

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of a hearing on submissions to the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan pursuant to clause 8B of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991

**ON BEHALF OF** **AJ ROBINS AND HJM CALLAGHN AND OTHERS**  
**(2104, 2163, 2281, 2291, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2378,2389, 2490, 2517)**  
Submitters

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**EVIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ESPIE**  
**(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)**  
**13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Benjamin Espie. I reside in Queenstown. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours) from Lincoln University and Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University. I am a member of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and was the Chairman of that branch between 2007 and 2016. Since November 2004 I have been a director of Vivian and Espie Limited, a specialist resource management and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. Between March 2001 and November 2004 I was employed as Principal of Landscape Architecture by Civic Corporation Limited, a resource management consultancy company contracted to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**).
- 1.2 The majority of my work involves advising clients regarding the protection of landscapes and amenity that the Resource Management Act 1991 provides and regarding the landscape provisions of various district and regional plans. I also produce assessment reports and evidence in relation to proposed development. The primary objective of these assessments and evidence is to ascertain the effects of proposed development in relation to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.3 Much of my experience has involved providing landscape and amenity assessments relating to resource consent applications and plan changes both on behalf of District Councils and private clients. I have compiled many assessment reports and briefs of Environment Court evidence relating to the landscape and amenity related aspects of proposed regimes of District Plan provisions in the rural areas of a number of districts. I have provided Environment Court evidence in relation to the landscape categorisation of the Wakatipu Basin, in relation to the formulation of the landscape related provisions that are now part of the Operative District Plan (**ODP**), and in relation to many resource consent applications and a number of plan changes within the Wakatipu Basin.
- 1.4 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained within the Environment Court Practice Note of November 2014 and agree to comply with it. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information I have been given by another

person. I confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed herein.

- 1.5 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the relevant submissions, further submissions and a statement of evidence prepared by Bridget Gilbert dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (**Ms Gilbert's evidence**).

## 2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The purpose of this evidence is to assist the Hearings Panel on matters within my expertise of landscape architecture and landscape planning in relation to the submissions listed above on the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**). In relation to these submissions, I have been asked by the submitters to prepare evidence regarding the landscape character of Landscape Character Unit 13 (**LCU13**) and its ability to absorb certain development. Specifically, I have been asked to:

- Examine Schedule 24.8 of the PDP as it relates to LCU13 and give comments;
- Give comments on the appropriateness of zoning that allows subdivision to a minimum lot size of 4000m<sup>2</sup> with one dwelling provided for on each lot; and specify an area (if any) within which I consider development of this sort could appropriately sit.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 I consider that the LCU13 part of Schedule 24.8 of the PDP should be amended and that the area marked in green on my Appendix 1 can appropriately absorb rural living development with a minimum lot size of 4000m<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER UNIT 13 AND ITS CAPABILITY TO ABSORB DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 LCU13 can be seen on Appendix 1 to this evidence. It takes in:
- i. The part of the western slopes of Morven Hill that are zoned Rural Residential Zone (**RRZ**) pursuant to the ODP.

- ii. The lower slopes above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road that are zoned RRZ and Rural Lifestyle Zone (**RLZ**) pursuant to the ODP.
- iii. The higher slopes above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road that are zoned Rural General Zone (**RGZ**) pursuant to the ODP. These upper slopes sit to the west of the Bendemeer Zone and contain a small island of RLZ (4.5ha held in two titles).

**4.2** In broad terms, I consider that areas (i) and (ii) described above have a similar landscape character that is dominated by relatively dense and visible rural living development. While area (iii) also supports rural living development, this is at a considerably lower density and, importantly, is generally well hidden visually.

**4.3** The LCU13 part of Schedule 24.8 sets out a description of landscape character. The relevant submissions seek some changes to this description. My comments in relation to the LCU13 part of Schedule 24.8 are:

- i. In relation to settlement patterns, I agree with the comments of the submissions; that newer dwellings are exposed and larger-scaled and that landscaping is generally established but young. Some of the Morven Hill ODP RRZ lots are not yet built on. Many of those that have been built on have only been built on in the last 5 years or so. A hallmark of young development is often starkness and exposure. Older rural living areas (Dalefield is an example) often become much more treed and green as residents seek shelter and privacy (but the retention of important views).
- ii. Again in relation to settlement patterns, I agree with the comments of the submissions in that within the ODP zoned areas, lot sizes are often between 4000m<sup>2</sup> and 2ha. In this regard, I consider that the LCU13 part of Schedule 24.8 should usefully distinguish between the more densely subdivided area (i.e. the ODP rural living zones) and the less subdivided area. This can be seen spatially on my Appendix 1 plan. Other LCU descriptions of Schedule 24.8 distinguish between different areas within an LCU (LCUs 4, 8, 23 and 25 are examples!).
- iii. In relation to complexity, the Schedule describes landform patterns and vegetation. I consider that it should also take account of development patterns. I consider that the

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<sup>1</sup> I have given evidence in a separate brief regarding LCU4. I do not agree with the notified Schedule 24.8 in relation to LCU 4 and its capability to absorb development.

development patterns within the ODP rural living zones are such that these parts of the LCU are significantly more spatially and visually complex and busy than the rest of the LCU.

- iv. In relation to sense of place, Schedule 24.8 describes the existing development within the LCU as relatively unsympathetic and as sprawl. The relevant submissions seek a more neutral description, simply saying that the existing development pattern is the result of legacy zoning and resource consents. I consider that some of the existing development within the LCU currently appears somewhat unsympathetic. This is mostly in relation to the upper parts of the Morven Hill zoned area (where considerable building has happened within the last 3 or 4 years) rather than that above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road. The upper extent of the Morven Hill ODP RRZ was decided by way of Consent Memorandum and Environment Court decision C35/2000. The upper extent of the zone that was agreed upon by the parties was an “orthographic break line”, i.e. a line of change in gradient. The zone has since been subdivided and partially built. At least 12 more dwellings have been constructed within the Morven Hill ODP RRZ than are shown on the notified WBLUPS map (including all of the uppermost lots). I mark the additional dwellings that I have counted on my Appendix 1. In addition to the existing dwellings, all of the roads that service the built and unbuilt lots have been constructed. Most of the unbuilt lots have had flat building areas constructed on them. All of these things are part of the receiving environment. I consider that the sense of place section of the Schedule should reflect this.
- v. In relation to issues and constraints associated with development, I agree with the Schedule as notified but also with the additions proposed by the submitters. The constraints essentially stem from visibility.
- vi. In relation to opportunities associated with development, I again agree with the Schedule and the additions suggested by the submissions. I would also add that a significant opportunity is what could be described as infill development, i.e. filling out the ODP zoned areas (with some small extensions) as shown on my Appendix 1. I consider that if the areas marked on my Appendix 1 in green were developed to a minimum lot size of 4000m<sup>2</sup> (and a dwelling on each lot), this would:
  - Continue the existing pattern of development inside logical and appropriate boundaries without spreading onto undeveloped land;

- Create a legible and strong edge to the rural living areas, with the rural land outside these areas reading as distinct and different from the rural living areas;
  - In the long term, result in rural living areas that share the appearance and patterning of mature rural living areas with more trees and more enclosure; distinct from the broader rural land.
- vii. Following on from all of the above, I consider that the “capability to absorb development” entry in the LCU13 part of Schedule should not be “low”, as per the notified situation. Like some other LCUs (such as LCUs 4, 8, 23 and 25), LCU13 should be given two ratings in my opinion; “low” in relation to the more elevated slopes above Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road, and “high” in relation to the rest of the LCU (i.e. the area marked in green on my Appendix 1.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 I therefore consider that the area marked in green on my Appendix 1 can absorb rural living development with a minimum lot size of 4000m<sup>2</sup> without problematic adverse effects on the landscape character or visual amenity of the Wakatipu Basin. The rural living area that would result from this would be contained within logical boundaries, would only slightly exacerbate the effects of existing elements and patterns in the landscape, would not spread into undeveloped areas and would not sully the character of the Wakatipu Basin as a whole.

## **ATTACHED APPENDICES**

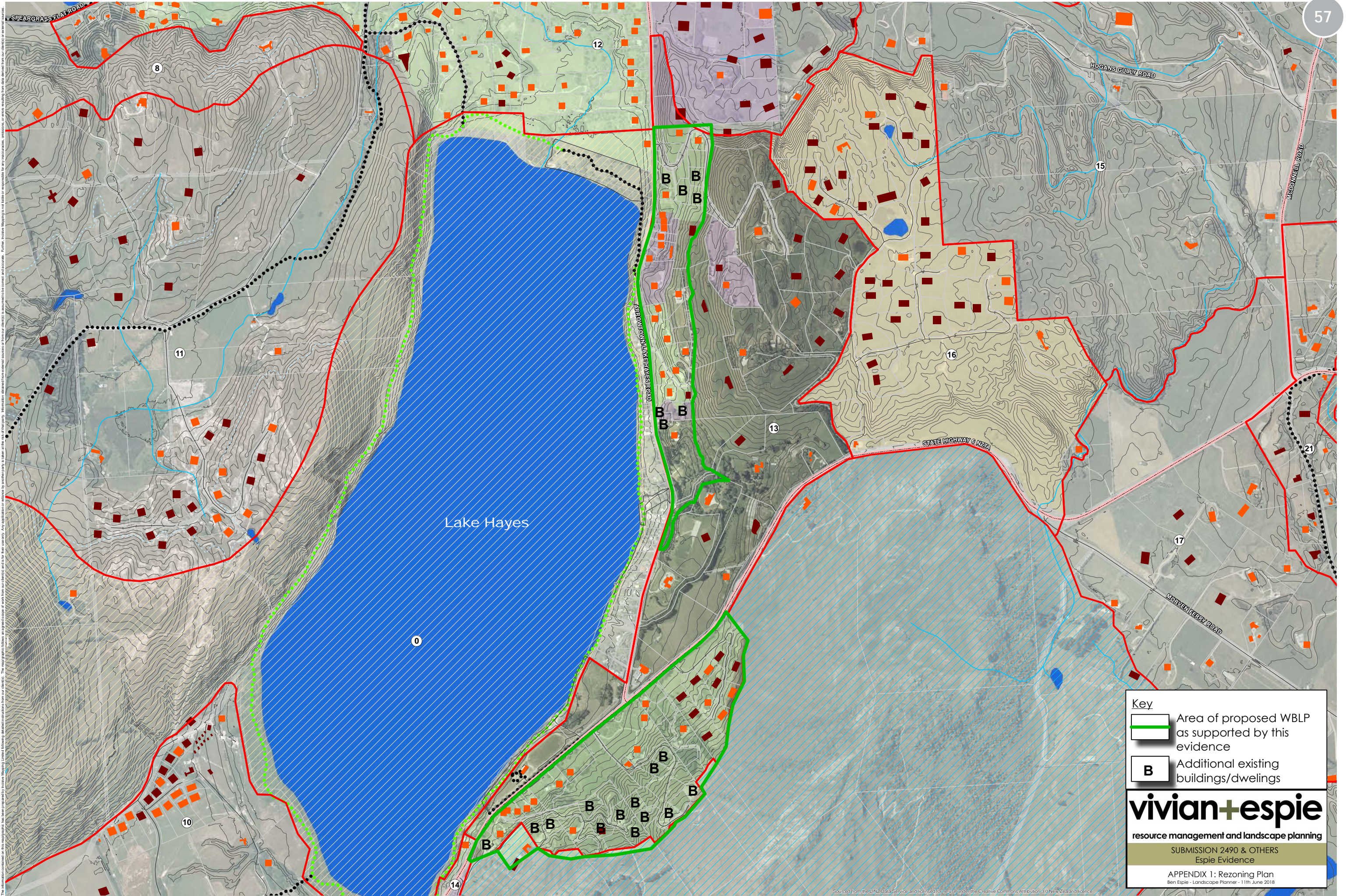
- 1 MARK-UP OF PAGE 57 OF THE WAKATIPU BASIN LAND USE PLANNING STUDY

**Ben Espie**

**vivian+espie**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

## Appendix 1 – LCU 13 Rezoning Plan



The information contained on this map is based on the best available information at the time of publication. It is not intended to be used as a legal document. The map is provided as a guide only and does not constitute a guarantee or warranty of any kind. The map is provided as a guide only and does not constitute a guarantee or warranty of any kind.

**Key**

- Area of proposed WBLP as supported by this evidence
- B** Additional existing buildings/dwellings

**vivian+espie**  
 resource management and landscape planning

SUBMISSION 2490 & OTHERS  
 Espie Evidence

APPENDIX 1: Rezoning Plan  
 Ben Espie - Landscape Planner - 11th June 2018

**INCISIVE MAPPING**  
 Author: Matt Daniels (matt.daniels@incisivemapping.co.nz) | Reviewed: Bridget Gilbert  
 Data Sources: LINZ/Eagle (Aerial), LINZ (NZTopo Database, Crown Copyright Reserved),  
 Landscape Research (LCRM), Queenstown Lakes District Council (Buildings, SHAs, Landscape  
 Units, Zones, ONL/ONF, Contours, Recreation, Lots, Roads), Bridget Gilbert, Incisive Mapping  
 File Ref: 2016-13\_Wakatipu\_Basin\_Landscape\_Character\_Units\_2016\_Map\_Series\_A1\_RevB.mxd



- Landscape Character Units (2016)
- Council Walkways and MTB Trails
- Lot Boundaries
- Approved SHAs
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Contours (5m)
- Other Walkways and MTB Trails
- Special Zones
- Approved SHAs & Resource Consent Issued
- Lake / Pond
- RAMM Carriageway Centrelines
- DOC Walkways
- Rural Lifestyle
- Waterfall
- Rural Scenic Roads
- Rural Residential
- River
- Rural Building Status
- Water Race
- Existing Dwellings
- River (Wide Channel)
- Consented Platforms
- Outstanding Natural Feature
- Outstanding Natural Landscape

Wakatipu Basin Landscape Study  
 Landscape Character Unit (2016)  
 13 Lake Hayes Slopes  
 Date: 16 December 2016