to the values of the wider ONF, I consider it exhibits a different sensitivity profile from many other parts of the Priority Area and, in some circumstances, may warrant different capacity ratings to those presently applied across the ONF as a whole. It is for these reasons that I have proposed amendments to the Priority Area Schedule, as set out in **Attachment [C]** to my evidence. In my opinion, those amendments provide a more accurate description of the existing character of the Poplar Beach

terrace and better align the Schedule's character descriptions and capacity assessments with the landscape conditions that currently exist on the ground.

Horseshoe Bend Peninsula Character Area

- 64 In my opinion, the Horseshoe Bend peninsula (**Attachment B**) represent one of the most distinctive and underappreciated landscape components within the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. While I agree it appropriately form part of the wider ONF, I consider it exhibits a combination of physical, visual and experiential characteristics that distinguish it from the active river corridor.
- 65 Importantly, the amended Schedule expressly recognises the Horseshoe Bends as distinct component of the Priority Area. In my opinion, this recognition is significant. Having recognised the Horseshoe Bends as a distinct landscape component, I consider it follows that these features should also be subject to a more specific assessment of character, values and capacity.
- 66 In undertaking my assessment of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula area, I note that the detailed LiDAR-derived contour information supplied by Council extends only to the vicinity of the Poplar Beach terrace and does not cover much of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula area. While broad topographic information remains available, the absence of more detailed contour data may partially explain why the subtle landform complexity of this landscape is not fully reflected in the Schedule or Ms Gilbert's assessment. Based on my site observations, I consider the Horseshoe Bend peninsula contains a considerably more intricate pattern of hollows, drainage features, subtle terraces and localised depressions than is readily apparent from aerial photography or broader scale mapping. In my opinion, these fine-grained landform characteristics are important because they contribute directly to the area's landscape character, visual containment and ability to absorb certain forms of carefully integrated development and landscape restoration.
- 67 The Horseshoe Bend peninsula is a physically distinctive landform within the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. It is largely defined by the meandering path of the Mata-au Clutha River, which wraps around the landform on three sides. Historic river flows and flood events have shaped the peninsula, creating a series of former overflow channels, subtle terraces, depressions, drainage features, hummocks and hollows. These fluvial processes have resulted in a varied and visually complex landscape that differs from both the broader open terrace environments and those

areas located immediately adjacent to the active river corridor. The relationship between the river and the landform creates a strong sense of physical separation from the wider Upper Clutha Basin and contributes to a distinct character that is more enclosed, varied and self-contained than many other parts of the Priority Area.

- 68 The resulting landform pattern has an important influence on how the landscape is experienced. While the hummocks, hollows, drainage channels and minor terraces may appear subtle when viewed from a broad landscape scale, they become increasingly apparent on the ground and contribute significantly to the area's character and visual complexity. Collectively, these features create a more fine-grained landscape with a greater degree of local enclosure and visual containment than many of the broader terrace environments elsewhere within the Priority Area. In my opinion, these characteristics are relevant not only to the landscape character of the peninsula, but also to its sensitivity and ability to accommodate change, as the varied topography frequently limits visibility and creates opportunities for development, restoration and land management activities to be integrated into the landscape in a manner not readily available elsewhere within the Priority Area. Such characteristics and the ability of specific parts of the horseshoe peninsula to absorb greater levels of development, should also be reflected in the landscape capacity ratings of the schedule. I consider these characteristics, together with the ability of specific parts of this character area to absorb a greater level of carefully integrated development, should be more appropriately recognised within the landscape capacity ratings contained in the Schedule.
- 69 Unlike the Poplar Beach terrace, where rural living and productive land use are dominant character influences, the Horseshoe Bend peninsula exhibits a stronger degree of natural character. This arises from the combination of indigenous and regenerating vegetation communities, the influence of the river corridor and its meandering path, the relative absence of development, and the varied landform which frequently limits visibility across the site.
- 70 Areas of regenerating kānuka, indigenous shrubland, rough pasture and naturally reverting vegetation are evident throughout the peninsulas. In my opinion, these vegetation patterns contribute positively to perceptions of naturalness and provide a strong connection to the ecological values associated with the wider river corridor.
- 71 I note that portions of the peninsula are subject to public access arrangements, including recreation easements and informal recreational use associated with the river corridor and the Reko Point Conservation Area. These public access opportunities contribute positively to the

experience of the landscape and provide opportunities for people to engage directly with the river environment. In my opinion, these public values are important and should continue to be recognised and enhanced where appropriate.

- 72 It is also important to recognise that the Reko Point Conservation Area and associated vegetation communities provide a degree of physical and visual separation between the elevated terrace environments and the active river corridor. While public access is available through parts of the landscape, much of the elevated terrace environment is not directly experienced from within the river corridor itself. Similarly, users of the publicly accessible areas are often unable to experience the river until they reach its margins, as vegetation, landform and the configuration of the peninsula frequently limit outward views. In my opinion, this distinction is relevant when considering landscape character and sensitivity, as portions of the elevated terrace environment are experienced differently from the river margins and exhibit a greater degree of separation from the primary recreational and visual focus of the river corridor.
- 73 While the area exhibits strong natural character values, I do not consider it appropriate to characterise the entirety of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula as uniformly sensitive to all forms of development. In my opinion, the varied landform, vegetation patterns and degree of visual containment create circumstances where sensitivity differs considerably across the landscape.
- 74 In particular, parts of the peninsula are visually self-contained. The combination of river bends, drainage channels, subtle terraces, localised depressions, existing vegetation and distance from public road corridors or recreation networks frequently limits visibility both into and across the landscape. As a result, some areas possess a greater ability to absorb carefully considered change than may be apparent from a broad-scale assessment.
- 75 In my opinion, this does not suggest that extensive development would be appropriate. Rather, it suggests that a more nuanced assessment of landscape capacity is warranted. The varied topography and vegetation patterns present opportunities for certain forms of development to be integrated into the landscape in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse landscape effects.
- 76 I consider that small-scale and carefully located development, where informed by a comprehensive landscape strategy, may in some circumstances be capable of maintaining and potentially enhancing the values of this part of the ONF. Such strategies could include the retention

and enhancement of indigenous vegetation, restoration planting, ecological enhancement, public access improvements, screening vegetation, management of wilding species, and the protection of visually sensitive landforms and river margins.

- 77 Importantly, the landscape characteristics that distinguish the Horseshoe Bend peninsula from other parts of the Priority Area are the very characteristics that may enable some areas to accommodate a greater degree of change. The varied topography, visual containment, existing vegetation patterns and physical separation created by the river provide opportunities for development to be integrated within the landscape while maintaining the broader values that underpin the ONF.
- 78 The distinction I draw is not between areas that are outstanding and areas that are not. Rather, it is between areas that possess differing abilities to absorb change while continuing to maintain the values that underpin their outstanding status.
- 79 In my opinion, the current Schedule does not fully recognise these distinctions. While it identifies the Horseshoe Bend peninsulas as a distinct landscape component, the subsequent assessment of values and capacity largely treats the areas in a similar manner to other parts of the Priority Area. I consider this approach understates the influence of localised landform, vegetation and containment characteristics on landscape sensitivity of this particular part of the PA.
- 80 For these reasons, I consider the Horseshoe Bend peninsulas warrants recognition as a distinct character area within the Schedule. While I agree that it contributes to the values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF and possess a higher degree of natural character than some other parts of the Priority Area, I also consider the Peninsula exhibits a more varied capacity profile than is presently reflected in the Schedule.
- 81 In my opinion, a more refined assessment would continue to recognise and protect the outstanding values of the ONF while also acknowledging that certain parts of the peninsulas possess a greater ability to accommodate appropriately designed and carefully integrated development, particularly where accompanied by landscape restoration, ecological enhancement, public access improvements and other measures that contribute positively to the long-term character and functioning of the landscape.

Naturalness

- 82 I generally agree with The Schedule's assessment that naturalness is an important attribute of the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area and that the

river itself displays a high degree of natural character. In particular, I agree with the assessment of the natural science values associated with the river corridor, the legibility of the river's geomorphic processes, and the contribution that the river itself makes to perceptions of naturalness within the wider landscape.

- 83 I also agree that portions of the river corridor provide experiences that are strongly influenced by the river itself and by the enclosing escarpments and vegetation that occur along sections of its margins. In these locations, natural character is often experienced as one of the defining characteristics of the landscape.
- 84 However, I respectfully differ from Ms Gilbert regarding the extent to which high levels of naturalness are experienced consistently throughout the entirety of the mapped Priority Area. In my opinion, the Schedule tends to attribute a relatively uniform perception of naturalness across a landscape that exhibits considerable variation in vegetation cover, land use, development patterns and human modification.
- 85 The Schedule itself recognises a range of existing modifications and human influences occurring within the Priority Area. These include rural living development, farming activities, dairy operations, silos, sheds, irrigation infrastructure, adjacency to urban areas, transmission infrastructure, pine plantations and other productive land uses. Similarly, Ms Gilbert acknowledges a range of existing activities and modifications throughout the Priority Area in her evidence.
- 86 In addition to these features, the wider Priority Area contains formed public roads, public recreation trails, cycle trails, rural access tracks, river access points, shelter planting, productive woodlots, areas of pastoral farming, aviation activity associated with the Wānaka Airport environment, and infrastructure associated with the broader Upper Clutha Basin. While these activities do not necessarily detract from the significance of the ONF, they do influence how naturalness is experienced.
- 87 In my opinion, naturalness within the Priority Area is not solely a function of landform. Rather, it is formed by the cumulative presence or absence of human influence and modification.
- 88 For example, portions of the Priority Area contain extensive areas of clearly modified landscape attributes. This is particularly evident around the margins of the Priority Area where settled and highly managed rural living and productive landscapes frequently adjoin, and occur within, the mapped ONF. Other areas are characterised by crack willow communities, exotic vegetation, plantation forestry and managed landscapes that, while

contributing positively to some aspects of landscape character, cannot reasonably be described as highly natural. While areas of regenerating kānuka shrubland are present and contribute positively to indigenous character and ecological values, these communities do not represent the endemic broadleaf forest and shrubland communities that are understood to have occupied much of the valley floor and lower terraces prior to human settlement and modification. In my opinion, the existing vegetation patterns, land use activities and degree of human modification indicate a landscape that retains a strong natural framework, but one that has been substantially influenced by both historical and contemporary human activity.

- 89 The broader context of the Priority Area is also relevant. The Mata-au Clutha River corridor extends between and adjacent to urban settlements including Wānaka, Albert Town and Luggate. Significant portions of the Priority Area are experienced in the context of nearby residential development, productive farming landscapes, airport activities, road networks and other infrastructure. In my opinion, these contextual influences are relevant when considering where the landscape sits on the spectrum of naturalness.
- 90 Landscape assessment generally recognises that naturalness exists on a continuum rather than as a binary condition. At one end of that spectrum are highly remote and largely unmodified wilderness environments where human influence is absent or barely perceptible. At the other end are highly modified urban and industrial environments where natural processes and natural character have been substantially displaced by human activity.
- 91 In my opinion, the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area sits towards the upper-middle portion of that spectrum. It possesses a strong natural framework arising from the river itself, the associated landforms, indigenous vegetation communities and ecological values. However, it is also a landscape that contains and is influenced by a range of productive, recreational and rural living activities. Similarly, significant sections of the river corridor and river margins are characterised by exotic vegetation communities, including crack willow and other introduced species, rather than indigenous riparian vegetation. Accordingly, while I agree that naturalness is an important attribute of the Priority Area, I do not consider it appropriate to characterise all parts of the Priority Area as exhibiting uniformly high levels of naturalness. Rather, naturalness varies across the Priority Area and reflects a landscape that combines strong natural landform and hydrological attributes with a substantial degree of historical and contemporary human modification.

- 92 This distinction is important because naturalness is one of the factors relied upon within the Schedule when determining landscape sensitivity and capacity. In my opinion, areas that display differing levels of naturalness should not necessarily be assumed to possess identical capacity characteristics. Rather, the degree of existing modification and the way in which naturalness is experienced should form part of a more nuanced assessment of landscape character and landscape capacity.
- 93 This issue is particularly relevant within the Poplar Beach terrace environment and parts of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula landscapes, where the degree of modification, land use and human influence differs materially from the active river corridor and adjacent escarpments. I discuss those areas in greater detail earlier in my evidence.

Remoteness and Wildness

- 94 Similar to my comments regarding naturalness, I respectfully differ from the Schedule's assessment of the extent to which perceptions of remoteness and wildness are experienced throughout the Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. While I acknowledge that the river corridor provides a valuable natural environment and an important recreational resource within the Upper Clutha Basin, I consider the Schedule overstates the degree to which the wider Priority Area can reasonably be characterised as remote or wild.
- 95 In my opinion, remoteness and wildness are attributes best understood on a spectrum. At one end are landscapes where evidence of human occupation, infrastructure and management is largely absent and users experience a strong sense of isolation from settlement and development. At the other are highly modified landscapes where human activity is a dominant component of the landscape experience. The Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area sits between these two extremes.
- 96 The river corridor undoubtedly provides opportunities for people to experience a natural river environment and engage with the hydrological, ecological and recreational values of the Mata-au Clutha River. However, those experiences occur within a landscape closely associated with settled and managed environments. The river corridor is bordered by rural living development, productive farming activities, public roads, recreation infrastructure and urban areas, and is traversed by an extensive network of public trails, access points and recreation easements that provide regular opportunities for public access and use.
- 97 During my own use of the river corridor for cycling, walking and boating, I have regularly encountered other users and observed numerous indicators of human occupation and management, including rural living development,

fences, access tracks, bridges, irrigation infrastructure, roads, informal camping areas and other elements associated with the settled landscapes adjoining the river corridor. While these features do not diminish the importance of the river corridor, they do influence the extent to which it can reasonably be described as remote or wild. Unlike more isolated backcountry environments, users of the Mata-au Clutha River are rarely separated from evidence of human occupation for extended periods.

- 98 Accordingly, while perceptions of remoteness and wildness may be experienced in some locations and at particular times, I do not consider these attributes are consistently experienced throughout the Priority Area or to the degree implied by the Schedule. In my opinion, the landscape is more accurately described as a highly valued and accessible river corridor situated within, and influenced by, a broader framework of settled, productive and managed landscapes. The defining experiential quality is therefore not one of remoteness or wilderness, but the opportunity to experience a natural river environment within the wider Upper Clutha Basin.

Landscape Capacity and Recommended Amendments

- 99 As discussed earlier in my evidence, I generally agree with the identification of the Mata-au Clutha River as an Outstanding Natural Feature and agree with much of the assessment undertaken by Ms Gilbert. However, I consider that parts of the capacity assessment contained within Schedule does not adequately reflect the varying landscape character, levels of modification and differing sensitivities present throughout the Priority Area.
- 100 In particular, I consider there is an inconsistency between the descriptive sections of the Schedule, which increasingly recognise the presence of rural living, farming and other modified landscape characteristics within parts of the Priority Area, and the capacity ratings which continue to apply a largely uniform and restrictive assessment across much of the landscape.
- 101 My recommended amendments seek to recognise the distinct attributes and values present within different parts of the Priority Area and to subsequently apply a more nuanced and fine-grained assessment of landscape capacity to those areas. The amendments do not seek to diminish the values of the ONF or facilitate inappropriate development. Rather, they seek to ensure that the Schedule's capacity ratings more accurately reflect the varying character, levels of modification and sensitivities evident across the Priority Area, particularly within the Poplar Beach terrace and portions of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula landscapes discussed earlier in my evidence.

102 While the preceding sections of my evidence primarily set out my areas of agreement and disagreement with the descriptions, attributes and values identified within the Schedule, the following sections provide commentary on those parts of the Priority Area that I consider warrant a more differentiated assessment of landscape capacity. In particular, I identify those areas that, in my opinion, exhibit distinct character attributes, differing levels of modification and varying sensitivities to change, and explain why I consider alternative capacity ratings are appropriate in those locations.

Visitor Accommodation

103 I consider the Schedule should more explicitly recognise that certain parts of the Priority Area possess a greater ability to absorb small-scale visitor accommodation than is presently acknowledged. In particular, I consider there is limited landscape capacity for visitor accommodation within areas of established rural living character, within existing buildings or building platforms, or where landform, vegetation and landscape containment can ensure development remains visually recessive and does not compromise the identified values of the Priority Area.

104 This is particularly relevant within the Poplar Beach terrace environment and portions of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula landscape discussed earlier in my evidence. These areas exhibit varying degrees of visual containment, and in the case of Poplar Beach, existing patterns of rural living development that distinguish them from the more sensitive and highly natural parts of the river corridor. In my opinion, these characteristics provide opportunities for carefully designed visitor accommodation to be integrated into the landscape while maintaining the values of the ONF.

105 My recommended amendment does not seek to create broad opportunities for visitor accommodation throughout the Priority Area. Rather, it recognises that landscape capacity is not uniform and that certain locations possess a greater ability to accommodate small-scale visitor accommodation where it is associated with existing development patterns or where landform and vegetation provide an appropriate degree of visual integration.

Earthworks

106 I generally support the Schedule's recognition that earthworks have the potential to adversely affect landscape values where they result in substantial modification of natural landform patterns or are undertaken in prominent locations. However, I consider the Schedule should more clearly recognise that limited earthworks are often an anticipated and necessary

component of rural land management, productive activities, ecological restoration, access formation and ongoing property management.

- 107 This is particularly relevant within the Poplar Beach terrace environment where the existing landscape is characterised by rural living development, productive land use, accessways, shelter planting, grazing and other managed landscape activities. This has been recognised and incorporated into the PDP at part 25.5.2 with regard to the Woodfield's land in Poplar Beach. In my opinion, earthworks associated with these activities are generally experienced as part of the ongoing management and evolution of the landscape rather than as foreign or unexpected interventions.
- 108 Similarly, portions of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula contain existing access routes, recreational easements, grazing activities and areas of active landscape management. In these locations, limited earthworks associated with access formation, track construction, restoration planting, erosion management, rural infrastructure and productive land use can often be accommodated without materially affecting the defining values of the Priority Area, particularly where they respond to existing landform patterns and are accompanied by appropriate landscape treatment.
- 109 In my opinion, the key consideration is not whether earthworks occur, but rather their scale, location, design and relationship with the receiving environment. Earthworks that respond to existing topography, avoid unnecessary landform modification and are integrated with restoration planting or productive land management activities will generally have a markedly different landscape outcome from large-scale landform alteration or engineering works. In this regard, I generally agree with the concerns raised in the Woodfield submission regarding the treatment of earthworks within parts of the terrace environment.
- 110 For this reason, I have proposed amendments that recognise limited landscape capacity for earthworks that support productive activities as well as additional trails, ecological restoration, public access and ongoing land management, provided those works protect the naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values of the Priority Area and are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing landform patterns. In my opinion, this approach better reflects the realities of managing these landscapes while continuing to appropriately recognise and protect the values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF.

Farm Buildings

- 111 As discussed earlier in my evidence, portions of the Priority Area, particularly within the Poplar Beach terrace environment, are already

characterised by productive land uses including grazing, cropping, shelter planting, woodlots, orchards and associated rural management activities. In these locations, productive land use forms an established and anticipated component of landscape character.

- 112 In my opinion, modestly scaled farm buildings associated with these activities are often experienced differently from other forms of built development. Where they are genuinely associated with pastoral or productive land uses, farm buildings frequently form part of the expected working character of rural landscapes and can reinforce, rather than detract from, the productive identity of the area.
- 113 This does not mean that farm buildings are appropriate throughout the Priority Area. In the more natural and less modified parts of the river corridor, farm buildings may have the potential to adversely affect natural character, openness and the experiential qualities of the landscape. However, in those areas already characterised by pastoral land uses and active land management, I consider there is some landscape capacity for modestly scaled farm buildings where they are carefully sited and designed.
- 114 In particular, I consider farm buildings are more readily accommodated where they are set within productive parts of the landscape and established access arrangements. The ability to locate buildings adjacent to existing landscape features can substantially reduce their prominence and allow them to be integrated into the broader pattern of rural land use.
- 115 For these reasons, I have proposed amendments to the Schedule that recognise some landscape capacity for modestly scaled farm buildings within those parts of the Priority Area characterised by pastoral land uses. In my opinion, this better reflects the existing character of these landscapes and the role that productive activities already play in shaping the visual and experiential qualities of the Priority Area.

Rural Living

- 116 Rural living is the activity for which I differ most significantly from the capacity assessment currently contained within the Schedule. While I agree that much of the Priority Area exhibits extremely limited or no capacity for additional rural living development, I do not consider this conclusion applies uniformly across the entirety of the ONF.
- 117 In particular, I consider portions of the Horseshoe Bend peninsula landscapes exhibit a combination of landform, vegetation, accessibility and visual containment characteristics that distinguish them from many other parts of the Priority Area. As discussed earlier in my evidence, these areas

are characterised by a fine-grained pattern of hollows, drainage features, terraces and established kānuka vegetation that create a greater degree of enclosure and visual complexity than is present within many of the broader terrace landscapes.

- 118 In my opinion, these characteristics are directly relevant to landscape capacity. The varied topography frequently limits outward visibility and creates opportunities for development to be integrated within existing landscape patterns. Similarly, areas of established kānuka vegetation, existing pasture clearings and modified land provide opportunities for carefully located development to be visually contained and contextualised within the receiving environment.
- 119 I also note that portions of the Horseshoe Bend part of the PA are physically separated from the primary river corridor by landform, vegetation and the Reko Point Conservation Area. As discussed earlier, parts of the elevated terrace environment are not directly experienced from within the river corridor itself and are experienced differently from those landscapes that form the immediate margins of the river. In my opinion, this distinction is relevant when considering landscape sensitivity and capacity.
- 120 Importantly, I do not consider that a broad pattern of additional rural living development would be appropriate throughout the Priority Area, nor do I consider that rural living activities could be accommodated across the entirety of the Horseshoe Bend or Poplar Beach parts of the PA. Rather, my assessment identifies that there are parts of the PA where localised landform containment, vegetation cover, existing access arrangements and the modified nature of existing pasture clearings indicate a greater ability to absorb carefully integrated rural living development without materially affecting the values of the ONF.
- 121 In my opinion, there is potential for a small number of additional rural living opportunities to be accommodated within parts of the Horseshoe Bend landscape where development can utilise existing access, respond to the existing landform pattern and be integrated with restoration planting and landscape management. Such opportunities would be highly site specific and dependent on detailed assessment, but I do not consider the landscape exhibits a uniformly "extremely limited or no capacity" rating across its entirety.
- 122 For these reasons, I have proposed amendments to the Schedule that recognise very limited landscape capacity for rural living on intermediate terraces and within those locations where existing landform and vegetation patterns can substantially reduce visibility and integrate development into

the surrounding landscape. In my opinion, this more accurately reflects the varied character and sensitivity of the Priority Area while continuing to recognise that rural living development would remain inappropriate in most locations within the ONF.


- 123 Importantly, the relief I seek does not challenge the Outstanding Natural Feature status of the Mata-au Clutha River nor promote widespread development within the Priority Area. Rather, it recognises that landscape capacity varies across the ONF and that a more nuanced assessment is appropriate where landform, vegetation, landscape context and existing patterns of modification demonstrably influence the ability of the landscape to absorb change.

Conclusion

- 124 In my opinion, the Mata-au Clutha River is appropriately identified as an Outstanding Natural Feature and I generally agree with the majority of the attributes and values identified within the Schedule and by Ms Gilbert. My evidence does not challenge the ONF status of the river, nor does it seek to diminish the importance of the values that underpin its recognition.
- 125 My principal area of disagreement relates to the extent to which the Schedule recognises variation in landscape character, naturalness, remoteness and wildness, sensitivity and landscape capacity across the Priority Area. In my opinion, the Priority Area is not experienced as a single homogeneous landscape. Rather, it comprises a number of distinct landscape environments that exhibit differing levels of modification, differing experiential qualities and differing abilities to absorb change.
- 126 In particular, I consider the Poplar Beach terrace and Horseshoe Bend peninsula areas possess distinct character attributes that warrant greater recognition within the descriptive and capacity components of the Schedule. While both areas continue to contribute strongly to the values of the ONF, they differ materially from the active river corridor in terms of landform, vegetation, development patterns, visibility and the way they are experienced.
- 127 I also consider that the Schedule overstates the consistency of naturalness, remoteness and wildness throughout the Priority Area. While these attributes are undoubtedly present and important, they are experienced to varying degrees across the landscape and should be assessed in the context of the existing rural living, productive, recreational and infrastructural influences that are evident throughout parts of the Priority Area.

128 In my opinion, the proposed amendments better align the Schedule's descriptions, attributes and capacity ratings with the landscape as it exists today, while continuing to appropriately recognise and protect the outstanding values of the Mata-au Clutha River ONF. I consider the proposed amendments improve the internal consistency of the Schedule by better aligning the identified values, character descriptions and capacity assessments with the landscape conditions that currently exist on the ground.

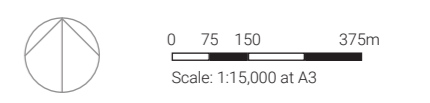


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 -  PROPOSED PRIORITY AREA

Project:
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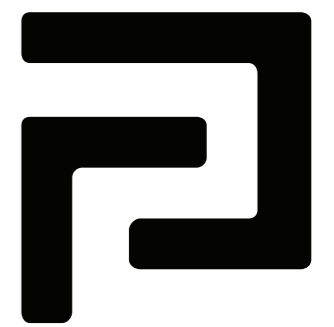
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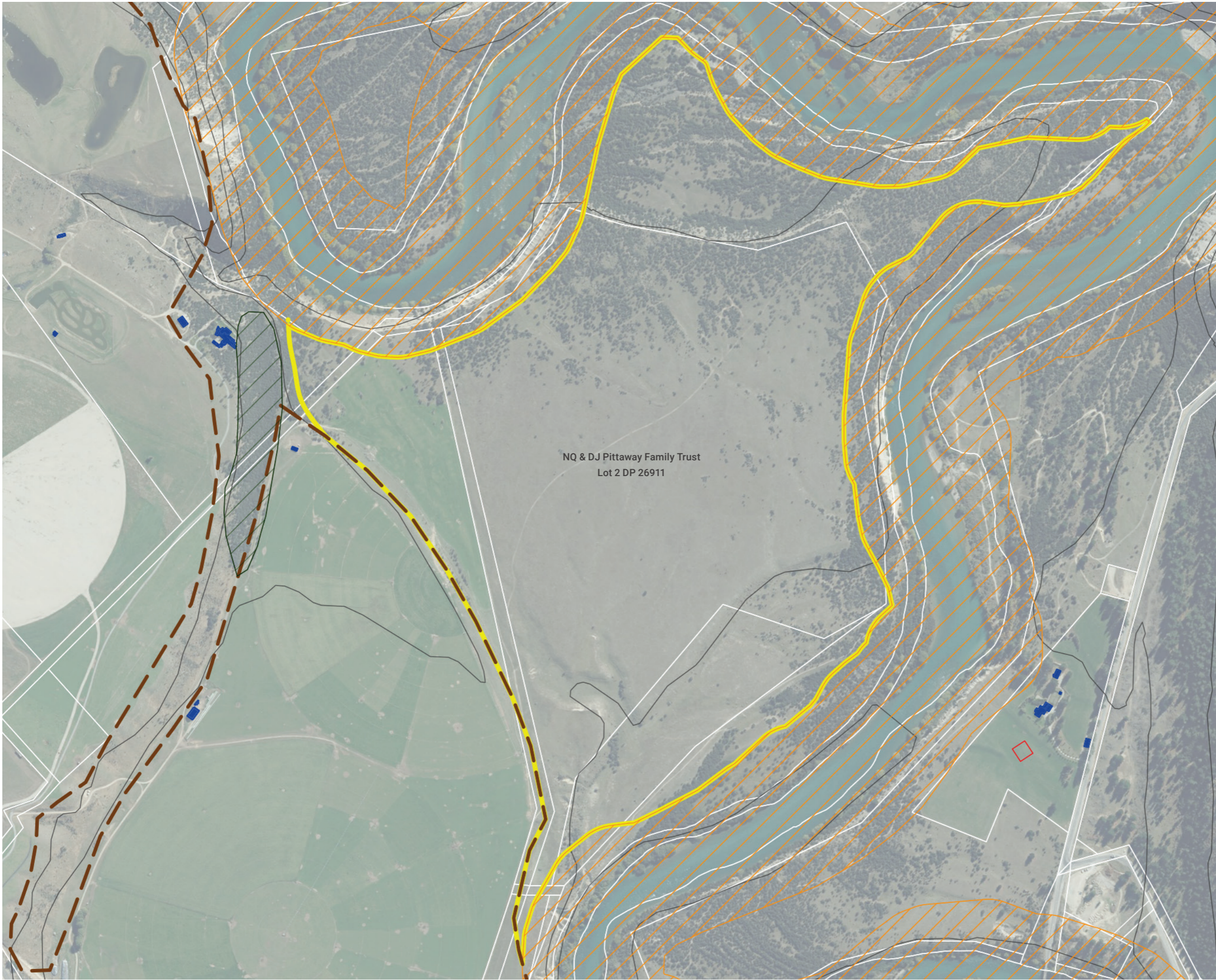
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Job Number: PA26932
 Date: 26 June 2026
 Issue Number: IS02

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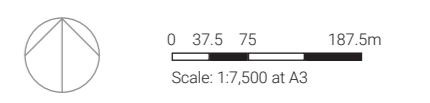


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Project:
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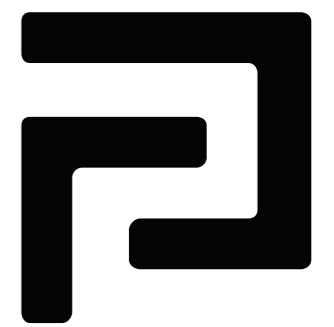
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Drawing Status:
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Job Number: PA26932
 Date: 26 June 2026
 Issue Number: IS02

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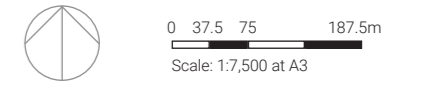


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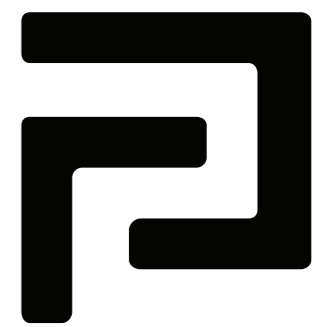
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Drawing Status:
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Job Number: PA26932
 Date: 26 June 2026
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Key:

Normal text – notified version of Schedules

Black underline and ~~strikethrough~~ text – recommended amendments based on submissions (May 2026)

21.22.25 Mata-au Clutha River: Schedule of Landscape Values

Application

Preamble 21.22, particularly clauses 3.1 – 3.3, explains that the application of the Priority Area Schedules is to the Rural Zone Priority Area only. The Priority Area Assessment Extent for this Schedule includes areas of land that are zoned Rural, Community Purposes, Informal Recreation and Nature Conservation.

Commented [BG1]: Text amendment made to align with PALS text approach and improve clarity, in accordance with submission requests. For example, see OS29.4, OS30.9 and OS27.3

General Description of the Area

Mata-au Clutha River PA includes the Mata-au Clutha River corridor from the outlet at Lake Wānaka to the boundary with Central Otago District, up to the crest of the enclosing escarpments of the corridor. It also includes the meandering section of the Hāwea River, north of its confluence with the Mata-au, and associated fluvial landforms. ~~Two~~ distinctive escarpments and terraces formed by the rivers are ~~also included~~ within the ONF ~~including the Poplar Beach terrace, and~~ the western Hāwea terminal moraine scarp; and the scarp east of Wānaka airport. The ONF also includes the horseshoe bends of the River north and east of Luggate which creates a series of distinct peninsulas of land.

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The identification of landscape values within this schedule is not intended to prevent or unduly constrain ongoing productive rural land use, farming diversification, horticulture, vegetation management, shelter planting, orcharding, agroforestry, regenerative planting, irrigation, or the establishment and upgrading of associated rural production infrastructure on existing rural properties.

Physical Attributes and Values

Geology and Geomorphology • Topography and Landforms • Climate and Soils • Hydrology • Vegetation • Ecology • Settlement • Development and Land Use • Archaeology and Heritage • Mana whenua

Landforms and land types

1. A distinctive deep corridor of escarpments and terraces carved by the Mata-au Clutha River through the glacial outwash gravels of the Upper Clutha Basin. The immediate escarpments of the river vary in height between about 5 metres east of the Albert Town bridge to over 100 metres at Halliday Bluff. Where there are older secondary escarpments enclosing the corridor, these vary between 10 and 50 metres in height.
2. The series of alluvial terraces and scarps surrounding the confluence of the Mata-au and Hāwea rivers with the lower Poplar Beach terrace being of distinct character area as a result of its human modification and farming.
3. The distinctive 40-metre-high escarpment east of Wānaka airport, formed by the fluvial action of the Mata-au reworking the largely alluvial sediments in this area.

4. The 60-metre-high eroded scarp on the western half of the Lake Hāwea penultimate glacial terminal moraine ridge. The entire ridge is identified as a Geopreservation Site of national significance and noted as an excellent example of a terminal moraine. The ridge dammed a glacial lake after the Hāwea glacier retreated resulting in the deposition of several hundred metres of lake sediment under Hāwea Hāwea Flat.

4.5. The horseshoe bends of the Mata-au Clutha River north and east of Luggate which create a series of distinct peninsulas of land.

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Hydrological features

5.6. The Mata-au Clutha River, in particular the following features and attributes:

- a. Highest volume river in New Zealand, and one of the most swiftly flowing rivers in the world.
- b. Clarity and distinctive turquoise colour of the waters.
- c. Swift water oxbow features, including the 'S'-shaped meander (The Snake) at Rekos Point and Devils Nook near Luggate. At Devils Nook the entire force of the river flows directly against a rock bluff as the river changes direction, forming powerful whirlpools. This rare hydrological feature is thought to be the most extreme high-volume switchback in the world.
- d. Habitat for trout, salmon, eel and threatened indigenous fish (galaxids) and supports a significant range of indigenous waterfowl.

6.7. The lower Hāwea River, in particular the complex river meanders between Newcastle Road and the Mata-au Clutha confluence, the rapids and gravel shoals, and the delta islands at the confluence.

Ecological features and vegetation types

7.8. Particularly noteworthy indigenous vegetation features include:

- a. Significant areas of regenerating kānuka woodland present on river terraces at Hikuwai Reserve, on the terraces surrounding the lower Hāwea River, and at the Rekos Point Conservation Area.
- b. Regenerating kānuka woodland in places along the river banks.
- c. Indigenous grey shrubland species and kānuka in many places on the escarpments of the river corridor.
- d. Some dryland cushionfield communities and short tussock grasslands where the glacial outwash gravels of the river terraces do not have irrigated or improved pasture. These include the threatened pillow native daphne (*Pimelia sericeovillosa* subsp. *pulvinaris*), desert broom (*Carmichaelia petriei*), cushions (*Raoulia* spp.) and heaths (e.g. *Leucopogon muscosus*). Significant Natural Areas on the Poplar Beach intermediate terrace protect cushionfield communities and kānuka woodland in this location

8.9. Other distinctive vegetation types include:

- a. Crack willow, poplar, elderberry, hawthorn, lupin and other exotic weeds are predominant along the riverbanks of the Mata-au Clutha and Hāwea.
- b. Mature and semi-mature radiata pine stands and plantations at The Outlet, approximately midway between The Outlet and the Albert Town Campground (adjacent the Hikuwai Reserve), the Albert Town Campground and further downstream, with some wilding spread.

Commented [BG3]: OS45.2 and OS 45.9 Scott Edgar, Exclusive Developments Limited

c. Stands of Lombardy poplar at The Outlet, Albert Town and further downstream near Poplar Beach.

d. ~~Predominantly low intensity grassland and scattered kānuka regeneration on intermediate terraces.~~ A mosaic of productive rural land uses, including pasture, horticulture, orchards,

[truffières, shelter belts, amenity planting, regenerative planting, scattered kānuka regeneration and other rural vegetation patterns occur across the intermediate terraces.](#) However between Albert Town and Rekos Point, the northern intermediate terraces have improved pasture under pivot irrigation. A small area of pivot irrigation is also present on the river terrace near The Snake horseshoe bend.

e. [The ongoing establishment, replacement, management and evolution of productive and shelter vegetation, including exotic and indigenous species, is a normal and anticipated component of rural land use on the intermediate terraces and contributes to the functioning and resilience of farming systems in this environment](#)

d-f. [Exotic woodlots, productive trees and rural character trees associated with rural living areas.](#)

9-10. The kānuka woodland, grey shrubland and expansive areas of exotic grassland and the varied landforms (terraces and escarpments) provide suitable feeding habitat for New Zealand falcon and Australasian harrier and nesting and feeding habitat for New Zealand pipit and the smaller native insectivorous birds, such as grey warbler and fantail.

Land use patterns and features

40-11. Much of the river corridor is Council-owned or Crown-owned land used for informal recreation, camping or historic/scientific reserve. Apart from the bridges [and tracks \(including on private land\)](#), there is little human modification on the immediate banks of the river [however the priority area immediately adjoins the Urban Growth Boundary and existing or zoned urban development to the south of the river at Northlake/Hikuwai and Albert Town](#). The bank and river escarpment on the true right immediately upstream of the Albert Town bridge have been modified to reduce hazards associated with river erosion and there are shelters, toilets and a rodeo arena within the Albert Town campground across the river.

12. [Low density rural living, productive farming, horticulture, agroforestry and ongoing land-based primary production activities and small farming](#) on lots of [approximately 20-40ha](#) is present on the intermediate terrace at Poplar Beach on the southern side of the Mata-au Clutha River below Wānaka airport. [Existing and evolving productive land uses, including shelter planting, orcharding, truffières, regenerative planting, beekeeping, animal husbandry, irrigation, managed grazing, vegetable gardens, viticulture, noxious weed eradication, farm tracks, fencing and associated rural infrastructure form an established component of the landscape character of these terraces.](#)

13. Across the river to the north, dairy farming under pivot irrigation is present on the intermediate terrace, as far west as the Hāwea confluence. Farming infrastructure, including [buildings, processing facilities, silos, irrigation infrastructure, bores and underground water distribution networks, farm tracks, worker facilities, fencing, water storage, sheep yards, shelter structures and effluent systems are evident throughout the wider rural landscape and contribute to the working rural character of the area.](#) ~~haysheds, milking sheds, silos, farm tracks and effluent ponds are also evident.~~

44-14. [Aurora electricity sub-transmission infrastructure is located in the ONF at the eastern end of Northlake. Pine plantations extend into the priority area at The Outlet, adjacent to the Hikuwai Reserve, the Albert Town Campground and further downstream.](#)

Archaeological and heritage features and their locations

42-15. Rekos Point Conservation Area, spanning a large area of 'The Snake' meander of the Clutha Mata-au north of Luggate. The point is named after Reko, a ~~Maori~~ [rangatira rakitira](#) who, together with Kaikōura, guided Nathaniel Chalmers from the Upper Clutha down the river by mōkohi (reed raft) in 1851.

43-16. Various inter-related complexes of 19th and early 20th century alluvial gold mining and dredging scattered along the Mata-au Clutha River, including at Rekos Point ~~and~~ downstream of the Red Bridge [and on the Poplar Beach terrace](#). These include water races, sluice box channels, herringbone tailings, hut sites, water wheels and stamper batteries.

Commented [BG4]: OS17.3 Dan Curley, Mata-Au Investments Limited

Commented [BG5]: OS45.4 and OS45.10 Scott Edgar, Exclusive Developments Limited

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Commented [BG10]: OS10.13 Michael Bathgate, Kai Tahu Ki Otago

- 44-17. Various sites of punts and ferries crossing the Mata-au Clutha, including the site of the Luggate Punt Ferry, access track and ferryman's house immediately downstream of the Red Bridge.
- 45-18. Grandview Bridge (Red Bridge) at Church Road near Luggate, a steel truss road bridge opened on October 28, 1915 (QLDC Ref 515).
- 46-19. James Horn plaque at the Albert Town Bridge, commemorating opening of the first bridge in 1930 (QLDC Ref. 509).
- 47-20. Pioneer graveyard at Graveyard Bend opposite Albert Town (QLDC Ref. 508).

Mana whenua features and their locations

- 48-21. The Mata-au was an important trail for Māori accessing the Upper Clutha and Lakes Wānaka, Hāwea, and Whakatipu Waimāori from coastal Otago, and was used by people trading pounamu (greenstone) from the West Coast. A kāika mahika kai (food gathering settlement) and permanent fortified pā, known as Te Rua Tupāpaku, was located alongside the river near Luggate.
- The entire area is ancestral land to Kai Tahu whanui and, as such, all landscape is significant, given that whakapapa, whenua and wai are all intertwined in te ao Maori.
- 18A The ONF includes the mapped wahi tupuna Mata-au (Clutha River), Hāwea River, Albert Town nohoaka and Te Rua Tupapaku.
- 18 B The Mata-au (Clutha River) is a Statutory Acknowledgement under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.
- 49-22. A contemporary nohoaka (camping site to support traditional mahika kai activities) is located at the Albert Town campground on the true right of the Hāwea, provided as redress under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlements Act 1998.

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Associative Attributes and Values

Mana whenua creation and origin traditions • Mana whenua associations and experience • Mana whenua metaphysical aspects such as mauri and wairua • Historic values • Shared and recognised values • Recreation and scenic values

Mana whenua associations and experience

- 20-23. Mata-au, Hāwea River and Te Rua Tupāpaku (Clutha River near Luggate) have been identified as Wāhi Tupuna by Ngāi Tahu.
- Kai Tahu whakapapa connections to whenua and wai generate a kaitiaki duty to uphold the mauri of all important landscape areas.
- 20A The Mata-au (Clutha River) takes its name from a Kai Tahu whakapapa that traces the genealogy of water. On that basis, the Mata-au is seen as a descendant of the creation traditions.
- 20B The Mata-au and the Hāwea River were part of inland mahika kai trails, with the Mata-au also a key transportation route for pounamu from inland areas to settlements on the coast.
- 20C Te Rua Tupapaku is a kaika mahika kai located on the Mata-au where weka, tuna (eels) and kauru (cabbage tree root) were gathered. It is also recorded as a fortified permanent pa.
- 20D The mana whenua values associated with this ONF include, but may not be limited to, wahi taoka, ara tawhito, mahika kai, nohoaka, urupa, pa and wahi tapu.

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Historic attributes and values

21-24. Strong historic associations with access into the Upper Clutha for early European and Chinese settlers and gold miners and early transport infrastructure (including evidence of historic ferries and punts around Albert Town and the Red Bridge.

22-25. Strong historic associations with gold mining in and alongside the Mata-au Clutha River and on the Poplar Beach terrace, and associated physical remnants, including evidence of sluicing and dredging.

23-26. Strong historic associations with early European development and pastoralism in the area, including the pioneer graveyard at Albert Town.

Shared and recognised values

24-27. Nationally recognised values of the Mata-au Clutha River as the highest volume and flow river in New Zealand.

25-28. Locally shared and recognised values for the contribution of the PA to the Upper Clutha Basin sense of place and distinctiveness and its recreational attributes.

Recreation attributes and values

26-29. Highly valued destination for kayaking, rafting, and fishing (particularly fly fishing) on the Mata-au and Hāwea River. Jetboating is popular on the Mata-au Clutha River and the river is identified as a nationally significant fishery.

27-30. Camping at Albert Town campground, and swimming and picnicking at easily accessible spots along the rivers; Freedom camping for self-contained vehicles in accessible spots along the rivers, outside of prohibited zones.

28-31. Very popular destination for walking and mountain biking on the network of trails that run along both sides of the Mata-au Clutha River between The Outlet and Luggate, and on the Hāwea River Track.

29-32. Events associated with kayaking national events, including national freestyle, national secondary schools and open nationals involving Hāwea Standing Wave structure (outside the PA) and reaches of the lower Hāwea.

Commented [BG22]: OS44.1 Ian Hadland, Fish and Game

Perceptual (Sensory) Attributes and Values

Legibility and Expressiveness • Coherence • Views to the area • Views from the area • Naturalness • Memorability • Transient values • Remoteness / Wildness • Aesthetic qualities and values

Legibility and expressiveness attributes and values

30-33. The course of the Mata-au Clutha River and the fluvial escarpments and terraces within the river corridor are highly visible and expressive and provide clear evidence of the eroding action of the river on the surrounding glacial outwash plains.

31-34. The eroded scarp on the western part of the penultimate Hāwea terminal moraine is a striking and expressive landform that is clearly related to the erosive action of the Hāwea River. It is visually prominent from the Hāwea Flats and the Hāwea River Track.

Coherence

32-35. Coherent pattern formed by the river course, escarpment and fluvial terrace landforms, with linking vegetation patterns of willows along the river edges and kānuka on escarpments and some terraces.

Particularly important views to and from the area

~~33-36.~~ Enclosed highly attractive views from the surface of the rivers are dominated by the waterbody, its vegetated margins and the immediate riverbanks or escarpments.

~~34-37.~~ High amenity views from the walking and cycling tracks that take in the dynamic river waters and the series of imposing escarpments and terraces that step up from the rivers. The scale, clarity and impact of these landforms is greater in the Mata-au Clutha corridor than in the lower Hāwea River. There is a varied level of enclosure experienced along the tracks, with long-range views to the mountain ranges available from some areas, and restricted mid-range views of the river corridor from others. The river course, escarpment and fluvial terrace landforms, with linking vegetation patterns of willows along the river edges and kānuka on escarpments and some terraces form a coherent pattern as people move through the ONF.

Naturalness attributes and values

~~35-38.~~ The Mata-au Clutha River has unmodified flow characteristics and generally unmodified and dynamic geomorphology, with ongoing processes of fluvial erosion and deposition. The exception is the true right bank upstream of the Albert Town bridge, where erosion hazards are being managed by rock revetments and bank reshaping. Natural processes of vegetation spread are occurring and the scarps and terraces (in places) support significant indigenous vegetation communities.

~~36-39.~~ ~~Although~~ rural living, campgrounds, modified landforms, pine plantations, trails, productive farming, horticulture, vegetation management, modified landforms and agricultural infrastructure and intensive farming are present with the PA. ~~This domestication and modification is dwarfed by its comfortably within~~ the scale of the searing river terrace escarpments, and the areas of indigenous vegetation the wider surrounding mountain landscape, and ~~There is a high perception of naturalness overall.~~

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~~37-40.~~ Flow characteristics on the Hāwea River are managed by control gates at the Lake Hāwea outlet, but the lower stretch of the river is otherwise relatively unmodified. There is a perception of significant naturalness, despite the presence of crack willows, and the built interventions at Albert Town campground, the presence of Rural living at Poplar Beach and the trails.

Memorability attributes and values

~~38-41.~~ The dramatic scale of the river corridor, the powerful flow and clear turquoise waters of the Mata-au Clutha River, the contrasts between the scarp and terrace landforms, and the sense of enclosure experienced by people accessing the rivers and adjacent public tracks create a highly memorable landscape.

Transient attributes and values

~~39-42.~~ Transient attributes include fluctuations in the Hāwea River flow, the presence of wildlife, and the seasonal changes in the vegetation lining the river, particularly the gold of willows and poplars in autumn and their intense fresh green in spring.

Remoteness and wildness attributes and values

~~40.~~ People on the surface of the Mata-au downstream of Albert Town are often enclosed within the river corridor and fringing vegetation and experience a strong sense of remoteness and wildness. This is also true for people using those trails, that are separated from urban, rural living or intensive agriculture land uses.

~~43.~~ Aesthetic attributes and values

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~~41-44.~~ The experience of all of the values identified above from a wide range of public viewpoints.

42-45. More specifically, this includes:

- a. The volume, scale and fast-moving flow of the Mata-au Clutha River.
- b. The distinctive swift water horseshoe bends and meanders in the rivers.
- c. The dramatic and expressive sequence of contrasting terrace and scarp fluvial landforms stepping up from the river courses.
- d. The autumn and spring colours of riverside willows and ~~poplars-rural character trees~~ and the contrasting turquoise colour of the Mata-au Clutha ~~and changing colour of the grasslands~~.
- e. The spread of indigenous vegetation, particularly kākūka woodland, along the rivers and escarpments and on some terraces.
- f. The ability to travel along the rivers on walking and cycling trails or on the water itself and to be ~~immersed in the~~ within a more natural, wild and scenic qualities of the river corridor than of the Basin's adjacent flatlands.

Summary of Landscape Values

Physical • Associative • Perceptual (Sensory)

Rating scale: seven-point scale ranging from **Very Low** to **Very High**.

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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The various physical, associative and perceptual attributes and values described above for the Mata-au Clutha River PA can be summarised as follows:

43-46. **Very high** physical values relating to the exceptional unmodified volume, flow and clarity of the Mata-au Clutha River waters, the distinctive horseshoe bends and high flow switchback, the clarity and scale of the fluvial landforms, the areas of indigenous vegetation and threatened plant communities, and the habitat values for native and introduced fauna.

44-47. **High** associative values relating to the Kāi Tahu associations with the river, the history of gold mining and early European settlement, the ~~very~~ significant recreational attributes, and the strong shared and recognised values.

45-48. **Very high** perceptual values relating to the scale, legibility and expressiveness of the rivers and their associated fluvial landforms, the high level of naturalness, the coherence and memorability of the corridor, and the strong aesthetic qualities.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape capacity rating of the Rural Zone Mata-au Clutha River PA for a range of activities is set out below. This provides high level guidance as to potential characteristics or locational matters that may assist with identifying appropriate development within the PA.

- i. **Commercial recreational activities – some** landscape capacity for activities that integrate with and complement/enhance existing recreation features; are located to optimise the screening and/or camouflaging benefit of existing natural landscape elements; designed to be of a sympathetic scale, appearance, and character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; and enhance public access.

ii. **Visitor accommodation and tourism related activities - limited** landscape capacity to absorb visitor accommodation that is within areas of established rural living character, within existing buildings or building platforms, or where landform, vegetation and landscape containment can ensure development remains visually recessive and does not compromise the identified values of the Priority Area, existing buildings or building platforms. **Extremely limited or no** landscape capacity for tourism-related activities.

ii. **Urban expansions – extremely limited or no** landscape capacity.

iii. **Productive farming, horticulture, agroforestry and associated rural production activities – some** landscape capacity on the intermediate terraces, particularly where such activities maintain the overall open rural character of the terraces and are integrated with existing vegetation, shelter planting, landform patterns and farming activities.

iv. **Intensive agriculture – limited** landscape capacity on intermediate terraces only.

v. **Earthworks – limited** landscape capacity for earthworks and additional trails that protect naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values and are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing natural landform patterns. **Some** landscape capacity for additional earthworks ~~to that contribute to productive activities, and to~~ manage erosion hazards in the vicinity of Albert Town that are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing natural landform patterns. **Some** landscape capacity for earthworks associated with farming on the Intermediate Terrace of Poplar Beach. **Some** landscape capacity for Lot 6 DP 325795 held in Record of Title 104103 as identified in Rule 25.5.2 of the PDP.

i. **Farm buildings** – in those areas of the PA with pastoral land uses, ~~limited~~ **some** landscape capacity for ~~farm buildings, storage facilities, processing buildings, irrigation infrastructure, workshops, implement sheds, produce handling facilities and associated rural structures and infrastructure where these support ongoing productive rural land use. Such structures should be enabled in practical and operationally efficient locations and may utilise planting, landform, setbacks or other design responses to integrate with the wider landscape~~

The establishment, extension, replacement and upgrading of rural production infrastructure associated with productive land use should be anticipated as part of the ongoing evolution of the working rural landscape of the intermediate terraces.

vi. ~~modestly scaled buildings that reinforce existing rural character and are sited to optimise the integrating effects of existing landscape and vegetation features.~~

vii. **Mineral extraction – extremely limited or no** landscape capacity, **limited** capacity for farm scale quarries and expansion of existing quarries that maintain or enhance the quality of views, naturalness values and aesthetic values.

viii. **Transport infrastructure – extremely limited or no** landscape capacity.

ix. **Utilities and regionally significant infrastructure – very limited** landscape capacity for infrastructure that is that is buried or located such that they are screened from external view. In the case of utilities such as overhead lines or cell phone towers which cannot be screened, these should be designed and located so that they are not visually prominent and/or co-located with existing infrastructure.

x. **Renewable energy generation – very limited** landscape capacity for hydro-electric generation that is consistent with the PA's values.

xi. **Forestry – very limited** capacity for forestry that protects aesthetic and naturalness values.

xii. **Shelter planting, orcharding, truffières and other productive tree-based land uses – some** landscape capacity where integrated with existing rural land use patterns and where they contribute to rural productivity, landscape diversity, shelter, biodiversity or erosion management.

xii. **Rural living – very limited** landscape capacity on intermediate terraces within established rural living environments, and within discrete locations where there is existing rural living development and where

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existing landform and vegetation features. landscape context and existing patterns of modification enable development to be integrated without materially compromising the identified values of the Priority Area. mean that new development is reasonably difficult to see from outside the site. **Extremely limited or no** landscape capacity in other locations.

Plant and Animal Pests

- A. Animal pest species include rabbits, stoats, possums, rats and mice.
- B. Plant pest species include oxygen weed, crack willow, hawthorn, elderberry, broom, lupin, and wilding conifers.