

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act  
1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Proposed District Plan  
Proposed Plan Review (Chapters  
21 and 22)

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF YVONNE PFLUGER**

21 April 2016

Darby Planning LP (#608),  
Soho Ski Area Limited (#610),  
Treble Cone Investments (#613)  
Lake Hayes Ltd (#763)  
Lake Hayes Cellar Ltd (#767)  
Mount Christina Limited (#764)

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## 1. **Qualifications and Experience**

- 1.1 My name is Yvonne Pflüger. I am employed as a Principal Landscape Planner for Boffa Miskell Limited (“BML”), an environmental consultancy specialising in planning, design and ecology. I have been employed at BML’s Christchurch office for ten years and am a Principal in the company.
- 1.2 I hold a Masters degree in Landscape Planning from BOKU University, Vienna (Austria, 2001) and a Masters degree in Natural Resources Management and Ecological Engineering from Lincoln University (NZ, 2005). I am a Full Member of the Resource Management Law Association and a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, as well as a Certified Environmental Practitioner under the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand.
- 1.3 I have practised as a landscape planner for over 13 years on a wide range of projects including environmental and visual effects assessments, nature conservation and river restoration, and recreation planning. As part of my professional career in Austria, I have been involved as a project co-ordinator in several projects funded by the European Union, which involved the preparation of management plans for designated protected areas.
- 1.4 During my time at Boffa Miskell I have played a key role in preparing several landscape studies for various territorial authorities throughout New Zealand’s South Island, including studies for Banks Peninsula, the Southland Coast, the Te Anau Basin, which included the assessment of the landscape’s capacity to absorb future development. I was the project manager and key author of the Canterbury Regional Landscape Study Review (2010) and Ashburton, Invercargill, Hurunui and Christchurch District landscape studies (2009-2015). The preparation of the above mentioned studies involved evaluating landscape character and quality for these regions and districts and advising councils on objectives and policies for the ongoing management of the landscape.
- 1.5 I have also prepared a large number of landscape and visual assessments for development projects of varying scales within sensitive environments, including preparation of landscape evidence for Council and Environment Court hearings. Relevant projects I was involved in

within the Queenstown Lakes District included Treble Cone gondola, Parkins Bay resort and golf course, a number of gravel extraction operations, the Queenstown airport runway extension and several consent applications for private rural subdivisions.

- 1.6 I have also provided expert landscape and visual effects evidence on a range of land uses for district, regional and Environment Court hearings. Recently I provided landscape evidence at the PC 44 hearing for Jack Point/ Henley Downs and have prepared the landscape assessments for a number of submitters for the QLDC Plan Review, most notably the submissions for Jacks Point/ Henley Downs and The Hills.
- 1.7 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note. This evidence has been prepared in accordance with it and I agree to comply with it. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## 2. **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 I have been asked to prepare evidence on landscape related issues within Chapter 21 Rural and Chapter 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle of the Proposed District Plan ("**PDP**") on behalf of the submitters named on the front cover page of this evidence.
- 2.2 In preparing this evidence I have reviewed the reports and statements of evidence of other experts giving evidence relevant to my area of expertise, including:
- (i) Dr Read's evidence dated 19 February 2016 and the Council's 42A Reports prepared in relation to Chapters 21 and 22.
  - (ii) The 'Wakatipu Basin Residential Subdivision and Development: Landscape Character Assessment', prepared by Dr. Read and dated June 2014.
  - (iii) Mr Baxter's general evidence on the character of the Wakatipu Basin presented before Hearings Panel at the Landscape and Strategic Chapters hearing (Topic 01B).
  - (iv) Mr Ferguson's evidence for Darby Partners et al on QLDC DPR Chapters 21 and 22.

- (v) Mr Tyler's evidence for Darby Partners et al on QLDC DPR Chapters 21 and 22.

### 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 In my evidence I firstly address a number of matters related to landscape character / value as referred to in the reports and evidence provided by Dr Read for QLDC. I provide a review of the landscape assessments and refer to some characteristics that I consider to be omissions, in particular in relation to the existing land uses within the Wakatipu Basin and the Ski Area Sub Zones (SASZ) located within the wider mountain ONLs of the District. This includes a general opinion on the ability of the basin and the mountains to absorb development within and around areas identified for rural living and ski areas.
- 3.2 I also cover specific provisions in the Proposed District Plan (PDP) addressed within the Darby Planning LP submissions, as they relate to landscape and visual effects. The key points covered in my evidence relate the following provisions and conclusions I drew:
- (a) Rule 21.5.27 (in relation to rules 21.5.15 and 21.5.16): I comment on the SASZ provision for colours and materials for buildings, as well as size limits. I consider the assessment matters under Rule 21.5.27 to be sufficient in controlling these activities and that it is unnecessary to limit the size of ski field buildings, which is often determined by operational requirements, due to the modified landscape context within the SASZ. I support the acknowledgement of benefits relating to landscape and ecological management, where positive environmental outcomes can be achieved through conditions as part of resource consents within the SASZs.
  - (b) Rule 21.5.15: I recommend the specific mention of schist in this rule (as an exception), since relying on light reflectance values and hues has limitations in relation to the use of natural building materials. In my view, schist constitutes an appropriate material in relation to the landscape character of buildings, adding to the sense of place within the rural environment of the district.
  - (c) Rule 21.5.19: I recommend that this rule is amended to ensure both the roof and external surfaces standards capture natural or

manufactured materials that are treated or untreated together with an exemption relating to Schist.

- (d) Rule 22.4.X: I provide an opinion on the proposed new rule<sup>1</sup> providing for commercial activities within the commercial overlay proposed to apply to the Amisfield site, where the existing winery is located. Currently the winery is within the Rural Zone and the neighbouring properties (across Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road) fall within the Low Density Residential Zone. I conclude that this rule would be appropriate in the context of the existing winery operation / buildings while maintaining the rural amenity experienced from outside the site.
- (e) Rule 22.5.1: Both the building materials, as well as appropriateness of commercial activities are covered under other sections of my evidence.
- (f) Rule 22.5.12.3: Various submissions relate to the size of sites and dwelling density in the Rural Lifestyle Zone, which are proposed in the PDP as one dwelling per two hectares. I consider, that some of the Rural Lifestyle zoned areas have the capacity to absorb a higher density of dwellings than one per 2 ha. I provide a detailed analysis of the change absorption capacity of the RLZ located on the south western corner of Speargrass Flat Road and Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road and conclude that a density of one dwelling / hectare is appropriate based on the landscape characteristics and in the context of existing modification.
- (g) Rule 22.5.5: A number of setback distances have been proposed by various submissions and discussed in the S42A report. I consider it preferable to maintain a setback distance of 10 metres as in the ODP and PDP to ensure that a homogenous appearance of built development can be achieved when viewed from the road within the Rural Residential and Lifestyle Zones.
- (h) Rule 22.5.3: The maximum size for permitted buildings is proposed as 500m<sup>2</sup> in the PDP. Assuming that building platforms are sited in suitable locations within lots (micro-siting), it is, in my opinion, generally possible to visually absorb buildings of 500m<sup>2</sup> in size in

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed by submitter Lake Hayes Cellar Ltd (Amisfield)

this type of landscape. I, therefore, support the size limit for buildings outlined in the PDP.

- (i) Rule 22.5.8: The rule proposed in the PDP allows for buildings of up to 8m in height as permitted activities. While an 8 metres height limit is reasonably permissive, it allows for a number of creative solutions and the ability to follow landform variation on undulating sites. I, therefore, support the height limit for buildings outlined in the PDP.

#### 4. REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF WAKATIPU BASIN

- 4.1 The evidence of Mr Osborne concludes that *“It is my economic opinion that the value of this natural landscape is of such vital economic importance to the District’s community that it is prudent to adopt a precautionary approach and manage the development of other activities in the Rural and Gibbston Character zones.”* This opinion seems to be related only to the natural values exhibited and not to the built environment and activities established within the rural areas. In considering the landscape character of the Wakatipu Basin, I consider that the landscape as a whole needs to be assessed.
- 4.2 Contained within page 5 of *‘Wakatipu Basin Residential Subdivision and Development: Landscape Character Assessment’*, prepared by Dr Read and dated June 2014 is a description of the current landscape character. Key landscape characteristics are listed, along with major threats to the rural character. Within the evidence of Mr. Baxter, which was prepared for a number of submitters, Mr. Baxter focuses his evidence purely on the Wakatipu Basin Character, particularly referring to those key characteristics listed by Dr Read in her report. I will briefly make some comment around both the key characteristics identified by Dr Read and the review provided by Mr. Baxter.
- 4.3 Mr. Baxter comments that Dr Read’s list of key characteristics of the Wakatipu Basin is *‘misleading, heavily swayed towards a romantic image of a rural landscape, and far removed from reality<sup>2</sup>’*.
- 4.4 Mr. Baxter argues that Dr Read *‘uses her description of the existing condition of the Wakatipu Basin to argue what she variously describes*

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<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Mr. Baxter, Wakatipu Basin Character, paragraph 7.

as “rural character” or “pastoral character”....In my opinion large parts of the Wakatipu Basin actually have an established rural living character<sup>3</sup>.

4.5 Dr Read states that the Wakatipu Basin is contained by ‘significant mountains on all sides, and by significant rivers on three’. She continues to state that ‘The majority of it retains a rural character typified by pastoral uses with open pasture of varying quality over most of the land area’. Dr Read continues by stating that ‘This character is becoming less coherent as residential development spreads and intensifies in pockets’<sup>4</sup>.

4.6 Dr Read summarises her description of the landscape character by listing the key characteristics of the Wakatipu Basin rural landscape:

- *‘predominance of natural features over human made features*
- *High ratio of open space relative to the built environment and to the presence of trees*
- *Significant areas in pasture, crops*
- *Scattered indigenous vegetation*
- *Presence of large numbers of farmed animals (sheep, cattle, deer, goats)*
- *Low population densities relative to urban centres*
- *Narrow, unsealed roads*
- *Absence of urban infrastructure*
- *Narrow range of tree species utilised for shelter*
- *Amenity tree species restricted to the immediate vicinity of buildings’*

4.7 The list, in my view, appears very generic and could apply to any rural landscape. The list lacks the essential character that makes a place unique. Landscape character refers to the combination of factors that distinguish any particular area of land. It is a combination of landscape attributes that give an area its distinctiveness. It is determined by the inter-relationship of –

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<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Mr. Baxter, Wakatipu Basin Character, paragraph 7.

<sup>4</sup> Wakatipu Basin Residential Subdivision and Development: Landscape Character Assessment; Read Landscapes, June 2014, page 5.

- Landform – which reflects the geology, topography and attendant natural processes such as erosion, hydrology and weathering.
- Land cover – which includes vegetation and water bodies, and reflects the biological processes such as plant succession and soil formation.
- Land use – which reflects cultural and social processes such as farming, tourism and transport, and can also include spiritual and historical associations that give added meaning to places

4.8 Mr. Baxter goes through each of Dr Read's key characteristics, providing his opinion on them. Mr. Baxter provides, in my view, a more grounded description of the character of the Wakatipu Basin. Mr Baxter's analysis of the attributes that contribute towards the character of a place is of assistance and in my view an appropriate analysis of, the '*character per se*' and the interrelationship between the attributes that constitutes the 'sense of place' will be of further assistance to the panel.

4.9 Both Dr Read and Mr. Baxter comment on the fact that the landscape character is '*contained by significant mountains*<sup>5</sup>' with Mr. Baxter referencing further the '*sculptured landforms, such as the Roche Moutonees of Morven Hill, Slope Hill, Queenstown Hill etc.*' In my view, in general terms the key landscape characteristics of the Wakatipu Basin are related to its landform determined by its complex underlying geology, the current landuse/ landcover forming the visible overlay and its location surrounded by mountain ranges. More specific characteristics are notable within discrete parts of the basin (for example Dalefield is characteristically different from land south of Ladies Mile), however they share higher level landscape characteristics. These generic characteristics include:

- The glacial carved basin, defined by prominent peaks and ridges of surrounding mountains. The distinctive formative processes provide sculpted basin-wide features, including roche moutonees, alluvial terracing, lakes and rivers. The basin setting has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.

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<sup>5</sup> Wakatipu Basin Residential Subdivision and Development: Landscape Character Assessment; Read Landscapes, June 2014, page 5 and Evidence of Mr. Baxter, Wakatipu Basin Character, referencing Dr Read at paragraph 8.



- Open and expansive valley floors, where natural vegetation patterns relate only to parts of the 'edges' of the basin and the higher elevated areas where alpine and tussock vegetation dominate.
  - Both the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers flow into Lake Wakatipu and demonstrate significant alluvial erosion and cutting through basement rock along their Wakatipu stretches.
  - Within the basin, settlement patterns vary in size with Arrowtown and Queenstown being the principal areas. Locally quarried stone brings a noted harmony to much of the built environment drawing on the area's mountainous setting.
  - Farming (both arable and pasture) is limited to a few areas, with the predominance of life style and low-density living paramount. A mix of densities proliferates throughout the basin, all angled to capture views and aspect. Specific areas such as Dalefield retain higher densities of dwellings as opposed to parts of Speargrass Road for example, creating a difference within the basin character. New areas of development, such as Lake Hayes Estate and Shotover Country are further changing the urban built form outside of Queenstown and Arrowtown, creating new nodal communities.
  - Shelterbelts and deciduous tree lines define land use boundaries within the basin. Species, despite being exotic, have become known to typify the area, promoting seasonal variation.
  - The roading network is typically straight, dual-lane and sealed. Many roads are lined with hedges and trees, which are generally located on adjacent private properties. Views towards the surrounding peaks and ridges provide containment and internal basin features including the roches moutonees, lakes and rivers amplify the formative processes within this basin landscape.
- 4.10 While the Wakatipu Basin Study prepared by Dr Read provides some useful generic character descriptions, I consider that the settled nature of the rural landscape and occurrence of many existing nodes of developments within the Wakatipu Basin, need to be acknowledged within the context of the more natural mountain landscape. Mr Baxter states (para 10) "*The glaring omission from Dr Read's list of key characteristics is the extensive existence of houses and the rural living characteristics associated with these houses.*" I agree with his view on

this aspect of Dr Read's landscape character descriptions. In my view, there are areas within the basin that can absorb further well-sited and designed development, which should be acknowledged as part of the landscape assessment. While there are sensitive parts of the landscape that warrant protection, I consider that there is great variability in its change absorption capability given the varied terrain and range of existing development.

- 4.11 Overall I consider that the Wakatipu Basin exhibits a varied landscape character containing a range of land uses and distinctive land use patterns. These man-made patterns that overlay the natural landforms should, in my opinion, influence the consideration of the landscape qualities that inform the zones and rules as an actual reflection of the modifications occurring within the basin surrounded by a more natural mountainous landscape. This means that within the district plan locations of zones and determination of appropriate activities, including the scale and density of potential development within these zones, should take the existing landscape characteristics into account.

## 5. **SKI AREA SUB ZONES SASZ**

### ***ONL Values***

- 5.1 Chapter 6 deals with Landscapes, where recognition is made the significant value the district's landscapes play in people's lives. The Chapter outlines that the district's landscapes have been categorised into three classifications within the Rural Zone. These are Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONLs) and Outstanding Natural Features (ONFs) with the remaining bulk of the district being Rural Landscapes Classifications (RLC). The latter retains varying landscape characteristics and amenity values. Ski Area Sub Zones are located predominantly within areas of ONLs<sup>6</sup>. I note that Dr Read does not address the presence of SASZs in her evidence, which I consider an omission given the importance of ski fields within the district and the visual and landscape character related implications of the existing ski fields near Queenstown, Cardrona and Wanaka.

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<sup>6</sup>I noted, however, that Rule 6.4.1.3 states that "*The landscape categories do not apply to the following within the Rural Zones:*  
*a. Ski Area Activities within the Ski Area Sub Zones.*  
 ...."

- 5.2 Dr Read's evidence focuses on descriptions of landscape characteristics for the mountainous ONLs in the district on the natural elements found in the wider mountain landscape, without acknowledging the presence of distinctive nodes of intensive development within the SASZs. The landscape descriptions for the ONL areas in the district are often broad and all encompassing, rather than specific in terms of existing modifications, as well as landscape value.

### **SASZ Provisions**

- 5.3 Objective 21.2.6 states: *'Encourage the future growth, development and consolidation of existing Ski Areas within identified Sub Zones, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment'*. Policy 21.2.6.2 states *'Control the visual impact of roads, buildings and infrastructure associated with Ski Area Activities'*.
- 5.4 Typically, the majority of built form associated with ski areas is located close to, or on top of a ridge due to operational requirements. They are located on large, bold landforms, within a mountainous context. Physically they are small, but intensive areas of development within a large landscape. Visually, it is often the earthworks and cuts associated with the access road and other tracks that are the most evident element. Buildings can occasionally be evident when viewed from outside the ski fields, however, it is generally difficult to detect buildings from long-distance viewpoints on the valley floor several kilometres away. I consider that continued use and development of activities in SASZs is expected and appropriate and that development of these discrete areas will not erode or degrade the broader landscape values that underpin the wider ONL overlay.
- 5.5 Under Table 2 of Chapter 21 (Rural), Rule 21.5.15 concerns buildings (predominately their external appearance and reflectance values and colours) and rule 21.5.16 concerns building size.
- 5.6 Treble Cone Investments (TCI) opposes Rule 21.5.15, stating that this is unnecessary as these factors are taken into account through Rule 21.5.27 (which specifically relates to standards for Ski Areas Activities and SASZs). TCI also opposes Rule 21.5.16, stating that limiting a threshold of buildings to 500m<sup>2</sup> in the SASZ is adding unnecessary layers to the resource consenting requirements, and that all buildings

within the SASZ are a controlled activity. I note that the s.42A report agrees that SASZs be exempt from Rules 21.5.15 and 21.5.16.

- 5.7 Since buildings are Restricted Discretionary activities under Rule 21.5.15 and Controlled under Rule 21.5.27, with both of the rules referring to external appearance of buildings and visual prominence/dominance, landscape outcomes are, in my opinion, are likely to be similar under those rules in terms of building design. In my view, buildings of a substantial size are an expected landscape element within a ski area and their design and appearance is often of a utilitarian nature, relating to their use. While the use of visually recessive colours and materials helps to avoid visual prominence/ dominance, including visibility from long distance viewpoints, I consider a 500m<sup>2</sup> limit on the floor area in most cases unnecessary given that buildings are generally designed to meet particular operational requirements. I consider the assessment matters under Rule 21.5.27 to be sufficient in controlling these activities.

## **6. LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS IN THE SASZ**

- 6.1 Landscape and ecological benefits can commonly be achieved in order to mitigate or offset potential landscape effects of developments. This can include medium to long term management of the surroundings of buildings to ensure that specific positive landscape outcomes can be achieved. Compensation for landscape effects relating to developments, including accommodation facilities within SASZ, could also include maintenance of landscape for specific purposes and to achieve particular benefits. These benefits can relate to a range of landscape characteristics such as maintenance of openness, landscape remediation or ecological protection and enhancement.
- 6.2 Through the resource consent process, conditions to achieve these benefits can be applied to ensure that important landscape features, such as prominent rock outcrops or ridgelines within SASZs are identified and their landscape sensitivity taken into account as part of any development proposal. One way of giving effect to consent conditions is through the preparation of Landscape and Ecological Management Plans. As part of these management plans suitable areas for built development can be identified and the layout determined to minimise landscape and visual effects of development. The

management plans are a comprehensive instrument that are useful in addressing inter-related benefits of proposed measures, for example native planting that can serve as a landscape mitigation measure combined with ecological enhancement effects.

6.3 The protection of the openness of visually sensitive parts of a SASZ forms an important part of the landscape management, as well as the opportunity to remedy visually adverse landscape effects related to past ski area activities. In my view, these aspects of landscape management help to ensure that overall appropriate landscape outcomes can be achieved within SASZs in relation to visitor accommodation developments. I consider that most visitors to commercial ski fields would expect the presence of a range of buildings that are visually and operationally linked to the activities present in the SASZs. As such, it is likely that most ski field visitors would consider them to be appropriate man-made elements in this modified landscape context.

6.4 Ecological management (also defined through resource consent conditions) could include identification of streams, wetlands, bogs and any habitats of any significant flora and fauna. This could include outlining of measures to enhance degraded habitats and protect any other significant ecological habitats to achieve appropriate ecological and natural character outcomes. While not entirely within my area of expertise, see the potential benefits of strategic management mechanisms to achieve positive environmental outcomes and a planning framework that enables them.

## 7. **RURAL AND RURAL LIFESTYLE ZONE RULES AND STANDARDS**

7.1 There are a number of submitters who respond to specific Rural (Chapter 21) and Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle (Chapter 22) related rules. It is assumed that these relate to rural areas outside of ONLs and ONFs and outside of SASZs. These submitters include:

- John Borrell
- Lake Hayes Limited
- Darby Planning LP (DLP)
- Dalefield Trustee Limited

- Amisfield

7.2 For ease of reference, each rule is written below and commented on. Where more than one submitter has commented on a single rule, this will be made evident.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 21 Rural - 21.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 21.5.15*

- 7.3 Darby Planning LP supports in part this rule relating to building materials and colours and seeks to amend the rule to ensure both the roof and external surfaces standards capture natural or manufactured materials that are treated or untreated together with an exemption relating to locally sourced stone (e.g. Schist). Dr Read comments in her evidence on the appropriateness of a variety of materials within the QLDC context<sup>7</sup>. She also comments on the appropriateness of schist in particular, which is the material requested for inclusion in the Darby Planning LP submission.
- 7.4 The term “bagged schist” mentioned in Dr Read’s evidence refers to the laying finish, which can be dry-stacked, pointed or bagged. As part of the bagged schist finish part of the wall consists of mortar between the stone. Dr Read (para 5.5) states that *“I consider that there are many materials for which no LRV can be readily determined which are appropriate within this landscape. Schist is the obvious one. Bagged schist, however, can be almost as prominent as a concrete wall, and concrete is often problematic.”* In my view, the use of bagged schist is appropriate in the Queenstown context, even though bagged schist walls may appear lighter than dry-stacked schist. Many buildings in the Queenstown landscape have been built with bagged schist and the uneven texture of the surface give those walls, in my opinion, a distinctively different appearance to concrete (see figures 1 and 2 below). The use of schist, including bagged schist in many instances, has led to a particular building style and character within the district that is appropriate for the landscape context. Therefore, schist should be, in my opinion, exempted from the rule, as proposed by a number of submitters. I agree, however, with Dr Read that Oamaru stone is very

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<sup>7</sup> *Read para 5.6: In summary, I consider that schist; stained timber; concrete coloured with either oxides, dark aggregate or both; zinc and corten steel are appropriate exterior materials within this District’s landscapes. I consider bagged schist; Oamaru stone; unstained timbers and raw concrete to be inappropriate in most circumstances as all are pale coloured and visually prominent.*

light in colour and generally not in character with the Queenstown environment.



*Fig 1: Dry-stacked schist*



*Fig 2: Bagged Schist*

*Images sourced from <http://www.allaboutschi.stqueenstown.co.nz/gallery/>*

- 7.5 The S42A report recommended an amendment to the wording of the rule as follows: *“\*\* Includes cladding and built landscaping that cannot be measured by way of luminous reflectance value but is deemed to be suitably recessive and have the same effect as achieving a luminous reflectance value of 30%.”* In my opinion, this amendment to the wording is difficult to interpret, as it is unclear what “suitably recessive” would mean. This wording seems open to a range of interpretations, while the reference to schist as a suitable material in terms of its reflectance as proposed in the Darby Planning LP submission would provide more certainty. I also recommend the specific mention of schist, since it constitutes, in my view, an appropriate material in relation to the landscape character of buildings, adding to the sense of place within the rural environment of the district.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 21 Rural - 21.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 21.5.19*

- 7.6 Darby Planning LP supports in part this rule, however recommend that it is amended to ensure both the roof and external surfaces standards capture natural or manufactured materials that are treated or untreated together with an exemption relating to locally sourced stone (e.g. Schist). The same commentary as for rule 21.5.15 applies in relation to schist and Oamaru stone. I also consider wooden cladding generally appropriate in the Queenstown context. The colour of the wood depends on the type of timber and the weathering of the material. Generally, timber cladding is maintained though staining, which mutes the colours to a darker appearance as outlined in Dr Read's evidence (para 5.5).

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle-  
22.4 Rules – Activities – Rule 22.4.X*

- 7.7 Lake Hayes Cellar Ltd (Amisfield) submits that a new rule providing for commercial activities within the commercial overlay is recommended within Table 1. The extent of the zone where this rule would apply is confined to the Amisfield site, where the existing winery is located. Currently the winery is within the Rural Zone and the neighbouring properties (across Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road) fall within the Low Density Residential Zone.
- 7.8 The winery is a substantial existing commercial operation including a number of buildings, such as the bistro and cellar. The site does not display the landscape characteristics generally associated with the Rural Zone due to the existing level of development. The rule proposed for the Zone would allow for commercial activities as a Controlled activity.
- 7.9 In my view, this activity status would be appropriate for future development in line with the existing operation on the site. In terms of the expected landscape outcomes I consider that the control of the bulk, location and external appearance of the buildings, as well as landscaping to be important considerations to ensure that future development is in character with the existing structures and landscaping on site. This would also ensure that the rural amenity experienced from outside the site can be maintained.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle-  
22.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 22.5.1*

- 7.10 Lake Hayes Limited supports in part this rule relating to building materials and colours and seeks to amend the rule to ensure both the



roof and external surfaces standards capture natural or manufactured materials that are treated or untreated together with an exemption relating to locally sourced stone (e.g. Schist). Within the Amisfield submission it is also sought that the external materials rule not apply to the commercial overlay. Both the building materials, as well as appropriateness of commercial activities, have been covered in my evidence above.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle- 22.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 22.5.12.3*

- 7.11 Mr. Borrell and Lake Hayes Limited oppose this rule, seeking that for sites equal or greater than 2 hectares, no more than two residential units shall be created, rather than just the one on average as proposed by the Plan. The Rural Lifestyle Zone, covered in the Lake Hayes Limited submission is located at the bottom of a broad valley that extends along Speargrass Flat and a part of Hogans Gully Road. Towards the southern part of the site the topography rises through a series of rolling hills. The landscape context of this site lies within the Rural Residential Zone along the western part of Speargrass Flat Road and to the south along Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road. Rural Zoning is found on the northern side of Hogans Gully Road. The landscape character of the western Speargrass Flat Road and along Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road has been modified through residential development and extensive amenity tree planting.
- 7.12 Mr Ferguson in his evidence addresses the matter of efficient land use, which was referred to in the S42A report (para 8.2 -8.3). I agree with his view on this issue and that Rural Lifestyle Zones are generally not used for rural productive activities, but will not comment any further on efficiency but will focus on landscape character.
- 7.13 I consider, that some of the Rural Lifestyle Zones have the capacity to absorb a higher density of dwellings than one per 2 ha. I agree with Dr Read that the Hawthorne Triangle is one of these areas that would be more suited to a density of one dwelling per 1ha. I also consider that the RLZ on the south-eastern corner of Hogans Gully Road has landscape characteristics in terms of the topography and location adjacent to Rural Residential Zones that make it suitable for this level of development. The varied terrain in a low- lying area along the Speargrass Valley could in my view absorb dwellings at a 1ha density without compromising the

existing landscape character. Shelter and clustered tree planting is a common element in rural residential and lifestyle zones, which reduces the openness of the landscape without maintaining the open space and rural character and expansiveness of views more commonly found within the rural zone. Along the south-eastern part of Hogans Gully Road extensive amenity tree planting has reduced that openness that is generally associated with rural landscapes and has led, in my opinion, to a relatively high level of domestication. The Rural Zone to the east of the RLZ already contains a number of dwellings. In my view, the RLZ would be suited to a dwelling density of one per hectare due to existing the landscape context and particular characteristics of the zone. It seems that the 2ha density is trying to preserve landscape characteristics, such as spaciousness and rural amenity (see S 42A report, para 8.5), that have already been compromised and will be further modified through likely future tree planting associated with establishment of dwellings within the zone.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle- 22.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 22.5.5*

- 7.14 Mr. Borrell opposes this rule, stating that the minimum setback from roads in the Rural Lifestyle Zone be 30m, not 10m as proposed by the Plan. This is primarily for visual reasons. The Dalefield Trustee Limited also opposes this rule, stating that the 10m setback should be extended to 15m. Dr Read's evidence does not specifically refer to the setbacks within these zones, but the S42A report supports the 15m requested by the Dalefield Trustee Limited submission (para 12.24) without providing a robust rationale for this recommended change<sup>8</sup>.
- 7.15 I consider that either a 10 (or potentially 15 metre) setback would be suitable to maintain the current landscape character within these zones, which has been established through existing development under the

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<sup>8</sup> In the following paragraph (para 12.24) the S42A report states "*While the 10m setback requirement is well established, being carried over from the ODP, I agree with the submission of Dalefield Trustees. Given that the anticipated minimum allotment size is 1ha, a 15m setback, is not considered a significant or onerous change*". In para 12.26 the report states, however, that "*Overall, I recommend that because the minimum allotment size in the Rural Lifestyle Zone is 1ha, a 20m setback would more appropriately meet the Objectives*." The report then concludes (in para 12.29) "*In summary, I recommend the setback from roads is increased to 20m in the Rural Lifestyle Zone and 15m in the Rural Residential Zone where the road is a State Highway*."

10m setback in the ODP. In my view, it is unlikely that a difference in setback distance between 10 or 15 metres is easily detected from the road. A setback of 20 or 30 metres, however, would in my view, be substantially different to the status quo and lead to undesirable landscape outcomes with an unexpected patterns of significantly different setback distances between existing and future development. The setback distance also influences the planting patterns on lots and the use of a front and back of the section in relation to outlook and privacy. I consider it, therefore, preferable to maintain a setback distance of 10 metres as in the ODP and PDP to ensure that a homogenous appearance of built development can be achieved when viewed from the road within the Rural Residential and Lifestyle Zone.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle- 22.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 22.5.3*

- 7.16 Mr. Borrell opposes this rule, stating that the maximum size of any building should be 400m<sup>2</sup>, where only a few buildings currently exceed this. The plan is proposing a maximum size of 500m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Dr Read states in her evidence (para 5.13) that she has “*come to the conclusion that allowing the construction of dwellings of up to 500m<sup>2</sup> in area and 8m in height as a permitted activity is too permissive.*” She suggests in para 5.13 that the size of buildings could be reduced to 300m<sup>2</sup>. She also proposes a different method in her evidence, aimed to address her concern with the bulk of buildings at a 500m<sup>2</sup> size and 8m height (height to be addressed under the following heading of my evidence). In my view, either one of the these options, as well as Mr Borell’s request, are overly restrictive in terms of building size in the context of this district. The majority of recent residential developments are of relatively large scale, reflecting the demand for upmarket residences in the area. The Queenstown District landscape is large-scale landscape sizeable landforms and varied terrain. Assuming that building platforms are sited in suitable locations within lots (micro-siting), it is, in my opinion, generally possible to visually absorb buildings of 500m<sup>2</sup> in size in this type of landscape. I consider it an appropriate

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<sup>9</sup> *Mr. Borrell also opposes Part 5- District Wide Matters- 27 Subdivision and Development- 27.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 27.5.1.1stating the rule be changed so that the building platform in the rural lifestyle has a maximum area of 600m<sup>2</sup> as opposed to 1000m<sup>2</sup> in the proposed plan.*

approach within the more sensitive areas of the district to require the identification of building platforms as part of subdivision (in the Rural General, Gibbston Character and Rural Lifestyle zones) to ensure that adverse landscape and visual effects can be avoided by appropriately locating proposed buildings. I, therefore, support the size limit for buildings outlined in the PDP.

*Part 4- Rural Environment- 22 Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle- 22.5 Rules – Standards – Rule 22.5.8*

- 7.17 Mr. Borrell opposes this rule, stating the proposed rule of 8m high buildings be changed to 7m in height. Mr Borrell considers that with permitted areas of 400m<sup>2</sup> (as proposed by Mr. Borrell, but currently proposed as 500m<sup>2</sup>) there is no reason to have buildings at 8m. In his view, a height reduction would reduce potential visual effects.
- 7.18 As outlined under the heading above (relating to building bulk) Dr Read states in her evidence (para 5.14) that she considers the 8m height limit to be too permissive in combination with the 500m<sup>2</sup> size limit, as the overall bulk of buildings may lead to adverse visual effects. While it would be possible to build a double storey building with an 8 metres height limit, it would in my view be unlikely that a “box style” building would be implemented to take up the permitted maximum size and height. In my experience, it is more likely that variations in building facades and modular buildings are used and that variations in roof lines with gables and dormers are preferred styles from an architectural point of view. While an 8 metres height limit is reasonably permissive, it allows for a number of creative solutions and the ability to follow landform variation on undulating sites.

## 8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 I have reviewed the landscape assessment reports and evidence by Dr Read and concluded that while the landscape character descriptions are useful, they do not provide sufficient acknowledgment of existing development within the Wakatipu Basin. In my view, existing land uses are an equally important aspect of landscape character to landform and land cover. It would, in my opinion, also be helpful to provide as part of the character descriptions an assessment of the landscape’s ability to absorb further change. I consider that parts of the large-scale and varied

Basin landscape can accommodate further development, which should be noted as part of the assessment.

- 8.2 I also consider that the Ski Area Sub Zones, while located within wider sensitive Outstanding Natural Landscapes of the Wakatipu Mountains, are suitable for further ski field related development, as they represent intensive nodes of development.
- 8.3 I have reviewed the rules proposed in the PDP in the light of various submissions and provisions in the ODP and provided a view on their appropriateness in my evidence. In general terms, I support the relaxation of standards for permitted buildings in the PDP, relating to the size (500 m<sup>2</sup>) and height (8m) of buildings within the Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle Zones. I also support the proposed continuation of a 10m setback requirement for buildings to ensure that consistent landscape outcomes can be achieved.
- 8.4 I consider minor amendments to the rules that address materials and colours of buildings would help to provide for the use of natural materials. I support the request by various submitters to specifically allow for schist as an appropriate building material, as I consider its characteristics suitable for the Queenstown landscape.
- 8.5 I provided an opinion on the suitability of two specific sites for future development, namely the Speargrass Flat/ Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road Rural Lifestyle Zone and the Amisfield winery site. I consider that the particular landscape characteristics and existing level of modification means that additional development can be absorbed in these areas and that this should be reflected through provisions for these zones.

Yvonne Pfluger

Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April 2016