

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL FOR THE CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**In the Matter of the Resource Management Act 1991**

**And**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT PLAN – PLAN CHANGE**

**19**

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**EVIDENCE OF WALT DENLEY FOR ROCKY GLEN LIMITED**

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**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE**

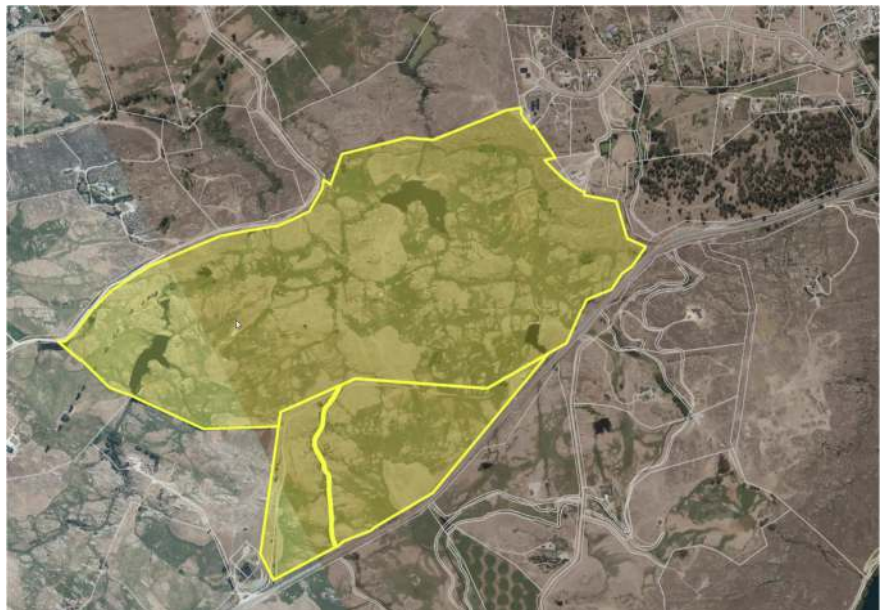
1. My full name is Walt Denley
2. I am a Senior Planner and Planning Team Leader at Landpro Limited.
3. I hold the qualifications of a Bachelor of Science (Geography) and a Postgraduate Diploma majoring in Planning from Massey University. I have twelve years' professional experience in planning and resource management, which includes six years in my current role within the Central Otago Community.

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EXPERT WITNESSES

4. Although this is not an Environment Court hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses within the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note 2014 and I agree to comply with that Code. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state I am relying on what I have been told by another person. To the best of my knowledge I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

5. The land which is the subject of my evidence is identified below in Figure 1. I will refer to this land as the Rocky Glen land.

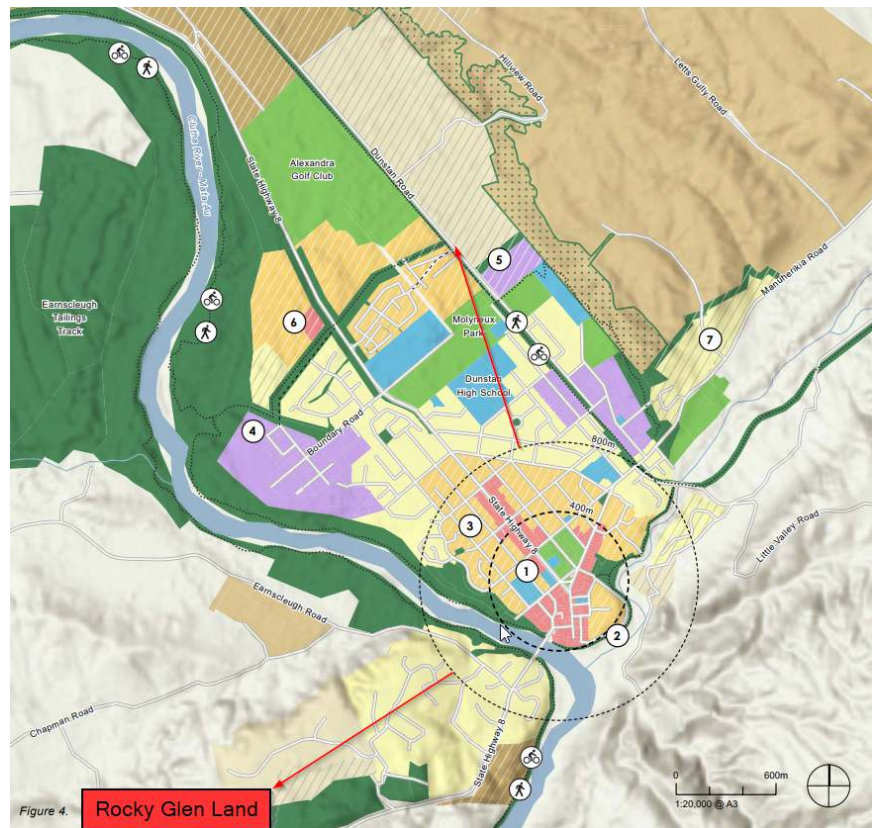


**Figure 1: Land which is the subject of evidence presented on behalf of Rocky Glen Limited**

6. The scope of my evidence is limited to the application of Plan Change 19 to the Rocky Glen land, specifically my evidence covers:
  - Relevant matters raised by the Section 42A officer;

## Section 42A report

7. Council's Section 42A officer, Ms White, addresses a number of matters relating to the proposed rezoning of the Rocky Glen land to the west of existing Residential Area 9 surrounding Old Golf Course Road:
  - The property not being identified as a growth area in the Vincent Spatial Plan;
  - Application of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land;
  - Servicing;
  - Yield assessment undertaken as part of the Vincent Spatial Plan; and
  - Landscape.
  
8. In assessing the above matters Ms White recommends that land should be retained as Rural Resource Area.
  
9. Ms White is correct in stating that the Vincent Spatial Plan does not indicate new residential areas for the Rocky Glen land. Instead, the Spatial Plan indicates growth of Alexandra being consolidated and expanding in northward direction along the flat river terraces. In particular, intensive infill opportunities have been prioritised and greenfield locations along the Dunstan Road corridor.
  
10. All these locations identified are on the flat river terrace areas. I suspect they have been chosen because they are easy to extend centralised services to. If you consider proximity to the existing town centre, then the land at Rocky Glen is certainly no further away from the existing town centre and commercial areas compared to the proposed new residential areas down Dunstan Road.



**Figure 2: Image taken from Vincent Spatial Plan, showing relative distance from centre of town**

11. Further concentration of redevelopment within the older established residential areas through infill development is reliant on market drivers and the ability to economically redevelop on existing sections. From my experience as planner who works closely with surveyors who advise on this type of development within this District regularly, redevelopment of these established areas is certainly not an easy option and is certainly associated with a level of risk that makes me sceptical that the town will achieve the required number of new dwellings to meet the yield projected to meet demand.
  
12. It is considered that all or at least part of Lot 1 DP 498688 and Sec 184 Blk I Fraser SD provides a logical extension to the residential area encompassing Old Golf Course Road at the top of Bridge Hill currently recognised as Residential Resource Area 9 (RR9) in the Operative CODP. This land represents a logical expansion of the residential zone at this location, enjoying good north aspect and offering a unique Central Otago landscape in which to place new

houses. Re-zoning at least part of this property as residential would assist in accommodating future growth while addressing key issues facing the Vincent area and providing additional lots with a desirable and unique central Otago outlook.

13. Despite the ongoing high demand for residential property at the top of Bridge Hill where unique Alexandra views are available, Plan Change 19 fails to recognise any further land with this type of outlook as suitable to be rezoned. This is despite the clear demand for this type of section within our community and its unique difference/aspect compared to other parts of our District providing much needed choice to our communities housing offerings.
14. It seems to me that this land has largely been dismissed from consideration for a change of zoning due to the servicing report written by Julie Muir, which states that connections to central wastewater and water services are not possible. This dismissal fails to recognise other ways of suitably servicing this land. For example, an existing bore water supply on site that has existing capacity that could meet the needs of any future development on site. Equally there are many different wastewater disposal options that could be put forward as suitable within such a large area.
15. The Rocky Glen land is certainly not highly productive land. It consists of areas of pasture that is interspersed by a great deal of schist outcrops. While the property is currently used for farming deer, the property is not considered to be great production land due to the significant protruding and underlying schist rock formations across the property which significantly affect drainage with only shallow soils being present between rock formations. The shallow soils and drainage qualities present limit the productive value of the site, which is identified as LUC Class 6 and 7. The land relies on irrigation in order to support the current farming practices and this water is not guaranteed into the future, with changing regulatory environment and increasing costs involved in irrigation make it harder to justify for a smaller farm area like Rocky Glen.

16. It is sought that the 'Large Lot' residential zone over Rocky Glen land is extended over at least part of the Rocky Glen land.
17. The new areas of residential land currently identified to be developed as potential greenfield development all represent a similar aspect, being located on flat land.
18. I am of the opinion that the Vincent community have missed an opportunity to provide a level of potential differentiation to the local housing market that would provide alternative living environments compared to other parts of the Central Otago Community. These differences are often what attract people to our community.
19. It is my understanding that Plan Change 19 forms part of a chapter by chapter review of the Operative Central Otago District Plan (Operative CODP). In this context, it is my opinion that Plan Change 19, should, as stated in Section 32A report, provide a comprehensive suite of changes to guide residential development in Central Otago's townships for at least the next ten years. For others in the community, it is my opinion that there has been some confusion created with the exclusion of the Rural (residential) areas in this current review. The word '(residential)' after rural gives some in the community the idea that lifestyle land that falls into this zone is governed under residential rules and should have been included in the current Plan Change 19 process. Incorporating these 'lifestyle' zones within this current review would have allowed the community to assess all the residential needs of the community at the same time.
20. Julie Muirs section 42A report regards Water and Wastewater servicing matters, states that the property cannot be serviced. In contrast Rocky Glen advises that the property is already receives or has an allocation for 30,000 litres of drinking water a day from a shared bore. This would provide enough water for at least 20 dwellings at 1,500 Litres each without having to seek

additional water supply elsewhere. There is also no reason why an onsite wastewater system couldn't be designed and installed on the site to deal with the development on the property that wouldn't necessitate connection to the existing Alexandra system. I think it incorrect to say that the site cannot be serviced, the land can be serviced, but at this time it cannot easily be serviced by the current central systems that service the existing residential areas of Alexandra.

21. Objective 6.3.4 as stated by Ms White as being relevant, *'To promote the sustainable management of the District's urban infrastructure to meet the present and reasonable foreseeable needs of the Districts communities'* is certainly a relevant consideration. As a planner, I don't agree that this objective means rezoned areas necessarily need to be integrated with existing infrastructure. It is my opinion that under this objective it would be enough to ensure adequate services are provided to all new residential areas to meet the present needs of a development and the reasonable future needs of a zoned residential area. So to dismiss the area because existing infrastructure cannot be easily extended to new areas is not strong reason to dismiss other areas from consideration when there might be additional benefits to our communities that cannot otherwise be achieved with other land. Following rezoning to residential, any subsequent subdivision application would need to confirm suitable servicing before being considered for approval by the Council.
22. Regards the landscape comments in the Ms Whites report, the comments made by the submitter are very general and it is my opinion that they do not warrant further specialist landscape reporting at this time. Specialist landscape evidence has not been something that has been required for any other areas being considered as part of this Plan Change that I am aware of.

## **Conclusion**

23. To ensure Central Otago District Council continue to provide new residential sections with different aspects and views, to give our community a range of section types to choose from as part of this Residential zoning update, the Council should consider re-zoning part of this area as a type of residential. The area is a logical extension of the existing Old Golf Course Road residential area and will greatly assist in managing future growth in the Vincent area.

Dated 17 May 2023

Walt Denley