

May 2026

NZSki Doolans Basin Expansion Recreation Assessment



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Recreation Assessment

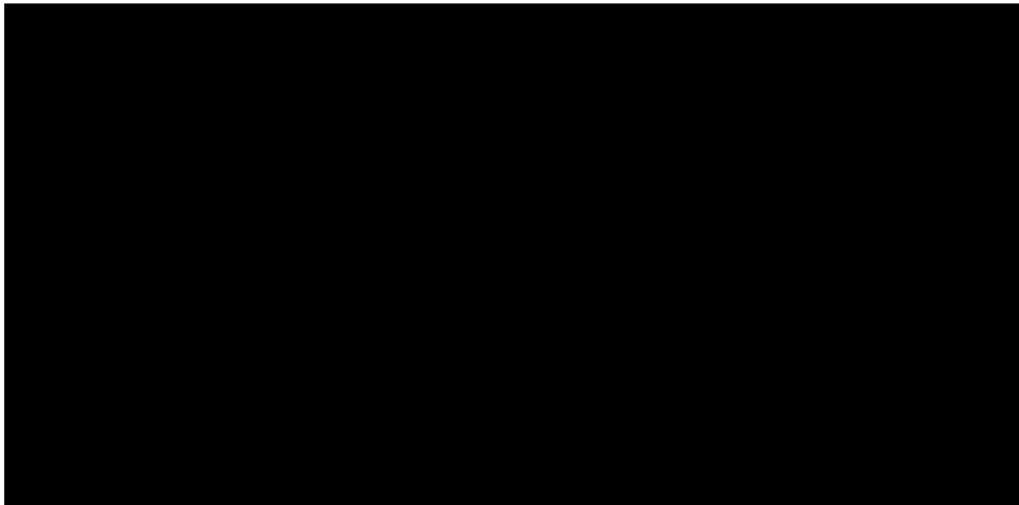
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Final

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1 Summary

This assessment reviews the effects on recreation and tourism of the proposal by NZSki to expand the existing Remarkables Ski Area into the Doolans Basin, located within the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area. The expansion includes a gondola lift from the Rastus Burn into the Doolans Basin, a mid-station at Helicopter Ridge, and a day lodge near the return station in the Basin. The project aims to increase skiable terrain at the Ski Area and to improve resilience to climate change by accessing alpine slopes with better snow-retention.

The Doolans Basin is identified as having 'very high' existing value recreation values, primarily based on its undeveloped natural character and winter snow sports opportunities, combined with high accessibility via the Remarkables Ski Area road and other access facilities.

Ski touring and splitboarding are the most prominent winter uses of the Basin, which is described by interviewees as one of New Zealand's premier locations due to reliable snow retention and varied terrain. On good winter days, between 20 and 50 users are estimated to visit the valley. Other winter uses include mountaineering and ice climbing (primarily in the adjacent Wye Creek).

Summer use is significantly lower and includes hunting (red deer, chamois, and goats), hiking, tramping, camping, and trail running, although, locally, these activities are focused on the Wye Creek area. The wider Doolans Valley has very low levels of recreational use, focused on access via Coal Pit Saddle, some distance east of the Basin. Freshwater angling is focused on the Nevis River, with no records of fishing in the Doolans catchment, although it might support some trout breeding.

Management and consenting expectations for the Remarkables and Doolans areas are set by several planning documents:

- DOC Conservation Management Strategy: The Doolans is currently in a "backcountry" visitor management zone, which prioritises solitude and largely unmodified environments. Policy 2.3.21 requires particular regard for adverse effects on natural quiet, current recreational uses, and the availability of development opportunities off public conservation land. Policy 3.25.2 mandates a precautionary approach regarding the longevity of infrastructure in the face of climate change.
- Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement: Classifies the Remarkables ski infrastructure as "Regionally Significant Infrastructure". It establishes a hierarchy for locating infrastructure in Outstanding Natural Landscapes, requiring that adverse effects on the values contributing to an area's importance be remedied or mitigated.
- Central Otago District Plan: Recognises the Doolans Basin as part of an "Outstanding Landscape of national importance". Policy 4.4.14 requires that activities avoid or mitigate adverse effects on backcountry amenity values, including natural character and natural quiet.
- The Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan locates the ski area within the Remarkables Ski Area Sub Zone, and defines a wide range of permitted, controlled and restricted discretionary activities within the Zone, enabling and managing the continued operation and development of the ski area.

Consultation with recreational groups and independent users identified several significant concerns regarding the proposal:

- Loss of backcountry character: The most prominent concern is the potential for permanent loss of the basin's status as a pristine, undeveloped backcountry area. Groups like the Federated Mountain Clubs and NZ Alpine Club argue that infrastructure will destroy the area's "very high" recreational values and the sense of remoteness. Other interviewees are supportive or conditionally supportive of the proposal considering increased skiing options.

- Displacement of activities: Infrastructure and groomed runs may reduce or eliminate traditional ski touring and speed-riding lines in the valley. There are concerns that winch cables and avalanche control could restrict the "anywhere, anytime" freedom of access currently enjoyed by backcountry users.
- Concerns were raised regarding the long-term viability of the infrastructure under climate change and the potential for "stranded assets". Stakeholders also highlighted risks to water quality from snowmaking and damage to fragile alpine grasslands from increased summer use, such as mountain biking.
- The potential for some effects on the commercial activities of several guiding companies as a result of the change to the remote backcountry experience and untracked snow, including Queenstown Mountain Guides and Wanaka Mountain Guides. Several other commercial operators report the potential for only a slight potential for effects due to their low use, alternative settings and the ability to work within the proposal. NZSki is in conversation with the affected operators.

This assessment relies on an effects and mitigations matrix to determine the scale of impact based on the magnitude of effect and value of the setting for recreation. The assessment for operation of the new ski area considers both recreation opportunities (the physical ability to undertake an activity) and recreation values (effects on the special qualities of the setting). In summary, these are:

Construction Effects

- Assessed as 'Very high but temporary' for all summer activities over three seasons due to noise, lighting, and the physical footprint of construction activity, and the use of the upper Ski Area carparks for laydown areas (requiring a longer walk into the upper Rastus Burn Valley from the lower parking areas).

Operational Effects on Recreation Opportunities

- All winter activities: Rated as a 'Moderate effect'. While the physical setting is modified by grooming and structures, new opportunities for lift-accessed skiing are created, but there will be changes to the scale and form of existing winter snow sports.
- Hunting and summer activities: Rated as 'Minor' due to the relatively low use of the setting and the availability of regional alternatives.

Operational Effects on Recreation Values

- Backcountry winter ski sports: Rated as 'Very high or high'. This reflects the fundamental shift from a backcountry to a frontcountry recreation experience, characterised by the location of infrastructure and high encounter rates between visitors.
- Mountaineering and ice climbing: Rated as 'Minor'. The local activities occur largely beyond the affected area (in Wye Creek), and have a high number of regional alternatives.
- All summer activities: Rated as 'Minor' due to the relatively low use of the setting and the high availability of regional alternatives.

Suggested mitigations include ensuring unrestricted physical access when safe, promoting affordable "one up" passes for backcountry ski tourers (which are currently offered but are not effectively promoted). A 'leave no trace' design philosophy and financial bonds for infrastructure removal are also advocated by stakeholder groups. The formation of a Recreation User Group (RUG) is recommended, made up of representatives of the wider and relevant Queenstown recreation community and commercial users of the Remarkables and Hector Mountains (the contact list for interviews for this assessment would represent the invitees), and the Department of Conservation (if interested). The RUG's role would be to liaise with NZSki regarding options for recreation access and management within the Ski Area, and NZSki's role in

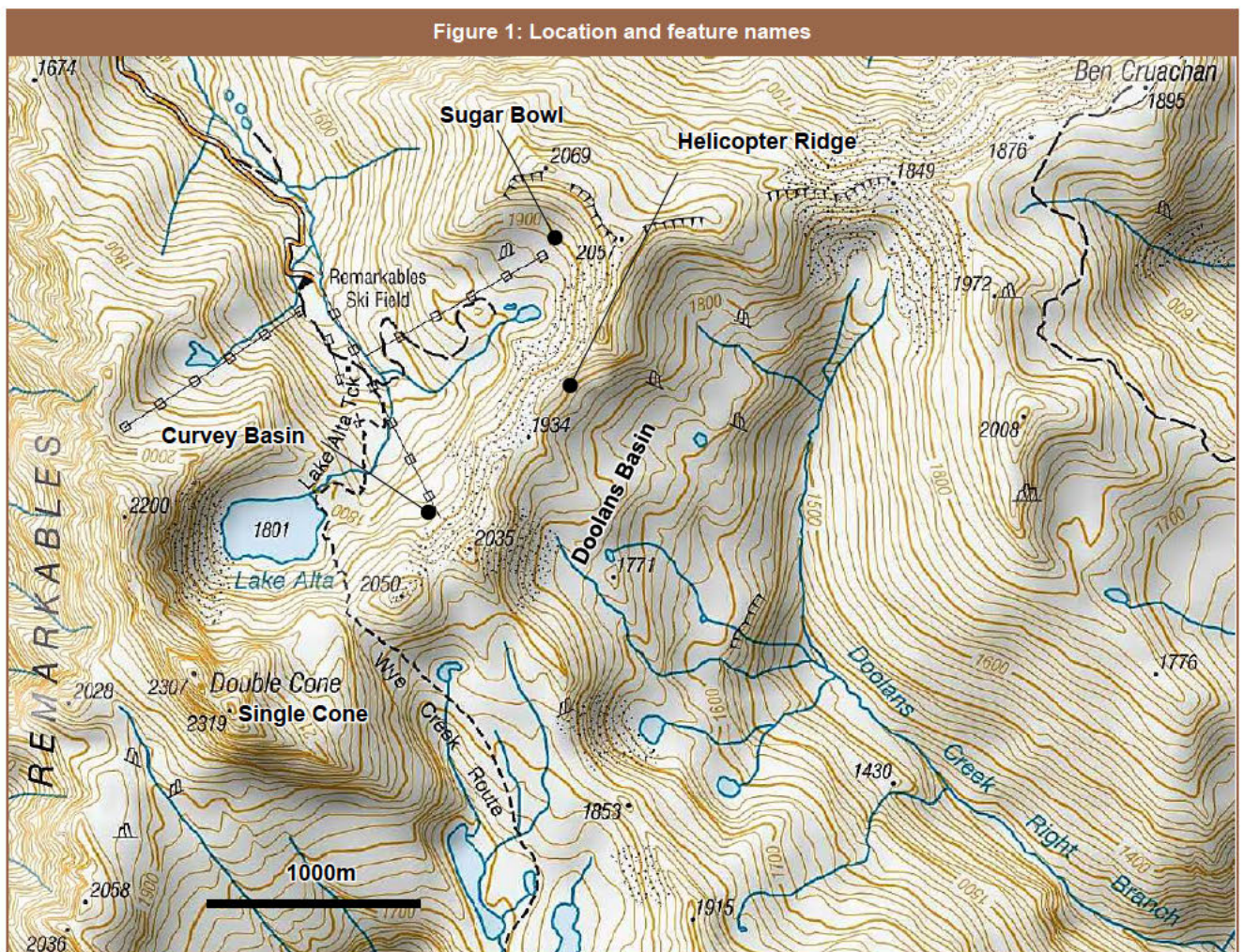
facilitating wider recreation opportunities in the Remarkables and Hector area. This would require NZSki appointing an employee with responsibility for community engagement, including liaison with, and participation in, the RUG.

While the proposed development will have positive regional effects on the scale of commercially available skiing terrain and opportunity, there will also remain a 'Very high or high' adverse effect on regional accessible backcountry winter ski sport activities, considering their relatively low level of availability.

2 Introduction

This assessment considers the effects on recreation of the construction and operation of NZSki's proposed ski area developments in the Remarkables Ski Area and the Lower Remarkables (within the Rastus Burn catchment), and the Doolans Basin. The works in the Rastus Burn will be within a well-established commercial ski area have only positive effects on existing snow sport recreation, and do not modify summer recreation opportunities or values. Amenity effects in the Rastus Burn are effectively addressed in the Boffa Miskell Landscape Assessment. Consequently, they do not form part of this recreation effects assessment, which focuses on effects of new infrastructure for snowsports in the currently undeveloped Doolans Basin.

Figure 1 indicates the main existing features of the study area, and features often referred to in this report which do not appear on standard maps (such as Curvey Basin, Helicopter Ridge, Single Cone, Sugar Bowl and Doolans Basin).



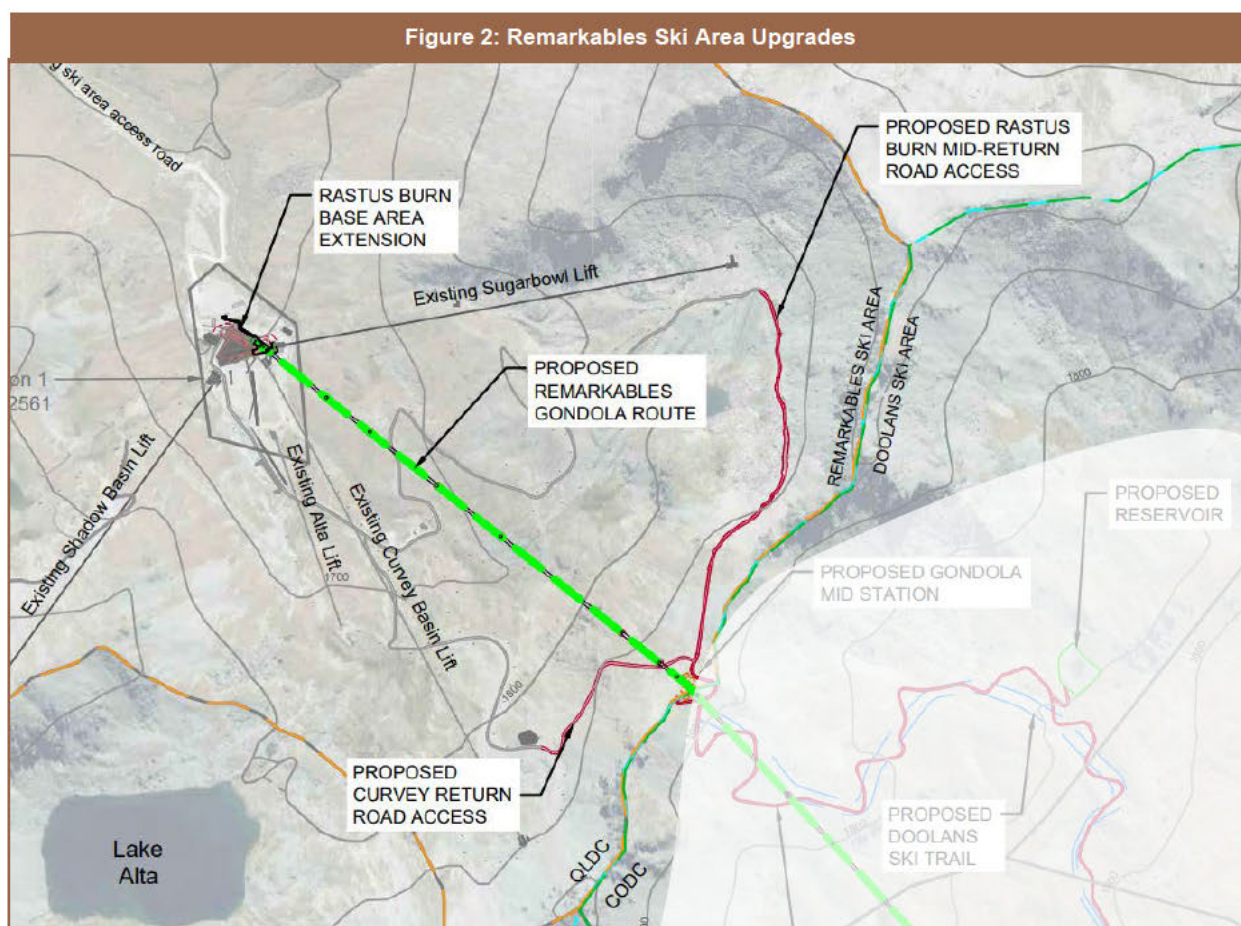
2.1 The proposal

The NZSki application seeks approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 to expand existing ski related facilities at Remarkables Ski Field area and to expand ski-related infrastructure into the adjacent Doolans Basin area.

2.1.1 Existing Remarkables Ski Area and Lower Remarkables

The key project works proposed at the existing Remarkables Ski Area (Figure 2) (within the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve) and the Lower Remarkables include:

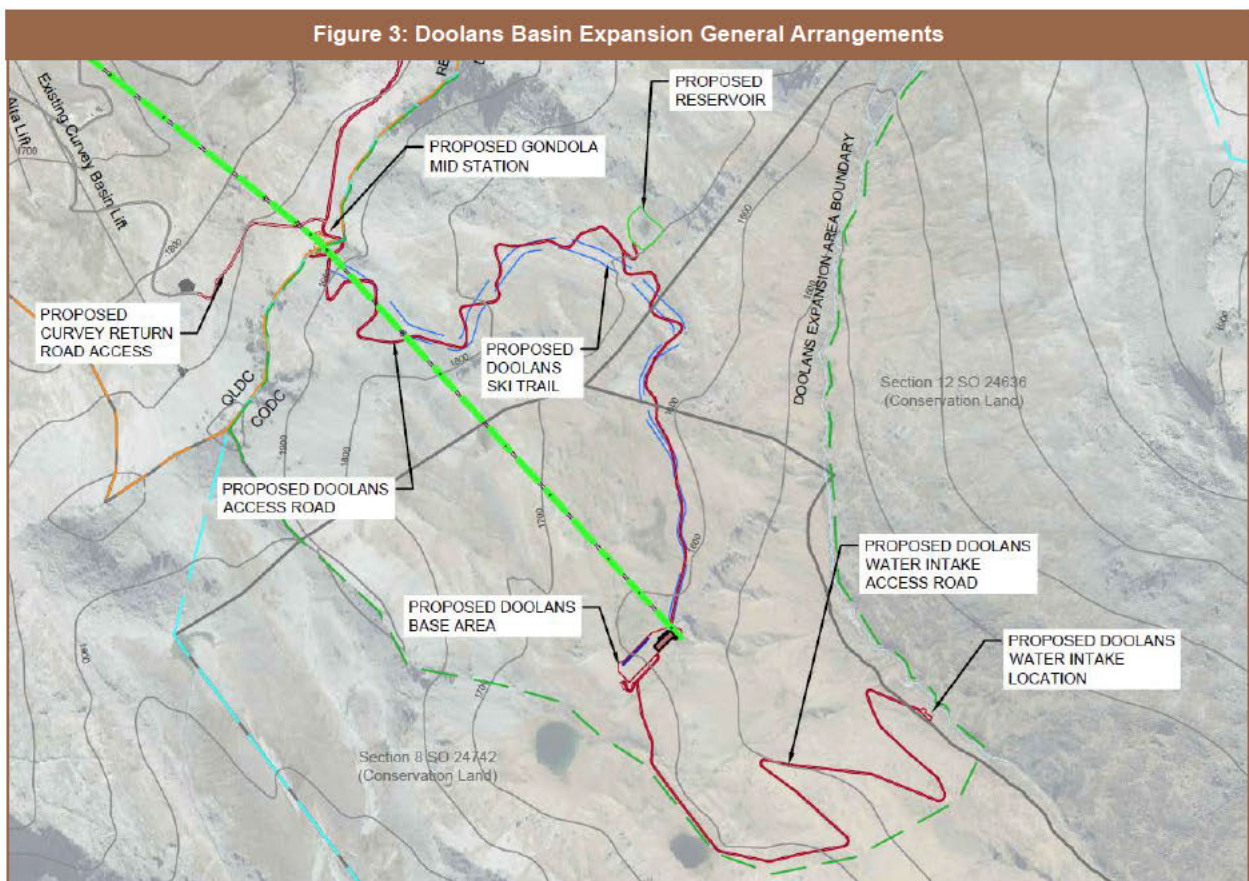
- Upgrades to existing infrastructure services and associated structures including upgrades to mains power supply, infield power distribution, water, wastewater, stormwater, communications, and snowmaking.
- Upgrades to existing transport infrastructure, including the Remarkables Ski Field Access Road intersection with SH6 and the adjacent carparking and transit hub at the access road entrance.
- Upgrades to (and an extension of) the existing Rastus Burn Base Building and arrival surrounds.
- Construction and use of a new gondola providing skier access into the Doolans Basin including construction of a new gondola base drive station adjacent to the Rastus Burn Base Building and construction of gondola towers, cables and associated infrastructure up to Helicopter Ridge (to access Doolans Basin).
- Upgrades to existing and establishment of new access roads and ski trails to provide vehicular access and ski return trails into the Doolans Basin.
- Installation of new operational controls to maintain the health and safety of ski field users. These include wayfinding signage, barriers/gates, permanent safety fencing/netting, snow fences, avalanche control and boundary markers.



2.1.2 Establishment of the Doolans Basin Ski Area

The key project works proposed in the Doolans Basin (within the Remarkables Conservation Area) includes (shown in Figure 3):

- Establishment and use of a new gondola from the Rastus Burn Base Building into the Doolans Basin. The new gondola would include a drive station directly adjacent to the existing Rastus Burn Base Building, a mid-station at Helicopter ridge with a viewing platform and patrol hut and a drive station directly adjacent (and connected) to the proposed Doolans Base Building.
- Establishment and use of new gondola tower structures and associated infrastructure, located within a defined gondola “corridor” within the Basin.
- Establishment and use of a new multi-purpose Doolans Base Building, designed to accommodate gondola cabin parking, integrated cabin maintenance, storage, bathroom facilities, café facilities and emergency shelter space.
- Establishment and use of ski trails and access roads between the gondola mid-station, the Doolans Base Building and associated infrastructure. Where practicable, these two features will be co-located to minimise the level of ground disturbance.
- Construction of a learners’ snowsports area at the Doolans Base Building with a covered passenger conveyor lift, supported by snowmaking infrastructure.
- Establishment of supporting services and facilities in the Doolans Basin, including power, water, wastewater, stormwater, communications and snowmaking facilities. A new water take is proposed to be established in Doolans Creek relying on a new Tyrolean Weir and taken at a maximum rate of 30 litres per second. The water will be used within the Doolans Ski Area for potable supply, firefighting and snowmaking.



- Installation of new operational controls to maintain the health and safety of ski field users. These include wayfinding signage, barriers/gates, permanent safety fencing/netting, snow fences, avalanche control and boundary markers.

Construction in the Doolans Basin is planned to progress largely over three summers, with some minor weather-dependent tidy-up work possible in the fourth summer. There is little work proposed for the winter seasons, apart from what can be completed within established structures, such as minor work on internal building fit-outs.

2.2 Method

This assessment is based on:

- Review of the project proposal;
- A site visit;
- Interviews and discussions with stakeholders;
- Literature review;
- The application of an assessment matrix developed by the report author and developed by use in many similar effects assessments;
- Review of mitigation options by the wider project team, and the development of a final recommended set; and
- Consideration of the identified effects and proposed mitigations to identify residual effects and their scale.
- Comments received on a draft version by Central Otago District Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and the Department of Conservation. Appendix 2 to this report addresses relevant feedback.

The author's summary CV is in Appendix 3.

2.3 Code of Conduct

The author of this report is Rob Greenaway. I am a recreation and tourism planner with considerable experience in the assessment of effects of major infrastructure projects on recreation values and opportunities.

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 were 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.

3 Policies and strategies

This section reviews policies and strategies which describe expectations for management of the Remarkables area generally and Doolans Basin specifically. The most relevant is the Department of Conservation's Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Otago (2016 incorporating 2022 partial review). This allows for the consideration of skifield expansion in the Remarkables-Hector area and specifies relevant assessment considerations.

3.1 Conservation Management Strategy

The Department of Conservation's CMS for Otago (2016 incorporating 2022 partial review) places the Doolans Basin in the Remarkables-Hector area of the Western Lakes and Mountains/Ngā Puna Wai Karikari a Rākaihautu Place. The preferred outcomes for the Remarkables-Hector area include (p67):

The outstanding natural landscapes and ecological values of The Remarkables and Tapuae-o-Uenuku/ Hector Mountains are intact and enjoyed by more people. Wilding trees and feral goats are being controlled to zero density by sustained control.

A range of recreational experiences is available in The Remarkables-Hector area ranging from largely unmodified environments where a sense of solitude and remoteness can be found in a largely unmodified environment (Wye Creek valley), to The Remarkables busy ski field.

The unmodified natural character of the upper Wye Creek valley (including its alpine tarns and basins) remains free of built structures and developments. It is easily accessible by walking and people enjoy the natural quiet and the indigenous ecosystems and landscapes.

The Nevis River valley's outstanding natural landscapes, indigenous ecosystems and freshwater species, intact altitudinal sequences, and historic heritage remain. The historic significance of the Nevis Road, as an important route between Southland and Otago for Māori and early settlers, is recognised and protected. The Nevis River, protected by the Water Conservation (Kawarau) Order 1997, remains in its natural state and many people appreciate its natural and recreational values.

Regular to frequent aircraft activity is experienced at specified landing sites in northern areas, particularly the ridge line of The Remarkables and the Ben Cruachan-Doolans Creek area. Visitors to the Tapuae-o-Uenuku/Hector Mountains experience occasional to regular aircraft activity during the summer.

And (p63):

The highest level of recreational use occurs in and around The Remarkables ski field. The ski field road provides access to The Remarkables and Tapuae-o-Uenuku/Hector Mountains year round.

Parapenting, hang-gliding and scenic flights occur in some parts. Tramping, climbing (including ice-climbing), backcountry camping and ski touring are available in the upper Wye Creek valley, easily accessible from The Remarkables ski field. Currently two heli-biking operations, authorised by concessions, occur in the Remarkables Conservation Area over summer.

Away from the busy ski field area, and particularly in the southern Tapuae-o-Uenuku/Hector Mountains and Nevis River valley, a sense of solitude prevails in this backcountry area.

Tramping, climbing, camping, kayaking, cross-country skiing and angling are popular activities. The historic road through the valley from Nevis Crossing to Garston is popular with four-wheel drivers.

The Remarkables, with its close proximity to Queenstown, and outstanding landscape and recreational values, is subject to many development proposals. Providing recreational and tourism opportunities for a growing number of visitors to some parts of The Remarkables, while ensuring protection of outstanding landscapes, indigenous ecosystems and natural character, is an ongoing challenge.

Policies specific to the Remarkables-Hector area include:

2.3.20 *Should not allow new permanent utilities, structures or facilities (both recreational and commercial) in the upper Wye Creek valley to protect the unmodified and high natural character of this valley.*

2.3.21 *When considering, applications for new utilities, structures or facilities throughout this Place (with the exception of the upper Wye Creek valley), should have particular regard to the potential adverse effects on:*

- a) natural ecosystems, landscapes and natural character, particularly in areas where structures and facilities are currently absent;*
- b) catchment water quality and quantity, including in Lake Alta;*
- c) priority ecosystem units and threatened species;*
- d) natural quiet;*
- e) current recreational uses; and*
- f) opportunities available for such structures or developments off public conservation lands and waters.*

2.3.22 *May allow further development and/or expansion of The Remarkables ski field (with the exception of the upper Wye Creek valley) in accordance with Policies 3.25.1-3.25.6 in Part Three, provided that adverse effects (including cumulative effects) are avoided, remedied or mitigated on the following values:*

- a) the outstanding natural landscapes and ecological values of The Remarkables and the Tapuae-o-Uenuku/Hector Mountains;*
- b) the landscape and ecological (including water quantity and quality) values of the priority ecosystem unit at Lake Alta;*
- c) the recreational experiences of other users; and*
- d) the ability of users to access the area year round.*

Policies 3.25.1 to 3.25.6 relate to ski fields in the Otago Conservancy:

Commercial ski fields typically require considerable infrastructure and terrain modification. This section does not apply to backcountry skiing activities that take place throughout the Western Lakes and Mountains/Nga Puna Wai Karikari a Rakaihautu Place and the Central Otago Uplands Place, and that do not require infrastructure. Neither does it apply to heliskiing activities.

Three commercial ski fields (Coronet Peak, The Remarkables and Treble Cone) are authorised on public conservation lands in Otago. All are popular visitor attractions and an integral part of Otago's tourism sector, and have potential for wide-ranging conservation advocacy, in addition to their community engagement with backcountry recreation.

The effects of climate change may result in fields becoming increasingly reliant on snowmaking into the future and may look at expanding their winter and summer visitor activities both on the fields and nearby.

These changes will start taking effect during the term of this CMS but may take decades to become fully apparent. In response, both a precautionary and a partnership approach may be needed: precautionary to avoid the risk of abandoned structures and adverse landscape effects; partnership to maintain a ski field's recreation opportunity.

Policies

- 3.25.1 May allow further development of existing authorised ski fields, where their natural values are already modified, in preference to the development of new ski fields.*
- 3.25.2 Should in considering the development of new and existing authorised ski fields apply a precautionary approach to the approval of new structures, accommodation facilities and terrain modification and consider both the likely effects of water use (for snow-making), the likely longevity of the field in the face of climate change, and any appropriate land remediation and facility removal costs should the ski field cease to operate.*
- 3.25.3 Process all applications for renewals of existing authorisations for ski fields as concessions.*
- 3.25.4 Where practicable, encourage non-skier and/ or non-ski season visitor use, and visitor use beyond the ski field consistent with the outcomes at Place.*
- 3.25.5 Should provide opportunities for conservation education and interpretation.*
- 3.25.6 Should allow over-snow vehicle use for the purpose of ski field management within ski field lease/licence areas subject to the provisions of the lease/licence and in accordance with Policy 3.2.12.*

The Remarkables-Hector area is defined in the CMS as within a backcountry visitor management zone (Figure 4). This is the dominant visitor zone for Otago. The Remarkables Ski Area is classed as frontcountry. Visitor management zones are established to, “ensure that visitors are able to seek out different locations to suit the type of experience that they want to experience.” (Otago CMS p38). Policy 3.1.5 of the CMS requires:

- 3.1.5 Manage recreation opportunities, including those provided by concessionaires, in accordance with the visitor management zones shown on Map 3 and as described in Appendix 12.*

Policy 3.10 of the CMS also requires that consistency with the appropriate visitor management zones is an assessment criteria for proposals to site structures and utilities on public conservation land (3.10 (g)).

Table 2.3 of the CMS defines the forms of non-pedestrian access permitted in the Western Lakes and Mountains/Ngā Puna Wai Karikari a Rākaihautu Place. Recreational motorised vehicle access is permitted only on The Remarkables ski field access road within the Remarkables Conservation Area. Non-motorised vehicles (including bicycles) are permitted “on tracks and roads purposely formed and maintained for biking” (policy 3.3.1) on the ski field access road, and within the Remarkables Conservation Area and Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve. Pack animals are permitted in the Doolans Valley, excluding the Doolans water race track.

Figure 4: DOC Otago CMS Visitor Management Zones. CMS Vol II Map 3 detail

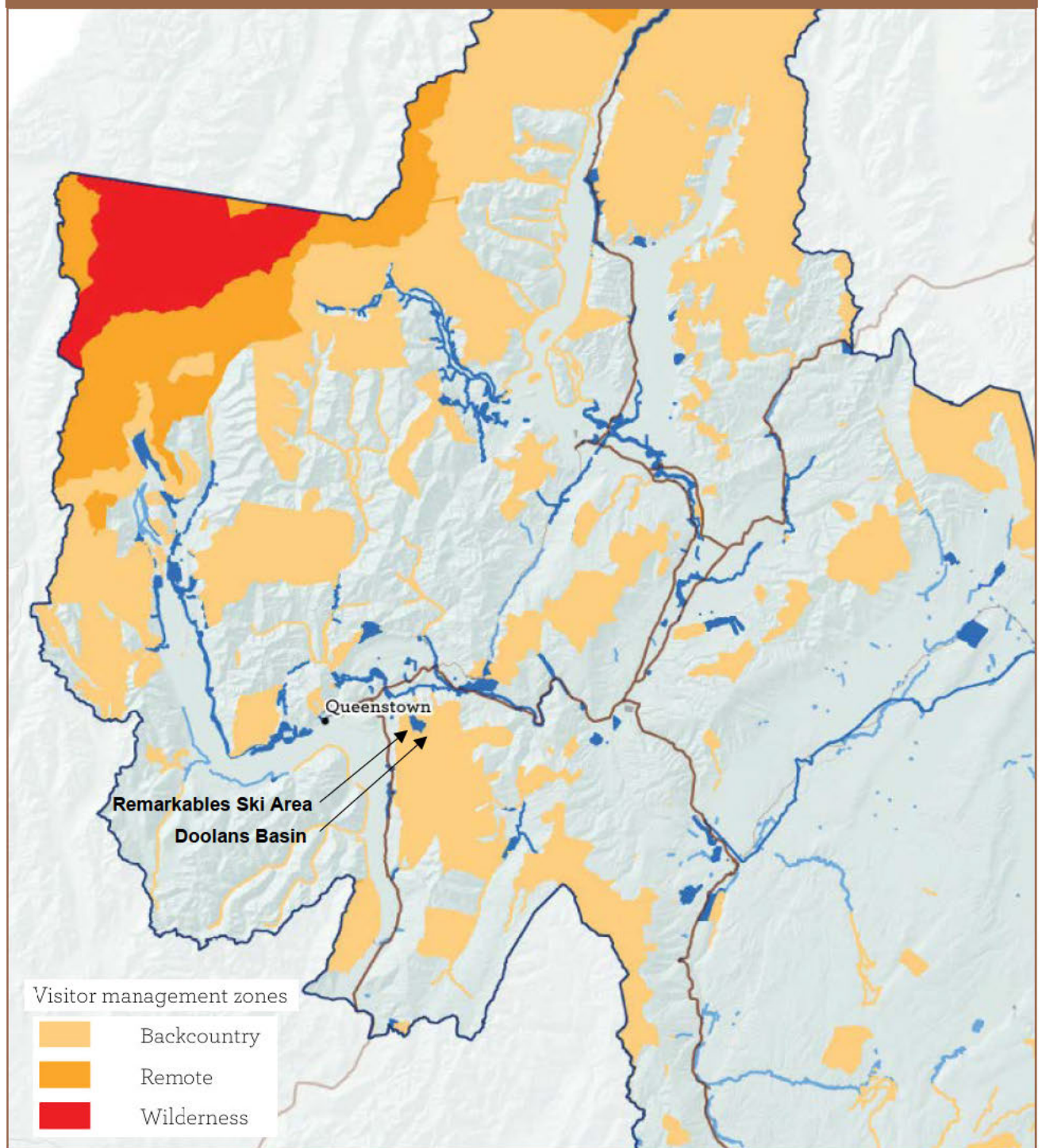


Table 1 compares the prescriptions for the management of visitor management zones from Appendix 12 of the CMS. The concession to operate the Remarkables Ski Area clearly means that the frontcountry setting description does not apply in terms of infrastructure, visitor numbers and the level of interactions between visitors.

Table 1: Front country and Backcountry visit management zone specifications, DOC Otago CMS Appendix 12		
	Frontcountry	Backcountry accessible and walk-in
General description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the majority of visits occur; typically small areas, scattered within or on the periphery of large, relatively natural areas Includes the vicinity of main 'scenic' roads passing through public conservation lands Often focused on a particular attraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large-scale natural settings generally accessed first through frontcountry Includes popular walks and tramps set within large scale natural settings and/ or that access other settings
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readily accessible areas, usually via sealed roads, or scheduled ferry or air services Mostly by car, but also tour buses and guided parties to some sites Enabled for people of most ages and abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will have travelled some distance to reach these settings Backcountry accessible focuses on unsealed roads, four-wheel drive roads, navigable waters and aircraft landing sites Motorised ground access generally restricted to roads and designated routes Backcountry walk-in is focused beyond the influence of motorised access
Predominant visitor groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly short-stop travellers, day visitors and over-nighters Other visitors in transition to backcountry and remote settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly 'backcountry comfort seekers' and 'backcountry adventurers'
Predominant destination categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Icon, Gateway and Local Treasure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominately Icon, Gateway and Local Treasure
Facility setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good-quality facilities and services, and easy access Sometimes the origin for tramping tracks and routes, with signs and information to make this transition clear High degree of control via information and direction signs, and barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of facility standards, including any designated vehicle routes, and popular walks and tramping tracks Evidence of control limited to essential directional signs and barriers on Great Walks, and where there are significant hazards
Desired visitor experience and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varying, from activities with large groups, time with small groups/families, some time away from other groups and, in some cases, solitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally some time away from other groups and, in some cases, solitude Occasional encounters with organised groups Generally accepting of occasional intrusion of noise
Preferred maximum party size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 50 for periodic tour parties Conforming concessions schedule-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15
Typical visitor interaction levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 or fewer people seen per visit duration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 or fewer people seen per day for 'backcountry adventurer' tracks 40 or fewer people seen per day for 'backcountry 'comfort seeker' tracks

Concession operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concessionaire activity may be permitted in all these visitor management zones, subject to conditions to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, including compliance with criteria within this table; the outcomes and policies for Part Two-Places and policies in Part Three apply ▪ Concessionaire client activities should not be advantaged or disadvantaged compared with those for non-concessionaire visitors, unless there is a specified reason for different management; the outcomes and policies for Part Two-Places and policies in Part Three apply 	
Preferred concessions effects management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid or mitigate adverse effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid adverse effects

3.2 Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (Clean Appeals Version 2025)

The Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (PORPS) classifies "ski area infrastructure at Remarkables" as Regionally Significant Infrastructure (Definitions, p42). In terms of locating new infrastructure, Policy EIT-INF-P13 – *Locating and managing effects of infrastructure, nationally significant infrastructure and regionally significant infrastructure outside the coastal environment* applies. This requires that when providing for new infrastructure, the first priority is to avoid locating it in significant natural areas, outstanding natural features and landscapes, natural inland wetlands and rivers, outstanding water bodies, areas or places of significant or outstanding historic heritage, and wāhi tūpuna. If avoidance is not reasonably practicable due to functional or operational needs, adverse effects must be managed according to specific hierarchies based on the same parameters. While there is no reference to recreation or tourism values, Policy EIT-INF-P13 (2) states that for regionally significant infrastructure:

(iv) in other areas listed in EIT-INF-P13 (1) above, the adverse effects of the infrastructure on the values that contribute to the area's importance shall be:

(I) remedied or mitigated to the extent practicable, and

(II) where they cannot be practicably remedied or mitigated, regard shall be had to offsetting and/or compensation of more than minor residual adverse effects,

Provisions relating the maintenance of public access are promoted in relation to rural areas (UFD-P7) and to and along lakes and rivers ((LF-LS-P22).

3.3 Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan December 2025

The Remarkables Ski Area is within the boundary of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). The Proposed District Plan locates the ski area within the Remarkables Ski Area Sub Zone, within an Outstanding Natural Landscape and within a Rural Zone. Section 21.12 of the Plan defines a wide range of permitted, controlled and restricted discretionary activities within the Zone, enabling and managing the continued operation and development of the ski area.

3.4 Central Otago District Council District Plan 2008

The Doolans Basin lies within the boundary of the Central Otago District Council (CODC).

The CODC District Plan acknowledges that outdoor recreation is a significant and growing land use in the district with (2.3.4):

The popularity of activities such as cross country skiing, mountain biking, motorised snow activities, tramping, boating, game bird hunting, and fishing is increasing. Passive recreation activities such as picnicking and sightseeing are also popular activities for both locals and visitors alike....

Tourism, which relies to a large degree on a number of the land uses listed above (eg. viticulture, recreation, conservation) is an increasingly important component in the Central Otago economy.

Three broad policies apply to the management recreation and tourism in the 'Rural Resource Area':

4.4.13 Policy - Public Access to Significant Features

To promote the provision of public access opportunities to the Districts significant natural and physical land features including areas of value for recreational purposes.

Explanation

The Central Otago District contains numerous natural and physical land features that are important to many people for recreation, scientific, educational and other purposes. Many valued natural and physical resources are on land administered by the Department of Conservation and consequently access to them is controlled by the Department. Public access to and over these areas is generally unrestricted, however, commercial development and/or protection of conservation values can restrict public access to and over these areas. The District Plan cannot impose public access over privately owned or Crown pastoral lease land. However, the tenure review process does provide the opportunity to maintain and enhance public access to these areas. The resource consent process also provides an opportunity to consider this issue to a limited degree.

4.4.14 Policy - Back Country Amenity Values

To ensure that activities avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the open space, landscape, historic, natural character, natural quiet and amenity values of the quality and range of recreational opportunities available in, the District's back country and/or remote areas.

Explanation

The back country and remote areas of the District generally have significant landscape and amenity values and are often greatly valued recreation areas. These values can be compromised by the very activities that seek them out. Furthermore, these activities have the potential to conflict with one another in terms of the effects that they may generate.

4.4.15 Policy - Conflict between Recreation Activities

To recognise and avoid, remedy or mitigate the potential conflict between different types of recreation activities that occur within the District, whilst encouraging multiple use of public open space and recreation areas wherever this is possible and practicable.

Explanation

The Central Otago District is a popular recreational area. The different recreation activities that occur in the district are not always compatible with one another. Conflict can arise between motorised recreation and more passive recreation activities that seek peace and tranquillity. These activities often seek the same environment which, particularly during winter months, can be limited to a few range tops.

Otherwise, the Doolans Basin within the District boundary forms part of the Hector, Garvie and Old Woman Ranges and Nevis Valley "Outstanding Landscape of national importance" (Schedule 19.6.2 (B)). This is defined as including:

Impressive combination of natural features, including diverse indigenous vegetation, and subtle historic/cultural elements. Is flanked to the west by the glaciated Remarkables and Hector Range that contrast with rounded Central Otago block mountain ranges being the Old Woman and Garvie Ranges to the east. Part of its outstanding quality is the general absence of modification above the valley floor. In particular the upper valley is unmodified.

Various policies apply to the “protection for [the District’s outstanding natural landscapes] from inappropriate subdivision, use and development”, such as Policy 4.4.1. Policy 4.2.1 notes that in protecting these landscapes, “In determining what is inappropriate subdivision, use and development in these landscapes it must be recognised that these landscapes are often utilised by people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.”

4 Existing environment

This section relies on published reports and consultation findings to describe the existing recreational uses and values of Doolans Basin and the Rastus Burn where the NZSki Remarkables Ski Area is located (although this report focuses substantially on the Doolans Basin where there is the greatest potential scale of change in recreation opportunities and values).

4.1 Use description from consultation

Consultation with recreation and tourism stakeholders has relied on:

- Sixteen semi-structured interviews with recreational users and recreation advocates identified by an online search and user recommendations (including several staff of NZSki).
- Written responses from some stakeholders.
- Thirty-two email and/or phone contacts with concession holders who have a permit or licence to conduct commercial recreation activities in the Remarkables area, based on a list of potential concession holders provided by the Department of Conservation. It was not possible to identify, from that list, which operators use the Doolans Basin, and so each was contacted – where possible – to review the locations used and whether there is any potential impact from the proposal. Due to privacy requirements, DOC was unable to supply contact names and details. Several contacts were individuals previously interviewed, and two were added to the interview list.
- An online information session was held in September 2025. All those previously interviewed were invited, along with those concession operators who stated they had some use of Doolans Basin. Five individuals attended, along with five representatives of NZSki (including the General Manager and CEO) and two consultants.

All consultation outputs are summarised in Appendix 1, including interview summaries, written feedback, minutes from the online information session, and a table summarising outcomes of the review of concession holders.

Doolans Basin was described as supporting a diverse range of year-round recreational activities, with a distinct seasonal focus.

Winter:

- **Ski touring and splitboarding:** Described by nearly all stakeholders as the most popular activity in the valley. The varied terrain in the Doolans Basin caters to all skill levels, from novices to advanced skiers.
- **Mountaineering and ice climbing:** While technical ice climbing is focused on the adjacent Wye Creek and on the west face of the Remarkables, the Doolans Basin and its surrounding ridges are frequently used for access, mountaineering courses, and general alpine skills training.
- **Snowshoeing:** This is an occasional activity in the valley, observed by stakeholders including NZSki staff and the Queenstown Climbing Club.

Summer and year-round activities:

- **Hunting:** The valley is used for both guided and recreational hunting, primarily targeting red deer, fallow deer, chamois, and goats. The prime season runs from late November to late May. Wye Creek is the more popular destination.
- **Hiking, tramping and trail running:** Including the use of the valley and its ridges for summer hiking, multi-day tramping trips, and trail running, often as part of point-to-point traverses connecting to areas like Coalpit Saddle and Wye Creek.
- **Camping:** The valley's flat areas and access to clean water sources make it an accessible remote camping option close to Queenstown.
- **Other:** Paragliding, snow-kiting, and speed-riding have been observed in the Valley.

Most interviewees provided a close range of winter use estimates, with the Queenstown Climbing Club an outlier (Table 2). Summer use was described as significantly lower.

Interviewee	Estimated daily visitors
Will Rowntree (NZSki)	5 – 20
Mike Madden (Queenstown Mountain Guides)	5 – 30
Gregg Biesly (NZ Alpine Club)	15 – 30
Tim Robertson (Alpine Dreams)	10 – 50
Mike Irwin (NZSki)	20 – 50
Queenstown Climbing Club	50 – 100

The Remarkables Ski Area hosts 282,000 skier days per annum (2020 – 2025 average), 60% of whom are day-pass visitors, and the remainder season pass holders. Approximately 15,000 visitors use the access road in summer. In 2024, 62 “one up, one down” list passes were sold.¹

Access to Doolans Basin was described as achieved via several key routes, depending on the season and activity.

- **Via the Remarkables Ski Area:** This is the most common access method, particularly in winter. Specific entry points include the top of the Curvey Basin Chairlift (the most popular route), the top of the Sugar Bowl chairlift (for access to the east branch of the valley), and from the Lake Alta area.
- **Via Wye Creek:** This route is used for both summer tramping and as an alternative winter ski touring approach, generally via Wye Saddle.
- **Via Coalpit Saddle / Gibbston Valley:** For longer, point-to-point tramping trips and a common access route for hunters.

Doolans Basin was consistently described as providing a backcountry experience in a front country setting, a reputation built on its accessibility combined with its undeveloped, natural character. Its south-facing aspect provides reliable, high-quality snow, a key advantage over Coronet Peak's north-facing basins which are described as losing snow more quickly. This accessibility distinguishes it from options in Glenorchy that require long walks in or Treble Cone, which is considered a longer drive for Queenstown residents and visitors.

¹ Paul Anderson, NZSki CEO pers. comm., Nov 2025

4.2 Strava overview

Strava is a social media application which uses GPS records from subscribers' smartphones and other devices uploaded to a central database, allowing speed and time comparisons with other cyclists, runners, walkers and trampers (for example), and the monitoring of individual activity or training targets. While the service is popular with professional athletes, its membership is dominated by casual recreation participants. Strava indicated that it had 50 million international users in early 2020 (80% outside the US) with an additional million joining per month, and in 2024 the company reported 120 million users.² It is popular amongst regular cyclists and runners, but is also used by a wide variety of other pursuits, such as tramping, rowing, swimming and skiing.

An international comparison between different forms of data-gathering in 2016 showed a range of 1% to 12% of users recording their activity on Strava; and that this is growing.³ Comparisons between track counter data and Strava records undertaken by the author of this report in Nelson suggest levels of Strava adoption in relatively low-use settings as high as 73% for cyclists and 26% for pedestrians. More accessible tracks appeared to have a lower (but still high) uptake of around 40% for cyclists and 7% for pedestrians. Such response rates would compare favourably to an on-site intercept survey of users in an outdoor setting, particularly since the Strava data are collected over all seasons and all day (an intercept survey would normally only cover relatively short time periods and be confined to specific interception points). Nevertheless, caution needs to be applied to the use of Strava data as they show participation by only Strava members. There will be an inherent bias toward the more competitive and tech-savvy, and some data accumulate from users staying logged in when they are doing other activities, such as driving. Strava is therefore similar to a tag and release programme. Strava essentially tags several thousand active people in an area and monitors where and how they recreate. Its value is in showing the relative levels of activity by location, and not all activities in all locations (there is no recreation survey technique available to achieve the latter, and in the opinion of this report author, Strava represents a valuable data-set considering the challenges associated with quantifying recreational activity generally).⁴

Strava data are best represented by heatmaps which show the relative levels of participation in various activities by location. For example, Figure 5 shows the heatmap data for the Queenstown / Wanaka area for all activities for 12 months of cumulative data to November 2025. This illustrates the scale of data available. Figure 6 shows selected data for only 'winter sports', including alpine skiing, backcountry skiing, Nordic skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing.

It is up to users of the Strava platform to decide the classification for their activity; and to remember to stop recording their activity once they have finished – failings of this indicated by heatmap records for skiing on several main roads and in Queenstown (that is, created by Strava users leaving their recording operating when driving away from the skifield).

² <https://www.bikebiz.com/cycling-insight-strava/> and <https://press.strava.com/articles/strava-releases-year-in-sport-trend-report>

³ Herrero, J. 2016. *Using big data to understand trail use: three Strava tools*. TRAFx Research. And see <https://medium.com/strava-metro/cdc-finds-strava-metro-data-correlates-strongly-with-census-active-commuting-data-8ab1be0fe130>

⁴ In the experience of the author, critics of Strava heatmaps note that the data might not include their particular activity since they are not a user of Strava, and therefore it is an irrelevant dataset. This is akin to complaining that one was not included in an on-site intercept survey because it was carried out while the critic was not there. The nature of random or non-random sample surveys means that not all visitors to a site are included in the dataset, simply because in an outdoor setting (and most other settings), this is not possible. The potential errors of such surveys are noted, and in the case of this assessment, triangulation with other – usually qualitative – datasets is necessary.

Figure 5: Strava heatmap for Queenstown / Wanaka area. All activities. 12 months of data to Nov 2025

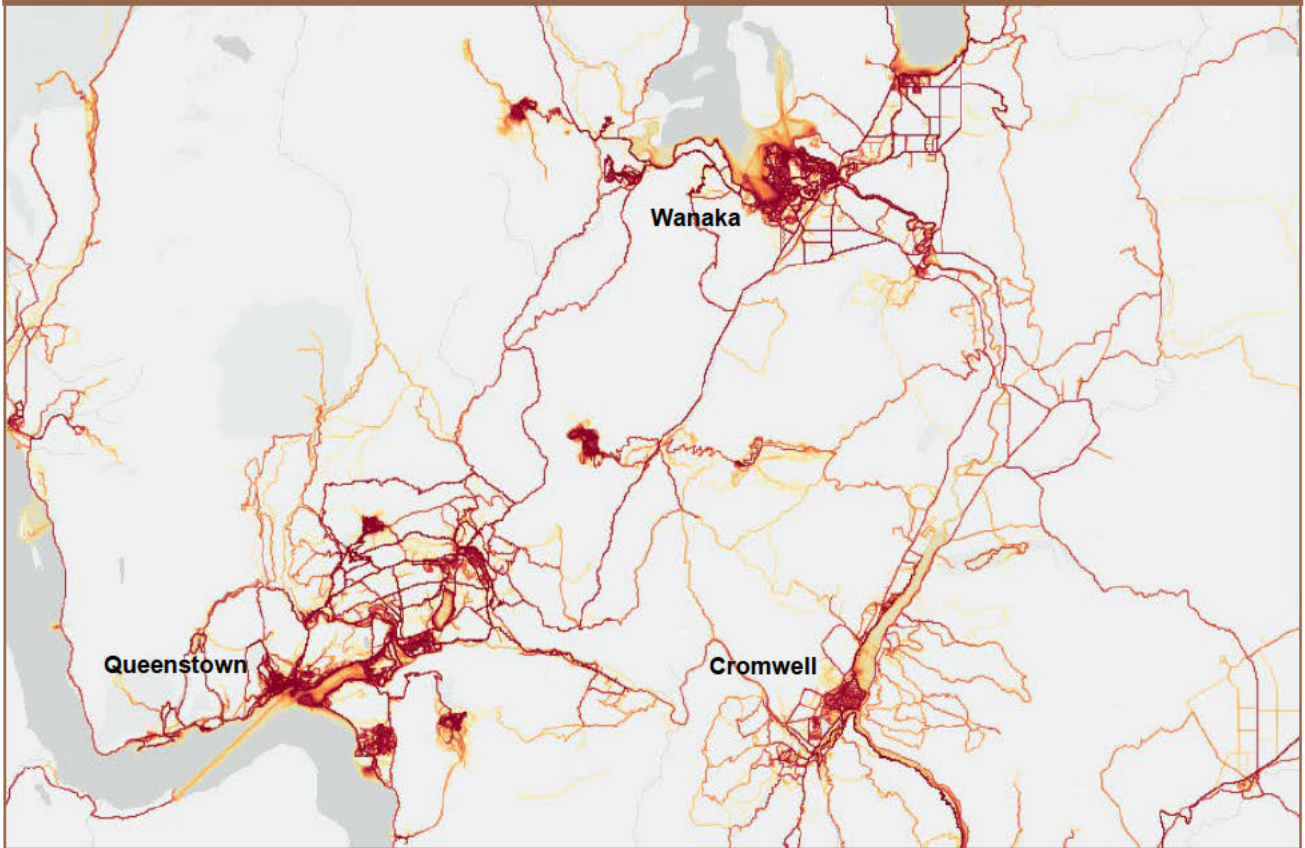


Figure 6: Strava heatmap for Queenstown / Wanaka area. Snowsports. 12 months of data to Nov 2025

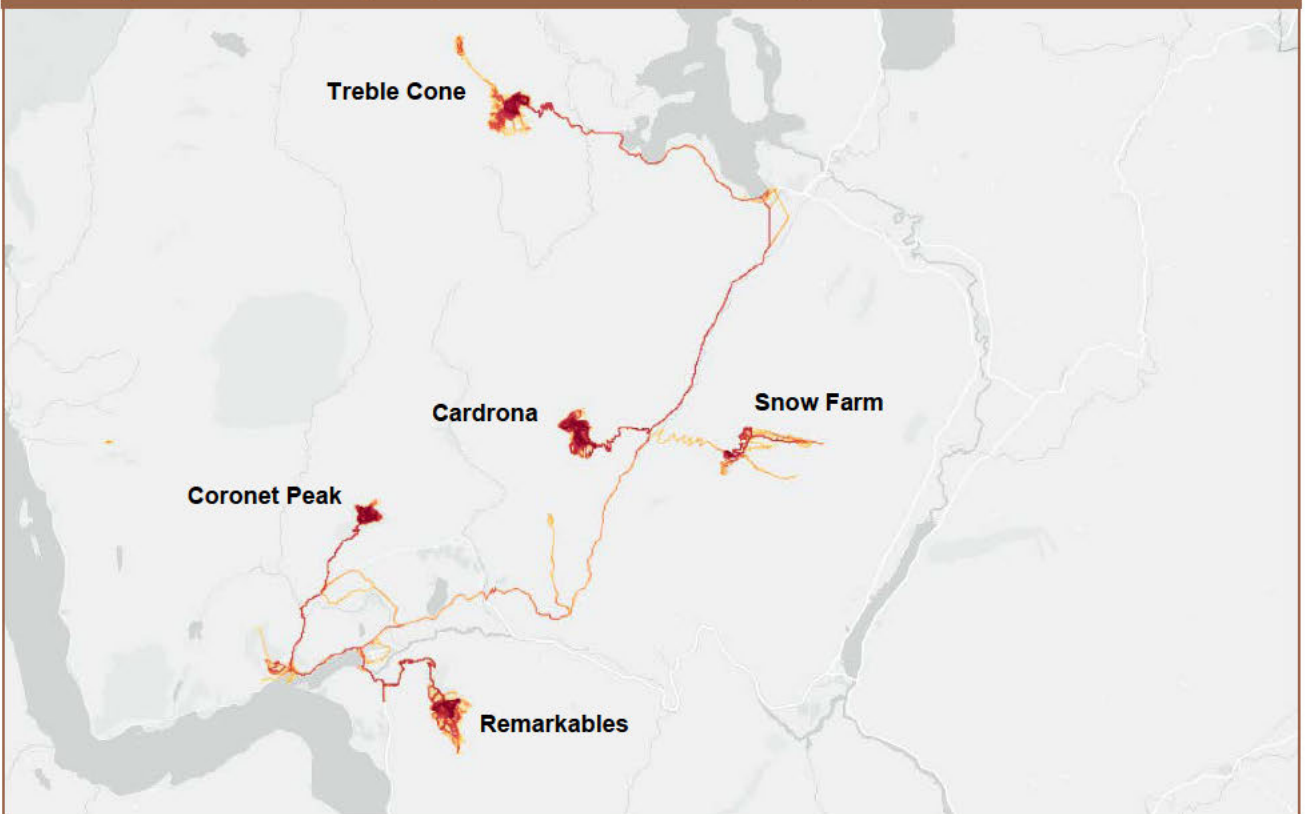


Figure 7 shows a Strava heatmap on an aerial image for all activities for the Remarkables skifield area, including Wye Creek and the Doolans Basin. This shows the obvious popularity of the Remarkables Ski Area, access into Wye Creek, and some activity in the upper slopes of Doolans Basin (only 'snow sports' for the latter). The following figures show the same area by activity type.

The underlying aerial photos are made up of images apparently taken at different times and stitched together, which is not uncommon for the likes of Google Earth. The west (the Remarkables Ski Area and Wye Creek) presents more of a winter scene, and the remainder more of a summer scene. This does not affect the overlying data which represent a full 12 months of recorded activity.

All figures indicate that most access into Wye Creek from the Rastus Burn occurs below the spur which separates the Creek from Doolans Basin. As detailed in the Boffa Miskell Landscape Effects Assessment, this spur blocks visibility of the Basin for the majority of visitors to Wye Creek.

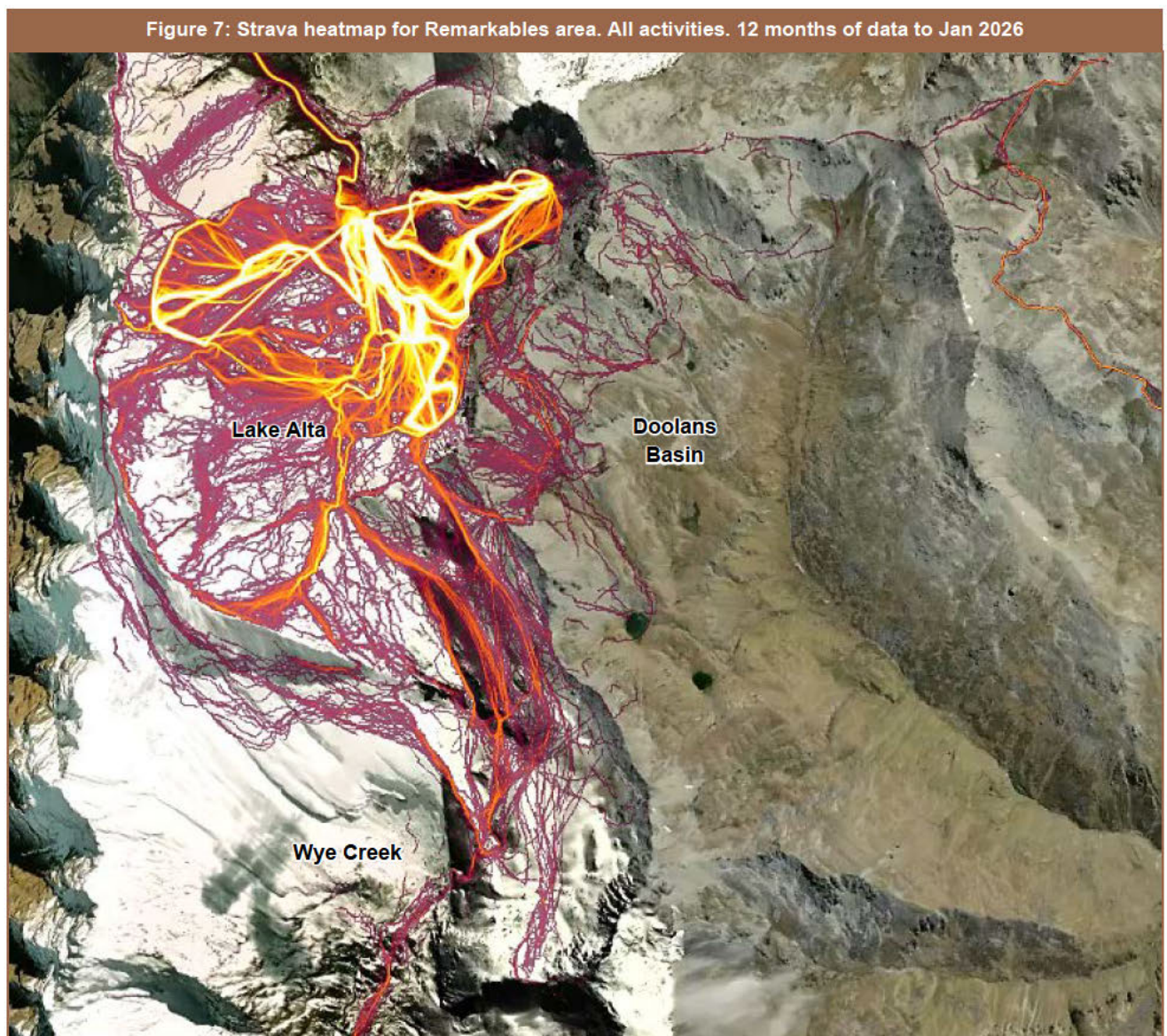


Figure 8 shows 12 months of data for 'snowsports' in the same area. This includes alpine skiing, backcountry skiing, ice skating, Nordic skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing. Beyond the Remarkables Ski Area, wide use of the eastern-facing slopes of the Doolans Basin is shown, with a focus on the most western part of the Valley. The top of the Wye Creek catchment is also relatively popular.

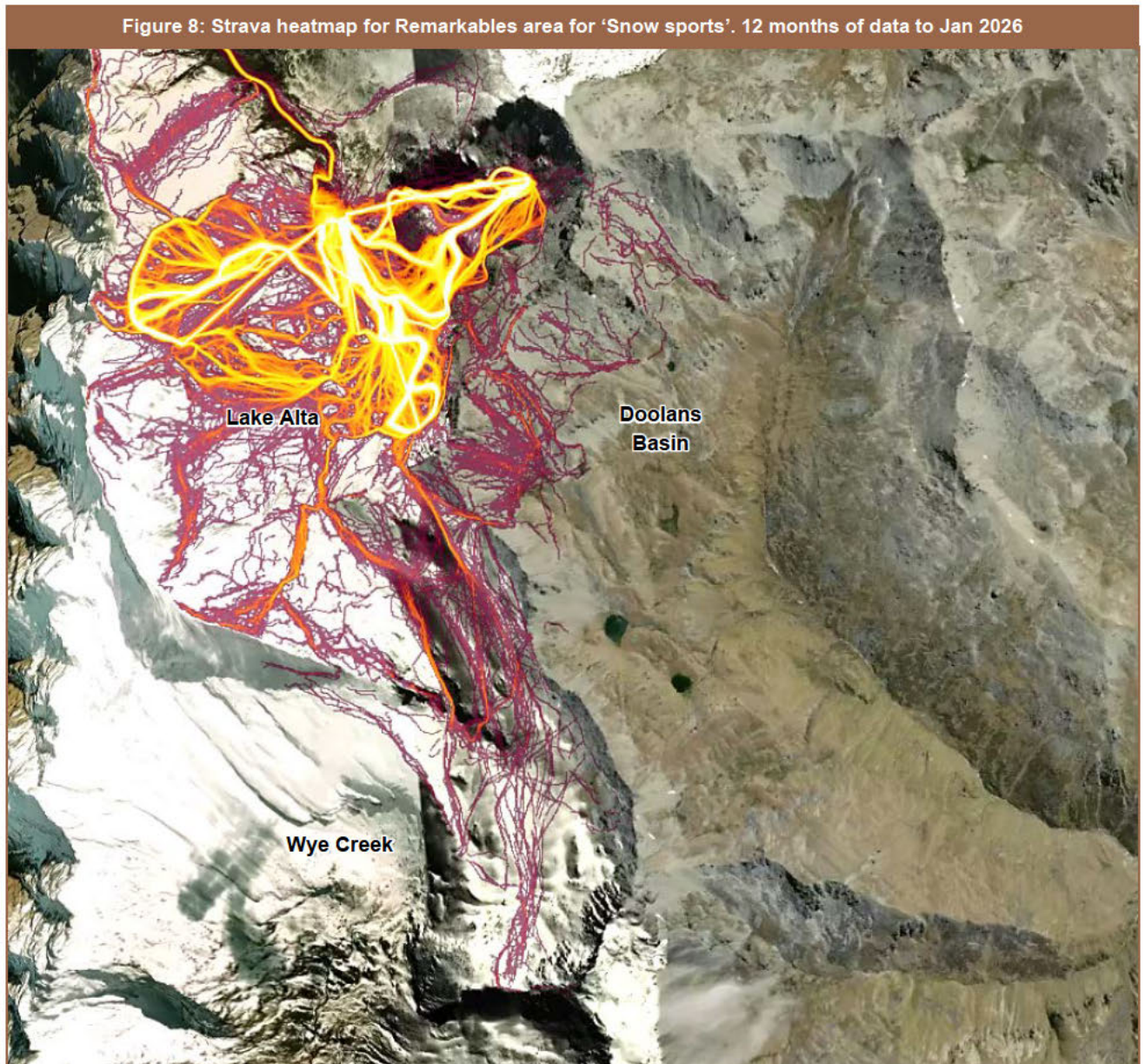


Figure 9 shows 12 months of data for 'footsports' in the same area. This includes running, trail running, walking and hiking. Again, the relative popularity of Wye Creek is evident, and the use of the roads and ski trails in the Remarkables Ski Area, and some walking east of Doolans Basin between Coal Pit Saddle and Ben Cruachan (at the extreme top right of the image).

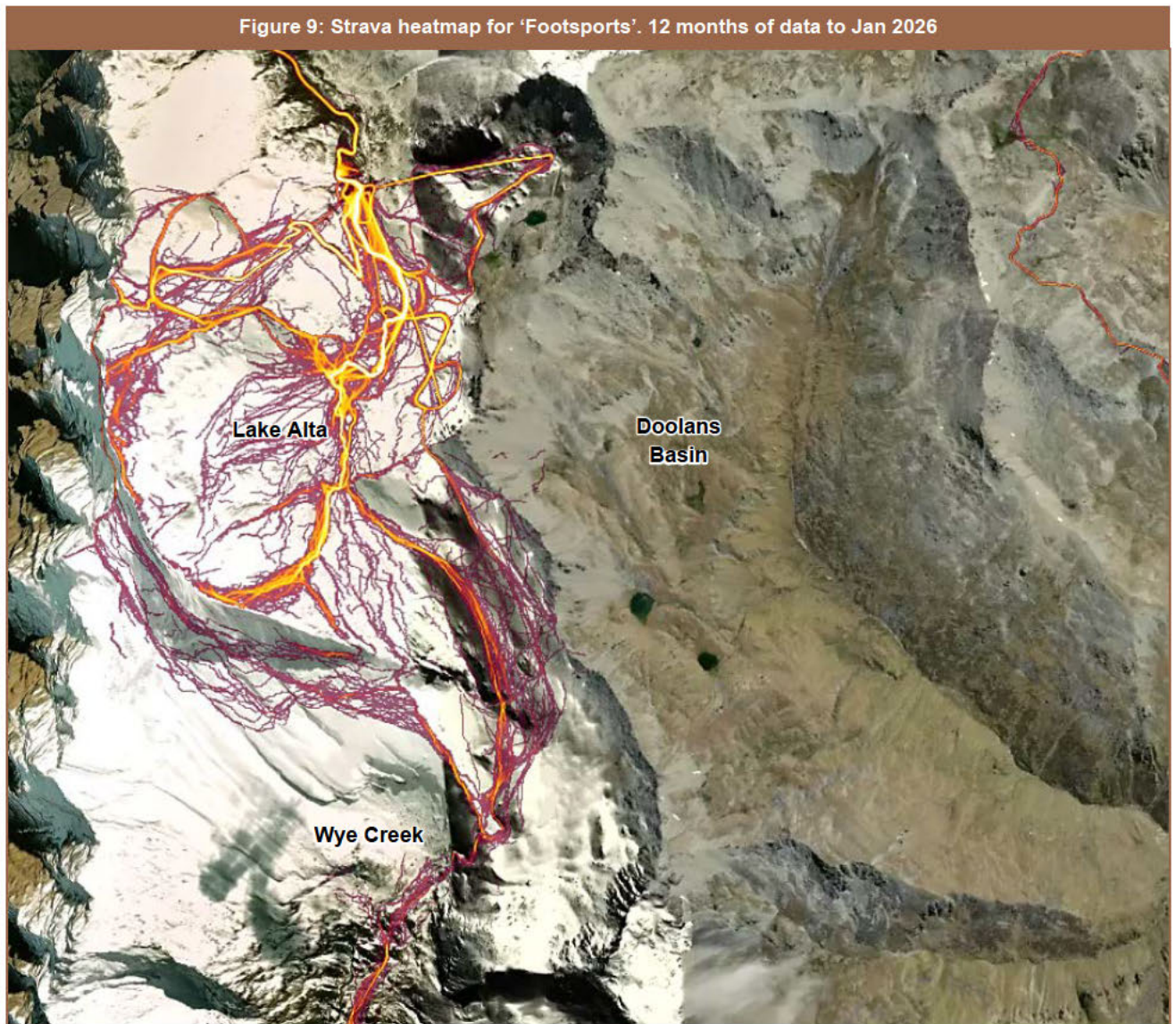
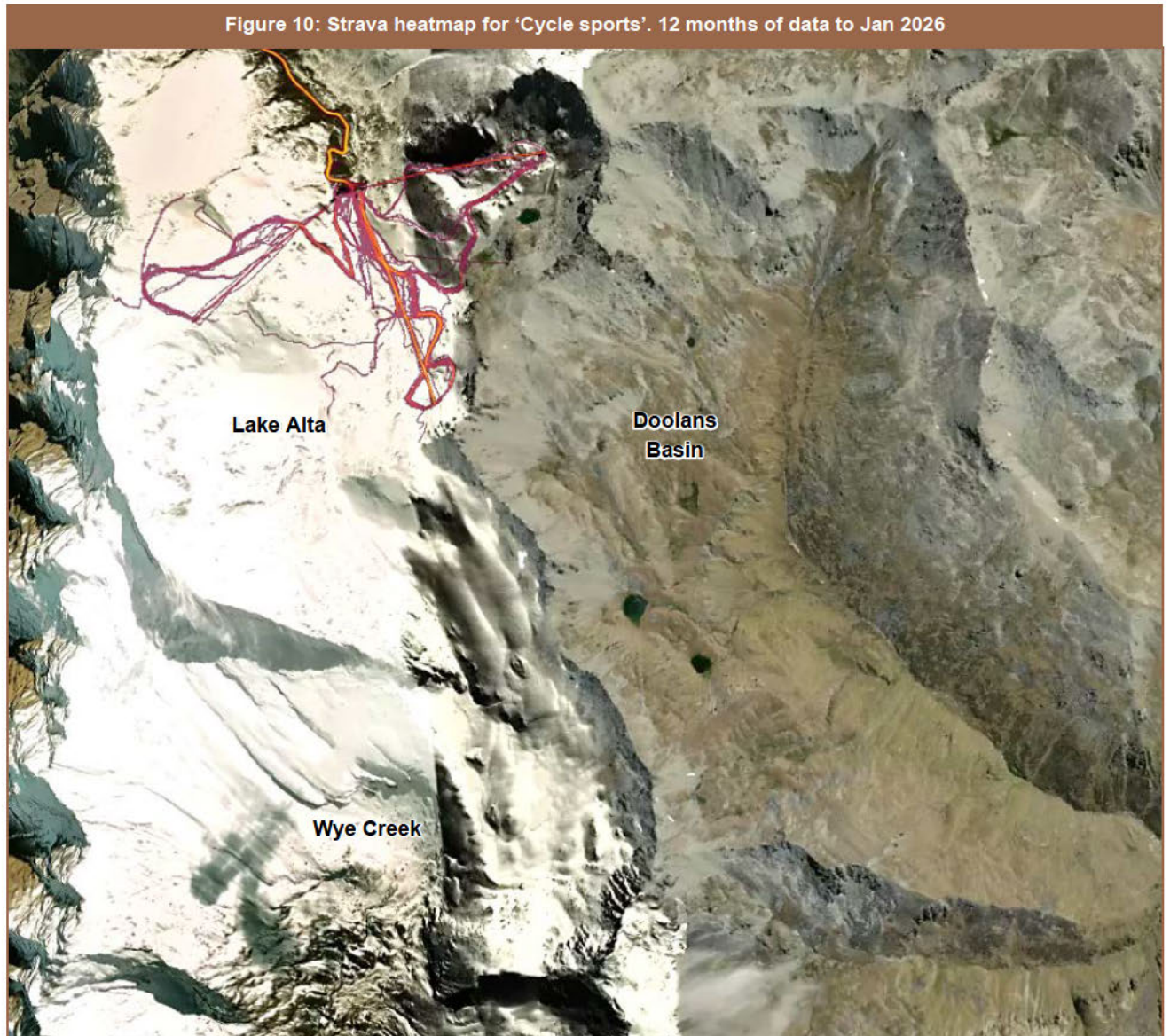


Figure 10 shows 12 months of data for 'cyclesports' in the same area. This includes 'riding', mountain biking, gravel biking and e-bikes. Use is largely confined to ski infrastructure in the Remarkables Ski Area. The nearest records in the wider Doolans area are shown at and east of Coal Pit Saddle and on the Wentworth Track (Figure 12 on page 30 for their locations).



4.3 Literature

The most recent formal review of recreation values in the Remarkables area is Devlin's (2020) DOC report on *Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area recreational values*. The Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area covers the headwaters of Doolans Creek, all of the Wye Creek catchment, and the headwaters of the Nevis Burn, Schoolhouse and Commissioner's Creeks.

Devlin (2020) describes the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area as offering year-round opportunities. The Area, which includes the Remarkables and Hector Mountains as well as the Nevis River Valley, is noted for its steep, rugged landscape and status as a prominent feature of the Queenstown region.

The Doolans catchment is described as a significant location for several specialised backcountry activities, with access primarily via Coal Pit Saddle, reached by a 4WD-only rough gravel road from the Gibbston Valley. Doolans Saddle is the furthest driveable point from the Nevis Road, at an altitude of 1,970m. The identified recreation activities and values in the Doolans area are:

- Ski touring and mountaineering: the Doolans basin is highly valued for short-day ski tours, with snow often lasting into October. The terrain in Doolans is described steeper than the adjacent Wye Creek basins. Many skiers access this area via the Curvey Basin chairlift followed by a short 10-minute skin up the ridge.
- Mountain biking and heli-biking: a popular mountain biking link exists between Gibbston and the Nevis Valley via Doolans Saddle. The report notes that one concessionaire operates heli-biking from Doolans Spur at over 1,800m, described as the highest heli-biking in New Zealand and featuring 15km of rock garden trails descending into the lower Doolans Creek. [Helibike NZ was interviewed for this assessment and reported that they do not use the Doolans Basin, and supported the ski area development proposal].
- Walking and tramping: the Wentworth Track descends from Coal Pit Saddle into the right branch of Doolans Creek, providing access to the alpine basins of the Doolans catchment and the "back" of the Remarkables.
- Hunting: the headwaters of Doolans Creek are part of a 23,000-hectare 'open area permit' block featuring chamois, red deer and goats.
- Historic heritage: Raceman's Hut is located in the lower valley and is primarily accessed via the Glenroy Water Race Track from Coal Pit Saddle, requiring some off-route navigation.

Devlin (2020) concludes:

The Remarkables Ski Area road has and will continue to have a strong influence on recreation activities making access to once difficult places easier. The sealed access road has opened recreation terrain and many activities can be completed in a day although a toll of \$10 per vehicle is charged outside of the winter ski season.

The other important access point is Wye Creek with a good track leading to crags for rock climbers. Other access routes are more challenging (Coal Pit Saddle and the Nevis Road from Bannockburn to Garston) both require a 4WD or mountain bike.

There are year-round recreation activities with skiing, ski touring and ice climbing in winter and walking, tramping, rock climbing, biking, fishing and horse riding in summer. The Grand Traverse is one of the best alpine outings in New Zealand, and Wye Creek is considered number one for ice climbing with consistent ice, good access, and outstanding scenery.

The Remarkables Conservation Area has very high recreational values and the northern parts of it are readily accessible from Queenstown.

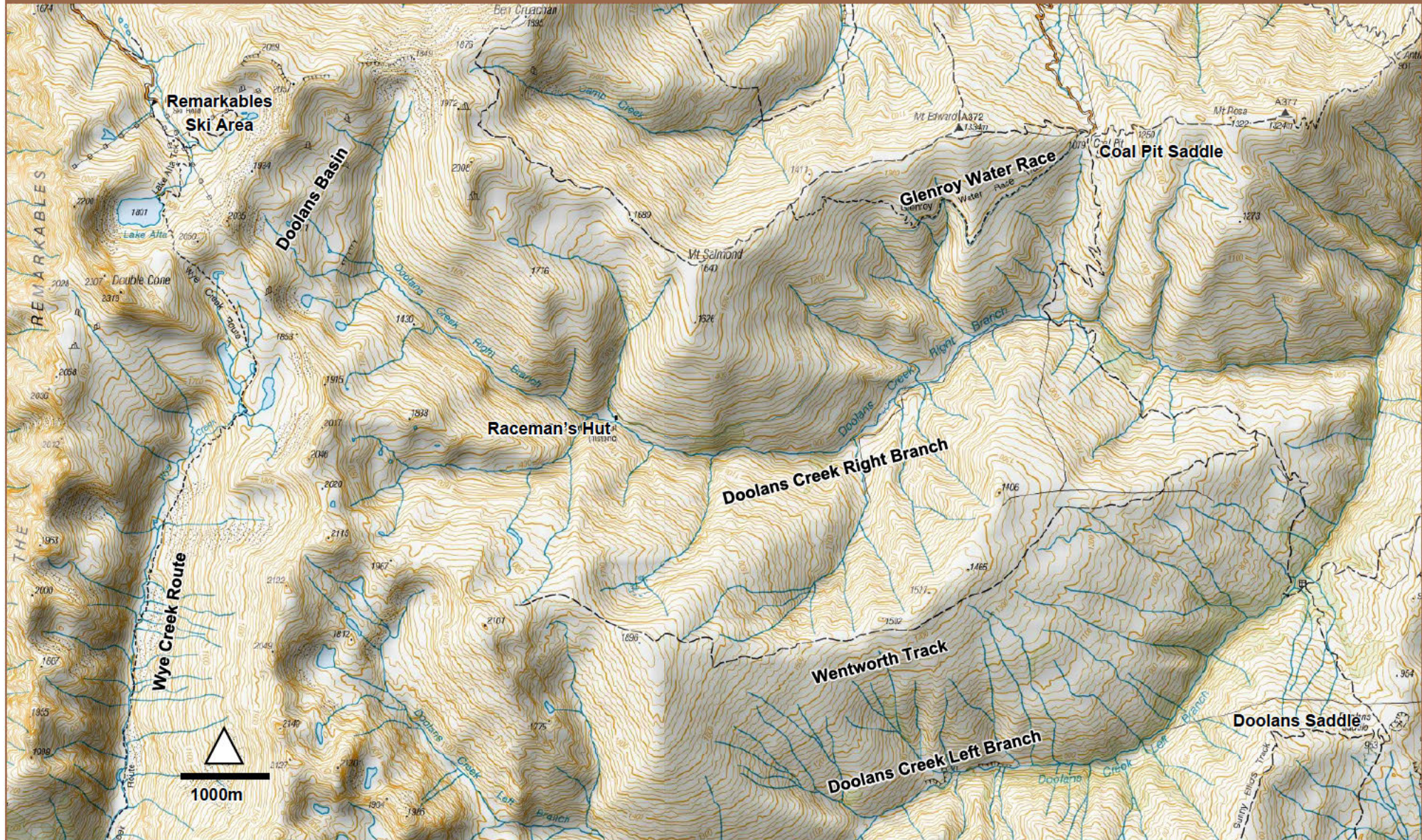
This area is a good introduction to the sport of ski touring when there are good snow conditions. The area is available to independent tourers, and four concessionaires provide a guided option. It is one of a few locations for this activity available in Otago.

The March 2025 DOC brochure describing “Queenstown day walks and bike trails” includes only the Lake Alta Track and Lower Wye Creek as recommended trails in the Remarkables Conservation Area (icons 34 and 35 in Figure 11), noting, “These tracks are at high altitude and suitable in summer only, although snow may still be present at any time of the year” and, “Wye Creek Route is an unmarked alpine route. It is separate from the Lower Wye Creek Track and much more difficult.”

Other features named in Devlin (2020) are shown in Figure 12.



Figure 12: Doolans area tracks and other recreation features. LINZ Topo 50



In response to the 1994 LINZ-directed tenure review of Wentworth Station – which included, to the west, much of the Doolans catchment between the left and right branches of Doolans Creek, including a portion of Doolans Basin – the Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (FMC) commissioned a review of the recreation values of the high country station (Floate 1996). The FMC review described Wentworth Station as having "very high" recreational values, claiming these were underrated in the 1994 LINZ assessment. The review focused on the station's status as a premier setting for high-altitude tramping, climbing and skiing, largely due to its rugged alpine and sub-alpine landscapes, specifically:

- Skiing and winter sports: The basins of the left and right branches of Doolans Creek are described as being among the "best areas" for ski mountaineering and cross-country skiing. The predominantly shady faces, particularly in the right branch, retain snow cover for prolonged periods, offering superb terrain for Nordic skiing.
- Camping and tramping: The Doolans basins provide excellent campsites situated among numerous high-level tarns and small lakes. In summer, these basins serve as ideal base camps for exploring nearby peaks and engaging in high-level tramping.
- Mountain biking: A legal road from Coal Pit Saddle crosses both branches of Doolans Creek before dropping to Nevis Crossing. The report notes this route provides a high-quality mountain biking experience and connects users to further opportunities in the Nevis Valley.
- Historic mining values: There is significant interest in the historical remains of mining near the lower Doolans Creek, specifically a tunnel driven through a rocky spur to provide water for sluicing operations.

The report author states:

Although the front face of the [Remarkables] range (and its name) are the draw cards, the whole area is well used by trampers, climbers and skiers. Particularly for ski mountaineering and Nordic skiing in winter, and for tramping, some of the best terrain lies to the east of the main range (Figs. 3 and 4). The basins of the Rastus Burn, Doolans and Wye Creeks (both branches of both creeks) provide the best opportunities. The Rastus Burn basin is now dominated by the Mount Cook Company commercial skifield and is therefore less used by independent recreational people. The remaining basins of the Doolans and Wye Creeks provide superb alpine and subalpine settings, good terrain for ski mountaineering and Nordic skiing and there are excellent campsites among a myriad of high level tarns and small lakes.

The area is also used by clubs, Mountain Safety and Search and Rescue as a training ground. It is a good high altitude training area which demands a high level of competence and tests navigational skills. The terrain is suitable for a variety of summer and winter activities, access is practicable and assistance can be available relatively easily if needed.

Access is usually from the north and west, most commonly now via the Rastus Burn [Remarkables] skifield, but use is also made of the eastern slopes. Clubs and individuals from Central Otago tend to approach the area from the Nevis....

The very name of the Remarkables, the magnificent mountain, alpine and sub-alpine landscapes, and very high natural conservation values make the whole area an important setting for both summer and winter recreation.

There is reported to be interest in extending the commercial skifield into other catchments (such as the Doolans) and any opportunity to extend conservation lands to protect the outstandingly high conservation and recreational values and to protect the area from further commercial development is welcome.

Freshwater fishing activity in New Zealand is very effectively described by Fish & Games periodic National Angler Surveys. The latest for 2022 summarises all national angling activity by waterway over five seasons since 1994/96 (Stoffels & Unwin 2023). The streams in the Doolans catchment have never featured as angling destinations. The closest reported angling setting is the Nevis River with a high of 877 ± 242 angler days in the 2007/08 season, a low of 106 ± 75 angler days in 1994/95, and the most recent figure at 235 ± 123 angler days in 2021/22. An angler day is any time spent fishing a river for any period within a day – be it for ten minutes or ten hours. The high margins of error suggest repeat visits by relatively few anglers. New Zealand's most comprehensive angling guide to the South Island (Kent 2009) also does not reference the Doolans catchment. The *Sports Fish and Game Management Plan for Otago Fish and Game Region 2015-2025* identifies the Nevis River as a nationally significant trout fishing river under increasing pressure (F&G 2015).

5 Effects

This section identifies the likely adverse effects on recreation potentially caused by the proposal, and a review of proposed “mitigations” / management responses. This is based on:

- An identification of all potential adverse effects on recreation amenity,
- A review of the technical reports which assess those effects, and the identification of the scale and relevance of each effect,
- A summary of the effects which have the potential to change recreation amenity,
- A discussion of the scale of those effects and their potential for mitigation/management.

Effects on recreation values are assessed according to the matrix in Table 3. This considers the magnitude of the effect and the value of the setting for recreation.

		Recreation value			
		Very High	High	Moderate	Low
Magnitude of effect	High or severe	Very high	High	Moderate	Minor
	Moderate or medium	High	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	Low or minor	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

A ‘very high’ adverse effect is likely to displace⁵ many or most users from a setting for prolonged periods, but not necessarily for all activities which occur there; although it is likely that amenity for all activities will be degraded. A ‘moderate’ adverse effect will periodically displace some activities and users, but amenity will not be degraded for all activities. A ‘minor’ adverse effect will displace a small number of users for short periods, but amenity will almost always be preserved for the majority of activities and users. The scale of effect may be reduced if the area affected is confined and there are ample suitable alternative opportunities for relevant activities.

The effects assessment is based on a regional-level review, which takes into account the scale of availability of alternative locations for each activity.

Many recreation activities in the study area have very high regional value due to the high local residential and visitor population, the accessibility of the setting and a relatively small number of alternatives, and the quality of the setting, ideally suited to a wide range of recreation pursuits.

Table 4 summarises the recreation activities undertaken as identified via literature review and interviews, and their significance. A ‘very high’ rating is given to the backcountry snow sport opportunities in the Basin, noting that use is at relatively low levels (which is typical of backcountry settings) and that access is facilitated by existing Remarkables Ski Area facilities.

The Boffa Miskell Landscape Effects Assessment identifies that there are no visual amenity effects from other recreation settings in the wider area, including Wye Creek and its eastern access, the Wentworth

⁵ Force people to recreate in other settings, at different times, or not at all.

Track, Raceman’s Hut, Coal Pit Saddle and Ben Curanchan and the track leading from there to Mt Salmond and Coal Pit Saddle.

Table 4: Value of recreation activities in the Doolans Basin at the regional level

Very high	High	Moderate	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Backcountry winter ski sports: predominantly ski touring and splitboarding. Proximity to Queenstown, and one of a limited set of such settings with easy access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mountaineering and ice climbing – predominantly focused on Wye Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hunting – Wye Creek the main focus and an element of a very wide set of regional opportunities ▪ Summer hiking, tramping, trail running and camping – an element of a very wide set of opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mountain biking ▪ Snow shoeing ▪ Paragliding, snow-kiting, and speed-riding ▪ Freshwater fishing (perhaps some trout breeding in the Doolans catchment, but no angling)

Effects on both recreation values and opportunities are considered. An opportunity, in this assessment,⁶ is the physical ability to undertake an activity, such as the ability to alpine ski in the Doolans Basin. Recreation values refer to the quality of the experience and the motivations of the participant, such as the desire to alpine ski in a backcountry setting with few other visitors and no infrastructure. The proposal will largely retain the existing activity opportunities, but will more-so affect recreation values.

Both construction and operational effects are considered.

5.1 Issues identified through interviews with recreational users

This summary of interviewees’ input provided here was largely generated by an AI review⁷ of Appendix 1: *Interview and consultation summaries*. The use of AI in this context is appropriate as it removes the potential for researcher bias in the analysis of qualitative data. The AI review has been edited for grammar and context. For example, the use of the word ‘unique’ as a descriptor has been removed; while such a term is used by interviewees, it does not represent a consensus. The review focuses on a high level analysis of the main concerns about the impacts of the proposal on an existing recreation setting. Other findings from consultation, such as the availability of alternative backcountry skiing locations, are referenced in the description of the existing environment. A response to the suggestions for mitigations made by interviewees is provided in Section 5.2.

The main issues identified centred on the degradation of the valley’s high-quality backcountry character, challenges related to access and affordability, concerns about environmental stewardship, and the long-term viability of infrastructure.

5.1.1 Loss of backcountry character and recreational opportunities

The most prominent concern among those consulted is the permanent loss of the Doolans Basin’s unique status as an accessible, yet pristine, backcountry area. Currently, the Doolans Basin is highly valued because it provides an accessible backcountry experience in a front country setting.

- **Impact on ski touring and wilderness values:** The Doolans is frequently described as a premier or best location in New Zealand for accessible ski touring due to its terrain variety, aspect, reliable snow retention, and proximity to Queenstown. Stakeholders, including the Federated Mountain

⁶ Other assessment tools, such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, often concatenate these two aspects.

⁷ Using Google NotebookLM

Clubs (FMC), the NZ Alpine Club (NZAC), and Queenstown Climbing Club (QCC), argue that the installation of ski field infrastructure would destroy the area's "very high" recreational values. The expansion is expected to close off key areas, dominate the best terrain, and eliminate ski touring and speed-riding opportunities in the valley. The overall experience would be diminished due to the loss of remoteness and the introduction of groomed runs and infrastructure, fundamentally altering the recreation opportunity spectrum.

- Impact on other activities: Commercial guides noted that the expansion would reduce the sense of remoteness, potentially deterring clients seeking a genuine backcountry adventure. The QCC stated that the development would eliminate opportunities for wilderness camping, scramble training, and family hiking along the Little Traverse. Hunters, while generally neutral if access remains unchanged, expressed concern about the change to the natural environment, higher usage, and the potential introduction of new activities like mountain biking.

5.1.2 Access, affordability, and operational barriers

A recurring theme was the need to maintain affordable and unrestricted access, given that the Doolans is on public conservation land.

- Road access and costs: Although NZSki maintains the crucial access road, the toll road fee (\$15 per vehicle) was identified as a barrier to access, particularly for local residents, guides, and summer users. Some interviewees recommended removing toll road fees or introducing an affordable "one up, one back" access pass, similar to the Snow Farm model, to ensure the area remains accessible to the wider community – although NZSki does already offer this option at the Remarkables.
- Uncertainty and operational conflict: Stakeholders emphasised the need for NZSki to include all future plans in the current Fast-track application to avoid "piecemeal consenting" and promote public understanding.⁸ There was also concern about whether ski tourers will retain the freedom to tour "anywhere, anytime," especially given that Helicopter Ridge (a proposed gondola mid-station location) has significant avalanche hazards that require control measures. NZSki noted that the consent application would include all components of the project.

5.1.3 Environmental stewardship and long-term viability

Consulted parties raised questions regarding the long-term responsibility for the infrastructure and potential environmental impacts.

- Climate change and infrastructure removal: Given that skiing is changing due to climate change, concerns were raised about the long-term viability of major infrastructure and the potential for stranded assets. Stakeholders sought a commitment from NZSki to the low-cost removal and rehabilitation of the infrastructure, at NZSki's expense, when climate change foreseeably makes the Doolans unviable for skiing. FMC advocated for a "leave no trace" design philosophy for all new infrastructure and terrain development.
- Water quality and ecosystems: The clean water in Doolans streams is vital for campers. Concern was raised that snowmaking chemicals could compromise this water quality. NZSki responded by stating they do not use the chemical Snowmax, and commitment was made to strong sediment control during construction and ongoing water monitoring. Additionally, there is worry that increased summer usage, such as new downhill mountain biking tracks, could damage fragile alpine grasslands.

⁸ At the time of the discussions, a potential second chair lift in the Doolans Basin was under consideration, but this has since been removed from the application.

- Protection of adjacent areas: Stakeholders stressed the importance of protecting the Wye Creek area, which is highly valued for ice climbing, summer hiking, and educational camping due to its safety and flat terrain. Concerns were raised about the potential for easy access from the new gondola pushing skiers into the fragile Wye Creek ecosystem. Stakeholders advocated for a commitment to a "hands off Upper Wye Creek" approach.

5.1.4 Positive impacts and enhancements

Several interviewees identified a range of benefits from improving the visitor experience, accessibility, and economic resilience of the region.

- Enhanced visitor experience: The expansion is seen as a way to increase the skiable terrain at the Remarkables, which would help manage crowding, extend the winter season with reliable snow, and provide a broader spectrum of recreational opportunities for both local residents and tourists.
- Improved accessibility: New gondolas and associated infrastructure are expected to open up the alpine environment to a wider range of users, including families, beginners, and individuals with limited mobility who may not currently be able to access backcountry areas.
- Economic and community benefits: The project is anticipated to provide a significant boost to Queenstown's tourism economy. It aligns with destination management strategies focused on high-value tourism and is expected to enhance community wellbeing by providing greater and more diverse access to the alpine environment.
- Increased access to new terrain: Some stakeholders, including experienced ski patrollers, acknowledge that while some existing ski touring routes would be impacted, the new lift infrastructure could also open up more efficient and safer access to more remote zones, potentially reducing travel times for backcountry users.

5.1.5 Summary

While some commercial operators who rely on increased tourism traffic view the expansion favourably, and others offered conditional support in exchange for defined commitments, some recreational groups such as the QCC and FMC remain strongly opposed. Their opposition is predicated on the view that the development of a ski field would destroy an accessible, world-class backcountry resource. Those offering conditional support primarily sought commitments regarding equitable public access (vehicular and physical), affordability, and environmental responsibility, including financial surety for eventual infrastructure removal.

5.1.6 Mitigation options identified through interviews

Several interviewees described provisions that they could support as conditions of consent to constructing and operating the proposed Doolans Basin ski area (while not necessarily endorsing the proposal in its entirety). The ideas and issues are summarised in Table 5. Responses clarify the proposal, explain existing provisions, and/or detail mitigations to be included in proposed conditions. Responses have been developed in consultation with NZSki representatives and generally relate to practical access and development considerations.

Table 5: Summary of suggested conditions and application response

Suggestions (and individual or agency)	Responses
<p>Ski Fields committing to a “leave no trace” design philosophy to any new ski-field infrastructure and new ski terrain like chair lifts, buildings, and snow guns. “In this regard we understand that NZSki has decided to delete proposals for a tunnel between the Rastus Burn and Doolans basins, and also sought to avoid siting lift towers in wetland areas. We welcome this.” (FMC)</p> <p>Committing to protecting areas of high very biodiversity, cultural, or scenic value on and near their fields, particularly for new terrain proposals. (FMC)</p>	<p>Further detail regarding minimising environmental effects are included in the main application bundle.</p>
<p>Ski Fields committing to a “leave no trace” design philosophy for any summer terrain, for example downhill mountain biking tracks, to the maximum extent possible. (FMC)</p> <p>There is concern about how a proposed ski field in Doolans Basin could affect hunting, particularly regarding post-season access, further ski expansion, the importance of maintaining hunting access, access costs, and introducing new activities such as mountain biking and tramping. (Out There Southern Adventures)</p>	<p>Mountain biking tracks and general summer access tracks do not form part of the proposal. However, there will be no restriction on private access to the Doolans Basin, and mountain bikers and walkers may choose to use field access formations. All existing access opportunities will remain.</p> <p>The application includes only the one lift in the main Basin area. Further development would require separate resource consent applications.</p>
<p>Ski Fields committing to creating and growing a contingency fund to remove and rehabilitate what might otherwise become stranded skiing infrastructure. This fund could be used for many purposes in the meantime. (FMC, NZAC)</p>	<p>The proposal is backed by Trojan Holdings which has a diversified investment portfolio. Site rehabilitation on closure will be a consent requirement.</p>
<p>Ski Fields committing to supporting ski touring on slack country, including one-up passes set at no more than 20% of a casual day pass rate, and touring lanes. (Queenstown Mountain Guides)</p> <p>To maintain the current back country passage, to both walkers, climbers and skiers, including and especially up to Lake Alta, and over the Wye Saddle closest to Single Cone. (Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd)</p> <p>Road access: To maintain fair and reasonable vehicular access up the road to a car park close to the Base Building and to foot traffic beyond the Base Building. This is to be established and maintained throughout the building process. A fair and reasonable arrangement should be sought so that the public is able to drive and park close to the top carpark in spite of the movement of heavy vehicles used during the building process. Offering a public car park a long way down the road hugely limits public access due to distance and significant time constraints. We do realise that the road is a private road, but much of it is in the Rastus Burn Conservation Area and public access is highly valued. (Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd)</p> <p>If the expansion proceeds, remove toll road fees or introducing an affordable “one up, one back” pass for backcountry users, similar to the Snow Farm model in the Pisa Range. Maintain low-cost or free access to ensure the area remains available to the wider community.(Queenstown Mountain Guides)</p>	<p>There is no charge for winter vehicle access to the Remarkables Ski Area.</p> <p>There are no restrictions on casual public access to Lake Alta and Wye Creek.</p> <p>Summer road fees are likely to remain in place to help cover maintenance of the private road.</p> <p>A “one-up” pass has always been available at the Remarkables Ski Area, but has not been well-publicised. It did not feature on the 2025 Ski Area website, for example.</p> <p>Loss of public use of upper carparks 1 and 2 is likely over three summer construction seasons when they are used for construction laydown areas. Access for those seasons will need to be from the lower parking areas. It is expected that public access from carpark 2 will be available in the third summer construction season.</p>

<p>Ski Fields committing to reliable and high capacity public transport to their base buildings, and free private road access for season pass holders and locals. (FMC)</p>	<p>NZSki operates morning ski bus services from Queenstown and Frankton, with return buses from 1.30pm. Season Pass holders receive a discount on their bus passes.</p> <p>Car-pooling is encouraged by making the most convenient car parks available to vehicles with three or more occupants during busy periods (Carpool Priority Days).</p>
<p>Commit to “hands off Upper Wye Creek”, and may also have the opportunity to join with Ngai Tahu and civil society organisations like FMC to advance proposals for the better protection of the wider Hector Mountains/Tapuae-O-Uenuku area. (FMC)</p>	<p>There are no proposed ski area developments in the Wye Creek area. The Boffa Miskell Landscape Effects Assessment describes how the proposal avoids visual effects from the Wye Valley area and its eastern access.</p> <p>Conditions include NZSki hosting a Recreation Users Group to assist in the company’s engagement with the wider recreation community, via representative organisations.</p>
<p>Backcountry ski hut operators, like Glenmore Station, Alpine Huts Limited, and even New Zealand Alpine Club, DOC and others committing to helicopter landing limits at their alpine or ski huts. (FMC)</p>	<p>This is beyond the scope of the proposal.</p>
<p>That NZSki supports the concept of a series of publicly owned Mountain “Turks” in the Wye Basin through to Lake Hope in Remarkables Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Mountain Turk organisation recognises that as ski tourers are forced into terrain further from the road end/ their vehicles (during to commercial ski field development) mountain shelter is desirable. Some of the mountain areas such as that around Lake Hope is highly consequential and we feel that having suitable shelter reduces back country travel pressure, and mitigates a lot of risk. It also provides additional accessible terrain. (Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd)</p>	<p>This is beyond the scope of the proposal and would require additional consents, which have not been scoped. However, conditions include NZSki hosting a Recreation Users Group to assist in the company’s engagement with the wider recreation community. Commitments to wider development in the Hector Mountains would be key consideration for this group and NZSki, considering the Remarkables Ski Area is a key gateway to the Hector area.</p>

5.2 Conservation Management Strategy review

The CMS contemplates and allows for consideration of the Remarkables Ski Area in its Policy 2.3.22:

May allow further development and/or expansion of The Remarkables ski field (with the exception of the upper Wye Creek valley) in accordance with Policies 3.25.1-3.25.6 in Part Three, provided that adverse effects (including cumulative effects) are avoided, remedied or mitigated on the following values:

- a) the outstanding natural landscapes and ecological values of The Remarkables and the Tapuae-o-Uenuku/Hector Mountains;*
- b) the landscape and ecological (including water quantity and quality) values of the priority ecosystem unit at Lake Alta;*
- c) the recreational experiences of other users; and*
- d) the ability of users to access the area year round.*

Other relevant policies from the CMS are reviewed in section 3.1. Table 6 summarises the points of alignment between the proposal and the CMS policies, and where potential issues have been identified..

Table 6: Proposal Alignment with the DOC Otago CMS		
DOC CMS Policy / Preferred Outcome	Proposal alignment	Proposal issues
Policy 2.3.22: Development of Remarkables Ski Area	The CMS identifies that development and expansion of the Remarkables ski field may be allowed (except in Wye Creek).	The policy requires that adverse effects on the recreational experiences of other users be avoided, remedied, or mitigated. The proposal is assessed as having a "Very high or high" adverse effect on current backcountry ski touring due to the change in experience.
Policy 2.3.20: Protection of Upper Wye Creek	The proposal adheres to the "hands off Upper Wye Creek" approach, with no permanent structures or utilities planned for that valley.	Stakeholders expressed concern that easy gondola access to the ridge might lead to visitor 'spillover' into the fragile Wye Creek ecosystem.
Policy 3.25.1: Preference for development of existing ski fields	The CMS prefers the development of existing authorised ski fields over new ones. This project is a contiguous expansion of the existing Remarkables infrastructure.	No issues
Policy 3.1.5: Visitor management zones	The existing Remarkables area is already classed as 'frontcountry', supporting high-intensity use and infrastructure.	Doolans Basin is currently a 'backcountry' zone. The proposal would fundamentally shift it to a 'frontcountry' experience, which conflicts with the zone's priority for solitude and unmodified environments.
Policy 3.25.2: Precautionary approach and climate change	The project aims to improve resilience to climate change by accessing slopes with better snow retention. Site rehabilitation and infrastructure removal costs are addressed.	Stakeholders, including the NZ Alpine Club, remain concerned about the long-term viability of high-cost infrastructure and the risk of 'stranded assets' due to rising snow lines.
Policy 2.3.21: Natural quiet and recreational uses	NZSki proposes forming a Recreation User Group (RUG) to maintain dialogue with the community and manage access concerns.	The project is noted to have high adverse effects on 'natural quiet' and will have a displacement effect on backcountry ski touring and speed-riding in the basin.
Policy 3.25.4: Non-skier and non-ski season use	The new gondola and mid-station viewing platforms are designed to improve alpine access for families, beginners, and non-skiers.	Current road tolls and access costs for the private road are identified by some users as barriers to non-skier and summer recreational use. Others recognise the costs of maintaining road access'

The CMS also outlines specific 'preferred outcomes' for the Remarkables-Hector area, balancing high-intensity commercial use with the preservation of 'natural quiet' and 'solitude' in adjacent valleys (see section 3.1). Table 7 summarises how the NZSki proposal aligns with or conflicts with these specific preferred outcomes.

Table 7: Alignment of Proposal with Remarkables-Hector Preferred Outcomes

Preferred Outcome (DOC CMS)	Alignment	Potential issues
Intact landscapes enjoyed by more people	The expansion provides increased accessibility for a broader demographic, including families, beginners, and those with limited mobility via the new gondola. NZSki also performs ongoing conservation work like pest control.	The "Very high or high" adverse effect on existing recreation values reflects a fundamental loss of the basin's "undeveloped natural character".
A range of recreational experiences (solitude vs. busy ski area)	The proposal capitalises on the Remarkables' status as a hub for high-intensity use and improves regional snow sports capacity and climate resilience.	The expansion displaces the "sense of solitude and remoteness" currently found in Doolans Basin, shifting it from a backcountry to a frontcountry experience.
Upper Wye Creek remains unmodified and free of structures	The proposal maintains a "hands off Upper Wye Creek" approach, with no permanent structures or utilities planned for that valley. A physical spur blocks visibility of the expansion from Wye Creek.	Stakeholders are concerned that the new gondola will facilitate easy "spillover" of visitors into the fragile Wye Creek ecosystem.
Highest level of recreational use focused around the ski area	The project uses the existing access road as a gateway and concentrates development adjacent to existing infrastructure in the Rastus Burn.	Stakeholders identify the summer road toll as a barrier to non-skier and community access to the wider area, while others accept the need to fund road maintenance.
Preservation of natural quiet	Mitigations include forming a Recreation User Group (RUG) to manage access and minimise conflicts between different user groups.	Construction activity over three summers will have "very high but temporary" noise and visual effects on the Basin.
Nevis River valley remains in its natural state	The proposal is largely contained within the Doolans Basin, and there are no records of angling in the Doolans catchment that would be directly impacted.	Some stakeholders raised concerns about potential sediment inflows into Doolans Creek affecting trout breeding downstream.

5.3 Effects assessment

This assessment summarises the recreation activities potentially affected by the proposal, considering especially the points summarised previously in this section, and reviews effects from three perspectives:

- Temporary **construction** activities over three summers (defined as the period outside the ski season when weather and snow cover allows construction activities), with the potential for minor 'tidy-up' works in the fourth summer, and only minor work on building interiors in the remainder of the year. Construction activities will include the construction of all necessary construction, including roads, buildings, water and waste infrastructure, and snow making and learner facilities. Construction will have obvious noise, vehicle, helicopter and associated human activity that while largely confined to the Doolans Basin, will have noise and visual effects in the wider valley, and include construction of the water take weir in the Doolans Creek Right Branch.

- The effects of operation of the new ski area on recreation **opportunities** in the Doolans Basin. That is, the physical ability to continue to undertake existing recreation activities in the Basin with the proposal in place. That is, for example, the physical ability to conduct a variety of winter snow sports activities. If the physical ability to undertake an activity is curtailed, the effect on that activity will be ‘very high’.
- The effects of the operation of the new ski area on recreation **values** in the Doolans Basin, and in the wider catchment. This refers to the ability to continue to enjoy the social and environmental characteristics of an existing activity – such as low encounter rates with other visitors and a setting featuring few or no non-recreation structures. If there are no similar alternative regional opportunities where the same set of recreation values can be experienced the effect on that activity will be ‘very high’.

Objectives for mitigation are to:

- Maintain public access for all existing summer and winter recreational uses of the Doolans Basin when the ski area is in operation, noting that there will be unavoidable effects on the ‘remote’ recreation values of the setting.
- Minimise disruption during construction for summer access to and with the Doolans Basin, and other recreation settings accessed via the Remarkables Ski Area (especially Wye Creek).
- Recognise and capitalise on the role of the Remarkables Ski Area as a gateway to recreation in the wider Hector and Remarkables Mountain areas.
- Maintain ongoing input from the recreation and tourism sectors and the Department of Conservation into the management of recreation and tourism opportunities in the Doolans Basin and those facilitated by the access provided by the Remarkables Ski Area.

A key proposed mitigation is the development of a Recreation User Group (RUG) made up of representatives of the wider and relevant Queenstown recreation community and commercial users of the Remarkables and Hector Mountains (the contact list for interviews for this assessment would represent the invitees), and the Department of Conservation (if interested). The RUG’s role would be to liaise with NZSki regarding options for recreation access and management within the Ski Area, and NZSki’s role in facilitating wider recreation opportunities in the Remarkables and Hector area. This would require NZSki appointing an employee with responsibility for community engagement, including liaison with, and participation in, the RUG.

Several guiding companies report the potential for some effects on the commercial activities as a result of the change to the remote backcountry experience and untracked snow, including Queenstown Mountain Guides and Wanaka Mountain Guides. Several other commercial operators report the potential for only a slight potential for effects due to their low use, alternative settings and the ability to work within the proposal. NZSki is in conversation with the affected operators.

A summary of potential effects with and without mitigation, and the mitigation recommendations, are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Proposal effects and mitigation summary			
Activity	Unmitigated level of effect	Potential mitigation	Residual level of effect
Construction			
All summer activities	Very high but temporary effect from noise and construction activity (three seasons), and loss of public use of carparks 1 and 2 for two construction seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online construction activity advice. ▪ General management of construction activities to manage noise, minimise lighting and to limit footprint. ▪ Recreation Users Group. 	Very high but temporary
Operation – recreational opportunities			
All winter activities	Moderate: Modification of physical setting characteristics via grooming, avalanche control, terrain (roading and ski trail) and introduction of physical structures (gondolas, buildings).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring no restrictions on physical access unless for declared visitor safety reasons (such as night-time grooming with winches). ▪ Enable safe access routes where practical when any works are underway (as per current operations on Remarkables Ski Area). ▪ Recreation Users Group. 	Moderate
Hunting	Minor: Low use setting, predominantly beyond the winter ski season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None required, but Recreation Users Group relevant to managing opportunities and access 	Minor
All summer activities	Minor: No change to access opportunities. Relatively low use with high number of alternatives regionally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None required, but Recreation Users Group relevant to managing opportunities and access 	Minor
Operation – recreational values			
Backcountry winter ski sports	Very high or high effect. Shift from backcountry to a front country recreation experience, with infrastructure and very high encounter rates between visitors. Alternatives exist, but more remote for Queenstown residents and visitors with different setting values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of the “one up one back” lift pass for those accessing the backcountry settings. ▪ Recreation Users Group. 	Very high or high
Mountaineering and ice climbing	Minor. As for winter ski sports, but with higher numbers of alternative locations, and focused on Wye Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of the “one up one back” lift pass for those accessing the backcountry settings. ▪ Recreation Users Group. 	Minor
All summer activities	Minor: Shift from backcountry setting. Relatively low use with high number of alternatives regionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None required, but Recreation Users Group relevant to managing opportunities and access 	Minor

6 Conclusion

The proposal to expand the Remarkables Ski Area would result in a fundamental change to the recreation landscape of the Doolans Basin. The operational effect of the proposal on existing recreation values is assessed as "Very high or high". This rating reflects a transition from a backcountry to a frontcountry recreation experience in the Basin caused by the introduction of permanent infrastructure, groomed trails and increased visitor interactions. For users who prioritise solitude and an unmodified landscape, the proposal represents a substantial modification of the local environment. There are few regional alternatives with comparable 'backcountry in the frontcountry' access, and displacement of traditional backcountry activities is the primary concern for stakeholders. This includes several commercial guiding companies.

However, the expansion would also provide meaningful enhancements to regional snow sports capacity. By accessing slopes with superior snow-retention, the project improves the climate resilience of the regional ski industry. The introduction of gondolas and new trails would increase accessibility for a broader demographic, including families, beginners, and individuals with limited mobility who do not currently visit the basin.

There are no opportunities to mitigate the change of the recreation setting from backcountry to frontcountry, but NZSki will have an ongoing role in facilitating recreation access to the Remarkables and Hector Mountains, and public use of the Rastus Burn and Doolans Valleys. Consequently, a key recommendation of this report is formalising NZSki's input via a leadership role in a Recreation Users Group. This is intended to assist in the management of the ski area generally, considering local public recreation opportunities, NZSki's relationship with other commercial providers, and the company's wider role in facilitating recreation in the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area.

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Appendix 1: Interview and consultation summaries

Several consultation methods have been applied:

- Sixteen semi-structured interviews were carried out with recreational users and recreation advocates identified by an online search and user recommendations (including staff of NZSki). Most interviews were conducted by ██████████ of Thrive Spaces & Places. This group included Federated Mountain Clubs who responded in writing to written questions.
- The Department of Conservation provided a list of all concession holders who have a permit or licence to conduct commercial recreation activities in the Remarkables area. It was not possible to identify, from that list, which operators use the Doolans Basin, and so each was contacted by phone and/or email – where possible – to review the locations used and whether there is any potential impact from the proposal. Due to privacy requirements, DOC was unable to supply contact names and details. Thirty-two contacts were made. Several were individuals previously interviewed, and one was added to the interview list.
- An online information session was held in September 2025. All those previously interviewed were invited, along with those concession operators who stated they had some use of Doolans Basin. Five individuals attended, along with five representatives of NZSki (including the General Manager and CEO) and two consultants.

All interviews and the minutes of the information session are presented in this Appendix. A final table lists all concession holders and a summary of their responses.

██████████ – Hunting

██████████ of Out There Southern Adventures has owned and operated in the region for eight (8) years and has hunted around Doolans Basin for over 30 years, using it primarily for hunting and guided backcountry activities under concession from DOC, including guided walks and overnight camping, all requiring high skill due to extreme conditions. Entry and exit points for these activities include several locations: the Remarkables, Raceman’s Hut, Coalpit Saddle (the most common), the ski field, Alta Saddle (covering both North and South Doolans), and via a 4WD track from the Gibbston Valley side.

The estimated number of visitors per hunting season is about 50-100, although that figure is uncertain. The prime hunting season is late November to late May, with a peak in April during the deer roar. Remarkables Ski Field plays no supporting role for hunting, as it lacks significant deer and pest populations, but Coalpit Saddle is valuable for introducing new or less fit hunters to backcountry techniques in accessible terrain. ██████ shared that the valley is favoured for its proximity to Queenstown, easy access, opportunities to experience backcountry settings with relative ease, and presence of species such as red deer, fallow deer, chamois, and goats; access routes include old water race tracks into Raceman’s Hut.

Other important hunting and recreation locations Pete uses in the region encompass the Remarkables Conservation Area (including up Wye Creek, now open to WARO), Nevis, Old Man and Old Woman Range, areas near Wanaka, Skippers, Pisa Range Conservation Area, and the 12 Mile Recreational Reserve, though these spots are often restricted by helicopter activity (WARO) and have depleted stock of animals or have other limitations due to location, weather, seasonality. The Doolans stands out from these alternatives for combining remarkable access with a unique and unmatched backcountry experience, especially compared to other varied terrains like open tussock or bush.

There is concern about how a proposed ski field in Doolans Basin could affect hunting, particularly regarding post-season access, further ski expansion, the importance of maintaining hunting access, access costs, and introducing new activities such as mountain biking and tramping.

Summary

Theme/Question	Key Points
Activity Use	Hunting Concession through DOC (has ability to facilitate walking/tramping trips, and overnight camping)
Entry/Exit	Coalpit Saddle, sometimes through the ski field, sometimes up through Wye Creek
Visitor Numbers	50-100 hunters per year (estimate, and not specifically through Out There Southern Adventures)
Seasonality	Late November-Late may (Roar in April)
Ski Field's Role	None Identified for Stakeholder
Suitability	Backcountry experience in a front country setting. Great array of game to hunt, great access, great terrain
Regional Comparison	Remarkables Conservation Area (Up Wye Creek)- opened up to WARO Over the top into the Nevis Old man and Old Woman Range Recreational areas in Wanaka Up in the back of Skippers Pisa Range Conservation Area Limited due to helicopter areas 12-mile Recreational Reserve
Doolans' Position	Special for access, naturalness, safety; backcountry in front country setting
Ski Field Impact	Change to naturalness, higher usage, altered experience; Hunters are neutral if access does not change

█ – Head of Ski Patrol

█ has spent the last 15 years in Queenstown working for NZSki. He personally ski tours in the Doolans, both the east side and main basin, as well as in North Wye Creek, giving him extensive on-the-ground knowledge of the area.

█ noted that in winter the Doolans Valley is a hub for ski touring and split boarding, often accessed directly from the ski area. It is considered one of the most accessible backcountry areas in New Zealand, with key entry points including Curvey Basin (a 10-minute walk from the lift) and Sugar Bowl (accessing the east branch via the Sugar Head Wall). Snowshoeing occurs on the east shoulder of Single Cone, while ski mountaineering is focused on the west face of the Remarkables and around Single Cone. The Doolans area itself is more of a basin, better-suited for touring than technical climbing, though ice climbing occurs nearby in North Wye Creek and along the west face of the Remarkables.

During summer, tramping is the main activity, with access from North Wye Creek or via the ski area. The ridge between Wye and Doolans offers excellent views and camping spots. Hunting for chamois and red deer takes place year-round, though mostly at lower elevations. Mountain biking does not occur in Doolans but is possible on the very fringes, such as toward Mount Rosa and Coal Bit Saddle.

There are two main access areas, with four specific entry points, three from the top of Curvey Basin and one from Sugar Bowl. The most popular route is a vertical boot pack from Curvey Basin, leading to the Keyhole Saddle and into the main basin. Traverses and loops are common, allowing users to enter and exit via different routes depending on conditions and preference.

Winter is by far the busiest season, with around 250,000 visitors to the Remarkables each year. Of these, an estimated 50,000–60,000 are likely ski touring enthusiasts, though many are repeat visitors, typically traveling in groups of 2–6. Summer use is much lower, with most visitors accessing the area from North Wye Creek, Ben Nevis, or Two Mile. Ice climbing is not common in Doolans itself but occurs in North Wye Creek and along the Remarkables. Climbing is popular in summer, but Doolans sees little technical climbing activity.

The Remarkables Ski Field focuses on risk mitigation and safe access. It works closely with patrol and ski managers to establish backcountry guidelines and provides clear signage and safe routes, especially during avalanche control. A toll gate at the base of the road helps monitor summer use, and additional control measures (such as the “bomb squad”) are in place to manage backcountry access during winter operations.

The Doolans is highly suitable for ski touring and split boarding due to its easy access, varied terrain (with runs for all skill levels), and south-facing slopes that retain snow longer than the north-facing Remarkables. The terrain offers a mix of green, blue, and black runs, making it ideal for both beginners and advanced users. Hunting is possible year-round, with access from Ben Nevis or North Wye Creek.

Recreational activities similar to those in the Doolans occur throughout the wider region, including at Treble Cone, Cardrona, and in the Matukituki Valleys. Areas like Soho Basin, Anderson’s Bowl, and Boundary Creek offer backcountry skiing, while the Pisa Range, St. Bathans Range, and mountains around Makarora provide mountaineering and touring opportunities. The Hector and Garvy Mountains and the area between Piano Flats and Cromwell are also popular for winter recreation.

Overall, ██████ pointed out that the Doolans stands out for its accessibility—being just a chairlift ride away from the ski area—and its varied terrain. While other areas like Treble Cone offer more challenging terrain, Doolans is considered the best for easy, safe access to backcountry skiing, making it ideal for beginners and those seeking a reliable touring experience. The valley’s basin shape and snow retention make it a standout in the region. Brad expresses excitement about the potential expansion, noting that while change can be controversial, it could bring significant benefits to the ski area and its users.

Summary

Section	Key Points
Background	Brad, US expat, 15 years in Queenstown, extensive NZSki experience, personally tours Doolans and North Wye Creek
Activities (Winter)	Ski touring, splitboarding, snowshoeing, ski mountaineering; Curvey Basin, Sugar Bowl, east shoulder Single Cone, west face Remarkables
Activities (Summer)	Tramping, hunting; access from North Wye Creek, Ben Nevis, ridge between Wye and Doolans; no mountain biking in Doolans
Access/Egress	2 main access areas, 4 entry points (3 from Curvey Basin, 1 from Sugar Bowl); vertical boot pack to keyhole most popular; loops and traverses common
Visitor Numbers	Remarkables: Winter ~250,000 visitors, 50,000–60,000 ski touring (repeat visitors, groups of 2–6); Summer: low use, mostly from North Wye Creek
Seasonality	Winter: June–Oct (main season); summer: low use; ice climbing in North Wye Creek, not Doolans; climbing in summer on Remarkables
Ski Field’s Role	Risk mitigation, safe access, backcountry guidelines, signage, toll gate for summer, “bomb squad” for winter control
Suitability	Easy access, varied terrain (green, blue, black), south-facing slopes, ideal for all skill levels; hunting year-round from Ben Nevis/North Wye Creek
Regional Comparison	Backcountry at Treble Cone, Cardrona, Matukituki Valleys; mountaineering/touring in Pisa Range, St. Bathans, Hector/Garvy Mountains, Piano Flats–Cromwell

Comparison/Outlook	Doolans best for access, varied terrain; other areas more challenging; expansion could bring benefits, though change is sometimes controversial
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– Destination Queenstown

Anticipated Impacts on the Overall Visitor Experience

Destination Queenstown anticipates that the Doolans Expansion would significantly enhance the overall visitor experience, particularly by increasing capacity and extending the winter season. The addition of new infrastructure, such as lifts and groomed terrain, is seen as a benefit for both local recreationists and visitors, providing greater access and a broader spectrum of recreational opportunities. The expansion is expected to help manage crowding, offer more choices for both traditional and adventure users, and improve access for those with varying skill levels. The ability to move further up the mountains in response to climate change is also highlighted as a positive, ensuring continued quality winter experiences. The alpine environment is recognised for its mental health benefits, and the expanded terrain is expected to accommodate growing demand and support a vibrant winter sports culture.

Enhancement or Change in Recreational Offerings

The expansion is viewed as a positive development for both visitors and residents, as it would diversify the recreational offerings available in Queenstown. The proposal is expected to introduce more mixed-use infrastructure, benefiting a wide range of users, from skiers and snowboarders, hikers and climbers. The new facilities would not only support winter sports but also provide opportunities for summer activities such as hiking and biking. The expansion is seen as a way to build capability within the community, particularly among young people and aspiring athletes, and to maintain Queenstown's reputation as a destination for world-class winter activities. The project is also expected to support economic growth by attracting more visitors and encouraging longer stays.

Estimated Numbers of Visitors per Year

While Destination Queenstown does not have specific visitor numbers for the Doolans area, it notes that visitation is influenced by factors such as weather, snow conditions, and access. The winter season typically runs from June to late October, with visitation peaking during periods of good snow and weather.

Alignment with Queenstown's Destination Management Strategies

The Doolans Expansion aligns closely with Queenstown's destination management strategies and long-term tourism goals. The project supports the goal of attracting high-contributing visitors who stay longer, travel further, and engage more deeply with the region. The expansion fits within the broader vision of regenerative tourism, where economic growth is achieved not by increasing visitor numbers but by increasing the value and quality of each visit. It was noted that NZSki has a long history of supporting sustainability objectives through its projects. Ski and winter visitors are considered essential to the region's tourism economy, and the expansion is seen as a way to further strengthen Queenstown's position as a premier ski destination.

Role of the Remarkables Ski Field in Supporting Activities

Destination Queenstown/Wanaka Tourism noted that the Remarkables ski field plays a critical role in supporting recreational activities in the Doolans and the wider region. The access road built by NZSki is essential for enabling participation in both winter and summer activities and NZSki's commitment to safety and risk management for mountain users.

Likely Impacts on Community Wellbeing

The expansion is expected to have a largely positive impact on community wellbeing, enhancing access to recreation and reinforcing the sense of place that the Remarkables provide for Queenstown residents. The mountains are seen as a taonga (treasure) for the community, offering spiritual and cultural value as well as opportunities for outdoor recreation year round. The project is anticipated to support mental health and social cohesion by providing more opportunities for residents to connect with the alpine environment and each other.

Ensuring Equitable Access to New Facilities

Destination Queenstown emphasises the importance of equitable access to new recreational facilities, noting that NZSki has a strong track record of community engagement through school ski programs, hardship grants, and adaptive initiatives. The expansion is expected to increase accessibility for underrepresented groups, including youth, families, and people with limited mobility, by providing more opportunities to experience the mountains and participate in intergenerational activities.

Comparison with Other Areas in the Region

While there are many other remote and less developed areas for recreation in the region, the Doolans offer a unique combination of accessibility, infrastructure, and quality terrain. Destination Queenstown notes that the expansion is expected to complement, rather than replace, existing options, providing another high-quality venue for both locals and visitors. The project fits within the broader context of destination management planning, balancing growth, sustainability, and community aspirations.

Summary

Question/Topic	Key Points
Visitor Experience	Enhanced capacity, extended season, improved access and variety, mental health benefits
Recreational Offerings	Diversified activities, mixed-use infrastructure, support for youth and athletes, economic growth
Visitor Numbers	No specific data; visitation peaks in good conditions; cumulative winter visitation is significant
Destination Management Alignment	Supports high-value, long-stay visitors; aligns with sustainability and regenerative tourism goals
Role of Ski Field	Provides essential access, environmental stewardship, safety, and community connection
Community Wellbeing	Positive impact on recreation access, sense of place, and social/mental health
Equitable Access	School programs, hardship grants, adaptive initiatives, increased opportunities for all residents
Comparison with Other Areas	Doolans offers unique accessibility and quality; expansion complements other regional recreation

Federated Mountain Clubs

20 August 2025



Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc.

Response to questions from *Thrive Spaces and Places* regarding the proposed Doolans Basin expansion by NZSki



Introduction

Thank you for inviting Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc. (*FMC*) to respond to your questions as part of a Thrive Spaces and Places (*Thrive*) independent recreation assessment of the proposed Doolans Basin expansion by NZSki Limited (*NZSki*) under the Fast-track Approvals Act (*Proposed Expansion*). We understand that the Proposed Expansion will not include a tunnel, and will initially comprise a single gondola lift from the Rastus Burn into the Doolans Basin. Our comments are premised on this understanding.

It is not clear whether the Proposed Expansion application will include a second lift to the north and east of that gondola. We encourage NZSki to include all of its future plans in the application so as to best use the opportunity that the Fast Track affords to avoid piecemeal consenting. A “complete long term concept” type application will best promote public understanding of NZSki’s view of the future for the Remarkables Ski Area, and in this way best promote public dialogue on it.

FMC was founded in 1931, to promote public access to the New Zealand outdoors, to preserve our public lands and to promote non-commercial outdoor recreation. We advocate on behalf of over 22,000 New Zealanders, comprising 93 member clubs and over 1,000 individual supporters, who enjoy outdoor recreation in New Zealand’s front and backcountry. We also speak for the large number of other New Zealanders who enjoy our public lands for outdoor recreation.

We understand that Samantha Strong of Thrive is working with Rob Greenaway on an independent recreation assessment of the Proposed Expansion, with the support of NZSki and in collaboration with Louise McQuillan and Mark Sommerville. As part of its assessment, Thrive is seeking to better understand current recreational use of Doolans Basin (*Doolans*).

On 17 June 2025, Ms Strong emailed FMC advising that Thrive would greatly appreciate insights from an FMC perspective on how the area is used, as well as FMC’s perspective on the potential impacts of the proposed ski field expansion. Thrive needs to capture current usage, activities, specific locations for activities, seasonality, and all values associated with the Doolans and why it makes it so appropriate for the activities listed. Thrive is also looking for an outline, if the ski field were to go into the Doolans, of how and why it would affect the recreational community.



Ms Strong met with Allan Brent of FMC on 2 July 2025. She presented nine questions to FMC, which Mr Brent asked for by email. These came on 3 July 2025. Ms Strong requested responses by 31 July 2025.

This letter forms our response, and we apologise for the delay. In part this has been to take the opportunity to discuss and better understand the Proposed Application directly with NZSki. Mr Brent met with Paul Anderson, NZ Ski CEO, for that purpose on 7 August 2025.

FMC's General Comments

1. FMC understood that Thrive would seek our view on how and why it would affect the recreational community. We do not feel that Ms Strong's questions necessarily afford that opportunity fully, so we make these comments.
2. Thrive may or may not be aware that an extensive recreation assessment of the wider area, including the Doolans, was prepared for the Department of Conservation (DOC) in 2020¹ (*2020 Report*). It outlines the extensive hunting opportunities in the Doolans. FMC does not speak for hunters but suggests that a recreation assessment will be incomplete without talking with New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association.
3. FMC has long recognised the special character of the Doolans, and the wider Remarkables/Hector Mountains/Nevis area. These areas very clearly contain scenery of such distinctive quality, ecological systems, or natural features so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their preservation is in the national interest. Thrive will recognise these words as originating in the National Parks Act 1980. As such, in the past we have campaigned for these areas to be declared a National Park.
4. FMC is a strong supporter of National Parks. We recognise Ngāi Tahu's current position on additions to, or additional, National Parks means that a Remarkables National Park is not currently realistic. A Remarkables National Park proposal is, nonetheless, a reminder of the area's priceless values and character, which are partly at stake in the Proposed Expansion. FMC made a submission for strong protection in the "Kawerau/Remarkables re-classification" exercise in 2021. That process was supported by 5 expert reports which we suggest will be essential references, if not the best available information, for their respective subject areas. Decisions omitting to consider these reports directly, or indirectly through Thrive's report, would be at material legal risk.
5. The earlier tenure review of Glenroy and Wentworth Stations, which brought the upper Doolans into public conservation land in the late 1990s (and out of Crown Pastoral Lease) was also supported by many expert reports including reports on "recreation and other public interest values" for Glenroy Station² and Wentworth Station³. These Reports date from 1996 so their "recreational use" commentaries correctly identify many activities (except potential paragliding) but understate the current usage picture. Overall, their conclusions of "very high" recreational values are, and could only be strengthened by, the increased recreational

¹ Peter Devlin. (2020, October). *Kawerau-Remarkables Conservation Area Recreational Values*. Department, of Conservation.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/getting-involved/consultations/2020/kawerauremarkables-conservation-area-reclassification/kawerau-remarkables-recreational-values.pdf>

² Dr Michael JS Floate. (1996, April). *Glenroy Station, Report on Recreation and Public Values*. High Country Consultancy. Available via online FMC Archives, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wpyREXLoDAKLd_NIMFxQ7Sv7fiklhqIq/view

³ Dr Michael JS Floate. (1996, January). *Wentworth Station, Report on Recreation and Public Values*. High Country Consultancy. Download via FMC Archives online: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wM4Mao07twbbxdvhlMeoW6vTDdnfdDTA/view>

usage since 1996. Decisions omitting to consider these reports directly, or indirectly through Thrive's report, would also be a material legal risk.

6. Many FMC member clubs, members of those clubs, and FMC individual supporters like downhill skiing. The Ski Areas Association of New Zealand was a long time FMC member. While we have not had the time or resources to conduct extensive member outreach or surveys, we anticipate that some proportion would support new chairlift-serviced downhill ski terrain, while others will be passionately against the despoiling of yet another relatively untouched valley in the name of volume tourism.
7. Our kaupapa is also for low-impact recreation that is available to ordinary New Zealanders, and not just a wealthy few, especially if they are visitors. As such our vision in the Doolans is for:
 - a. An appropriate balance between the privileges - the concessions - associated with accruing significant private benefit using public conservation land, the public's right to enjoy that land, and the public benefit in protecting that land;
 - b. The profitable operation of the Remarkables infrastructure (whether including the Doolans or not) over its lifetime - its loss-making will be no good to anyone;
 - c. The low-cost removal of Doolans infrastructure, at NZSki's cost and not the public's, when climate change foreseeably makes the Doolans unviable for skiing; and,
 - d. The winter usage of the Doolans being a concession to the permanent and better protection of the surrounding Hector Mountains/Tapuae-o-Uenuku area.
8. With these visions catered to, we anticipate that NZSki would both achieve its own goals (no doubt including strong viability and resilience) while maintaining or even enhancing its social licence among the recreational community in the Wakatipu and regionally.
9. Skiing is changing due to climate change. Propping up "concrete jungle" ski fields is getting harder, and building new ones increasingly short-sighted.

Practically speaking then, FMC could support:

- a. Ski Fields committing to a **"leave no trace" design philosophy to any new ski-field infrastructure** like chair lifts, buildings, and snow guns. In this regard we understand that NZSki has decided to delete proposals for a tunnel between the Rastus Burn and Doolans basins, and also sought to avoid siting lift towers in wetland areas. We welcome this.
- b. Ski Fields committing to a **"leave no trace" design philosophy for any new ski terrain to the maximum extent possible**. In this regard we applaud Cardrona Alpine Resort's commitment to this in its development of the Willows and Soho basins without significant earthworks for pistes.
- c. Ski Fields committing to a **"leave no trace" design philosophy for any summer terrain**, for example downhill mountain biking tracks, to the maximum extent possible.
- d. Ski Fields committing to **creating and growing a contingency fund** to remove and rehabilitate what might otherwise become stranded skiing infrastructure. This fund could be used for many purposes in the meantime.
- e. Ski Fields committing to **supporting ski touring on slack country**, including one-up passes set at no more than 20% of a casual day pass rate, and touring lanes.
- f. Ski Fields committing to **reliable and high capacity public transport to their base buildings**, and free private road access for season pass holders and locals.

- g. Ski Industry operators committing to **protecting areas of high very biodiversity, cultural, or scenic value** on and near their fields, particularly for new terrain proposals. At the Doolans, we suggest that NZSki has significant opportunities in this regard. It could commit to “**hands off Upper Wye Creek**”, and may also have the opportunity to join with Ngai Tahu and civil society organisations like FMC to advance proposals for the **better protection of the wider Hector Mountains/Tapuae-O-Uenuku area**.
- h. Backcountry ski hut operators, like Glenmore Station, Alpine Huts Limited, and even New Zealand Alpine Club, DOC and others **committing to helicopter landing limits** at their alpine or ski huts.

These are general positions we will seek to apply consistently in our dealings with ski area developments in the near term. They will mean different things for different proposals in different places.

In the absence of comparable NZSki commitments to the above, or comparable concession conditions, FMC could not support the Proposed Expansion.

FMC’s Response to the Questions

1. How do you use the Doolans Basin for your activity?

FMC is aware that the Doolans is well used by the Otago and Southland **ski-touring** communities in winter, when conditions allow. Refer to section 8.9 of the attached 2020 Report.

We are also aware of summer **walking** and **running** usage linking the Coal Pit Saddle/Mt Edward/Mt Salmond and Ben Cruachan areas. This is not detailed in the 2020 Report, which was more general in character. In the case of running, it was also authored before the significant growth in popularity of mountain running in New Zealand (FMC represents member clubs such as Canterbury Mountaineering Club, reporting this growth).

We are aware of interest in, and actual, paragliding, and snow-kiting, and speed-riding (i.e. skiing/speed paragliding) in the area. Paragliding is possible though affected by airspace considerations. Similarly these are not covered in the 2020 Report, which again precedes a period of significant growth in these sports (FMC represents member clubs such as New Zealand Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association reporting that growth).

2. How do you enter and exit the Valley?

Ski-tourers, and **speed-riders** tend to enter and exit the basin from the Rastus Burn or Wye Creek.

Walkers and runners also enter and exit from the Rastus Burn, but are more likely to do so through trips entering or exiting via Coal Pit Saddle or Wye Creek.

3. What’s your estimate of numbers of visitors per year for your activity?

As we discussed, FMC does not feel that estimates of numbers are likely to be appropriate and useful in this case. A “per year” measure, for example, is straightforwardly inappropriate to cater to seasonal variation, both between summer and winter, and year to year. Nor can current usage reflect the obvious growth in running, ski-touring and para-associated sports in the Southern Lakes.

We are aware that **snow-kiting** is not common in the Doolans, it being steep and lee to prevailing winds. However, it is possible in certain conditions.

Once again we are aware that the Doolans is well used by the Otago and Southland ski-touring communities in winter, when conditions allow, and of summer walking and running trips, including through trips. In short, **the Doolans is sought after year round.**

4. What's the season for each?

Clearly **ski-touring** and speed-riding are winter activities.

Walking, running and traditional **paragliding** are summer activities.

5. What role does the Remarkables Ski Field play in supporting your activity?

The Remarkables Ski-field plays a role in that NZSki maintains a road and car parking areas high into the Rastus Burn.

6. What makes the Valley so suitable for your activity?

In summary, the recreation values of the Doolans are at minimum “very high”. In this way the conclusions of the Glenroy and Wentworth Reports stand and can only have been strengthened with increasing recreational use.

For **ski-tourers** and **speed riders** there are very few high altitude Otago valleys of the scale, aspect, and mixture of difficulties on offer in the Doolans. While there are many more high altitude valleys nearby, much of the terrain is extreme, or has very difficult access, or both. In Canterbury, the many high altitude valleys have terrain of a much different character and are often much more difficult to access.

For **walkers** and **runners** in the Wakatipu, similarly there are no similar opportunities to enjoy remote country with point to point access.

For **paragliders**, the back side of the Remarkables can offer flying conditions that are more suited to thermal climbing than elsewhere. The Doolans is the most accessible of these areas.

7. Where else in the region do you do your activity?

As provided in the 2020 Report, the Doolans is “one of only a few” areas in Otago that are very good for **ski-touring**. We assess that this remains true today. A very nearby one is the Upper Wye Creek area, which affords an excellent round-trip opportunity of Rastus Burn/Wye/Doolans/Rastus Burn.

Snow-kiting is most popular on the Pisa Range, Old Man, Old Woman and Garvie Mountains and the Doolans is an advanced area, much less used, being steeper and lee to prevailing winds.

There are many **walking** opportunities in the region but few areas of high alpine environment are so readily accessible. In terms of **running**, there are few high altitude point to point options of comparable length and difficulty.

8. How does Doolans compare with those other areas? Is it one of the best or just another option?

The Doolans is uniquely good for an introduction to **ski-touring**, as the 2020 Report details.

9. How do you think a ski field in the Valley will affect your activity?

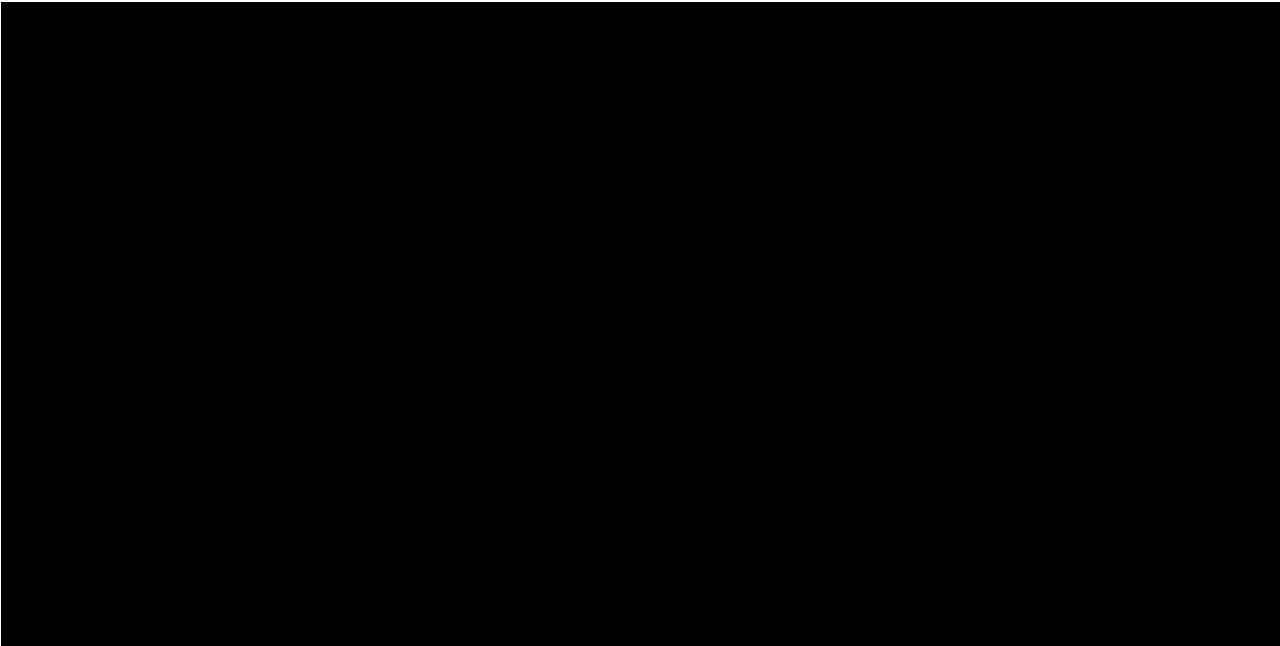
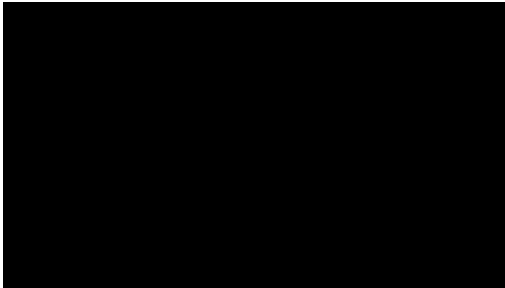
Clearly ski field infrastructure will wholly destroy the “very high” recreational values of the Doolans. That cannot be an acceptable concession to the recreational use, and the protection, of public conservation land without reversibility at private cost, along with strong protections for comparable nearby areas, and accommodations for recreation in the meantime.

Specifically, ski field infrastructure will **remove ski-touring and speed-riding opportunities** in the Doolans altogether, with the poor substitute of making lesser opportunities in the far-afield Pt 2008/Mt Salmond Basin slightly more accessible (which would not allow Rastus/Wye/Doolans/Rastus round trips.).

The proposal will have a much lesser effect on **snow-kiters** who mainly go elsewhere.

It will **change the remote character of the walking experience**, which may be of less concern to some runners.

Yours sincerely,



Alpine Dreams / Peak Experience Ltd

Alpine Dreams is the latest incarnation of Peak Experience, which originally included many guides but under the Alpine Dreams banner represents only two. As such it is a smaller guiding company and uses the Doolans basin only a few times per year, over both winter and summer. Double and Single Cone are key winter destinations, but beyond Doolans. Traversing Helicopter Ridge (summer and winter), avalanche training in the Basin and general ski touring are offered. The Doolans Basin is a high quality ski touring destination, but company takes a lot of beginner clients and the Basin slope is often too steep for them, but is a good terrain for teaching. On a good day there might be 40 – 50 people in the Basin, with a general range of 10 – 50, often in two or three groups.

The use of Doolans for backcountry activities fully depends on use of the Remarkables Ski Area access road. [REDACTED] is comfortable with the summer fees for access, recognising the cost of maintaining the road asset. Compared with many other ski areas which border similar backcountry settings, [REDACTED] believes that NZSki has done a very good job of working with the public and other commercial providers to enable backcountry access – allowing free use of carparks, not shutting access without very good reason, having reasonable access to road and field managers for updates, and supporting rescues off-piste.

He notes that as use rises in backcountry settings like the Doolans Basin, personal risk will increase. For example, a skilled skier might use a lower part of a valley due to the risk of setting off an avalanche in higher and steeper areas, only to see less-experienced skiers above them, increasing risk to all users. It is probably inevitable that more proactive avalanche management will be required in such settings.

[REDACTED] recognises that the Doolans expansion will mean that clean runs will be tracked out very quickly and the setting will change. This will likely push ski tourers and other backcountry skiers into new terrain, which will be made more accessible but will most likely not be of the same quality. He notes that with climate change, there will be more competition for increasingly limited areas of quality snow over time. This is already his experience with, in many settings, guided groups often having to share smaller areas when in the past there was ample scope to spread out. Encounter rates between different and shared activities will inevitably increase throughout the region, coupled with ongoing growth in guiding businesses.

Personally, he will be sad to see the change, but commercially it will have only a slight effect on operations considering his level of use of the area and the wide range of alternatives the company accesses. Other operators, such as Queenstown Mountain Guides, are more dependent on the Basin.

Aspiring Guides

[REDACTED] is the Owner/Director of Aspiring Guides in Wanaka. He has over 25 years' experience and Aspiring Guides uses the Doolans and Remarkables for many recreational activities.

Aspiring Guides uses the Doolans Basin primarily for backcountry skiing, and the surrounding Remarkables area for ice climbing, and mountaineering courses. The area is valued for providing one of the best accessible backcountry mountain experiences near Queenstown without the need for helicopters. Ice climbing is typically done around the backside of Single Cone and towards Wye Creek, using the access track from Wye Creek to reach climbing areas behind Double Cone. To the southwest of the proposed return station is used for climbing and mountaineering. While hiking and heli-hiking are less common, Aspiring guides is in the process of developing these activities. [REDACTED] also shared that Aspiring Guides uses the Remarkables are also used as a training ground during summer, the Doolans serving as a contingency location for staff and client training. Key areas are also around Single and Double Cone.

Access to Doolans Basin is achieved either by helicopter (heli'd in) to Wye Creek or by walking from the carpark in the ski area, then skinning up from Lake Alta, boot-packing, and traversing over the top. Exits are typically via the same routes, with some ice climbers descending Wye Creek.

Aspiring Guides tend to operate more on the Wanaka side of the Crown Range as they are based there, but [REDACTED] shared that the Doolans Basin sees some ski touring activity, with approximately 20 people per year. Mountaineering activities are more a more prominent activity for AG occurring every second week between June and October, with an estimated 50–60 visitors annually for these pursuits. There is greater use in winter and less in summer. Ice climbing and mountaineering are concentrated in the winter months, while summer sees more training and hiking activities, though at a lower frequency.

The Remarkables Ski Field is critical for access to Doolans Basin, though issues with road access and summer charges have been noted. The ski field allows for walking access without requiring lift tickets, which is important for cost-effective backcountry experiences.

The Doolans Basin is suitable for these activities due to its reliable snow, manageable terrain for guiding, and lower hazard levels from a commercial perspective. It is considered an easy place to facilitate backcountry experiences, making it ideal for both guided and recreational activities. Other locations for similar activities include the fringes of Cardrona (Soho Basin), the Pisa Range, and Treble Cone (especially off the back of Treble Cone and Black Peak).

The Doolans is more accessible and less effort-intensive than Cardrona and offers terrain comparable to Treble Cone (TC), especially if using TC's lift or backcountry pass. A key advantage is the low cost, as no ski pass is required for the Doolans, making it more attractive for most recreationists and commercial guiding.

A new ski field in the valley could have negative effects on the client experience by reducing the sense of remoteness. However, he said that it might also open access to more remote zones. The recreation experience would change, becoming less about solitude and more about accessibility, but it could also expand to more remote areas currently harder to access for a day trip. While direct activities in the Doolans are sparse for AG, the area is frequently used as a thoroughfare by those traversing the Remarkables. Increased infrastructure could lead to more frequent access but might diminish the unique backcountry experience.

The valley is manageable and easy to supervise from a commercial guiding perspective, making it ideal for group instruction and avalanche courses. Improved access could reduce travel times but may also shift the type of experience offered, moving away from remote backcountry adventures towards more accessible, potentially crowded activities.

Summary

Question	Key Points
Use of Doolans Basin	Backcountry skiing, ice climbing, mountaineering courses, training, limited hiking
Entry/Exit Methods	Helicopter to Wye Creek, walking from carpark, skinning, boot-packing, same routes for exit
Visitor Numbers (Annual Estimate)	20 ski tourers, 50–60 mountaineers
Seasonal Use	Mostly winter, less in summer
Role of Remarkables Ski Field	Critical for access, some issues with road and charges, allows walk-in access
Suitability	Reliable snow, manageable terrain, lower hazard, easy for guided experiences

Other Regional Locations	Cardrona (Soho Basin), Pisa Range, Treble Cone (Black Peak)
Comparison with Other Areas	More accessible, less effort, lower cost, similar terrain to Treble Cone, better than Cardrona
Impact of New Ski Field	Reduced remoteness, possible access to new areas, recreation experience will change
Additional Observations	Good for group instruction, improved access may change experience type

NZ Alpine Club

The respondent is the Club Instruction Officer for the local Otago Section of the NZ Alpine Club (NZAC), responsible for organizing avalanche safety, ice climbing, ski touring, and alpine/rock discipline courses. They also administer the club's safety systems for trips and instruction. They have held this role for two years and have been a club member for 35 years. The South Island have a total of 2675 members with the Otago Section, encompassing Queenstown, Wanaka, and Dunedin, has about 921 members, while the national club has around 4,500 members. From the clubs most recent members survey, 57% of its members said that they ski tour. Gregg noted that this number is probably significantly higher for the South Island membership as the North Island membership tends to be more rock climbing focused (and they only have a couple mountains).

Currently, the club does not run formal courses in the Doolans Basin, but ice climbing courses are held in Wye Creek, and mountaineering courses sometimes touch the upper reaches of the Doolans. Ski mountaineering courses are typically based in Arthurs Pass and Mount Cook, but as snow becomes less reliable, some courses may shift to the Otago region or Craigieburn. The local Alpine Club community is strong, with most members (about 90%) using the Doolans for ski touring. Some members snowshoe or travel on foot, and a few access the valley in summer for trail running or ridge traverses.

shared that Club members use a mix of entry points: season pass holders use chairlifts (Curvey Basin and Sugar Bowl), while others use the access road and then boot pack up. Most commonly, members go up Curvey Basin and over the little saddle above. Some use Sugar Bowl, ski traverse, and climb to the ridge. A minority enter via Wye Saddle, dropping into the Doolans from the head of the Wye.

Numbers are weather- and condition-dependent. On a fine day, 15–30 ski tourers in the Doolans, with repeat visits common. Over a season, this could amount to several hundred visits, though precise annual numbers are difficult to determine. Ski touring and split boarding occur from June to October, occasionally into November if snow persists. Trail runners appear as snow melts, typically in summer. Ice climbing is a winter activity. Mountaineering courses in the Otago Section are held mainly from July to September.

shared that the ski field provides essential access via its road and chairlifts, as well as an avalanche control program and up-to-date snow condition information from ski patrol. Club members who are season pass holders or ticket holders benefit from more convenient access. The ski field supports education, safety, and access for ski tourers.

Overall, said the Doolans is unique for its range of aspects and terrain steepness, accommodating skiers of all abilities. It is relatively easy to skin up, making it accessible for both beginners and advanced tourers. In contrast, Wye Creek is more limited and steeper, making it less suitable for long touring days. The Doolans offers a true backcountry experience with front country access. From Queenstown, members sometimes ski in the Pisa Range for easier, low-angled terrain with lower avalanche risk. Some also ski down Mount Crichton after boot packing up. Other backcountry options in the region are generally steeper and less accessible.

The Doolans is considered the top pick by NZAC for ski touring in the Queenstown area due to its terrain, aspect, and direct access. There is no comparable venue in the region that offers the same combination of features. Wye Creek and other nearby areas are either more limited or require more effort to access

Overall, ██████ said that a ski field expansion would close off some areas for ski touring, dominate the best terrain, and significantly impact where and how tourers can access the area. It would remove the “wilderness” experience and change the recreation opportunity spectrum. Tourers would be restricted to less suitable terrain and lose access to natural ski lines. The overall experience would be diminished, and the unique backcountry feel would be lost.

NZAC is concerned about the loss of wilderness and the true backcountry experience. There are also worries about the long-term viability of major infrastructure given climate change and rising snow lines. The environmental impact of large-scale development for potentially short-term gain is a significant concern. The club questions NZSki’s plans for climate adaptation and the removal of infrastructure if the ski field becomes commercially unviable. The loss of recreation opportunities for those who rely on accessible backcountry is also a key issue.

Summary

Question/Theme	Key Points
Club Role	Instruction Officer for 2 years; 35 years NZAC member; Otago Section 400–500 members
Activities in Doolans	No formal courses; ice climbing in Wye Creek; mountaineering in upper Doolans; 90% ski touring
Entry/Exit	Mix of chairlift/road access; most via Curvey Basin, some Sugar Bowl, minority Wye Saddle
Visitor Numbers	15–30 ski tourers/day on fine days; several hundred visits/season; repeat visitors
Seasonality	Ski touring: June–Oct/Nov; trail running: summer; ice climbing: winter; mountaineering: Jul–Sep
Ski Field Support	Access road, chairlifts, avalanche control, ski patrol, education, safety
Suitability	Range of terrain/aspects, easy to skin up, accommodates all abilities, unique backcountry feel
Other Regions	Pisa Range (easier/low angle), Mount Crichton, other areas steeper/less accessible
Comparison	Doolans is top pick for terrain, aspect, access; no comparable venue in region
Ski Field Impact	Loss of terrain, wilderness, experience; restricted access, forced onto less suitable terrain
Club Concerns	Loss of wilderness, long-term viability of infrastructure, environmental impact, climate change

██████████ Wakitipu High School – Outdoor Education Teacher

██████████ has a long history with the Remarkables, having been part of the “Hands Off the Remarkables” group in the 1990s and holidaying in Frankton since childhood. He has accessed the area throughout his life and professionally since 2001, now leading the Outdoor OREC (Outdoor Recreation and Education Centre) at Wakitipu High School.

██████████ uses the Rastus Burn and Remarkables Conservation Area primarily for the school’s Mountain Expedition Number 2, which involves crossing Curvey Basin and setting up tents or snow shelters in North Wye Creek. Access near Doolans is only along high points in the ridge overlooking the Basin.

The group arrives by minivan, parking at the ski field. They walk up under or around Curvey Basin, following a boot line near the main saddle, and then drop into North Wye. The expedition is supported by mountain guides for safety. Exiting is via the same route.

Each class typically involves 15–25 students, with total numbers (including adults and guides) sometimes reaching 60 in a large year. The number of nights students stay is optional, depending on their commitment and circumstances.

The main expedition occurs once a year, usually in late August or September, and is weather-dependent. Summer activities have grown with the school’s size, but no summer trips to the Doolans have occurred in the past five years.

The ski field provides crucial public access via the access road, making it easy for the group to reach the area. The infrastructure and facilities (such as toilets) are available for use, especially in summer.

The group mainly uses North Wye for camping, as it is flatter and less avalanche-prone. Avalanche risk precludes use of the Doolans Basin, and the group does not carry avalanche gear.

Previously, Mountain Expedition Number 1 was based on Ben Lomond in Queenstown. The location shifted when the school moved to Frankton and the number of random visitors on the saddle increased, raising safety concerns. The group also used the Snow Farm for snow caving experiences.

The North Wye area is preferred for camping due to its safety and terrain.

A ski field expansion would change the naturalness of the area and the receiving environment. Higher usage is expected, and the aesthetic component of part of the experience would be altered, though the group could still conduct their trips. The school remains neutral on the proposal, recognizing that recreation and experience values will change, but access may not be affected.

The school’s stance is neutral regarding the ski field expansion. While the recreation and experience values of the area may change, access for educational trips is not expected to be significantly impacted.

Summary

Theme/Question	Key Points
Activity Use	Mountain Expedition Number 2: mountaineering, backcountry skills, avi training; Doolans as highlight/extra
Entry/Exit	Minivan to ski field; walk under/around Curvey, boot line to saddle, drop into North Wye; guides assist
Visitor Numbers	15–25 per class; up to 60 total (students, adults, guides); optional nights
Seasonality	One trip/year (late Aug/Sept, weather-dependent); no summer trips in past 5 years
Ski Field’s Role	Provides public access via road; facilities available
Suitability	North Wye for camping (safe, flat); Doolans for natural, untouched experience
Regional Comparison	Ben Lomond previously (safety concerns); Snow Farm for snow caving
Doolans’ Position	Special for access, naturalness, safety; backcountry in front country setting
Ski Field Impact	Change to naturalness, higher usage, altered experience; school neutral, access likely unchanged
School Stance	Neutral; recreation/experience values may change, access not expected to be affected

Basecamp Adventures

█ is the owner and operator of Basecamp Adventures, a company operating in both Wanaka and Queenstown that specialises in facilitating a wide range of outdoor and wilderness adventures, with a strong focus on climbing, mountaineering, and snowshoeing. Basecamp Adventures acquired Climbing QT (established in the 1990s) in 2016/2017 and has since been running treks and trips in the Remarkables region from this base. The company is able to run day-trips out of Queenstown, accessing a significant backcountry area that stretches from Lake Alta up to Single Cone and Double Cone, and into Wye Creek—anything outside the main basin and up to about 10km from Lake Alta is considered “backcountry” by their operational definition.

The main activities Basecamp Adventures facilitates in and around Doolans Basin are snowshoeing and mountaineering (including mountain skills training). These activities are highly dependent on weather and snow conditions. Access is typically through Lake Alta, up to the Wye Saddle, and then into Single Cone or Double Cone for mountaineering, depending on the specific trip and conditions. Snow shoeing is focused on upper Wye Creek Basin where the terrain is most suited to snow shoeing being gentle yet isolated. On average, the company runs about 20 trips mountain craft trips into the Doolans each year, with approximately 50 trips per season in the broader Remarkables backcountry. Ski touring and split boarding are also observed in the area, but ice climbing does not occur within Doolans itself.

Trips usually begin at Lake Alta, with participants hiking up to the Wye Saddle. From there, the route varies according to conditions, leading into Doolans, Single Cone, or Double Cone. This flexible approach ensures safety and maximises the recreational opportunities available in the backcountry. Basecamp Adventures estimates that through them about 40 people per season engage in guided activities specifically within Doolans, while around 150 people use the Remarkables backcountry more broadly for similar activities.

Summer is the main season for climbing and mountaineering trips to Single Cone and Double Cone. Snow-based activities such as snowshoeing and mountaineering training are concentrated in the winter and spring months, aligning with snow cover and safe conditions.

The Remarkables Ski Field provides a functional road for access, but this is user-pays in the summer. While the ski field infrastructure supports access to the backcountry, it does not directly facilitate or promote guided trips. Doolans Basin is highly suitable for snow-based activities due to its south-facing aspect, which traps snow and provides reliable winter conditions. The terrain and aspect offer a range of options for different skill levels, and the relatively easy access makes it attractive for guided trips and independent users alike.

Similar activities are carried out throughout the Remarkables, the Pisa Range, and the backcountry areas of Cardrona and Treble Cone. The region as a whole offers a wide variety of terrain and experiences for outdoor enthusiasts. Within a regional context the Doolans Basin is considered remote yet accessible, offering good and steep terrain for a range of activities. Compared to the backcountry at Treble Cone, Doolans is less challenging but still provides a genuine backcountry experience. The ability to drive to the area (without requiring a season pass) adds to its appeal. However, if the proposed Doolans expansion proceeds and a ski lift is installed, the receiving environment and overall backcountry experience will change. Increased ease of access could alter the experience that guests seek and may reduce the number of trips, as the sense of remoteness and adventure is diminished. Overall, █ has reservations about the expansion, as this will alter how his business functions, the experiences they offer, and will overall reduce the “remote, and backcountry” qualities that the Valley currently supports.

Summary

Section	Key Points
Background	Loz Ogle, owner of Basecamp Adventures (Wanaka & QT); acquired Climbing QT in 2016/17; runs guided climbing, mountaineering, and snowshoeing trips; day trips from QT; “backcountry” defined as outside main basin, up to 10km from Lake Alta, including Single/Double Cone and Wye Creek
Activities	Snowshoeing, mountaineering (mountain skills), ski touring/split boarding; ice climbing not in Doolans; activities weather/snow dependent
Locations	Lake Alta, Wye Saddle, Doolans, Single Cone, Double Cone; flexible routes based on conditions
Access/Egress	Lake Alta → Wye Saddle → Doolans/Single Cone/Double Cone (as conditions allow)
Visitor Numbers	~40 people/season in Doolans; ~150 people/season in broader Remarkables backcountry
Seasonality	Summer: climbing/mountaineering (Single/Double Cone); winter/spring: snowshoeing, mountaineering training
Ski Field’s Role	Functional road (user-pays in summer); supports access but does not facilitate guided trips
Suitability	South-facing aspect traps snow; varied terrain; easy access
Regional Comparison	Activities also in Remarkables, Pisa Range, Cardrona, Treble Cone backcountry; variety of terrain
Comparison/Outlook	Doolans: remote yet accessible, good/steep terrain; TC backcountry more challenging; expansion/lift would change backcountry experience; increased access could reduce trip numbers and sense of adventure

██████████ Snow Safety Officer, NZ Ski

██████████ is a Safety Snow Officer at the Remarkables in his 16th year of service. He is an avid backcountry skier and noted that the popularity of ski touring in Doolans has increased dramatically over the time he has been with NZSki, attracting both novice and advanced users. He noted that ski/board touring is by far the most popular recreational activity in the valley, and the Doolans also supports ice climbing/climbing, mountaineering, trail running, and occasional snowshoeing, though summer use is limited due to challenging terrain and minimal trail infrastructure.

Access to Doolans Basin is available from several key points: the top of the Curvey Basin Chairlift is less than 100 meters from the ridge and is popular among all skill levels; the south side of Lake Alta offers moderate skiing and is also commonly used; the ridge above Curvey Basin is steeper and less popular, but accesses the same terrain; and the top of the Sugar Bowl Chairlift, heading east and south along the ridge, provides access to Doolans East Branch and has seen increasing use over the past five to six years. Additionally, designated routes are in place for safety during avalanche control operations, supported by clear signage and educational efforts.

Remarkables Ski Field plays a crucial role in supporting these activities by providing education, safety information, and clear signage for backcountry users. As ██████████ noted, the ski field’s patrol and snow safety teams actively manage the ski field in bounds, and when doing snow maintenance, provide a direct and safe access route to the Doolans. The patrol team regularly communicates with recreational groups, particularly during high-use periods such as the annual ice climbing festival, and any avi bombing / maintenance that is occurring. They do not however promote any backcountry skiing, and do not actively patrol the area. While winter and spring see

the majority of recreational use, summer activities are minimal and largely self-managed, with some oversight from Department of Conservation signage.

Ski touring and splitboarding in Doolans Basin attract between 20 and 50 people per day during good conditions, with numbers fluctuating depending on weather and snow quality. Ice climbing sees 2–3 groups of 3–4 people on busy days, with the annual festival representing the peak activity period. Summer recreational use is very low, with most visitors limited to Lake Alta and lookouts rather than venturing deep into Doolans. The majority of activity occurs during winter and spring (June to October), accounting for about 85% of annual use, while summer and autumn see only about 15%, with the lowest numbers recorded from November to December.

Compared to other regions, Doolans Basin stands out for its ease of access and the variety of terrain available, making it one of the top choices for backcountry enthusiasts in Central Otago and NZ. This is due to its close proximity to Queenstown and Wanaka, and having direct chairlift access through Curvey Basin. There is potentially better quality ski touring at Treble Cone or Cardrona, because the Doolans has direct access, it makes it a great overall touring experience for all level skiers and snowboarders. [REDACTED] noted that while some direct access routes may be affected by the proposed expansion, the overall experience is expected to remain high, as increased access to new terrain could offset any losses. This would mean that some historical touring times to get to areas on the mountain would be reduced, therefore increasing access and safety.

Summary

Category	Details
Key Activities	Ski Touring: Most popular; easily accessed backcountry, attracts all skill levels; numbers increased dramatically over 16 years. Split boarding: Growing in popularity. Ice Climbing: South side of Single Cone (Wai Creek); festival in July draws up to 100; otherwise, condition-dependent. Mountaineering: Winter and summer; winter training in Shadow Basin. Adventure Activities: Trail running, hiking, tramping; summer use much lower due to terrain and lack of trails. Snowshoeing: Occasional groups, not common.
Access and Egress	Entry/Exit Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Top of Curvey Basin Chairlift: <100m to ridge, popular/all skill levels. - Lake Alta (south side): Moderate skiing, popular. - Ridge above Curvey Basin: Steeper, less popular, same terrain. - Top of Sugar Bowl Chairlift: East/south along ridge, Doolans East Branch; increasingly used over 5–6 years. - Designated Routes: Used during avalanche control; clear signage and education.
Visitor Numbers & Seasonality	Ski Touring/Splitboarding: 20–50 people/day in good conditions; varies with weather/snow. Ice Climbing: 2–3 groups of 3–4 people on busy days; festival is peak. Summer Activities: Very low numbers; most use for Lake Alta/lookouts, not deep into Doolans. Seasonality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter/Spring (Jun–Oct): 85% of use. - Summer/Autumn: 15% of use, lowest Nov–Dec.
Remarkable Ski Field's Role	Education and Safety: Wayfinding, signage, education for ski touring, even during avalanche control. Community Outreach: Hosts ice climbing festivals; backcountry awareness nights (now via social media).

	<p>Boundary Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter: Clear signage and boundaries. - Summer: Signs to Lake Alta remain; ski boundary signage removed; safety self-managed. <p>Communication: Limited direct engagement with climbing groups outside festival times.</p>
Suitability of Doolans Basin	<p>Ski Touring: Ease of access, variety of terrain (mostly easy/moderate, some advanced), quality compared to other NZ resorts.</p> <p>Climbing/Mountaineering: Spectrum from beginner to advanced.</p> <p>General: High-quality terrain and variety attract a range of activities.</p>
Regional Comparison	<p>Other Areas: Ski touring, climbing, mountaineering throughout region (Wanaka/Hawea, Routeburn Valley, Mount Aspiring, Pisa Range, Coronet Peak).</p> <p>Access: Remarkables/Doolans among easiest to access from a ski area; highly popular.</p>
Doolans' Position Among Competitors	<p>Ease of Access: Best for easy access to backcountry skiing.</p> <p>Terrain Quality: Among best for commercial ski areas; terrain varied and suitable for all levels.</p> <p>Trade-offs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If expansion proceeds: Some direct, easy access may be lost, but new terrain could become accessible. - Experience: Despite potential increased numbers, vast terrain means experience unlikely to be detrimentally affected.
Broader Project Context	<p>Expansion Aims: Doubling skiable terrain, improving resilience to climate change, supporting projected growth in demand.</p> <p>Community Benefits: Increased recreation, tourism revenue, job creation, enhanced ecological and cultural outcomes.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement: Ongoing consultation with local councils, iwi, community groups; feedback incorporated into project planning.</p>

Queenstown Mountain Guides

has been skiing recreationally in the Southern Lakes region for over 20 years and has operated Queenstown Mountain Guides (QMG) for 15 years. He regards the Doolans Basin as the best and most accessible backcountry skiing area in the region, making it central to both his personal and professional activities.

QMG uses the Doolans Basin extensively during the winter season for backcountry avalanche courses and guided ski touring. The area directly behind the Remarkables ski field is particularly important for these activities due to its accessibility and terrain. While the Wye Creek area is occasionally used, it does not offer the same quality of skiing as the Doolans. Access to the Doolans Basin is primarily gained by climbing up behind the Curvey Basin chairlift or via Wye Creek. Ski tourers typically do not use the ski field's chairlifts, instead preferring to climb under their own power. Exiting the area is usually done by re-entering the ski field.

estimates that a few hundred people use the Doolans Basin each year for winter touring activities. On any given day during the ski season, between 5 and 30 people might be present, depending on conditions. The primary backcountry skiing season runs from late June to early October. During summer, QMG's guiding activities shift to the Remarkables peaks and traverses above Lake Alta.

The Remarkables ski field provides essential road access to the Doolans Basin. However, notes that NZSki, has not been supportive of non-commercial recreationists, often putting up

barriers including the road toll that make access more difficult and expensive for local guides and independent recreationists.

The Doolans Basin is uniquely suited for backcountry skiing due to its safe terrain, scenic beauty, and reliable snow conditions. [REDACTED] strongly noted that the Doolans Basin is the only high-quality, easily accessible backcountry ski area left in the Southern Lakes, making it an invaluable resource for both teaching, guiding, and recreational use. Its accessibility and low costs associated with access are especially important as the expense of other options rises.

While QMG also operates in the Pisa Range, back of Treble Cone, and more remote locations such as the Hector and Harris Mountains and Glenorchy, these areas require either helicopter access or long, challenging approaches. As a result, 90% of QMG's winter guiding occurs in the Remarkables and Doolans area, with only 10% elsewhere.

Doolans stands out as a world-class backcountry area that does not require expensive infrastructure or lift access. It offers consistently good snow on southeast-facing slopes and is far more accessible than other options in the region. [REDACTED] is strongly opposed to the proposed ski field expansion into the Doolans Basin. He believes it would result in the loss of a unique, accessible backcountry area that is essential for guiding, teaching, and recreational skiing. The expansion would force recreationists to pay higher costs and lose the true backcountry experience.

If the expansion proceeds, [REDACTED] recommends removing toll road fees or introducing an affordable "one up, one back" pass for backcountry users, similar to the Snow Farm model in the Pisa Range. He stresses the importance of maintaining low-cost or free access to ensure the area remains available to the wider community.

[REDACTED] and Queenstown Mountain Guides do not support the Doolans Expansion, emphasising that it would destroy a quintessential, easily accessible backcountry skiing resource in the Southern Lakes, vital for both local recreationists and guiding businesses.

Summary

Question/Topic	Key Points from Interview
Background/Experience	20+ years skiing, 15 years guiding; Doolans is central to operations
Use of Doolans Basin	Avalanche courses, guided ski touring, key winter area
Entry/Exit	Climb from behind ski field or via Wye Creek; rarely use lifts; exit via ski field
Visitor Numbers/Season	Few hundred per year; 5–30 per day; winter focus (June–October); summer guiding elsewhere
Role of Ski Field	Provides road access; operator not supportive of non-commercial use; toll road is a barrier
Suitability for Activity	Only easily accessible, high-quality backcountry area; safe, scenic, reliable snow
Other Areas Used	Pisa Range, Treble Cone, Hector/Harris Mountains, Glenorchy; less accessible, more costly/difficult
Comparison with Other Areas	Doolans is world-class, accessible, no expensive infrastructure needed
Impact of Expansion	Loss of unique, accessible backcountry area; negative for guiding and recreation
Recommendations	Remove tolls or offer affordable access passes if expansion proceeds
Overall Position	Strongly opposed to expansion; area must remain accessible and affordable



Queenstown Climbing Club

The interview involved two representatives of the Queenstown Climbing Club (QCC): [REDACTED], club president and founder (also chairman of the Remarkables Trails Trust and a local secondary school teacher with 20 years' experience running outdoor education), and [REDACTED], club secretary and a recent Queenstown resident. The QCC, founded in 2008, has over 400 paying members and more than 6,000 online members. The club is dedicated to fostering access and maintaining the integrity of the Remarkables range, including the Doolans Basin. Both interviewees have significant experience recreating in the Doolans, with activities ranging from family hiking to advanced ski touring.

The Doolans Basin is valued to the QCC as a multi-season, largely untouched landscape that serves as an escape from Queenstown and other modified environments. In summer, members use the area for hiking, tramping, family camping, and scrambling along the ridge known as the Little Traverse. The valley's east side remains unmodified, offering a rare sense of remoteness. Flat areas near the proposed gondola base and along the right branch of Doolans Creek are popular for alpine camping. The clean water in these streams is crucial for campers, and there is concern that snowmaking chemicals could compromise this. In winter, the valley is renowned for ski touring, considered by the club as the best in New Zealand due to the terrain, snowpack, and accessibility. Other winter activities include snowshoeing and avalanche training, with the Little Traverse providing a critical route for skill development. The area also supports general alpine skills training, which is not possible in adjacent valleys due to different terrain and snow conditions. Ice climbing is typically done in nearby Wye Creek.

Access routes to the Doolans Basin vary by season and activity. Most commonly, members enter via Wye Creek and Wye Saddle, or by skinning and boot-packing from Curvey Basin Saddle. Other routes include the right branch of Doolans via Gibbston-Coal Pit Saddle and traversing north-east from Wye Saddle. Exits generally follow the same routes, often retracing steps over the Little Traverse. For summer activities, the longer Wye Creek tramping track is used, ascending to the Doolans and descending via Coal Pit Saddle. These approaches offer a sense of remoteness and avoid built infrastructure.

Visitor numbers are highly variable and dependent on weather and snow conditions. On a good ski touring day in winter, there may be 50–100 people in the valley. In summer, similar numbers are possible on a fine weekend, though overall use is more dispersed. The area's appeal lies in its capacity to offer a remote, uncrowded experience, and exact numbers are difficult to estimate due to the informal and dispersed nature of backcountry recreation.

The Doolans Basin is used year-round by QCC members. Summer sees hiking, tramping, scrambling, and camping, while winter is dominated by ski touring, snowshoeing, and alpine skills training. The area's terrain and elevation allow for a long ski touring season, with activities shifting as snow conditions change. The Remarkables ski field provides essential access via its road, which is a double-edged sword. In winter, the road offers excellent access to the backcountry, but in summer, the toll and lack of maintenance are seen as barriers by the club. [REDACTED] noted that the ski field provides minimal support beyond access, occasionally defining skin tracks and assisting with rescues, but does not actively facilitate club or volunteer activities. The toll road is a particular point of frustration for summer users.

The Doolans Basin's proximity to Queenstown, elevation, and spectrum of terrain make it uniquely suitable for a wide range of activities. Its aspect and natural, raw state provide reliable snow and a variety of challenges for both intermediate and advanced users. The lack of infrastructure preserves a true backcountry experience with minimal user conflict. The area is also valued as a safe and accessible training ground for new backcountry adventurers, offering wilderness education close to town and reliable cell phone coverage for emergencies.

Club members also recreate throughout Central Otago, including the Haute Route (a 30 km ski touring traverse), Lake Hope, various branches of Wye Creek, the Hector Range, and the broader Remarkables. Activities extend to Coronet Peak, Cardrona, Hospital Flat, Lake Hawea, Brewster, Kingston, the Eyre Mountains, Mount Aspiring, and the Pisa Range. However, the Doolans is seen as the gateway to many of these routes and holds a special place for its accessibility and quality. The Doolans Basin is considered one of the best locations for both summer hiking and winter ski touring in the region. Its accessibility, terrain, aspect, and lack of development set it apart from other options. In winter, it is regarded as the premier destination for ski touring in New Zealand, offering an unparalleled experience free from the constraints and costs of controlled ski areas.

The QCC are not in support of this development. The club notes that the development of a ski field in the Doolans would fundamentally alter the recreational experience. Ski touring would effectively end in the valley, replaced by groomed runs and infrastructure. The wilderness camping experience would also be lost, and the introduction of mountain biking could damage fragile alpine grasslands. The visual and experiential impact of new infrastructure would diminish the sense of remoteness and natural character that currently defines the area. The club believes these changes would deter current users and undermine the valley's unique value as a backcountry recreation destination.

Summary

Question/Topic	Key Points
Use of Doolans	Year-round hiking, camping, scrambling, ski touring, snowshoeing, avalanche/alpine training
Access	Via Wye Creek, Wye Saddle, Curvey Basin, Coal Pit Saddle; retrace routes to exit
Visitor Numbers	50–100 per day in good conditions, both summer and winter
Seasonality	All year: summer (hiking/camping), winter (ski touring/skills)
Ski Field Role	Provides access road; minimal support; toll road a barrier in summer
Suitability	Proximity, elevation, terrain variety, aspect, untouched nature, minimal user conflict
Other Locations	Central Otago, Haute Route, Wye Creek, Hector Range, Remarkables, Cardrona, Pisa, Aspiring
Comparison	Doolans is premier for ski touring/hiking due to access, terrain, and natural state
Impact of Development	Would end ski touring/camping, degrade wilderness, introduce infrastructure, harm environment

Owner and Operator Wanaka Mountain Guides

with over 15 years of experience and four years owning and operating Wanaka Mountain Guides (WMG) runs ski touring and mountaineering trips in the Doolans. The company specialises in ski touring and split boarding in the Doolans Basin, as well as mountaineering and rock climbing in the Remarkables, particularly around Double Cone and Single Cone.

The primary activities observed in Doolans Basin are ski touring and split boarding, which take advantage of the accessible backcountry terrain. noted that tramping is very occasional, with most trampers preferring the Wye Creek Route. The Doolans offers a unique backcountry experience with the convenience of front country access, making it attractive for guided and independent users alike.

WMG access the Doolans Basin typically via two main entry points: the saddle at the top of the Curvey Basin lift and the Wye route. Another common entry is over Helicopter Flat, which is near

the proposed mid-station for the new gondola. The access road to the ski resort is also frequently used due to its ease and convenience.

During winter, [redacted] observes between one and five groups per day in the Doolans, with each group averaging two to four people, depending on weather and snow conditions. Summer visitation is minimal, as the area is not a primary destination outside the snow season. Wanaka Mountain Guides typically facilitates up to five trips per winter in the Doolans.

Mountaineering occurs year-round in the Remarkables, while ski touring and split boarding are concentrated in the winter months when snow conditions are favourable. The Doolans is not a significant destination for summer activities.

The Remarkables Ski Area plays a crucial role in supporting backcountry activities by providing essential road access and permitting physical access through the ski field. The ski patrol team is proactive in sharing safety information and risk mitigation strategies, which is highly valued by guides and independent users. The Doolans Basin is particularly suitable for ski touring and split boarding due to its varied terrain and significant avalanche zones, which provide good riding conditions. The ease of access is a major factor in its popularity, allowing users to reach quality backcountry terrain with minimal effort.

Most alpine climbing in the region takes place in the Remarkables, with larger or more remote objectives found along the main divide. All regional ski touring areas are accessed via ski fields, but Doolans stands out for its lift-accessible terrain. Ski tourers have been increasingly pushed out of the Cardrona area, making Doolans and Treble Cone more attractive alternatives. Tim notes that the terrain in Doolans is comparable to Treble Cone, with both offering a wide spectrum of challenges, while the Pisa Range is flatter but still accessible for touring.

Although the main climbing activities are outside the Doolans, any expansion, such as the proposed gondola and new lifts, will have a visual impact on the area. This could potentially change the offerings of Wanaka Mountain Guides for its clients, requiring adaptation to new conditions and altering the backcountry experience.

Summary

Theme/Question	Key Points
Activities	Ski touring, split boarding; very occasional tramping; backcountry experience with easy access
Entry/Exit	Saddle at Curvey lift, Wye route, Helicopter Flat, ski resort access road
Visitor Numbers	1–5 groups/day in winter (2–4 people/group); minimal summer use; up to 5 guided trips/winter
Seasonality	Mountaineering year-round; touring in winter months
Ski Field’s Role	Provides road and physical access; active in safety messaging and risk mitigation
Suitability	Varied terrain, avalanche zones, easy access
Regional Comparison	Most climbing in Remarkables; Doolans and Treble Cone comparable; Pisa Range flatter
Expansion Impact	Visual impact likely; may require adaptation of guided offerings and user experience

Safety Officer NZSki

has extensive experience in Doolans Basin, having served as a ski patroller for 11 seasons at the Remarkables, a mountain guide for Aspiring Guides in both summer and winter, and as a volunteer with the Alpine Cliff Rescue team.

noted that the primary activity in Doolans Basin during winter is ski touring and split boarding, with occasional snowshoers. The area is essentially isolated to the ski touring community. In summer, use is minimal, with only infrequent visits by hunters. Nearby Wye Creek is much more popular in summer due to its tramping track and climbing opportunities on Single and Double Cone, with mountaineering occurring above these features. Guided groups occasionally use the Doolans as a backup if weather conditions are poor elsewhere.

All access to Doolans Basin is via the Remarkables Ski Area. The most popular entry points are from the head of the Curvey Basin chairlift (offering the most direct and fastest access) and the Sugar Bowl chairlift (providing access to the east branch of the Doolans). Helicopter Ridge is often used as an egress route, and some users enter or exit via Wye Creek, though this is less common.

On a fine winter day, the valley sees between 5 and 20 ski tourers or split boarders. In summer, fewer than one hunter per month visits the area, making it a very quiet destination outside of the ski season. The main season for ski touring in the Doolans is from mid-July through to the end of September, depending on snow and weather conditions.

The Remarkables Ski Field is integral to the valley's popularity and accessibility as Will notes. Despite some pushback from the ski touring and climbing communities, the ski field's infrastructure, including groomed runs, avalanche control, and road maintenance, makes the backcountry experience possible. Without the ski field, Will expressed that the area would not attract nearly as many visitors, as most would not be willing or have the skill set to access the mountain and backcountry without the road access, essentially having to walk up from town.

Doolans Basin is highly suitable for ski touring due to its terrain, which is predominantly south-facing and holds snow well for an extended period. The terrain offers a range of difficulty from simple to advanced, catering to intermediate and advanced tourers. Avalanche danger is present, requiring skill and local knowledge, but Will noted that the area is well trafficked and close to a monitored ski area, making it relatively safe. The valley provides a backcountry experience in a front country setting, with relatively easy access, making it attractive to a wide range of users.

Ski touring and related activities are also popular at Treble Cone, Cardrona, Coronet Peak, and the Ben Lomond/Bowen Peak area. These areas offer similar experiences, but access and terrain difficulty vary. More advanced touring is available across the region, but requires a higher skill level.

Overall, noted that the Doolans Basin does not stand out as the absolute best in the region for ski touring. Treble Cone offers more intermediate to advanced terrain and is considered superior for backcountry skiing. The Remarkables as a whole is more technical, while Cardrona is easier but offers similar terrain. Coronet Peak has the easiest terrain. The Doolans is seen as a valuable resource for the region and an opportunity for development, rather than a standout destination in its own right.

Summary

Question/Topic	Key Points
Activities in Doolans Basin	Winter: ski touring, split boarding, occasional snowshoeing; summer: infrequent hunters
Entry and Exit Routes	Curvey Basin, Sugar Bowl chairlifts, Helicopter Ridge, Wye Creek
Estimated Visitor Numbers	Winter: 5–20/day; summer: <1/month

Seasonality	Mid-July to end of September
Role of Remarkables Ski Field	Essential for access, safety, and popularity; infrastructure is key
Suitability of the Valley	South-facing, reliable snow, range of difficulty, avalanche danger, easy access
Other Regional Activity Locations	Treble Cone, Cardrona, Coronet Peak, Ben Lomond/Bowen Peak
Comparison with Other Areas	Not the best, but valuable; Treble Cone better for backcountry, Remarkables more technical

Independent recreational visitor

has been accessing Doolans Basin for about 20 years, primarily for ski touring, but also for tramping. In winter, Yvonne shared that the Doolans Basin is predominantly used for ski touring and snowboarding. During summer, hiking is the main activity, with people often starting from the Mount Rosa track and occasionally mountain biking. Mountain biking does occur but is typically outside the main valley. Mountaineering mainly takes place on the Single Cone rather than within the valley itself, and snowshoeing is observed in Wye Creek but not commonly in Doolans.

In winter, noted that she observes an average of five groups, around ten people, ski tour in the valley each day, though numbers can increase with good snow conditions. Summer use is minimal, with only two to four parties of people hiking in the area. The Wye Creek walking track is popular, especially for those walking from the road to the ski field. In winter, Wye Creek is also used for ice climbing, with some individuals camping overnight. Instruction and guided trips occur in Wye Creek, with routes leading to Lake Hope through the Wye. Ice climbing is also prevalent on the Single Cone and the west face of the Remarkables.

estimates that between 200 and 250 people engage in ski touring or split boarding in Doolans Basin each year. Hiking in the valley is much less common, with only 20 to 30 people per year. Hiking is a summer activity, while ski touring and mountaineering are winter pursuits, dependent on snow conditions. The Remarkables Ski Field is crucial for providing access to the valley, both via the road and through direct ski field access. Ski pass holders can use the chairlifts to reach higher elevations. The ski field's south-facing slopes are especially valuable as they hold snow well, making them ideal for winter activities.

Doolans Basin is highly suitable for ski touring due to its easy access, variety of terrain angles and aspects, and reliable snow retention on south-facing slopes. The terrain offers options for finding avalanche-safe spaces and is often sheltered from wind, depending on direction. noted that these features make it attractive for both recreational and guided users. Hiking is possible throughout the region, while ice climbing is concentrated on the west face of the Remarkables and at locations like the Alta Circuit, Chinamans Bluff, Wye Creek Craigs, Bannockburn, Queenstown Hill, and Gorge Road. Traditional multi-pitch climbing is also popular in the Remarkables.

Regionally, the Doolans Basin stands out for its good southern aspect, which holds snow and powder well, and for its easy and direct access. The back basins at Coronet are north-facing and lose snow quickly, while ski touring in Glenorchy requires long walks. The Pisa Range is beginner-friendly but can be good when other areas are avalanche-prone. Cardrona offers good backcountry but is harder to access, and Treble Cone is excellent for touring but is farther from Queenstown, so locals tend to stay closer to home. notes that the proposed gondola development would be met with disappointment by many local recreationists. The valley is considered the most accessible and enjoyable ski touring area in the region, and its loss or transformation would be keenly felt. She also mentions that the Raceman's Hut remains available

for overnight stays, though most people prefer to return home given the valley's proximity to Queenstown.

Summary

Theme/Question	Key Points
Activities	Winter: ski touring, snowboarding; Summer: hiking, some mountain biking; mountaineering on Single Cone, snowshoeing in Wye Creek
Entry/Exit	Winter: 5 groups/day (10 people); Summer: 2–4 parties; Wye Creek popular for walking/ice climbing; instruction in Wye Creek
Visitor Numbers	Ski touring/splitboarding: 200–250/year; Hiking: 20–30/year
Seasonality	Hiking: summer; Ski touring/mountaineering: winter
Ski Field's Role	Provides road and direct access; chairlift use with pass; south-facing slopes hold snow well
Suitability	Easy access, variety of terrain/aspect, south-facing, avalanche-safe, sheltered from wind
Regional Comparison	Hiking everywhere; ice climbing on Remarkables, Alta Circuit, Chinamans Bluff, Wye Creek Craigs, Bannockburn, QT Hill, Gorge Road; multi-pitch climbing in Remarkables
Doolans' Position	Best for access and snow retention; Coronet back basins lose snow fast; Glenorchy requires long walk; Pisa beginner-friendly; Cardrona good but hard to access; TC far from QT
Gondola Impact	Many will be upset; valley is top local ski touring spot; Raceman's Hut available for overnight

– Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd

Email 19 September 2025

Kia ora [REDACTED],

Thank you for contacting us, Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd/ [REDACTED]

We have perused the FastTrack proposal you forwarded, and have had opportunity to discuss this.

Concession Terrain: In answer to your question, our concession yes most definitely does include the Doolans, as well as the Remarkable peaks including Single and Double Cone, the Wye Valleys and the mountains further East in the Hector's around Lake Hope. We use this for ski touring, ice climbing and for hiking and mountaineering. We use it both recreationally and professionally as a guiding company.

I understand that NZSki has had a proposal in mind to access the Doolans Basin for some time. In fairness this may well have been fairly low impact on other users - in the past.

Ski touring popularity: Now however, the sport of ski touring has boomed. Whether it be ski touring side-country or "slack"-country, or ski mountaineering, and even snow shoeing and winter hill walking, interest in recreating in the back country in winter especially, has exploded. Our high mountain huts are crammed, ski touring courses and ski guiding are full and booked. To give you an idea, a very recent promotion of a women's specific ski touring workshop, by a mutual guiding company in QT/Wanaka area on which I am guiding, has gained 36 clients and six guides with more on the waiting list within two weeks!

The Doolans Basin is a rare piece of accessible and very high quality ski touring. An additional key factor is that the whole area is far away from the Main Divide and hence good in westerly

weather, and it remains the most Easterly of ski-touring accessible terrain in this QT/ Wanaka region.

Thus, we believe that there should be significant compromises recognised, to benefit both parties - NZSki and the Public's access to limited resources.

Consideration: Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd would like to support NZSki's expansion into the Doolans with these important agreements:

1. Access to the mountain terrain: To maintain the current back country passage, to both walkers, climbers and skiers, including and especially up to Lake Alta, and over the Wye Saddle closest to Single Cone.
2. Road access: To maintain FAIR AND REASONABLE vehicular access up the road to a car park close to the Base Building and to foot traffic beyond the Base Building. This is to be established and maintained throughout the building process.

This access is absolutely key. A fair and reasonable arrangement should be sought so that the public is able to drive and park close to the top carpark in spite of the movement of heavy vehicles used during the building process. Offering a public car park a long way down the road hugely limits public access due to distance and significant time constraints.

We do realise that the road is a private road, but much of it is in the Rastus Burn Conservation Area and public access is highly valued.

3. That NZSki supports the concept of a series of publicly owned Mountain "Turks" (mountainturk.org.nz) in the Wye Basin through to Lake Hope in Remarkables Conservation Area.

The Mountain Turk organisation recognises that as ski tourers are forced into terrain further from the road end/ their vehicles (during to commercial ski field development) mountain shelter is desirable. Some of the mountain areas such as that around Lake Hope is highly consequential and we feel that having suitable shelter reduces back country travel pressure, and mitigates a lot of risk. It also provides additional accessible terrain.

Our thoughts above are part of the weights and balances, and we seek compromise.

If we can be part of the online info session on the 18th – then we would love to join. Please send us an invitation.

Kind regards and many thanks,

[Redacted signature block]

Online information session – 18th September 2025

Attendees

- [Redacted] - recreation and tourism impact assessment – independent consultant
- [Redacted] Wakatipu High School
- [Redacted] – Queenstown Climbing Club, Chair Remarkables Trails Trust, teacher at Wakatipu High School
- [Redacted] Harris Mountains Heli-Ski
- [Redacted] Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd

- [REDACTED] – FMC exec member
- [REDACTED] – NZSki General Manager Development & Operations
- [REDACTED] – NZSki CEO
- [REDACTED] – Remarkables Snow Safety Officer
- [REDACTED] – Senior Patroller, ex Snow Safety Officer
- [REDACTED] – Mitchell Daysh – planner
- [REDACTED] – NZSki programme manager from mid-October

Louise and Paul described the application as it currently stands – noting it is being refined as impact assessments are carried out – with the main components including:

- Gondola from Remarkables bottom station to Helicopter Ridge with a middle station there
- Intermediate trail from mid-station to the left and sweeping down the valley to the return station
- Minimum earthworks – focused on that intermediate trail to be used also for construction and summer maintenance
- Access gondola from mid-station heading south-east to the return station in the Doolans Basin
- Daylodge near return station, return station to be used for gondola parking
- Learners area near return station, with one

[REDACTED] – Wakatipu High School: Doolans Basin is primarily for the school's Mountain Expedition - crossing Curvey Basin and setting up tents or snow shelters in North Wye Creek. The trip includes a day traversing the non-avalanche parts of Doolans, focusing on mountaineering, backcountry skills, and some avalanche training. The Doolans leg is considered a highlight for students, though it is highly dependent on weather and conditions. Occasionally, the group does a half-day walk or loop through the Doolans. Doolans is considered special - a backcountry experience close to town, with relatively easy access. The North Wye area is preferred for camping due to its safety and terrain. The Doolans is a small but important part of the trip, offering a pristine environment and a safe place to mitigate risk for both Queenstown and international students. A ski field expansion would change the naturalness of the area and the receiving environment. With the proposal in place, higher usage is likely, and the experience would be altered, though the school could still conduct their trips.

[REDACTED] – Queenstown Climbing Club:⁹ The Doolans Basin is valued by the QCC as a multi-season, largely untouched landscape that serves as an escape from Queenstown and other modified environments. Members use the area in summer for hiking, tramping, family camping, and scrambling along the ridge known as the Little Traverse. The valley's east side remains unmodified, offering remoteness. Flat areas near the proposed gondola base and along the right branch of Doolans Creek are popular for alpine camping.

In winter the valley is valued for ski touring, considered by the club as the best in New Zealand due to the terrain, snowpack, and accessibility. Other winter activities include snowshoeing and avalanche training, with the Little Traverse providing a critical route for skill development. The area also supports general alpine skills training, which is not possible in adjacent valleys due to different terrain and snow conditions. Ice climbing is typically done in nearby Wye Creek.

⁹ Notes here also rely on follow up emails from Guillame (summary points only)

The top of “Helicopter Ridge” has significant avalanche hazards that require bombing for control, while winch cables from groomers would pose extreme risks. Will ski tourers truly still be free to tour “anywhere, anytime,” or will NZSKI effectively lock up this landscape? (█████ replied that access will always be open unless the NZSki is doing some which creates a hazard – such as avalanche clearing, which would be for a small area only. Also noting that NZSki owns private land under a section of the Remarkables access road but expects to maintain controlled public access across this).

The QCC is wholly opposed to the development proposal.

█████ - Aotearoa Mountain Guides Ltd: Understands how treasured the area is, but supports the development if fair and reasonable access is provided. For example, currently in summer the public parking is too far down for accessing the Remarkables Traverse. Cannot get backcountry access pass like you can at Cardrona (█████ later noted that they do sell a 1-up backcountry pass at the Remarkables). Referred to letter sent previously in response to interview by ██████

█████ noted happy to commit to all or most of Lydia’s letter, such as maintaining public access and support for other ski tour activities.

Discussion re ██████ proposal for Turks in the backcountry (small self-contained backcountry huts). General agreement that they are a great idea but there is some discussion in the backcountry community about where they should be located.

█████ noted that they are not necessarily a great thing in summer – for example at Lake Hope which has special delicate bog and other vegetation which risks damage from too many visitors. ██████ recreation report for the area from the ‘90s would be good to refer to. Summer access would require a quality access track.

█████ – yes, debate needed and agrees that management and track development likely necessary. NZSki happy to be part of the conversation, but the Turk developments would not form part of the consent application – they would be a separate exercise, but maybe tied to some financial contribution.

█████ noted 180 ski fields in Europe closing due to climate change. Are there funds to dismantle the equipment in, say, 2100?

█████ NZSki’s attitude is that areas must be better off where they operate – lots of effort put into conservation work (revegetation and pest control) that many people are unaware of. The company has substantial financial support (Trojan Holdings) and is not taking this project lightly. Defunct assets are a real issue for DOC, and NZSki and Trojan Holdings have the resources to deal with it.

█████ FMC: Points have been well-made, such as the fair use of the Remarkables Access Road, avoiding development in Wye Creek, the importance of ski touring in the area, access controls considering avalanche control. There is the need to write all the commitments down. ██████ noted that the consent conditions will be explicit).

█████ questions the second chair lift – timing of installation? Louise noted that its construction will depend on the level of use of the Doolans field. ██████ prefers that there is a lapse period in the consent that it needs to occur within a defined time – not just sitting in the ‘never-never’. Paul – second lift probably a decade away – the company would need to recover from the initial investment and check on the need. [Note – the second lift is no longer part of the application.]

█████ – there is the opportunity to cautiously support the development, but the staging of all components would need to be made clear.

██████████ will skiers access the Wye Creek easily from the top of the gondola? Head off to Wye too easily considering its fragile ecosystem? Paul – replied no.

██████████ will the top of the gondola be visible from the head of the Wye? Paul – work is currently underway to check, but highly unlikely.

██████████ - the clean water in these streams is used by campers, and there is concern that snowmaking chemicals like Snowmax could compromise this. Paul pointed out that Snowmax is not used on the Remarkables, and there will be strong sediment control during construction. Ongoing water monitoring will also be required.

██████████ – would like to see that water management commitment in the conditions.

██████████ – Mitchell Daysh: Summarised the Fast track process.

- NZSki made it through the first stage and qualified as a nationally or regionally significant project and is in Schedule 2 of the Act. Few recreation or tourism developments made it through.
- Fast is not necessarily 'fast'.
- Early test of application for completeness – must get it right or lose the \$200,000 application fee.
- 1 stop shop – if NZSki applied outside this process it would have to deal with multiple agencies – DOC, likely two district councils and one regional, and many different permits – under the Wildlife Act for example. Fast track gives one consenting roof, but it is not simple. All the permits still need to be considered, but all at the same time.
- Panel must involve a lot of stakeholder agencies and iwi. There are formal requirements for this engagement. The media says community input is not provided for, but the Panel governs its own process and can invite whoever it likes to contribute, within certain boundaries. The Panel is obliged to invite people to comment and they tend to go beyond the bare minimum and have so far asked a range of stakeholders for their comments – but it is at their discretion.
- In this case it will depend on who is on the panel. John assumes local recreational users would be asked to comment.
- Applicants need to consult widely – it is just good practice and will ensure an application where any difficult issues are narrow and hopefully resolved. The applicant must offer conditions to resolve relevant issues.

██████████ – concerns are largely around the Wye – it is a remote experience for students. Need to keep it remote. Need to quantify and manage potential effects generally.

██████████ closed the session at 4.15 pm – encouraging all to keep in contact and to send in any ongoing concerns.

Concession holders contact summary

A list of concession holders for the Remarkables / Hector area was requested from the Department of Conservation. Due to privacy requirements, contact details were not provided. The list included a wide range of potential operators – such as concession holders for walks on conservation land in the South Island – and was winnowed down to focus on the most likely relevant tourism operators, including, for example alpine guiding, helicopter landings and skiing. The activity list in the table below shows the activity types selected. Contacts for each operator was sought via their webpages and, where necessary, NZ Companies Office details. Each was contacted by email or phone, although several listed companies had no online presence – which would be highly unusual for a business offering commercial tourism services. The responses are summarised below. Where a potential issue was identified, a more detailed interview was completed and is included earlier in this Appendix.

Table 9: Summary of responses from potentially affected concession holders			
Concession #	Activity	Company	Response
36696-AIR	Helicopter Landings	Over The Top Limited	Phoned 3.9. Email forwarded to Louisa Choppy Patterson and another pilot to check - will revert
37717-GUI	Heli-skiing, Walking - up to eight hours		
OT-24010-AIR	Helicopter Landings	Totally Tourism Limited	Phoned 3.9. Resent email to queenstown@helicopter.co.nz
36702-AIR	Helicopter Landings	Wanaka Helicopters Limited	Not affected - works in Wanaka area - although concession extends into that area. More interested in tourism capacity generally and effects on traffic and accommodation etc. Queenstown getting too busy.
119743-AIR	Helicopter Landings	Back Country Helicopters (2022) Limited	Sister to Wanaka Heli - so previous response applies
76864-FIL	RPAS (drones), TV Series	The Hunters Club Limited	No response to emails (only contact information available)
70843-GUI	Camping, Cycles/Mountain Biking, Walking - multi- day, Walking - up to eight hours	Active Earth New Zealand Limited / Hiking NZ	Do not use Doolans. Might have a personal interest. Will get back if any issues.
53760-GUI	Abseiling/Rap Jumping, Canoeing/Kayaking, Rafting, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours, Water Sledging	Adventure and Education Holdings Limited	No contact details online.
67998-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Camping, Canoeing/Kayaking, Cross Country Skiing/ Ski touring, Cycles/Mountain Biking, Heli-biking, Helicopter Landings, Heli-hiking, Heli-skiing, Mountaineering, Other - Boating,		

	Rafting, Rock Climbing, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours, Water Sledging		
59974-GUI	Cycles/Mountain Biking, Minibus, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours	Adventure South Limited	Does not use area
107489-GUI	Walking - up to eight hours	Alpine Luxury Tours Limited	Used to go to Lake Alta - sell other options preferentially. Put off by \$10 to drive up Remarkables road. Totals \$18.50 in fees per pax. Compare with Coronet Peak - no access fee. Not affected otherwise.
86396-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Cycles/Mountain Biking, Walking - up to eight hours	Black NZ Limited	Does ski transfer and concierge at Remarkables Field and walks to Lake Alta in summer - otherwise no effect. Likely a positive effect if it increases patronage.
87749-GUI	Outdoor Instruction Courses, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours	Frost, Robert Graham	Uses the head of the Wye valley for snow skills and a bit of scrambling on the ridge, but otherwise unaffected. Interested but not concerned – neutral.
82609-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Walking - up to eight hours	Hillview Park (2007) Limited	Uses the Coal Pit area. No effect.
52399-GUI	Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours	New Zealand Photography Workshops Limited	Uses lower ski field road and Lake Alta - rarely. Probably no issue - will check with Richard Young who is on tour. Most likely nothing - but will confirm
77977-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Fishing, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours	Out There Southern Adventures Limited	Uses Basin – interviewed – Pete Henderson
107155-GUI	Mountaineering	Peak Experience Limited / Alpine Dreams	Uses Basin – interviewed – Tim Robertson
74011-GUI	Walking - up to eight hours	Queenstown Wilderness Adventures Limited - Tanken Tours	No email address available, No response to voice message.
104781-GUI	4WD or Quadbike	Soho Expeditions Limited	No use of valley.
96143-GUI	Still Photography, Walking - up to eight hours	Southern Photography Adventures Limited	Use the Remarkables ski area and road occasionally. Proposal probably good with new access, but not concerned.
82299-GUI	Cross Country Skiing/ Ski touring, Mountaineering, Rock Climbing, Walking - multi-day	The Aspiring Guiding Collective Limited	Already interviewed. Doug Beech.

45772-GUI	Cross Country Skiing/ Ski touring, Huts (public), Mountaineering, Rock Climbing, Walking - multi-day, Walking - up to eight hours	Wanaka Mountain Guides Limited	Already interviewed. Tim Steward
122371-GUI	4WD or Quadbike	4x4 Explorer Adventures Limited	No use of area. Good luck with application.
80089-GUI	Camping, Cross Country Skiing/ Ski touring, Mountaineering, Rock Climbing	Alpine Guides (Aoraki) Limited	Very little use in winter - only Lake Alta in summer. No effect.
108659-GUI	Fishing	Aotearoa Anglers Limited	Only use Nevis - no effect.
122478-GUI	Fishing, Walking - up to eight hours	Aventura New Zealand Limited / Southern Rivers Fly Fishing	Guides in the Nevis - probably trout breeding in Doolans Creek - need to assess sediment inflows. Compare with Cardrona and Coronet Peak. Not affected otherwise.
101898-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Cycles/Mountain Biking, Walking - up to eight hours	Beau Rapley Guiding Limited / Cycle Tours NZ	Does not use Doolans but Lake Alta area in summer. Concerns are maintaining public access (irked by road use cost but understands) and ecology. Will summer product conflict with other some guided activity? Users of Queen's Drive and Double Cone.
119772-GUI	Abseiling/Rap Jumping	Canyoning New Zealand Limited	Concession for Wye Creek - only operates up to hydro intake so not affected - would be worried if effects on water quality - but different catchment. No effect
118805-GUI	Walking - up to eight hours	Epic South Photography Tours Limited	No response to form contact via web page. No other contact details available.
53544-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Walking - up to eight hours	Exclusive Tourism Services Ltd / Queenstown Guided Expeditions Ltd	No response to emails and phone message.
102344-GUI	Cycles/Mountain Biking	Helibike New Zealand Limited	Does not use the area - Devils Ridge ride. Keen on the proposal - would write a letter of support
81921-GUI	Fishing	Little Meg's Limited	Only uses Nevis - no effect.
53868-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Walking - up to eight hours	Mammoth Limited	Operates out of West Wanaka and Aspiring Valley - will get back if they think of anything.
122452-FIL	Commercial	Mountainwatch NZ Limited	Unlikely - film only for customers - will check and reply if it is an issue.
111380-GUI	Cross Country Skiing/ Ski touring, Mountaineering, Rock Climbing, Walking - multi-day	Queenstown Mountain Guides Limited	Previously interviewed. Mike Madden.

119044-GUI	4WD or Quadbike, Cycles/Mountain Biking, Walking - up to eight hours	Salt Queenstown Limited	Has consent for Wye Creek, Lake Alta and Doolans - but summer use mostly. Planning on some more activity in Doolans perhaps but focused mostly on Wye Creek. Happy with proposal - good luck. Looking forward to skiing there. Keep in touch.
117737-AIR	Hang-gliding	Skytrek Tandems Limited	No effect
121290-GUI	Walking - up to eight hours	The Real New Zealand Limited	No effect

Appendix 2: Response to comments on draft report

A draft of this report was forwarded to the Central Otago District Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and the Department of Conservation. The table below summarises the resulting queries relevant to this assessment and how they have been addressed. Not all comments in the responses were relevant to this assessment and have been addressed elsewhere in the application.

Agency and issue	Summary of feedback	Response
QLDC: Mitigation	Ultimately, the recreational impact of the expansion is that it will displace current backcountry users and shift the experience from a backcountry/wilderness setting to a more front-country setting. For ski tourers and other backcountry users, the fact that the area is currently accessible with minimal cost is a significant social and economic value. The report recognises this loss but does not identify any real mitigation options for it.	There are limited mitigations available. The opportunity is limited by the types of terrain available in the locale. While there are alternatives in the region for some activities, there are few for others. This factor is built into the assessment via, for example, the significance review in Table 4 on page 34, and the scale of effects assessment in Table 8 on page 42. Direct mitigations for regionally significant activities with high residual effects are limited. However, NZ Ski has stated that it is committed to working with the regional recreation community, and has committed to working with representatives via the proposed Recreation Users Group (RUG). Consultation revealed various backcountry development opportunities for winter sports which may support the activities most affected, but they are based beyond the ski area and cannot form a commitment within this consenting process.
CODC: Opportunities for current users	The conclusion is somewhat unclear in terms of the balance of impact between allowing more people to access the area via a mass recreation experience (skiing) and the adverse effect on the existing, more traditional boutique experience, which requires more effort on the part of the user. It may assist in more fully assessing what opportunities will be provided for the current users in areas adjacent to the extension area, and then come to an overall conclusion regarding the impacts on existing users.	The proposal will allow for deeper access into the Remarkables Conservation Area for winter sports via its enhanced access provision, in the same way that the existing ski area currently facilitates access into Doolans Basin. However, the other recreation opportunity settings are beyond the consenting footprint, and may require further development within the Remarkables Conservation Area to be fully realised (there is no simple like-for-like winter sports setting immediately adjacent to the Doolans area, but many of the winter backcountry snow activities can be conducted in the Conservation Area). Developing these opportunities is beyond the scope of this assessment, which is why the ongoing commitment by NZ Ski via the RUG has been identified as the best avenue. This assessment cannot guarantee what the outcomes of the RUG will be, and the degree to which the Department of Conservation will permit additional development for casual recreation in the Conservation Area (such as access tracks and huts).
DOC 1: Seasonal variation	Summer use described as 'low' but not quantified.	Section 4.1 estimates summer ski road use at 15,000 visitors, although the vast majority of these will only access the Rastus Burn (Lake Alta as the destination, for example). Notes summer activities (hunting, hiking) are "significantly lower" than in winter. There are a significant number of accessible alternative settings in the region for these summer

		activities, and any displacement effects outside the Doolans Basin will be slight.
DOC 2: Visitor equity	No breakdown of locals vs visitors or guided vs independent users.	No data are available for the Doolans Basin, but interviews indicate that independent ski touring is largely a local activity and almost all unguided.
DOC 3: Cumulative effects	No explicit cumulative effects assessment.	The assessment is based on the existing recreation and tourism environment. There are no know additional consent applications in the area or region of the same type or with the same suit of impacts which would represent a cumulative effect. The assessment does not consider the wide range of other tourism developments in the region which aim to serve the growing demand for tourism generally, but recognises the growing demand for recreation experiences and the limited capacity for the Remarkables Ski Area to respond without growth.
DOC 4: Displacement effects	Displacement discussed qualitatively only.	The report identifies alternative locations for displaced activities (Pisa Range, Treble Cone). And assesses displacement as a "Very high or high" adverse effect on backcountry values. The number of potentially displaced individuals is not large at a regional level (see Table 2) and the adverse effects are on the individuals rather than on the alternative destinations.
DOC 5: Indirect effects	Limited assessment of spill-over into adjacent catchments (Wye Creek).	The report identifies stakeholder concerns about "spillover" into the Wye Creek ecosystem. Wye Creek is a different recreation setting to the Doolans Basin with largely different user groups. There is the potential for additional activity in Wye Creek, although access is already facilitated by the existing services at the Remarkables Ski Area. This is not considered incompatible with the expectations of the CMS.
DOC 6: Construction Access	Loss of key car parks acknowledged but not managed in detail.	Confirms loss of upper carparks 1 and 2 for three summer construction seasons and proposes use of lower parking. Construction effects are summer-based, when use of the area is relatively low. The additional walking distance is not an impediment to access.
DOC 7: Mitigation specificity	Mitigation described conceptually only.	Provides a "Summary of suggested conditions" (Table 5) and an "Effects and mitigation summary" (Table 8). The final assessment notes residual adverse effects which are challenging to mitigate directly.
DOC 8: Recreation Users Group	RUG proposed without governance or scope.	The report outlines the RUG's role (liaison for access/management), proposed invitees, and the requirement for a dedicated NZSki employee for engagement. The governance and scope should be defined by group members and not pre-determined.
DOC 9: Backcountry access	Access pricing and availability unclear.	The report recommends promoting and continuing affordable "one up" passes for backcountry users. Pricing will be a commercial decision by NZ Ski to maximise patronage and cost-recovery.
DOC 10: Monitoring framework	No recreation monitoring or review framework.	The report recommends that the RUG will liaise on management options for the area, and managing post-development impacts is an expectation.
DOC 11: Climate longevity	Climate risk acknowledged but not operationalised.	Argues the expansion improves resilience by accessing slopes with better snow retention.

DOC 12: Decommissioning	No end-of-life pathway for infrastructure.	Site rehabilitation is a consent requirement.
DOC 13: Alternatives	No structured consideration of alternatives.	This is beyond the scope of this assessment.
DOC 14: Cultural values	No explicit Māori recreation assessment.	This report is not a cultural impact assessment.
DOC 15: Conflict management	No strategy for managing user conflict.	Proposes the RUG as the primary vehicle for managing and minimising conflicts between user groups.
DOC 17–20, 25: Light pollution, night-time landscape	No baseline or assessment of construction/operational/night-time effects. Artificial lighting not assessed for recreation experience.	There has been no night-time recreation identified in the visual catchment. Construction management will minimise noise, lighting effects and footprint.
DOC 21, 24, 26: CMS Qualities	CMS experiential values (solitude, etc.) not explicitly addressed.	Addresses these in Section 3.1 and Tables 6 & 7, acknowledging a shift from a backcountry to frontcountry experience. Section 5.3 added to report to review CMS outcomes with proposal in place.
DOC 22: Landscape-recreation	Landscape effects not translated into recreation outcomes.	Report refers to the Landscape Assessment for the Rastus Burn and notes that a spur blocks visibility of the expansion from Wye Creek. Otherwise refer to the Landscape Assessment.
DOC 28: Heritage connection	Heritage effects on recreation not assessed.	The report identifies the heritage assets of value to recreation (Raceman’s Hut and historic mining remains) which are beyond the project footprint.
DOC 29: Visitor safety	Visitor safety not addressed as a recreation effect.	The report discusses avalanche control, winch cable risks, and safety roles for ski patrol and the RUG. These are standard management activities for a professionally managed ski area.

Appendix 3: Author qualifications and experience



ROB GREENAWAY • CURRICULUM VITAE

Recreation and Tourism Research and Planning

Rob Greenaway has an academic and practical background in recreation, tourism and conservation management. He is experienced in planning and managing for public, community and commercial facilities and services in parks and reserves, and in urban and protected areas.

His strong skills in formal and informal data gathering, research analysis and journalism have been demonstrated in hundreds of project reports, management plans, publications, evidence, submissions and research papers over the past 30 years. Rob has published extensively in New Zealand, Australia and Asia (examples of articles and papers are available on www.greenaway.co.nz).

Core work is recreation and reserve management planning, and comprehensive and robust assessments of effects of large-scale infrastructure proposals. Rob has presented expert evidence at over 120 hearings, with experience in hydro, irrigation, wind, forestry, subdivision, roading, cycleways, mining, marine farming, discharges and coastal and tourism developments.

Work History from 1990	1997 - current:	Director, Rob Greenaway & Associates (R&R Consulting (NZ) Ltd) , Nelson.
	1995 - 1997:	Consultant in Recreation and Tourism, Boffa Miskell Limited , Christchurch.
	1990 - 1995:	Consultant in Recreation and Tourism, Tourism Resource Consultants , Wellington.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Assessments of effect and expert witness evidence

- Waka Kotahi / NZTA, 2025–2026:** Assessment of Effects for Petone to Grenada Road of National Significance.
- Christchurch City Council, 2023–2026:** Impact assessments and evidence for reconstruction of Akaroa Wharf (with Enviser).
- Port of Tauranga, 2023–2026:** Assessment for consenting of harbour dredge activities.
- Bathurst Resources, 2023–2026:** Assessments for mining works on Denniston and Stockton Plateaus.
- Winstone Aggregates, 2025–2026:** Assessment of land exchange proposal in Wellington.
- Santana Minerals, 2024–2026:** Effects assessment for Bendigo gold mine proposal.
- Graymont Ltd, 2019–2026:** Quarry expansion and consenting existing operations.
- OceanaGold, 2020–2025:** Review of effects of Waihi North project (with Mitchell Daysh).
- Mowbray family, 2023–2024:** Assessment for consent for helicopter activity, Westmere, Auckland.
- Skyline Enterprises, 2024–2025:** Submission evidence for proposed aerial lift amenity area at Franz Josef.
- Auckland Council, 2024–2025:** Open space assessment and evidence for Private Plan Change 94.
- Ravensdown, 2022–2024:** Reconsenting Dunedin fertiliser works, recreation assessment.
- Northport, 2020–2023:** Effects assessment and evidence for port expansion and reclamation (with Enviser).
- Waka Kotahi and Auckland Transport, 2022–2023:** Assessments for NORs for Airport to Botany and North West rapid transit corridors and roading improvements (with Beca).
- 100WPS Trust, 2023:** Evidence for marina redevelopment near Walter Peak on Lake Wakatipu.
- Watercare, 2022–2023:** Central Interceptor works on Point Erin Park, recreation assessment.
- Kāpiti Coast District Council, 2021–2022:** Assessment for wastewater treatment options in Waikanae (with Stantec).
- Hurunui District Council, 2021–2025:** Effects assessment and evidence for a Flyride in Hanmer Springs.
- Wellington Water, 2018–2022:** Assessment for wastewater treatment options in Porirua (with Stantec).
- Bayview Maitahi Proposed Plan Change 28, 2022:** Evidence for plan change for residential development in Kaka Valley, Nelson.
- Kaikōura District Council, 2022:** Effects of Wakatu Quay tourism development proposal (with Enviser).

- Whakatāne District Council, 2021:** Assessment of effects for boat harbour development connected to the Whakatāne River (with Sally Gepp Barrister and Waredale).
- Waka Kotahi, 2019–2021:** Review of effects and benefits of proposed shared path between Ngauranga and Petone – Te Ara Tupua.
- Talley’s, Clearwater Mussels, Clifford Bay Marine, PALMS Ltd, Marine Farming Association, Aquaculture NZ and Friends of Onapua Bay, 2021:** Several sets of evidence relating to Marlborough District Council’s Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan for aquaculture (largely with Gascoigne Wicks).
- Tasman Asphalt, 2021:** Evidence for asphalt plant near the Waimea River (with Sally Gepp Barrister).
- King Salmon, 2021:** Assessment of effect for offshore Blue Endeavour salmon farm (with Gascoigne Wicks).
- Yili Oceania, 2019–2020:** Review of effects of proposed ocean outfall for dairy factory near Waimate.
- Hutt City Council, 2018–2020:** Recreation assessment and evidence for coastal shared path proposal in the Eastern Bays (with Stantec).
- Auckland Council, 2020:** Effects assessment and evidence for Te Whau shared path.
- Ponui Aquaculture Ltd, 2020:** Evidence for proposed marine farm, Firth of Thames (with Gascoigne Wicks).
- Ohinau Aquaculture Ltd, 2020:** Evidence for proposed spat farm in Mercury Bay (with Gascoigne Wicks).
- Wellington Water, 2018–2019:** Review of options for location of cross-harbour water supply pipeline (with Stantec).
- Wellington International Airport Ltd, 2015–2020:** Assessment of effect of runway extension and sea defences renewal.
- Auckland Council, 2016–2019:** Assessment and evidence for Orewa seawall consent application (with T&T).
- Simcox Quarry, 2019–2020:** Review of effects of quarry trucks on recreation in the road corridor.
- Port Gore, 2017:** Expert evidence in relation to marine farming, Marlborough Sounds.
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2017–2018:** Assessment for SH3 Mt Messenger roading by-pass.
- Lyttelton Port Company, 2013–2018:** Review of effects of port deepening project and cruise ship berth development.
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2017:** Assessment for Petone Interchange development.
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2017:** Evidence for Northern Corridor Improvements, Auckland.
- Suburban Estates Ltd, 2017:** Evidence to QLDC plan review for development by iwi of Sticky Forest in Wanaka.
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, 2016–2018:** Review of Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing for designation and coastal permit.
- Mt Maunganui Dive Club, 2016–2017:** Evidence for Rena consent appeal.
- Clearwater Mussels Ltd, 2015:** Assessment for plan change in Marlborough Sounds for marine farm.
- Refining New Zealand, 2014–2017:** Review of effects and evidence for Marsden Point port development.
- CentrePort, 2014–2017:** Review of effects of Wellington port development.
- Trans-Tasman Resources, 2013–2015:** Review of recreation and tourism effects of iron sand mining proposal off the South Taranaki Coast (with Argo Environmental) and presentation to EPA.
- Peninsula Bay Joint Venture, 2016:** Evidence for plan change proposal for Wanaka subdivision.
- Silver Fern Farms, 2016:** Assessment of effect for ocean outfall consent.
- Harakeke residential development, 2016:** Evidence for coastal subdivision in Tasman.
- Chin Hill, 2015–2016:** Public access review for proposed subdivision near Orewa.
- Rena owners and insurer, 2012–15:** Review of recreation and tourism effects of wreck removal options.
- Auckland Transport, 2015:** Assessment of effects on parks for major roading project (Mill Road).
- Southland District Council, 2014–2016:** Environment Court evidence in relation to the Around the Mountains cycleway proposal.
- Fonterra, 2014–15:** Review of recreation effects of dairy factory expansion in South Canterbury.
- Direction Matiatia, 2014:** Expert evidence in relation to a marina proposal on Waiheke Island.
- Marlborough District Council, 2012:** Expert evidence in relation to salmon farming, Marlborough Sounds.
- Buller Coal, 2011–13:** Expert evidence in relation to an open cast mine, West Coast.

Nelson Cycle Trails Trust, 2011: Expert evidence in relation to cycleway proposal, Nelson.

South Head Action Group, 2011: Expert evidence in relation to a road stopping, Kaipara.

Port Gore, 2011: Expert evidence in relation to marine farming, Marlborough Sounds.

Fonterra, 2010: Expert evidence for new dairy factory in Darfield.

Omaha Park Ltd, 2010: Expert evidence for coastal subdivision, Auckland.

Darby Partners Ltd, 2007–10: Presentation of evidence for subdivision at Parkins Bay, Wanaka. Preparation of evidence for Te Arai coastal park development. Review of West Wanaka development.

Port Marlborough NZ, 2010: Survey of current and prospective marina berth holders, recreation assessment of effect for Waikawa marina extension and expert evidence at Council hearing.

Lincoln Land Developments / Ngai Tahu, 2009: Expert evidence in relation to Dairy Block subdivision.

Fiordland Link Experience, 2004–10: Assessment of effects of proposed monorail in conservation area.

Lakes Environmental, 2009: Expert evidence in relation to commercial jet boating on Wilkin River.

Auckland Regional Council, 2009: Bayswater Marina development Environment Court hearing.

Queenstown Airport Corporation, 2009: AEE preparation for gravel extraction on lower Shotover River.

Wairewa Rūnanga, 2006–07: Recreation assessment for proposed Lake Forsyth opening structures.

Landco Ltd, 2007: Presentation of Environment Court evidence for subdivision at Long Bay, North Shore.

Infinity Investments, 2005–06: Expert evidence for two Wanaka subdivisions (Hillend, Peninsula Bay).

**Recreation
research and
planning**

Department of Conservation, 2025: Review of management options for Molesworth Rangitahi Recreation Reserve.

Tasman District Council, 2023–2024: Recreation value assessment of Tasman and Golden Bays to assist marine aquaculture area planning.

Nelson City Council, 2022–2024: Reserve General Policies development.

Koata Ltd and Nelson City Council, 2019–2024: Recreation management planning for public use of private forest.

Christchurch City Council, 2023: Review of options for managing wharf development and use in Akaroa (with Enviser).

Auckland Council, 2022: Review of appeal material for Drury plan change proposal.

Nelson City & Tasman District Councils, 2019–2021: Reserve Management Plan for Saxton Field.

Port Nikau Joint Venture, 2021: Review of reserve development contributions assessment for residential development in Whangarei.

Bathurst Resources, 2019–2023: Visitor survey on Denniston Plateau and recreation access monitoring.

Nelson City Council, 2019: Review of esplanade reserve width requirements for recreation values for all waterways to advise policy in proposed Whakamahere Whakatū Nelson Plan.

Department of Conservation, 2018: Review of visitor management options for Rakau Rangatira project (kauri die-back, Waipoua Forest) (with Boffa Miskell).

Nelson City Council, 2017: Survey of Nelson Marina and boat ramp users

Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2016: Survey of users of the Hutt River Corridor.

Nelson City Council, 2016: Review of Open Space and Recreation Zone provisions for the proposed Whakamahere Whakatū Nelson Plan.

Nelson City Council, 2016: Survey of use of Maitai River ford.

Wellington City Council, 2015: Mount Victoria Masterplan (with Megan Wraight & Associates).

Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve Board, 2015: Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve and Kaka Point Historic Reserve Management Plan.

Nelson City Council, 2014–15: Survey of recreational use of Maitai and Roding Rivers.

Christchurch City Council, 2013–14: Survey of recreational and commercial use of 15 marine structures on and around Banks Peninsula.

Tasman District Council, 2012–2014: Regional Open Space Strategy and General Policies.

Meridian Energy, 2012: Survey of recreational use of the Waiau River.

Trustpower, 2007–2011: Surveys of recreational use of the Rangitāiki, Arnold, Wairau and Rakaia Rivers.

Lake Hood, 2007: Survey of Lake Hood residents and visitors (with Tonkin & Taylor).

Christchurch City Council, 2002–07: Visitor surveys for the Port Hills, Spencer Park, Sumner Beach, New Brighton Beach and users of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary.

Clutha River Parkway, 2006: Review of recreation and tourism benefits (with Dr Kay Booth and GHD).

Department of Conservation, 2003–04: National survey to quantify recreation displacement.

Christchurch City Council, 2003: Port Hills Recreation Strategy.

Meridian Energy, Project Aqua, 2001–02: Recreation survey of the Waitaki River and door-to-door survey of Waitaki Valley residents for AEE for recreation and community.

Energy and river-related

Lochindorb Wind Limited Partnership, 2023–2026: Assessment of wind farm effects near Balclutha.

Westpower, 2012–2026: Investigations and evidence for Waitaha River hydro proposal.

Manawa Energy / Trustpower, 2005–2026: Effects assessment work and evidence on four proposed and 11 existing hydro schemes (including Kuratau, Mangahao, Arnold, Coleridge, Wairau, Pātea, Mangahao, Matahina, Motukawa, Mangorei, Beaumont, Wheao, Kaimai and Kaniere). Wind farm impact assessments in Whanganui and Central North Island.

Meridian Energy, 2004–2026: Assessments of effect and evidence presentation for seven hydro schemes (including Pūkaki, Waitaki, Mokihinui, Manapouri, Waiiau), three wind farms (including Project Hayes) and two irrigation proposals. Review of Waitaki Catchment Water Allocation Regional Plan, preparation and presentation of evidence to Waitaki Water Allocation Board and consenting of Waitaki Scheme.

Otago Regional Council, 2022–2024: Regional outstanding waterbodies assessment (with Ken Hughey).

Hawke's Bay Regional Council, 2023–2024: Evidence for PPC7 relating to assessment methods for outstanding water bodies.

Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment / DOC, 2021: Recreation assessment for Lake Onslow/Aotearoa/NZ battery project.

Genesis Energy, 2021–2023: Effects assessment of operation of Tekapo hydro scheme for consenting.

Wairarapa Water, 2020–2021: Effects assessment for water storage scheme near Masterton.

Amuri Irrigation, 2018–2021: Review of effects of proposed irrigation infrastructure and water take, Hurunui River.

Ngaruroro River Water Conservation Order, 2017–2020: Analysis of recreation significance and evidence for Hastings District Council and Horticulture NZ.

Rangitata Diversion Management Ltd, 2015–2020: Review of effects of water storage and abstraction on Rangitata River, including proposal for an artificial whitewater feature.

Otago Regional Council, 2019–2020: Visitor survey of Manuherekia River and review of recreation values of Manuherekia River and Dunstan Creek.

Alliance Mataura, 2018–2019: Survey of recreation use of Mataura River and review of discharge effects for consent renewal.

Otago Regional Council, 2017–2019: Social values assessments for the Arrow and Clutha catchments to support regional planning for water quantity.

Environment Canterbury, 2018: Recreation assessments for four rivers for the Braided River Management & Certainty (BRIDGE) Project (with Boffa Miskell).

Outstanding Freshwater Bodies project, 2015–2016: Development of methods for identifying nationally outstanding rivers for recreation (with Golder Associates for Auckland and Hawke's Bay Regional Councils)

Environment Canterbury, 2015: Preparation of resource document and RiVAS assessment for jet boating in Canterbury (with Dr Ken Hughey and Rob Gerard).

Silver Fern Farms, 2014: Expert evidence in relation to a discharge into the Waimakariri River.

Waimea Water Augmentation Committee, 2010–13: Recreation assessment for irrigation/flow augmentation proposal (with Tonkin & Taylor).

Hurunui Water Project Ltd, 2009, 2011–13: Recreation AEE for water storage scheme on Hurunui River.

Pioneer Generation, 2009–12: Evidence for Kawarau Water Conservation Order for Nevis River.

Mighty River Power, 2011: Assessment of effects for wind farm proposal (Puketoi).

Genesis Energy, 2010–12: Assessment of effects for wind farm proposal (Castle Hill).

Contact Energy, 2011: Review of hydro options on Clutha River.

Environment Canterbury, 2010: Review of Opihi/Opuha irrigation area within Canterbury Water Management Strategy (through Golder Associates and with Lindis Consulting).

Norske Skogg, Tasman JV, 2010: Expert evidence for mill discharge on Tarawera River.

MainPower, 2008–11: Mount Cass wind farm consent application recreation assessment and evidence.

Lincoln University, 2009–10: *A Significance Assessment Method for River Values*, peer review of main report and activity-specific reports.

Fish & Game Council, Canterbury, 2009: Hurunui River Water Conservation Order evidence.

Environment Canterbury, 2005–06: Visitor survey for lower Waimakariri River.

Central Plains Water Trust, 2006: Recreation development planning for proposed irrigation scheme (with Steve Gurney and GHD).

King Country Energy, 2005: Expert evidence for proposed Mokau River hydro scheme.

Bay of Plenty Energy, 2005: Assessment of effects for proposed upper Kaituna River hydro scheme.

Contact Energy, 2005: Expert evidence for Clyde and Roxburgh hydro scheme re-consenting.

Hurunui Community Water Scheme, 2004: Assessment of effects for preliminary irrigation proposal.

Environment Canterbury, 2000–01: Recreation survey of the Hurunui River and assessment of significance.

Ministry for the Environment, 1998. Recreation section of *Flow guidelines for instream values* river management guide.

ECNZ, 1998. Recreation research for resource consents for Tongariro Power Diversion Scheme (with Kay Booth & Boffa Miskell Ltd).

BACKGROUND

Awarded the Ian Galloway Memorial Cup by the New Zealand Recreation Association in 2004: *To recognise excellence and outstanding personal contribution to the wider parks industry.*

Education *Diploma in Parks and Recreation Management (Distinction);* Lincoln University 1987.

Postgraduate study in conservation management – 18 months, Lincoln University 1988 – 89.

Professional training and associations Accredited Recreation Professional and Fellow of Recreation Aotearoa.

Chair of Nelson Marina Advisory Committee to the Nelson City Council, 2021 – 2023, Deputy from 2017.

Member of New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment, ex-executive member, 2006 – current.

Member, inaugural Sport NZ Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Recreation Council, 2009 – 2013.

National Executive of Recreation Aotearoa, 2000 – 2005 (member since 1990). Previously Chair and currently member of Recreation Aotearoa Board of Accreditation for member accreditation to professional status.

Member of Cashmere Forest Park Campaign for the Port Hills Park Trust Board, 2005 – 2011.

Member of Board of Management, Styx River Living Laboratory Trust, 2002 – 2006.

Introduction to Māori language, University of Canterbury, 1996.

Selected conference papers and articles *Mapping recreation: A costly dangerous mess?* Recreation Aotearoa National Conference, Queenstown 2016.

Assessing recreation in coastal plans – a case study of the Lyttelton Port Recovery Plan. NZ Association for Impact Assessment annual conference, Lincoln University 2016.

Keynote speaker. NZRA Coastal Recreation Seminar, Wellington 2014.

Christchurch 2025. Lincoln Planning Review. Vol 3. No 1. 2011.

The RMA and Recreation. Thinking Recreation – Recreation Aotearoa National Conference, Nelson 2011.

Recreation and tourism impact assessments: Rivers. Resource Management Law Association national conference, Christchurch 2010.

The effects of rural change on recreation and tourism, and vice versa. NZ Association for Impact Assessment annual conference, Papamoa 2009.

Recreation impacts: Coastal and lake-front environments. NZ Association for Impact Assessment annual conference, Nelson 2008.

An exploration of recreation displacement in New Zealand. Annals of Leisure Research, Volume 10 (2007).

Impact assessments for recreation. NZ Association for Impact Assessment annual conference, Dunedin 2006.

Measuring the significance of multi-use outdoor recreation resources: A comparative analysis of three sites in New Zealand. Annals of Leisure Research, Volume 5, 2002.

Visitor profiling: To what degree are users of open space dedicated, loyal, frequent, alternative and local, and in conflict? Recreation Aotearoa National Conference, Hamilton, 2002

Using Market Segmentation Analyses to monitor trends in recreation. Recreation Aotearoa National Conference, 2001