

21.22.14 Northern Remarkables ONL

General Description of the Area

The Northern Remarkables PA ONL relates to the northern faces of the Remarkable Range framing the southern side of the Wakatipu Basin. The southern boundary of the PA/ONL corresponds with the mountain peaks and ridgelines of that range around, and east of the Remarkables Ski Area Sub-zone – extending through to near Chard Farm. The Northern Remarkables PA/ONL's northern boundary follows the upper edge of the low-lying Kawarau River terraces on the south side of the Kawarau River to near Chard Farm. In so doing, the PA/ONL captures the steep mountain faces above the Kawarau River valley and terraces at the toe of the Northern Remarkables.

Physical Attributes and Values

Geology and Geomorphology • Topography and Landforms • Climate and Soils • Hydrology • Vegetation • Ecology • Settlement • Development and Land Use • Archaeology and Heritage • Tāngata whenua

Important landforms and land types:

1. Steep to very steep mountain slopes with frequent exposed schist outcrops and scree slopes. The northern faces consist principally of large landslides which occurred after the retreat of glaciers at the end of the last glaciation.
2. Alluvial fans and shingle beds associated with the Rastus Burn and Owens Creek.
3. Elevated fans and flat alluvial floodplains and terraces bordered in places by steep escarpments.
4. Located to the north of, and down slope of, the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road, the Remarkables Terrane Boundary and Block Field are identified as a Geopreservation Site of national importance; and the Frankton Block Field is identified as being of regional importance. Both of these features are rated as being robust and not considered to be vulnerable to most human-related activities.
5. This ONL also contains the Lake Alta cirque which is a classic lake-filled cirque with steep rocky sides. There are areas of moraine over the schist bedrock at the front lip.

Important hydrological features:

6. The Rastus Burn.
7. Owens Creek.
8. The cirque lake of Lake Alta (i.e., amphitheatre-shaped basin with precipitous walls at the head of a glacial valley). Identified as a Geopreservation Site of regional significance that is rated as being robust and not considered to be vulnerable to most human-related activities.
9. The series of small tarns in the vicinity of the Remarkables Ski Field.

Important ecological features and vegetation types:

10. Particularly noteworthy indigenous vegetation features include:
 - a. Extensive areas of regenerating indigenous grey shrubland, particularly in the Owens Creek and Rastus Burn valleys. The larger areas of shrubland are designated as SNA's.
 - b. Snow tussock grasslands, mixed snow tussock *Dracophyllum* scrub and cushionfields covers the higher slopes generally above c. 900 m, including the Rastus Basin.

- c. Alpine cushion bogs are a feature of the Basins in the upper Rastus Burn bordering the streams and tarns.
 - d. Expansive areas of mixed short tussock – exotic grassland interspersed with grey shrubland occur above the prominent alluvial fans and terraces of the Rastus Burn and Owens Creek.
 - e. Scattered, locally rare, mature kowhai across the lower and mid slopes especially on bluffy sites.
11. Other distinctive vegetation types include:
- a. Grazed pasture throughout the flat river terraces while extensive grazing occurs on the lower hillslopes.
12. Valued habitat for a range of lizards, New Zealand falcon, New Zealand pipit and grey warbler, and endemic invertebrates. Mingimingi and the tree daisies (*Olearia sp*) are important to endemic invertebrates during parts of their life cycles while rocky areas amongst low stature shrubs and short and exotic grassland is important habitat for skinks and geckos.
13. The upper part of the PA lies in the DOC managed Remarkables Conservation Area.
14. Animal pest species include red deer, feral goats, feral cats, ferrets, stoats, weasels, hares, rabbits, possums, rats and mice.
15. Plant pest species include sweet briar which is often a component of grey shrubland, wildings conifers, buddleia, broom, and gorse.

Important land-use patterns and features:

16. Human modification which is concentrated throughout the low-lying river terraces at the base of the mountain slopes (and adjacent the Kawarau River ONF), where pastoral and viticultural land use dominate; in the three elevated basins near Lake Alta within which the ski field is located; and throughout the north-western portion of the PA associated with the ski field access road.
17. Built development patterns which, throughout the lower-lying river terraces includes a farmhouse at Owens Creek, the Chard Farm winery, scattered farm buildings, farm tracks, fencing and a power line (on poles) roughly traversing the toe of the steeper slopes. Generally development is characterised by very carefully located and designed buildings that have an obvious connection with the working rural landscape, are well integrated by plantings and remain subservient to the 'natural' landscape patterns. Elsewhere, the modest scale of buildings, together with their distinctly working rural character and sparse arrangement, ensures that they sit comfortably into the setting.
18. The location of the Remarkables Ski Field within three interconnected elevated basins which means that it is relatively visually discreet in views from low-lying places in the Wakatipu Basin and Queenstown. The ski field access road, however, is prominent in such views.
19. Gibbston Character Zone in the vicinity of Chard Farm which includes viticulture and commercial activities with and affiliation to viticulture and farming.

Important archaeological and heritage features and their locations:

20. Chard Road (District Plan reference 216) and Chard Farm (archaeological site F41/52).
21. Various inter-related complexes of gold sluicings, tailings, water races, dams, and associated domestic sites in the area (for example, archaeological sites E41/204, E41/228, and E41/279).

Mana whenua features and their locations:

22. The entire area is ancestral land to Kāi Tahu whānui and, as such, all landscape is significant, given that whakapapa, whenua and wai are all intertwined in te ao Māori.

23. The western part of the ONL overlaps the mapped Kawarau wāhi tūpuna. Kawarau is the traditional name for the Remarkables.
24. The very northern extent of the ONL overlaps the mapped Kawarau River wāhi tūpuna.

Associative Attributes and Values

Mana whenua creation and origin traditions • Mana whenua associations and experience • Mana whenua metaphysical aspects such as mauri and wairua • Historic values • Shared and recognised values • Recreation and scenic values

Mana whenua associations and experience:

25. Kāi Tahu whakapapa connections to whenua and wai generate a kaitiaki duty to uphold the mauri of all important landscape areas.
26. As one of the highest and most prominent ranges overlooking Whakatipu-wai-māori, closeness to the Ātua gives significance to Kawarau.
27. The Kawarau River was a traditional travel route that provided direct access between Whakatipu-wai-māori (Lake Whakatipu) and Mata-au (the Clutha River).
28. The Kawarau River is a significant kāika mahika kai where weka, kākāpō, kea and tuna (eel) were gathered.
29. The mana whenua values associated with the ONL include, but may not be limited to, mauka, wāhi taoka, ara tawhito, mahika kai and nohoaka.

Important historic attributes and values:

30. Gold mining in the area and the associated physical remnants.
31. Historic farming, especially early pastoralism.
32. Chard Road, which was part of the old main coach link between Queenstown and Cromwell. Identified in the PDP Inventory of listed Heritage Features, QLDC Category 2 (three categories, 1 to 3, with Category 1 being the most significant).

Important shared and recognised values:

33. The descriptions and photographs of the area in tourism publications.
34. The popularity of the mountain slopes as an inspiration/subject for art and photography and as a 'key outlook' from Queenstown.
35. The high popularity of the recreational 'features' listed below.

Important recreation attributes and values:

36. The Remarkables Ski Field for winter use and recreation; access to the ski field also offers the general public close-up, first-hand experience of the Northern Remarkables PA ONL.
37. The Remarkables Ski Field Access Road (and lookouts) and SH 6 as key scenic routes either within the PA or in close proximity.
38. The popular Queenstown Park Station Fun Ride and Kawarau River Run annual events.

39. Walking and cycling along the Twin Rivers Trail on the north side of the Kawarau River. Although the trail is outside the Northern Remarkables PA ONL, its close proximity means that the landscape character experienced on the trail is strongly influenced by the PA.
40. The Lake Alta and Wye Creek Route walking tracks.
41. Climbing in the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve.
42. Jetboating, kayaking, rafting, and fishing on the Kawarau River (ONF), for the same 'proximity' reasons to those described above.
43. Chard Farm winery.

Perceptual (Sensory) Attributes and Values

Legibility and Expressiveness • Views to the area • Views from the area • Naturalness • Memorability • Transient values • Remoteness / Wildness • Aesthetic qualities and values

Legibility and expressiveness attributes and values:

44. The area's natural landforms, land type and hydrological features (described above) which are highly legible and highly expressive of the landscape's formative glacial and fluvial / alluvial processes.
45. Indigenous gully and stream plantings which reinforce the legibility and expressiveness values within the Owen and Rastus Burn catchments.
46. More generally, the vegetation cover and land uses found within the area which reinforce the landform differences throughout the ONL, with more cultural vegetation patterns evident on the lower-lying flat areas and more natural vegetation cover apparent across elevated areas.

Particularly important views to and from the area:

47. Impressive and highly appealing mid to longer-range views from the Twin Rivers Trail across the Kawarau River and its floodplains to the largely open pastoral terraces and dramatic mountain slopes, peaks, ridges and valleys of the PA ONL Northern Remarkables.
48. Impressive close-up views across tussock-dominated slopes near the Remarkables Ski Field Road towards the deeply etched valley of the Rastus Burn and up into the valley corridor of the ski field itself.
49. Highly attractive close, mid and longer-range views from the Kawarau River to the edges of the pastoral terraces, backdropped by a vast and rugged mountain setting. The complex river edge landforms and vegetation patterns frame and filter views in places, contributing to views that have highly variable content and a variable character.
50. Complex and highly attractive mid-range views from Lake Hayes Estate, Bridesdale and Shotover Country over intervening riverside vegetation to the exposed, relatively bare, pastoral terraces and mid slopes, either side of the Rastus Burn valley and the crenelated ridges and peaks that top the range.
51. Dramatic longer-range views from the Whakatipu Basin, the Crown Range Road and Queenstown urban area (including the airport and key scenic routes), to the elevated mountain slopes, peaks and ridges.
52. In all of the views, the dominance of 'natural' landscape elements, patterns, and processes along with the generally subservient nature of built development and impression of openness underpins the high quality of the outlook.

53. From the more distant vantage points (i.e., Queenstown, Whakatipu Basin and Crown Terrace area), views of the jagged alpine peaks and rugged incised mountain slopes comprise signature views that are critical to the identity of the wider area.
54. From more proximate vantage points, the vegetation-fringed, dynamic waters of the Kawarau River add to the locality's spectacle – acting as the centrepiece to an enclosed, U-shaped valley that becomes increasingly incised east of Morven Hill (ONF). In such views, the seemingly 'tamed' pastoral floodplains and elevated terraces on both sides of the river are also apparent, offering attractive contrast with, and counterpoint to, the sheltered river corridor and its mountain backdrop.

Naturalness attributes and values:

55. The mountain slopes which exhibit a very high level of naturalness, except in the more immediate vicinity of the Remarkables Ski Field and its access road. This perception is accentuated by the sheer scale and visual grandeur of the mountain range as a whole. While modifications related to the ski field and its road are visible from much of the catchment associated with the Kawarau River, Queenstown, and the southern Whakatipu Basin (albeit to varying degrees), their confined location and limited scale – relative to that of the Northern Remarkables in totality – limits impact on those areas and means that they are not dominant elements. These landscape modifications also make an important contribution to Queenstown's recreational values (see above), suggesting a degree of landscape 'fit'.
56. The elevated river terraces closer to the Kawarau River, where pastoral and viticultural land uses dominate, giving rise to a lower level of perceived naturalness within this part of the PA ONL Northern Remarkables. Scattered farm dwellings, rural buildings, shelterbelts, woodlots, power lines, fencing, and tracks add to this impression in places and its 'cultural' dimension is further amplified by the predominance of exotic plant species near the river, including willows, poplars, broom, gorse and rosehip.

Memorability attributes and values:

57. Views of the steep mountain slopes and crenelated ridges and peaks that top the range are highly memorable.

Transient attributes and values:

58. Seasonal snowfall and the ever-changing patterning of light and weather across the mountain slopes.
59. The changing colours of pasture areas, which are green in some seasons and tawny brown in others.
60. Autumn leaf colour and seasonal loss of leaves associated with the exotic vegetation (river edge poplars in particular).

Remoteness and wildness attributes and values:

61. A strong sense of the sublime associated with the Northern Remarkables' main slopes, which contribute a sense of remoteness and wildness to their wider setting. Such feelings are less apparent near the valley floor, due to the more obvious influence of rural production and the presence of residential development along the northern edge of the ONL – most notably near Bridesdale, Lake Hayes Estate and Shotover Country. The valley corridor reveals significant landscape transition; from the sublime and predominantly natural, to the picturesque and cultural.

Aesthetic qualities and values:

62. The experience of the values identified above from a wide range of public viewpoints.
63. More specifically, this includes:
 - a. The highly attractive and striking composition created by the powerful and dramatic mountain slopes and peaks juxtaposed beside the more modified and 'tamed' river terraces.

- b. At a broad scale, this 'natural' large-scale landscape scene forms a bold contrast with, and backdrop to, Queenstown and the Wakatipu Basin.
- c. At a finer scale, the following aspects contribute to the aesthetic appeal:
 - i. the sculpted exposed schist outcrops and scree slopes throughout the elevated slopes;
 - ii. the steeply incised Rastus and Owen Burns;
 - iii. the bold patterning of elevated fans and flat alluvial floodplains and terraces interspersed with steep escarpments;
 - iv. the picturesque glacial Lake Alta;
 - v. the relatively low-key and 'rural vernacular' or sympathetic style of the majority of built development; and
 - vi. the poplars along the river edge, which contribute to the scenic appeal despite not being native.

Summary of Landscape Values

Physical • Associative • Perceptual (Sensory)

Rating scale: seven-point scale ranging from **Very Low** to **Very High**.

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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The combined physical, associative, and perceptual attributes and values described above for PA ONL Northern Remarkables can be summarised as follows:

- 64. **Very High physical values** due to the proliferation of high-value landforms, geological features along with the vegetation features, habitats, species, hydrological features and mana whenua features in the area.
- 65. **Very High associative values** relating to:
 - a. The mana whenua associations of the area.
 - b. The historic features and associations of the area.
 - c. The very strong shared and recognised values associated with the area.
 - d. The significant recreational attributes.
 - e. The scenic values associated with the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road.
- 66. **Very High perceptual values** relating to:
 - a. The high legibility and expressiveness values of the area deriving from the visibility and abundance of physical attributes that enable a clear understanding of the landscape's formative processes.
 - b. The very high aesthetic and memorability values of the area as a consequence of its dramatic and highly appealing visual character. The attractive composition of both natural and rural/farmed landscapes, with a strong focus on the mountains (and river), are critical features of the area. The proximity of the area to Queenstown, the Whakatipu Basin, key gateways/scenic routes, and

popular recreational features, which allows the experience of these values along with the area's transient values, also play a role.

- c. An impression of high naturalness arising from the dominance of the more natural landscape and the generally relatively modest or visually recessive nature of built development.
- d. A strong sense of remoteness and wildness associated with large-scale steep slopes and rugged peaks, which is heightened as a consequence of the area's close proximity to Queenstown and the Whakatipu Basin.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape capacity of the PA ONL Northern Remarkables for a range of activities is set out below.

- 67. **Commercial recreational activities** – **some** landscape capacity for activities (including at Chard Farm) that: integrate with and complement/enhance existing recreation features; are located to optimise the screening and/or camouflaging benefit of natural landscape elements; are designed to be of a sympathetic scale, appearance and character; integrate appreciable landscape restoration and enhancement; enhance public access; and protect the area's ONL values.
- 68. **Visitor accommodation and tourism related activities** – **some** landscape capacity for activities on the flat and low-lying terraces and floodplains (including at Chard Farm) that are: designed to be difficult to see in views from the Kawarau River, Twin River Trail, Bridesdale, Shotover Country and Lake Hayes Estate; are of a modest scale; have a low-key 'rural' character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; enhance public access; and protect the area's ONL values. **No** landscape capacity on the mountain slopes and fans.
- 69. **Urban expansions** – **no** landscape capacity.
- 70. **Intensive agriculture** – **no** landscape capacity.
- 71. **Earthworks** – **limited** landscape capacity for earthworks associated with farming, viticulture, existing recreational facilities, or public access tracks, that protect naturalness and expressiveness attributes and values; and are sympathetically designed to integrate with existing natural landform patterns.
- 72. **Farm buildings** – in those areas of the ONL with pastoral and viticultural land uses, **limited** landscape capacity for modestly scaled buildings that reinforce existing rural character (including viticultural land use) and maintain openness where openness is an important existing landscape characteristic.
- 73. **Mineral extraction** – **no** landscape capacity for extraction larger than farm/vineyard-scale quarries. **Limited** capacity for farm/vineyard-scale quarries that protect the naturalness and aesthetic attributes and values of the ONL.
- 74. **Transport infrastructure** – **very limited** landscape capacity for trails and 'low key' rural roading that are: located to integrate with existing networks; designed to be of a sympathetic appearance and character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; and protect the area's ONF values. **No** landscape capacity for other transport infrastructure.
- 75. **Utilities and regionally significant infrastructure** – **limited** landscape capacity for infrastructure that is buried or located such that they are screened from external view. In the case of utilities such as overhead lines or cell phone towers which cannot be screened, these should be designed and located so that they are not visually prominent.

- i. **Renewable energy generation** – **no** landscape capacity for commercial-scale renewable energy generation. Limited capacity for discreetly located and small-scale renewable energy generation. **Limited** landscape capacity for discreetly located and small-scale renewable energy generation on the flat and low-lying terraces and floodplains.
- 76. **Production forestry** – **no** landscape capacity.
- 77. **Rural living** – **very limited** landscape capacity for activities on the flat and low-lying terraces and floodplains that are: designed to be difficult to see in views from the Kawarau River, Twin River Trail, Bridesdale, Shotover Country and Lake Hayes Estate; are of a modest scale; have a low-key 'rural' character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; enhance public access; and protect the area's ONL values. **No** landscape capacity on the mountain slopes and fans.
- 78. **Gondolas** – **limited** landscape capacity to improve public access to focal recreational areas higher in the mountains via non-vehicular transportation modes such as gondolas, provided they are positioned in a way that is sympathetic to the landform, are located and designed to be recessive in the landscape, and protect the area's ONL values.