

Boffa Miskell



# Remarkables Ski Area Carpark & Bus Hub

Landscape Effects Assessment  
Prepared for NZSki Ltd

5 May 2026





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## Document Quality Assurance

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Scope of the report

Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) have been engaged by NZSki Ltd (NZSki) in April 2026 to undertake an additional Landscape Effects Assessment (LEA) relating to approvals required to upgrade and extend the car parking area, create a bus hub and storage yard in vicinity of SH6 and the Remarkables ski field access road. The Site is situated within Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), together with the existing ski field and the access road.

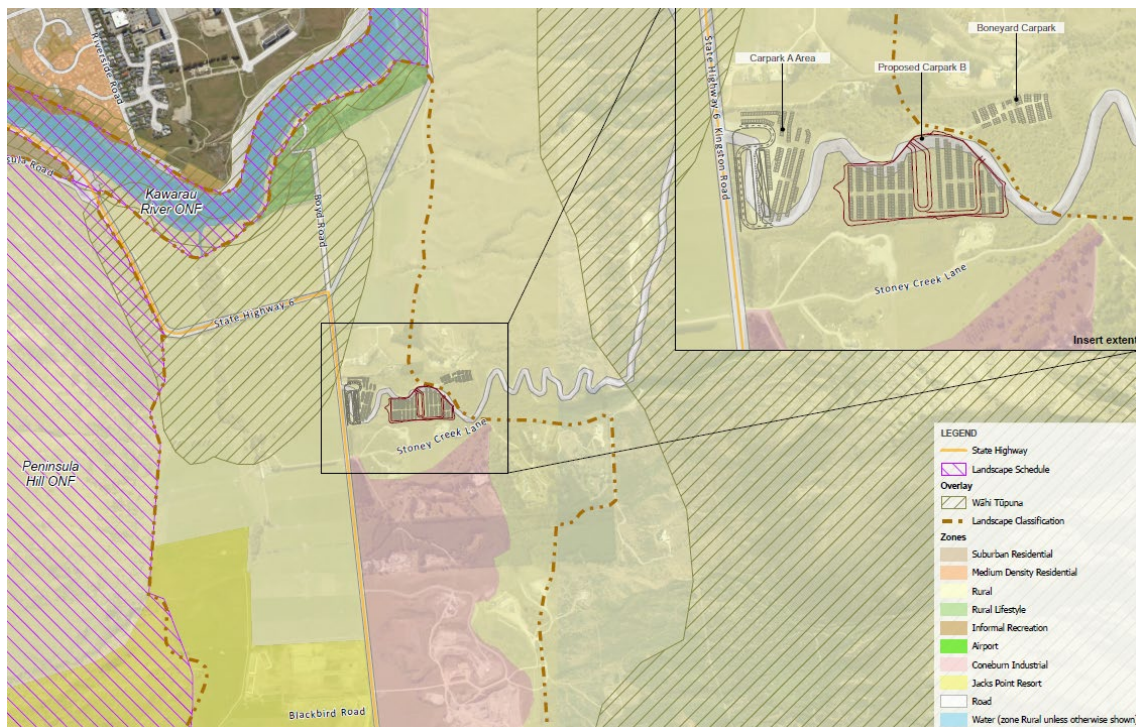


Image 1: Zoning QLDC District Plan (see also Figure 4 Graphic attachment)

The existing Remarkables Ski Area is zoned Rural - Ski Area Sub-Zone (SASZ) under the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan (QLPDP), with the lower reaches of the Remarkables Ski Field access road being zoned Rural under the plan without the SASZ overlay. The existing ski field falls within land managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve, while the lower ski field road and car park are within NZ Ski Ltd privately owned land.

The Remarkables Ski Area and upper part of the access road are subject to Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) overlays. While the existing base car park and proposed extension are outside the ONL overlay, the existing storage area/ proposed Boneyard carpark falls within it.

In general terms, the proposal will:

- Extend the existing lower car park (referred to as “Carpark A”). This area will continue to be used for car parking, however new ride share and shuttle pick up areas will be established.

- Expand into “Car Park B”, located to the east of Carpark A, to the south of the lower ski field access road. The vast majority of this area will be cleared, levelled into the two separate flat areas and used for parking.
- Create a new storage area and carpark in the “Boneyard”. This an existing area currently used by NZSki as a general purpose yard, located to the north of the lower ski field access road.

This LEA assesses the landscape and visual amenity effects of the proposed carpark, bus hub and storage yard adjacent to this bottom part of the ski field access road on the immediate and surrounding environment character. While this proposal is part of the fast-track application for the ski field expansion, it is located within a different environment to the existing ski field and Doolans extension area and, therefore covered in this separate assessment.

## 1.2 Code of Conduct

The author of this report is Yvonne Pflüger, partner of BML. I (Yvonne Pflüger) am a registered landscape architect and have practiced for over 25 years, based in Queenstown for seven years, as a landscape planner. I have assisted several District/ Regional Councils in the South Island with the review of their plans by preparing territorial landscape studies. I specialise in preparing landscape and visual assessments for development projects within sensitive environments, as well as presentation of evidence for Council and Environment Court hearings, mediation and expert conferencing. I have prepared numerous landscape assessments for a variety of projects, including resort and residential developments through to large-scale infrastructure developments, including airport, port, ski field, renewable energy and roading projects.

I regularly provide peer reviews and advice on consent applications to the EPA and various councils, including for MDC, QLDC and CODC where I am a member of the peer review panels. I am also a Certified Environmental Practitioner under the EIANZ, and a Certified Independent RMA Commissioner.

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. This report has been prepared in compliance with that Code, as if it was expert evidence presented in proceedings before the Environment Court. Unless I state otherwise, this report is within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this report.

## 2.0 Landscape Assessment Methodology

### 2.1 Landscape Assessment Guidance

This assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*<sup>1</sup>. A full method is outlined in **Appendix 1** of this report. In summary, the effects ratings are based upon a seven-point scale which ranges from very low to very high.

Te Tangi a te Manu recognises the term ‘landscape effects’ as all-encompassing, and that visual effects and natural character effects are a subset of landscape effects. This assessment provides separate chapters to discuss landscape, visual and natural character effects, but is referred to throughout as Landscape Effects Assessment (LEA) in accordance with the Guidelines.

The significance of the wider Kawarau / Remarkables Mountains to manawhenua is acknowledged. NZ Ski has engaged with Ngāi Tahu, however, a Cultural Values Assessment has not been prepared by Ngāi Tahu for the proposal. Assessment of effects on cultural landscape values is acknowledged as the domain of mana whenua. Where appropriate, however, recognised values have been identified based on the 2020 Ngāi Tahu Values Report prepared for the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area reclassification process<sup>2</sup>.

The Site and surrounding landscape were visited on 15 April 2026 to assess the potential visibility and landscape effects. The weather was fine with cloud cover at times. The purpose of the visit was to assess the landscape character and visual influence of the Site within its landscape context, as well as appraising the Site itself. This survey included a visual appraisal to consider the nature of existing views from publicly accessible viewpoints including residential areas, SH6 and other roads and public walking tracks. Consideration was also given to private views identifying the potential for visual effects that may be experienced by the community within the residential areas in vicinity of the site, however private property was not visited for this assessment. Photographs from this site visit form part of the Graphic Supplement.

### 2.2 Assessment Process

This LEA follows the assessment process outlined below:

- Familiarisation of the project proposal and background documents, including the existing resource consents.
- Desktop review of the existing environment and landscape values. Part of the proposed Site is identified as forming part of an Outstanding Natural Landscape under the QLPPD.
- Site visit to understand the Site, its context, and nature of existing views.
- Preparation of the assessment of landscape effects of the proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Remarkables Conservation Area, Summary of Ngāi Tahu Values, Practices and Associations, Kauati, Dec 2020

- Provision of recommended mitigation measures to avoid, remedy and mitigate potential adverse effects.

To accompany this written assessment is a separately bound Graphic Supplement. The Graphic Supplement illustrates the figures, plans and photographs of the Site taken from outside the Site.

## 3.0 Proposal

The proposed Lower Remarkables Transit Hub will include the following components:

- The proposed upgrades to the existing car park at the bottom of the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road (Car Park A);
- Construction of a new car parking area (Car Park B) approximately 500m east of the existing Car Park A; and
- Conversion of the existing temporary storage yard into a new car park (the Boneyard Car Park).

The approximate location of the above works are shown on **Figures 1-5 of the graphic attachment**.

Carpark A will be reconfigured (**Figure 2**) to improve the efficiency of the site access and egress, improve car parking efficiency and capacity, provide for new shuttle/bus drop-off and pick-up and improve ride-share transition zones. These works will enable NZSki to support increased modal shift of visitors to the top of the ski field from private cars to shared buses, shuttles and cars.

Two new carparks, 'Carpark B' and the 'Boneyard Carpark' are proposed to be established east of the existing Carpark A to cater for the increase in visitors, and to compensate for the loss of Carpark 3 below the Remarkables base station (which is being used for electricity related infrastructure). An existing section of land will be cleared of vegetation and earthworked to establish Carpark B. Existing stormwater flows will be maintained via open drains and culverts with discharges to existing downstream flow paths. The Boneyard Carpark will be established within an existing cleared area of the site and therefore will not require earthworks.

All works associated with Carparks A and B will be undertaken during normal construction hours, of 7:30am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday, and 7:30am to 6.00pm Saturdays, and will be undertaken in accordance with a certified ESCP.

During peak days during the ski season, part of Carpark 1 at the top of the mountain will be used for additional shuttle drop-off/pick-up areas rather than car-parking to ensure the shuttle services from the lower mountain carparks can operate efficiently. NZSki will alter the configuration of Carpark 1 on a day-to-day basis in response to daily demand.

Carparks for the ski field are unsealed without line marking. NZSki utilises traffic controllers to organise carparking as visitors arrive to ensure efficient and safe carparking across the site.

To manage peak flows through the SH6 intersection, NZSki proposes implementing temporary afternoon traffic control measures for the duration of the winter ski season. Successfully implemented for the last season, the traffic control measures impose a left out only turn from the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road. This temporary mechanism is proposed while QLDC and NZTA work through the wider implementation of the Te Tapuae Southern Corridor strategy and strategic network upgrades.

NZSki is also proposing to install permanent left turn measures out of the SH6 / Remarkables Ski Field Access Road intersection and will consider the use of variable speed limit signs on the State Highway. Both of these actions are within the State Highway road reserve, therefore will be subject to separate approval pathways.

Within 12 months of the Doolans Base Building being opened, NZSki will undertake an investigation, in collaboration with NZTA, to understand the performance of the existing intersection, identification of potential intersection improvements to address safety or performance issues and the funding of the preferred solution. NZSki will be required to implement the improvements, however as the detail has yet to be defined, it will be subject to separate approval processes outside of the FTAA.

To encourage a modal shift of skiers away from private car usage, NZSki will also formalise the existing travel demand and car parking measures on site through the preparation and implementation of a Travel Demand and Parking Management Plan. The plan will provide a strategic framework designed to influence travel behaviour, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and alleviate traffic congestion (including parking) associated with the operation of the Remarkables Ski Field. Implemented in the first ski season after approvals are granted, NZSki will monitor and report on its success and adjust the Plan to ensure the modal shift outcomes sought for the ski field are being achieved as visitor numbers increase over time.

## 4.0 Recommended Mitigation

Given that in the area of earthworks for Carpark B 2.5ha of existing vegetation, consisting of a mix of exotic and native shrubs and small trees will be removed as part of the proposal, the earth worked area would appear open in views from the ski field access road, with glimpses from other viewpoints. The visual effects assessment in Section 7.2 of the report outlines that moderate visual effects would be experienced from short sections of the access road, while effects from other viewpoints would be very low or low.

Views into the Carpark B area will vary depending on relative elevation of the viewer on the access road in relation to the car park. In order to soften and break up views into the area, it is recommended to plant native vegetation along the edges and on the central escarpment between the split levels. The escarpment below Carpark B will be maintained without earthworks proposed in this area and existing mature scrubby (partially native) vegetation can be retained in this area to screen views (see Site Photographs 1-3).

If earthworks along the access road extend close to the road margin, exiting vegetation (see Site Photograph 7) should be replaced with native shrub and tree planting to at least partially screen views into the carpark area. While it is considered that the area does not need to be

screened in its entirety, the landscape and visual effects would be reduced to low if the open car parking area could be visually framed and broken up with planting along its eastern and northern edges. The escarpment that will be created between the two split levels would break up the large area, if native planting was to be implemented following earthworks.

It is understood that a consent condition is proposed that requires detailed planting design through the preparation of a Landscape Planting Plan which will be submitted to council for approval. This Landscape Planting Plan will include proposed species, densities/spacing and plant grade/ height, as well as any relevant planting notes.

The goal of the proposed native planting is visual integration of the earthworks required for the creation of Carpark B, visually breaking up views to the area proposed for vegetation clearance with:

- native grey shrubland planting on the escarpment between the two split levels, and
- along parts of the northern boundary, filtering (but not necessarily entirely screening) any views that can be potentially gained from the ski field access road and viewpoints along SH6.

Should it not be possible to retain the existing shrubland on the western escarpment (between Carparks A and B), the proposed planting should extend to include this area.

The species selection for the proposed planting should include input from an ecologist to ensure appropriateness of species for the environment.

## 5.0 Existing Environment

The Site is located to the west of the Remarkables mountain range, along the base of the elevated land to the east of State Highway 6 that connects Queenstown with Kingston. The three sites are located within proximity of each other, between the existing base car park associated with the ski field (around 330masl) and an existing storage area (the Boneyard) at around 380masl. All three sites are immediately adjacent to the existing ski field access road.

### 5.1 Broad Landscape Context

The Remarkables Mountains to the south of the Wakatipu Basin and the main settlement area of Frankton and to the east of Jacks Point, contain some of the district's most iconic landscapes. Extensive rock faces and outcrops are a distinctive characteristic of the upper part of the Kawarau/Remarkables mountain range. The steep mountain slopes, ridges and peaks have formed over time through past glaciation activity, tectonic uplift and ongoing fluvial processes and are highly expressive of their formative processes.

As a result of this, the mountains are highly valued for their impressive skyline views from the wider Queenstown area. With the existing Remarkables Ski Field and associated access, the area is also very popular for recreational activities, including skiing and hiking. The Remarkables Ski Field Access Road provides access to the Remarkables Ski Field, which is located within the upper catchment of the Rastus Burn. Here ski related facilities, including chair

lifts, car parking, amenities/ base building and earth-worked ski slopes are located. The ski related facilities are subject to the specific SASZ under the QLPDP.

The Sites are located on State Highway 6 (SH6) / Kawarau Road between Queenstown and Kingston, directly south of Te Kirikiri / Frankton. The wider state highway corridor is contained to the north by the Kawarau River, to the east by the Remarkables (Kawarau) mountain range and to the west and south by Lake Wakatipu (Whakatipu-Wai-Māori); all are distinct geographical features of Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) / Feature (ONF) status. Peninsula Hill (ONF) and Jacks Point (ONF) form part of the local context to the west.

These outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONF/Ls) comprise a mix of both natural landscapes, generally publicly owned and managed by LINZ or DOC, and rural landscapes, in either privately owned or held under QEII covenant. The District Plan boundary lines of these ONF/Ls are located on elevated fans and mountain slopes, which define the edges of the lower slopes and valley floor.

Much of the geology underpinning the Southern Corridor is comprised of outwash fans and deltas and glacial till. The varied topography ranges from a lake escarpment and terraces to the schist ridge of the Tablelands and a broad central valley incorporating rolling hummocks, fans and ephemeral gullies, as well as the lower slopes of the Remarkables to the northeast.

SH6 runs through and alongside the central valley which, in the main, slopes fairly gently west towards the Tablelands and the legible lake terraces to the south. In contrast, the Tablelands slopes and lake escarpment between Jacks Point Hill and Peninsula Hill are steep and rocky. Refer to **Photograph 1** in the Graphic Supplement.

While the ecology of the high-lying mountain landscape is dominated by indigenous snow tussock and cushionfield communities within the alpine zone, the lower part of the Remarkables Range contains grey shrublands, grazed pasture and a wide range of invasive exotic species. The site where Carpark B is proposed contains small, scattered stands of matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*), mingimingi (*Coprosma propinqua*), porcupine shrub (*Melicactus alpinus*) and desert broom (*Carmichealia petriei*) that are embedded in areas heavily infested with hawthorn, sweet briar and broom.

Since the initial development of Jacks Point Resort Zone the valley floor to the south west of the ski field access road has been transformed over the years from a rural landscape to one that is characterised by considerable urban development. The area east of the valley floor consists of the lower slopes of the Remarkables and is characterised by undulating hummocks, terraces, gullies and fans and incorporates developments underway as part of the Coneburn Industrial area. These are located behind bunds on upper terraces and are visually discrete. The existing Remarkables Ski Field Road also cuts through this area.

The character of the northern part of valley floor, closer to the Kawarau River is undeveloped, rural land, part of a much larger private landholding under a QEII covenant. Views are possible from some portions of the adjacent State Highway where they are not blocked by roadside planting or landform, to the lake and mountains beyond. Landscape values associated with the wider area are largely derived from the composition and dominance of adjacent ONF/Ls.

## 5.2 Local Landscape Description and Values

The site is located at the base of the iconic western face of the Remarkables Range which forms the eastern backdrop to Jacks Point, and the eastern backdrop to Lake Whakatipu near Frankton and Queenstown CBD. While the upper part of the range is rocky and very mountainous in character, the lower slopes are generally occupied by more gently sloping fans.

The existing Remarkables Ski Field and access road are located on the southern side of the Kawarau catchment. While the existing ski field and its infrastructure are within the SASZ, and the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve, the lower part of the access road fall outside. The ski field turn-off from State highway 6 is approx 400m south of the Boyd Road turn-off and 300m north of Stoney Creek Lane. This lower part of the access road winds its way up the lower slopes, before traversing the mid slopes of the Remarkables in a northerly direction towards the prominent face above the Kawarau River, and subsequently into the upper Rastus Burn catchment where the ski field is located.

The lower west-facing slopes of the Remarkables Range frame the low-lying valley generally referred to as the “Southern Corridor” extending in a southerly direction from the Kawarau River, that contains a number of residential subdivisions, such as Jacks Point, Hanley Farm, Coneburn and Parkridge. Peninsula Hill forms the western frame for the valley, and has been identified as an ONF almost in its entirety, as the landform is largely free of built form.

In contrast, the lower slopes of the Remarkables Range that frame to valley to the east have been more modified in the past. These modifications include the presence of an old landfill, an industrial area that contains gravel extraction/ quarrying and other businesses/storage yards, the existing ski field road and carpark and a few residential buildings along Stoney Creek Lane and north of the ski field road. The ONL that encompasses the northern part of the Remarkables Range includes the tops and mid slopes on the western side and the north-facing slopes above the Kawarau River. However, the lower west-facing slopes have been excluded from the ONL due the existing level of modification. The map in Image 2 below shows the extent of the Priority Areas that were identified for the preparation of Landscape Schedules in the QLPDP.

The Northern Remarkables PA extends from the Kawarau River southwards to include the rugged and steep terrain associated with the northern faces of the Remarkable Range framing the southern side of the Wakatipu Basin. The southern boundary of the PA/ONL corresponds with the district boundary that is formed by mountain ridgelines, and to the east of the Remarkables Ski Area Sub-zone. Given that the characteristics of the lower, west-facing Remarkables slopes are different, they have not been included in the Northern Remarkables landscape schedule, even though they partially fall within the ONL that extends along the mountain range.

Within the QLPDP, the Boneyard Carpark Site is contained within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (refer to Image 1), but outside of the Northern Remarkables PA. The site is located in close proximity to the western boundary of the ONL, while the existing car park (Carpark A) and the proposed extension (Carpark B) fall outside.

Whilst the Site is contained within a large landscape that encompasses the lower slopes of the Remarkables Mountain Range, many of the values are reasonably broad and relate to the composition of the context. The landscape consists of the lower-lying fans which include the existing industrial area to the south and the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road and existing car park on the eastern side of SH6.



*Image 2: Landscape Priority Areas identified in the QLPDP for the preparation of Landscape Schedules. While part of the site falls within the ONL, it has not been included in the Northern Remarkables Priority Area.*

The values related to the wider landscape are strongly related to the rocky, mountainous backdrop of the Southern Corridor valley<sup>3</sup>, formed by the steep and rugged West Face of the Remarkables.

#### 5.2.1.1 Physical Values

The highly distinctive western escarpment face of the Remarkables extends from the Kawarau River in the north to Wye Creek in the south. The iconic west face is renowned for sheer, vertical, buttressed, dark grey jagged rocky ridges and steep bluffs rising above Lake Wakatipu.

The over-steepened rocky topography and bluffs have been shaped by movement of the Wakatipu trough glacier, leaving deposits on the largely valley floor. The fans of alluvial material on the lower, west-facing slopes of the mountain range are a sign of the erosional forces that shaped the exposed face in more recent times. The hydrology of the watercourses and creeks that shaped the topography of the Remarkables West Face is clearly legible, even if creeks often only contain water during and after rainfall events. The erosion has led to sharp, clearly distinguishable ridgelines and gullies in the upper part of the range and broad, indented fans and terraces along the base of the slopes.

Vegetation on the upper part of the Remarkables comprises bands of snow tussock on steep faces and grey shrubland on the slopes below. Native shrubland extends onto fans at the base of escarpment face, while exotic vegetation generally dominates the lower slopes located below the DOC managed conservation land.

Small narrow ribbons of remnant mountain beech are confined to watercourses in very limited locations, none of which are located in proximity to the existing car park and ski field access

<sup>3</sup> defined as the valley between Peninsula Hill to the west and the Remarkables Mountains to the west, extending from the Kawarau River in the north to Homestead Bay in the south

road. The water courses to the north and south of the ski field road and proposed car park sites are ephemeral and mostly lined with a mix of native and exotic trees and shrubs. The lower terraces near the Kawarau River exhibit a mix of short tussock–exotic grassland mosaics interspersed with pasture. While the northern part of the lower slopes is covered in extensively grazed exotic grassland, the block of land adjacent to the ski field access road is largely covered in shrubland, where exotic weed species dominate.

The Carpark A and Boneyard area currently consist of gravel surfaces, with Carpark A mainly serving as a parking area and storage activities mostly occupying the Boneyard. Carpark A contains a small portcom building and bus shelters set within large areas of open gravel, while the enclosed area of the Boneyard contains a variety of materials and equipment scattered across the site.

In contrast, the Carpark B area is currently mostly covered in dense mature shrubs. While this shrubland contains a range of exotic weeds, such as hawthorne, broom, sycamore and briar, there are stands of mature matagouri present, in particular in the southern part of the site. These areas of matagouri scrub include companion indigenous shrubs such as mingimingi (*Coprosma propinqua*), porcupine shrub (*Melicactus alpinus*) and desert broom (*Carmichaelia petriei*). To the south of the site are two parcels of land that contain mature exotic conifers, while the industrial zone to the south contains large, exposed earthworks and storage.

Human modification on the lower slopes of the range is largely contained within a few parcels of land between Boyd Road and Woolshed Road turn-offs. In this part of the lower slopes, modification in the form of residential development, ski field access road/ parking and industrial activity is clearly detectable, while the northern and southern part of the Remarkable fans remain largely free of built development. The Remarkables Ski Field access road introduces a linear visual element that contrasts with the natural form of the mountain when viewed from the parts of the Wakatipu Basin and SH6.

Overall, the landscape on the upper part of the Remarkables West Face clearly contrasts with the lower slopes in terms of its formative processes and current land use. While the hydrology and formative processes are legible on the northern and southern part of the lower fans, the area between Boyd Road and Woolshed Road has been substantially more modified. The land use of each parcel is reflected in the land cover, leading to unnatural elements, patterns and processes that impact on the landscape values at a localised scale. At a wider scale, the dominance of the physical values associated with the Remarkables Range remains, with modifications limited to about 2km long stretch of the lower slopes to the east of SH6.

#### 5.2.1.2 Perceptual Values

The jagged skyline ridge and silhouette culminating in Double Cone is also a distinctive feature in the surrounding views of the area. The mountain landscape exhibits a highly legible expression of glacial, fluvial, and alluvial processes, with steep schist slopes, incised valleys, and alluvial fans forming a distinct geomorphic framework. While indigenous vegetation on the southern Remarkables slopes (from Woolshed Road turn off southwards) enhances this natural legibility, reinforcing hydrological and topographic structure, the vegetation patterns on the lower slopes between Boyd Road and Woolshed Road does not reflect the underlying landform in terms of its formative processes. On the upper mountain slopes vegetation patterns transition from natural alpine and subalpine communities at higher elevations to more cultural and managed vegetation across the lower terraces, creating a clear ecological and visual gradient that reflects natural process and land-use intensity.

At a wider scale, the peaks of the prominent West Face define the Remarkables' skyline with Double Cone and Single Cone and unify views of the landscape through the dominance of natural elements and the subservience of built development, contributing to the landscape's

high visual quality and sense of openness. The northern slopes of the range in particular are largely open and allow for expansive views. This openness has been largely lost through exotic amenity planting, weed invasion and small-scale forestry around the lower part of the ski field road.

Levels of naturalness vary spatially across the landscape. The fans on the southern part of the Remarkables Range reflect the natural patterns of native grey shrublands, set amongst boulders from past rockfall events, creating a more natural and legible landscape than on (and adjacent to) the application site where man-made patterns dominate. The upper mountain slopes retain a very high degree of perceived naturalness due to their scale, form, and limited modification, while the fans and terraces express a more cultural character, shaped by pastoral and other land uses, and invasion of exotic species. The ski field access road and existing car park/ storage area have led to modifications through earthworks which detract from the naturalness within these areas. When viewed from a distance, the overall composition of the mountainous landscape maintains coherence through its integration of natural geomorphology with spatially limited human activity, despite these modifications.

Aesthetic, perceptual, and transient qualities further enhance the area's landscape value. Seasonal snow cover, shifting light, and atmospheric conditions animate the mountains, while the colour changes of pasture and exotic vegetation contribute visual variety throughout the year. The juxtaposition of sublime, wild alpine landforms with the cultivated valley floor produces a dynamic and memorable visual composition. This interplay of natural form, process expression, and confined human presence on the lower western slopes of the Remarkables Mountain Range is a defining element of the wider Southern Corridor landscape.

#### 5.2.1.3 Associative values

The Remarkables and Kawarau landscape hold deep cultural significance for Ngāi Tahu, whose whakapapa connections to the land and water create a kaitiaki responsibility to protect their mauri. The range's prominence above Whakatipu-wai-māori links it to the Ātua, while the Kawarau River served as an important traditional route between Whakatipu-wai-māori and Mata-au, and a key mahika kai site for gathering native species such as tuna and weka. Mana whenua values, including mauka, wāhi taoka, ara tawhito, mahika kai, and nohoaka, continue to underpin the cultural identity and meaning of the landscape.

The three sites where the car parks and bus hub are proposed are not included in the wahi tupuna sites located in the northern part of the Southern Corridor, in vicinity of the Kawarau River, and on the upper part of the Remarkables Mountain Range.

The connections Ngāi Tahu has with Ngā Puna Wai Karikari a Rākaihautū and Kawarau are both historical and contemporary, tangible and intangible. Kawarau is both the name of the mountain range and the adjacent river to the north, thought to have been named after a local rangatira although there is now no direct reference to this tūpuna. This whakapapa connection with the archaeological, written and oral records enables the exchange, expression and recognition of Ngāi Tahu mātauranga tuku iho. It provides an ongoing presence of the mana of Ngāi Tahu in its takiwā.

Historically, the maunga was a significant landmark and is surrounded on all sides by mahinga kai and nohoanga. Historically, the Remarkables Conservation Area is part of a much larger network of mahinga kai and a highly visible landmark in Te Ara a Tamatea, the Whakatipu route across the lake to the West Coast, and the link to Potiki-whaka-rumaki-nao and the Mata-au Clutha River.

The significance of this wider area to manawhenua is acknowledged. NZSki has continued to engage with Ngāi Tahu with regard to the ski field expansion however a Cultural Values Assessment has not been prepared by Ngāi Tahu for the proposal.

Today, the Remarkables Mountains remains a defining visual and recreational landmark, with the ridgeline above the prominent West Face particularly notable in views from Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu. The mountain's dramatic form is widely celebrated through art, tourism, and outdoor recreation, including skiing, walking and climbing activities. Scenic routes such as SH 6 and the private Remarkables Ski Field Access Road and nearby trails, enhance public access and appreciation to this highly valued alpine setting. The private ski field access road is utilised by visitors and recreationists to access the conservation land year-round.

### 5.3 Visual Catchment

One of the purposes of the site visit was to determine the visual catchment and viewing audience of the proposal, in conjunction with the study of aerial photography. There is a continuity of degree of visibility, ranging from no view of the Site, through to full, open views. Three categories of view have been determined.

- Truncated (no view)/ Glimpse views: a view towards the Site that is curtailed by a visual barrier in the intervening landscape.
- Partial view: a view of part of the Site (eg visible between confining landform), or a filtered view of the Site, or a distant view where the Site is perceived as a small part of the view; and
- Open view: a clear view of a significant proportion of the Site within the wider landscape.

A series of Site Context Photographs (**Site Context Photographs 1-16**) were taken from publicly accessible areas where views (or potential views) towards the Site could be determined. These photographs are contained within the accompanying **Graphic Supplement** and their locations are outlined on **Figure 5: Photograph Location Plan**.

The site is orientated towards the west and due to its slightly elevated location, its theoretical visual catchment encompasses the northern and central part of the Southern Corridor valley, extending from the Kawarau River to the recently established Parkridge development. Peninsula Hill forms the western boundary of the visual catchment. Elevated open views can be gained towards the site from here, but the land is entirely in private ownership.

The main public viewing corridor that extends through this area is State Highway 6, which forms a straight, approximately 2km long stretch between Boyd Road and Woolshed Road turn off in vicinity of the site. The flat land on the eastern side of SH6 is currently in pastoral grazing to the north of Parkridge subdivision, and this land has been partially protected through a QE2 covenant. The Kawarau River is deeply incised and no views extend out from the river corridor in this area. The southern part of Frankton is oriented towards the south, with the northern and mid-upper slopes of the Remarkables Range and Peninsula Hill are the visually most prominent landforms in these views.

## 6.0 Relevant Statutory Provisions

The following is a review of the statutory provisions relevant to the assessment. The purpose of such a review is to help frame the landscape assessment rather than to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the provisions or a planning assessment of the proposal against the provisions. There are a number of planning provisions that are relevant to this proposal, and these are discussed below.

### 6.1 Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024

This project is identified as a listed Project under Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. This includes requirements to assess applications under the Resource Management Act under Schedule 5 and the Conservation Act under Schedule 6 as set out below.

### 6.2 Resource Management Act 1991

The key sections identified with the RMA regarded as being relevant to this landscape and visual assessment are:

**Section 6(b)** – *the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development*

**Section 7(c)** – *the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values*

**Section 7(f)** – *maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment*

### 6.3 Otago Regional Policy Statement 2019

The key relevant objectives and policies of Part B of the Otago Regional Policy Statement 2019 (RPS) to the Project are set out below:

**Objective 3.1 – The values (including intrinsic values) of ecosystems and natural resources are recognised and maintained or enhanced where degraded.**

**Objective 3.2 – Otago’s significant and highly-valued natural resources are identified and protected, or enhanced where degraded.**

**Policy 3.2.4 - Managing outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes**

Protect, enhance or restore outstanding natural features, landscapes and seascapes, by all of the following:

- a) In the coastal environment, avoiding adverse effects on the values (even if those values are not themselves outstanding) that contribute to the natural feature, landscape or seascape being outstanding;
- b) Beyond the coastal environment, maintaining the values (even if those values are not themselves outstanding) that contribute to the natural feature, landscape or seascape being outstanding;
- c) Avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects;

- d) Encouraging enhancement of those areas and values that contribute to the significance of the natural feature, landscape or seascape.

#### **Policy 3.2.6 - Managing highly valued natural features, landscapes and seascapes**

Maintain or enhance highly valued natural features, landscapes and seascapes by all of the following:

- a) Avoiding significant adverse effects on those values that contribute to the high value of the natural feature, landscape or seascape;
- b) Avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects;
- c) Encouraging enhancement of those values that contribute to the high value of the natural feature, landscape or seascape.

## 6.4 Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan

Within the QLPDP, the Sites for Carparks A, B and the Boneyard are zoned Rural. As outlined, the Boneyard Site is also subject to an Outstanding Natural Landscape, while Carparks A and B fall outside the ONL.

The following chapters (and their related policies) of the QLPDP are considered pertinent for this LEA.

### 6.4.1 Chapter 6 (Landscapes and Rural Character)

Chapter 6 applies to the area that falls within the Queenstown Lakes District identified as ONL, which includes the Boneyard car park area.

#### 6.3.3 Managing Activities on Outstanding Natural Features and in Outstanding Natural Landscapes

- 6.3.3.1 *Recognise that subdivision and development is inappropriate on Outstanding Natural Features or in Outstanding Natural Landscapes unless:*
  - a. *landscape values are protected; and*
  - b. *in the case of any subdivision or development, all buildings and other structures and all changes to landform or other physical changes to the appearance of land will be reasonably difficult to see from beyond the boundary of the site in question.*
- 6.3.3.2 *Ensure that the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes includes recognition of any values relating to cultural and historic elements, geological features and matters of cultural and spiritual value to Tangata Whenua, including tōpuni and wāhi tūpuna.*
- 6.3.3.5 *Maintain the open landscape character of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes where it is open at present.*

### 6.4.2 Chapter 21 (Rural Zone)

The purpose of the Rural Zone is to enable farming activities and provide for appropriate other activities that rely on rural resources while protecting, maintaining and enhancing landscape

values, ecosystem services, nature conservation values, the soil and water resource and rural amenity.

21.2.1 Objective - A range of land uses, including farming are enabled while:

- a. *Protecting the landscape values of Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes;*
- b. *Maintaining the landscape character of Rural Character Landscapes and maintaining or enhancing their visual amenity values;*
- c. *Maintaining or enhancing amenity values within the rural environment; and*
- d. *Maintaining or enhancing nature conservation values.*

## 7.0 Assessment of Effects

A landscape effect is a consequence of changes in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change on landscape values that is relevant. While an effect arises from changes to physical attributes, the consequences on landscape values relate to all of a landscape's physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions. Landscape effects can be both adverse and positive.

Effects are considered against the existing and potential landscape values, and the outcomes sought in the statutory provisions. Such provisions often anticipate change while protecting certain landscape values. Whether effects on landscape values are appropriate therefore depends both on the nature and magnitude of effect on the existing landscape values and what the provisions anticipate.

The assessment of potential effects is based on a combination of the landscape's values and visual sensitivity together with the nature and scale of the development proposed. The landscape and visual effects have been determined using a seven-point scale ranging from very low to very high as set out in **Appendix 1** of the assessment methodology.

Due to the Site partially being within an ONL (identified within the Queenstown Lakes District Plan), the following effects considered relate to the following:

- Landscape effects in relation to the values of the ONL (RMA S6b)
- Visual amenity effects from public and private locations (RMA S7c)
- Potential cumulative effects; and

Following this an assessment of effects in relation to statutory provisions is provided in Section 7 of this report (Assessment of Statutory Assessment Matters).

### 7.1 Landscape Effects Concerning the Values on the ONL

Landscape character is derived from the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and features of human settlement. It creates the unique sense of place defining different areas of the landscape. The assessment of potential effects on landscape considers effects on landscape character and values. Introducing human

modification into an area with limited modification will impact on its sense of wilderness and diminish its naturalness.

As outlined within the QLPDP, the Boneyard Site is contained within an Outstanding Natural Landscape. The identification of ONL along the base of the Remarkables Range does not follow any obvious landform boundaries. It excludes existing residential and industrial development to the south of the ski field access road and the existing lower car parks, while the residences to the north and the existing storage area within the proposed Boneyard Carpark are located within the ONL boundary. The existing Boneyard area falls immediately adjacent to the boundary and extends approximately 150m into the ONL. The Boneyard Carpark is located in an area that is surrounded by landform and mature vegetation which means that most people are currently unaware of its presence. Given that the existing area has already been earth-worked and currently already contains storage of materials, the additional landscape change proposed to create a car parking area in this location is minimal and inconsequential in terms of landscape effects on the ONL.

Carpark A falls outside the ONL and the proposed modifications, in addition to the existing car parking area are very limited, consisting of small amendments to the layout of the access road to accommodate the bus hub. While this may change the extent of the car park at a very localised scale, there will be no adverse landscape or visual amenity effects beyond the boundary of the site.

Carpark B will lead to the only landscape change that may be perceived as adverse due to the vegetation removal required for the earthworks to create two graded levels for carparking. The area is approximately 250m long (in an east-westerly direction) and 125m wide (north-south). The two levels will be accessed from a central location off the ski field access road, just below the Boneyard turn-off. The top part of the carpark, located in the south-eastern corner will require the most substantial cut, while the western edge will require fill to create a level gravel area for parking. Between the split levels a batter will be located to follow the rising landform as much as possible. The earthworks will require vegetation removal over an area of around 2.5ha, including some native grey shrubland species, such as matagouri scrub and companion shrubs of mingimingi, porcupine shrub and desert broom. However, the majority of the existing vegetation consists of exotic weeds that have established in the area over time. The escarpment on the lower, western side of the car park will be maintained in its current form. This area is relatively steep due to past earthworks for the creation of the ski field access road. The creation of the large open gravel area in a currently densely vegetated area will lead to low to moderate landscape effects, as the presence of a sizeable earth-worked area would be largely in character with surrounding land uses that have led to similar modifications in the vicinity.

Overall, the landscape effects are considered **very low for proposed Carpark A and the Boneyard** as the existing landscape character will be maintained without perceptible adverse effects beyond the site. The modification in the form of the proposed Carpark B **will lead to low to moderate landscape effects** due to the size of proposed vegetation clearance. While the proposed mitigation planting will assist with reduction of the effects on perceptual aspects of landscape to a low level, the physical effects associated with the vegetation clearance will remain low-moderate as planting will only occur along the perimeter/escarpment (to be identified through a Landscape Planting Plan as consent condition). However, it has to be considered that the modification will occur adjacent to a part of the lower Remarkables slopes that currently displays a relatively high level of human modification of a similar nature.

## 7.2 Visual Effects

Visual amenity effects are influenced by a number of factors including the nature of the proposal, the landscape absorption capability and the character of the site and the surrounding area. Visual amenity effects are also dependent on distance between the viewer and the proposal, the complexity of the intervening landscape and the nature of the view. Te Tangi a te Manu states:

*'Visual effects are effects on landscape values as experienced in views. They contribute to our understanding of landscape effects. They are a subset of landscape effects'.<sup>4</sup>*

There are relatively limited opportunities to view the proposal from the wider landscape due to its low-lying location and relatively confined visual catchment described in Section 5.3.

### 7.2.1 Views from State Highway 6

State Highway 6 extends across the Southern Corridor from the Kawarau Bridge towards Jacks Point/ Wye Creek and beyond. Following the base of Peninsula Hill extensive open views extend towards the Remarkables West Face that forms the impressive backdrop to views. Along this section of road glimpsed views may be gained to the earthworks/ vegetation clearance required for Carpark B (see Site Photograph 12). The location of this carpark is low-lying on the mountain slopes and foreground vegetation blocks the majority of views towards the proposal and existing earthworks within the Coneburn Industrial area are generally visible in the backdrop. If glimpses can be gained of Carpark B, the appearance of earthworks in this area would not be out of character in relation to other similar modifications in the area, leading to low adverse visual effects at most. As the viewer approaches Boyd Road turn-off the intervening vegetation obscures views towards Carpark B (see Site Photograph 13).

In close-up views a row of mature deciduous amenity trees that are located between the road reserve and the car parking area on the applicant's land obscures views into Carpark A and B (see Site Photograph 5 and Figure 2 for location). While glimpses to Carpark A can be gained below the canopy of the trees, views to Carpark B and the Boneyard are partially truncated by landform. Despite the elevated landform glimpses to parts of Carpark B may be possible, but the discrete location of the Boneyard is not visible from the SH6 corridor. It is proposed to maintain the existing row of trees on the western side of the existing fenceline to continue to provide screening. On the neighbouring properties trees are also located near the road boundary, currently blocking views to the site on the approach along SH6 from the north and south (Site Photographs 10 and 11), which means short-distance, glimpsed/ filtered views to Carpark B would be limited to the approx 350m long stretch of road along the site boundary, leading to very low visual effects.

### 7.2.2 Views from Remarkables Ski Field Access Road

The Rastus Burn Recreation Area is accessed via the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road. The existing ski field access road initially extends across the lower, west-facing slopes of the Remarkables Range where it forms several switchbacks.

The access road enters the site from the SH6 turn off and traverses through Carpark A where a slightly amended road alignment is proposed to provide space for the proposed shuttle bus/ transport hub (see Figure 2). While this layout is different no adverse visual effects are expected

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<sup>4</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu; Landscape Assessment Guidelines (July 2022); paragraph 6.25.

from this proposed change. When travelling up the ski field road views vary, and as shown on Site Photograph 7 the lower part of the road is currently mostly in a low cut with dense scrubby vegetation. For the creation of Carpark B large-scale earthworks will require vegetation removal and cut/ fill to create flat areas. Views into the area will vary depending on relative elevation on the road in relation to the car park (see Site Photograph 8). In order to soften and break up views into the area, it is recommended to selectively plant native vegetation along parts of the northern edge (in places where existing vegetation or landform does not provide screening from the ski field road) and on the central escarpment between the split levels (see Section 5 Mitigation Recommendations and condition to require a Landscape Planting Plan). This would reduce the moderate adverse visual effect of Carpark B that would otherwise be experienced along some sections of the access road to low.

The Boneyard Carpark is located in a visually confined area, surrounded by scrubby vegetation and landform, obscuring it from view from the access road. Only brief glimpses can be gained at the entrance to the area, leading to very low visual effects, given that the area is an existing storage yard.

### 7.2.3 Views from Frankton South

The southern part of Frankton is oriented towards the incised Kawarau River and the Remarkables West Face in the backdrop. The elevation of this area is comparable to the valley floor within the Southern Corridor where SH6 extends south. Due to intervening landform no views can be gained towards Carparks A and the Boneyard. Carpark B is theoretically partially visible from some of the residences along the southern edge of Frankton (see Site Photograph 15), but views are oblique and it would be difficult to detect the carpark from this viewing angle. In addition, several layers of intervening foreground and mid ground vegetation currently obscure the view. If glimpses can be gained, the appearance of Carpark B would be similar to the earthworks visible within the Coneburn Industrial Area to the south with very low visual effects due to the low-lying location. Views from the cycle trails along the Kawarau River are truncated by landform and vegetation (see Site Photograph 16).

### 7.2.4 Views from Residential Areas in the wider Southern Corridor Area/ Coneburn Industrial Area

State Highway 6 forms the entrance to Queenstown from the south. The Remarkables are a dominant landscape feature to the east of the road corridor, confining the visual catchment in this direction. To the west, broad views extend over gently rolling grassy terrain and pockets of planting to ranges on the far side of Lake Wakatipu.

Residential development within Hanleys Farm and Jacks Point is visible in the mid-ground but generally as glimpses and appears recessive and absorbed within the receiving landscape. However, the recently established, northern-most Parkridge development has departed from this setback/ screening approach and is clearly visible from SH6, approximately 1km south of the site.

The Coneburn Industrial area extends along the lower slopes of the Remarkables Range, south of the Remarkables Ski Field Road. Existing development in this area is set back from SH6 within a visually discrete area behind bunds on upper terraces. From this existing industrial area, east of SH6, the site is well screened through landform and existing vegetation truncating the views to the proposed carparks. As shown on Site Photographs 13 and 14, there will also be no views to the proposal from the Parkridge development due to intervening vegetation and landform.

### 7.2.5 Views from Adjacent Residences

The existing topography of these lower slopes typically comprises gentle contours closer to the valley floor and road corridor with hummocky, rolling upper slopes dissected by waterways. Views to the area from SH6 are currently limited by these undulations and existing vegetation. A small number of dwellings are located within rural zoned land on lower to mid slopes to the north of the Industrial area, and south of the site. These residences to the south of the site are excluded from the ONL identified higher on Remarkables slopes, while the residences to the north of the site fall within the ONL.

Generally, residential development is very limited on the eastern side of the highway. However, a few residential buildings exist along Stoney Creek Lane to the south of the site. Landform separates the lower part of Stoney Creek Lane from Carparks A and B (see Site Photograph 9). No adverse visual effects are expected on the residences located to the south of Stoney Creek Lane (4, 7, 68 Stoney Creek Lane). However, two residences to the north of Stoney Creek Lane look out towards the north-west and could potentially gain views of Carpark B (83 and 86 Stoney Creek Lane). While 86 Stoney Creek Lane is elevated and setback from the edge of the landform, the dwelling on 83 Stoney Creek Lane is located in proximity to proposed Carpark B (see Site Photograph 11) and it is possible that parts of the carpark may be visible in the lower part of the residence's view. However, the key part of the outlook extends above the carpark towards Peninsula Hill and Queenstown Hill. Should part of the carpark be visible in this outlook adverse visual effects would be no more than low due to the distance of more than 350m and the elevation difference.

No adverse visual effects are expected on the three residences to the north of site (247, 247A and 249 Kingston Road), as they are oriented to the north and separated by landform and vegetation on the application site.

## 7.3 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are the effects of a proposal in combination with those of previous developments. Cumulative effects come into play in circumstances where an additional effect takes a landscape beyond a 'tipping point' —which would normally require a benchmark against which the effects are to be measured. Such benchmarks might include the character envisaged in the district plan or the 'capacity' of a landscape to accommodate development before compromising its landscape values (its valued attributes)<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding potential cumulative visual effects, these can occur in a range of ways:

- They can appear in combination to one another (seen together in the same view),
- They can occur in succession (where the observer needs to turn their head), or
- They can occur sequentially (where there is a time lapse between instances as people move through the landscape).

The main cumulative effects arising from the proposal relate to Carpark B, since Carparks A and the Boneyard are amendments to existing modified areas without substantial increases in landscape and visual effects. Currently, the ski field road is lined by scrubby vegetation which would be removed for the creation of Carpark B, leading to a more modified appearance of the

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<sup>5</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022., para 6.48

lower slopes of the Remarkables. The proposed modification would potentially be seen in combination with the existing carparks and storage areas on site and on the land parcels to the north and south, including the Coneburn Industrial area.

Given that the visual effects are at most low and limited to few viewpoints as described in the previous section, the effects of Carpark B are more related to the physical landscape change than the perceptual impacts. The scale of the proposed earthworks is comparable to the earthworks in the southern part of the industrial area, but would perceptually be associated with the ski field activity. Within the confined area of the north-eastern part of the Southern Corridor the cumulative landscape effects are considered to be low to moderate, but not out of character with existing modifications.

## 8.0 Assessment of Statutory Assessment Matters

The following commentary concerning natural character, landscape and visual effects considers the following statutory documents:

### 8.1 Resource Management Act Effects

In relation to Matters of National Importance, effects on Outstanding Natural Landscapes (RMA S6b) are assessed in Section 6 of this report.

A small part of the proposal, the Boneyard Carpark, is located within an ONL identified within the QLPDP. Given that additional modifications in this area will be very limited, there will be no direct impact on the ONL values which relate to the unmodified mid and upper slopes of the Remarkables Range. The main additional landscape effects relate to the earthworks/vegetation removal for Carpark B which falls outside the ONL. Landscape effects of these project components are considered low to moderate in the context of the existing modifications, relating to the ski field access road and surrounding industrial land uses.

Potential visual amenity effects (RMA S7c) are addressed further under the broad assessment against the statutory provisions in the QLPDP.

### 8.2 Effects in relation to the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan

The existing ski field on the upper part of the Remarkables Mountains falls into an exception zone (SASZ) from the ONL within Queenstown Lakes District. However, a small part of the proposed car park area (Boneyard Carpark) is situated within the boundaries of the outstanding natural landscape and rural character landscape categories, not contained within the SASZ which means that policies of Section 6 of the QLPDP apply to proposed activities in this area. Given, that the modifications proposed in this area are comparable with the existing situation (ie no additional earthworks are required), the landscape effects on the ONL are considered very low.

Due to the size of this large mountainous landscape, many of the values are reasonably broad and relate to the composition of the context. The modification in the form of the proposed

Carpark B will lead to low to moderate landscape effects, as they occur adjacent to a part of the Remarkables ONL where other activities along the boundary currently display a relatively high level of human modification of a similar nature. It is therefore considered that the direct landscape effects at a localised scale would be low to moderate, while the wider effects on the values of the ONL would be very low.

The only visual amenity effects exceeding a very low or low level would be experienced from within the application site. As assessed in the visual assessment, in light of the low-lying location of the carpark areas, coupled with the recommended mitigation planting implemented, the proposal is considered to meet the policy direction of being 'reasonably difficult to see', in the context of the wider Remarkables ONL.

## 9.0 Conclusions

The proposal includes three carparking areas in vicinity to the ski field road turn-off at SH6 on the lower slopes of the Remarkables Mountains. Carparks A and B fall outside the identified ONL area that encompasses the upper slopes of the range, while the Boneyard Carpark is located within (adjacent to the western boundary).

The modifications associated with Carparks A and Boneyard are very limited and adverse landscape and visual effects are considered to be very low.

Carpark B will require vegetation removal and earthworks across an approximately 2.5ha area to create two flat parking areas. While the vegetation is dominated by exotic weeds, with few native shrubs, the physical landscape effects of this part of the proposal are considered to be low-moderate. While the area is relatively large, earthworks of a similar scale and appearance are located to the south of the application site within the Coneburn Industrial area on the lower Remarkables slopes. This means that this type of modification would not be out of character in this context.

The visual effects of Carpark B would be no more than low from viewpoints outside the application site due to the low-lying location and intervening landform and vegetation when viewed from SH6 and surrounding residences. In order to reduce moderate adverse visual effects of Carpark B that could be experienced from the ski field road to a low level, it is recommended to maintain the existing vegetation on the escarpment to the west of Carpark B and along the access road. In order to visually break up the carparking area, it is recommended to implement native planting on the escarpment between the split levels of the car park. Should it be necessary to remove vegetation along the northern edge of Carpark B (along the access road), it is recommended to implement native shrub and tree planting in this area following earthworks to minimise visual effects on users of the ski field road that provides access to the Rastus Burn/ Remarkables Conservation Areas.

# Appendix 1: Method Statement

22 November 2023

This assessment method statement is consistent with the methodology (high-level system of concepts, principles, and approaches) of 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. The assessment provides separate chapters to discuss landscape, visual and natural character effects where relevant, but is referred to throughout as a Landscape Effects Assessment in accordance with these Guidelines. Specifically, the assessment of effects has examined the following:

- The existing landscape;
- The nature of effect;
- The level of effect; and
- The significance of effect.

## The Existing Landscape

The first step of assessment entails examining the existing landscape in which potential effects may occur. This aspect of the assessment describes and interprets the specific landscape character and values which may be impacted by the proposal alongside its natural character where relevant as set out further below. The existing landscape is assessed at a scale(s) commensurate with the potential nature of effects. It includes an understanding of the visual catchment and viewing audience relating to the proposal including key representative public views. This aspect of the assessment entails both desk-top review (including drawing upon area-based landscape assessments where available) and field work/site surveys to examine and describe the specific factors and interplay of relevant attributes or dimensions, as follows:

- **Physical** –relevant natural and human features and processes;
- **Perceptual** –direct human sensory experience and its broader interpretation; and
- **Associative** – intangible meanings and associations that influence how places are perceived.

## Engagement with tāngata whenua

As part of the analysis of the existing landscape, the assessment should seek to identify relevant mana whenua (where possible) and describe the nature and extent of engagement, together with any relevant sources informing an understanding of the existing landscape from a Te Ao Māori perspective.

## Statutory and Non-Statutory Provisions

The relevant provisions facilitating change also influence the consequent nature and level of effects. Relevant provisions encompass objectives and policies drawn from a broader analysis of the statutory context and which may anticipate change and certain outcomes for identified landscape values.

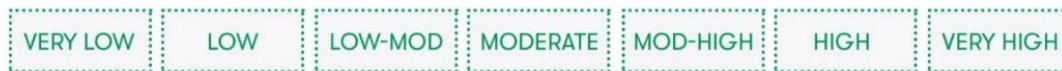
## The Nature of Effect

The nature of effect assesses the outcome of the proposal within the landscape. The nature of effect is considered in terms of whether effects are positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which they occur. Neutral effects may also occur where landscape or visual change is benign.

It should be emphasised that a change in a landscape (or view of a landscape) does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape effect. Landscapes are dynamic and are constantly changing in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways; these changes are both natural and human induced. What is important when assessing and managing landscape change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate adverse effects. The aim is to maintain or enhance the environment through appropriate design outcomes, recognising that both the nature and level of effects may change over time.

## The Level of Effect

Where the nature of effect is assessed as 'adverse', the assessment quantifies the level (degree or magnitude) of adverse effect. The level of effect has not been quantified where the nature of effect is neutral or beneficial. Assessing the level of effect entails professional judgement based on expertise and experience provided with explanations and reasons. The identified level of adverse natural character, landscape and visual effects adopts a universal seven-point scale from very low to very high consistent with Te Tangi a te Manu Guidelines and reproduced below.



## Landscape Effects

A landscape effect relates to the change on a landscape's character and its inherent values and in the context of what change can be anticipated in that landscape in relation to relevant zoning and policy. The level of effect is influenced by the size or spatial scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of landscape change on the characteristics and values within the specific context in which they occur.

## Visual Effects

Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. They are consequence of changes to landscape values as experienced in views. To assess where visual effects of the proposal may occur requires an identification of the area from where the proposal may be visible from, and the specific viewing audience(s) affected. Visual effects are assessed with respect to landscape character and values. This can be influenced by several factors such as distance, orientation of the view, duration, extent of view occupied, screening and backdrop, as well as the potential change that could be anticipated in the view as a result of zone / policy provisions of relevant statutory plans.

## Natural Character Effects

Natural Character, under the RMA, specifically relates to 'the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development'. Therefore, the assessment of natural character effects only involves examining the proposed changes to natural elements, patterns and process which may occur in relevant landscape / seascape contexts.

As with assessing landscape effects, the first step when assessing natural character effects involves identifying the relevant physical and experiential characteristics and qualities which occur and may be affected by a proposal at a commensurate scale. This can be supported through the input of technical disciplines such as geomorphology, hydrology, marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecology as well as input from tāngata whenua. An understanding of natural character considers the level of naturalness and essentially reflects the current condition of the environment assessed in relation to the seven-point scale. A higher level of natural character means the waterbody and/or margin is less modified and vice versa.

A natural character effect is a change to the current condition of parts of the environment where natural character occurs. Change can be negative or positive. The resultant natural character effect is influenced by the existing level of naturalness within which change is proposed; a greater level of effect will generally occur when the proposal reduces the naturalness of a less modified environment. In short, the process of assessing natural character effects can be summarised as follows:

- Identify the characteristics and qualities which contribute to natural character within a relevant context and defined spatial scale(s), including the existing level of naturalness;
- Describe the changes to identified characteristics and qualities and the consequent level of natural character anticipated (post proposal); and
- Determine the overall level of effect based on the consequence of change.



## The Significance of Effects

Decision makers assessing resource consent applications must evaluate if the effect on individuals or the environment is less than minor<sup>6</sup> or if an adverse effect on the environment is no more than minor<sup>7</sup>. For non-complying activities, consent can only be granted if the s104D 'gateway test' is satisfied, ensuring adverse effects are minor or align with planning objectives. In these situations, the assessment may be required to translate the level of effect in terms of RMA terminology.

This assessment has adopted the following scale applied to relevant RMA circumstances<sup>8</sup> (refer to diagram below), acknowledging low and very low adverse effects generally equate to 'less than minor' and high / very high effects generally equate to significant<sup>9</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> RMA, Section 95E

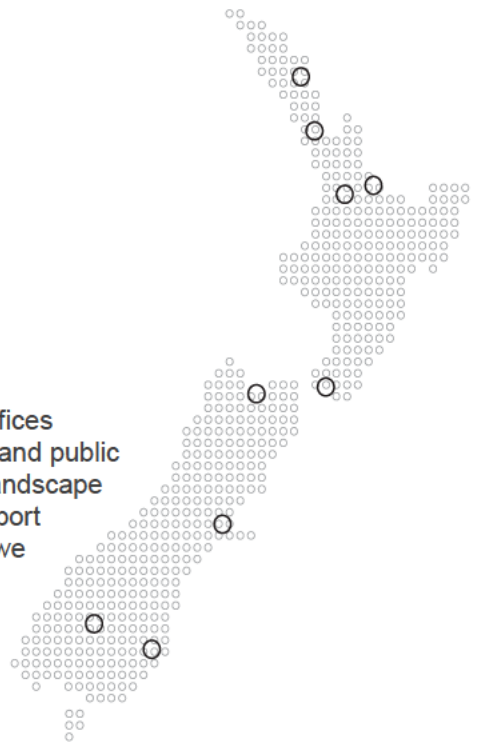
<sup>7</sup> RMA, Section 95E

<sup>8</sup> Seven-point level of effect scale. Source: Te tangi a te Manu, Pg. 151

<sup>9</sup> The term 'significant adverse effects' applies to specific RMA situations, including the consideration of alternatives for Notices of Requirement and AEEs, as well as assessing natural character effects under the NZ Coastal Policy Statement.

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