

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL
FOR THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN**

UNDER THE Resource Management Act 1991 ("**Act**")

IN THE MATTER OF Stage 3 Proposed District Plan - Settlement and
Lower Density Residential Zones – Mapping

BETWEEN **KINGSTON LIFESTYLE PROPERTIES LIMITED**
Submitter 3297 and Further Submitter 3439

AND **QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Planning Authority

**EVIDENCE OF NEVILLE DAVID SIMPSON IN SUPPORT OF
THE SUBMISSION OF KINGSTON LIFESTYLE PROPERTIES LIMITED**

29 MAY 2020

Counsel instructed:

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PROFESSIONAL DETAILS

Qualifications and experience

1. My full name is Neville David Simpson.
2. I am an Industrial engineering surveyor.
3. I hold the qualifications of mechanical and marine engineer.
4. My experience includes mechanical engineering, marine engineering, industrial engineering surveyor.

Code of conduct

5. Although this is a Council hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witness contained in the Environment Court Practice Note and that I agree to comply with it.
6. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.
7. I do acknowledge, given my involvement in supporting the efforts to bring the Kingston Flyer back into service, that I am not independent.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

8. I am not familiar with District Plan or hearing processes, but I understand that KLP wishes to obtain better recognition in the District Plan for activities of the Kingston Flyer, and activities that might reasonably be undertaken on Kingston Flyer land.
9. The purpose of my evidence is to:
 - (a) Briefly record some of the history behind the Kingston Flyer.
 - (b) Explain what recent efforts have been undertaken to bring the Kingston Flyer back to service.

THE KINGSTON FLYER – HISTORY

10. The Kingston Flyer began as a tourist operation between Lumsden and Kingston in December 1971. This was an initiative between the Minister of Railways and New Zealand Railways to boost tourism in the region and continue a rail freight service for the farming community. The twice daily service during the summer months was an instant success, attracting thousands of domestic and overseas passengers.
11. Damage caused to several bridges and track formation due to major floods in the late 70's, lead to the operation being re-located to Invercargill and then the decision to close the Kingston branch line in 1979.
12. This resulted in a public “out-cry” and the eventual agreement to lease the train to a Garston farmer who had purchased the railway line between Five Rivers and Kingston from the Government. The two locomotives and seven carriages were transported by road back to Kingston in November 1982 and a new service began between Kingston and Fairlight under a 10 year private lease.
13. Towards the end of that lease, New Zealand Railways had been sold to Wisconsin Central. Wisconsin Central chose not to renew the lease and continued to operate the Flyer under the TranzRail banner for almost a further ten years. The passenger numbers increased year on year and the train was by this time, internationally recognized as a leading heritage tourist operation.
14. TranzRail announced during 2001 that all of their passenger operations were up for sale, including the Kingston Flyer. This was the beginning of private ownership and for various reasons has resulted in periods of 'mothballing'.
15. The Kingston branch line was completed from Invercargill in 1878 and the remaining 14kms is the oldest surviving railway branch line in the country.
16. The heritage value can't be overstated and for this reason alone it is imperative that it is not lost.

RECENT EFFORTS TO BRING THE KINGSTON FLYER BACK TO SERVICE

17. From the initial condition assessment of the rolling stock and infrastructure in 2016, a huge amount of work has been undertaken by several people to return the train to an operational railway.
18. This has included:
 - (a) boiler and mechanical repairs to one of the two locomotives;
 - (b) restoration of the ex Royal carriage;
 - (c) returning all the locomotive servicing equipment to operating condition; and
 - (d) the replacement of more than 100 track sleepers.
19. All work has been undertaken working with NZTA Rail Safety and accredited Inspection Body for approvals required under the Railways Act 2005, and the Pressure Equipment and Passenger Ropeways Regulations 1999.
20. Kingston Flyer Ltd is now recognized by and is a member of the Federation of Rail Organizations of New Zealand and has the support of Heritage NZ.
21. The commitment is there to ensure that the Kingston Flyer returns to operations. While I do not know about the detail of District Planning matters, it would be a shame if the Plan were to provide a further barrier or impediment to the Kingston Flyer.



Neville Simpson
29 May 2020