



It's our World Heritage

'Save Fiordland' Movement Builds Momentum to Rescue World Heritage Wilderness from Reckless Tunnel and Monorail Proposals - Public Meeting 26 June in Te Anau

Thursday, 21 June 2012

Press Release: Save Fiordland

Grassroots Group Plans Nationwide Campaign to Protect the Integrity of Wilderness Heritage in New Zealand

The Te Anau community has come together to organise a concerted and steadfast campaign to prevent the irreversible loss of a priceless part of New Zealand and World Heritage Area Wilderness.

The Minister of Conservation has already given notice of her intention to grant concessions for both the 'Milford Dart' tunnel - which would run directly beneath the Routeburn Track Great Walk, as well as for the 'Fiordland Link Experience' monorail - which would tear a strip through the heart of the Snowdon Forest, in the midst of the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Site. Final decisions from the Minister and Department of Conservation (DoC) are expected within the next few months, and now is a critical time for the public to seize the agenda and show the country and the world just how big a mistake these developments would be, and that putting a stop to them is the only sustainable option.

'Save Fiordland' brings together a cross-section of concerned New Zealanders: local residents, community leaders, outdoors enthusiasts, and many other people who simply cherish the unspoiled wilderness area of this special part of the world. In addition, Save Fiordland is supported by and working with community members on the 'other side of the ranges', in Glenorchy and surrounding area, whose way of life and future are similarly endangered by these proposals. In addition, outrage about these development proposals has come from the international community, as the National Parks and Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area represent a precious and unique drawcard for overseas visitors to come and experience what we New Zealanders are so lucky to have in our own backyard.

Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks, the Snowdon Forest area and the UNESCO World Heritage Area of Te Wahipounamu of which they are all a part, are areas of irreplaceable beauty, wilderness, recreation and solitude. Locals appreciate the special untouched nature of the place, new locals move here to live alongside it, New Zealanders treasure it as a national taonga and travel across the country to visit it, and tourists from around the world are drawn to this part of the world largely because places like this are so rare elsewhere.

The tunnel and monorail proposals represent clear breaches of the fundamental principles of wilderness protection that the Conservation and National Parks Acts and Management Plans, along with World Heritage Status obligations, are supposed to protect. And DoC is supposed to be the principal steward in this regard - not the principal facilitator of their destruction through the granting of concessions for reckless proposals. The tunnel and monorail will add no value to the tourism experience in New Zealand - it will only offer shortcuts around, over, and blasted through the beauty that they have travelled here from far and wide to enjoy.

Save Fiordland is hosting a public meeting on 26 June 2012 at 7:30 pm, at the Distinction Te Anau Hotel, on the Te Anau lakefront. Speakers will include community leaders, conservation group members, technical experts, local business people, and representatives from neighbouring regions who are also fighting or have fought to save their own local wilderness heritage.

This world heritage wilderness has been a treasure for the people that came before us, and Save Fiordland pledges to fight to protect it so that it will remain preserved for those who come after us.

For more information, please contact:

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