
MINUTE 6 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Initial Follow-Up to Comments

Ayrburn Screen Hub

FTAA-2508-1093

(18 December 2025)

[1] The Panel received 21 Comments by the deadline on 17 December. While some were brief, others were substantial and it will take some time for the Panel to review and absorb the detailed feedback provided. Rather than wait until the Panel has undertaken a complete and detailed review, we have identified certain issues that we wish to address before the Christmas break, based on our preliminary skim of the material received.

[2] Firstly, we note that we have received independent expert evidence from Ms Gilbert (for Queenstown Lakes District Council) on landscape issues and from Ms Hampson (for Messrs Andersson and Kidd) on economic issues as part of the Comments filed by interested parties. The Panel directs that they each caucus with their respective counterpart for the applicant (Mr Milne on landscape matters and Mr Osborne on economic matters) as soon as practicable and report back via a Joint Witness Statement. That Statement needs to be in hand not later than noon on 16 January.

[3] If the personal commitments of any of the experts make that deadline problematic, counsel for the parties for whom they have given evidence have leave to propose an extended timeframe. Parties will however be aware that the statutory timeframe is unforgiving and so the Panel's flexibility is limited.

[4] We note that we have received expert but not independent feedback from Ms Hadley and Mr Dougherty on landscape and economic matters respectively.

While we do not consider it appropriate to direct that they participate in expert conferencing because of their personal interest, we request that the experts who are conferencing consider their written input and, as part of their Joint Witness Statement, comment on its merits or otherwise where it raises issues they have not themselves addressed previously.

[5] We have not directed that the three planners whose evidence is before us on land use issues (Messrs Vivian, Langman and Cook) conference at this point. We will consider that option once we have the Applicant's response to Comments, and the Joint Witness Statements we have directed as above.

[6] We have noted that Mr Langman for Queenstown Lakes District Council has identified the absence of any assessment of terrestrial ecological effects as a gap in the applicant's case, precluding an assessment of the application against the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. The Panel assumes that the applicant will address that gap as part of its response to comments due 14 January. To put the matter beyond doubt, we request that information be provided within that deadline.

There are doubtless additional other matters raised in the comments received that the applicant will wish to respond to. That is a matter for the applicant and its advisors to consider.

[7] Turning to Queenstown Lakes District Council, we have noted Mr Langman's response to our queries regarding the status of the Silverlight Studios' consents (at paragraph 29 of his evidence). He has answered our first question, confirming that those consents will not lapse until 2029, but not the second- given that those consents are still live, what relevance if any do those consents have to our consideration of the applications before us? We request that he do so.

[8] Secondly, we have noted concerns raised by adjacent residents regarding the robustness of the assessment in the applicant's noise report of the existing noise environment and the potential adverse effects thereon if the project proceeds

as proposed. Those comments also suggest an unsatisfactory level of noise currently received on those properties emanating from the existing hospitality area on the Ayrburn property.

[9] In his report, Mr Langman has addressed acoustic issues relatively briefly, effectively relying on the applicant's acoustic assessment. The Panel queries whether the material provided by adjacent residents causes either Mr Langman or council generally to reconsider the view he expresses at paragraph 51 of his report.

[10] Further, we request that Queenstown Lakes District Council provide a summary of any noise complaints it has received in relation to activities on the Ayrburn property, the results of any investigations following such complaints, and any subsequent enforcement action it may have taken.

[11] We note that commenting parties have requested that we obtain independent acoustic advice of our own. We have deferred consideration of that request until we have Queenstown Lakes District Council's response to our questions.

[12] Lastly, we have noted suggestions in the comments received that the actions it has proposed to manage water quality in Mill Creek are required by existing consents. We request that Queenstown Lakes District Council confer with Otago Regional Council and jointly advise whether this is the case.

[13] We request that Queenstown Lakes District Council (and Otago Regional Council in respect of the last matter) supply the information requested by noon on 16 January.

[14] The Panel intends to convene a conference early in the week of 19 January to discuss further steps in the application process with the parties. Among other things, the Panel will need to consider whether it convenes a hearing and if so, its ambit and timing. We will issue further directions in relation to that conference in the New Year, but if parties have any time constraints we need to be aware of,

please email the EPA Application lead Melita Raravula on : info@fastrack.govt.nz.

We cannot promise to accommodate all participants, but we will endeavour to do so.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Robinson', with a large loop and a horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Trevor Robinson
Expert Panel Chair