

Oral Submission Plan Change 13 8 September 2008

Anne Braun-Elwert – Submitter #135

This submission is not as well prepared or as detailed as I would have liked – for reasons most people will be aware. However, I still think it is worth emphasizing several points:

It is pleasing to see in the Council Officer's report the retention of the identification of the Mackenzie Basin as an "outstanding natural landscape". There has been an attempt from an unknown source to send propaganda to ratepayers, challenging the use of the word "natural". I'm sure that if a survey was undertaken of people taking in the views north up Lakes Ohau, Pukaki or Tekapo as to whether they considered the landscape natural or outstanding, over 98% would say yes. Swiss visitors have often expressed their awe of this scenery. When I counter that they have their own outstanding landscapes at home, they point to the lack of buildings and development as being the striking point of difference. It is this uniqueness that we must be careful to retain and which is fundamental to our submission.

In our original submission we asked for the maximum number of building platforms within each node to be reduced from 10 to 5. This has been declined. My concern remains that if there is allowed to be subdivision within nodes, ie nodes within nodes, that you could end up with 10 x 10 or even more...? building platforms in the one area. In other words a considerable settlement.

I want to focus on Lake Tekapo for a moment now, but my arguments apply equally to Lakes Pukaki and Ohau. If I have understood correctly the map identifying new nodes in the landscape sub-area, then there is the possibility of having **NINE** new nodes around Lake Tekapo **IN ADDITION** to the existing homestead "nodes". If 10 building platforms are allowed in each node, plus the current "nodes", then this means there could be an **additional 150 buildings (and with further subdivision possibly even more?)** built around Lake Tekapo, north of the existing township. The size of each building platform can be a maximum of 1000 square metres, so multiply that by the 150 buildings and you have a considerable surface area.

Even if these buildings are tucked out of sight from Tekapo Village, this still constitutes a huge impact in terms of light pollution in the northern sky for Mt John Observatory, as well as a considerable environmental and economic impact as the Council struggles to provide adequate sewerage, water, roading and rubbish disposal/recycling. Efficient use of facilities and resources calls for settlement to occur in the existing townships, Tekapo and Twizel, with only isolated instances of small-scale tourist development in the outlying areas. The propaganda circulated to ratepayers speaks of the huge cost of Plan Change 13 to ratepayers. My response to that is twofold: 1) the ongoing cost to ratepayers of servicing subdivisions scattered throughout the Basin would be far higher than any one-off cost of an Environment Court appeal; and 2) the cost in terms of tourism and natural and cultural heritage lost, if we take away the uniqueness of our outstanding natural landscape, is simply immeasurable.

Lakes Tekapo, Pukaki and Ohau have unique qualities that are not only important for

New Zealand, but also for the world. Lake Tekapo in particular has the opportunity to gain further international recognition with World Heritage status for night sky purity for star watching due to absence of light pollution. There are not many places left in the world, easily accessible, where this is possible. Outstanding natural landscapes such as those surrounding our high country lakes will become increasingly rarer, as new Zealand struggles to meet energy needs and the pressure to create wind farms on open terrain increases. As an example: Central Otago's iconic Lammermoor Range is under threat from the Project Hayes Wind Farm proposal. There are already changes in the rules for power-line companies. They no longer have to provide a connection to your front door, if they find it uneconomic. There is already talk of people building a home in a rural area being forced to consider installing their own wind turbine. Imagine wind turbines added to the nodes of development proposed around our lakes! The Mackenzie District Council needs to consider such factors before agreeing to allow any development that is more than minor around our lakes.

My plea is that for any new rules in the District Plan that the unique qualities we have currently are not undermined and that any development is carefully controlled. As stated before we do not want to have satellite hamlets dotted throughout the Mackenzie Basin.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.