

BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND The District Plan Review Submission #526 by Michaela Meehan

---

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE EVIDENCE OF PATRICK BAXTER FOR

MICHAELA MEEHAN

S0526 – Meehan – T14 – BAXTER P - EVIDENCE

DATED 13 JUNE 2018

---



## Introduction and Qualifications

- 1 My full name is Patrick John Baxter. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography from 1981 and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from 1984. I am a Director of Baxter Design Group Limited, a Queenstown based consultancy specialising in landscape architecture, urban design, master planning and landscape planning and I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 2 I have worked in the Queenstown Lakes District since 1989. I was employed in the Queenstown office of Boffa Miskell from 1989 until 1998. In 1998, I established my own practice specialising in landscape architecture, urban design and masterplanning. Baxter Design currently employs 8 staff and is working on projects throughout New Zealand and the South Pacific.
- 3 I have complied with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note 2014. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on another person, and I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.
- 4 In this evidence I address the matters raised by Helen Mellsop in her Statement of Evidence for the Landscape Section for the Wakatipu Basin Hearing, on behalf of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (dated 28 May 2018). Refer to Section 6. Arthurs Point Basin under Requests for changes to Landscape Boundaries.

## Attachments

- 5 The following plan is attached to this summary for reference:
  - Attachment A – Existing and Proposed ONL Boundaries
  - Attachment B – Existing and Proposed ONL Boundaries – Coronet Peak Road View
  - Attachment C – Existing ONL Boundary – Fitzpatrick Road View

## Site Description

- 6 The area subject to this evidence **is the 'Northridge landform'**, a ridge running from Hunters Road in the west to Malaghans Road in the east and broadly parallel to Malaghans Road. This ridge has been described in previous hearings **as the 'spiny backed lizard'**. The landform discussed in this evidence is the eastern end of that ridge. The primary characteristics of that landform include the following:
  - Steep escarpments rising from Malaghans Road on the northern side of the ridge
  - Hillocks along the top of the ridge
  - Sloping pasture hillsides on the southern side of the ridge
  - Exotic vegetation (predominantly exotic grasses) and young amenity tree planting
  - Road and driveways to existing and consented dwellings
  - Built dwellings

- An overall amenity of existing rural lifestyle development and pastoral areas located on the upper lumpy terrace parts of the landform
- The escarpments and the toe of the escarpments adjacent to the Malaghans road and to the western end of the landform.
- **A substantial cliff form abruptly completing the terrace edge at the western edge of the 'spiny backed lizard' dropping to a valley adjacent to Malaghans** and Little Roads running approximately north – south.

7 In general, this landform has a visible cloak of human activity in the form of roads, clusters of houses, exotic grasses and trees and pastoral land, with the exception of the cliffs. It is an Arcadian and pastoral landscape, with a dramatic contrast at the western end where the cliffs abruptly terminate the landform.

#### Summary of the Primary Landscape Matter

8 The submission seeks to amend part of the notified Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) boundary to better match the existing topography and vegetation of the site and acknowledging the current and consented land use patterns existing on that landform. The current ONL boundary shown on the PDP planning maps has no logical relationship to any perceptible change in vegetation pattern, land use or landform. The existing ONL boundary and the relocated ONL boundary that I have recommended are shown on Attachments A & B.

9 In her report Helen Mellsoy has concluded that she does not support the amendments to the ONL boundary and is in *"complete agreement with Dr Read's discussion of this issue in the Landscape Report"*. I disagree with this statement as that supports the ONL boundary in its current location and ignores both the realities of topography and the visible characteristics of a landscape in transition.

#### Evidence to support amended part of the ONL Boundary

10 I consider that the landscape that exists west of the existing ONL boundary (to the edge of the cliff) has the characteristics of a (ODP) Visual Amenity Landscape, given that landscape east of the existing ONL boundary exhibits domestication typical of an Arcadian and pastoral landscape. The location of the existing and consented (unbuilt) dwellings are shown on Attachments A and B.

11 The north side of the landform is part of a broadly visible landscape when viewed from some public places in the vicinity of **the site**. **The 'spiny backed lizard' is visible from Malaghans Road, Arthurs Point Road, Littles Road, Coronet Peak Road and Skippers Road.** Development on the upper terraces is only visible from Coronet Peak Road, aside from one established dwelling and domestic planting on the edge of the terrace form. The degree of visibility and the openness of the landform is different from each of these public places, and changes as a viewer travels along these roads.

12 The open values of upper terrace landform, in the vicinity of the existing and consented dwellings that form part of the Northridge development and other lots to the east of the Northridge development, are diminished by buildings and mature vegetation, on the terraces, and near the hillocks at the top of the site. The escarpments do not have open values due to the existing cover of wilding vegetation which includes trees and scrub, although some recent clearance has occurred.

13 Attachment B shows the location of the existing ONL / VAL boundary. This image shows clearly the disconnection between the ONL boundary **and the existing landform**. **I agree that the lower valley at the eastern end of the 'spiny**

**backed lizard' landform and the wider enclosing hills** to the east and north is an ONL. There is no landscape relevance or logic to that ONL boundary dissecting a landform that extends some considerable distance both sides of that boundary with a similar topographical pattern.

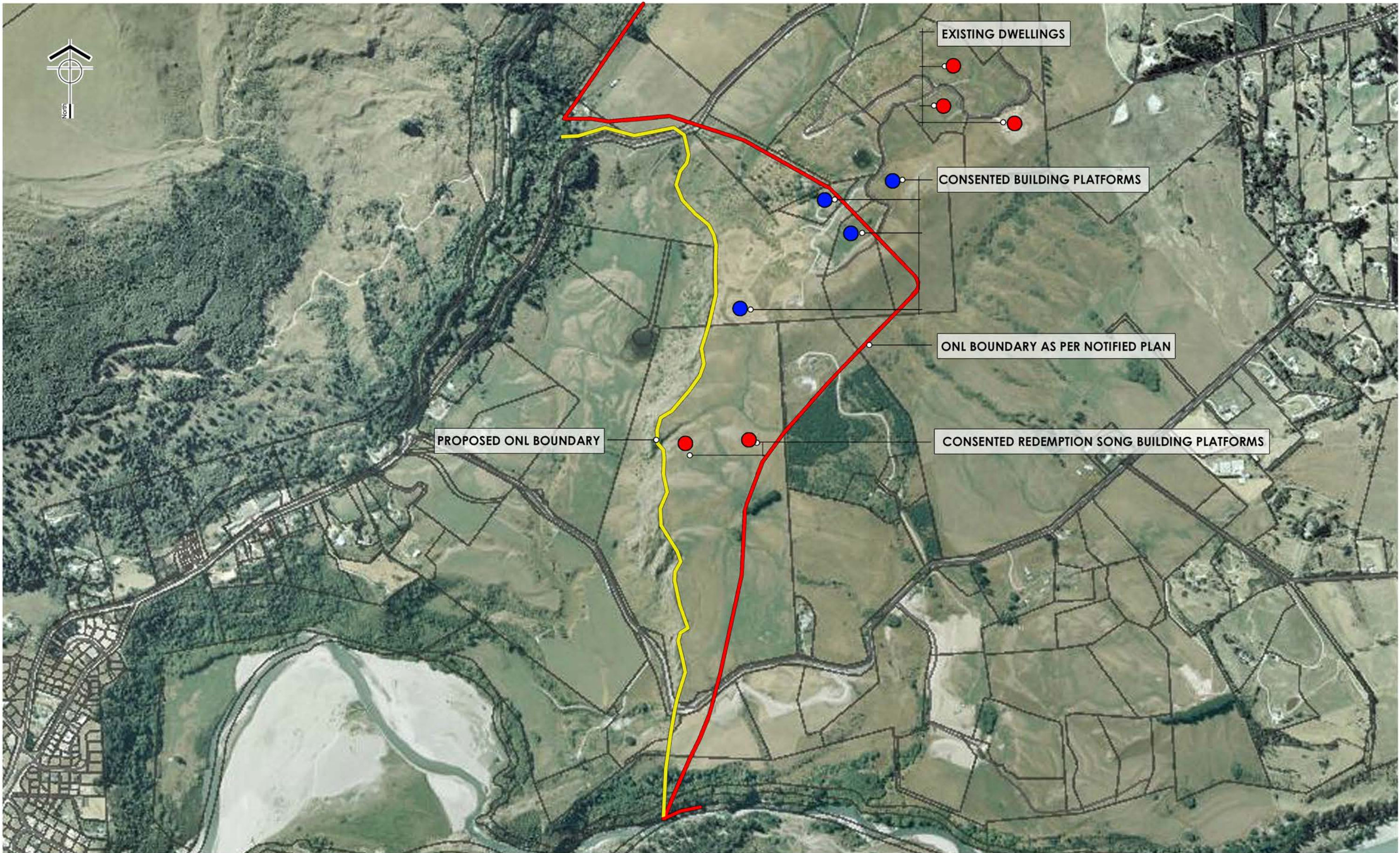
- 14 I am aware that, since the Court set the ONL boundary in 2002 there have been 3 dwellings approved within the ONL landscape being the two Redemption Song dwellings and a dwelling near the edge of the cliff being the Michaela Meehan dwelling (refer Attachment A).
- 15 The surrounding landscape displays the same mix of partial open space and closed space and the partial openness continues on either side of the site into Northridge and the Redemption Song site. The degree of openness of the Redemption song site will change as the substantial planted native regeneration matures. The Northridge development has, and the Redemption Song development will have, an effect on the amount of openness due to the existing and future dwellings and existing tree cover. The substantial number of trees planted within that landform on the escarpment, on both sides of the existing ONL line are young and will change the character of that landscape over time, and the existing amount of openness will diminish, as will that of the Redemption Song site.
- 16 Existing and new development has compromised the naturalness of the landscape in that it has changed it to an Arcadian and pastoral landscape of houses and exotic trees on the terraces and flats. Existing and new development has not compromised the visual coherence of the landscape as it has repeated the Arcadian and pastoral character **already established elsewhere on the terrace of the 'spiny backed lizard'**.
- 17 Landscape boundaries usually coincide with, or are determined by, a noticeable change in one or more landscape characteristics, including topography, vegetation, and extent or characteristics of development. The area of land west of the existing ONL boundary within the site does not reflect any such changes. There is no difference between the characteristics of the land on either side of that ONL boundary right along its full length.
- 18 In my opinion there is a clear landscape and landform-based logic to moving the ONL boundary to the top of the cliff edge (shown on my Attachment B). This coincides with a very distinct and visible change in topography, vegetation and development pattern.
- 19 In my opinion the relocation of that boundary will reflect existing and future landscape patterns as changes east of that relocated boundary on the upper terrace have already occurred and, as described above, will keep on occurring, as the 3 consented and unbuilt dwellings west of the existing boundary (refer my Attachments A and B for dwelling locations) and all the associated tree planting that sits with those dwellings, takes shape over time.
- 20 I have also attached my Attachment C **showing the south side of the 'spiny backed lizard'**. **Again, there is no logic** to that boundary as the ONL boundary traverses a uniform and continuous landscape in order to get back down to the Shotover Gorge. The relocation of the ONL boundary (Attachment A) would remove that illogical boundary from that landscape.

## Conclusion

- 21 In my opinion the landscape character of the **'Northridge'** terrace, which extends west to the cliff edge within the Redemption Song site, is not ONL in that it has houses, driveways and exotic and indigenous tree planting interrupted by areas of pastoral grass. It is not, as assumed under an ONL, an open and natural landscape of minimal modification, natural plant patterns and indigenous species devoid of structures.

P J Baxter

13<sup>th</sup> June 2018



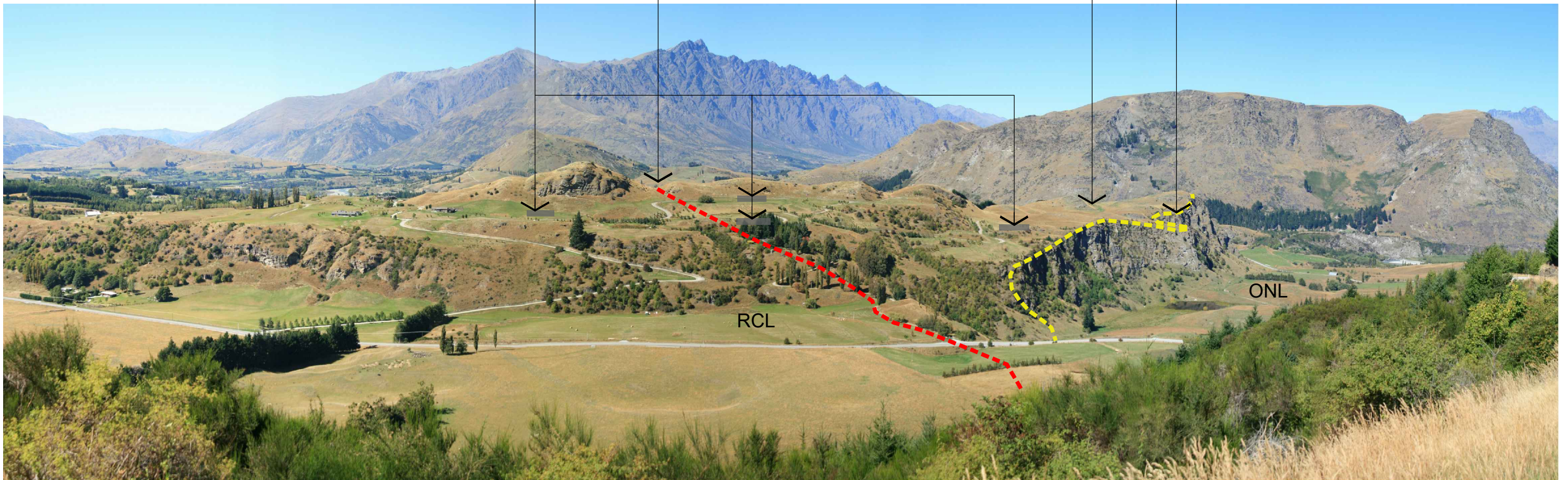


APPROXIMATE LOCATION  
OF APPROVED BUILDING  
PLATFORMS (4)

ONL / RCL BOUNDARY  
AS PER PDP

REDEMPTION SONG  
DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED ONL /  
RCL BOUNDARY



LANDSCAPE CATEGORY BOUNDARIES  
VIEW FROM CORONET PEAK ROAD





ONL / RCL BOUNDARY  
AS PER PDP



VIEW FROM FITZPATRICK ROAD

