

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY  
THE MACKENZIE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER**

the Resource Management Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER**

of RM230149 an application for land use consent to establish and operate a commercial tree-climb ropes course and picnic facilities at Lakeside Drive, Tekapō/Lake Tekapo

**BETWEEN**

**QUEENSTOWN COMMERCIAL  
PARAPENTERS LIMITED**

Applicant

---

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF ANDREW CRAIG**

---

Dated: 27 August 2025

## **Summary Statement of Andrew Craig**

### **Introduction**

- [1] My name is Andrew Craig. I prepared evidence for the Queenstown Commercial Parapenters Ltd (**Applicant**) relating to RM230149, an application for land use consent to establish and operate a commercial tree-climb ropes course and picnic facilities at Lakeside Drive, Tekapō/Lake Tekapo dated 13 August 2025.
- [2] This summary statement provides a synopsis of the key issues identified in my statement of evidence. These issues include whether the proposal:
- (a) Is in keeping with the landscape character of the site and its surroundings;
  - (b) Maintains the kind of amenity expected to occur within the zone in which it is located;
  - (c) Aligns with what people would reasonably expect to occur in the landscape of its setting (associative effects); and
  - (d) Achieves the relevant expected Mackenzie District Plan landscape outcomes.

### **Summary statement**

- [3] The overall character of the site and its setting is diverse, incorporating a wide range of activity. The proposal is consistent with this and is therefore, not anomalous or out of keeping.
- [4] Natural character of the shoreline environment is moderately high, but by no means pristine. The subject site is not subject to any RMA s6 overlays identified within the MDP and is not, in my opinion, within the margin of the Lake in terms of RMA s6(a) and is therefore, an RMA s7(c) matter.
- [5] The main contributory landscape elements – shoreline landform, lake surface, trees and physical features will essentially remain intact.

- [6] Landscape effects, being those arising from changes to the landscape irrespective of whether they are visible, are assessed to be minor. That is, change will occur to an appreciable extent, but not so much that existing landscape character will be substantially altered.
- [7] As Mana Whenua have given their written approval, no cultural landscape effects will arise in this regard.
- [8] Potential visual effects concern view intrusion and view quality.
- [9] View intrusion effects will be very low due to the bulk of the activity being located high in the trees and its essentially 'transparent' nature. The exception being the base building which is located so as to minimise view intrusion. Foreground trees will contribute significant screening also. View intrusion effects are assessed less than minor.
- [10] View quality is maintained due to the reasons just listed. The base building is a quality design. Proposed landscaping will enhance view quality. View quality effects are assessed less than minor.
- [11] Amenity effects arising from the activity will align with the kinds of activity already occurring in the wider setting, although it will introduce a greater level of complexity and diversity compared to the current situation. Based on first hand observation, the proposed activity will be relatively quiet enabling ongoing appreciation of the landscape and the amenity derived from it. Landscape amenity effects are assessed less than minor.
- [12] Associative effects, put simply, centre on the question of: would people be negatively surprised to find such an activity as that proposed occurring in a setting such as this? The answer is no, given the wide range of recreational activity occurring in the vicinity of the site. Associative effects are therefore, assessed less than minor.
- [13] In consideration of the Mackenzie District Plan matters where they concern landscape outcomes relevant to the site, it is my opinion that the potential effects arising from the proposal will maintain these, while acknowledging that at most, a minor degree of adverse effects will occur. Chief outcomes are, essentially: the predominance of green open space

containing limited facilities and structures while views to the lake arising from the presence of buildings are maintained.

### **Submitter landscape evidence<sup>1</sup>**

[14] Mr Smith's evidence makes the following conclusions:

[15] commercialisation of the landscape is unacceptable as '*...while the proposal will physically maintain a predominance of open space, the proposal will deter the general public from spending time under these trees reducing its perception of openness*' [p37 / p70 / p75]. As noted in my evidence, commercial recreation activity is common on public land – eg: various concessionaires in national parks. Also, shoreline activity such as marinas, clubs, food outlets etc. Additionally, the MDP anticipates the possibility of commercial activity within the OSZ (P2), where those are of a nature and scale that is complimentary to the recreational focus of the zone. I do not consider the scale of the proposal would reduce a perception of openness given its limited footprint and largely elevated location at least 3m above ground up in the trees. Regarding this matter I also defer to Ms Strong's evidence regarding her conclusions as to it not deterring public use.

[16] Busyness of the site will adversely affect views for residents [P40]. Based on my observation of like for like activity, busyness is not particularly prevalent – in fact, very sedate. Views are not entirely uninterrupted to the lake presently from urban areas, and the limited built form of the proposal will maintain those and amenity overall.

[17] '*The proposal has very limited associative values...*' with the lake and foreshore. It is a recreational activity that people would expect to find in a reserve or park irrespective of the setting. The MDP lists activities it expects to occur in the OSZ – such as walking, cycling, picnicking, bbq, seating, play, toilets, shelters, play grounds and sports equipment (PC29 OSZ – 02 provisions). None of these are necessary to the lake shore environment. Further, the wider setting includes a wide range of recreational activity and will therefore not be out of keeping with peoples' expectations. Nor, in this regard, will it be out of keeping with the degree

---

<sup>1</sup> Landscape evidence prepared by Mr Paul Smith.

and type of natural character present along the lake shore environment and the fact it is part and parcel of the wider physical environment that the application site adjoins. Mr Smith acknowledges this where he states: *'Whilst at a broad scale, the proposal will be in keeping with other commercial recreational activities within the receiving environment, approximately 350m away. However, it will not be consistent with the current use, character and values associated with this part of the foreshore* [p56].

- [18] Access is hindered due to overhead activity and people congregating around the base building [p63]. I note that the maximum number of users (60) is always cited, thereby conflating actual effects, which in reality will occur only occasionally (Ms Strong to comment on). In any event, access will not be impeded.
- [19] The character of the 4km shoreline is variable and *'Therefore, community facilities or commercial recreation activities are unlikely to always be complementary with the varied character within the zone.* [p71]. This variability in my view, lends itself well to the capacity and absorption of various recreational activity, including that proposed. That is to say, the proposal will be in keeping with the prevailing pattern of activity.
- [20] *'...the proposal will interrupt views to the lake and the amenity of the lakeside area will not be maintained* [p76]. I assess that view interruption of the lake will be negligible for the reasons given in my evidence. In any case, the views to the lake are already interrupted and will be more so once existing planting outside of the site matures.

## **Conclusion**

- [21] Context as derived from the existing environment and landscape relevant District Plan provisions are always key to the determination of whether the effects of a proposal are acceptable. In this case, given the prevalence of recreational and urban activity in the receiving environment, the somewhat modified foreshore environment and the District Plan aspirations for the zone in which the proposal is located, it

is my opinion that the tree climb activity will entirely be in keeping with the character and amenity of its landscape setting.

Dated: 27 August 2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Craig', is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

Andrew Craig