

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act (Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the submission by Ngāi Tahu Tourism Limited on the QLDC Proposed District Plan 2015 (Stream 13) to rezone a piece of land from Rural General to Rural Visitor

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BEN FARRELL FOR
Ngāi Tahu Tourism Limited (Submitter #716)**

9th June 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Ben Farrell. I am an Independent Planning Consultant employed by John Edmonds & Associates Limited, a firm of independent planners and project managers based in Queenstown.
2. My qualifications and experience are provided in my evidence in chief dated 29 February 2016 and my evidence prepared for the submission by Lake Wakatipu Station dated 9 June 2017. I confirm the matters raised in my evidence in chief relating to the code of conduct for expert witnesses also apply to this evidence.
3. In preparing this evidence I have reviewed [some or all of] the following documents of particular relevance to this matter:
 - Hearing Panel Minutes dated 29 May and 8 June relating to this matter
 - QLDC s.42A Report prepared by Ms Kim Banks dated 25 May
 - QLDC s.42A Report prepared by Ms Rosalind Devlin dated 24 May
 - Evidence in support of the s.42A Report prepared by Mr G Davis, Dr M Read, Mr U Glasner, all dated 24 May 2017, and Ms W Banks dated 25 May
 - S.42A Report for Stream 12 prepared by Mr Barr dated 17 March, and rebuttal evidence dated 5 May 2017
 - Supplementary evidence of Mr Whyte dated 6 June 2017 for Sarah Burdon (Submission #282)
 - Rural Visitor Zone Monitoring Report prepared by QLDC dated April 2010
4. In preparing this evidence I have also listened to part of the recording of part of the Stream 12 Mapping Hearing in relation to the questioning of Mr Whyte by the panel in relation to his planning evidence.

SCOPE AND SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

5. This planning evidence is written at the request of Ngāi Tahu Tourism Limited, in response to the s.42A Report and supporting evidence in relation to the request to rezone existing reserve land (currently administered by DOC) from rural general to rural visitor.

SCOPE OF THE SUBMISSION

6. The submission seeks that the operative rural visitor provisions apply to the Morning Star Reserve (as described in the s.42A Report). While the rural visitor zone permits residential activities, the intent of the submission (having liaised closely with the submitter) is not to enable residential activity. Rather it is to appropriately recognise and provide for the existing and potentially new tourism related activities within the Morning Star Reserve.
7. The operative rural visitor zone framework enables a bespoke framework for each particular rural visitor zone. If the panel determines there is merit in the land being rezoned to rural visitor (or something similar), but the operative provisions are not the most appropriate (i.e. if additional or alternative provisions should be included), then the submission provides scope for the panel / decision-maker to include those provisions in the PDP.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

8. I generally agree with the description of the Morning Star reserve provided in the s.42A Report. In addition I note:
- a. The Morning Star Recreation Reserve is managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) on behalf of the Crown. The land was formalised as a Recreation Reserve in 1991, as Gazette Notice 1991, P.2665.
 - b. The Morning Star Recreation Reserve is considered a *Special Place* (30) within the Queenstown area, under the Otago Conservation Management Strategy, Chapter 10 (1998:359). The Conservation unit number is E41 122.
 - c. There are three existing commercial companies that currently operate within the subject reserve, Shotover Jet Ltd (Shotover Jet), Queenstown Rafting Ltd (QT Rafting) and Rapids Cafe. These companies either have a lease agreement or a Concession with the Department to occupy or operate from this reserve. Initially, Shotover Jet Ltd began operations in 1970, on a 0.49 hectare area of land, within the Morning Star Reserve.
 - d. There is also an existing vehicle access traversing the site providing access to a commercial art gallery.

Table 1 Summary of existing activities at the site

Party	Activities
Shotover Jet	Commercial jet boat operation (x4 boats); Shotover Jet base building (incl. offices, customer services, retail); Viewing platforms within marginal strip; Carparking areas; Jetty; Underground fuel supplies . incl. pipelines to rivers edge; Sealed access roads leading to river margin; Boat and tractor storage; Workshop and maintenance building; Sealed motor-court . between storage and maintenance. Shotover Jet hold various QLDC and ORC resource consents, and DOC concessions.
QT Rafting	Resource consent to operate commercial rafting trips (take out point is on the margin of Morningstar Reserve). Operate from a base building on the site including customer facilities, admin, raft storage and maintenance.
Cafe	Ground floor of Cavells building
Department of Conservation	Administration offices on first floor of Cavells building; workshop, storage and vehicle parking area
Communal	Carpark near Gorge Road entry

9. There are five buildings within the reserve used for commercial purposes (Shotover Jet base building, Shotover Jet boat store, Shotover Jet maintenance, Cavells, DOC workshop and storage). These are identified in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 Existing Activities within the Morning Star Reserve

MATTERS RAISED IN THE S.42A REPORT

10. The following addresses the matters raised in the s.42A Report specific to the rezoning request.

Development capacity

11. Paragraph 46.2 of the s.42A Report suggests that the rezoning request would potentially yield 338 lots (based on 228m² per lot, which is based on analysis of a Rural Visitor development at Cardrona).
12. In my opinion this is a gross overstatement and exaggeration of the likely development capacity that would result from rezoning the land from rural general to rural visitor. In this regard the existing environment within the site provides a significant development constraint for new residential activity.
13. Moreover the intent of the submission is not to facilitate residential development (as discussed above). In my opinion it would be appropriate to include bespoke provisions to restrict and manage any residential development within the Morning Star Reserve.

Landscape

14. The evidence of Dr M Read supports removal (or shifting) of the ONL boundary. Removal (or shifting) of the ONL boundary from the site would remove a significant development hurdle for enhancing the rural visitor activities already located at the site. Based on the evidence of Dr M Read I consider it would be more appropriate than not to amend the district plan maps so that the ONL does not apply to the site.

Ecological values

15. The evidence of Mr Davis raises no concern regarding ecological values given the predominance of introduced woody weed species, mature pine trees, indigenous plant species. Mr Davis acknowledges the site contains areas of restoration planting. This finding is consistent with my understanding of the ecological values of the site.

Infrastructure

16. I accept the evidence of Mr Glasner that there is insufficient information to determine the appropriateness of rezoning that would potentially yield over 300 residential units. However, as discussed above, the intent of the submission is not to facilitate residential development. In my opinion Mr Glasner could consider the appropriateness of the rezoning in the scenario where no additional residential development was enabled by the permitted or controlled activity status.

Access

17. I accept the evidence of Ms Banks that there is insufficient information to justify the appropriateness of rezoning based on potential effects on the transportation network, on the assumption that the rezoning could yield over 300 residential units. However, as discussed above, the intent of the submission is not to facilitate residential development of such scale. In my opinion it would be helpful if Ms Banks considered the appropriateness of the rezoning request in the scenario where no additional residential development was enabled by the permitted or controlled activity status.

CONCLUSION

18. In my opinion the request by Ngāi Tahu Tourism to rezone the Morning Star Reserve from rural general to rural visitor has considerable merit given the existing rural visitor activities at the site.
19. I agree further information should be provided if the zoning is to include residential development. However, in my opinion it would be appropriate to consider the rezoning request where residential activities are not anticipated as either permitted or controlled activities.

SIGNED



9 JUNE 2017