

MEMORANDUM

To: Ben Bond, Environmental Protection Authority

From: Mitchell Daysh Limited

Date: 1 July 2026

Re: FTAA-2605-1236: Request for further information in relation to your application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This memorandum sets out, and responds to, each of the queries raised in the FTAA-2605-1236 S46 Request for Further Information (“**RFI**”) dated 4th June 2026, relating to the Remarkables Expansion Project.

This memorandum refers to, and is supported by, the following attachments

- > Remarkables Expansion Project Transport Addendum, prepared by Stantec (attached as **Appendix A**);
- > Memorandum regarding the climate change resilience of the Project, prepared by NZSki (attached as **Appendix B**); and
- > Remarkables Expansion Project Ecology Addendum, prepared by e3Scientific (attached as **Appendix C**).

It is noted that a number of the requests for further information stem from comments arising from the Department of Conservation (“**DOC**”) and the Queenstown Lakes District Council (“**QLDC**”). Notably, in its comments, DOC states “*DOC’s view is that while no information requirements under clause 3 of Schedule 6 or clause 2 of Schedule 7 have been identified as entirely absent, the following information is not in sufficient detail*”.

NZSki considers that many (if not all) of the matters raised by DOC (and others) are matters relating to the assessment of the substantive application, rather than matter which relate to completeness under section 46(2) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. Notwithstanding, in the interests of transparency and ensuring that NZSki continues to narrow any points of difference between itself and invited parties, this memorandum provides further detail in responses to the queries raised in the RFI. NZSki considers the substantive application should be considered complete under section 46 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.



RESOURCE CONSENT – SCHEDULE 5 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

1. *Clause 6 of Schedule 5 of the Act requires an assessment of the actual or potential effects on the environment to be undertaken. Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), through mandatory consultation processes with the EPA, has noted:*

“The traffic assessment supporting the application and the Assessment of Environmental Effects does not undertake a full assessment of wider transport network impacts and performance in relation to additional demand on State Highway 6, in particular the highway in both directions from the ski field access road, and the Frankton Road/State Highway 6 intersection. Rather, it narrowly focusses on the intersection upgrade of the ski field access road and State Highway 6.... QLDC considers that it is important that decision-makers are apprised with a full understanding of the effects of the proposal from additional traffic generation on the transport network.”

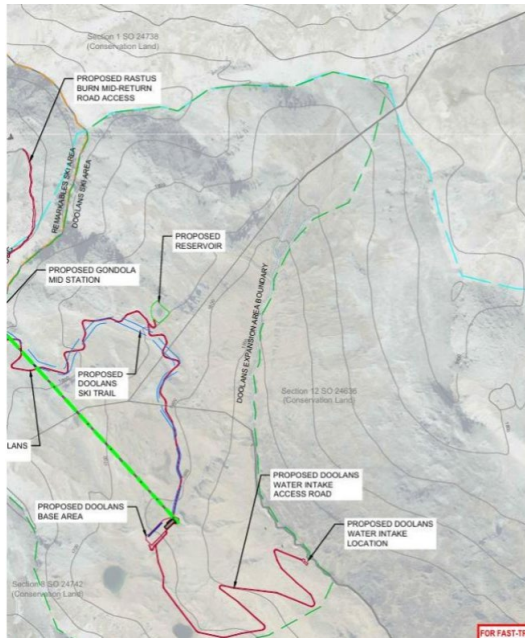
Please provide any further information you wish to have considered in response to this comment from QLDC.

Stantec has prepared a short addendum to their original transportation assessment. A copy of the addendum is attached as **Appendix A** of this memorandum. In summary, Stantec provides further information regarding:

- > The wider transportation network and network improvements that are currently underway or proposed in the near future;
- > The traffic patterns of the surrounding network, in particular, within Frankton;
- > The current challenges the transportation network is facing within the area; and
- > The mitigation measures that NZSki is proposing to manage the effects (that it can control) within the wider context of the above transportation setting.

CONCESSION - SCHEDULE 6 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

2. *In accordance with sub-clause (a) please provide a description of the proposed activity in the lands to the north of the proposed infrastructure developments (i.e. the 2 northern ‘sub-basins’ within the green dotted line of the “Doolans Expansion Area Boundary” - see excerpt from map C00 E103 below). This area does not appear to contain any proposed infrastructure, trails or obvious access from the proposed developments.*



The two northern ‘sub-basins’ referred to by DOC have been included in the proposed ‘Licence Land’ of the concession¹ for the Doolans Expansion Area for off-piste skiing. Off-piste skiing (being skiing on natural, ungroomed snow) is a common activity on New Zealand ski fields and provides ski field visitors with additional variety of skiing, improving their recreational experience. NZSki already facilitates off-piste skiing within the Rastus Burn Concession Area such as the Homeward Run/Outward Bound and Scarpa Run ski trails on the north-western area of the existing Remarkables Ski Area.

The Project Description (Section 3 of the Substantive Application) makes reference (on page 128) to providing for “... off-piste skiing throughout the Doolans Basin when snow conditions allow”.² The Project has sought that the proposed concession extend along the northern ridgeline and down to the valley floor of the Doolans Basin as NZSki consider that experienced, off-piste skiers will likely exit the Doolans Gondola at Helicopter Ridge and traverse the ridgeline into this area. While no groomed ski trails, structures or infrastructure are proposed to be authorized in the area, NZSki may erect temporary safety fencing (e.g. snow netting, mesh fencing, etc.) and safety signage during the ski season as part of being a responsible ski field operator. NZSki may also undertake the following activities in the area in accordance with that broader responsibility:³

- > Avalanche control work;
- > First aid and ski patrol services; and

¹ H.03 Concession Doolans Expansion, Schedule 1, 1. Land

² Refer to Part A, Document A.10 Project Description, page 128.

³ To be authorized under H.03 Concession Doolans Expansion, Schedule 1, Condition 2

> Search and rescue services.

Snow vehicles will only enter the area to undertake the above activities and only when necessary.

NZSki would welcome further discussion with DOC regarding the inclusion of the above area within its proposed concession boundaries and whether further conditions are required to appropriately narrow its use within the parameters noted above.

3. Sub-clause (f) requires information about the extent to which the project is in keeping with the purposes for which the land is held, status, ownership and administration. The application includes land in the Doolans Basin held under s 7 of the Conservation Act for conservation purposes. Please provide further information as to the extent to which the project (for those parts in the Doolans Basin and held for conservation purposes under the Conservation Act) is in keeping with the purpose of conservation as defined in the Conservation Act.

A description of the consistency of the parts of the Project in the Doolans Basin on land held for “conservation purposes”, as defined in the Conservation Act, has previously been provided as part of the lodged Substantive Application.⁴

Conservation is defined in the Conservation Act⁵ as:

...the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations

The terms “protection” and “preservation” have the following meanings, as defined in the Conservation Act.⁶ Importantly, these definitions include the wording ‘so far as is practicable’ which has the effect of not precluding use and development:

“Protection, in relation to a resource, means its maintenance, so far as is practicable, in its current state; but includes—

(a) Its restoration to some former state; and

(b) Its augmentation, enhancement, or expansion.”

“Preservation, in relation to a resource, means the maintenance, so far as is practicable, of its intrinsic values.”

⁴ Remarkables Ski Area Upgrade and Doolans Expansion, Part A – Substantive Application, Section 10.1, pg.439

⁵ Conservation Act 1987, Section 2

⁶ Conservation Act 1987, Section 2

As detailed in the Substantive Application, the design of the Project has been undertaken iteratively (including in response to feedback received from relevant agencies pre-lodgement) to ensure that the environmental effects on resources within the Doolans Basins are avoided or minimised, **so far as practicable**, while providing an opportunity for the public's enhanced appreciation and recreational enjoyment of the area. Notably, this includes (but is not limited to):

- > Co-locating infrastructure and trails to ensure the ski area has the smallest physical disturbance footprint practicable, thus maintaining the vast majority of the concession area in its current state;
- > Avoiding key areas of indigenous vegetation through careful trail and infrastructure siting and design and where avoidance is not practicable, minimising the footprint of the affected area;
- > Where vegetation removal is required, undertaking such works in accordance with agreed DOC and NZSki protocols (as applied at the Remarkables Ski Area);
- > Minimising the volume of earthworks required by forming a single vehicle access and ski trail in the Doolans Basin and utilising the natural topography of the land where practicable to form the access /ski trail;
- > Where larger volumes of earthworks are proposed (such as at the mid station and where retaining walls are proposed), these works are vertical cuts (and utilise retaining walls) rather than cut and fill which would require a larger footprint and area of disturbance. In the case of the mid station cuts, these works are proposed to minimise the visibility of the mid station;
- > Ensuring that the overall vegetation disturbance is minimised, key threatened and at-risk species are proposed to be relocated in accordance with NZSki and DOC's existing vegetation relocation protocols at the Remarkables Ski Area;
- > Utilising an existing tarn for water storage, rather than creating a new reservoir which would further increase the vegetation and earthworks disturbance. While consideration was given to pumping water from the Rastus Burn, this was discredited early to avoid transferring water from one catchment to another, particularly where didymo is present within the Rastus Burn; and
- > Applying accidental discovery protocols to the small area of the works footprint that has not been subject to a detailed walk over by heritage experts.

The above demonstrates that NZSki has sought to preserve and protect the resources within the Doolans Basin, as far as reasonably practicable, in accordance with the conservation purposes for which the land is held.

In addition to the above, and as detailed in the Substantive Application:

- > The total footprint of the expansion into the Doolans Basin impacts only a small part (just over 1%) of the wider Remarkables Conservation Area (33,000 ha). The actual area of vegetation disturbances is considerably smaller, with the wider vegetation disturbance across the Rastus Burn and Doolans being in the order of 15.94 hectares, or 0.4% of indigenous vegetation cover located above 1,100m;
- > The relatively small size of the ski field expansion and very small (relatively) footprint of development provides for the appreciation and recreational enjoyment of the conservation land by the public (similar to tracks, trails, huts and associated car parks that are formed through large areas of conservation estate) while prioritizing the preservation and protection of the natural and historic resources of the wider conservation area, safeguarding the land for future generations; and
- > Commercial ski fields provide (relatively for the alpine environment) safe and convenient access for the public to recreational activities in the alpine environment. The Doolans Basin is currently relatively inaccessible for the vast majority of the public due to its geographical location and limited access options, limiting the number of people who can appreciate and obtain recreational enjoyment out of the conservation land. The ski field expansion into the Doolans Basin will create safer and more convenient recreational access to the conservation land for the public – in winter and summer. This is in keeping with the conservation purpose of the conservation land within Doolans Basin as it will provide the public with greater ability to access the conservation land for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment.

NZSki's purposeful approach to effects management initially from its design and siting of infrastructure and trails, through to the subsequent management of effects through conditions and management plans ensures the ongoing preservation and protection of the natural and historic resources of the wider conservation area, safeguarding the land for future generations, while still managing to provide for the appreciation and recreational enjoyment of the conservation land by the public through the ski field expansion.

4. ***DoC has also noted that “although the application acknowledges climate change and how the Doolans proposal is able to improve the resilience and extend the longevity of the ski area generally, due to its south facing aspect; this appears to assume that the Doolans Basin itself is not also affected by climate change... Insufficient information has been provided about how the Project, including new developments proposed in the Doolans Basin itself is consistent with a precautionary approach to developing a ski area in the face of climate change, noting the 40-year term sought. Climate change data and assessment supporting an expansion into the Doolans for the purpose of operating a ski area over the proposed term of the next 40 years, in the face of climate change, is absent. Relevant to the matter of climate change effects on the upgrade and expansion project, please provide:***

- a. ***With reference to sub-clause (d) - Information addressing Ski-fields Policy 3.25.2 of the Otago Conservation Management Strategy, which requires the application of a precautionary approach ... the likely longevity of the field in the face of climate change, and any appropriate land remediation and facility removal costs should the ski field cease to operate; and***

As recognised by DOC, the proposed expansion into the Doolans Basin is intended to assist with the future resilience of the Remarkables Ski Area in the face of a changing climate. NZSki has not assumed that the Doolans Basin will not be affected by climate change. NZSki has instead sought to utilise the basins natural characteristics which allow it to capture and retain snow for longer than the existing ski area within the Rastus Burn. This is detailed in the NZSki Limited memorandum attached in **Appendix B**, which provides:

- > Background context for the known and published scientific research regarding the forecasted effect of climate change on New Zealand's Alpine Ski Areas which supports the long-term reliability of the Doolans Basin for alpine activities;
- > The long-term snow accumulation trends within the Rastus Burn over the past 20 years;
- > Details of historic and recent advances in snow making technology and NZSki's experience successfully implementing this technology; and
- > NZSki's commitment to remove structures in the unlikely event the ski field was to cease operating at the end of its concession, including requirements to replant the affected land with indigenous vegetation of a similar abundance and diversity as that which existed generally in the vicinity prior to the structures or improvements being installed.

With specific reference to Policy 3.25.2, the policy states:

Should in considering the development of new and existing authorised ski fields apply a precautionary approach to the approval of new structures, accommodation facilities and terrain modification and consider both the likely effects of water use (for snow-making), the likely longevity of the field in the face of climate change, and any appropriate land remediation and facility removal costs should the ski field cease to operate.

As set out in the memorandum prepared by NZSki, it anticipated that climate change **will not** render the ski field operations unviable within the 40-year term of concession sought, given the known (published) science, the aspect and elevation of the Doolans Basin and the ongoing advances in snow making technology.

As detailed in the Substantive Application, the Project is designed to minimise the overall terrain modification and utilise the existing contour of the land where practicable. This has resulted in a single earth-worked ski trail and vehicle access into the Doolans Basin. While snow making facilities are proposed as part of the Project, retaining residual minimum flow within the Doolans

Creek Right Branch (proposed to be secured by draft conditions of consent) will ensure sufficient water remains within the catchment for the duration of the water take consent.

As noted earlier, various remediation measures have been proposed by NZSki as conditions on its Doolans Concession (which largely mimic those of the existing Remarkables Ski Area Concession), including requirements around the removal of structures and the remediation of the land using indigenous vegetation of a similar abundance and diversity as that which existed generally in the vicinity prior to Project commencing. This is secured through NZSki's parent company, Trojan Holdings Limited, as the Grantor of the concession.

In light of the above, even when a precautionary principle is applied to the proposed Doolans Concession, the evidence and technological advances suggest that skiing within the Doolans Basin will continue to be feasible beyond the term of the proposed concession. In the context of NZSki's wider operations, it should also be noted that this particular policy, and the application of the precautionary principle, did not present any statutory barriers for the recent renewal of the Remarkables Ski Area Concession which was granted for a 38-year term.

b. With reference to sub-clause (g) - Information addressing the potential climate change effects on the land and its conservation values should climate change make the activity unviable in the future.

Schedule 6 Section 3 Clause (1(g)) of the Fast-track Approvals Act only requires a description of "the potential effects (positive and negative) of the proposed activity". The 'potential climate change effects on the land and its conservations values...' is not an 'effect' of the Project and therefore is not a consideration under the clause.

This matter has, however, been broadly addressed early in response to query 4a above and is therefore not repeated here.

5. With reference to sub-clause (g), DoC has also noted a lack of detail in relation to the following potential effects of the proposal:

"Vegetation and related ecosystems:

The application does not put the vegetation ecosystem into the context of the wider ecological district (ED). There has not been an assessment of the ecological importance (including representativeness) of the indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems of the Doolans Basin in the context of other basins in the ED. Therefore, the effects are not sufficiently or accurately described. This will have flow on effects to fauna also.

Invertebrates

There are limitations in the baseline dataset that introduce uncertainty regarding the completeness of the assessment of alpine invertebrate values. In particular, sampling was restricted to mid-late summer and may under-represent seasonally active alpine taxa (noting the recognised importance of spring-early summer activity). In addition, some taxonomic groups of potential ecological significance, including alpine cicadas (Cicadidae), do not appear to have been explicitly considered. These gaps influence confidence in the completeness of the terrestrial invertebrate assessment and the characterisation of conservation values present within the project area.

Avifauna

A threatened avifauna species with potential to be affected but not recorded during field surveying is rock wren (Xenicus gilviventris – Nationally Endangered). Targeted surveying along the bottom of rocky bluffs and through boulderfields would be more likely to detect this species if they were present; as opposed the surveying undertaken. This species should be considered in the Terrestrial EIA. Construction of new access roads is mentioned in the Terrestrial EIA, but the potential indirect impacts of these roads are not addressed. These provide a track for predator access and there will likely be an increased effect of introduced species, particularly feral cats which are known to use these access routes readily. Assessment of this increased risk is missing from the application.”

Please provide any further information you wish to have considered in response to these comments from DoC.

e3Scientific has prepared a memorandum that directly responds to these matters. Please refer to **Appendix C**.

WILDLIFE ACT AUTHORITY – SCHEDULE 7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

6. *In accordance with sub-clause (f) please provide further information you wish to have considered in response to DoC’s comments around how the methods proposed to be used to conduct the actions specified in the Application will ensure that best practice standards are met. Specifically, DoC has made the following comments:*

Avifauna

Information to ensure best practice standards are met is not sufficient. For example, information on how methods for relocation of nests ensures best practice is not provided; including examples of where this has successfully occurred for this or similar species.

Lizards



Information to ensure best practice standards are met is not sufficient. This includes why salvage (mitigation) is not being proposed ahead of compensation; which is not best practice. The methods do not state how best practice standards are met.

e3Scientific has prepared a memorandum that directly responds to these matters. Please refer to **Appendix C**.

- 7. *In accordance with sub-clause (g) please provide further information you wish to have considered in response to DoC's comments regarding the methods that will be used to safely, efficiently, and humanely catch, hold, or kill the animals and identify relevant animal ethics processes. Specially DoC has made the following comment:***

Avifauna

The methods for humane destruction of avifauna nests (chicks and eggs) is not sufficiently provided.

e3Scientific has prepared a memorandum that directly responds to these matters. Please refer to **Appendix C**.

- 8. *In accordance with sub-clause (h) please provide further information you wish to have considered in response to DoC's comments regarding the location or locations in which activity will be carried out. Specifically, DoC has noted:***

Avifauna

The application identifies the project footprint and includes mapped areas of disturbance, with the draft wildlife approvals confirming that collection and release locations will be spatially defined and recorded. However, specific locations for wildlife relocation are not identified in the application, and therefore the level of spatial detail remains insufficient. We acknowledge exact locations may not be known, but we expect a broad location for where they propose to move them to.

e3Scientific has prepared a memorandum that directly responds to these matters. Please refer to **Appendix C**.

- 9. *The response to the request relating to sub-paragraph (h) could include description of actual, possible and/or likely relocation areas, and/or criteria to be used to select these.***

e3Scientific has prepared a memorandum that directly responds to these matters. Please refer to **Appendix C**.

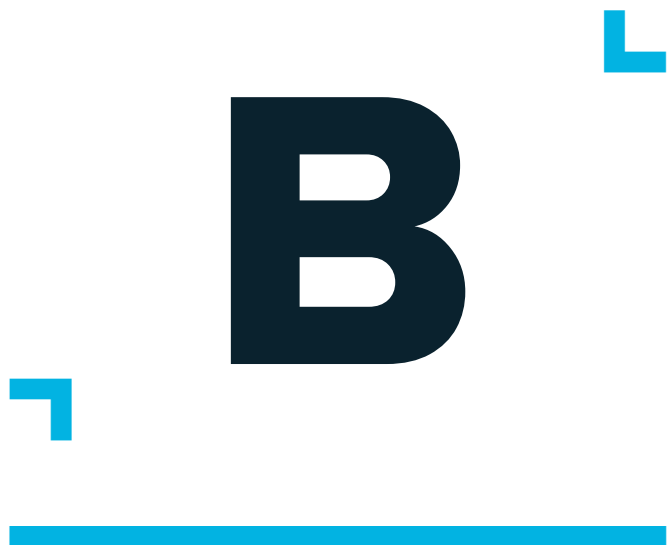


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APPENDIX A

Remarkables Expansion Project
Transport Addendum (Stantec)





APPENDIX B

Memorandum regarding the climate change resilience of the Project (NZSki)





APPENDIX C

Remarkables Expansion Project
Ecology Addendum (e3Scientific)