

# ONF, ONL AND RCL PRIORITY AREA LANDSCAPE SCHEDULES

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Methodology Statement

FINAL

May 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following ONF, ONL, and RCL Priority Areas Landscape Schedules Methodology Statement (collectively referred to as the **PA Landscape Schedules**) has been prepared by Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Limited (BGLA), Helen Mellsop Landscape Architect, and reviewed by Brad Coombs of Isthmus (in a peer review and administrative project lead role) for Queenstown Lakes District Council.

### Background

- 1.2 The preparation of ONF, ONL and RCL Priority Areas Landscape Schedules (collectively referred to as the **PA Landscape Schedules**) has been directed by a series of decisions from the Environment Court in relation to the Stage 1 appeals on the Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan (**PDP**).
- 1.3 The Topic 2.2 interim decision<sup>1</sup>, directed Council to:
- a. identify Priority Area ONF, ONL and RCL within the district;
  - b. prepare schedules for each of the priority areas that describe the landscape values that need to be protected or managed and the landscape capacity of the area<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4 The Topic 2.5 decision confirmed the mapping of the ONF and ONL Priority Areas<sup>3</sup>:

#### ONF Priority Areas

1. Peninsula Hill,
2. Ferry Hill,
3. Shotover River,
4. Morven Hill,
5. Lake Hayes,
6. Slope Hill,
7. Feehly Hill,
8. Arrow River,
9. Kawarau River,
10. Mt Barker, and
11. Mt Iron.

#### ONL Priority Areas

1. West Wakatipu Basin,
2. Queenstown Bay and environs,
3. Northern Remarkables,
4. Central Wakatipu Basin Coronet Area,
5. East Wakatipu Basin and Crown Terrace Area,
6. Victoria Flats,
7. Cardrona Valley,
8. Mount Alpha,
9. Roys Bay,
10. West Wānaka,
11. Dublin Bay,
12. Hāwea South North Grandview, and
13. Lake McKay Station and environs.

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 NZEnvC 205.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, see [262].

<sup>3</sup> NZEnvC158 at [83].

1.5 The RCL mapped areas confirmed in the Topic 2.7 Decision<sup>4</sup> are:

#### Upper Clutha RCL Priority Areas

1. Cardrona River/Mt Barker Road,
2. Halliday Road/Corbridge,
3. West of Hāwea River,
4. Church Road/Shortcut Road, and
5. Maungawera Valley.

1.6 The spatial extent (boundaries) of the ONF, ONL, and RCL Priority Areas are shown in the QLDC GIS mapping resource.

1.7 The PA Landscape Schedules work is not required to address the merits or otherwise of the PA ONF, ONL, and RCL spatial mapping itself, as these have been set by the Environment Court. Further, the mapped extent of a priority area is not necessarily a 'landscape' in its own right, and typically forms part of a broader landscape.

1.8 In addition, the authors understand that the extent of the ONL in the vicinity of Arthurs Point is subject to appeal. For the purposes of the PA Landscape Schedules, the authors have used the Decisions Version mapping of the Proposed District Plan ONL overlays.

1.9 The Chapter 3 text confirmed by the Court in the Topic 2.9 interim decision sets out the policy context for the PA Schedules, including describing the 'scope' of the PA Schedules as follows<sup>5</sup>:

### Values Identification Framework for Priority Areas for Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes

**3.3.37** For the Priority Areas listed in SP 3.3.36 ~~Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Natural Landscapes~~ Priority Areas, according to SP 3.3.38, describe in Schedule 21.22 at an appropriate landscape scale:

- a. the landscape attributes (physical, sensory and associative);
- b. the landscape values; and
- c. the related landscape capacity.

*(relevant to SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.1)*

**3.3.38** To achieve SP 3.3.37 for each Priority Area:

- a. identify the key physical, sensory and associative attributes that contribute to the values of the Feature or Landscape that are to be protected;
- b. describe in accordance with SP 3.3.43<sub>2</sub> and then rate<sub>2</sub> those attributes; and
- c. assess and record the related landscape capacity for subdivision, use and development activities including but not limited to:
  - i. commercial recreational activities;
  - ii. visitor accommodation and tourism related activities;
  - iii. urban expansions;
  - iv. intensive agriculture;

<sup>4</sup> 2021 NZEnvC 60 at [26].

<sup>5</sup> 2021 NZEnvC 2.9 Annexure 1.

- v. earthworks;
- vi. farm buildings;
- vii. mineral extraction;
- viii. transport infrastructure;
- ix. utilities and regionally significant infrastructure;
- x. renewable energy generation;
- xi. forestry;
- xii. rural living.

*(relevant to SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.1)*

### **Values Identification Framework for Priority Areas for Rural Character Landscapes**

**3.3.39** Identify in Schedule 21.23 the following Rural Zone Priority Areas within the Upper Clutha Rural Character Landscapes shown on maps held on [QLDC reference file]:

- a. Cardrona River/Mt Barker Road RCL PA;
- b. Halliday Road/Corbridge RCL PA;
- c. West of Hāwea River RCL PA;
- d. Church Road/Shortcut Road RCL PA;
- e. Maungawera Valley RCL PA.

*(relevant to SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.7)*

**3.3.40** For the Priority Areas listed in 3.3.39 ~~Upper Clutha Basin Rural Zone Rural Character Landscape Priority Areas~~, according to SP 3.3.41, describe in Schedule 21.23 at an appropriate landscape scale:

- a. the landscape attributes (physical, sensory and associative);
- b. the landscape character and visual amenity values; and
- c. the related landscape capacity.

*(relevant to SO 3.2.5, 3.2.5.7)*

**3.3.43** In applying the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Policies ~~on landscape values and related landscape capacity~~ of for Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Rural Character Landscapes, including the values identification frameworks in SP 3.3.37, 3.3.38, and SP 3.3.40 and 3.3.41 and the landscape assessment methodology in SP 3.3.45, have regard to the following attributes:

- a. Physical attributes:
  - i. geology, geomorphology and topography;
  - ii. ecology;
  - iii. vegetation cover (exotic and indigenous);
  - iv. the presence of waterbodies including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and their hydrology;
  - v. land use (including settlements, buildings and structures; and
- b. Sensory (or experiential) attributes:
  - i. legibility or expressiveness – how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes;
  - ii. aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness;

- iii. wild or scenic values;
- iv. transient values including values at certain times of the day or year; and
- c. Associative attributes:
  - i. whether the attributes identified in (a) and (b) are shared and recognised;
  - ii. cultural and spiritual values for Tangata Whenua;
  - iii. historical and heritage associations;
  - iv. recreational values.

*(relevant to SO 3.2.1, 3.2.1.7, 3.2.1.8, 3.2.2, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.5, 3.2.5.1 – 3.2.5.7)*

- 1.10 To assist plan users, the Chapter 3 text confirmed by the Court in the Topic 2.9 decision also includes a number of definitions that are of relevance to the preparation of the PA Landscape Schedules:

**3.1B.7** In this Chapter:

- a. 'Landscape capacity':
  - i. in relation to an Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape, means the capacity of a landscape or feature to accommodate subdivision and development without compromising its identified landscape values;
  - ii. in relation to a landscape character area in a Rural Character Landscape, means the capacity of the landscape character area to accommodate subdivision and development without compromising its identified landscape character and ~~whilst~~ while maintaining its identified visual amenity values;
- b. 'Landscape values' in relation to any Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding Natural Landscape or Rural Character Landscape includes biophysical, sensory and associative attributes (and 'values' has a corresponding meaning);
- c. 'Rural Living' means residential-type development in a Rural Character Landscape or on an Outstanding Natural Feature or in an Outstanding Natural Landscape, including of the nature anticipated in a Rural Residential or Rural Lifestyle zone but excluding residential development for farming or other rural production activities;
- d. 'Priority Area':
  - i. in relation to an Outstanding Natural Feature or Outstanding Natural Landscape, means an area listed in SP 3.3.36 and shown on the maps ~~in Schedule 24~~ [held on [QLDC reference file]];
  - ii. in relation to the Upper Clutha Rural Character Landscape, means an area listed in SP 3.3.39 and shown on the maps ~~in Schedule 24~~ [held on [QLDC reference file]].
- e. 'Best practice landscape methodology' in relation to the identification of landscape values or related landscape capacity or their assessment includes a methodology produced or recommended by a reputable professional body for landscape architects.

## Methodology Report Structure and Scope

- 1.11 Drawing from this background, the Methodology Statement report is structured as follows:
- a. Provides an outline of the approach taken to the identification and evaluation of **landscape attributes and values** in the PA Landscape Schedules.
  - b. Explains how **landscape capacity** is evaluated in the PA Landscape Schedules.
  - c. Explains how the **PA Schedules link with the District Plan Policy Framework**.
  - d. Describes the **landscape assessment ‘method’** (or ‘process’) that has been used to complete PA Landscape Schedules. This includes:
    - i. a description of **other expert inputs** into the preparation of the PA Landscape Schedules;
    - ii. an explanation of how **associative values** have been addressed;
    - iii. an explanation of how **perceptual values** have been addressed;
    - iv. **other information sources** relied on;
    - v. the **PA Landscape Schedule** templates;
    - vi. a description of the **field survey**
    - vii. a summary of the **peer review** process;
    - viii. the **delineation of ‘landscape character units’** within Priority Areas;
    - ix. the **data sources** that have been relied on;
    - x. any **assumptions** that have underpinned the preparation of the PA Landscape Schedules; and
    - xi. the **step-by-step process** that has been used to complete the work.
- 1.12 It should be noted that while the outline above frames the method that has been applied for the PA Landscape Schedules work, this is not formulaic and is inevitably contextual requiring professional judgement to determine the appropriate method.

## 2.0 Landscape Attributes and Values

- 2.1 The authors understand that the purpose of this aspect of the PA Landscape Schedules project is to provide guidance to plan users by identifying and rating the landscape values of the priority areas that require protection under the PDP.
- 2.2 The identification and evaluation of the landscape attributes and values referenced in the PA Landscape Schedules is underpinned by the landscape assessment methodology set out in *Te Tangi a Te Manu* (the Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines Final Draft April 2021, subject to editing and graphics etc.)

that were unanimously adopted by the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Tuia Pito Ora (NZILA TPO) at the 49th AGM on 5 May 2021 (referred to as **TTatM**<sup>6</sup>).

- 2.3 TTatM reflects best practice landscape assessment in Aotearoa and has been carefully drafted to incorporate up-to-date guidance from the Environment Court with respect to landscape assessment.
- 2.4 In particular, four key concepts addressed in TTatM have informed the range of landscape attributes and values (or ‘factors’) addressed in the PA Landscape Schedules, along with the evaluation of the landscape attributes and values:
- a. the three-dimensioned concept of landscape;
  - b. the definition of landscape values;
  - c. the discussion of the factors that might inform a ‘starting point’ for describing and evaluating landscape values; and
  - d. the rating of landscape values.

## A Three-Dimensioned Concept of Landscape

- 2.5 As explained in TTatM<sup>7</sup>:

*Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place: it includes the physical character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it.*

*Whenua is the nearest Te Reo term for landscape, although the terms are not directly interchangeable. Whenua contains layers of meaning concerning people’s relationship with the land.*

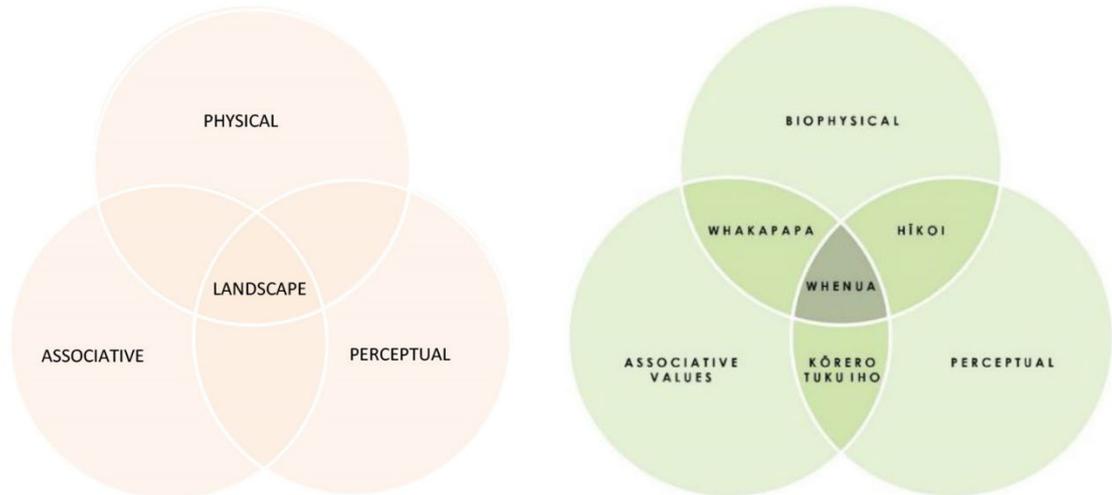
*Professional practice conceives of landscape as comprising three dimensions: the physical environment, peoples’ perceptions of it, and the meanings and values associated with it. This concept, integrated with mātauranga, provides a potential bridge between whenua and landscape.*

*The current professional practice of conceptualising landscape as three overlapping dimensions provides a bridge between Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā meanings: (see **Figure 1** below)*

- *Physical (the physical environment – its collective natural and built components and processes); and*
- *Associative (the meanings and values we associate with places); and*
- *Perceptual (how we perceive and experience places).*

<sup>6</sup> [https://nzila.co.nz/media/uploads/2021\\_07/210505\\_Te\\_Tangi\\_a\\_te\\_Manu\\_Revised\\_Final\\_Draft\\_as\\_approved\\_5\\_May\\_2021.pdf](https://nzila.co.nz/media/uploads/2021_07/210505_Te_Tangi_a_te_Manu_Revised_Final_Draft_as_approved_5_May_2021.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Refer TTatM, pages 31 and 32.



**Figure 1:** Diagrammatic representation of the bridge between Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā meaning of landscape. Source: TTatM, page 32.

2.6 TTatM elaborates on the **three dimensions of landscape** as follows:

***‘Physical’** means both the natural and human-derived features, and the interaction of natural and human **processes** over time. Other terms sometimes used for this dimension include **‘natural and physical resources’** (which echoes RMA phraseology), **natural and built environment** (which echoes the Randerson Report phraseology), **‘physical environment’**, **‘biophysical’** (which is potentially problematic if it is taken to mean only the natural aspects of landscape rather than both natural and human features), and **‘geographical’**.*

***Associative** means the intangible things that influence how places are perceived – such as history, identity, customs, laws, narratives, creation stories, and activities specifically associated with a landscape. Such associations typically arise over time out of the relationship between people and place. Tāngata whenua associations are therefore especially relevant because of primacy and duration. Pūrākau, tikanga, whakapapa, and mātauranga are key considerations of the associative dimension from a Te Ao Māori perspective, particularly important when considering matters such as mauri and wairua. Other terms sometimes used for this dimension include **‘intangible’**, **‘meanings’**, **‘place-related’** (sense of place).*

***‘Perceptual’** means both sensory experience and interpretation. Sensory appreciation typically occurs simultaneously with interpretation, knowledge, and memory. What we **know**, **remember**, and **imagine** influences how we perceive a place. While sight is the sense most typically applied to landscape assessment, sensory perception importantly includes all the senses such as sound, smell, touch, and taste (the smell of the forest floor, sounds of a city, feel of the wind, sense of movement in the tides and waterways, tastes of an area’s foods, or of salt on the wind). Other terms sometimes used for the perceptual dimension include **‘sensory’** (which suggests only raw senses and does not capture the cognitive or interpretative aspect that is implied in the term ‘perceptual’), **‘aesthetic’** (which suggests a focus on beauty rather than wider appreciation), and **‘experiential’** which perhaps better conveys movement and active engagement.*

2.7 The Topic 2 decisions use the term **‘sensory’** rather than **‘perceptual’** (as used in TTatM). This reflects the ongoing debate within the landscape profession at the time of landscape evidence preparation for the Topic 2 appeal hearings. Since that time, the landscape profession has agreed to use the term ‘perceptual’ rather than ‘sensory’ as it captures both the sensory experience and peoples’ interpretation of those sensory experiences. For this reason, the term ‘perceptual’ is used in the PA Landscape Schedules.

## Landscape Values

2.8 TTatM explains that **landscape values** are:

*...the reasons a landscape is valued – the aspects that are important or special or meaningful. Values may relate to each of the landscape’s dimensions – or, more typically, the interaction between the dimensions. They could relate to the physical condition of the landscape, the meanings associated with certain attributes, and their aesthetic qualities. Importantly, values are embodied in certain physical attributes (values are not attributes, but they depend on attributes).<sup>8</sup>*

2.9 TTatM elaborates that values are ascribed by people and typically reflect different interests and perspectives, observing that even natural values, which may be referred to as ‘intrinsic’, are values ascribed by people. It is the role of the landscape assessor to provide an impartial assessment of landscape values.<sup>9</sup>

## The Factors that Inform an Understanding of Landscape Values

2.10 TTatM explains that the three dimensions are complementary, overlapping, and non-hierarchical<sup>10</sup> and provides a **list of the typical factors** often considered under the dimensions of landscape:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Physical    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (natural and human):</li> <li>• Geology and geomorphology.</li> <li>• Topography and hydrology (including drainage patterns).</li> <li>• Climate and weather patterns.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Soil patterns.</li> <li>• Vegetation patterns.</li> <li>• Ecological (flora and fauna) and dynamic components.</li> <li>• Settlements and occupation.</li> <li>• Roads and circulation.</li> <li>• Land use – cadastral pattern.</li> <li>• Buildings.</li> <li>• Archaeology and heritage features.</li> <li>• Tāngata whenua features.</li> <li>• Likely future (permitted or consented) activities in the environment.</li> </ul> |
| Associative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tāngata whenua creation and origin traditions manifest in landscape features.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Tāngata whenua associations and experience – (historic, contemporary, and future)<sup>13</sup> including pūrākau, whakapapa, tikanga, and mātauranga.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• Tāngata whenua metaphysical aspects such as wairua and mauri.</li> <li>• Legal personification of landscape features.</li> </ul>  |

<sup>8</sup> TTatM, paragraph 5.6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 5.9 and 5.10.

<sup>10</sup> TTatM paragraph 4.28.

<sup>11</sup> Factors are intertwined. For example, high rainfall on the West Coast results in lush vegetation and very active erosion compared to the dry regimes east of the Southern Alps. Much of the topography of the Southern Alps is influenced by glaciation which is also strongly influenced by climate. Characteristic weather patterns are also part of a landscape’s character, such as the Waikato River’s mists, Hauturu-o-Toi’s cloud puff, Canterbury’s Nor-west arch, and Greymouth’s ‘The Barber’ wind.

<sup>12</sup> Such traditions often explain the appearance of features, whakapapa connections between them and between features and tangata whenua, and patterns of occupation and use. Creation and origin traditions are associated with many landscape features – particularly notable examples include Aoraki, Mauao, Taranaki maunga, and Te Mata-o-Rongokako.

<sup>13</sup> Tāngata whenua have a holistic relationship with landscape in all its dimensions. The highlighting of certain factors in this list is not to be interpreted as restricting tāngata whenua landscape values to such factors.

<sup>14</sup> Refer **QLDC Proposed District Plan Chapter 2 Definitions 2.3 Glossary and Chapter 5 Tangata Whenua**

- Historic associations and stories attached to the landscape since European settlement.
  - Shared and recognised values of a landscape derived from community life including the community's livelihood, its history and reason for being in that place, places of social life and gathering, places associated with metaphysical meanings such as retreat, contemplation, and commemoration.
  - Landscape values associated with identity such as attributes that are emblematic for an area, places that are central to a community (main street, wharf, park), features that are anthropomorphised.
  - Landscapes that are engaged through activities such traditional food and resource gathering, recreational use, food and wine that reflect a locale, tourism based on landscape experience or appreciation of a landscape's qualities.
- Perceptual
- Geomorphic legibility (how obviously a landscape expresses the geomorphic processes).
  - Wayfinding and mental maps (legibility or visual clarity of landmarks, routes, nodes, edges, and areas of different character).
  - Memorability.
  - Coherence (the extent to which patterns reinforce each other, coherence between human patterns and underlying natural landscape).
  - Aesthetic qualities.
  - Naturalness.
  - Views.
  - Wildness/remoteness.
  - Transient attributes.

2.11 TTatM clarifies that such lists are useful reminders but are not intended as a formula, explaining:

- Factors straddle dimensions (e.g., 'naturalness' is a function of physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions) – it is the interplay between dimensions that is often key.
- Not every factor is relevant everywhere, and factors that are not listed may be relevant.
- The relative weight given to a factor depends on context and issues.
- Assessment and interpretation of such factors (and the conclusions and recommendations that flow from them) is a matter of professional judgement. As with all matters of professional judgement, explanation and reasons are key.

2.12 TTatM also explains how the three overlapping dimensions of landscape (i.e. physical, associative and perceptual) draw from factor lists such as the 'Pigeon Bay factors'<sup>15</sup> and the 'Lammermoor list'<sup>16</sup>, commenting that the benefit of 'repacking' such factors as three overlapping dimensions include:

- Accommodating both tāngata whenua and western world views in a holistic manner.
- Linking the dimensions more directly with the definition of 'landscape'.
- Providing flexibility to include other relevant factors and criteria depending on context.
- Discouraging use of such checklists as a default formula.

2.13 The list of 'factors' set out in TTatM is longer and more comprehensive than the list of factors in PDP Chapter 3 SP 3.3.43. This reflects the more 'summary' nature of SP 3.3.43. Importantly, all of the factors referenced in TTatM sit within the 'scope' of the factors listed in SP3.3.43.

2.14 The matter of **landscape scale** is also of importance in identifying (and rating) landscape values.

<sup>15</sup> For example, see NZEnvC C180/99 at [7].

<sup>16</sup> For example, see NZEnvC 432 at [50].

- 2.15 The physical scale of the landscapes to which a landscape schedule is to apply (eg regional scale, district scale etc) will influence the ‘grain’ or level of detail in the schedule.
- 2.16 As explained earlier, for the PA Landscape Schedules project, the physical extent of each PA has been determined by the Environment Court. However, it is important to note that the grain of landscape description and evaluation applied in the PA Landscape Schedules is inevitably coarser grained than a site-by-site landscape evaluation process. It will be important that this distinction is made in any future planning documents that incorporate the PA Landscape Schedules. As mentioned previously, some of the PA’s assessed do not constitute complete landscapes but are in some cases landscape character units within a broader landscape.
- 2.17 In this regard, it is expected that a Guidance Note along the lines of the PDP Chapter 24 Wakatipu Basin Schedule 24.8 Guidance Note is likely to be required to assist the use of the PA Landscape Schedules.

The **PA Landscape Schedules Guidance Note** should explain that:

- the landscape attributes and values identified, relate to the PA as a whole and should not be taken as prescribing the attributes and values of specific sites;
- the landscape attributes and values may change over time;
- a finer grained location-specific assessment of landscape attributes and values would be required for any plan change or resource consent; and
- ‘other’ landscape values may be identified through these finer grained assessment processes.

## Rating Landscape Values

- 2.18 TTatM recommends a seven-point rating scale for the evaluation of landscape values (and landscape effects) explaining that the seven-point scale is recommended as a ‘universal’ scale for the following reasons:

*It is symmetrical around ‘moderate’.*

*It has even gradations.*

*It uses neutral terms so does not confuse rating and qualitative aspects.*

*The scale is therefore suitable for both positive and adverse effects, and for other purposes such as aspects of landscape value and natural character. It can be used in a ‘universal’ manner. (Emphasis added.)*

*The seven points provide for nuance of ranking, while being near the practical limit at which such distinctions can be made reliably. For those who struggle with seven points, the scale can be envisaged as three simpler categories (low, moderate, high) with finer steps above, below, and in-between.<sup>17</sup>*

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
low			moderate	high		

<sup>17</sup> See TTatM paragraphs 6.21 and 6.22.

- 2.19 Rating landscape values is a complex and iterative phase requiring a significant component of expert judgement by the landscape assessor, and typically including input from a **Study Team** comprised of other expert disciplines (for example, ecologists, geologists, archaeologists, where relevant), iwi representatives, Council staff, key stakeholders, and (ideally) representatives of the wider community.
- 2.20 The process by which input from other expert disciplines (ecology, heritage, recreation, geomorphology), iwi representatives, Council staff, key stakeholders, and (ideally) representatives of the wider community has been integrated into the PA Landscape Schedules project is explained shortly under the discussion of the Landscape Assessment 'Method'.
- 2.21 Further, as TTatM advises (at paragraph 5.30), care is required in rating attributes to quantitatively evaluate landscapes for the following reasons:

*Conceptually, landscape is the interplay of dimensions – not the sum of their parts.*

*Value is embodied in specific character and attributes, not the generic criteria/factors that typically make up a scoring framework.*

*The relative significance of any criterion/factor depends on context.*

*While in practice a high 'score' for one dimension is often repeated by high scores in the other dimensions (given that the physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions typically resonate with each other), such self-reinforcing tendencies do not always hold true and should not be misconstrued. It is possible for a landscape to have a single over-riding reason for its value.*

*Some criteria/factors, particularly in more detailed schema, may be in opposition (for example rarity vs representativeness, historic features vs naturalness).*

## 3.0 Landscape Capacity

- 3.1 The purpose of this aspect of the PA Landscape Schedules project is to provide guidance to plan users by assessing and recording the landscape capacity of the PA for subdivision, use, and development activities for a range of different land uses.
- 3.2 In addition, the authors note that assessments of landscape capacity of this nature are typically aimed at assisting the management of cumulative adverse landscape effects.
- 3.3 As discussed earlier, the meaning of 'landscape capacity' within the context of the district's ONF/ONL and RCL areas has been defined by the Court in the Topic 2.9 interim decision. These definitions of landscape capacity have informed the corresponding assessment within the PA Landscape Schedules.
- 3.4 The Topic 2.9 interim decision also provides guidance with respect to the range of land uses for which the landscape capacity should be assessed, acknowledging that other activities may be deserving of consideration.
- 3.5 The majority of landuses addressed are described in Chapter 2: Definitions of the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan (Decisions Version) (**the Plan**). The exception to this is 'tourism related activities' which is not defined in the Plan. The authors understand that this landuse relates to resorts.
- 3.6 'Other landuses' such as moorings, jetties and gondolas are addressed in the PA Schedules where appropriate.

- 3.7 As TTatM explains: an evaluation of (landscape) capacity is a necessarily imprecise process because it involves estimating an unknown future.<sup>18</sup>
- 3.8 For this reason, commentary with respect to landscape capacity is relatively 'high level' and focusses on describing the characteristics of development outcomes that are likely to be appropriate within the specific priority area rather than a series of measurable standards (such as a specified building height or building coverage control).
- 3.9 This reflects the complex nature of successfully integrating subdivision, use, and development into high-value landscape settings which typically involves a fine-grained, location-specific response. Such an approach does not fit well with the 'one size fits all' approach implicit in measurable standards.
- 3.10 For the purposes of the PA Landscape Schedules, landscape capacity is described using the following four terms:
- **some** landscape capacity;
  - **limited** landscape capacity;
  - **very limited** landscape capacity; and
  - **no** landscape capacity.
- 3.11 The choice of wording here is deliberate. Given the uncertainty around what a specific landuse might entail, the authors have not applied the seven-point rating scale (described above) but favoured a 'less absolute' terminology.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.12 Further the high value landscape context of the PA ONF/Ls (RMA s6(b) and PA RCLs (RMA s7(c)), means that they are inevitably sensitive to landuse change (albeit to varying degrees). For this reason, the choice of terminology intentionally favours a relatively cautious approach to landuse change.
- 3.13 To assist plan users, the following broad explanation of each of these terms is as follows:
- Some** landscape capacity: typically this corresponds to a situation in which a careful or measured amount of sensitively located and designed development of this type will not materially compromise the identified landscape values.
- Limited** landscape capacity: typically this corresponds to a situation in which the landscape is near its capacity to accommodate development of this type without material compromise of its identified landscape values and where only a very modest amount of sensitively located and designed development will not materially compromise the identified landscape values.
- Very limited** landscape capacity: typically this corresponds to a situation in which the landscape is very close to its capacity to accommodate development of this type without material compromise of its identified landscape values, and where only a very small amount of sensitively located and designed development is appropriate.
- No** landscape capacity: This corresponds to a situation where development of this type will materially compromise the identified landscape values.
- 3.14 It is intended that the use of this four-tier landscape capacity terminology, **along with** a description of the characteristics that are likely to frame development that is appropriate (from a landscape perspective), will assist in guiding the scale, location and characteristics of each landuse type that will: protect

<sup>18</sup> See TTatM paragraph 5.46 last bullet point.

<sup>19</sup> For example, under the landuse type of 'renewable energy generation' this can range from a single wind turbine for domestic use to a large scale windfarm.

landscape values in each PA ONF/L; and maintain and enhance landscape character and visual amenity values in the PA RCL.

- 3.15 In a similar vein to the discussion above in relation to landscape attributes and values, it should also be noted that the evaluation and comments with respect to landscape capacity:
- a. relate to 'a moment in time' and therefore may change over time; and
  - b. have been undertaken at a 'priority area' scale, rather than a 'site' scale.
- 3.16 For these reasons, the PA Landscape Schedules Guidance Note should explain that:

The capacity descriptions are based on the scale of the PA and should not be taken as prescribing the capacity of specific sites; landscape capacity may change over time; and across each PA there is likely to be variations in landscape capacity which will require detailed consideration and assessment through consent applications.

- 3.17 It should be noted that the capacity evaluation has taken into consideration residential building platforms, but does not factor in consents that have not been implemented.

## 4.0 The link between the PA Schedules and the District Plan Policy Framework

- 4.1 For methodological consistency and transparency, the PA ONF, PA ONL and PA RCL Schedules have all been structured in the same way using the three dimensions of landscape: physical, associative and perceptual (or sensory) described above. This is established and accepted by the NZILA best practice.
- 4.2 This approach reflects the fact that all landscapes (and not just Aotearoa's very high value landscapes), are the 'result' of the collective interaction of these three dimensions.
- 4.3 The link between the policy context relating to PA ONFs and PA ONLs and the PA Schedules is relatively straight forward in that it requires landscape values and related landscape capacity to be identified<sup>20</sup>, and the protection of landscape values which are listed in each schedule<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.4 The policy context in relation to PA RCLs requires landscape character and visual amenity values (and landscape capacity) to be identified<sup>22</sup>.
- 4.5 Landscape character and visual amenity values are expressed through the 'three dimensioned' structure of the PA RCL Schedules (ie physical, associative and perceptual / sensory). The concept of 'landscape character' encompasses all three dimensions of landscape. 'Visual amenity values' typically draw from the perceptual dimension, however there is inevitably an overlap with the physical dimension.
- 4.6 The schedule authors have carefully considered the potentially perceived 'disconnect' between the 3.3.41 text and the PA RCL Schedule structure. It is their view that structuring the PA RCL Schedules to more 'neatly' align with the terminology in the Plan would be methodologically flawed as it amounts to plan policy guiding how landscape schedules are 'crafted', rather than landscape assessment best practice (as articulated in TTaTM and which has informed the PA RCL Schedule structure).

<sup>20</sup> Proposed District Plan Decisions Version Chapter (3 November 2021) 3.2.5.1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 3.2.5.2 (a).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 3.2.5.7.

- 4.7 In a similar way, the policy context for PA RCLs set out at 3.3.41 mentions 'aspects' that are not specifically referenced in the PA RCL Schedules. For example, assess and record the relationship between the PA and the wider RCL context; and assess and record the relationship between the PA and ONFs in the Upper Clutha Basin. Again, for reasons of methodological consistency and transparency, the schedule authors do not consider that it is appropriate to craft the schedules to respond to these specific policy constructs and consider that the three dimensioned landscape approach allows for these matters to be referenced. The schedule authors have carefully considered the content and terminology in the PA RCL Schedules, to ensure that the requirements of 3.3.41 have been adequately addressed and that there is a reasonably obvious link between the PA RCL Schedule text and policy 3.3.41 wording.
- 4.8 To assist transparency between the PA RCL policy context and the PA RCL Schedules it is recommended that the **PA Landscape Schedule Guidance Note** also includes the following explanation:

**Landscape character** and **visual amenity values** are expressed through the 'three dimensioned' structure of the PA RCL Schedules (ie physical, associative and perceptual / sensory). The concept of '**landscape character**' encompasses all three dimensions of landscape. '**Visual amenity values**' typically draw from the perceptual dimension, however there is inevitably an overlap with the physical dimension.

With respect to the link between the PA RCL Schedules and PDP Policy 3.3.41, the **key public routes and viewpoints** are typically identified in the description of the '*Important land use patterns and features*', with key scenic routes identified under '*Important recreation attributes and values*' and/or '*Particularly important views to and from the area*'.

The **relationship between the PA RCL and the wider Rural Character Landscape context, the Outstanding Natural Features within the Upper Clutha Basin and the Outstanding Natural Landscapes that frame the Upper Clutha Basin** are typically addressed in the description of '*Important land use patterns and features*', '*Important shared and recognised attributes and values*', '*Particularly important views to and from the area*', and '*Aesthetic qualities and values*'.

## 5.0 Landscape Assessment 'Method'

- 5.1 This section of the Methodology Statement explains the process or 'method' used to prepare the PA Landscape Schedules.

### 'Other Expert' Inputs

- 5.2 The three-dimensioned approach to assessing landscape values outlined in Section 3 typically involves input by 'other expert' disciplines (i.e. non landscape architects).
- 5.3 The range of other disciplines required to assist landscape evaluation will vary from district to district throughout New Zealand depending on the landscape characteristics of the area. For example: the proliferation of volcanic features throughout Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), suggests a need for expert geological input to understand landscape values; the largely indigenous vegetation covered Raukumara Range would require expert ecology input to understand the health and value of the indigenous flora and fauna; and cultural landscape expert input would be required to understand the Te Ao Māori history and context to the modern day use and occupation of Ohinemutu Village on the shores of Lake Rotorua.

- 5.4 For the Queenstown Lakes District, the following expert inputs have informed the assessment of landscape values:
- a. Geomorphology (Jack McConchie).
  - b. Terrestrial Ecology (Simon Beale).<sup>23</sup>
  - c. Māori cultural landscape / mana whenua (Aukaha).
  - d. Recreation and tourism (Thrive Spaces and Places).
  - e. Heritage and archaeological (Origin Consultants).
- 5.5 Given that the PA Landscape Schedules project is focussed on identifying the landscape values of the mapped ONF/L and RCL PAs (as opposed to a 'first principles' exercise of determining the extent and values of such areas), a pragmatic approach has been adopted to 'other expert' input. With the exception of cultural input (discussed shortly), this has involved the 'other experts' providing comment on a 'first draft' of the PA Landscape Schedules.
- 5.6 More specifically, this includes responding to the following questions:
- a. *Bearing in mind the role of the PA Landscape Schedules to identify the landscape values that need to be protected in each priority area, are there any other attributes and values relevant to your discipline that are deserving of mention in the PA Schedule of Values? If so, please advise recommending text description.*
  - b. *Are there amendments required to the (existing draft) description of values relevant to your discipline in the PA Landscape Schedules? If so, please advise recommended text amendments.*
- 5.7 The Methodology Statements for the 'other expert inputs' (excepting Māori cultural landscape / mana whenua expert input) are attached as **Appendix A**.
- 5.8 With respect to suggested amendments to the PA Landscape Schedules 'text', the expert advice in relation to geomorphology, ecology, mana whenua and recreation and tourism has been adopted.
- 5.9 The Heritage and Archaeological suggested text amendments tend to focus on cross referencing to District Plan features rather than describing the 'values' that need to be protected, although it is noted that many such values are mentioned in the Origins Methodology Report. While many of the suggested text amendments to the schedules have been incorporated, an approach to describing values has been retained in the schedules.
- 5.10 The PA team acknowledge the reluctance of mana whenua to rate landscape values (as explained more fully in section 5 of the Section 32 Evaluation Report prepared by Queenstown Lakes District Council). The landscape experts defer to mana whenua on these matters and have sought to avoid specifically rating mana whenua values in the schedules.

## Associative Values

- 5.11 Associative values embrace the meaning that mana whenua, communities, and individuals place on landscapes and features.
- 5.12 The cultural input described above has assisted with informing the meaning that mana whenua associates with the priority areas.

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<sup>23</sup> NB There has no expert input with respect to freshwater ecology.

- 5.13 With respect to the associative values ascribed by broader community to the priority areas, QLDC have undertaken the 'preliminary' community consultation prior to notification between 9 March and 3 April 2022. The preliminary consultation 'process' is described in the Section 32 Evaluation Report and included sending letters to landowners whose properties were within a PA.
- 5.14 The feedback from the 'preliminary' community consultation (prior to notification) was collated into Summary Tables (**Summary Tables**) for each PA by QLDC staff. The Summary Tables have been reviewed by the landscape schedule authors and the (draft) schedules amended to reflect many of the points raised by the public. To assist transparency, the landscape schedule authors have also recorded a brief response to each matter raised in the Summary Tables. (Refer **Appendix B.**)<sup>24</sup>

## Perceptual Values

- 5.15 Perceptual values relate to our sensory experience of landscapes and features and includes a cognitive or interpretative aspect (as opposed to simply the 'raw' sensory experience). This dimension of landscape values has been assessed by the landscape architects in the project team (with Helen Mellsop and Bridget Gilbert carrying out the expert evaluation and Brad Coombs undertaking a peer review role).

## Other Information Sources

- 5.16 Other information sources relied on in the preparation of the PA Landscape Schedules include:
- a. Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review.
  - b. National Park Management Plans.
  - c. Environment Court decisions that address the priority area, including expert landscape evidence referenced in decisions.
  - d. Landscape assessments prepared for resource consent applications within the relevant area.
  - e. Reserve Management Plans, publicly available geomorphological and archaeological reports.

## PA ONF/L Schedule Template

- 5.17 A copy of the PA ONF/L Landscape Schedule template is attached in **Appendix C**.
- 5.18 The structure of the schedule template responds to the directions of the Court in the Topic 2 decisions and applies the landscape methodology discussed in Section 3.

## PA RCL Schedule Template

- 5.19 A copy of the PA RCL Landscape Schedule template is attached in **Appendix D**.
- 5.20 Again, the structure of the schedule template responds to the directions of the Court in the Topic 2 decisions and applies the landscape methodology discussed in Section 3.

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<sup>24</sup> NB the landscape schedule authors have not corrected any typographical errors or the like in the Summary Tables as supplied by QLDC.

## Field Survey

- 5.21 Helen Mellsop, Bridget Gilbert and Brad Coombs undertook a joint survey of the PA Landscape Schedule areas in December 2021 and are all familiar generally with the landscapes assessed through previous experience within the District.

## Peer Review Process

- 5.22 The Peer Review process has included involvement in the development of the methodology and schedule templates, field survey and discussions in relation to the PAs and the attributes and values associated with each, with the assessment authors. Each of the Draft Schedules was read and reviewed in sequence to ensure coherence in assessment descriptions, language and relativity between the PAs. Some language edits were made to ensure consistency, however any challenge or edits to the values and ratings of the PAs was undertaken through iterative discussion between the authors and the reviewer. Edits to the PA schedules have thus been agreed between the assessors and the reviewer with the decision on edits made by the assessor.
- 5.23 The full Peer Review Report is attached as **Appendix E**.

## Delineation of Landscape Character Units within Priority Areas

- 5.24 The authors have considered the utility of dividing the priority areas into landscape character units or 'sub areas' as they have worked through the drafting of the PA Landscape Schedules to assist an understanding of values. This has not been deemed necessary in any of the PAs.

## Data Sources

- 5.25 A full list of the GIS data and their sources relied on to inform the landscape assessment is attached in **Appendix F**.

## Assumptions

- 5.26 The authors acknowledge that while they have some knowledge of some of the 'sites' within many of the priority areas, detailed site visits have not been made to assist the drafting of the PA Landscape Schedules. It is expected that as QLDC work through the notification process, detailed site visits are likely to be appropriate to assist the refinement of the schedules.

## Step by Step Process

