

**Before the Panel of Hearing Commissioners
For the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan**

In the Matter of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the Matter of the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan
(Stage 2 – Hearing Stream 14)

Statement of Evidence of
Emma Jane Hill for Trojan Helmet
Limited (Submitter 2387 and Further
Submitter 1157)

Dated: 13 June 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Experience

1. My full name is Emma Jane Hill.
2. I am the Chair of Michael Hill International, a position I have held since 2015. Prior to that I was the Deputy Chair of the company. I have worked in the company in various roles for over 30 years. I am also a Director of The Hills Golf Club Limited and Trojan Helmet Limited (**THL**). THL is a family owned company which owns the approximately 162 ha of land on which The Hills Golf Club is situated.
3. I have a Bachelor of Commerce and an MBA with Distinction from Bond University (Gold Coast, Australia).
4. I am authorised to give this evidence on THL's behalf.

THE HILLS

5. The Hills Golf Club was established after my parents, Sir Michael and Lady Christine Hill, purchased what was a fairly run down deer and sheep farm in the early 1990s.
6. They built their house on the farm and shortly after established a few golf holes for personal use. These holes evolved into what is now a championship 18 hole marquee golf course. The course opened in 2007 with the hosting of the New Zealand Open. We have hosted a major international golf event every year since then.
7. We have recently established a further 9 hole course on the property which exhibits a more natural and rustic character than the championship course. It is an easier golfing option for people new to the game, children, anyone wanting a shorter game, and the elderly who find the big course too challenging.
8. As a family we regard ourselves as fortunate custodians of an incredibly special piece of land. We feel an obligation to ensure it is cared for and maintained for future generations.
9. The evolution and development of the property has been slow and considered, driven by our vision to create a sanctuary and sense of

connection for everyone that visits. Any changes made to the property are in harmony with the land enhancing its health and natural and scenic values.

10. We are committed to sustainable land use and management practices. We have undertaken extensive plantings and waterway restoration and improvement measures throughout the property. We are committed to adopting the lowest impact land maintenance practices available. I consider that together, these measures have significantly improved the property and peoples' enjoyment and appreciation of it.
11. The buildings and structures have been carefully designed to integrate with, and read as part of, the landscape. For example, the Golf Clubhouse was designed and built to enhance the panoramic alpine vista. It is hunkered into the earth with two thirds of it underground. It has a turf roof, blending seamlessly with the surrounding landform. We are proud the clubhouse was selected as one of the nine best Sports and Leisure buildings in the world at the Barcelona World Architecture Awards 2008 and won Supreme New Zealand Award for Architecture 2008.
12. The golf course itself is unique for the sculpture which makes much of the course into an open-air gallery. Our intent is to compliment the landscape with inspirational works giving the course a dimension that appeals to all. Giant sculptures dot the course, many of them the work of my brother, sculptor Mark Hill, who works and also resides on the property with his family. Sculptures also include those by other notable New Zealand and international artists, perhaps most inspiring is "*The Wolves are Coming*" by Chinese sculptor Liu Ruo Wang, which includes 110 larger-than-life cast iron wolves placed in a location chosen by the artist.
13. We run annual charity golf events to give back to our community. In the last three years, \$156,000 has been donated to the Queenstown Hospice, Wakatipu Junior Golf Club and James Patterson Trust. Over the last ten years \$717,817 has been donated to Cure Kids. In 2019 we will be seeking nominations from the community for which charity they would like to benefit from our annual charity day.

14. Cultural events are also important to us. We like to bring performing artists to The Hills and the Lodge for the community's enjoyment. Typically we host four artists a year.
15. We employ a base team of around 20 fulltime staff, plus seasonal and event staff. We invest in training and development for everyone on our team giving them capability and skills that are valued internationally and setting them on pathways for long term success.
16. Three generations of the Hill family live on the property and we are both physically and emotionally invested in the health and wellbeing of the environment in which we live, our team and the community.

THE HILLS RESORT ZONE

17. The conception and design of the Hills Resort Zone has been more than three years in gestation and has been informed by multiple expert consultants from a range of disciplines since its early stages. Our vision is to naturally progress from the established foundation to create a sustainable sanctuary with certainty of scope for further development.
18. A key aspect of the design process has been to work with and around the existing golf course(s) and to ensure that the amenity enjoyed when on course is not compromised. Equally or more important has been to design a development that is visually discreet and subservient to the landscape when viewed both internally and externally from the property.
19. Accordingly, the evolution of the Structure Plan for the Resort Zone has involved a process whereby each of its component parts has been tested and refined numerous times to ensure that the resulting outcomes are appropriate for the property and the wider area, and that they align with our values.
20. We consider a Resort Zone for the property is appropriate because it will recognise the development that presently exists, albeit which has been established through piecemeal resource consent processes, while providing for additional development that is carefully and sensitively planned and located so as to maintain the existing values and attributes of the property.

21. It is a natural progression for us to move a Resort Zone model and will enable us to better realise The Hills' potential as one New Zealand's premium golf destinations. A Resort Zone will enable further development of the golf course to occur in a fully integrated manner. It will provide a defined and agreed envelope in which to invest and efficiently operate. The Zone will enable the current offering to develop into a more comprehensive golf resort allowing it to be self sustaining. It should be noted that presently the golf course does not contribute an economic return.
22. A Resort Zone will provide certainty for us for future investment, and also certainty for the community, providing it with an assurance that almost 97% of the property will remain as open space maintained to the highest standard.
23. The Resort Zone will allow the property to be utilised and enjoyed by greater numbers of people, being tourists, residents and their guests and the general public.
24. We intend to engage with Queenstown Trails Trust as to how the property can integrate with the District's outstanding cycle trails. We have identified a route that links McDonnell Road near the Arrowtown Lifestyle Retirement Village with Hogans Gully. This will provide a meaningful and scenic walkway and cycleway connection giving easier access to Lake Hayes and the nearby cafes and galleries. The walk/cycle way will be formed and maintained by us and will be publicly accessible.
25. The diversification of our activities that will be enabled under the new Zone will mean that we can invest in, nurture and employ more people. Recognising the housing shortage we will build staff accommodation on site for members of our team and their families.
26. A Resort Zone will enable us to continue to play a custodial role for the property, it will enable greater community connection, provide certainty of investment and good economic outcomes for everyone's benefit, while providing the community certainty of high quality enduring landscape outcomes.

E J Hill

June 2018