

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-03 23:42:06

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
The Hills Residences Limited and The Hills Holdings Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
s 9(2)(a)

3 What is your job title

Job title:
s 9(2)(a)

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:
s 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:
s 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:
s 9(2)(a)

7 Is your address for service different from your postal address?

No

Organisation:

Contact person:

Phone number:

Email address:

Job title:

Please enter your service address:

Section 1: Project location

Site address or location

Add the address or describe the location:

The location of the project is the land comprising and adjacent to 'The Hills' which is a private golf club in the Wakatipu Basin, near Arrowtown.

The project land is a roughly triangular in shape, c. 180ha landholding, located between Arrowtown Lake Hayes, McDonnell and Hogans Gully Roads, comprising the following addresses: land 167 McDonnell Road, 37 Hogans Gully Road, 77 Hogans Gully Road, 37 Arrowtown Lake Hayes Road, 424

Arrowtown Lakes Hayes Road, and 428 Arrowtown Lakes Hayes Road.

The legal descriptions and registered owners of the land are as follows:

Record of Title: Legal Description: Registered Owner:

413071 Lot 6 DP 392663 Veritas Hill Limited
1068487 Lot 4 DP 516022 Trojan Helmet Limited
803678 Lot 3 DP 516022 Trojan Helmet Limited
803677 Lot 2 DP 516022 AC Hill and RM Hill
1068488 Lot 5 DP 516022 Veritas Hill Limited
803676 Lot 1 DP 516022 MS Hill, M Hill and Veritas (2015) Limited (Mole Hill Trust)
755877 Lot 1 DP 501981 Blackcurrant Trustees Limited, JJ Chisholm, EJ Hill and P Houghton

A cadastral plan showing the landholdings is attached. This includes a table summarising the ownership information above. For the avoidance of doubt, all the coloured areas shown on the plan are addressed by this submission.

Also attached is a plan that shows the existing (operative) Structure Plan development areas layout for the land, overlaid with the changes proposed by this application. The relevance of this plan is addressed later.

File upload:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Upload file here:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?

Yes

upload file:

Collated Records of Title.pdf was uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

As above, namely:

Record of Title: Legal Description: Registered Owner:

413071 Lot 6 DP 392663 Veritas Hill Limited
1068487 Lot 4 DP 516022 Trojan Helmet Limited
803678 Lot 3 DP 516022 Trojan Helmet Limited
803677 Lot 2 DP 516022 AC Hill and RM Hill
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803676 Lot 1 DP 516022 MS Hill, M Hill and Veritas (2015) Limited (Mole Hill Trust)
755877 Lot 1 DP 501981 Blackcurrant Trustees Limited, JJ Chisholm, EJ Hill and P Houghton

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur

Please write your answer here:

The Applicants are The Hills Residences Limited (HRL) and the Hills Holdings Limited (HHL).

HHL is a single purpose company set up to oversee the redevelopment of The Hills Golf Club (The Hills), which is a private golf club in Arrowtown, Central Otago.

The Hills is currently operated by The Hills Golf Club Limited (HGC), a company belonging to the Hill Family. The Hills land is currently owned by entities belonging to the Hill Family.

HRL is a single purpose company set up to acquire, develop, subdivide, and sell the non-golf land within The Hills which is also owned by entities associated with the Hill Family.

The Hill Family have entered into partnership with Ric Kayne and Jim Rohrstaff to further develop and enhance The Hills.

HHL and HRL will be owned 50% by the Hill Family through their company Trojan Helmet Limited (Trojan), 25% by Ric Kayne through his company Tara-iti No.1 Limited (Tara-iti), and 25% by Jim Rohrstaff through his company Rohrstaff Group Limited (RGL).

HHL and HRL will have the necessary legal interests and ability to undertake the development works to which this application relates.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

The Hills Resort Development

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The project is the redevelopment of The Hills Golf Club, including contiguous land at 37 and 77 Hogans Gully Road (Lot 6 DP 392663 and Part Lot 4 DP 516022) (Contiguous Land), so as to position the 18-hole championship course as a course of international acclaim and a top 5 course nationally, and construction of world leading resort facilities of exceptional quality, including visitor accommodation, staff accommodation and residential activities.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

The Hills golf course was progressively developed by the Hill family between 2000 and 2007. Upon completion the course rated as the #2 golf course in the South Island, and within the top seven courses in New Zealand. The Hills is rated as a “marquee course” by NZ Golf Tourism and has been the tournament venue for the NZ Open on many occasions. The Hills course and its amenities are a recognised asset to the region and a golf tourism drawcard.

Over the past five years the golf landscape has changed significantly in New Zealand. The development of Tara Iti and Te Arai Links, both located on coastal land near Mangawhai, north of Auckland, has raised the bar in terms of golf tourism and golf club experiences. The end of the COVID closed border period has seen a resurgence in golf and golf tourism all over the world. The high-value golf tourism and high service models at clubs like Tara Iti and Te Arai Links result from an operating model that did not previously exist in New Zealand.

The Hills property is subject to a Resort Zoning, named the ‘Hills Resort Zone’ (HRZ), which provides a zoning framework for the maintenance and further development of the golf course and the development of complementary resort facilities, including supporting and other recreational activities, clubhouse and restaurant facilities, visitor accommodation, staff accommodation, residential activities, plus a public pedestrian/cycle way through the resort to Arrowtown. This purpose is highlighted in the Zone Purpose statement which provides as follows (Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan, Chapter 47, cl 47.1.1):

“The purpose of the Zone is to enable high quality on-site visitor activities and resort facilities, within a golf course setting and with a predominance of open space. The Zone provides for golf courses (including an 18-hole championship course), a sculpture park, walkway and cycleway, visitor industry activities, residential activities (including staff accommodation), and a small-scale commercial area. A range of forms of visitor accommodation are anticipated in the Zone, including boutique hotels / lodges with associated visitor amenities (including cafés and restaurants and facilities for health and wellness), and units that are primarily available for short-term visitor stays.”

The HRZ land must be developed in accordance with a Structure Plan which sits within the District Plan and identifies ‘activity areas’ where built form development and certain resort activities can occur. The Structure Plan is designed around the existing golf course layout and routing, the further development of which is enabled by the Resort Zoning (i.e., permitted). A copy of the current Structure Plan and zone rules is available here: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/rjnnzush/pdp-chapter-47-the-hills-resort-zone-jun-2023.pdf>

The resort presently comprises the 18-hole championship golf course and a clubhouse but is otherwise mostly undeveloped. It is intended that further development that implements the Resort Zoning will be undertaken on a staged basis, with residential and visitor accommodation (VA) development to likely occur after the golf course has been upgraded and improved to achieve premier status. This anticipated staging is in part due to the conventional planning approvals processes that will apply, as will be discussed further shortly.

The HRZ zoning was confirmed by the Environment Court via consent order in September 2021, following more than 6 years of various technical reporting, mediations and negotiations with the Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Otago Regional Council and other interested parties, at very significant cost. The HRZ zoning is now operative (i.e. beyond challenge and in effect).

The Contiguous Land is not presently zoned for but is logically part of the resort offering. This land is presently undeveloped rural land, but it is too small to be a viable productive land unit, where productive activities give rise to downstream water quality issues. In 2015 the Applicant applied to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) for this land to be rezoned for residential activities complementary to the resort. The rezoning request is presently awaiting an Environment Court hearing. The hearing has not yet been scheduled and the land’s zoning remains unresolved, some nine years on.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Since obtaining the Resort Zoning for The Hills in 2021, the Hill family have partnered with Ric Kayne and Jim Rohrstaff, who together make this application through related legal entities. These partners have extensive experience with high-end world class golf resort, visitor accommodation and residential development, including Tara Iti and Te Arai Links, north of Auckland.

The partnership seeks to lift the quality of The Hills golf course and environs, including the Contiguous Land, to become the premier course in the South Island and a top 50 course within the Southern hemisphere, offering a world class playing and club experience. Golf tourism attracts (very) high net worth, high quality visitors and their friends and family, who stay longer and spend more. Lifting the golfing experience at the Hills will undoubtedly give

rise to significant local, regional, and national economic benefits due to construction of the resort and the resulting golf tourist spend, where tourism and the tourist dollar are the most significant direct and indirect contributors to the Queenstown Lakes economy and tourism is one of New Zealand's biggest export industries.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The golf course enhancements and resort development have the following objectives:

1. Repositioning the Hills golf course and club back into the "best-in-class" within New Zealand and comparable with the best internationally.
2. Substantial investment in the golf course and ancillary facilities, creating sustainable future employment.
3. Provision of on-site staff accommodation, to house resort workers and assist with addressing the shortage of worker accommodation, which is a significant issue confronting the Queenstown Lakes District and wider region.
4. Investment in the development of the non-golf land, resulting in construction of new dwellings, visitor and staff accommodation units, providing short and long-term accommodation offerings, generating employment during construction and beyond, leading to flow-on benefits to the local economy.
5. Ensuring the on-going viability and availability of a world class facility capable of hosting international golf events and enhancing NZ's reputation in that market.
6. Maintaining and enhancing availability of the course for the high-value in-bound golf tourism sector.
7. The establishment of premium visitor accommodation catering to the high-end inbound tourism sector.
8. Showcasing the landscape and maintenance and enhancement of its character and values.

PARTICULAR WORKS:

Detailed planning work is underway to facilitate these objectives. The detailed planning work has determined that the current routing of the golf course could be significantly improved and that this is necessary to achieve premier status and ranking.

Rerouting the golf course is generally permitted under the current Resort Zoning. The rerouting will however necessitate the reconfiguration or relocation of some of the development areas identified on the Zone Structure Plan and the identification of some new development areas. Small extensions to the Zone are also required to integrate the presently unzoned land (the Contiguous Land) with the resort and enable its development for complementary residential activities.

The changes to the existing Structure plan layout are shown in a plan which is has been attached earlier A plan of the proposed development for the Contiguous Land is also available, but cannot be uploaded due to size.

The particular development activities include the following:

1. Extension of the existing Golf Clubhouse
2. Arrival area enhancements
3. Golf course improvements, including course rerouting and associated earthworks
4. Irrigation improvements, including upgrading equipment and establishing new storage ponds
5. Landscape improvements (plantings and earthworks)
6. Construction of staff accommodation for construction and resort workers
7. Construction of a golf training facility and other recreational offerings
8. Construction of visitor accommodation
9. Residential accommodation
10. Roading
11. Subdivision associated with the above activities
10. Infrastructure provision
11. Public cycle/pedestrian track
12. Plus various related and ancillary activities.

Describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging

Please write your answer here:

The golf course re-routing and improvements require significant investment. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Thus, while permitted under the Resort Zoning, s 9(2)(b)(ii)

the reconfiguration and relocation of these areas is a precursor to realisation of the resort development, with all its commensurate benefits.

Under conventional planning approval processes, the reconfiguration and relocation of the development areas can only occur via a RMA Schedule 1 plan change process (i.e. via a private plan change request) or non-complying resource consents.

The resource consent pathway is not a good fit with and does not readily recognise or allow for the staged roll out of the resort development or practical factors such as contractor availability, construction season, market demand drivers and the need to sequence the development in order to keep the golf club operational and viable while construction work is carried out. A resource consent process would likely also require detailed plans for all stages to be prepared and consented upfront, and for all development to be undertaken at once or the consents may lapse.

A plan change better enables the sequencing, funding, and ownership considerations to be accounted for in the delivery of the development and provides long term flexibility to deliver the golf course improvements resort development in a logical and staged manner, however the RMA does not prescribe firm timeframes for plan change requests to be processed and decided, and the first instance council process may take years.

Both the conventional plan change and resource consent processes would very likely involve public notification s 9(2)(b)(ii)

s 9(2)(b)(ii) Confirmation of the now operative Resort Zoning took over 6 years, despite its obvious merits, while the zoning of the Contiguous Land remains unresolved, some nine years on.

Conversely, if approvals were in place that confirmed the reconfiguration and relocation of the Structure Plan development areas (i.e. utilising the Fast Track Approvals (FTA) process), the development of these areas could and would commence immediately, noting that:

- The development masterplanning work for the re-rerouted golf course and reconfigured/relocated development areas is largely complete.
- Design of the visitor accommodation component is very well progressed and can be completed quickly.
- Procurement is not an issue. All necessary expert consultants have been engaged. An earthworks contractor is yet to be engaged, however a construction management team already in place. The Applicants have an existing relationship with a builder which can be ramped up to formal engagement at any time.
- Site works would commence as soon as the necessary development approvals were obtained.
- In terms of capital, both the Applicant partners are well resourced. Funding agreements are already in place and various further funding levers are available. Funding is not an issue.
- Completion is market driven. The Applicant is of the view that there is significant demand for the proposed products.

If the necessary planning approvals were in place today, a high-level timeline for the project development works, from today's date, is as follows:

- Finalise the project masterplan – **s 9** months
- Finally determine golf course enhancement works, associated with the rerouting – **s 9** months
- Finalise infrastructure upgrade design – **s 9** months (i.e. irrigation and the new storage pond)
- Commence golf buildings construction (Clubhouse expansion, Golf Training Facility) – **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** months (subject to construction seasons)
- Commence initial stages of residential, visitor and staff accommodation development – **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** months (commencing with infrastructure provision, and subject to construction seasons)
- Commence golf and golf infrastructure enhancement – late **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** but more likely in mid **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** (after the golf season).

As the timeline above demonstrates, the development project is by and large 'ready to go', subject to commercial considerations, contractor engagement finalisation, obtaining the necessary RMA and OIO approvals and other approvals (building consents for example), and the successful equitisation of the golf course to provide certainty of access and funding before the golf course improvements and resort development works are commenced (like the Tara Iti model, for example). **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**

What are the details of the regime under which approval is being sought?

Please write your answer here:

Resource consents under the Resource Management Act

If you seeking approval under the Resource Management Act, who are the relevant local authorities?

Please write your answer here:

the Queenstown Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council

What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?

Please write your answer here:

As above, the land is generally zoned for golf course and resort development under the Queenstown Lakes District Plan. The relevant zone is the Hills Resort Zone (HRZ). Notwithstanding the zoning, the District Plan rules require resource consents to be obtained for any development activity within the zone (mostly controlled activity consents). In addition, development activities must be undertaken in accordance with a Structure Plan, which is included in the District Plan.

The development that is proposed does not comply with the Structure Plan in all respects, necessitating a requirement for more stringent (non-complying) resource consents to be obtained, or the structure plan to be changed via a Schedule 1 RMA plan change. If a plan change, subsequent (controlled activity) consents would then be required for the development works. These would be pursued via conventional processes.

While planning work and procurement for the golf course rerouting and resort development is underway and finding arrangements are in place, no applications for the necessary consents/approvals have yet been made.

Is approval required for the project by someone other than the applicant?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Resource Management Act approvals (resource consents) will be required from the Queenstown Lakes District Council and the possibly the Otago Regional Council (for the irrigation storage ponds).

Overseas Investment Office approval is required for the investment by Ric Kayne. The application has been made and is currently being processed.

If the approval(s) are granted, when do you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed?

Please write your answer here:

See above.

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

Queenstown Lakes District Council and possibly the Otago Regional Council (as above)

Detail all consultation undertaken with the persons referred to above. Include a statement explaining how engagement has informed the project.

Please write your answer here:

The Applicants have consulted with the Queenstown Lakes District Council, s 9(2)(b)(ii) in particular their legal, planning and landscape advisors. During this consultation, the QLDC team did not raise any particular issues or identify any significant concerns with the proposal, but did acknowledge its merits, recognising the very high-quality tourism and landscape offering that would result and the commitment and demonstrated track record of the Applicants to deliver this outcome.

s 9(2)(b)(ii) The previous process, to obtain the Resort Zoning for the property, took over 6 years, despite the obvious merits of the zoning, as ultimately confirmed by the Environment Court. For the Contiguous Land, the process has been ongoing for nine years and remains unresolved presently. As also noted earlier, due to the public nature of the conventional approval processes, the approval timeframes for this development project could be similarly drawn out, despite the operative Resort Zoning which sets the framework for and indicates the general appropriateness of the development. If non-complying resource consents are required, to facilitate the reconfiguration of some of the Structure Plan development areas for example, policy considerations may come into play that could cause the consenting process to be even more drawn out. If a plan change process, the RMA does not prescribe any firm timeframes within which a district council must make its first instance decision, which best case may take 18 months or longer. In either case, Environment Court appeal rights could further prolong final approvals. This is despite the approval requirements arising due to largely technical rule breaches with very minor or no environmental effect.

These considerations, which include past experience with several development projects within the Queenstown Lakes District, have informed the Applicants' decision to pursue FTA approvals.

The Applicant has also consulted with Golf Tourism New Zealand (GTNZ). GTNZ's role is to promote New Zealand as a golf tourism destination to a global audience. Since 2014, this work has been done in cooperation with Tourism New Zealand and Golf New Zealand, the governing body for the sport. GTNZ does not sell travel, but works to educate, create demand, facilitate industry connections, and advocate for the continued improvement of the supply side of golf in New Zealand. GTNZ supports to development project. This is detail in a letter from GTNZ, attached.

Upload file here:

Signed Letter of Support from GTNZ.pdf was uploaded

Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur:

Please write your answer here:

N/A

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

What treaty settlements apply to the geographical location of the project?

Please write your answer here:

N/A

Are there any Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 principles or provisions that are relevant to the project?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Are there any identified parcels of Māori land within the project area, marae, and identified wāhi tapu?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Is the project proposed on any land returned under a Treaty settlement or any identified Māori land described in the ineligibility criteria?

No

Has the applicant has secured the relevant landowners' consent?

Yes

Is the project proposed in any customary marine title area, protected customary rights area, or aquaculture settlement area declared under s 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 or identified within an individual iwi settlement?

No

If yes, what are they?:

Has there been an assessment of any effects of the activity on the exercise of a protected customary right?

No

If yes, please explain:

N/A

Upload your assessment if necessary:

No file uploaded

Section 5: Adverse effects

What are the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment?

Please describe:

NO ADVERSE EFFECTS

The development project involves the implementation of the Resort Zoning which generally anticipates and enables development of the nature now proposed. The effects of enabling resort development on the subject land were comprehensively scrutinised and assessed when the Resort Zoning was approved by the Environment Court in 2021. The primary considerations at that time were whether zoning for golf resort development would give rise to adverse landscape or plan integrity effects. The Environment Court found that it would not and hence issued a consent order which confirmed the Resort Zoning, copy attached. This was informed and supported by legal analysis and planning and landscape evidence jointly prepared by the Queenstown Lakes District Council and the applicant (Trojan Helmet Limited, (being an entity related to the Hill Family)), also attached.

As outlined earlier, the detailed planning work undertaken since 2021 to bring the Resort Zoning to life and deliver a world class golf resort offering has determined that the current routing of the golf course could be significantly improved and that this is necessary to achieve premier status and ranking. Rerouting the golf course requires the reconfiguration and relocation of some of the development areas identified on the Resort Zone Structure Plan. Small extensions to the Zone are also required to integrate the presently unzoned land (the Contiguous Land) with the Resort and enable its development for complementary residential activities.

The changes to the development layout, as compared with what is presently shown in the operative Zone Structure Plan, are relatively minor and have been assessed by various experts, including landscape architects and planners, as having very low to nil or in some instances positive environmental effects. No formal reports assessing these effects have yet been prepared as the detailed design work is still being completed (but is very near completion).

The subdivision and development of the Contiguous Land for residential activities associated with the resort has been assessed by various experts through the extant Environment Court zoning process. Landscape, planning, engineering and other reports have been prepared for the Applicant which find that development of the land for residential activities associated with the resort will be consistent and cohesive with existing development in the locality and will improve downstream water quality (i.e. Lake Hayes) through retiring the land from productive use and improved stormwater management techniques. These reports are available upon request however they cannot be uploaded due to size. The engineering report addressing downstream water quality improvements is uploaded later, however. There are no other potential adverse effects of any note that require consideration.

SIGNIFICANT POSTIVE EFFECTS

There are however various positive effects of significance.

As described earlier, the changes to the development layout are necessitated by and will facilitate the reconfiguration of the existing championship to position it as a premier course within New Zealand and internationally. The course has been the venue for the NZ Open on many occasions. The improved golf course, in conjunction with the complementary resort development will be tourism drawcard, showcasing the region and nation and attracting high net worth visitors who stay longer and spend more locally, regionally and nationally, with resulting significant economic benefits. The repositioned course and resort will be a jewel in New Zealand tourism crown, lifting the international profile and attraction of New Zealand golf and golf tourism.

Construction of the resort itself will give rise to significant regional benefits through employment, which will like span several years, resulting in significant increases in the District's GDP, employment and household incomes.

The ongoing operation of the developed resort will provide enduring benefits through long term, secure employment options and wages/household incomes, as well as increased economic activity at The Hills and further afield.

Accommodation for resort workers will be available onsite, contributing to the resolution of a worker housing shortage confronting the tourism areas within the region or at least offsetting any increased demand arising from resort staffing requirements.

Public access for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided through the resort, offering meaningful connection for residents and tourists between the rural areas of the Basin, including Lake Hayes, and Arrowtown. This will enhance the District's highly regarded extensive trail network.

Development of the resort will ensure that the property maintains its 'greenbelt buffer' function for the long term, as the vast majority of the property (almost 95%) will be retained and protected as open space, maintaining and enhancing valued landscape amenities which, like golf tourism, are a significant tourism drawcard for the District and Region.

Overall, there will be no adverse environmental effects, but significant environmental benefits of regional significance arising from the project development.

Upload file:

HRZ Environment Court Consent Order and Supporting Documents including Joint Planning and Landscape Assessments.pdf was uploaded

Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

Please write your answer here:

The National Coastal Policy Statement does not apply.

The National Policy Statement - Urban Development does not apply as the project land is not within an 'urban environment' (i.e. it is not and is not intended to be 'urban in character').

The National Policy Statement - Highly Productive Land does not apply as the land is not LUC 1, 2 or 3, or in the case of the Contiguous Land, part of which has an LUC 2 classification in the NZLRI, the land is not zoned 'general rural' or 'rural production' as defined in the NPS-HPL and National Planning Standards. This has been confirmed by the Environment Court in *Wakatipu Equities Ltd v QLDC* [2023] NZEnvC 188.

The National Policy Statement - Freshwater Management (Policy 5) is of relevance to the Contiguous Land as this land is within the Lake Hayes Catchment which is a degraded waterbody. An assessment has been prepared by Environmental Engineer Bronwyn Rhynd which compares the current rural zoning and consequential use of the land for farming activities with residential development of the nature intended by the Applicant (10 lots at a density of one dwelling per 2ha). Ms Rhynd's expert assessment is that residential development of the land will result in downstream water quality improvements, as compared with continuation of the farming use. The assessment is attached, see paragraphs 61 onwards in particular. The proposal for the Contiguous Land therefore gives effect to the NPS-FM.

The National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil (NESCS) is of some relevance to the Contiguous Land given its past and current use for farming activities and its presently undeveloped state. A Preliminary and Detailed Site Investigation was undertaken by Glen Davis in 2015 when the Applicant applied to rezone the land for residential activities associated with the resort. The assessment found that the land was suitable for such use. A copy of the report is available upon request but cannot be uploaded due to size.

There are no other applicable national policy statements or environmental standards.

File upload:

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Section 7: Eligibility

Will access to the fast-track process enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under normal processes?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

As noted earlier, the majority of project land is zoned for resort development of the nature addressed by this application. The Resort Zoning (HRZ) was confirmed by the Environment Court via consent order in September 2021, following more than 6 years of various technical reporting, mediations and negotiations with QLDC and interested parties, at very significant cost. The planning process whereby the Applicant is seeking development rights for the Contiguous Land has been on foot for almost nine years. An Environment Court hearing for this land has not yet been scheduled.

As also detailed earlier, under conventional planning approvals processes, the changes sought to the current resort zoning framework to enable the delivery of the premier resort development with its commensurate regional and national benefits requires either a plan change under RMA Schedule 1 or the granting of non-complying resource consents. Past experience indicates that for either process, public notification is highly likely (or inevitable, if a plan change).

Again, as detailed earlier, the Environment Court has already found the HRZ zoning of the project land, and the resort development enabled thereunder is appropriate and achieves the necessary statutory and policy imperatives. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Past experience also indicates that the informational requirements will be extensive and (unduly) costly, regardless of the scope of the proposal or its actual or potential effects.

These factors, together with the wide ranging appeal rights arising from a district council's first instance decision under conventional approvals processes, mean that a final decision on the approvals necessary to undertake the golf course rerouting and Structure Plan development area changes may take many years, irrespective of the scope and scale of the proposal or its environmental effects, or its merits and benefits, resulting in significant delays to project delivery and inordinate (unnecessary) cost.

Thus, the conventional approval processes required to effect the relatively minor changes to the HRZ Structure Plan, which are of limited or no environmental effect and which will facilitate the related and logical development of the resort land and the Contiguous Land have the very real potential to add substantial and unnecessary cost to the project and significantly delay its delivery, including the delivery of its significant benefits.

The Fast Track Approvals process will make for a quicker, more focused, cost-effective pathway to obtaining the necessary approvals, thus facilitating a far quicker and efficient delivery of this regional/nationally significant development.

What is the impact referring this project will have on the efficient operation of the fast-track process?

Please write your answer here:

No effect.

The project land is mostly zoned for the resort development; it is not a new or greenfield development.

The effects of the enabling the resort development have been previously assessed. This includes the traffic, landscape, planning, natural hazards, infrastructure provision, noise, and various other effects. These assessments remain valid.

The only potential adverse effects arising from the project relate to landscape matters. Landscape effects have been assessed on a preliminary basis as minor to nil.

A detailed landscape assessment and any other necessary assessments will be provided to the appropriate persons should the project be assessed as a suitable candidate for the FTA process.

Given the previous reporting undertaken and the extant Resort Zoning, the FTA assessment should be very straightforward.

Has the project been identified as a priority project in a:

Not Answered

Please explain your answer here:

No

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer here:

No

Will the project:

increase the supply of housing

Please explain your answer here:

The project includes the construction of up to 66 homes for long term residents, up to 84 visitor accommodation units, and worker accommodation for resort workers (up to 50 bedrooms). There is a recognised shortage of worker accommodation within the Queenstown Lakes District, including for service workers. Provision of worker accommodation onsite will contribute to the resolution of that or at least offset the housing demand created by increased staffing needs for the resort.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The development project will give rise to significant economic benefits, as detailed earlier, and below.

Golf Tourism New Zealand (GTNZ) has assessed that pre-Covid 19, inbound golf tourism (defined as international visitors whose primary purpose was golf) was worth in excess of \$400m NZD annually. [GTNZ's role is to promote New Zealand as a golf tourism destination to a global audience. Since 2014, this work has been done in cooperation with Tourism New Zealand and Golf New Zealand, the governing body for the sport.] This represents significant growth from when central government first commissioned and accepted New Zealand's International Golf Tourism Strategy (2013), which valued inbound golf tourism at \$143m NZD.

Inbound golf tourism is based on high value, low volume visitors, who stay longer and spend more, and who support regional dispersion and a willingness to travel in shoulder seasons. GTNZ indicates that only 5 – 14% of spend from these visitors goes to New Zealand's golf courses, with the remainder spent in the wider tourism economy.

Over the past 25 years, the private sector has invested more than \$500m NZD into golf and golf related activities in New Zealand. The worldwide market for golf tourism is valued at \$30-40b NZD, and significant opportunities exist to attract more of this market to our shores.

GTNZ's most complete data set (calendar years 2014 – 2019), indicates that Queenstown's three Marquee courses (The Hills, Millbrook, and Jack's Point) played 56% of all inbound golf rounds in New Zealand. Australians accounted for a staggering 76% of these rounds. GTNZ confirms that the Otago Region is important for the ongoing success and growth of New Zealand's national golf tourism initiative, and improved supply is a critical component of this success.

Of key international markets of focus, Australia is the highest volume, but lowest per person spend. Long haul markets such as the USA and China are the highest spending inbound markets that GTNZ tracks, however they are currently North Island focused for golf. There exists an opportunity at The Hills to upgrade the facility to raise the spend profile of golf visitors coming to Queenstown by attracting more long haul visitors who seek a higher level of service and quality than what currently exists in the market.

During the Covid-era, global golf participation surged, with a 15% increase since 2020. Golf was able to be played outdoors, in a bubble, and had significant appeal to those working from home. Research undertaken on the "stickiness" of golf, or rather the importance of golf to those who have contributed to the growth in participation, shows that golf has become an important part of their lives, and it is unlikely this is a short-term relationship with the sport. New Zealand has seen its own rebound in golf tourism, with forward bookings for the 2023/24 summer looking to be our strongest ever. To continue and build on this success as a destination, we must continue to improve and develop our golf and premium tourism assets.

To summarise, the development project at the Hills that is the subject of this application will:

- Produce a "best in class" product for the Queenstown market
- Contribute to the local economy during the build phase, and with an increase in FTEs with longterm future employment when fully operating
- **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**
- Benefit New Zealand's economy by offering international memberships and therefore encouraging overseas travelers to form a relationship with New Zealand
- Provide a product in Queenstown that appeals to the long-haul premium market.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project support adaptation, resilience, and recovery from natural hazards?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project relates to land that already zoned for development of the nature proposed (golf resort development, per the Hills Resort Zone) or has otherwise been assessed as suitable for development of the nature proposed (the Contiguous land). The proposal is thus consistent with the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan and the statutory plans (including regional and national planning documents) which have informed and been accounted for in the formulation of the Proposed District Plan and the HRZ zoning.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

Does the project includes an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

Will the project be affected by climate change and natural hazards?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 9: Track record

Please add a summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill, and the outcome of those actions.

Please write your answer here:

None

Load your file here:

No file uploaded

Declaration

Do you acknowledge your submission will be published on environment.govt.nz if required

Yes

By typing your name in the field below you are electronically signing this application form and certifying the information given in this application is true and correct.

Please write your name here:

s 9(2)(a) the Applicants being The Hills Holdings Limited and The Hills Residences Limited

Important notes