

## PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 19 TO THE CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT PLAN

**SUBMISSION 163** - John Klevstul, Rowan Klevstul, and Rubicon Hall Road Limited

### EVIDENCE SUMMARY OF BENJAMIN ESPIE REGARDING LANDSCAPE

16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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1. My name is Benjamin Espie. I have prepared and circulated a brief of evidence regarding landscape and visual amenity issues in relation to the relief sought by Submission 163. This document is a brief summary of my key conclusions.
2. The Submitter's relief seeks a southern extension to the notified Large Lot Residential Zone (LLRZ) at the southern side of Bannockburn township. Specific provisions, potentially with a Structure Plan (if thought necessary by the Panel), are proposed to apply to the site in order to bring about a clustered form of development that would include considerable greenspace. Development of the site in accordance with this relief would create a new southern edge in the relevant part of Bannockburn township, located at the gut of Smith's Gully, which topographically marks the southern extent of the flattened spur on which Bannockburn township currently sits.
3. The subject site is located at the northern end of Shepherds Creek Valley, being the valley that sits between the Cairnmuir Mountains and the Carrick Range and runs from Round Hill in the south, down to Lake Dunstan (formerly the Kawerau River) to the north. The valley is dominated by productive farming, viticulture and horticulture. The landform of the valley, particularly its northern half, has been considerably modified by past mining practices.
4. At the northern end of Shepherds Creek Valley, Bannockburn takes the form of an east-west running strip of residential development. The residential area on the western side of Bannockburn Road sits on the northern half of the broad flat-topped spur that sits between Domain Road to the north and Smith's Gully to the south. The subject site sits within Smith's Gully, on the northern side of the gully's gut.
5. The Shepherd's Creek Valley is an Other Rural Landscape pursuant to the Operative District Plan, i.e. a third-tier landscape. The 2008 District Wide Landscape Study categorised this landscape as having limited landscape sensitivity. Nonetheless, this landscape has pleasant rural aesthetics and important heritage, recreational and viticultural/productive associations. It is within this context that the Submitter's requested extension to the LLRZ sits.

6. The rolling terrace of the site is a distinct piece of landform, forming part of the northern flanks of Smith's Gully. The land cover of the site takes the form of stoney unkempt paddock land with areas where gravel extraction / earthworks have taken place in the past, and includes an existing small dwelling and accessory buildings. The site's location within Smith's Gully mean that it is significantly hidden from broad views and from Bannockburn township.
7. From roads and trails in the immediate vicinity of the subject site and some nearby private properties, the requested relief will mean that the site plainly reads as part of Bannockburn township. However, the nature and extent of enabled development will have visual logic and coherence, and will accord with landform and with the current character of Bannockburn township. For some observers in these areas, the current open and rural (but unkempt) character of the site, contributes to a degree of remoteness and corresponding visual amenity. The requested relief will reduce this visual amenity for these observers in some views, but to a degree that ranges up to being a low degree at most. Some observers are likely to find the visual experience of a clustered /hamlet development pattern at this southern edge of Bannockburn to be positive in terms of amenity.
8. The southern boundary of the notified LLRZ that contains Bannockburn township lacks logic in the vicinity of the submission site and follows a cadastral boundary to the north of the subject site. The requested area of zoning would mean that the current zone boundary is replaced with a new zone boundary that provides for a southern expansion of residential land use to the gut of Smiths Gully. Residential activity will be enabled on land that provides relatively flat residential building locations with excellent solar access and amenity. In my opinion, this will create a southern edge to Bannockburn that appears logical and coherent. The pattern of development that is enabled will not be out-of-character at an immediate scale nor a broader scale. The character and values of the Shepherds Creek Valley landscape will be maintained.

**Benjamin Espie**

**16 May 2023**