

19 Willow Place,  
Queenstown 9300.  
February 18, 2021

To Department of Conservation – Te Papa Atawhai permissions officer:

I write in support of the renewal of DOC's concession for Wakatipu Ski Club on Coronet Peak.

Now a life member of the club, my husband and I first joined the club when we moved to Queenstown in 1995. It was an incredibly valuable conduit into the community. Although we did not at the time have kids, it was a wonderful introduction to local life and families. Our core group of friends remain people we met at this time - having had the enjoyment of watching their kids grow up, move away, and many of them come back. We eventually had a daughter and experienced for ourselves the pleasure of seeing her thrive in a club and community environment where links made through environment and exercise supported relationships elsewhere. She even learned to love skiing (as skiing wasn't a book, that wasn't guaranteed :-)).

This sense of community is particularly important in a place like Queenstown, where there is often a lot of transience. And where activities like skiing seem unaffordable for many.

The ski club, however, makes it possible for many more than would otherwise be the case. Having the club base on the hill means our families can retreat there to warm up, meet up and eat up, making it not just a friendly and warm gathering place but also a much more affordable one. Waiting parents can work/coffee there. We also have an annual ski sale, which sees club members recycle and renew ski and gear packages for a much more affordable price. And our subsidised ski lesson programs mean families can afford for the kids to learn to ski properly, with a group of kids they get to ski with through the season.

The WSC hut also support DOC's Kaupapa, in terms of conservation advocacy. This is much more effective if there is an emotional link to the environment being advocated for. There will be literally hundreds and hundreds of Wakatipu-raised people who have a very real sense of kaitiaki for Coronet Peak in particular, but our mountains and environment in general, through the many positive experiences and memories they have from their time there.

Going back to the club's role in building community. Every year, Wakatipu Ski Club members cover meals on wheels delivery for a month. This is a substantial commitment of volunteers and, in a community where extended family support is a rarity, a vital one.

I would be happy to elaborate on any of the above if required. My email contact is

**Privacy**

Kind regards

Cath Gilmour