

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 Vaughn & Kathryn Woodfield

31 August 2026

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May it please the Panel

- 1 Our full names are Mr Vaughn Howard Woodfield & Mrs Kathryn Maree Woodfield. We lodged a submission (#39) on the variation to introduce landscape schedules 21.22 and 21.23 to Chapter 21 Rural Zone (**Variation**).

Background

- 2 We own land at 216 Stevenson Road RD 2 Wānaka 9382, legally described as Lot 6 DP 325795 held in Certificate of Title 104103 (**Submitters' Land or Site**) as identified in Appendix 1.
- 3 We provide this lay evidence based on our extensive knowledge of our property.
- 4 The Site forms part of what was historically **Windermere Farm**, which was farmed for sheep and cattle. It was subdivided around **2003** as part of the Poplar Beach subdivision. We have owned the Site since **2015**, purchasing it with the intention of developing a **small-scale, mixed-use rural property** to support increasing self-sufficiency and sustainable land management. We began construction of our home in **2016** on the approved building platform and have lived on the Site continuously since December 2016. Since purchasing the property, we have undertaken significant development consistent with a **working rural property**, including:
 - (i) Installing **boundary and internal fencing** to enable managed grazing;
 - (ii) Establishing **paddocks for sheep grazing**;
 - (iii) Planting **shelter belts, fruit trees, and firewood trees**;
 - (iv) Constructing **raised vegetable gardens**;
 - (v) Building **sheep yards**;
 - (vi) Constructing a **farm shed, recessed below the access track**, with associated implement storage;
 - (vii) Installing a **bore and underground water distribution network**;
 - (viii) Establishing **irrigation systems (K-line)**;
 - (ix) Planting for both **production and visual screening purposes**;

- (x) Establishing a small **apiary**;
- (xi) Establishing a small private **vineyard**;
- (xii) Implementing a **noxious weed eradication program**; and
- (xiii) Implementing a pest control program.

5 We are also currently:

- (i) Developing a wetland in an existing gully below the road;
- (ii) Constructing a sunken glass house; and
- (iii) Constructing environmental berms to mitigate visual effects of the glasshouse and the vineyard plus to provide wind protection.

6 Our present and intended use of the Site includes:

- (i) Small-scale viticulture
- (ii) Orchards and tree crops
- (iii) Vegetable gardens
- (iv) Sheep grazing
- (v) Beekeeping
- (vi) Supporting infrastructure required for these activities

7 We intend to continue developing the Site as a **diversified, sustainable rural property**, and we require flexibility to adapt land use over time, including trialling new crops, modifying planting layouts, and evolving our farming systems.

8 We were involved in Queenstown Lakes District Council's (**Council**) Section 293 proposal to alter the mapping and landscape classification of the Clutha River/Mata Au Outstanding Natural Feature (**ONF**) corridor and were granted a site-specific earthworks rule 25.5.2 which allows the maximum permitted volume of earthworks for the Submitters Land to be 1000m³¹ (per site within any consecutive 12-month period) (**Submitters' Bespoke Rule**).

¹ *Upper Clutha Environmental Society Incorporated v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2022] NZEnvC 244

Site Characteristics and Topography

- 9 The Site is characterised by **low-relief Upper Clutha Basin topography**, including:
- (i) Gentle slopes and shallow terraces
 - (ii) Broad, open rural landforms
 - (iii) Subtle undulations and gullies, including a gully where we are developing a wetland
- 10 The Site does not sit on a ridgeline or skyline and is not visually prominent in the wider landscape. The landform provides **natural containment**, allowing development and planting to integrate into the surrounding environment.

Visual Context – Stevenson Road and River Track

- 11 The Site is visible in part from **Stevenson Road** and sections of the **river track**, with views generally:
- (i) Oblique and intermittent
 - (ii) Experienced at similar elevation to the Site
 - (iii) At medium to long range
- 12 The Site is viewed as part of a **broader working rural landscape**, rather than as an isolated or dominant feature. Our development approach has deliberately sought to **minimise visual effects**, including:
- (i) Siting buildings and infrastructure **below or relative to landform breaks**
 - (ii) Using **recessive materials and modest scale buildings**
 - (iii) Aligning planting (vineyards, orchards, shelter belts) with **natural contours**
 - (iv) Maintaining **open grazing areas** to retain landscape openness
 - (v) Constructing **environmental berms** establishing plantings to reduce visibility of built elements
- 13 Many visual elements (such as seasonal crops or netting) are **temporary and part of normal rural activity** and should not be treated as permanent

adverse effects. We consider that our land use enhances rather than detracts from rural character, contributing to a **functional, productive, and lived-in landscape**.

Concerns with the Proposed Variation

- 14 Our primary concern is that the proposed Landscape Schedule introduces a **high level of uncertainty and restriction** on normal rural land use, including activities that are:
 - (i) Small in scale
 - (ii) Environmentally beneficial
 - (iii) Consistent with rural character
- 15 Our concern is based on the difference between the Site as we know and manage it and the way in which the wider scheduled area is described. We accept that the river corridor, escarpments and other parts of the Priority Area have landscape values that should be recognised. However, several of the broad descriptions do not, in our view, adequately distinguish those parts of the Priority Area from the modified and productive Poplar Beach Terrace.
- 16 In particular, descriptions based on naturalness, remoteness or wildness do not reflect our ordinary experience of the Site as a lived-in and working rural property. The Site contains a dwelling, farm building, vineyard, irrigation, fencing, tracks, shelterbelts, grazing areas and other productive features. It is also experienced in the context of other rural properties and activities on the terrace. We seek more precise wording so that the Schedule records both the values of the wider area and the different existing character of the Poplar Beach Terrace.
- 17 The Schedule appears to rely heavily on **subjective visual assessment**, without clear thresholds or recognition of site-specific context such as topography and existing or past land use. In our experience, even under the current framework, planning controls have already constrained development—for example, we were advised that our farm shed would not have been consented if it had been located differently.
- 18 We understand that Council describes the Schedule as high-level guidance and says that a later site-specific assessment may identify different values or capacity. Our concern is that the Schedule will nevertheless form part of the PDP and will be the starting point for future assessments. Based on our previous experience obtaining approvals and developing the Site, we

expect that any future application would need to address the Schedule wording, even where that wording does not accurately describe our property.

- 19 If the Schedule overstates the naturalness or sensitivity of the Poplar Beach Terrace, we may need to obtain further professional advice and evidence to explain the existing rural character and capacity of the Site. In practical terms, this would place the burden on us to qualify or correct the starting point recorded in the PDP. We consider it preferable for the Schedule to recognise the existing productive uses and modification of the terrace accurately from the outset.
- 20 The proposed Variation risks further restricting:
- (i) The establishment of vineyards, orchards, and gardens
 - (ii) Necessary farm infrastructure
 - (iii) Adaptive and sustainable land use changes
- 21 We are concerned that **visibility alone may trigger restrictive activity status**, even where effects are minor and able to be mitigated.
- 22 The Variation does not adequately recognise that:
- (i) The Upper Clutha is a working rural landscape
 - (ii) Landscapes evolve over time
 - (iii) Productive land use is essential to long-term stewardship

Need for an Effects-Based and Enabling Approach

- 23 We submit that landscape provisions should:
- (i) Focus on **significant adverse effects**, not all visible change
 - (ii) Recognise **site-specific factors such as landform and context**
 - (iii) Enable **low-impact rural activities and infrastructure**
 - (iv) Support **innovation and diversification in farming**
- 24 On our Site, the combination of:
- (i) Low-lying topography

- (ii) Limited visual prominence
- (iii) Effective mitigation measures

means that landscape effects are inherently constrained and manageable.

- 25 Since 2015, the character and use of the Site have continued to evolve. We have progressively introduced grazing, productive planting, shelterbelts, irrigation, beekeeping, viticulture, pest management and ecological enhancement. We are also developing a wetland and implementing planting and landform measures to integrate the glasshouse and vineyard. These changes have not occurred all at once, but as part of the gradual development and management of the Site.
- 26 We expect that this process will continue. Productive planting may need to be replaced or reconfigured, shelterbelts will mature, farming systems may change, and new infrastructure may be required to respond to climate, water availability or the success of particular crops. This is why we are concerned about Schedule descriptions that record the landscape at one point in time without giving sufficient recognition to the ordinary evolution of a working rural property.
- 27 We are disappointed with Council's refusal to acknowledge our bespoke earthworks rule within the landscape capacity section of the schedule. As set out in our submission, there is a site-specific earthworks rule which permits up to 1,000m³ of earthworks to be undertake on our site (within any consecutive 12-month period) (**Submitter's bespoke rule**). This rule reflects a far greater capacity for our site to absorb earthworks than other land that falls within the Clutha Mata-Au River Priority Area Landscape Schedule. On this basis, we seek that the Submitter's bespoke rule be acknowledged within the Schedule.

Relief Sought

- 28 We are not seeking to remove all recognition of the landscape values associated with the wider Mata-au Clutha River Priority Area. We seek amendments that distinguish the modified and productive Poplar Beach Terrace from the more natural river corridor and accurately recognise the terrace's existing rural activities, infrastructure, shelterbelts, horticultural planting and capacity for ordinary rural change.
- 29 In particular, we seek amendments consistent with the marked-up Schedule attached to the legal submissions as Appendix 1. Those amendments would provide a more accurate starting point for future

assessment of our Site, while retaining recognition of the relevant values of the river corridor and wider Priority Area.

30 We seek that the Variation be amended to:

- (i) Recognise the capacity for earthworks as provided by the Submitters' Bespoke Rule.
- (ii) Recognise small-scale viticulture, orchards, vegetable gardens, and sheep grazing as appropriate rural activities on the intermediate terraces at Poplar Beach.
- (iii) Enable associated rural infrastructure as permitted or controlled where effects are minor on the intermediate terraces at Poplar Beach.
- (iv) Provide for ongoing adaptation and experimentation in sustainable land use.
- (v) Reduce reliance on subjective visual assessment.
- (vi) Apply a proportionate, effects-based approach that recognises topography and context.
- (vii) Ensure that landowner rights and reasonable use expectations are maintained.

Conclusion

31 We are committed to managing Lot 6, DP 325795 as a **productive, sustainable, and well-integrated rural property**. We consider that a planning framework that enables responsible land stewardship will better achieve both **landscape protection and long-term environmental outcomes**.

32 We respectfully request that the Panel amend the Variation accordingly.

31 August 2026

Vaughn Howard Woodfield & Mrs Kathryn Maree Woodfield

Appendix 1 – Map of Submitter's land in the context of the Upper Clutha Rural Character Landscape Schedules overlay

