

## Urban Intensification Variation

Hearing 25 August 2025

### Wānaka Property Owners Group

*Tēnā koutou katoa.*

Good afternoon, members of the Panel. My name is Dave Blyth, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Wānaka Property Owners Group Committee, in my role as their advisor.

Our submission relates solely to the **Wānaka Town Centre Zone** – the commercial heart of our community.

Having reviewed the Section 42A material the committee's view is that growth in Wānaka is inevitable, and with that, some degree of intensification is inevitable too.

Done well, intensification can strengthen our town centre, attract private investment, and create a vibrant and resilient community hub.

But done poorly, it risks undermining the very character and function of the town centre – the qualities that make Wānaka distinctive and successful today.

Our support of the UIV, therefore, is conditional. We support intensification only if it is done well, and we believe there are some essential pre-requisites that must be met.

The first, and most important, is **Design Quality**.

Design is paramount. It is the make-or-break factor.

We support a review and update of the **Wānaka Design Guidelines**, as recommended in the Barkers & Associates Urban Design review report.

We want to see provisions that:

- Ensure shading and aspect are properly managed, so that daylight access is not just maintained but enhanced.
- Require buildings to reflect Wānaka's alpine character and unique setting.
- Deliver high-quality streetscapes and public spaces that feel human in scale.

The second pre-requisite is **Adequate Parking**.

Car parking is not a side issue – it is critical to the **economic sustainability of the town centre**.

Parking is already under severe pressure in Wānaka. The reality of our town is that, due to our geography and a lack of alternative transport options, many people travel by car. Adding more bulk through intensification without addressing parking will compromise the town centre's ability to function well for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Given that the NPS-UD requires removal of minimum parking requirements, we believe that QLDC has to step up to ensure that the town can function properly. Wānaka is not Auckland, or even Queenstown. We have no public transport system. Until alternatives exist, reducing parking provision is unrealistic and unfair.

If the town centre becomes too hard to access, people will go elsewhere – and businesses will suffer. That is what has happened in other towns that cut parking before providing alternatives. We cannot afford to repeat that mistake here.

The third issue is **Pedestrian Safety and Access**.

Our members have been lobbying for years for better crossings and safer intersections. Progress has been slow. Intensification will only increase pedestrian volumes, and it must come with improvements to crossings, intersections, and linkages. A vibrant town centre should be easy and safe to move through on foot.

The fourth pre-requisite is **Public Infrastructure Investment**.

Intensification cannot come first, with infrastructure playing catch-up. The upgrades must happen in parallel, not after the fact.

That means new investment in:

- Power network capacity
- Fresh water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- And flood protection.

The Section 42A evidence confirms that our three waters networks do not currently have the capacity to handle full intensification. Projects are budgeted in the Long-Term Plan – but they need to be aligned, timed, and funded to keep pace with growth.

This is not only about pipes and drains. It is about **sustainable growth** – environmental sustainability, so that Wānaka continues to be a healthy place to live and visit, and economic sustainability, so that the town centre remains a thriving hub for business, tourism, and employment.

So, in summary:

- We support intensification, but only if it is done well.
- Design quality is paramount – it must protect and enhance Wānaka’s unique alpine character and ensure good daylight access.
- Adequate parking is essential for economic sustainability.
- Pedestrian safety must be addressed.
- Public infrastructure must be upgraded in parallel with growth.
- And all of this must be underpinned by sustainability – both environmental and economic.

The Wānaka Property Owners Group is not opposed to intensification. We accept that growth is inevitable.

But we are also clear that **we are at a critical junction**. Decisions made here will shape the future of Wānaka for decades to come.

We have a genuine opportunity to grow in a way that is sustainable, resilient, and successful – or to undermine the very qualities that make Wānaka special.

We urge the Panel to ensure the right safeguards are in place so that intensification strengthens, rather than weakens, our town centre.

**Ngā mihi nui. Thank you.**