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and is the wrong
activity in the wrong
place”.**

Geoff Van Deursen



Our property is the closest to the proposed film hub.

Submission in Opposition to the Ayrburn Screen Hub Application (FTAA-2508-1093)

Name:

Geoff Van Deursen

Postal Address:



Email Address:



Mobile Number:



1. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment



I can receive emails and my
email address is correct.



The closest property to the proposed new site

Geoff Van Deursen

10th December 2025

Submission in Opposition to the Ayrburn Screen Hub Application (FTAA-2508-1093)

I oppose this proposal and ask that the Panel declines the application.

My key concerns are:

- This is a 24/7 industrial and commercial operation and is the wrong activity in the wrong place.
- The resulting impacts on our amenity and enjoyment of our property cannot be protected by conditions.
- The proposal is fundamentally incompatible with the Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone and the Wakatipu Basin Lifestyle Precinct.

The matters I wish to raise and ask the expert panel to consider are set out below.



The outdoor living spaces face directly towards Ayrburn and the proposed new site

Background

Our property at [REDACTED] is part of a small-scale, five-lot rural-residential subdivision accessed from Speargrass Flat Road. Our home is well set back from the road and we love our peaceful house and garden.

We have extensive outdoor living areas that face the land proposed for the Screen Hub and accommodation, and we use these areas in all seasons. Since owning our property, we have been developing the garden, planting extensive hedging to screen our property from the cycle track along our boundary, and adding sculptures and other features to make this our long-term home.

We chose this location for its rural-residential character and peace and quiet, while still having great access to Arrowtown, Millbrook, Mora and all the walking and cycling opportunities around Lake Hayes.

Proximity to the Proposal

Our house and main outdoor living areas look directly towards the proposed Screen Hub. Through the trees we are in very close proximity to:

- the accommodation lobby and 24/7 bus and car drop-off area,
- the closest accommodation buildings and carparking areas,
- the backlot and workshop hardstand areas.

We and the others in our subdivision are effectively 'just through the trees' from some of the key sources of the noise that would be generated by this proposal.

This makes us the closest and most affected of Ayrburn's neighbours, although the other properties in our subdivision are also very close to the noise sources and their amenity would be affected to a similar extent.



The outdoor living spaces face directly towards Ayrburn and the proposed new site

PART B: Our experience of living next door to this site and the Ayrburn precinct

Operational Noise from the Existing Entertainment Precinct

Construction disruption

The neighbourhood has already endured a prolonged period of construction disruption, going back to before COVID, as this specific site has been used as a staging and support area for the existing Ayrburn precinct.

While we have not experienced as many years of construction as some of our neighbours, since we have been at our property we have had to put up with:

- Heavy machinery, trucks and reversing beepers, often starting early in the morning.
- Recent bore drilling very close by which was extremely loud and excruciating to live through.
- Ongoing earthworks and activity on what is now being described as the “spur” for the Screen Hub, which appears to have started before any consent has been granted.

We are very concerned that this application will sentence us to another 36 months of disruption, creating for some neighbours a near-decade of intolerable construction effects.



These images show typical examples of ongoing site works at Ayrburn. This activity has continued well beyond the date when “construction” was said to be complete. It is a clear example of additional, ongoing noise that has not been accounted for in the current proposal.

Operational noise from existing Ayrburn activities

The Ayrburn precinct and adjacent land are already a source of noise nuisance that impacts our amenity.

From our property we can clearly hear:

- Events and bass from functions at Ayrburn on still nights, sometimes going on late.
- People talking and laughing in outdoor areas and carparks.
- General restaurant and bar activity that carries a long way.

An example is an event where bass from the Bakehouse function was heard up until around midnight, well past what we understood to be the 8 pm limit. There have been other occasions when we have clearly heard noise from events and general operation.

This shows how effectively sound travels around this “bowl” of land, even under the current, smaller-scale activities.

Noise from the proposal site

On top of the existing precinct, we can already hear activity from the proposal site itself, including:

- People working and talking through the trees.
- Vehicles using areas of the land as a carpark.
- Constant use of the cycleway, including voices carrying across our property as people pass along our boundary.

As the owners of [REDACTED] have described it in their submission, noise carries around this bowl in a way that is not typical of flatter rural areas. Normal voices and bass tones travel a long way and remain clearly audible.

With that lived experience, it is very hard to accept the suggestion that a much larger Screen Hub, plus 201 accommodation units, will have only minor noise effects.

Disregard for neighbours

A key example of how neighbours are treated is the cycle track:

- We had no notification of the cycle track which now passes along our north boundary.
- The day the diggers started work was the day we found out about it.

We now have a public trail right on our boundary with large numbers of people walking and riding past each day, many able to look straight into our property. This has reduced our privacy and changed how we use our outdoor areas.

We also share the extreme disappointment described by other neighbours at the sudden shift from what we understood would be 3–4 rural-residential properties next door to the current proposal, which is several orders of magnitude larger than what the Environment Court considered appropriate for this land.

Taken together, this feels like a pattern of disregard for existing neighbours and their expectations.

Images showing how close the cycle trail is to our boundary with people on it.



PART C: Our concerns and reasons for opposition

1. Noise and amenity – fundamental change in ambient conditions

The applicant's own noise data confirms this is a quiet rural area, with night-time ambient noise levels as low as 20–30 dBA in the middle of the night.

This is the baseline peace and quiet that we currently enjoy and that the District Plan, through its control of permitted adjacent land uses, is meant to protect.

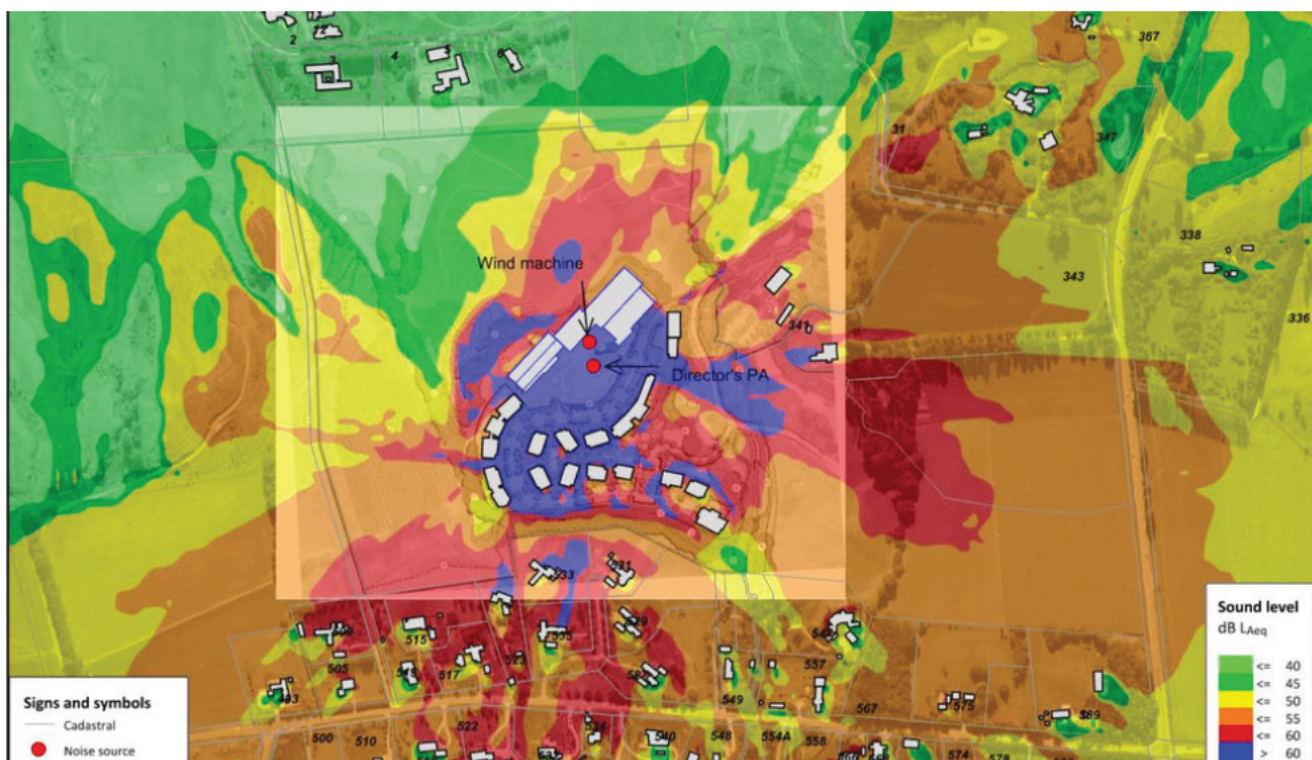
We are well away from Speargrass Flat Road, so we experience very little traffic noise. Other than:

- usual neighbourhood sounds (a neighbour's lawnmower or a car leaving), and
- noise from Ayrburn's operations (most of which we are not meant to hear if it consistently complied with its consents), our site is extremely quiet.

The application mostly treats meeting the District Plan limits (40 dBA at night and 50 dBA during the day) as a target, and claims that if those numbers can be met then noise is “not an issue”. We do not accept that as the correct test.

We respectfully ask that the Panel compare the predicted noise from this proposal with what we would receive if the site was developed as per the District Plan and the Structure Plan that was developed after many hours of Environment Court time – namely, 3–4 rural-residential houses.

The difference between a handful of rural homes and a full film hub plus 201 accommodation units is enormous.



Graphic demonstrating the expected sound level outputs

2. Noise not properly assessed

The proposed Screen Hub has multiple noise sources which, if not rigorously controlled, will impact us. The “worst-case” noise heat map in the report shows how badly this could go wrong if assumptions are not met.

In particular:

- The assessment makes no proper allowance for special audible characteristics, even though the sounds under investigation include hammering during outdoor set construction, director’s PA systems, and wind/rain machines. These are exactly the kind of sounds that are more annoying to listen to.
- We are advised that these “additionally annoying” sounds should be assessed as if they are 5 dB louder than assumed in the assessment. This would have a major effect on the claimed level of “compliance” based on the prediction results.
- The proposed accommodation lobby, with 24/7 bus and car drop-off, is very close to our boundary. The carparking and closest accommodation buildings are also very close.
- The traffic assessment predicts around 137 vehicle movements per peak hour associated with hotel use, not including traffic generated by the gym (which is said to be open to the public).

It is inevitable that noise from vehicles, doors, and patrons will be concentrated directly near our home.

We are gravely concerned that the noise assessment is not complete, and ask that the Panel recognise that an urgent independent peer review is required.

That peer reviewer should be directed to model the key noise sources that will affect us and the other closest neighbours, remembering we are just through the trees.

Specifically, we want to understand how we will be affected by:

- Cumulative noise from 201 accommodation units, especially guests returning late at night or socialising in their rooms or outdoor areas.
- Noise from the central facilities (gym, pool, lobby) and their 24/7 mechanical plant.
- The specific noise from the carparks and the porte-cochère drop-off area.
- The intrusive and unusual noise from wind/rain machines, director’s PA systems and other special effects on the backlot.
- Production/Shoot Call Times – It is a well known fact that in film/production cast and crew call times are often well before first light. Creating a major noise concern.

Until this is properly assessed for our specific location, the conclusions about “acceptable” noise effects are, in our view, unsafe.



An example image to demonstrate the scale and multiple sources of noise that a studio would create.

3. Set construction noise

Not only are we faced with several more years of construction to build the facility, but once it is built, construction becomes part of daily life because there will always be a set to construct.

The noise assessment refers to the impact on our neighbour to the east at [REDACTED] and states:

"[REDACTED] is the most potentially affected receiver because they may have line of sight into the construction area on the hardstand area. We predict noise levels of 49 dB LAeq at this receiver. At all other receivers, noise levels are less than 45 dB LAeq."

We are very disturbed by this assessment and by the extremely small margin of 1 dB under the limit. Real-world operations do not sit neatly on modelled numbers, and any change in how the sets are built, what tools are used, or how doors are opened and closed could push this into non-compliance.

The report goes on to say that:

workshop noise levels (typically less than 40 dB LAeq but up to 49 dB LAeq at 533 Speargrass Flat Road) would be similar to the existing noise environment but more noticeable in character, and that this would be similar to general household construction noise commonly present from time to time in the area.

This is far too simplistic. It essentially says that neighbours should put up with a house being built next door on an ongoing basis, forever. That is not what we reasonably expected when we purchased in a five-lot rural-residential subdivision next to land that was meant for 3–4 similar properties.



Bird's-eye view of an industrial area to demonstrate scale, potential noise sources and re-emphasising that this is the wrong activity in the wrong location. Examples of industrial film studios, as detailed in the submission for [REDACTED]

4. Construction noise (build phase)

The proposed way of managing construction noise over the 36-month building period is also very concerning.

Phrases such as “noise dampening should occur when possible” are imprecise and too broad. They do not give us any confidence that noise and vibration during construction will be effectively managed.

The Plan does not mention mitigating construction vibration, yet for neighbours as close as we are, vibration and low-frequency noise will be an obvious issue with heavy machinery, rock breaking and compaction.

Given the years of disruption we have already experienced, the idea of another **three/five** years with such high-level and vague construction controls feels completely unacceptable.

5. Lighting, visual effects and character

Although this submission focuses mainly on noise, we are also very concerned about:

- 24/7 industrial and security lighting in what is currently a dark rural environment. Light spill into our home and garden will further erode our sense of peace and privacy.
- The visual impact of large buildings, extensive hardstand, carparks, trucks and general activity where we currently expect to see a low-key rural outlook.

The overall character of the proposal is that of an industrial complex, not a rural-residential neighbourhood.



An example image to show additional lighting and construction noise that has not been accounted for during the assessment.

6. Credibility and long-term risk

Finally, we have genuine questions about the credibility and long-term viability of such a large studio and accommodation complex in this location.

If the economics rely heavily on running a large hotel-style operation on this rural land, there is a very real risk that the community will be left with an oversized accommodation and industrial complex even if the studio operations do not succeed as planned.

CONCLUSION AND DECISION SOUGHT

In summary:

- This proposal is an industrial-scale, 24/7 activity in the wrong location.
- It is a huge step away from the 3-4 rural-residential properties that many of us understood this land was destined for after years of planning work.
- The assessment of its noise effects is incomplete and, in key respects, critically flawed, especially for the closest neighbours like us.
- It will have unacceptable and cumulative effects on our amenity, our sleep, our privacy, and the character of our home and neighbourhood.

We do not believe that this proposal can be adequately mitigated by conditions or management plans.

I respectfully request that the Panel declines the application.

Geoff Van Deursen



Image depicting the indoor/outdoor flow of our property and the proximity to the proposed new site.

