

**BEFORE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991  
(Act)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of Stage 3/3b of the Proposed Queenstown  
Lakes District Plan

**Summary of Evidence by Graeme McCarrison Spark New Zealand Trading Limited (Spark) and Vodafone New Zealand Limited (Vodafone).**

1. I, with Colin Clune of Vodafone, prepared joint evidence for Spark and Vodafone dated 29 May 2020. My relevant qualifications and experience are set out in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.7 of that statement.
2. The evidence relates to:
  - Telecommunication as critical infrastructure.
  - Heights of poles for stage 1 are not justification for the Stage 3 pole heights.
  - Regulatory framework which we operate nationally including via the National Environmental Standards for Telecommunications Facilities 2016 (NESTF).
  - Examples of cell site heights in recently reviewed district plan.
  - Examples of typical network, refer to appendix D.

**Summary submissions points**

3. We are confused in that Queenstown Lakes District Council commonly pushes the telecommunication industry to provide infrastructure to support its community and business yet the proposed provisions in Stage 3/3b continue to make it difficult to provide network.
4. Telecommunications is critical and essential infrastructure for shaping and enabling the future of Queenstown Lakes District by ensuring that it's residents and businesses have the opportunity to be connected internationally and across New Zealand. Changes in the way people access and use telecommunications and data networks are rapidly evolving. It is critical that the regulatory framework provides certainty and enables efficient roll out of current and future technology. Covid-19 has demonstrated that people rely on fixed and mobile telecommunications to run their lives, including entertainment, staying in touch with loved ones, education and work remotely from home or wherever. The pivot of businesses toward

digital services and platforms demonstrates the future and importance of having telecommunication networks that can be extended and upgraded to meet our customers needs.

5. Telecommunication network operators need district plan provisions that provide flexibility to design the network to meet our requirements for coverage and those of a developer so we can plan locations for key infrastructure.
6. Council did not include in the S32 any analysis of the pole heights or justification for those proposed. Other than our submitter initiated prehearing meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> May Council did not discuss with us the proposed provisions nor the potential impact of these on our ability to build appropriate network within areas e.g. General Industrial or the Commercial zones. We are attempting to correct the situation with practical and reasonable provisions.
7. The Stage 1 decisions did not achieve resolution of all the pole height outcomes originally requested. However, Vodafone and Spark made a pragmatic decision at the time not to appeal based on a number reasons including:
  - The area of the business mixed use zones was very limited in extent.
  - There was existing adequate mobile coverage into the known business mixed use areas.
  - The businesses had no plans or customer reasons to expend the network within Business mixed use zones.
  - Resource and financial costs of an appeal appeared to outweigh the potential benefits.
  - Potentially the NESTF provided options, such as in the road, on building or upgrading an existing site, for establishing within these zones.
8. In hindsight we should have appealed to resolve the pole heights. That is to ensure that all pole heights were at least 3 to 5m above the permitted building heights across all the zones, We note that although building clearances are one element in planning a network, additional height such as that sought in the General Industrial Zone may be more appropriate for wider network coverage or to enable co-location. A lot has changed in the last couple of years that influences our decision to push for heights that are practical and appropriate in the Stage 3 zones. At para 5.7 we highlighted some of these changes which includes the rollout of our next generation of technology ie 5G. Significant growth and proposed growth across the district. While Covid-19 and the resulting economic impacts will potentially have some consequences for the short-term, the longer term growth expectations in the district remain. The current practice is for the operators to explore opportunities to share existing assets. Co-location with other operators is made difficult in the district because of pole heights.

9. The evidence explained that the actual height of any particular mast is determined by a number of criteria which often means that the masts constructed to heights below the maximum District Plan pole height limits. The criteria include:
- Area that requires coverage or additional capacity
  - Physical environment e.g. contours of the locality, height of existing buildings or shelter belts/vegetation that interfere with coverage
  - Regulatory requirements i.e. development controls such as height, colour and radiofrequency
  - Build costs
  - Proximity to potential customers – generally the aim is to have within proximity to the customers
  - Site characteristics e.g. wind, soil conditions, access to the site and power, slope of the property
  - Access to appropriate property/s i.e. reasonable lease agreement with the owner/s
10. The NESTF does not provide for a complete suite of telecommunication facility activities. Telecommunication facilities and activities that are not regulated under the NESTF 2016 continue to be managed through the relevant district and regional plans including for new poles and antennas that are not located in the road reserve or rural zones or when the proposed location is Sub-Part 5 NESTF sensitive area such as a ONL.
11. Given that approximately 97% of the district is subject to Outstanding Natural Landscape overlay means it is common for the District Plan rules to apply for sites rather than the NESTF, especially outside urban areas. Within the ONLs it is permitted to construct an 8m high cell site. Potentially if the Cardrona Settlement provisions remain restrictive building in the ONL is an option. However, as set out in para 6.28 we do not consider it sensible to push infrastructure needed to support development within Cardrona into elevated ONL areas. All necessary infrastructure should be encouraged and enabled to be located where it is required.
12. Spark and Vodafone participate in every district plan review. Our aim is to achieve reasonable national consistency and certainty around what can be built. We set out examples of recent district plan height provisions in para 6.30 to 6.31. Nationally it is common to be able to construct 20m plus high cell sites/poles in zones of a similar nature to the General Industrial and Three Parks zones.
13. We support the provisions recommended in the evidence of Chris Horne and that of Shannon Bray.

Graeme McCarrison

11 August 2020

