

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for Social Development and Employment
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
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Ayrburn Screen Hub Expert Panel
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Dear members of the Ayrburn Screen Hub Expert Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the application by Waterfall Park Developments Ltd for the Ayrburn Screen Hub under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

From a tourism perspective, I consider the proposal likely to deliver positive outcomes for the Queenstown Lakes District and the wider region. In particular, the project would support economic diversification, enhance visitor infrastructure and strengthen outdoor recreation opportunities.

I am pleased with how this proposal could reshape the Queenstown Lakes District by reducing reliance on traditional tourism and introducing a high-value screen industry. The projected benefits are significant – around \$278 million in construction activity and \$485 million in operational output over the next decade, supporting approximately 370 ongoing jobs each year.

I also see real advantages for visitor accommodation. The proposed 201 on-site accommodation units will help ease pressure during peak seasons. While these are primarily for film crews, making them available to visitors when not in use adds flexibility and capacity for the region.

The improvements to the cycle trail network are another highlight. Safer realignment of the Countryside Trail and new links to Lake Hayes will strengthen Queenstown Lakes' reputation as a destination for outdoor recreation. Coupled with environmental measures like sediment traps and riparian planting to improve Lake Hayes' water quality, the project demonstrates a commitment to ecological values.

Stakeholder feedback reflects strong support from local authorities and mana whenua. Film industry representatives view the hub as critical national infrastructure to attract longer productions and reduce economic leakage offshore. The Queenstown Trails Trust also welcomes the trail enhancements. I understand that while some community members have raised concerns about visual and traffic effects, these have been assessed as low to moderate and likely to diminish over time.

Overall, I believe this project offers a compelling opportunity to diversify the economy, enhance visitor experiences, and deliver environmental improvements. I support the application and its potential to contribute to regional resilience and tourism development.

Sincerely



Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality