

Submission on Notified Application

Concerning Resource Consent

(Form 13)

Section 95A Resource Management Act 1991

To: The Chief Executive

Central Otago District Council

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DETAILS OF SUBMITTER

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Central Otago

This is a submission on the following resource consent application: RC No: 230179 Rocky Point Bendigo

Applicant: TKO Properties Limited

Location of Site: Bendigo Loop Road

Lot 1 DP 561457, Title no 993471

Brief Description of Application: The application proposes to subdivide Lot 1 DP 561457 into 33 new developable allotments, with 30 proposed to be for residential and travellers' accommodation purposes, one balance lot, and three lots to be vested as road. Lots 28, 31 and 32 are proposed to be able to be used for a mixture of potential communal, leisure, accommodation and commercial activities. Building platforms, with associated residential activity and travellers accommodation, are proposed for each developable lot. Design controls are proposed to limit the design, height, colours of buildings. Further conditions related to landscaping on each lot are also proposed. Of the proposed developable lots, eight have their building platforms located substantially or entirely outside the development area identified in Schedule 19.16 of the District Plan, with these platforms located within the area identified as being intended to be set aside for their conservation values.

The specific parts of the application that our submission relates to are:

(give details, attach on separate page if necessary)

1. The landscape (biophysical & historic) effects of the proposed buildings and roading and recreation tracks on Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) values outside of the development area.
2. The subdivision and the subsequent adverse effects this will have on Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) values when viewed from SH 8, Lake Dunstan, Lake Dunstan Trail and SH6, public users of Bendigo Scenic Reserve, and associated Mt Koinga and Bendigo Loop tracks to and within the scenic reserve over looking the subdivision.
3. The absence of Landscape assessment in relation to public users of Bendigo Scenic Reserve, Mt Koinga and Bendigo Loop tracks and silence on the effects on trail users of Lake Dunstan Trail
4. The absence of Spring Annual and Saline Soil Biodiversity assessments in relation to the subdivision, building sites, road and recreational tracks, that are known to exist in neighboring blocks and are highly likely to exist within Lot 1 DP561457
5. The lack of assessment of effects from recreational tracks on historic values and dryland flora and fauna – specifically Kanuka and the highly threatened pigmy mistletoe.
6. The proposal also dissects and compromises the values within the existing Conservation Covenant 5009824.9 (Reserves Act) on Mt Koinga which was set up to protect –

- a. *“Protecting and enhancing the natural character of the land with particular regard to the natural functioning of ecosystems and to the native flora and fauna...”*
 - b. *“Protecting the land as an area representative of a significant part of the ecological character of the Dunstan Ecological District as referred to in the draft survey report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme for the Lindis, Pisa and Dunstan Ecological Districts dated February 1987.”*
 - c. *“Maintaining the landscape values of the land as referred to in the “Application for exchange of property rights” submitted to the Commissioner of Crown Lands.*
 - d. *“Maintaining the historic values of the land as referred to in “The rich fields of Bendigo” by Jill Hamel February 1993.”.*
7. Lack of robust Biodiversity Compensation Measures.
 8. The absence of assessment of biodiversity and landscape effects of proposed recreation tracks.
 9. Absence of consideration of the cumulative and future increasing effects if these diverse entities are used beyond horticultural labour needs or are later separated from horticulture needs to be used as stand-alone accommodation and recreational businesses.
 10. Because of the highly significant natural values and outstanding landscape, there needs to be a clause registered against the titles that protects them from further subdivision in perpetuity.
 11. The proposal does not confine itself to the allowed Development Zone but encroaches onto adjoining Rocky Point Recreation Zone (CODC zone) established in the District Plan to protect the landscape values arising from the kanuka present and the general ONL.
 12. The increased risk of fire from this density of residential and accommodation subdivision.
 13. The community benefit of employment seems low to compensate for the impacts on rare and significant biodiversity and landscape values.

Central Otago Environmental Society (COES) is an independent body with the following stated aims:

- a. The protection and preservation of the natural landscape and character of Central Otago. This covers many values including landscape, amenity, aesthetic and Central Otago’s endemic flora and fauna.
- b. Raising awareness of issues concerning the natural landscape, heritage and resources of Central Otago with the wider public.
- c. To encourage and support the Government, the Central Otago District Council, the Otago Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and other statutory authorities as appropriate, to establish policies and make decisions which will preserve and enhance the special character of Central Otago’s landscapes, heritage and resources for the benefits of future generations.

This submission is:

- *COES opposes the application due to the adverse effects of buildings, curtilage, roading (water tabling) power supply, water supply, storm water and waste water tanks and disposal fields and recreational tracking on the Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) values identified by the district plan. These values are associated with public use of SH 8, Lake Dunstan, Lake Dunstan Trail and SH6, public users of Bendigo Scenic Reserve, and associated Mt Koinga and Bendigo Loop tracks to and within the scenic reserve.*
- *the reasons for your views.*

The area is zoned in the district plan as Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) consisting of - faces along western faces of Dunstan Range.

These are high public and tourist use areas appreciated for their high landscape and recreation values. The area is in close proximity to the well-utilised Bendigo Wildlife Reserve, Bendigo Camping & Picnic Area, Bendigo Boat Ramp, Lake Dunstan shoreline rest areas and Lake Dunstan Trail. Activities associated with these areas are swimming, fishing boating, cycling, shoreline walking, camping, and picnicking. The Outstanding Natural Landscape(ONL) forms the foreground and backdrop to these highly used and diverse recreation and amenity space uses.

The Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) is a particularly noteworthy landscape incorporating the important geological feature of the western faces of the Dunstan Range with a near complete ecological altitudinal sequence from lake Dunstan shoreline to the Dunstan Range summit. It comprises intact indigenous semi-arid dryland biodiversity, diverse endemic flora and fauna, some of which are very rare and increasingly under threat of extinction.

Drylands generally have important biodiversity, natural, physical, cultural and recreational values. Intact Drylands have value for carbon sequestration as well as soil and water conservation values.

More than 70% of drylands are now lost and only 3% are legally protected. (Ref DOC WEB Drylands)

The landscape surrounding and including the application site displays high levels of natural character and biodiversity intactness due mainly to the minimal human impact and light footprint except for the traversing transmission lines.

The amenity values enjoyed by the public using adjacent public spaces, which are afforded by this outstanding landscape setting, include privacy, openness, spaciousness and the scale of the western Dunstan Range as a wider backdrop to the application site.

When viewed from SH 8, Rocky point forms part of the Dunstan Mountains western faces. , It forms a smooth folded board layer with incised deep fissured gullies with an uneven exposed schist layer within and across it which feature some impressive buttresses and tors which

affords a sense of naturalness. With the encompassing ONL, there is a sense of exposure to the weather and 'ruggedness' which is reflected by the regenerating kanuka and grey shrubland interspersed with dry land spring annuals, ephemeral areas, saline soil areas, wetland seepages, hardy significant rare and threatened ecological systems.

The level of modification and human footprint proposed for this area by the application and the area's ONL classification under the District Plan appear incongruous and incompatible. The placement of the worker/tourist accommodation and communal buildings among such an outstanding landscape and this particular ecological system appears insensitive in terms of landscape and visual effects and the stewardship of rare and endangered ecological systems.

- *COES opposes the application due to unjustified subdivision of parcels for worker accommodation/tourist accommodation and communal buildings.*
- *the reasons for your views.*
 - *Limited and questionable community benefit when considered against the adverse effects on biodiversity and landscape.*
 - *This proposal is insensitive to the highly significant ecological values and outstanding landscape with high potential for unintended consequences like fire (noting Mt Iron, there is increasing pressure from landowners and FENZ for kanuka to be removed from around houses to reduce fire risk. Should more subdivisions be allowed in areas of known high fire risk associated with high biodiversity values?).*
- *COES opposes the application on the grounds of deficient biodiversity assessment of effects and the resulting modification of landform, potential destruction and loss of threatened dryland flora and fauna habitat.*
- *the reasons for your views*

The lack of robust ecological assessment including of the distinctive Otago dryland values of spring annuals, ephemeral areas and saline soils known to be present. Our view is that submitting such an application without having made such an assessment is complacent and negligent in light of the following articles.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/habitats/drylands/#:~:text=Drylands%20contain%20about%20half%20of,ear%20hawkweed%20and%20sweet%20brier.&text=Drylands%20have%20important%20biodiversity%2C%20natural,physical%2C%20cultural%20and%20recreational%20values>.

& <https://i.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/69225068/central-otagos-indigenous-biodiversity-endangered>)

The biodiversity assessment provided by the applicant doesn't appear to account for actual loss of Nationally Critical pygmy mistletoe that grows on kanuka.

A biodiversity survey is required for of Nationally Critical pygmy mistletoe that grows on kanuka and is known to be present here.

- *COES opposes the application due to the deficiency in the Biodiversity Compensation Measures which are a result of an incomplete biodiversity survey and assessment.*
- *the reasons for your views*

The current application biodiversity compensation measure is based on an incomplete survey and assessment of biodiversity values.

The effects management hierarchy (Avoid-Remedy-Mitigate-Offsetting- No-net loss: Net gain- Environmental Compensation) has to be followed in that order. Compensation is the last resort measure which should only be applied if off-setting is not possible.

No Offsetting Assessment has been provided, where the ecological gains and losses are measured and balanced. Compensation can only be considered after off-setting has been explored in detail.

Likewise, no detailed Compensation Assessment has been provided. Compensation requires the same level of scrutiny as for off-setting.

There should also be evidence that steps to avoid values have been taken. The original consented subdivision lies within the development zone. This proposal extends into the Reserves Act conservation covenant and the CODC ONL (Rocky Point Recreation Zone) zone that contains kanuka, so avoidance has not been attempted.

- *COES opposes the application on the grounds of deficiency in archaeological assessment of the effects of the subdivision on the adjacent archaeological sites of G41/297 Wakefield Ferry Hotel & Stable(the oldest building in the district) and G41/19 the short lived township of Wakefield/Cripple town and proposed subdivision recreation tracks and the resulting associated impacts / modification / destruction of historic values.*
- *the reasons for your views*

There is insufficient assessment of the significance of the adjacent archaeological sites of G41/297 Wakefield Ferry Hotel & Stable(the oldest building in the district) and G41/19 the short lived township of Wakefield/Cripple town at base of Rocky Point.

There appears to be no evidence of archaeological survey or assessment of the proposed recreational track network.

The internal recreational track network should be archaeologically assessed for effects on remaining archaeological values.

COES endorses Kate Wardle's submission.

We seek the following decision from the consent authority:

Decline the application.

We oppose the application. We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

We are not* a trade competitor for the purposes of [section 308B](#) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (select one)

***We will consider presenting a joint case if others make a similar submission**

We do not request (select one), pursuant to [section 100A](#) of the Act, that you delegate your functions, powers, and duties to hear and decide the application to 1 or more hearings commissioners who are not members of the local authority. "See note 4 below as you may incur costs relating to this request."

 Recoverable Signature

X 

M J Sole
COES Secretary
Signed by: 6a769510-0d30-4da1-9c64-9c63b834b7ec

Signature (COES Secretary) Matthew Sole Date 12 10 2023

(to be signed by submitter or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter)



Mahaka Katia
Scientific Reserve Fi



From the big: sprays of *Plagianthus regius* (ribbonwood) flowers to the tiny: *Galium aff. perpusillum* (dwarf bed straw) Images: R Baxter



MAHAKA KATIA SCIENTIFIC RESERVE FIELD TRIP

Last weekend a small group made the trip out to the Pisa Flats to visit one of the last remaining remnants of the nationally 'Naturally Uncommon' and now 'Critically Endangered' outwash gravel ecosystems. These gravelly river terrace ecosystems were once widespread along the Clutha River all the way from Hawea to Alexandra.

Surrounded by orchards, vineyards, grazing paddocks and even a gravel extraction pit the threats these ecosystems face are well demonstrated at the reserve.

Dhana Pillai led the group explaining how the glacial history of the area has produced outwash terraces in the landscape. During the Pleistocene (2 million years ago) there were at least 20 glacial advances and retreats. As the ice melted after each advance a vast amount of sand and gravel was released into the river system and transported downstream of the terminal moraines

by fluvial processes. This material was deposited in a series of flat-topped terraces. The highest terraces are the oldest. The prominent terrace at Lowburn represents a glacial advance dating to about 600 000 thousand years ago. The top terrace of the reserve formed around 70,000 years ago and the lower terraces closer to the river are more recent.

Interestingly the reserve also hosts an inland saline ecosystem but unlike the saline sites around Alexandra which are formed on clay produced from weathered schist or Miocene mudstone this one is formed by very fine grained loess being washed down by surface water or blown into depressions in the gravel. Micaceous clays from the redeposited loess form an impermeable barrier that water cannot penetrate through. Sun and wind then work to evaporate the rain water that accumulates on these pans causing the airborne salts to be left behind on the surface. These pans are not only salty from accumulated sodium chloride derived from trace amounts of seasalt in rainwater but also are alkaline with a pH of up to 10 from the precipitation of sodium carbonates.

The importance of this site is being recognised by both DOC and the ORC. The change overtime has been devastating to this small and again endangered ecosystem. Exotic grasses and plants are encroaching on the pans from the edges changing the soil's salinity by capturing blown dust and organic material.

DOC are undertaking a number of experiments to best solve the problem of the salt pans disappearance. One approach involves mowing the exotic grasses that are overgrowing the salty soils and another involves scraping the topsoil and weeds off the top. Perhaps a year on, the grasses seem to be winning the fight. ORC have begun an annual monitoring programme in a bid to assess the current state of health of this ecosystem with the purpose of taking action to resolve once this has hit a critical point.

But back to the out wash gravels! Over 41 different native species are on this site, 13 of which are uncommon or rare and one *Craspedia argentea* (Pisa Flats woollyhead -see our website for a Plant of the Month article on this plant) is endemic to the reserve and has a 'Threatened - Nationally critical' status. With only 22 left (as of last year) from a population numbering in the hundreds back in the early 2000s this is a plant in big trouble. October is the time to see this plant in flower along with the bright eye catching yellow of it's neighbour, the cushion plant *Myosotis uniflora* (river bed forget-me-not).

Leptinella conjuncta (Nationally Critical) was another plant spotted in flower at the reserve. This tiny plant even when in flower is incredibly cryptic with it taking some work to re-find the same plants only spotted one hour before. We also have the new hazard of 'head butting' to add to our H&S document. An item I suspect only applicable to this site as everyone bends down all at once to get a close look at these tiny plants.

Lepidium solandri (Maniototo peppergrass -'Nationally Critical'), *Raoulia monroi* (fan-leaved mat daisy -'Nationally Vulnerable'), *Convolvulus verecundus* (tussock bindweed -Nationally Vulnerable) and the native halophyte *Atriplex buehneri* (Buchanan's orache -Nationally Vulnerable) were also spotted at the 27ha reserve.

Has fencing off this area and massive work on rabbit eradication been to the detriment of this ecosystem and its plants? The threat to the reserve is the loss of its habitat through the incursion and growth of exotic plant species. There is not much left of the open stony areas or the salt pans that were once prevalent throughout this site. Birds once filled this ecological niche and kept the balance in check with their grazing. Were the rabbits their modern day equivalents?

Work is currently being undertaken by experts to propagate the plants with a critical status. It is not an easy task with potential genetic bottlenecks, potential loss of pollinators and

fungal infections all things to challenge a successful breeding program. Then there is the lack of stable places to replant if successful.

The reserve is open to all at any time but it must be said if you want to plant view going with a knowledgeable guide will make your efforts more successful. The Trust thanks Dhana for her making time available to share her knowledge and enthusiasm for this special area.

Important to note that the Alexandra Airport is another example of this type of ecosystem but now is somewhat degraded and only contains a few of the more common species spotted at Mahaka Katia.



Craspedia argentea (Pisa flats woolly head - 'Threatened -Nationally critical') and the ideal habitat for ***Myosotis uniflora*** (riverbed forget me not - 'At risk -Naturally uncommon') Images: R

Baxter



The mats of ***Raoulia australis*** (golden mat daisy - 'At risk -Declining') make the ideal homes for a number of tiny native species. We saw over 5 different species growing within this plant. ***Colobanthus brevisepalus*** (pin cushion - 'At risk -Declining') and ***Leptinella conjuncta*** ('Threatened -Nationally critical') Images: R Baxter



Mahaka Katia Scientific Reserve. First glances can definitely be deceiving Image D. Pillai
