

**BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan – Stage 3 –  
Hearing Stream 17 – 101 Ballantyne Road

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MORGAN WEATHINGTON  
THE UPPER CLUTHA MATERNITY TRUST (SUBMITTER 3403)**

**101 BALLANTYNE ROAD REZONING**

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

## **Qualifications and Experience.**

1. I am Morgan Elizabeth Weathington. I am a registered New Zealand midwife based in Wanaka. I have provided midwifery care in the region since 2015. I currently contract my services to the Southern District Health Board (SDHB) as the Wanaka Maternity Hub Coordinator. Within this role I liaise and coordinate rural care with other professions, provide relief locum LMC midwifery care, routine secondary care locally, Telehealth clinics with our obstetric colleagues in Dunedin, and support our local LMCs with administration. Prior to this I was a full-time community midwife or Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) in Wanaka.
2. In addition to my clinical midwifery work, I am the Chair of the recently established charitable organisation, The Upper Clutha Maternity Trust. Regionally, I am the Anatomy and Physiology Lecturer for the Bachelor of Midwifery Programme at the Otago Polytechnic. I guest lecture for the Otago University Medical School Rural Health paper GENA727. I am a SDHB Maternity Quality and Safety Committee Member since 2016, and a SDHB representative on the Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Committee 2017-2018.
3. I hold Bachelors Degrees in Midwifery and Science from Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, NZ and Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada respectively.

## **Summary of Current State**

4. The Upper Clutha Maternity Trust was established to address the need for a robust maternity service in Wanaka. Maternity services nationally are in danger of collapsing due to underfunding. Remote rural areas have felt this most acutely, with Wanaka and Queenstown having the additional complication of fast growth and high land prices. To solve the maternity crisis in Wanaka, the solution will have to come locally, as changes to the national budget for maternity will not address the unique combination of rurality and high expenses.
5. Currently the SDHB is leasing consult rooms that can also handle fast unplanned birth (referred to in the SDHB as a Maternity Hub). There is work being done assessing the suitability of a Primary Birthing Unit in Wanaka as well - the proposed facility below would have the capacity to scale up to a birthing unit if needed. However, the lease of a building does not address the lack of midwives. A team of 6-8 midwives is appropriate for a 24/7, 365 day service. The current national funding can only support 2-3 midwives in Wanaka.

## **Local Proposal for a robust maternity system in Wanaka and surrounds.**

6. The Upper Clutha Maternity Charitable Trust can hold land and a maternity facility. The Trust facility can be leased to the SDHB and other allied professions, thereby generating revenue to employ a midwifery team. The revenue from the leases supports the maternity service, employing more midwives on the team than what the current national funding model allows.
  
7. 101 Ballantyne Road represents an ideal site for the Upper Clutha Maternity Charitable Trust facility. A maternity facility requires ease of access by passive and public transport, car, ambulance and helicopter, the ability to be co-located with other allied professions, and discretion. Suitable sites have been difficult to source in Wanaka due to price, inappropriate location, or inability to expand an existing site to meet the needs to of the population. As a charitable organisation, The Upper Clutha Maternity Trust is looking to the QLDC for support in this project. 101 Ballantyne is the most appropriate QLDC site to support the new families in the region with their maternity needs.