

## KEY POINTS MONORAIL OPPOSITION

### Summary of proposal:

A new transport link between Queenstown and Te Anau Downs, the Fiordland Link Experience will include

- a catamaran crossing of Lake Wakatipu to Mt Nicholas Station
- an ATV road transfer through the Von Valley and Mavora Road to the Kiwi Burn
- a monorail system to Te Anau Downs and Lake Te Anau
  - taking 33mins to travel 43km (78km/hr) according to FL fact sheet
- a separate construction/maintenance track which will be operated as a bicycling track.
- the link will operate year round with up to six daily trips peak season and
- full capacity is estimated at 160 passengers per trip.

Development of this project will also involve:

- the construction of a terminus facility in the vicinity of the Kiwi Burn that will accommodate transfers from ATV vehicles to the monorail train
- a significant terminus area at Te Anau Downs will also be constructed to include restaurant/cafes, restrooms and information kiosks, maintenance area and parking facilities.

The monorail, maintenance/bike track and both terminus are located in *Te Waipounamu* World Heritage Area, which includes Snowden Forest and Fiordland National Park.

### General Statement:

We do not believe it is appropriate to destroy significant habitat within a World Heritage Area, given the special range of flora and fauna, or to destroy accessible recreational areas that have remoteness values and are used by all ages, especially locals, doing all kinds of Kiwi things in a traditional kind of Kiwi way, just to introduce another transport option for those travelling to Milford Sound.

### ISSUES:

#### 1. Economic Effects

- **Visitor flows will be diverted away from the Southern Scenic route,** affecting Te Anau and businesses outside of Te Anau as well (Lumsden etc).

#### 2. Existing facilities can be reasonably used

- **There are already multiple forms of access to Milford Sound from Queenstown:** via the existing state highway (Milford Road), which is recognised internationally as a 'world class' touring route, and quicker access via Milford Airstrip. Boat access to Milford Sound is also available.
- **There is already a four hour return trip to Milford Sound from a fully serviced tourism centre - Te Anau.**
- **If** there is a need for additional transport options, stakeholders are ready to progress **the preferred option, the Park and Ride proposal** (as identified in the Southland Integrated Transport Study), using existing infrastructure, subject to the reversal in the current decline in New Zealand international visitor numbers and the restoration of market growth in Southland.

#### 3. Degradation of *Te Wahipounamu* World Heritage

- Fiordland National Park and Snowden Forest are in *Te Wahipounamu* World Heritage Area. What makes *Te Wahipounamu* South West New Zealand a world heritage area is its natural heritage. What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration."<sup>1</sup> New Zealand has an obligation to take measures necessary to protect the integrity of this heritage, and DOC is obliged to preserve the integrity of Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks' overwhelming landscape character of being wild and unpopulated.

**To compromise the flora, fauna and landscape character of any part of this World Heritage Site, for the purpose of providing alternative travel options, is unequivocally inappropriate.**

#### 4. Establishing a precedent

- to allow all sorts of exploitation of our National Parks, and in particular a World Heritage Area. The long-term implications of this project are further complicated by a clause in the Ngai Tahu Deed of Settlement relating to the Greenstone Valley:

*"If the Minister permits the undertaking of any development of any form of road or railway between Lake Wakatipu and the Milford Road through the Snowden conservation area (the permitted development), the Minister will not withhold consent under clause 5.1 for any proposed development of the same kind or a similar kind by the Landholder on the Land if the area affected by the permitted development has ecological and recreational values of equal or greater significance to those developments, and the Landholder's proposed development has no greater impact on the environment than the permitted development."*

<sup>1</sup> World Heritage Convention <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about>

## 5. Inconsistent with statutory plans

- **Snowden Forest Conservation Area is managed as a remote visitor setting.**  
The Snowden Forest area is held for the purpose of protecting its natural and historic resources. In order for DOC to foster a range of recreation opportunities on public conservation land, they use visitor settings to guide management.
- This application will involve sacrificing a large area of habitat (67ha) for the purpose of providing a **mass tourism infrastructure route which is more consistent with the natural character of a city than a conservation area.** This is clearly inconsistent with both the purpose for which the land is held, and the remote visitor setting. Therefore it is inconsistent with the current Conservation Management Strategy for this area.

## 6. Environmental effects

- **The scale of habitat destruction associated with this project is substantial.**  
When combined with the edge effects associated with removing forest areas in this windswept environment, the Officer's Report states the effect is likely to be an area of approximately 67ha. Although attempts to minimise environmental effects by utilising a flexible on site plan for the exact route will be used, the total amount of forest affected is significant larger than many of the individual conservation areas within Southland.
- **Offsetting by way of ongoing sponsorship of an existing programme presents risks,** as the damage occurs as part of the construction, but the offsetting will only continue in its intended potential benefit if the business continues to operate and fund the project.

## 7. Social effects

- **We are concerned at the dust, noise and visual impacts of the proposed concession, and the impact on the feelings of remoteness currently experienced by users.**  
In particular: the impact on existing recreational users (hunters, fishing, tramping, horse riding, biking, running, traditional family camping) of the conservation land in the affected area. Kiwiburn and Mavora Lakes are likely to be affected, as is the Upukerora area and potentially the upper Whitestone. The Upukeroa area, particularly near Takaro Lodge is one of few easily accessible areas which offers a sense of remoteness.
- **With up to 160 passengers arriving at one time at Te Anau Downs, this will likely leave passenger bottlenecks**  
at Te Anau Downs, as well as at all the remaining roadside stops along the Milford Road. Without careful control of visitor flows, this is likely to lead to a loss of enjoyment by many users of this area through increased perceptions of crowding. The concession application as it stands does not include the intended parking facilities or transport links, highlighting a lack of adequate information to assess the effects.

## 8. Safety Risks

- The developers have made many public comments about proposed promotional spend in marketing; however this is not enshrined in any form of contractual agreement, and will likely alter depending on the views of additional funding partners.
- The risk of partial completion and abandonment in the current financial climate is high. The failure of the applicant or any of their contracted parties will likely result in project failure on any one of the following areas of risk: unacceptable noise impact, and loss of intrinsic values  
lack of visitor demand  
financial risk if project runs over time/cost.



*It's our World Heritage*