Before the Expert Panel appointed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Under	the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
And	
In the Matter of	an application for approvals by NZSki Limited to upgrade existing infrastructure at the Remarkables Ski Area, including a new passenger transport lift, carparking areas, and expanding the ski field into the adjacent Doolans Basin

Statement of Evidence of **Robert James Greenaway** on behalf of NZSki Limited in response to Section 53 Comments

Recreation

Dated: 3 November 2026

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Robert James Greenaway.

2. I have almost 40 years' experience in the recreation field, the past 30 as a self-employed recreation and tourism research and planning consultant specialising in impact assessments for large-scale infrastructure projects. I have completed more than 600 projects nationally and presented evidence at more than 120 hearings. I am an Accredited Recreation Professional with Recreation Aotearoa and am on its accreditation board. I graduated from Lincoln University in 1987 with a three-year Diploma in Parks and Recreation Management with Distinction and completed 18 months of postgraduate study in conservation management.

3. This statement is given as part of NZSki Limited's (**NZSki**) response to comments on the Remarkables Ski Area Upgrade and Doolans Expansion (**Project**) made under sections 51 and 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTA**). I respond to the recreation issues raised by:

   (a) the Department of Conservation (**DOC**), including Tamzin Moore's visitor experience evidence as summarised in DOC's section 51 concession report;

   (b) Queenstown Mountain Guides Limited (**QMG**), in its comments dated 9 October 2026; and

   (c) Central Otago District Council (**CODC**), in section 3.6 of its comments and the related proposed condition changes.

4. My original findings are provided in the May 2026 NZSki Doolans Basin Expansion B.07A Recreation Assessment. My confirmation of compliance with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 is at section 2.3 of that report. I have prepared this statement on the same basis.

5. There is substantial agreement between myself, DOC and QMG about the existing recreation values of the Doolans Valley and the principal adverse effect. We recognise its unusually accessible backcountry setting and the High or Very High adverse effect on existing backcountry recreation values and users arising from its conversion to a frontcountry ski area. The differences concern what the access and management measures achieve, the opportunities which remain, and the implications of those effects for the Project.

SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Department of Conservation

Recreation benefits

6. I agree with DOC that the principal adverse effect is the change in the character of the recreation setting. There are also substantial recreation benefits. The Project provides more lift-served skiing terrain and a wider choice of slopes, including a learners' area, with gondola access for people who would not otherwise enter Doolans. Families, beginners and people with limited mobility would have improved access to the alpine environment. These benefits are described in sections 5.1.4 and 6 of my report and in the Destination Queenstown interview at pages 48–49.

7. For context, the existing Remarkables Ski Area averages 282,000 skier days annually (2020–2025), while estimated backcountry use of Doolans is 20–50 people on a good winter day (section 4.1 of the Recreation Assessment). These figures indicate the scale of the existing ski-area market and the opportunity to make Doolans accessible to a much wider group. I have not estimated additional annual visits and do not suggest that visitor numbers alone determine recreation value. These are different measures of use and should not be compared as if they were annual visitor totals for the same activity.

8. In recreation terms, I consider the increased capacity, choice and accessibility of lift-served skiing terrain provided by the Project to be a substantial regional recreation benefit. The objective is to create a quality recreation experience for both residents and visitors. This benefit is separate from the adverse effect on existing backcountry users. It does not mitigate or offset that effect.

Mitigation and management

9. At paragraph 192 of its section 51 concession report, DOC describes the access provisions, one-up lift passes and proposed Recreation User Group as means of maintaining access and managing interactions, rather than mitigating the principal recreation effect. I agree that these measures do not retain the existing backcountry character. My report leaves the High or Very High residual effect unchanged.

10. The measures can nevertheless mitigate effects on recreational users. They do not replace the solitude, natural quiet or unmodified terrain lost within the developed area. Maintaining physical access, providing safe alternatives where practical and continuing one-up passes reduce barriers to reaching recreation settings. A Recreation User Group and ongoing NZSki liaison provide a means of addressing operational conflicts and maintaining input from recreational and commercial users.

These are practical measures to maintain a quality recreation experience within the changed setting and access to the wider mountains.

Queenstown Mountain Guides Limited

Quality of Doolans and regional alternatives

11. I agree with QMG about the value of Doolans' combination of road access, varied terrain, snow retention and an undeveloped setting. My report rates backcountry ski sports as having Very High regional value. I also agree that a groomed and avalanche-controlled slope does not provide the natural snowpack and decision-making setting needed for backcountry avalanche education, for example.

12. I disagree with QMG's statement that Doolans is the only high-quality, easily accessible backcountry ski area in the Southern Lakes. The interviews identify alternatives at Treble Cone, the Pisa Range and the fringes of Cardrona, among others. Aspiring Guides and Wanaka Mountain Guides describe terrain at Treble Cone as comparable to Doolans (pages 57 and 68 of my report). The travel, access costs and suitability for particular clients differ. These alternatives do not provide a like-for-like replacement close to Queenstown. Their existence does not remove the High or Very High effect I have identified. The alternatives nevertheless continue to provide valued regional backcountry opportunities.

Remaining opportunities

13. As DOC also recognises at paragraph 190 of its section 51 concession report, skiing, touring, mountaineering and other recreation can continue in the wider area. The Project is concentrated in the upper basin and does not develop the whole Doolans Valley or the surrounding Remarkables and Hector Mountains, with no ski-area development proposed within Wye Creek. The gondola would also improve access towards backcountry? terrain beyond the developed area. This supports the continuation of some guided and independent activities, although it recognises that existing touring routes or teaching locations may require changes. As the interviews in my report indicate, the new lift access could reduce the approach to more distant backcountry? terrain. That terrain has different characteristics and is not a like-for-like replacement for Doolans, but improved access would give some users more options.

14. QMG's concern extends beyond the structures and groomed trails to encounters, avalanche control and operational restrictions. I agree that the small physical footprint of individual works cannot be used as a measure of their effect on the backcountry experience. The existing ski area already facilitates guided and independent access through its road, carparks and lifts. Although it does not retain

the same backcountry experience within the developed part of Doolans, the existing arrangement demonstrates how ski-area infrastructure can facilitate access to the wider backcountry.

Duration of effects

15. I agree that the change to the backcountry experience is a long-term effect for the operating life of the ski area. The proposed concession provisions require removal of structures and rehabilitation at closure, subject to retained exemptions for some works. They therefore address QMG's concern about abandoned infrastructure, but do not establish that all modified landforms or the original backcountry character would be restored. I would not describe the recreation effect as temporary on the basis of those provisions. Removal and rehabilitation would reduce the effects of redundant infrastructure and assist recovery of recreation amenity, although the extent of recovery would depend on the works retained and the rehabilitation achieved.

Level of effect

16. I agree with QMG's description of a high adverse effect on existing backcountry values. My rating is High or Very High and remains so after the proposed access and management measures. The separate Moderate rating for winter recreation opportunities in my Table 8 addresses the physical ability to undertake activities within a changed setting. It is not the overall rating for the loss of backcountry skiing, nor a finding that QMG's existing teaching and guiding experience would be retained.

Public access and commercial use

17. I agree that the Project introduces a commercial ski area into a public recreation setting. It does not follow that the land would cease to be available for public recreation – rather, access will be improved. The proposed public-access provisions retain passage, subject to necessary safety restrictions, with alternative access where reasonably possible. The road and lifts would continue to provide access towards backcountry areas beyond the development, just as the existing skifield currently provides access to the Doolans Valley. The access provisions in Appendix B to DOC's section 51 concession report (Schedule 3 clauses 26–30 (pages 33–34) for public passage and safety, and clauses 59–60 (page 39) for temporary operational restrictions) address passage and temporary safety restrictions. Necessary safety restrictions mean that access cannot be unrestricted at all times. Subject to those restrictions, the provisions support continued public access alongside the wider access opportunities provided by the Project.

18. The important distinction is between public access and the experience available once there. Continued access via existing and proposed infrastructure does not preserve the undeveloped setting or remove the effects on QMG and other backcountry users. Subject to the access and safety provisions, the area would remain available to the public, with a changed recreation offering. I retain the principal adverse-effect ratings in my report.

Central Otago District Council

19. I agree with CODC's Parks and Recreation Manager, Gordon Bailey, on the main effects findings summarised in section 3.6 of the Council's comments (pages 29–31). These include positive regional effects on skiing terrain and opportunities, Very High but temporary summer construction effects, High or Very High effects on existing backcountry winter recreation, and Minor operational effects on summer recreation.

20. Mr Bailey seeks a clearer conclusion about the benefits and adverse effects. The Project would make Doolans accessible to a much wider range of users and increase lift-served skiing opportunities. For existing users seeking its undeveloped character, however, there would remain a High or Very High adverse effect. Improved access to adjacent backcountry? terrain is a benefit for some users, but that terrain is different and does not replace the existing experience. I have not reduced the adverse-effect rating in anticipation of further tracks, huts or other developments, or outcomes which the proposed Recreation User Group cannot guarantee.

21. I support CODC's proposed addition to condition RUG.02 requiring promotion of the one-up one-down lift pass to backcountry users (page 93 of its conditions comments). This gives effect to a recommendation in my report and would help users make use of the available access. I also support the purpose of the proposed condition requiring redundant equipment and buildings to be removed within 12 months of becoming redundant (page 3). This would avoid unnecessary continuing effects on recreation amenity.

22. CODC considers that any financial bond needed to secure infrastructure removal is better addressed through the DOC concession. From a recreation perspective, the important outcome is effective provision for removal and rehabilitation. I understand conditions for the removal of improvements are provided for in the proposed Doolans Expansion and Remarkables Upgrade concessions. I leave the appropriate approval mechanism and detailed wording to the planning evidence and legal submissions. These measures would support the ongoing quality of the recreation setting and NZSki's role in facilitating public access.

CONCLUSION

23. The comments do not change my principal effects findings. There is substantial agreement on the loss of existing backcountry values, and CODC also agrees with the identified regional benefits. The access, liaison and removal provisions address practical effects on users and recreation amenity, while the High or Very High effect on existing backcountry winter recreation remains. Alongside that effect, the Project would provide substantial regional recreation benefits through increased skiing capacity, choice and access to the alpine environment for a much wider range of users.



Robert James Greenaway

3 November 2026