

E.03: Overview of feedback received from QLDC regarding recreation and landscape considerations.

Relevant Assessment / Report	Reviewer Question / Comment	NZSki Ltd Response	Report / Management Plan Reference
Recreation Assessment			
Recreational Users	One key observation from a recreation perspective—also noted in the report as having “no opportunities to mitigate”—is that the proposed ski area expansion will introduce new infrastructure and high visitor numbers into areas that are currently used by locals and visitors for a backcountry recreation experience (including ski touring, hiking, and other wilderness-based activities).	<p>The Applicant notes this feedback from the Council; however, the proposal to expand the Remarkables Ski Area would lead to a fundamental change in the Doolans Basin recreation landscape. The operational impact is assessed as "Very high or high," reflecting a shift from backcountry to frontcountry recreation due to permanent infrastructure, groomed trails, and increased visitor interactions. This substantially alters the environment for users who value solitude and an unmodified landscape. Few regional alternatives offer comparable ease of access to the backcountry, and displacement of traditional backcountry activities is a primary concern for stakeholders.</p> <p>While the change from backcountry to frontcountry cannot be mitigated, NZSki will continue facilitating recreation access to the Remarkables and Hector Mountains, as well as public use of the Rastus Burn and Doolans Valleys. A key recommendation is formalising NZSki’s role through a leadership position in a Recreation Users Group. This would support management of the ski area, consider local public recreation opportunities, NZSki’s relationships with other providers, and its broader role in facilitating recreation within the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area.</p> <p>It is also important to note that the expansion will enhance regional snow sports capacity by providing access to slopes with better snow retention, improving climate resilience for the ski industry. The introduction of gondolas and new trails would increase accessibility for a broader demographic, including families, beginners, and those with limited mobility who currently do not visit the basin.</p>	Refer to B.07 Recreation Assessment Section 5.2, Table 8 and Section 6 H.01 Master Resource Consent Conditions RUG.01-RUG.04
Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) Assessment	The CMS assesses the area as unmodified with very high intact ecological and natural landscape values where a sense of solitude and remoteness can be experienced. Once that infrastructure is in place, these values will be significantly impacted and those areas will no longer provide the same backcountry experience for the community, with no similar accessible alternatives. There are already four large commercial ski fields in close proximity (Remarkables, Coronet Peak, Cardrona and Treble Cone) providing the experience provided by the proposed expansion.	A full assessment of the Project against the CMS can be found in Section 10 of the substantive application.	Refer to A.17 – Approvals Relating to the Conservation Act
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.	<p>There are limited mitigation options available. The opportunity is limited by the types of terrain available in this location. 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 of the Recreation Assessment, and the scale of effects assessment in Table 8 on page 42 of the Recreation Assessment. Direct mitigations for regionally significant activities with high residual effects are limited.</p> <p>As noted above, NZSki 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. Consultation revealed various backcountry development opportunities for</p>	Refer to B.07 Recreation Assessment Section 5, Table 4, Section 5.2, Table 8 and Appendix 2.

Relevant Assessment / Report	Reviewer Question / Comment	NZSki Ltd Response	Report / Management Plan Reference
		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.	
Construction	<p>Concentration of displaced users into the Wye Creek Basin, increasing recreation impacts in this area. Mitigation could include regular inspections for rubbish, increase pest predator control, monitoring of the Wye Creek Basin ecological values to measure any decline.</p> <p>Rubbish from construction activities and increase of rubbish from Winter ski operations blowing into the fragile alpine natural environment.</p>	Access through the Rastus Burn and Doolans Basin during construction will be limited to only those areas necessary for health and safety purposes. It is therefore not anticipated that visitors will be displaced.	N/A
Recreation User Group	The proposed Recreation User Group, which has been suggested as mitigation for the removal of the backcountry experience, doesn't identify how this will be resourced - NZSki should provide administrative support, and NZSki should fund the implementation of any recommendations agreed to by the Recreation User Group.	As noted above, the role of the Recreation Users Group is to facilitate backcountry development and access opportunities, through a centralised group with specific interests in the Remarkables and Hector Mountains. The Recreation User Group is recommended to be 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). NZSki's role would be to co-ordinate and facilitate the Recreation Users Group. While NZSki will look to support the Recreation Users Group's initiatives, through access opportunities through the Remarkables and Doolans ski areas and potentially funding (on a case-by-case basis), it is not envisaged that NZSki would be responsible for funding and delivery of the projects identified by the Recreation Users Group.	Refer to H.01 Master Resource Consent Conditions RUG.01-RUG.04
Landscape and Visual Assessment			
Landscape Effects Assessment	The Landscape Effects Assessment has helped inform the design for the proposal, which is preferable - in theory, any adverse landscape effects can be identified early on and responded to through an iterative design process (Section 1.2).	Noted.	N/A
Zone of Theoretical Visibility Modelling	Images of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps are included. From correspondence, I understand that final versions of these ZTV images are to be included in the final report, as well as digital model views and visual simulations. All of that will be useful. As mentioned, I also understand that a final earthworks/landform design for the vicinity of the Mid Station is being prepared, and that will be relevant to its visual catchment.	<p>Larger A4 exports of the ZTVs shown in the LVA are provided with higher resolution within the updated graphic supplement (page 20-22).</p> <p>The ZTV modelling is based on NZ Ski survey data and publicly available Lidar data with 1m Digital Elevation Model (DEM) accuracy within areas where this was available (majority of QLDC). A DEM with 8m accuracy was used within CODC (outside of Doolans Basin) and the fringes of the Wakatipu Basin. The ZTV maps included in the graphic attachment show the boundary between 1m and 8m DEMs.</p> <p>A model was prepared that includes the base stations at their proposed height above existing ground (13.5m Remarkables base station and 10m for mid station and Doolans Base station). ZTVs have been prepared based on centrally located points within the proposed built forms that would be most visible from external viewpoints.</p> <p>The ZTVs were used as a tool for a broad scale, terrain-based visibility analysis. Visual simulations were prepared for more accurate assessment from key representative viewpoints, showing towers as well as built form and earthworks.</p>	Refer to B.03 Landscape Effects Assessment and B.03.1 Landscape Graphics

Relevant Assessment / Report	Reviewer Question / Comment	NZSki Ltd Response	Report / Management Plan Reference
		<p>Given that ZTVs do not take vegetation into account, they represent a “worst-case scenario” in terms of visibility from the lower-lying viewpoints in the Wakatipu Basin where vegetation may intervene in the foreground. For the higher-lying areas (above the tree line) the extent of visibility is considered representative. However, the ZTV does not differentiate visibility in relation to distance – it shows the theoretical visibility, while the actual visibility of structures would be much lower from distances of over 10km, such as those viewpoints located in the Wakatipu Basin. It is unlikely that structures, even if located on the Helicopter ridge would be discernible at those distances. This has been taken into account and described in the visual assessment and clarified in the report.</p> <p>Should other components of the proposal be considered relevant, additional ZTVs can be exported, or results can be shown at different scales.</p>	
Lighting Clarification	Lighting at night, evenings and mornings in relation to base buildings, the Mid Station, gondola pylons, gondola cabins and snowmaking machines. The extent, hours and nature of lighting of these elements will be important to gaining a full understanding of visual effects.	<p>Artificial lighting at night associated with the proposed development is expected to be greater than existing night-time lighting levels. Artificial lighting will consist of snow groomers and other vehicles headlights, as well as spotlights (downlights) for snow making. Internal and potentially some external lights will be mounted at the midstation and cabin building which will all be low lux and downlighting. Conditions of consent are proposed to require lighting to comply with the QLDP lighting standards for ski area activities.</p> <p>The Doolans Gondola, and the Doolan’s Base Station and Doolans Mid Station may only be lit during winter operations between 6.30am to 5.30pm. No lighting is allowed outside of this time period.</p> <p>With respect to the Base Building in the Doolans operational lighting allows for cleaning staff to undertake their work, but there would be no lighting overnight.</p> <p>Groomers with lighting will operate on the ski trails in the Doolans and Rastus Burn catchments. These usually operate following closure of the ski field in the later afternoon/ early evening. There is no night-skiing with any associated lighting proposed.</p>	<p>Refer to B.03 Landscape Effects Assessment Section 6.2.2</p> <p>Refer to H.01 Master Resource Consent Conditions OP.8-OP.9</p>
Transport and Bus Hub	The transport and bus hub area that is to be located close to State Highway 6 (SH6) so that the landscape and visual effects can be fully understood. Information on earthworks, levels and screening (whether by created landforms or vegetation) will be useful. Effects need to be considered in relation to highway users but also neighbouring land to the north, south and west.	The Applicant has prepared a separate report, “Remarkables Ski Area Carpark & Bus Hub”, which covers all the matters raised.	Refer to B.04 Carpark & Bus Hub Landscape Effects Assessment and B.04.1 Carpark & Bus Hub Landscape Graphics
Proposed Revegetation / Rehabilitation	Proposed revegetation/rehabilitation of earthworked areas within both the Rastus Burn and Doolans catchments. The Applicant’s draft Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment Report gives detail of proposed mitigation/avoidance measures in relation to vegetation loss, weed introduction, etc and this appears comprehensive. However, it would be useful to have some commentary on how revegetation of batters and earthworked areas (including temporary access tracks) is expected to develop over time in terms of landscape and visual effect.	<p>As noted, the proposed rehabilitation of earthworked areas has been addressed in the Terrestrial Ecology Assessment. In accordance with the proposed conditions of consent, all plant translocations must achieve a 60% survival rate after seven years. These will be monitored on an annual basis for three years, and biennially for a further four years.</p> <p>Specific commentary of how this will develop over time, from a landscape and visual effects perspective, is being considered by NZSki’s landscape expert and will be responded to in due course.</p>	To be confirmed.

Relevant Assessment / Report	Reviewer Question / Comment	NZSki Ltd Response	Report / Management Plan Reference
Earthworks Clarification	<p>Finished levels and earthworks information regarding the proposed gondola Mid Station. Plans/elevations are currently marked as drafts with earthworks updates to come. Understanding how the Mid Station will be set into landform and how contours will be re-shaped will be important to understanding its visibility, particularly from parts of the Wakatipu Basin, such as the Site Context Photo 8 location from the Graphic Supplement. Finished colours for all structures (including gondola pylons) will also be useful.</p>	<p>The earthworks plans in Map Series 400, 450 and 500 show the proposed cut and fill for the Remarkables, Mid Station and Doolans Basin ski trails and access roads. These plans also show areas where retaining walls may be required due to the height of the proposed cut or fill. An additional section has been included in the report (Section 3.3) to explain the proposed earthworks and retaining walls as outlined below.</p> <p>The detail design of earthworks will be required to determine the exact extent and height of retaining walls, but the LVA has assumed the worst-case scenario as stated on the plans. The visual simulations show the earthworks based on the cut/fill plans.</p> <p>In the visual simulations the earthworks are shown as different in colour/texture. In winter it is likely that the snow would cover the cut/fill areas, apart from areas where vertical retaining walls are required. In order to show a worst-case scenario these areas are not shown with snow cover in the visual simulations. In summer visualisations no re-vegetation of earthworks is shown, which would be the case for areas with a lower gradient.</p> <p>It is understood that the majority of cut and fill batters can be rehabilitated by transplanting snow tussocks when undertaking earthworks. This would reduce the visual effects of earthworks in areas where snow tussocks are currently present, such as the lower part of the Doolans catchment. High-lying, wind-exposed ridgelines currently contain rock or scree with limited cushionfield and herbfield vegetation. It is understood that these cannot be transplanted and exposed scree or rock will remain in these areas.</p> <p>Based on the Construction Management framework, where level changes, space constraints, ground conditions, or construction requirements require additional support, retaining structures and batter slopes are incorporated into the earthworks methodology.</p> <p>Retaining and slope support solutions are selected to suit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Local ground conditions and geotechnical recommendations > Height and extent of cut-and-fill interfaces > Constructability within constrained alpine environments > Long-term performance and integration with permanent works <p>Where practicable, geogrid-reinforced slopes are preferred in place of structural retaining, as these can reduce reliance on conventional wall systems and support more landform-responsive outcomes. Their suitability will depend on the availability and performance of fill material capable of meeting the required engineering specification.</p> <p>Where geogrid-reinforced slopes are not suitable, other retaining solutions may be adopted to respond to local conditions and constructability requirements. These may include gabion retaining structures, or timber pole and lagging walls, including where necessary supplementary support such as buried 'deadman' anchors / piles.</p> <p>The final retaining solution adopted in any location will be informed by detailed design and geotechnical assessment. For the purposes of the Fast-track application, indicative wall extents, lengths, and heights have been identified to define the assessed construction methodology and effects envelope.</p>	<p>Refer to C.06 (Sheet E402), C.07 (Sheet E456) and C.08 (Sheet E502)</p> <p>Refer to B.03 Landscape Effects Assessment and B.03.2 Graphic Simulations</p> <p>Refer to H.01 Master Resource Consent Conditions BD.4, GEO.1 and EW.3</p>