

## **Replies to DOC letter from Nikki Mardle - January 2021 ref: 82598-SKI**

1. Future Developments
2. Ecological Assessment
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4. The Concession Term
5. Ski Club Building
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## **1. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

This licence renewal application is for the ongoing operation of Mt Dobson Ski Area utilising facilities as are existing and providing services as are currently offered.

All future upgrades, which include changed or new facilities, will require Mt Dobson Ski Area Limited (MDSAL) to make a new application to DOC for that work and, as required, to other regulatory agencies. Depending on the scale of these future works normal processes of consultation with effected parties and the wider public will be an integral part of any new application.

## **2. ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

MDSAL has engaged Kate Wardle, Environmental Services NZ to undertake this work. The field visit has been completed and the final report is expected in late March 2021.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT – annual operational & maintenance activities**

#### **Ski Runs development**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Effects &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>Annual Maintenance</b>	<b>Results</b>
Ski Runs – Terrain Modification	During the past 38 years some 14 ski runs have been identified most suitable for skiers, and selective terrain modifications have occurred. These modifications were considered and approved in the original licence application or as part of later applications for development work, eg when the triple chairlift was installed in the West Valley	Only approximately 5% of any ski run required modification which involved moving large rocks to the side of the runs to create runs approximately 18-20m wide.  Some stony runs have been also been heavy rolled to partially “bury” medium size rocks.	Terrain modifications of this type are undertaken to facilitate offering safe and enjoyable skiing during early season periods, as the winter snow pack is building, and throughout seasons of light snow falls.	Annual maintenance is minimal and extends to removing the odd rock which rolls onto a trail during intense weather events or is moved through ongoing freeze thaw cycles which can push rocks up to the surface.	Ski runs, and the snow cover that is available, can be more easily groomed throughout the season providing all skiers with safer and more enjoyable experiences.
Snow Fences	Several snow retention fences have been erected to trap wind transported snow in key areas.		Constructed to maximise the capture of natural snow on ski runs.  In some cases, these snow fences establish ski run boundaries which guide skiers in poor visibility.	Require regular maintenance due to damage during winter storms and high winds.	Are complementary to and can reduce the requirement for terrain modifications.

## Waste management

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
Rubbish	Containers located in the base area with signage. Exchangeable drums are installed in containers with automatic opening lids.	The exchangeable rubbish drums are removed as required and the contents processed at the Fairlie Recycling Centre. Staff are trained to manage and control this system.	Clean, free of rubbish area for all to enjoy.	No litter No garbage No hazards No smell No visual pollution	Clean environment
Effluent	All effluent is treated and disposed of on site via a Septic tank system.	This system was approved by Canterbury Regional Council under Resource Consent No CRC992808 and CRC093918	The septic system is maintained and managed to ensure all conditions of the Resource Consent are complied with on an ongoing basis.		

## Toilets

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
Toilets and hand washing facilities provided in the base area.	Men's and Ladies toilets meet all the legal requirements including water and discharge consent.	The toilet building has cleaning and maintenance work on a regular basis.	A clean environment.	Toilets are available for the public at any time.	No sanitary problems on site.

## Road management & maintenance

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
<p>Mt Dobson has one of the longest Alpine roads suitable for all types of vehicles to use during the ski season, when the ski area is open to the public.</p>	<p><i>Winter</i> Mt Dobson staff will make a daily decision on whether the road and weather conditions are such that skiers can safely take this journey. If not the road is closed until the weather improves or the road can be made safe.</p> <p>At times, during the ski season, it is necessary to remove snow from the access road. Mt Dobson has heavy machines to clear the snow from the road. These heavy machines are operated by experience operators and are maintained in a “ready to go” state to go at any time.</p> <p><i>Summer</i> All water courses are cleared of gravels that have accumulated in them. This gravel is removed and spread on the road carriageway. Culverts that allow for water to pass under the road are cleared as required.</p>	<p>Chain restrictions apply as required.</p> <p>Safe areas for fitting chains are nominated.</p>	<p>Safe well maintained access road for skiers, board riders and visitors.</p>	<p>Maintenance of a high standard road, safely usable for all.</p>	<p>Enjoyable environment for driving.</p>

## Buildings

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
Mt Dobson Ski Area has a range of buildings which are used solely for the operation of the Ski "Area".	<p>The buildings are maintained to a tidy standard with weekly inspections to confirm doorways, walkways and signage are at a regular standard to meet the purpose they are designed for.</p> <p>Summer maintenance is carried out with any defects attended to, including painting, safe entrances and signage.</p>		Functional operation with tidy appearance to a high standard.	Safe and well signed buildings for skiers who go straight to the facility they need.	Happy skiers/snowboarders and visitors.

## Lift maintenance

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
West Valley Chair Lift Main Run T Bar Platter Lift Beginner Rope Tow	<p>All lifts have intensive summer maintenance with lift inspection certificates issued before the commencement of each ski season.</p> <p>All waste oil is taken off the mountain.</p> <p>All mobile service machines are serviced at our workshop in Fairlie.</p>		All requirements met. Safer reliable ski lifts.	All requirements met.	Happy customers and users.

## Access for servicing and maintenance

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
Access tracks	<p>Several access tracks have been installed to facilitate winter and summer access to lift stations and towers to enable servicing and maintenance of lifts. These access tracks also facilitate safe access to and from lifts for skiers.</p> <p>Summer vehicle movement is confined to these tracks</p>		Minimal disturbance of ground cover in adjoining terrain.	<p>Efficient and safe access for skiers and maintenance staff</p> <p>Minimises any negative environmental effects of vehicle movements winter and summer.</p>	

## Environmental management – fuels and other hazardous substances

Item	Description	Comments	Effects	Benefits	Results
Diesel	<p>Diesel is used on mountain to power all large facilities and equipment including lifts, groomers, road vehicles, generators etc</p> <p>Storage is in 1 x 3,000 litre tank at West Valley Chairlift, 5 x 2,000 litre tanks which are at Road End, Platter Lift, T Bar and the Generator Shed.</p> <p>These tanks supply direct to vehicles or to day tanks at lifts and the generator.</p>	<p>All tanks are compliant with relevant NZ standards and certified as such.</p> <p>The 3,000 &amp; 2,000 litre tanks are all filled in summer direct from the fuel company tanker.</p>			
Petrol	Petrol is used for small vehicles and equipment eg snowmobiles				

	There is no bulk storage on site with all petrol being brought up from Fairlie in small 20 litre containers as required				
Oils	Oils are used in all plant and equipment.  Various oils are brought t site and stored in small containers until used as required.  All waste oil is transported off site and disposed of in the nearest appropriate refuse centre.				
Fire Extinguishers	Fire extinguishers are placed in most of the buildings and are inspected on a regular basis.	Essential requirement		Public safety	
Explosives	No explosives are stored or used on the Ski Area				

#### **4. THE CONCESSION TERM – Exceptional Circumstances**

All large assets on Ski Area in NZ have a minimum 40 – 50 year life, eg the Main Run T Bar is already 38 years old and will continue operating for a minimum further 10 years. But more significant in the context of licence term the short operating season in any one year (4 – 5 months) results in the large assets of lifts, buildings, snowmaking systems etc, requiring a minimum of 20 years operation before “pay back” is achieved on these investments. This is the dominant exceptional circumstance why MDSAL, and all other ski area concessionaires in NZ, look for concession terms that are a minimum 40 years duration, and ideally are at the 60 year maximum permitted under the legislation.

This advocacy to the department resulted in agreement to the Whakapapa and Turoa licences which were renewed in recent years being for terms of up to 60 years. MDSAL understands that this advocacy was also the underlying exceptional circumstance for the recently renewed Mt Hutt licence being for a 40 year term.



## **5. SKI CLUB BUILDING**

The building belongs to Mt Dobson Ski Area Ltd but is used exclusively by the Mt Dobson Ski Club by agreement with MDSAL. It is intended the building will continue to be used by the club and it is included in this application.

This building is used free of charge for the Club to administer ski racing and school competitions, and ski training academies, plus skiing/snowboarding events.

## **6. PUBLIC ACCESS – Off Season**

During the summer months unlimited walking access to Mt Dobson and the wider DOC estate is available from the State Highway 8 via the Mt Dobson road or alternately along the edge of Firewood Stream.

The Mt Dobson road is closed during summer to vehicle traffic though organisations are able to contact MDSAL (details are available on the Mt Dobson website) who will in some circumstances allow access to the wider DOC estate along this road.

It is noted that the lower section of the road traverses private land, owned by two farms, before entering the DOC estate. During periods of summer these farms may require vehicle access to be constrained.