

**Before Independent Commissioners appointed by  
The Queenstown Lakes District Council**

**In the Matter of**

the Resource Management Act  
1991 (**Act**)

**And**

**In the Matter of**

Variation to the Proposed District  
Plan: Priority Landscape Schedules

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**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF STEPHEN RUSSELL SKELTON (LANDSCAPE)  
ON BEHALF OF TREESPACE NO.1 LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (SUBMITTER  
#96)**

**18 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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## Qualifications and Experience

1. My qualifications and experience are detailed in my primary evidence in relation to the Variation to the PDP that deals with the Priority Area Landscape Schedules.

## Summary of Landscape Evidence

2. My Evidence and Chief (EiC) sets out my key considerations with regard to the landscape schedules for Priority Area (PA) Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) Central Whakatipu Basin: Schedule of Landscape Values, the Preamble to the schedules and the capacity ratings. Generally, my evidence sought to include what I considered a few oversights regarding the description of the receiving landscape's attributes and values and to address the capacity of the landscape for a range of activities: specifically, Earthworks, Renewable Energy and Rural Living. I also raised issue with the inclusion of a 'no capacity rating'.

## Outcomes From Expert Conferencing

3. Although I was not engaged by Treespace No1 Limited Partnership to participate in the expert conferencing, on behalf of other submitters I participated in the expert conferencing from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023. I agree with the revised JWS landscape capacity rating scheme, in particular the removal of the 'no capacity' rating across all landscape schedules.
4. I have since learned that Council seeks to amend the agreed JWS wording of the capacity rating Extremely Limited to No Capacity. I support the text in the JWS version which was agreed by experts. I consider the use of the qualifiers 'occasional', 'unique' and 'discrete' in the description to be significant and directive. The wording of the capacity rating was the subject of significant debate during conferencing and the JWS wording was widely adopted by experts.
5. My EIC made several recommended changes to the 21.22.15 Schedule, many of which have been adopted to some degree.
6. I set out below the parts of the JWS 21.22.15 Central Whakatipu Basin Schedule which have not been adopted and which I still consider should be amended in the schedule.
  - (a) I consider the word '*very*' should be omitted from part 21 of the Schedule for the reasons set out in part 13 of my EIC.
  - (b) I consider that if the words '*seemingly undeveloped*' are not omitted from part 66 and 68 of the schedule as I have recommended in part 14 of my EIC, that the schedule

should list which places are 'seemingly undeveloped.' I consider only parts of the PA are seemingly undeveloped and that the south and south-east facing slopes of Mt Dewar and Coronet Peak are not.

- (c) Similarly, part 21 and 76 of the schedule describes *elsewhere*. I consider it would be useful if the schedules were more specific, as they are in many other instances.

## Key Evidence Points

### *Renewable Energy*

7. Mr. Scott Freeman addresses this matter in his summary evidence. I am aware the Schedules definition of renewable energy generation defers to the definitions in the PDP Chapter 2. However, the text of the Schedules describes a 'very limited landscape capacity for discreetly located and small-scale renewable energy generation'. This omits the words *community-scale* which are included in the definition of renewable energy in Chapter 2. I consider the words *community-scale* should be added to the renewable energy generation capacity portion of the Schedule.

### *Rural Living*

8. With regard to rural living, my EIC suggested that the landscape has the second lowest term on a 5-point capacity rating scale for rural living.
9. Now that the terminology in the rating scale has been re-evaluated and further qualifiers such as 'co located' and 'low key' have been added, I consider that a 'very limited capacity', or the middle pivot point in a 5-point rating scale is the most appropriate capacity rating for rural living in this PA. This is also partly attributed to due to a detailed description of where 'co-location' may occur as set out in the body of the Schedule.
10. The amended landscape schedules now read:

#### *Rural Living – extremely limited landscape capacity*

*'Where such development is appropriate, it is likely to be: co located with existing development; sited to optimize the screening and/or filtering benefit of natural landscape elements; designed to be small scale and have a 'low key' rural character; integrate landscape restoration and enhancement; and enhance public access (where appropriate).'*

11. I consider these qualifiers to be appropriate, specific to the identified attributes and values of the PA and very directive. If used in tandem with the 'very limited' capacity rating, I consider it

would result in a directive which would guide plan users to consider rural living only in locations only where it can meet the clear qualifiers. For ease of reference, the schedule's preamble describes very limited capacity as:

***Very limited landscape capacity:*** typically this corresponds to a situation in which the landscape is very close to its capacity to accommodate development of this type without material compromise of its identified landscape values, and where only a **very small** amount of sensitively located and designed development is likely to be appropriate.

12. I note that the highest capacity rating in the ONL/F Schedule is 'some' which starts from a conservative assumption that only 'careful', 'measured', 'sensitive type' development could occur.
13. Also, users of the Schedules will be referred back to the attributes and values as set out in the body of the Schedule, specifically the parts which I have addressed above, which I consider require a small amount of further clarification as to where those co-located places are, and where they are not. I consider, as the Schedule separates parts of the landscape into areas of *developed*, *seemingly undeveloped* and *elsewhere* where developments and activity has occurred or has not occurred, that the directive to co-locate rural living type development is quite specific and can be even more specific. For these reasons, I consider the rural living capacity rating can come up one level to very limited (or the middle capacity rating on a 5-point scale).

Steve Skelton

18 October 2023