Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance
Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Social Investment

12 October 2026

The Expert Panel
Environmental Protection Authority
Waterloo Quay
Wellington

REQ-0040231

To the Expert Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the substantive application for the Remarkables Ski Area Upgrades and Doolans Expansion (FTAA-2605-1236), under section 53(2)(j) of the Fast-track Approvals Act. My comments focus on whether the application is likely to deliver economic benefits, based on the information provided by the applicant.

Remarkables Ski Area Upgrades and Doolans Expansion, FTAA-2605-1236

The application is to upgrade the Remarkables Ski Area and expand it into the adjacent Doolans Basin in the Queenstown-Lakes District. The project would create a multi-valley ski area, including a gondola into Doolans Basin, and increase the ski field's capacity from 3,500 to 6,000 skiers per day.

According to the applicant's economic assessment, the project would involve approximately $193.3 million in capital investment and indicatively contribute $61.9 million to GDP over the five-year construction period. Construction is estimated to support an average of 81 annualised jobs, with employment potentially exceeding 150 jobs during each shortened alpine construction season. Once operational, the project is estimated to increase annual GDP across Otago by between $55 million and $82 million by 2035. The applicant estimates this increased visitor activity could support an additional 1,242 to 1,851 seasonal jobs across Otago, taking total seasonal employment associated with visitors who ski at the Remarkables to between 3,834 and 4,443 jobs. The benefits would be concentrated in Queenstown-Lakes and include increased ski-tourism capacity and employment.

The scale of the operational benefits depends on projected growth in skier demand and the extent to which that demand could be accommodated elsewhere. An independent review considered the modelled impacts to represent an upper limit but concluded that the project was still likely to be significant to the regional economy. On balance, the proposal appears likely to deliver significant regional economic benefits under section 22(2)(a)(iv), principally through increased tourism activity and the scale of the proposed investment.

Yours sincerely

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