

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of a hearing on submissions to the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan pursuant to clause 8B of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991

**ON BEHALF OF** **HERON INVESTMENTS LIMITED**  
Submitter (31014)

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**EVIDENCE OF JESSICA MCKENZIE  
(LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)**

**29<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Jessica McKenzie. I reside in Queenstown. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours) and Master of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am a member of the Southern Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and I am also the current secretary of that branch. I have been employed by Vivian and Espie Limited since January 2020, a specialist resource management and landscape planning consultancy based in Queenstown. My experience involves working in planning at WSP (previously Opus) and the Timaru District Council, and as a Landscape Architect at the Christchurch City Council.
- 1.2 Much of my work involves advising clients regarding the management of landscapes and amenity that the Resource Management Act 1991 provides, and regarding the landscape provisions of various district and regional plans. I also produce assessment reports and evidence in relation to proposed development. The primary objective of these assessments and evidence is to ascertain the effects of proposed development in relation to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.3 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained within the Environment Court Practice Note of November 2014 and agree to comply with it. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information I have been given by another person. I confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed herein.
- 1.4 In preparing this evidence, I have reviewed the relevant parts of a Section 42a report prepared by Ms Emily Grace on behalf of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) and a statement of evidence prepared by Mr Mathew Jones. I have also considered Part 2 Strategy (Chapters 3 to 6) of the decisions version of the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) and the associated interim decisions of the Environment Court that relate to this part of the PDP.

## 2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 The purpose of this evidence is to assist the Hearings Panel on matters within my expertise of landscape architecture and landscape planning in relation to Submission 31014 on the PDP. In relation to this submission, I have been asked by the submitter to prepare evidence in response to Mr Jones' evidence, regarding the landscape sensitivity mapping of Heron Investments Limited (**Heron**) land on Camp Hill Road.
- 2.2 This evidence looks at whether the site is appropriate for future rural visitor activities it does not assess any particular proposal or development. In preparing the landscape sensitivity mapping I have considered the nature of rural visitor activities that could occur within the proposed Maungawera Rural Visitor Zone (**RVZ**). I understand from Mr Vivian's evidence that the proposed Maungawera RVZ is likely to include buildings and infrastructure for commercial recreation activities, visitor accommodation, commercial activities ancillary to commercial recreation and visitor accommodation activities, built form including staff accommodation, and general farming activities. The resultant resource consent processes will determine exactly where such activities will take place on the property.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This statement of evidence responds to the statement of evidence prepared by Mr Mathew Jones in relation to the proposed Maungawera RVZ. Mr Jones' evidence generally agrees that the relevant area can absorb some visitor-related development<sup>1</sup>. However, he raises concerns regarding landscape sensitivity and the degree of certainty that the notified RVZ provisions give, in relation to the ultimate form of development that will occur. Mr Jones' evidence outlines the requirements for detailed landscape analysis and assessment to ensure the requested Maungawera RVZ is appropriate and adequate controls are in place. An analysis of landscape sensitivity ratings and spatial analysis has been undertaken, and a map identifying areas of high and moderate-high landscape sensitivity has been created. I consider that the landscape assessment and map showing landscape sensitivity appropriately alleviates Mr Jones' concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> Second statement of evidence of Mathew Stuart Bentley Jones, dated 18 March, paragraph 10.6

## 4. THE PROPOSED AREA OF RVZ

- 4.1 The Heron Investments Limited property (**the site**) is located on the corner of Lake Hawea – Albert Town Road (**SH6**) and Camp Hill Road in the Maungawera Valley, Wanaka. The Heron property is legally described as Lots 1 and 2 DP 21025 Section 1 SO 20288 Block III Lower Hawea SD and is 114.8251 hectares in area.
- 4.2 Pursuant to the Operative District Plan (**ODP**), the site is zoned Rural General Zone (**RGZ**) and is not within an identified Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**). Pursuant to Stage 1 of the PDP, the site is zoned Rural Zone (**RZ**) and is within a Rural Character Landscape (**RCL**).
- 4.3 Three resource consents have been granted for commercial recreational activities on the site. Resource consent RM181691 provides for six woodfired hot tubs, RM190148 allows for 12 visitors to the site, RM190925 allows for eight additional hot tubs. A further two resource consents have been lodged, seeking to increase commercial recreational activity on site. RM190925 has been lodged to vary RM191025, and a commercial recreational activity has been applied for under RM200188. The existing and proposed commercial activities are concentrated in discrete locations on the upper terrace in the central part of the site.
- 4.4 In his evidence, Mr Jones supports the notion that within the district's identified RVZs, areas of "high" and "moderate-high" landscape sensitivity should be identified, and more restrictive provisions should apply to these areas<sup>2</sup>. The areas of high landscape sensitivity, moderate-high landscape sensitivity and low landscape sensitivity have been identified as per Appendix 1 to this evidence. I understand that the construction of buildings in the areas which are not moderate-high or high sensitive (i.e. my low sensitivity area) is proposed to be a controlled activity, the construction of buildings in moderate-high sensitivity areas is proposed to be a discretionary activity and the construction of buildings in high sensitivity areas is proposed to be a non-complying activity. I understand that Ms Grace has recommended that one of the matters of control for the construction of buildings in areas of low visibility (or more precisely areas which are not of moderate to high or high sensitivity) is the *"compatibility of the building density, design and location with landscape, cultural and heritage, and visual amenity values."* I support this matter of control.

<sup>2</sup> Second statement of evidence of Mathew Stuart Bentley Jones, dated 18 March, paragraphs 10.2, 10.3, 10.8.

- 4.5 I understand that all the notified RVZs were located within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL). The Heron site sits within the rural zone, but outside the wider ONL. The Heron site is, therefore, in my opinion, less sensitive (in terms of landscape issues) than the sites that the RVZ provisions were formulated for. Despite being less sensitive than the notified RVZs, the Maungawera RVZ is in an RCL that also has important character and amenity values. I consider the mapping of landscape sensitivity appropriate to ensure development is concentrated in areas of the RVZ where it can be absorbed without compromising the landscape and character values.

## **5 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

- 5.1 The site is a rural property located between Albert Town and Lake Hawea. It is positioned on an outwash fan which extends from the steep eastern slopes of Mount Maude towards the Hawea River. To the east of the site are the large, open, broad plains of the Hawea Flat that extend to the toe of the Grandview Mountains. In general terms, the Hawea Flat is characterised by topographically flat grassed paddocks interspersed with lines of shelter trees and areas of rural living.
- 5.2 To the immediate west and south-west of the site is a cluster of rural living type development. Within approximately 400 metres of the Camp Hill Road and SH6 intersection are eight dwellings with associated accessory buildings, curtilage areas and amenity plantings. These dwellings are located within properties that range in area from approximately 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 7.18 ha and are used primarily for residential activities rather than rural activities.
- 5.3 The site is on the corner of SH6 and Camp Hill Road. SH6 runs along the western boundary. When travelling north past the site, the land adjacent to SH6 comprises of flat pastoral land for the first 100m, the road then enters a gully as the banks gradually rise on both sides of the road. SH6 meanders through the gully adjacent to the site for approximately 900m before plateauing on a flat just past the site's northern boundary.
- 5.4 A steep escarpment running through the site separates it into two distinct areas. The lower terrace adjacent to Camp Hill Road comprises approximately 20ha of flat pastoral paddocks covered with border dykes. A steep escarpment setback approximately 100m from Camp Hill

Road rises from the lower terraces. The escarpment covers approximately 20ha of the site. A formed meandering access track through a small gully feature in the centre of the escarpment connects the lower terrace to the upper terrace which covers the remainder of the site. The remainder of the site comprises the upper terrace. The upper terrace has a gently rolling topography that is visually contained. A small escarpment lined with a shelterbelt rises above the upper terrace, the feature is more visually prominent than the remainder of the upper terrace.

- 5.5** The site is currently used for both agricultural and commercial recreation purposes. Most of the site is used for regenerative agriculture, with the commercial recreation activities sitting within the farmed land. The woodfire hot tubs sit within the farmed land on the upper terrace (see Appendix 1). The site also contains a significant amount of exotic vegetation. An exotic conifer plantation has been planted on the eastern half of the escarpment, and a eucalyptus plantation has been planted in the north-western corner of the site. Two established conifer shelterbelts are prominent features within the site. One shelterbelt runs along the northern boundary and the other shelterbelt is located centrally within the site.
- 5.6** Areas of high, moderate-high, and low landscape sensitivity have been identified to ensure any future development within the site is appropriate and will be concentrated in areas able to absorb rural visitor activities, without significantly compromising the rural character of the site. The lower flats adjacent to SH6 and the visually prominent escarpment, have been identified as areas of high landscape sensitivity to protect them from inappropriate development and to ensure an open rural character is retained.
- 5.7** The mapped landscape sensitivity areas and the corresponding provisions in the PDP ensure the rural character of the site will be retained. The escarpment and lower terrace adjacent to SH6 have been identified as high landscape sensitivity areas and as such, it is anticipated built form will be a non-complying activity and open character of the site is retained. An area of moderate-high landscape sensitivity covers approximately two thirds of the lower terrace. The moderate-high landscape sensitivity area is located on the eastern edge of the site, away from SH6. The escarpment on the western half of the upper terrace, north of the large escarpment, had also been identified as an area of moderate-high landscape sensitivity. The elevated nature of the escarpment means it is more visible than the rest of the upper terraces. It is anticipated that built form will be a discretionary activity in the moderate-high landscape sensitivity area to ensure any future development is appropriate. The upper terraces have been identified as areas of low

landscape sensitivity. The undulating nature of the terraces and the existing vegetation ensure existing and proposed development is visually contained. For this reason, the existing woodfire hot tubs and recreational activities are concentrated in this area.

**5.8** With the landscape sensitivity mapped and the corresponding provisions in the PDP, the landscape character of the area between Albert Town and Hawea would remain dominated by rural character, albeit that an area of visitor activity would sit within it. Subject to consideration of visual effects, the proposed RVZ would not significantly endanger rural character in this setting. Nodes of visitor activity can sit comfortably within rural landscapes. Hence the inclusion of an RVZ in the ODP and PDP. In relation to landscape character, this rural landscape setting is more able to absorb a node of visitor activity than most settings within the rural landscapes of the district. This is primarily because:

- The site is not within an ONL; it is in a less sensitive location in relation to the district's rural landscapes, in a vicinity that accommodates a reasonable degree of human modification and occupation.
- The site is adjacent to SH6 between Albert Town and Hawea, sitting just out developed area of the Albert Town. The site is easily accessed from Albert Town, Wanaka, and Hawea. In terms of the patterns of activities that make up landscape character, there is considerable logic and expectation of some non-rural / semi-rural activities in a location of this sort.
- A landscape sensitivity map would spatially manage activities within the area of RVZ such that more intensive activities are contained in the topographically contained upper terraces and the visually prominent escarpment and flats adjacent to SH6 are kept in an open and unbuilt state.

## **6 EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY**

**6.1** In relation to views and visual amenity, three areas of landscape sensitivity have been mapped: areas of low landscape sensitivity, areas of moderate-high landscape sensitivity and areas of high landscape sensitivity.

- 6.2** The upper terraces of the site have been defined as areas of low landscape sensitivity. The terraces are visually contained by topography and the existing vegetation on the site. To the south and southwest, a large escarpment and existing vegetation screen any views of the upper terrace. The north and the east of the site are also screened by established planting, in the form of shelterbelts to the north and plantations to the east, and undulating topography. The undulating topography of the terraces adds another level of discreteness. The topography creates an opportunity to concentrate future development in sites that are difficult to see, even within the site. Photographs 1 and 2 of Appendix 3 are taken within the site and show the undulating topography of the upper terrace. Photographs 3 – 6 shows views into the site from SH6 and Camp Hill Road. The upper terrace cannot be seen from these public locations.
- 6.3** SH6 connects Wanaka and Hawea and continues to the West Coast. SH6 runs along the western side of the site, views of the escarpment, and lower terraces are in the sightline of motorists. The escarpment closest to SH6 comprises exotic grasses and mix of exotic and native scrubby vegetation, typical of rural landscapes in the area. When travelling north along SH6 the face of the escarpment is visible from a significant distance due to the increase in elevation. Consequently, the escarpment is mapped as an area of high landscape sensitivity. The flats adjacent to SH6 are currently open paddocks with border dykes. They are also highly visible, albeit, in the periphery of motorists travelling along SH6. Consequently, the paddock adjacent to SH6 has also been mapped as an area of high landscape sensitivity. As discussed above, built form will be non-complying in these areas and the open rural view will be retained for those viewing the site from SH6.
- 6.4** Two areas of high-moderate landscape sensitivity have been identified on the site; the first area is the lower flat adjacent to Camp Hill Road, away from SH6, the second area is the face of a smaller escarpment located on the upper terrace. I consider the flats adjacent to Camp Hill are less sensitive than the flats adjacent to SH6 due to SH6 being the main thoroughfare between Albert Town and the Hawea. Naturally, it is going to have more observers travelling along it than Camp Hill Road, making the landscape more sensitive to change. The upper escarpment is visible from elevated areas in Albert Town, approximately five kilometres southwest of the site. Views of the upper escarpment can only be obtained from a significant distance and elevation.



- 6.5 In relation to views and visual amenity, I find that, with the landscape sensitivity mapped, the site has good capacity to absorb the proposed Maungawera RVZ without inappropriately degrading the visual experience of the landscape that is currently had by observers.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 I consider that the Maungawera RVZ is appropriate in terms of landscape character and visual effects. The landscape sensitivity map ensures any future rural visitor development is in discrete parts of the site, that have a high capacity to absorb change due to visual containment and contain the existing consented commercial recreation activity. The important qualities of the broader rural landscape will be maintained. The site is considered appropriate for an RVZ due to the location and existing modifications. The landscape sensitivity map and controls proposed in the PDP will help further protect the site from inappropriate development that would compromise the character or visual amenity of the site.

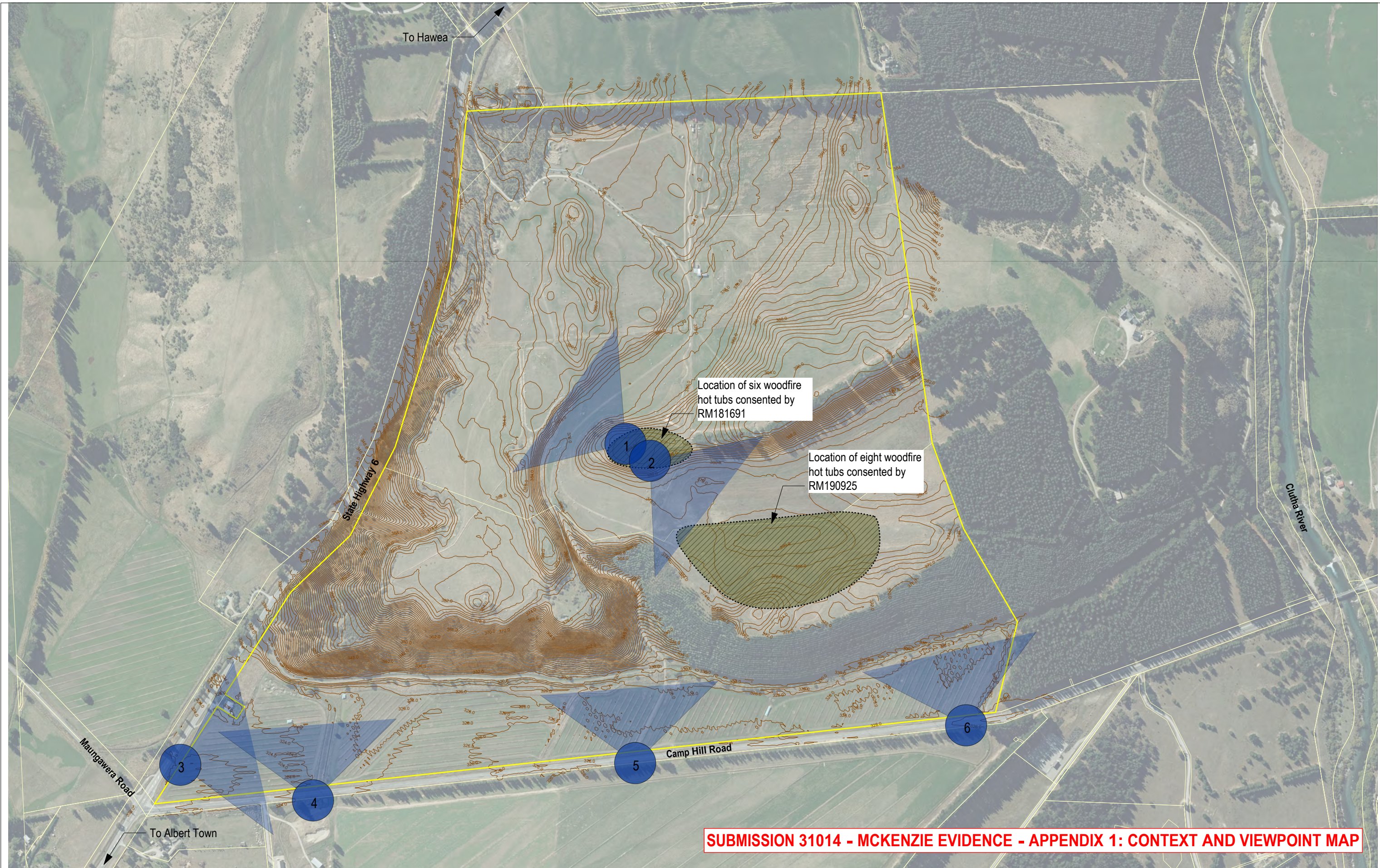
## **ATTACHED APPENDICES**

- 1 CONTEXT AND VIEWPOINT MAP
- 2 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY MAP.
- 3 PHOTOGRAPHS.

**Jessica McKenzie**

**vivian+espie**

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2020**



**SUBMISSION 31014 - MCKENZIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT AND VIEWPOINT MAP**

Drawing Status  
INFORMATION ONLY

Scale 1:6000 @ A3

**HERON INVESTMENTS LIMITED**

Sheet Title  
CONTEXT AND VIEWPOINT MAP

Sheet Number  
**01**

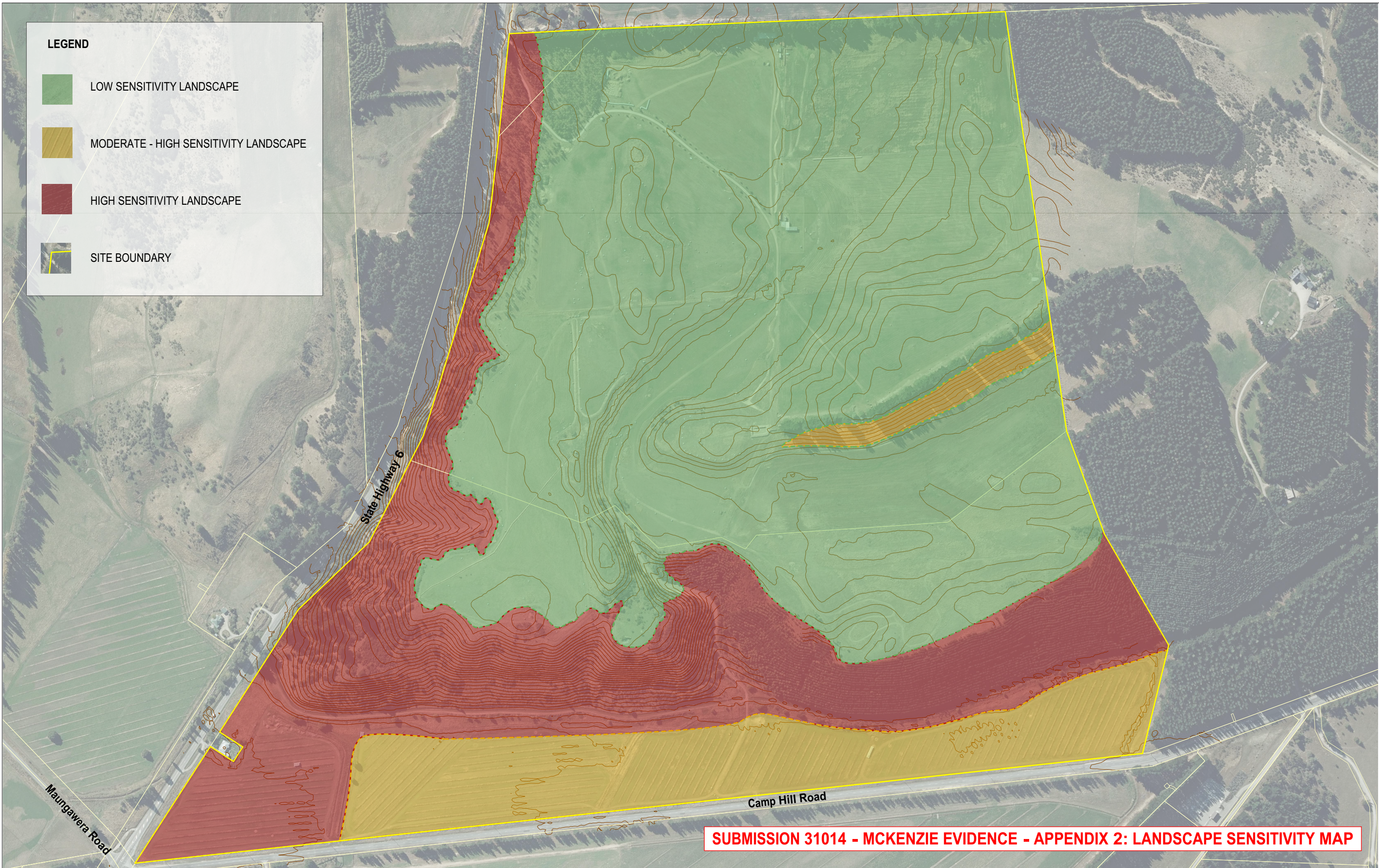
Revision  
**01**

Revision: 01  
Drawn By: JM

Date: 26-05-20

**LEGEND**

- LOW SENSITIVITY LANDSCAPE
- MODERATE - HIGH SENSITIVITY LANDSCAPE
- HIGH SENSITIVITY LANDSCAPE
- SITE BOUNDARY



**SUBMISSION 31014 - MCKENZIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 2: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY MAP**

Drawing Status  
INFORMATION ONLY

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Scale 1:5000 @ A3

**HERON INVESTMENTS LIMITED**

Sheet Title  
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY PLAN

Sheet Number      Revision  
**02**                      **01**

Revision: 01  
Drawn By: JM                      Date: 26-05-20



Viewpoint 1: Looking northwest over the area of low landscape sensitivity on the upper terrace.



Viewpoint 2: Looking southeast over the area of low landscape sensitivity on the upper terrace. The escarpment is considered to be a high-moderately sensitive landscape.

### **SUBMISSION 31014 - MCKENZIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 3: PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs were taken with a fixed focal length of 50mm. Photographs are intended to illustrate points made in this report. If this sheet is printed at A3 size, the photographs are not at full size so as to replicate the full-scale field of view as taken in by the human eye. Landscape sensitivity overlays indicate the approximate location of the areas of low and moderate-high landscape sensitivity. These overlays are intended as a guide to assist in reading the photographs. They are intended as a guide to assist understanding.



Viewpoint 3: Looking east towards the areas of high landscape sensitivity from SH6.



Viewpoint 4: Looking northeast towards the areas of high landscape sensitivity from Camp Hill Road.

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Viewpoint 5: Looking north towards the areas of high landscape sensitivity and high-moderate landscape sensitivity from Camp Hill Road.



Viewpoint 6: Looking north towards the areas of high landscape sensitivity and high-moderate landscape sensitivity from Camp Hill Road.

### **SUBMISSION 31014 - MCKENZIE EVIDENCE - APPENDIX 3: PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs were taken with a fixed focal length of 50mm. Photographs are intended to illustrate points made in this report. If this sheet is printed at A3 size, the photographs are not at full size so as to replicate the full-scale field of view as taken in by the human eye. Landscape sensitivity overlays indicate the approximate location of the areas of low and moderate-high landscape sensitivity. These overlays are intended as a guide to assist in reading the photographs. They are intended as a guide to assist understanding.