

Before Queenstown Lakes District Council

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In the matter of            The Resource Management Act 1991

And                            The Queenstown Lakes District proposed District Plan Topic 11  
Ski Area Subzones mapping

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**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF YVONNE PFLUGER FOR**

Soho Ski Area Limited and Blackmans Creek No. 1 LP (#610)

Treble Cone Investments Limited (#613)

Dated 09 May 2017

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**anderson  
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## Introduction

- 1 My name is Yvonne Pfluger.
- 2 My evidence in chief dated 28 March 2017 outlines my experience and qualifications relevant to this evidence in respect of the Ski Area Subzone ("SASZs") Mapping Hearings.
- 3 My evidence in chief provides a detailed description of the existing landscape character and values found within the existing Treble Cone and Soho ski fields, as well as within the proposed SASZ extension areas. In my assessment I conclude that the landscape's ability to absorb change within these extension areas is relatively high due to the existing modifications in the ski areas and the existing access to the ski areas.
- 4 I have undertaken a detailed assessment of the existing environment of the existing ski areas at Treble Cone and Soho, as well as the broader landscape context within the Motatapu and Cardrona Valleys. For Treble Cone I have taken into account the existing access road and a consented gondola alignment, including an identified base station area, as part of the existing environment within the SASZ extension. In the Soho SASZ extension (as submitted, to the road) a recently constructed access track exists on the slopes. In my view, the presence of existing distinctive nodes of intensive development within the SASZs needs to be acknowledged in the context of the wider ONLs of the district, which are otherwise largely free of man-made structures.
- 5 Subsequent to finishing my evidence in chief the Submitters developed an alternative approach which is summarised in Mr Ferguson's Supplementary Evidence. This includes a much smaller extension to the Cardrona SASZ than originally proposed, while there would be no extension to the existing Treble Cone SASZ boundary. Mr Ferguson also outlines the further changes to the Rural zone and SASZ rules that better enable the provision of vehicle access and passenger lift access to both ski areas from outside of the SASZ in place of extensions to the SASZ itself.
- 6 For Soho, the revised proposal is to extend the area of the Cardrona SASZ into the upper reaches of Callaghan's Creek and Blackmans Creek Basin, to provide opportunity for skiing. In all other respects the boundary of the Cardrona SASZ remains as notified within the PDP.

### **Treble Cone**

- 7 I have assessed the ability for the landscape around Treble Cone to absorb the effects of new forms of access to the snowline. I understand that in planning terms the access can be enabled by either the extension of the SASZ boundary to the Mt Aspiring Road as set out in the evidence in chief, or by the restricted discretionary rule in the Rural Zone as proposed in Mr Ferguson's supplementary evidence.
- 8 The effects in terms of what I have assessed are largely the same.
- 9 Under the full extension option, I consider the spatial restrictions of buildings and lifts as they relate to the potential passenger lift corridor and associated buildings appropriate, in order to ensure change is contained within visually disturbed corridors and where the landscape values of the wider SASZ area are able to be managed through an appropriate consent process. If a gondola was to be processed as a restricted discretionary activity instead, as outlined under the version summarised by Mr Ferguson, I consider that a similar outcome could be achieved.

### **Soho**

- 10 Similarly, for Soho an overlay was proposed under the full extension of the SASZ to the Cardrona valley floor to ensure that the landscape effects, as they would be experienced from the Cardrona highway and other places within the valley can be managed. Again, this would in my view lead to similar outcomes as the proposed alternative with a reduced spatial extension to the SASZ in combination with a restricted discretionary activity status for a gondola outside the SASZ.
- 11 The much reduced extension area to the Soho SASZ (180ha), as proposed as an alternative, is located high in the Blackmans Creek Basin, extending down to approximately the 900m contour. This basin is visually relatively contained due to the existing topography created by surrounding ridgelines. The upper basin, which would be included in the alternative SASZ extension, is relatively low in gradient, compared to the lower steep valley slopes incised by Blackmans Creek and its tributaries. I consider that ski related activities within this basin would be unlikely to cause high visual effects, given the topography and recessed location of the high-lying basin.

### **Council Evidence**

- 12 The points addressed by Dr Read in her rebuttal evidence, as they relate to Soho SASZ (para 4.1-4.11) are largely irrelevant should the Commissioners prefer the option as set out in Mr Ferguson's supplementary evidence.

However, if the full extension is still to be considered then my response to the issues addressed in Dr Read's para 4.5 – 4.7 is as follows:

- 13 The visibility of a potential gondola within the SASZ extension is raised as an issue by Dr Read in light of the undeveloped nature of the upper Cardrona Valley. As outlined in my evidence, the partial views to a very limited number of potential gondola towers would be restricted to few short stretches of road at long viewing distances. In my opinion, this would not lead to significant visual effects that would affect the landscape character of the upper valley at these viewing distances. I do not consider the upper Cardrona Valley to be remote, given that it contains the highly frequented Crown Range Road.
- 14 In relation to Dr Read's concerns relating to sprawl, I consider that the potential to perceive a base station building in the area proposed for a facility overlay as sprawling development is very low. While the location of the facility overlay is relatively close to Cardona Township, it is located on a separate landform, and due to its utilitarian nature a base station would in my opinion be sufficiently different to not be perceived as sprawl of the existing township development. I consider this location favourable, as it is in proximity to existing development without causing high visual effects on residences in the area. In my view, this is preferable to a location that is well away from existing development or directly within the cluster of the township, which would appear to be the alternative. As Dr Read notes correctly the terminal building of the McDougall's Express gondola is (or will be) located on the ridgeline near Mount Cardrona, which is the most relevant in the context of Soho skifield.
- 15 Dr Read's rebuttal evidence covering Treble Cone (para 5.1 -5.6) addresses her concerns in relation to landscape effects of buildings on the valley floor. In her paragraph 5.4 she questions the advantages of the inclusion of a ski area overlay. It should be noted that under the Submitters' original proposal, lifts and associated facilities would be restricted discretionary outside the overlay, while controlled within. In my view, this would provide guidance in terms of appropriate location of these structures into areas where the change can be more easily absorbed, away from the valley floor next to Aspiring Road.

## **Conclusion**

- 16 In my view, the proposed SASZ extensions (whether by way of lines on maps, or appropriate restricted discretionary rules) for Treble Cone and Soho represent a logical extension to the existing ski fields, where development under the amended relief sought (as described in my and Mr Ferguson's evidence and supplementary evidence) could take place without compromising the landscape values and visual intactness/ coherence of the wider ONLs. The proposed modifications, such as buildings and lifts would be contained within areas that

have already undergone substantial change in the form of the formation of access roads, where further change is anticipated by approved consents (for Treble Cone), and where further change could be successfully absorbed into the landscape.

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2017**

**Yvonne Pfluger**