

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPOSED DISTRICT
PLAN HEARINGS PANEL**

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER OF the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan [Part
One]**

STATEMENT OF ERIK BARNES

FOR

CARDRONA ALPINE RESORT LTD

Dated: 23 March 2016



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Thank you for the opportunity to talk to our submission today.
- 1.2. I am Erik Barnes and work as the Infrastructure and Assets Manager for Cardrona Alpine Resort Ltd. I have worked for CARL for the past 20 months with previous roles as the GM for Infrastructure at Queenstown Lakes and Southland District Council. I also spent 12 years managing the operations and infrastructure with the US and NZ Antarctic Programmes.
- 1.3. I want to acknowledge the Council's efforts with the District Plan review and appreciate the complexity and volume of work that has led to this point and that will follow.
- 1.4. Today I want to provide an overview of Cardrona Alpine Resort and why this work is important to us as a business, for the community of the Queenstown Lakes district and nationally.

2. WHO ARE WE

- 2.1. Cardrona Alpine Resort was founded by, John Lee, a local in the Cardrona Valley and visionary. He believed in creating a place for people to enjoy the stunning Cardrona mountains and promoting the growth of the region.
- 2.2. Cardrona was then purchased by an Australian owner, the Veals. Development and growth continued with the installation of new lifts and buildings. The ski area saw continued growth in visitor numbers.
- 2.3. In recent years Cardrona has been purchased by Real Journey's. Back in NZ ownership and a passion for supporting the development of our local region, RJs has provided a great boost and energy to push our development forward into new areas. This development will continue to help support the economic growth and job opportunities for Queenstown, Wanaka, and across the region.
- 2.4. As a winter resort, Cardrona Alpine Resort offers the broadest range of ski/board related activities in New Zealand and is a premier resort for snow sports in Australasia. The resort caters for guests of all abilities and disciplines making it the most diverse field in New Zealand.
 - 2.4.1. Facilities range from ski school to a Ministry of Education certified pre-school and child care facilities. For the more advanced a "high performance centre" is provided which trains skiers and snowboarders, including top international skiers/snowboarders. Cardrona is regularly a venue for competitive ski and snowboard events and championships attracting competitors from around the globe.
 - 2.4.2. We have the largest and most diverse terrain park with two world class half-pipes, park features for the first time skier to Olympic and X-games athletes.
- 2.5. As a summer resort, Cardrona has invested heavily in the development of summer activities and growth.
 - 2.5.1. Last year we initiated summer operations with lift assisted mountain biking and the development of seven trails, one lift operating and opened the cafe. Our first year of operations was over a 16-day period as a trial.
 - 2.5.2. The success of this trial has led to the continued development and

operation this summer for over 70 days. We have further invested and developed lift assisted mountain biking with over 20 trails and connections, two running lifts, and developed a southern hemisphere first with Mountaincarting activities on two trails. The café and hotel are also open and on most nights fully booked.

- 2.6. As a town connector, Cardrona has again invested heavily in the development of 'Cardrona Corner,' an information, tourism centre and retail shop based in the main street of Wanaka.

3. WHY WE CARE

- 3.1. Cardrona is about creating '**epic experiences on our mountain with our people**'
 - 3.1.1. Our values embrace our people, excellence, safety, and innovative growth.
 - 3.1.2. When we talk about our 'people' we mean everyone. Our staff, our guests, and our local communities.
 - 3.1.3. When we talk about 'our mountain', it is for all of us to enjoy and have fun. In the winter and summer, year round.
- 3.2. We are a commercial business but understand the social connections and contributions we all need to embrace, to make all of us successful. Whether it is on the mountain, locally in Cardrona Village, Queenstown, Wanaka, or Nationally.
- 3.3. CARL is committed to growing the business, investing in new infrastructure, and pushing into new opportunities for year round operation.
- 3.4. We are community focused, passionate, and have a drive and commitment to ensure excellence and innovation in what ever we do.
- 3.5. As a community we share each others success and need to ensure we are able to effectively manage and promote growth in year round tourism opportunities.
- 3.6. As an employer we need to help promote sustained growth and build the local capability for retaining expertise so people can make a life and support their family.
 - 3.6.1. The Cardrona Alpine Resort generates employment for about 560 staff in winter.
 - 3.6.2. With the focus on growth and the development of our summer operations we have expanded employment for summer staff from 0 three years ago to over 100 staff in the 2016 summer.
 - 3.6.3. The investment, development, and growth of Cardrona has also led to a significant increase in full time staff from 10 in 2013 to 40 in 2016.
- 3.7. As a company we are committed to building our business and supporting the development of our local community.
 - 3.7.1. As an example of this, is our support in working with the local Cardrona Valley residents and Council to look for ways to deal with the issue of sewage treatment in the Cardrona Valley.

4. GROWING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND OUR CHALLENGE

- 4.1. Significant pressures face the ski/boarding industry with rising costs of operation; growth of tourism; increasing expectations from guests; increased safety requirements and changes to legislation; the fast paced nature of changing trends; climate change pressures and the need to look at more unique products to ensure financial viability in the future.

- 4.2. Cardrona has seen sustained visitor growth of around 10% over the past several years. With an average of 250,000 guests coming to our resort in the winter and summer guest numbers increasing.
- 4.3. This growth is predicted to continue, meaning a higher level of demand and need to expand to support the growth.
- 4.4. Cardrona Alpine resort is committed to investing in the future. Through development of new infrastructure, expansion of our business into year around activities and supporting our people and communities to succeed.
- 4.5. The district plan is an important element in helping us all recognise the importance of tourism and providing the mechanisms to help manage growth in an appropriate manner that,
 - 4.5.1. does not stifle sound investment opportunities; and
 - 4.5.2. promotes development; and
 - 4.5.3. promotes the ability to work more efficiently and effectively; and
 - 4.5.4. supports the growth of our local people with year round employment to build a stronger community and family connections; and
 - 4.5.5. supports our drive of creating 'epic experiences on our mountain with our people.'

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