

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act (the "Act")

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Queenstown Lakes District Proposed District Plan
Hearing Stream 02

**EVIDENCE OF GRANT WILLIAM STALKER
21 April 2016**

(Farming, Subdivision History, Personal Perspective)

Ayrburn Farm Estate Limited (430)
G W Stalker Family Trust, Mike Henry, Mark Tylden, Wayne French, Dave
Finlin, and Sam Strain (534 and 535)
Slopehill Joint Venture (537)
Wakatipu Equities Limited (515)
Crosshill Farm Limited (531)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 My full name is Grant William Stalker. I have lived in the Wakatipu Basin for the past 35 years. I am a second generation farmer in the Wakatipu Basin. As is the case for many farming families in the Wakatipu Basin, farming activities have declined over the last 3-4 decades as land which was used for farming has changed to be used for rural living purposes.
- 1.2 I have been asked to provide this evidence to illustrate that change in land use activity, and to provide my personal perspective on the outcomes as they relate to the land my family has farmed in the past.
- 1.3 I am a trustee of the G W Stalker Family Trust, which is a submitter to the District Plan Review.

2. Change in Land Use

- 2.1 Our family purchased Glenpanel Farm in 1976, being the area of land containing 154ha outlined in orange on Plan A attached in Schedule 1 ("**Plan A**"). Glenpanel Farm generally comprised much of the western and southern slopes of Slope Hill together with part of the flat land between the base of Slope Hill and Ladies Mile. Glenpanel was an operating sheep farm when our family purchased it. The farm contained one homestead.
- 2.2 In about 1984 our family purchased the adjoining Springbank Farm, being the area of land containing 50ha outlined in purple on Plan A. Springbank Farm is located on the lower western slopes of Slope Hill running down to and adjoining Lower Shotover Road. Springbank Farm was an operating sheep farm when our family purchased it. It also contained one homestead.
- 2.3 During the period our family has owned Glenpanel and Springbank Farms, much of the land within the two farms has been subdivided and sold as rural living lots. The current subdivision title pattern is as shown by the black lot boundary lines on Plan A. 20 rural living lots has been created from the two farms through the following subdivision methods under the relevant District Plan provisions at the time:

- (a) One lot created through a historic provision which allowed subdivision for a retiring farmer (being the farmer who sold Glenpanel to our family).
 - (b) 4 lots created under a rule which allowed subdivision of one 1 acre rural living lot per 100 acres of farmland (up to a maximum of 4 per farm).
 - (c) 4 lots created under the 'economic use' subdivision provisions which allowed subdivision on the basis of economic farming uses such as nut tree farming and lucerne chaffing. None of those economic uses are still being carried out. Those lots are now just rural living lots.
 - (d) 11 lots created under the discretionary subdivision regime which has operated in the Rural General zone since the mid-1990s.
- 2.4 My wife and I currently live in a house on one of the Springbank Road rural living lots, which is the small cluster of six lots shown on Plan A in the middle of the southern half of what was Springbank Farm.
- 2.5 We still farm the balance of Glenpanel and Springbank Farms which has not been subdivided and sold. That balance land contains approximately 150ha on which we run about 300 deer, about 250 sheep, and a few cattle. That farming operation runs at a very modest surplus which is basically enough to keep the land looking tidy but would not be enough to support a family.

3. **Personal Perspective**

- 3.1 I believe the outcomes of the subdivision of Glenpanel and Springbank Farms are positive, both from a landowner's point of view and from the point of view of the visual amenity of the area as viewed by others.
- 3.2 Obviously our family has benefited personally from the subdivision process. However other people have also benefited financially. People who buy a rural lifestyle lot tend to build reasonably expensive houses which creates jobs for builders, tradesmen, landscapers, etc. Some of the purchasers have built second homes which they are not always residing in, and there are jobs for the people who look after the properties while the owners are away. I know a lot of the owners

personally, and I know they very much appreciate having had the opportunity to buy their properties and build their houses.

- 3.3 As far as economic benefits are concerned, from my point of view the comparison is between the use of an area of land for a rural living lot or the use of the same area of land to run perhaps 20 or 30 sheep. The economic benefits of a rural living subdivision vastly outweigh the economic benefit from farming, and in addition people have the enjoyment of living on their rural living lot and welcoming their friends, families and visitors to the lovely house they live in.
- 3.4 I believe the rural living subdivision which has occurred on Springbank and Glenpanel Farms has made the landscape more attractive and more interesting than it was when it was just farming country. The multitude of trees planted by lot owners adds interest, and also adds colour because many of the trees are deciduous. The houses, to the extent that they are visible from outside the properties, also add interest.
- 3.5 I remember Ladies Mile before the development of houses which are now located on the flat land either side of Ladies Mile. There was gorse and scrub along the road edges in many places. I believe Ladies Mile is now a lot more attractive, as a consequence of plantings associated with rural living subdivision, than it was previously.
- 3.6 I find it ironic that some people complain about the effects of rural subdivision, while at the same time enjoying the beauty of the upper golden slopes of Slope Hill, when it is income from rural living subdivision which has enabled our family to control the gorse, broom and other pest weeds which would otherwise cover Slope Hill. Farming income would never have been enough to enable us to manage and maintain the undeveloped land which we continue to farm and which other people enjoy.
- 3.7 My evidence should not be taken as suggesting that the upper ONL land on Slope Hill should be developed or planted in trees. However I do believe there is scope for some carefully managed additional rural living development on the lower slopes of Slope Hill, and on the flat land adjoining Ladies Mile, provided it is carried out in a way which adds to the beautification which has already resulted from rural living development on Glenpanel and Springbank Farms.

SCHEDULE 1

Plan of Glenpanel and Springbank Farms