

# Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area recreational values



Peter Devlin

October 2020



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

Cover: Day tripper in the Remarkables Conservation Area. *Photo: Carl Walrond, DOC*

Crown copyright 2020, New Zealand Department of Conservation. Report prepared by Peter Devlin, Total Industrial Solutions for Department of Conservation.

In the interest of forest conservation, we support paperless electronic publishing.

# Contents

1.	Introduction.....	5
2.	National recreational activity on PCL.....	7
3.	Count data on visits and trends on PCL.....	7
4.	National domestic visitors' characteristics.....	8
5.	International visitors.....	9
5.1	International visitor activities.....	9
6.	Public access points.....	10
7.	Recreation assets and use.....	11
8.	Available activities.....	12
8.1	Walking and tramping.....	12
8.1.1	Lake Alta Track.....	12
8.1.2	Lower Wye Creek Track.....	13
8.1.3	Wye Creek Route.....	14
8.1.4	Mt Rosa Tracks.....	14
8.1.5	Wentworth Track.....	14
8.2	Historic Huts.....	15
8.3	Hunting.....	16
8.4	Horse riding.....	17
8.5	Mountain biking.....	17
8.6	4WD and trail bike riding.....	18
8.7	Skiing.....	18
8.8	Ice and rock climbing.....	19
8.9	Ski touring and ski mountaineering.....	21
8.10	Fishing.....	22
9.	Commercial recreation.....	23
10.	Conclusion.....	24
11.	References.....	26
	Appendix 1.....	27
	Changing demand for recreation.....	27
	Appendix 2.....	28
	Appendix 3.....	29
	Appendix 4.....	30
	Map 1 - Walking easements.....	30
	Map 2 - Road easements.....	31



# 1. Introduction

The Remarkables Conservation Area includes Kawarau/The Remarkables and Tāpuae O'Uenuku/Hector Mountains and Te Papapuni/Nevis River valley. While each area is distinct; together, they comprise a large area with high natural, landscape, recreational, historic heritage and Ngāi Tahu values (Fig. 1).

Kawarau/The Remarkables and Tāpuae O'Uenuku/Hector Mountains include the Remarkable Conservation Area and the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve in which the Remarkables Ski Area is located. Marginal strips extend along most of the Te Papapuni/Nevis River with large areas contained within Crown pastoral leases.

Kawarau/The Remarkables is an extremely steep, rugged mountain range that extends to 2234 m and is a prominent part of the quintessential Queenstown landscape. The range is one of the most outstanding features in a highly scenic landscape.

There are high altitude walks which contain several beautiful features, such as Lake Alta, glacial tarns, schist outcrops and bluffs, waterfalls, unique flora and fauna, and spectacular views over Whakatipu-wai-Māori.



## 2. National recreational activity on PCL

Around the country, surveys show that short walks, sightseeing, day walks, camping and photography are the most popular activities with visitors to Public Conservation Land (PCL) and waters. One in five visitors have also been picnicking/barbecuing, walked one of the Great Walks, or had been swimming in Department of Conservation (DOC)-managed locations.

Figure 2 illustrates the range of recreational activities undertaken on PCL and the percentage of participants for each activity. While individual surveys vary with location, the most popular activities remain relatively consistent.

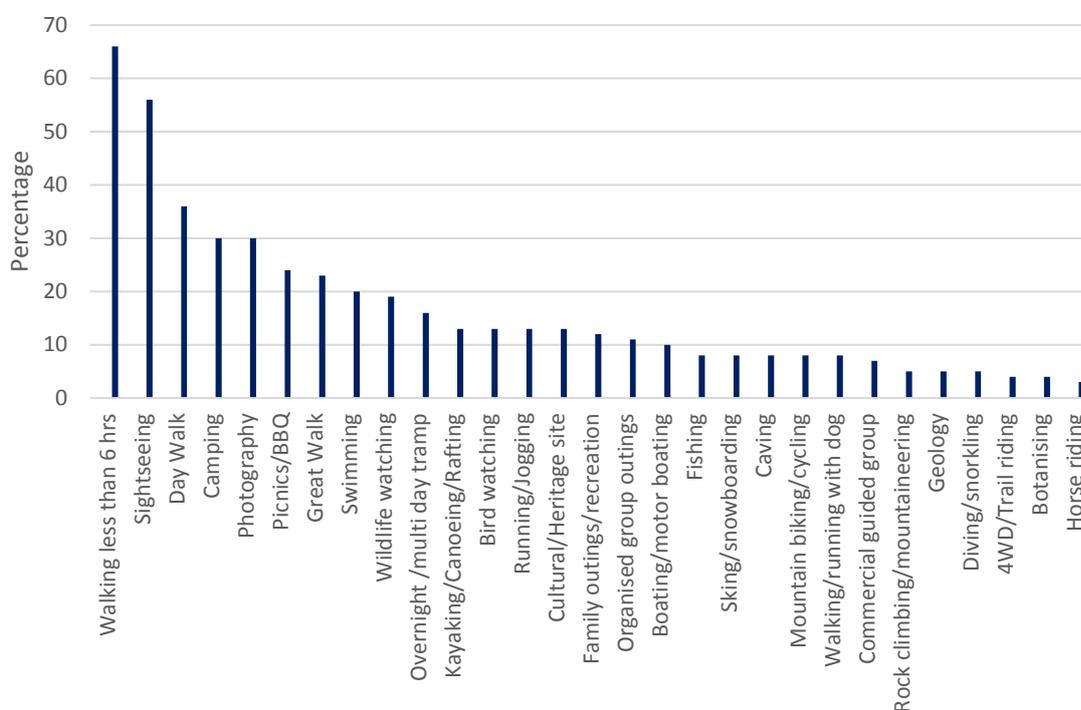


Figure 2. Activities on Public Conservation Land.

## 3. Count data on visits and trends on PCL

The analysis of data identifies areas throughout the country where the demand for visitor experiences on PCL is growing quickly. Most change is occurring around the main tourism hubs and major travel corridors. These include Auckland to Northland, Auckland to Rotorua/Taupō, Arthur’s Pass to Glaciers/Abel Tasman National Park, and Christchurch to Queenstown/Aoraki/Mt Cook.

Mapping these high-change locations highlights specific areas where issues might exist because of increasing visitation. In the South Island, Queenstown and the immediate vicinity were, just a year

ago, likely to see a significant increase in visitation, although these forecasts must now acknowledge the uncertainties of the global pandemic and its effects on international tourism. Appendix 1 provides an overview of locations throughout New Zealand, where there is a changing demand for recreation.

By investigating population growth projections and current visitation rates, by 2043, there is forecast to be an additional 200,400 people visiting the Otago Region, and there will be an extra 160,300 (medium projected number) New Zealanders recreating in the region. Note these are pre-Covid-19 estimates and the international figure is now more uncertain.

## 4. National domestic visitors' characteristics

The Domestic Growth Insight Tool (DGiT) shows that 14% of the New Zealand population want to get outdoors to explore nature. They go on an average of 9.4-day trips and 5.5 overnight trips a year.

The main activities they are interested in are wildlife in their natural environment, walking, hiking, trekking or tramping, visiting a beach, a national park, other natural attractions; photography; and cycle trails.

The proportion of New Zealanders visiting DOC recreational areas and parks continue to increase. Some 80% of New Zealanders have visited at least one DOC recreational area over the past 12 months, and those living in Otago (87%) or Southland (90%) regions are more likely to have visited a DOC recreational area than other regions.

Nationally, the Kā-muriwai/Arrowtown Chinese Settlement is rated 5th as one of the area's most frequently visited in the country. Of those living in Otago and Southland, it is rated the 3rd most visited location (Otago and Southland) and The Remarkables Ski Area is the 14th (Otago), and 7th (Southland) most visited location for those living in the Otago and Southland Regions.

The recreation offering is valued by these residents, as demonstrated by the high visitation rates. Appendix 2 shows the domestic visitor travel routes and their estimated volumes throughout the country.

We know that in general domestic users tend to come from adjacent rather than more distant regions, except when they are visiting nationally iconic destinations.

There are 1,965,020 total potential trips, 788,327 total potential day trips, and 1,176,692 total potential overnight trips.

- Most skiing, snowboarding, or other snow sports visitors travel by road (82%).

- The main source markets for people interested in skiing, snowboarding, or other snow sport are Central Auckland (14.6%), Canterbury (11.9%), Wellington (11.8%), Auckland North (9.4%) and Waikato (8.6%).
- Most of these visitors are day-trippers. If they do stay overnight, they typically choose to stay with friends or family, or in a motel (\$100–\$249 per night).
- Other activities snow sport users are interested in our hot pools, hikes, treks or tramps, and mountain biking.

In 2017, there were 205,000 individuals or just over 6.0% of the New Zealand population who participated in skiing or snowboarding.

## 5. International visitors

The International Visitor Survey shows that the number of visitors going for a walk, hike, or tramp has steadily increased from 1.9M in 2016 to 2.27M in 2018.

In 2013, the Queenstown Lakes District was the second most visited Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) in the country. The Queenstown Lakes District has had an annual compounding growth rate in international visitors of 4.88% annually since 2000. Until recently, international visitor arrivals to New Zealand were expected to grow at 4% annually, reaching 5.1M in 2025, up from 3.88M in 2019.

We also know from the International Visitor Survey that 34% of international tourists come to Queenstown. While in 2019 an additional 450,000 international visitors were to be expected by 2024, this figure is now very uncertain due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and most likely there will be a downwards revision in future forecasts. Queenstown and surrounds are currently experiencing a huge decline in international visitor numbers. Appendix 3 illustrates the international flow routes within New Zealand.

### 5.1 International visitor activities

We know from the International Visitor Survey that 34% of international tourists come to Queenstown and that the most popular outdoor recreation experience for international visitors is short walks between half an hour and three hours, at 51%.

With a participation rate of 51%, by 2024 this yields an increase in existing levels of use by international visitors who are likely to participate in:

- A short walk under half an hour of 108,000 people by 2024
- A short walk between half an hour and three hours of 230,000 people by 2024
- A day walk over three hours of 85,000 people by 2024
- A great walk of 36,000 people by 2024

- An overnight trek or tramp of 13,500 people by 2024

Again, these forecasts must be now be considered uncertain now due to the global pandemic.

Skiers that visit New Zealand tend to come back - with 54% returning. They have an excellent visitor experience with strong satisfaction (9.1 out of 10) and are likely to recommend New Zealand as a destination.

## 6. Public access points

Access is crucial for recreational activity. There are four distributed access roads into the parks, as detailed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. ACCESS ROADS INTO THE REMARKABLES CONSERVATION AREA.

Road	Distance	Additional information
State Highway 6	2 km south of Frankton	Drive up the Remarkables Ski Area Road to the car park. The access road was sealed in 2015/16 as part of a \$45M infrastructure upgrade project. A road toll of \$10 is charged outside of the winter ski season.
State Highway 6	15 km south of Frankton	There is a car park a few hundred metres before the Wye Creek bridge. An unsealed track leads a few hundred metres to a grassy carpark area. From there, follow the Wye Creek Track.
State Highway 6	28 km east of Queenstown	Access to the tracks of the Doolans catchment is by way of Coal Pit Saddle, a 4WD-only gravel road off State Highway 6 in the Gibbston Valley. Turn right up Coal Pit Saddle Road and drive to the gravel car park at a gate. 4WD-only rough gravel road to saddle. From there, follow the Glenroy Water Race track.
Nevis Road		The unsealed road into the Nevis is 4WD-only. The road from Bannockburn into Lower Nevis is of a better standard than the stretch from Garston into the Upper Nevis. Nevis Road from Commissioners Creek to the Southland district boundary is closed to motor vehicles annually from the <b>first Monday in June to 30 September</b> . There are many fords in this section and a 4WD is essential.

There are multiple easements giving access to the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area, the majority are walking access tracks, and there is one road easement as detailed in Table 2. Maps of the easements are in Appendix 4.

TABLE 2. EASEMENTS IN THE REMARKABLES CONSERVATION AREA.

Easement type	Additional information
Nevis Gibbston Road	The Nevis Valley provides access to the North Hector Mountains and the Remarkables Range. An 8 km access road providing access to walking easements into the Kawarau/Remarkables.
Dark Elliots Track	Access is off the Nevis Gibbston Road easement. Access is closed annually from <b>15 October – 30 November</b> for lambing.
Sunny Elliots Track	Access is off the Nevis Gibbston Road easement. Access is closed annually from <b>15 October – 30 November</b> for lambing.
Ryder Scotmans Creek	Access is off the Nevis Gibbston Road. Nevis Road from Commissioners Creek to the Southland district boundary is closed to motor vehicles annually from the <b>first Monday in June to 30 September</b> .

## 7. Recreation assets and use

There is one front country and four backcountry tracks and two small historic huts in the Remarkables Conservation Area (Table 3). Section 8 below provides more detail on each of these tracks (see map – Fig. 7). Some of these tracks also cross private land and the Lake Alta track is mostly within The Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve.

TABLE 3. TRACKS AND HUTS IN THE REMARKABLES CONSERVATION AREA.

Frontcountry Destination Tracks	Backcountry Destination Tracks	Backcountry Destination Huts
Lower Wye Creek	Glenroy Water Race Track	Glen Roy Racemans Hut (historic)
	Lake Alta Track	Two Mile Hut (historic)
	Wye Creek Route	
	Mt Rosa Track	
	Wentworth Track	

There are two visitor counters within the Kawarau/Remarkables; both are showing growth in line with increased visitation to Queenstown. The compounding annual growth rate for Wye Creek is 23% annually and Lake Alta 5% (Figs 3 & 4).

An increase in visitor numbers could have been expected prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in line with recent increased visitor numbers, as detailed in this report. The growth in track use is in line with or exceeds visitor growth to the Queenstown Region (Fig. 5). This projected growth is now in question, at least in the short term.

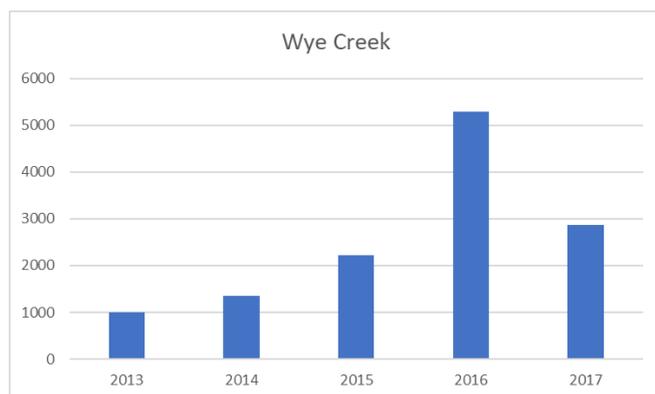


Figure 3. Visitor counter tally Wye Creek.

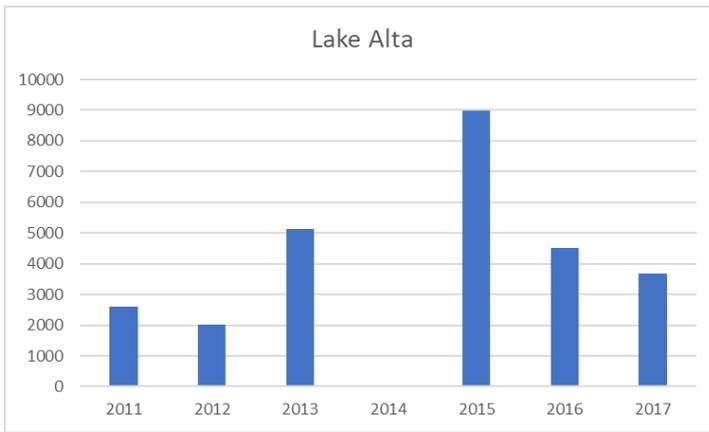


Figure 4. Visitor counter tally Lake Alta.



Figure 5. Walker on Mt Rosa Track with Gibbstown Valley below.  
Photo: DOC.

## 8. Available activities

### 8.1 Walking and tramping

The mountain areas in Kawarau/The Remarkables contain numerous tramping and walking opportunities. One of the most popular and accessible areas is the Lake Alta basin in the Remarkables Conservation Area.

#### 8.1.1 Lake Alta Track

Time: 1 hr 30 min return

Start/Finish: The Remarkables Ski Area buildings

A walk that climbs steadily to a picturesque glacial lake. It begins on the road behind the base building and follows a ski field road to the top of the Alta Chairlift. From there, cairns and flagstones mark the way through alpine wetlands, up to the glacial cirque.

The Remarkables Ski Area in the head of the Rastus Burn provides access to alpine areas all year round. Consequently, it has provided an opportunity for people who would be unlikely to experience it without the road to the skifield, although a toll of \$10 per vehicle is charged outside of the winter ski season.

The popular walk to Lake Alta is a direct result of this improved access. Road access is south of the Kawarau River on the eastern side of Lake Wakatipu, turn off SH 6 at the signposted junction to the Remarkables Ski Area (Figs 6, 7).



Figure 6. Lake Alta track from the ski field is a popular walk. Most of the skifield lies within the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve while the Lake Alta basin is within the Remarkables Conservation Area.

### 8.1.2 Lower Wye Creek Track

Time: 4 hr return

Start/Finish: Wye Creek car park, SH6, 20 min drive south of Queenstown

This track crosses private land. From the car park by the Wye Creek Bridge, the track climbs for 45 min to a hydro dam. Crossing the dam to the right provides access to popular rock-climbing spots. Staying left of the dam leads further up the steep tramping track through beech forest and reaches the bush line and the Lower Wye Creek basin after another hour.

### **8.1.3 Wye Creek Route**

Time: 8-10 hr one-way

Start/Finish: Wye Creek car park, SH6, 20 min drive south of Queenstown

This track crosses private land. The Wye Creek Route can be accessed from the Remarkables Ski Area and SH6. From SH6, this steep track follows the pipeline from the dam and leads you to the foot of a rocky bluff. A further walk through beech forest takes you to the stream in the Lower Wye Creek basin. From the carpark by the Wye Creek Bridge, it's a 45 min climb to the hydro dam. This steep zig-zag track follows the pipeline from the dam. Don't cross the dam, climb away from the creek - the track leads to the foot of a rocky bluff.

To reach the bush line and the Lower Wye Creek basin from the dam means another hour following a marked, benched track through beech forest. It then emerges beside the stream in the Lower Wye Creek basin.

Access from the ski field is off route and takes you through high alpine basins to the upper Wye Creek basin. The route down is on steep snowgrass, and the middle reaches are easy over tussock grassland.

### **8.1.4 Mt Rosa Tracks**

Time: 3-4 hr one-way

Start/Finish: Coal Pit Rd car park - 4WD essential on Coal Pit Rd - or the car park on SH6 near Victoria Bridge

This track crosses private land starting with a steady climb to Mt Rosa; the track crosses the top with great views of the Nevis Bluff, the Kawarau Gorge, and the lower Wakatipu basin. Follow the track past Mt Mason and down to the flats and car park.

For cyclists, it is best to start in Gibbston and cycle up Coal Pit Saddle Rd for 5.5km as it turns from a gravel road to a rough 4WD. Once at the saddle turn left to continue toward Ben Cruachan for a further 7.5- kilometres on a single narrow track over some large cliff areas or right for a 7.5- kilometre ride heading further up along the ridgeline to Mt Rosa (Figs 5, 7).

### **8.1.5 Wentworth Track**

Time: 2-3 hr to the conservation area boundary, 5-6 hr one-way to track end, full-day return

Start/Finish: Coal Pit Rd car park - 4WD essential on Coal Pit Rd

This track crosses private land. Descend from Coal Pit Saddle into Doolans Creek's right branch. Ford the creek and follow the 4WD road up around the face of the hill to a sign-posted junction. Here the walking track branches to the right. Follow it to the Wentworth Conservation Area for views of

the Pisa and Old Woman ranges, and Nevis Bluff. The track continues along the ridge, providing access to the alpine basins of Doolan's catchment and the back of The Remarkables.

## 8.2 Historic Huts

There are two historic huts within the Remarkables, and there is no track access to these huts, and off route, navigation is required. The historic Two-Mile Hut in the Hector Mountains was built of local stone about 1900, and following tenure review of Loch Linnhe Station, Two Mile Hut became part of the Remarkables Conservation Area. Ski tourers and experienced trampers use it and permission must be gained from the landowner if accessed from the 4WD track leaving SH6 on the south side of Wye Creek (Fig. 8).

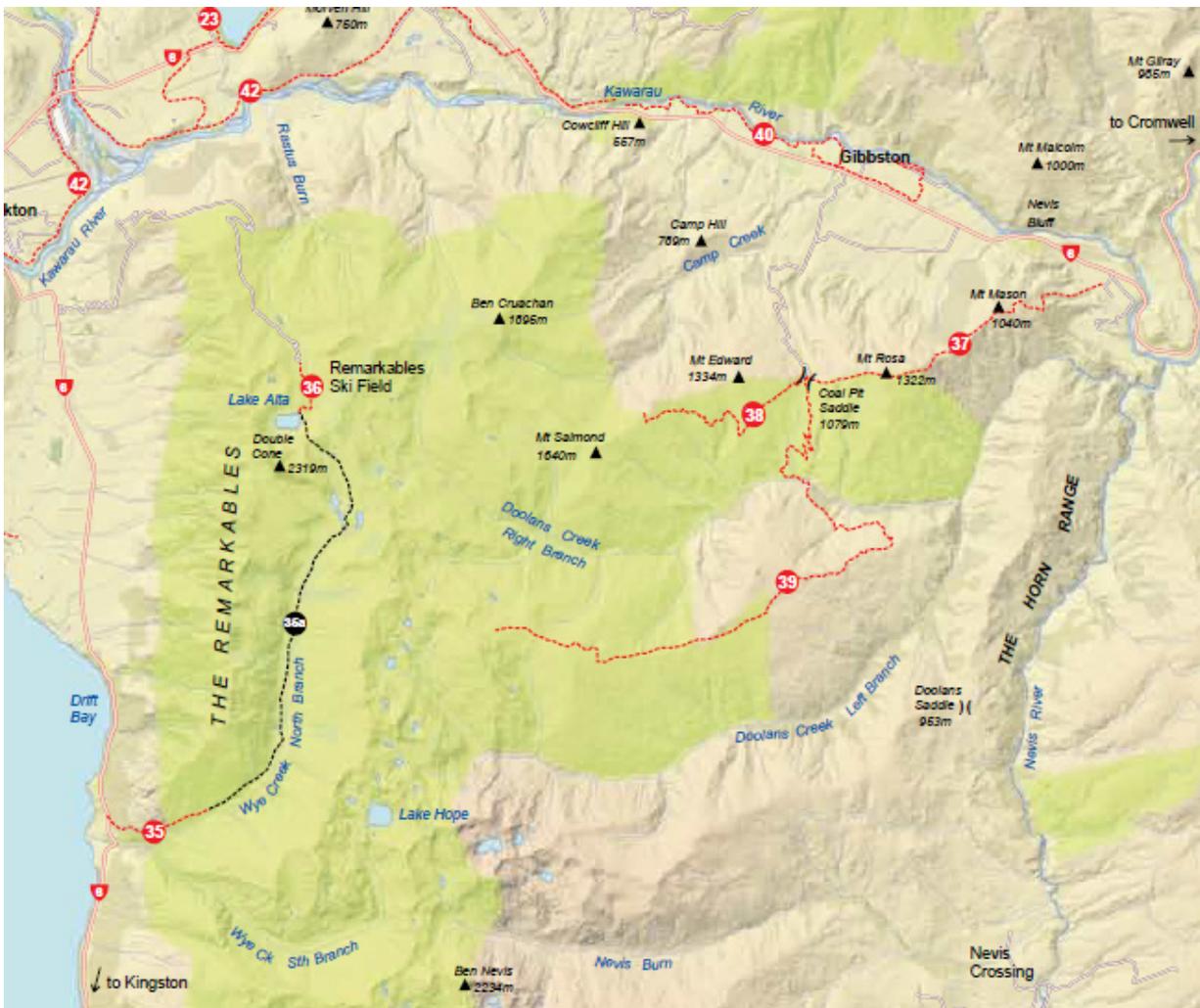


Figure 7. Wye Creek (35) and Remarkables Ski Area (36) off SH6 offer the easiest access to the Remarkables Conservation Area. Mt Rosa (37), Glenroy (38) and Wentworth (39) tracks can be accessed from Coal Pit Saddle – but the road is a rough 4WD only track from the gate in the Gibbston Valley.



Figure 8. Two-Mile Hut. *Photo: DOC.*

Racemans hut is accessed from Gibbston, take Coal Pit Road to Coal Pit Saddle. The Glenroy Water Race track follows the water race initially, then turns off. Keep to the water race, which leads to the hut. About 5-6 hours return. There is no track access to this hut, off route navigation is required (Fig. 9).

### 8.3 Hunting

Chamois, red deer, and goats are present, and this hunting area is an 'open area permit.'

This large 23,000 ha block in the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area covers the headwaters of Doolans Creek, all of the Wye Creek catchment, and the headwaters of the Nevis Burn, Schoolhouse and Commissioner's Creeks. The terrain is mostly steep alpine tussock faces, with rock and scree outcrops.

All three species can be found locally elsewhere, with goats being particularly widespread. Hunting of chamois also occurs in the Greenstone, Taka Ra Haka/Eyre Mountains, Mt Aspiring National Park, and Kawarau/The Remarkables, and they are throughout the Southern Alps.



Figure 9. Racemans Hut. *Photo: DOC.*

## 8.4 Horse riding

The Otago high country tussock grasslands have a long history of horse riding, primarily for farm work but also recreational. Horse riding is permitted in the Te Papapuni/ Nevis Valley, and there is potential for commercial riding ventures in the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area.

## 8.5 Mountain biking

There are numerous mountain biking opportunities around Queenstown. DOC has nine mountain biking trails and the Queenstown District Council has a further five trails. One of the more popular is the link between Gibbston and the Te Papapuni/ Nevis Valley via Coal Pit and Doolans Saddles.

Guided mountain heli-biking trips go from Ben Cruachan to Coal Pit Saddle and down old farm tracks on the eastern foothills of the Tāpuae O'Uenuku/Hector Mountains. Mountain biking is permitted on the Mt Rosa Track, and there is potential for mountain bike trail development in the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area.

There is one heli-biking concessionaire who operates in the Kawarau/Remarkables and land atop Doolans Spur at just over 1800 m, the highest of all heli-biking in New Zealand. There is a descent of 15km of rock garden trails into the open alpine tundra and alpine snowgrass down to Doolan's Creek.

## 8.6 4WD and trail bike riding

There are numerous 4WD opportunities on old roads. The tracks were retained when the land tenure changed from high country lease to public conservation land.

Four-wheel driving is possible as far as Doolans Saddle on the Nevis-Gibbston Track. The Nevis Road can be accessed from Bannockburn (northern end) and Garston (southern end).

Doolans Saddle is the furthest driveable point from the Nevis Road (8.5 km) and is at an altitude of 1970 m (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. A 4WD vehicle is required in for the Nevis Road from Bannockburn to Garston due to many fords in the Upper Nevis. This section of the road is closed over winter. *Photo: Carl Walrond, DOC.*

## 8.7 Skiing

Located in the adjacent Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve the Remarkables Ski Area opened in 1985 and is at an elevation of 1943 m. It is located adjacent to the Remarkables Conservation Area and the ski field access road also crosses stewardship land.

The ski area has three mountain bowls covering 540 acres of which 385 ha is skiable.

On average, the ski field is open for 106 days, with an average of 3% of days closed. The patrolled area covers 220 ha with seven lifts (four chairlifts, four surface conveyer lifts), and the terrain is 30%

beginners, 40% intermediate, and 30% advanced. The whole skifield area is 540 acres (2.2 km<sup>2</sup>) with seven lifts, and the carpark has the capacity for 940 vehicles.

- In 2007 automated snowmaking was installed
- in 2008 a terrain park was developed
- in 2015 a new base lodge was constructed
- In 2015/16 the access road was sealed
- In 2019 a new 160-metre long conveyor lift was installed

Of the 2.3M skier days in 2018, NZSki's three ski areas – Mt Hutt, Coronet Peak, and The Remarkables had 38% of the market or approximately 300,000 skier days per skifield when divided equally.

## 8.8 Ice and rock climbing

Kawarau/The Remarkables offer accessible alpine terrain and is a mixed ice and rock-climbing destination in the winter and a multi-pitch climbing location in the summer.

Single Cone is the highest peak in Kawarau/The Remarkables in and it is one of only ten peaks over 1500 m and there are currently 28 climbing routes. The road to the Remarkables Ski Area is located at 1600 m and allows access all year.

Nestled in a bowl at 1800 m is Lake Alta where there are numerous rock walls and technical routes all around the primary summit ridge as well as in the bowl above the lake.

The two highest peaks in the range are called Single Cone (2319 m) (Fig. 11) and Double Cone (2307 m) and are only 250 m distant from one another. A traverse along the summit ridge between the two peaks is popular in the alpinist community and is known as The Grand Traverse, which is described as one of the best alpine outings in New Zealand. Other popular multi-pitch routes are located on the south face of Single Cone, which is accessed from near Wye Pass.

There are many places you can ice climb in New Zealand but for the most consistent ice with good access, and outstanding scenery, Wye Creek is considered number one for ice climbing. The Wye Creek faces of Kawarau/The Remarkables are the most popular winter ice climbing area in the Aotearoa/New Zealand mountains There are guides and companies that run trips to Wye creek ranging from 2 to 5 days duration (Fig. 12).

Steep quality schist crags and scenic alpine lakes make Kawarau/The Remarkables a classic multipitch alpine rock-climbing venue. Kawarau/The Remarkables offers excellent multi-pitch alpine rock climbing and a variety of different styles and grades of climbing to suit all levels. There are 85 rock climbing routes near the Remarkables Ski Area and 209 at Wye Creek (Fig. 13). There are four concessions for this activity.



Figure 11. Climbing Single Cone (2319 m) with spectacular views over Whakatipu-wai-Māori. *Photo: Guillaume Charton.*



Figure 12. The ice climbing in upper Wye Creek is considered the best in New Zealand. *Photo: Guillaume Charton.*



Figure 13. The schist crags above Wye Creek South Branch offer many different routes of up to 50 m on both sides of the creek. *Photo: Guillaume Charton.*

## 8.9 Ski touring and ski mountaineering

Much of the Kawarau/Remarkables Conservation Area is snow-covered in winter, making it highly valued for ski-touring away from commercial fields. Ski tourers use the ranges, and there is a proposal that most of the Garvie Mountains be protected as a winter remote experience zone.

The Kawarau/Remarkables has many short-day ski tours available in the vast Doolans and Wye creek basins, where the snow lasts well into October every year. The terrain in the Doolans is steeper than the Wye creek basins (Fig. 14) where the slopes are considered great for skiing. Access is via the Curvey Basin Chairlift, many skiers are using this for access, with a relatively short 10-minute skin up the ridge and into the Doolans.

This area is a good introduction to the sport of ski touring when there are good snow conditions. The area is available to independent tourers, and four concessionaires provide a guided option. It is one of a few locations for this activity available in Otago.



Figure 14. Ski touring in the upper Wye Basin with The Remarkables in the background.  
*Photo: Dan Clearwater.*

## 8.10 Fishing

The 1997 Water Conservation Order on the Te Papapuni/ Nevis River gave it protection for recreational purpose, in particular fishing and kayaking, In 2007, the Otago Fish and Game Council submitted an application to amend the 1997 Water Conservation (Kawarau) Order, specifically in respect of the Te Papapuni/ Nevis River, with accordance of Part 216 of the RMA. The application was to protect the outstanding fishery, in-stream habitat, wild, scenic, recreational and natural characteristics of the Te Papapuni/ Nevis River (Fig. 15).

The Te Papapuni/ Nevis River is an outstanding backcountry fishery and fishery habitat, highly regarded for its relatively unmodified natural features and scenery. The River is open for angling from the 1<sup>st</sup> October until the 30<sup>th</sup> day of April (Fish and Game NZ 2008), and only fly fishing is permitted).

The natural environment and outstanding scenery are a major factor attracting both international and national anglers to the Nevis Valley. It is a nationally important backcountry trout fishery in the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan for Otago (Otago Fish and Game 2003).

From a fishing perspective, an array of elements makes Te Papapuni/ the Nevis River a high-quality backcountry fishery.



Figure 15. Angling information sign in the Upper Nevis.  
 Photo: Carl Walrond, DOC.

## 9. Commercial recreation

Complementing the recreation opportunities provided by the Department are those opportunities provided by concessionaires. In total, there are 65 concessions offering recreation opportunities across a range of activities. Demand for these activities is a function of proximity, ease of access and the topography (Table 4).

The concessions can be separated into two main groups, low risk guided walking and snow shoeing, and higher risk mountaineering and rock-climbing activities.

The results show that concessionaire use of Kawarau/The Remarkables is steady over the three years with a slight increase. The main increase is in guided walking and ski touring activities.

Although aircraft activities are a small number of concessions, they represent the highest use of Kawarau/The Remarkables (excluding NZSki which is not shown as the Remarkables Ski Area is within the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve).

The most common aircraft activity is scenic flights; however, helicopters are also used for hunter transport and filming in Kawarau/The Remarkables. There is also one heli-skiing block with one concessionaire (Totally Tourism). Landings are prevalent over the summer months.

There is one event in Kawarau/The Remarkables – The Peak to Peak – which sees multisporters go from the Remarkables Ski Area to Coronet Peak. There are typically around 300 competitors.

Analysis of the activity returns showed that Kawarau/The Remarkables is used throughout the year by concessionaires as both summer and winter activities are popular there. During the summer guided walking companies frequently use the Lake Alta track. Rock climbing also takes place over the summer. There are also a number of heli-biking concessions however they were not used over the summer period. It's likely that they have agreements with private landowners, and that people are heli-biking independently. Guided snowshoeing and back country skiing is the most popular winter activity, followed by guided mountaineering.

TABLE 4: PERMITS, AUTHORISATIONS AND VISITOR NUMBERS FOR THE REMARKABLES CONSERVATION AREA FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
<b>Number of one-off permits*</b>			
One-off filming	8	6	9
One-off aircraft landing	2	14	3
One-off events	0	0	1
<b>Number of authorisations **</b>			
Total number of concessions	66	64	65
Concessions with activities returned	20	20	19
Aircraft (excluding WARO)	5	5	5
Guided walking, snow shoeing, scenic tours, ski touring*	7	7	6
Guided mountaineering etc.*	6	6	6
Guided rock climbing			1
Heli skiing	1	1	1
Events	1	1	
<b>Concession visitor numbers***</b>			
Total aircraft visitors	5196	5698	5533
Total guided walking etc	1817	2770	2737
Total guided mountaineering etc.	1309	1532	1690
Total visitor numbers across all concessions	9394	10766	10290

\* A one-off permit is a short term concession issued for a temporary commercial activity for up to 3 months.

\*\* A concession is a long term authority issued for commercial activity for between 10-30 years.

\*\*\*Only recreational concessions which provide "returns" are represented in the visitor numbers section. Non-recreational concessions, such as easements, where only a financial payment is made cannot be represented in the same way.

## 10. Conclusion

The Remarkables Ski Area road has and will continue to have a strong influence on recreation activities making access to once difficult places easier. The sealed access road has opened recreation terrain and many activities can be completed in a day although a toll of \$10 per vehicle is charged outside of the winter ski season.

The other important access point is Wye Creek with a good track leading to crags for rock climbers. Other access routes are more challenging (Coal Pit Saddle and the Nevis Road from Bannockburn to Garston) both require a 4WD or mountain bike.

There are year-round recreation activities with skiing, ski touring and ice climbing in winter and walking, tramping, rock climbing, biking, fishing and horse riding in summer. The Grand Traverse is one of the best alpine outings in New Zealand, and Wye Creek is considered number one for ice climbing with consistent ice, good access, and outstanding scenery.

This area is a good introduction to the sport of ski touring when there are good snow conditions. The area is available to independent tourers, and four concessionaires provide a guided option. It is one of a few locations for this activity available in Otago.

The Remarkables Conservation Area has very high recreational values and the northern parts of it are readily accessible from Queenstown.

# 11. References

DOC (Department of Conservation) 2014: Voting with their feet: use of recreation sites on public conservation land and waters by New Zealanders.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/visitor-research/voting-with-their-feet-2014.pdf>

DOC (Department of Conservation) 2016: Otago Conservation Management Strategy.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-policies-and-plans/statutory-plans/statutory-plan-publications/conservation-management-strategies/otago/>

DOC (Department of Conservation) Wakatipu walks pamphlet.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/tracks-and-walks/otago/wakatipu-walks-brochure.pdf>

Charton, G. 2018: Queenstown rock, ice and boulders: a comprehensive guide to Queenstown climbing. Third edition. New Zealand Alpine Club, Christchurch. 256 p.

Ipsos 2016: Full report: survey of New Zealanders. Prepared for DOC.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/visitor-research/survey-of-new-zealanders-2016.pdf>

QRIOUS 2016: New Zealand people movements Mar 2015 – Feb 2016. Internal report to DOC.

MBIE. New Zealand Tourism Forecasts 2019–2025.

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/a8bba25fdf/new-zealand-tourism-forecasts-2019-2025.pdf>

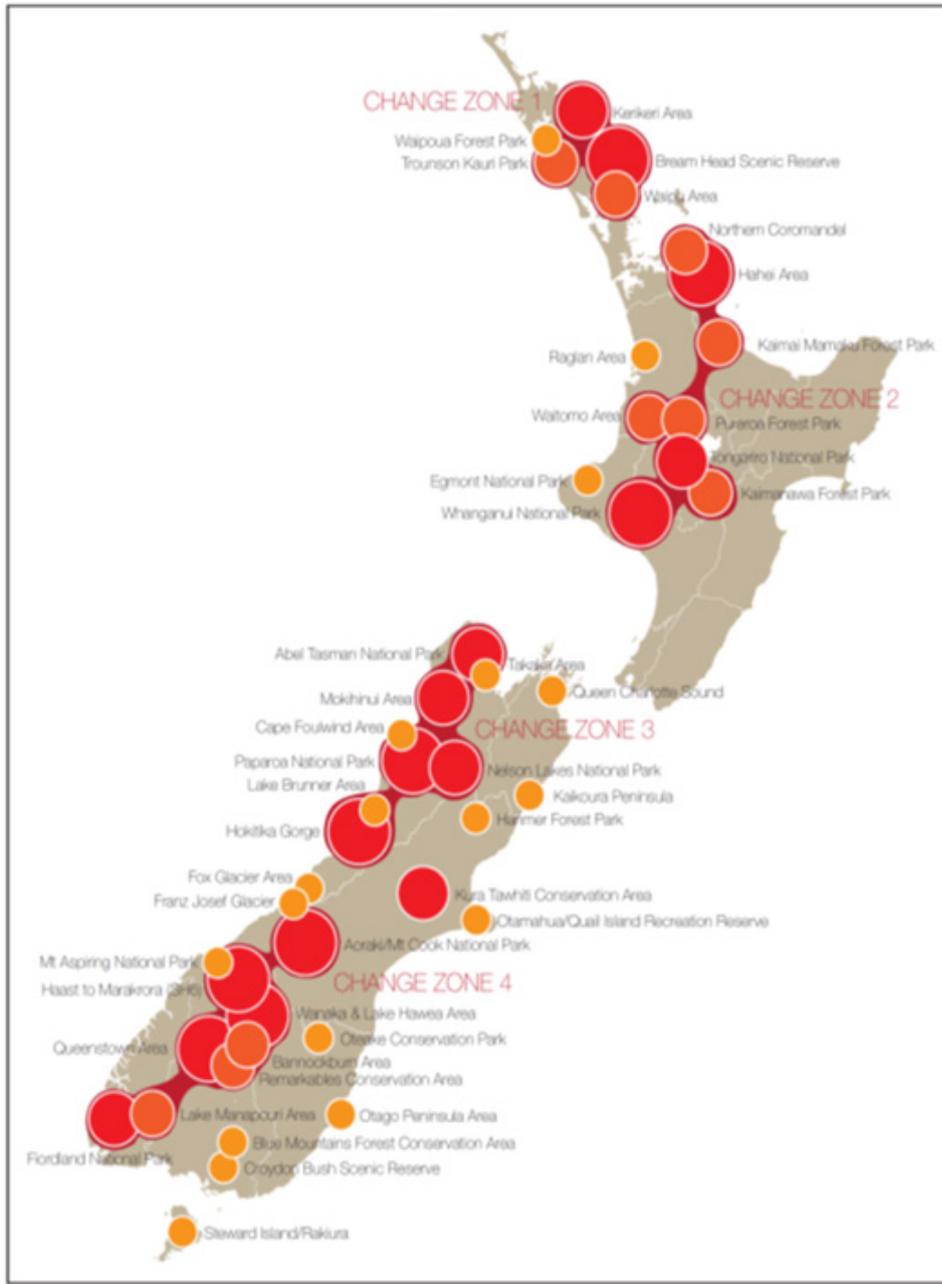
## Websites

Remarkables Conservation Area

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/otago/places/remarkables-conservation-area/>

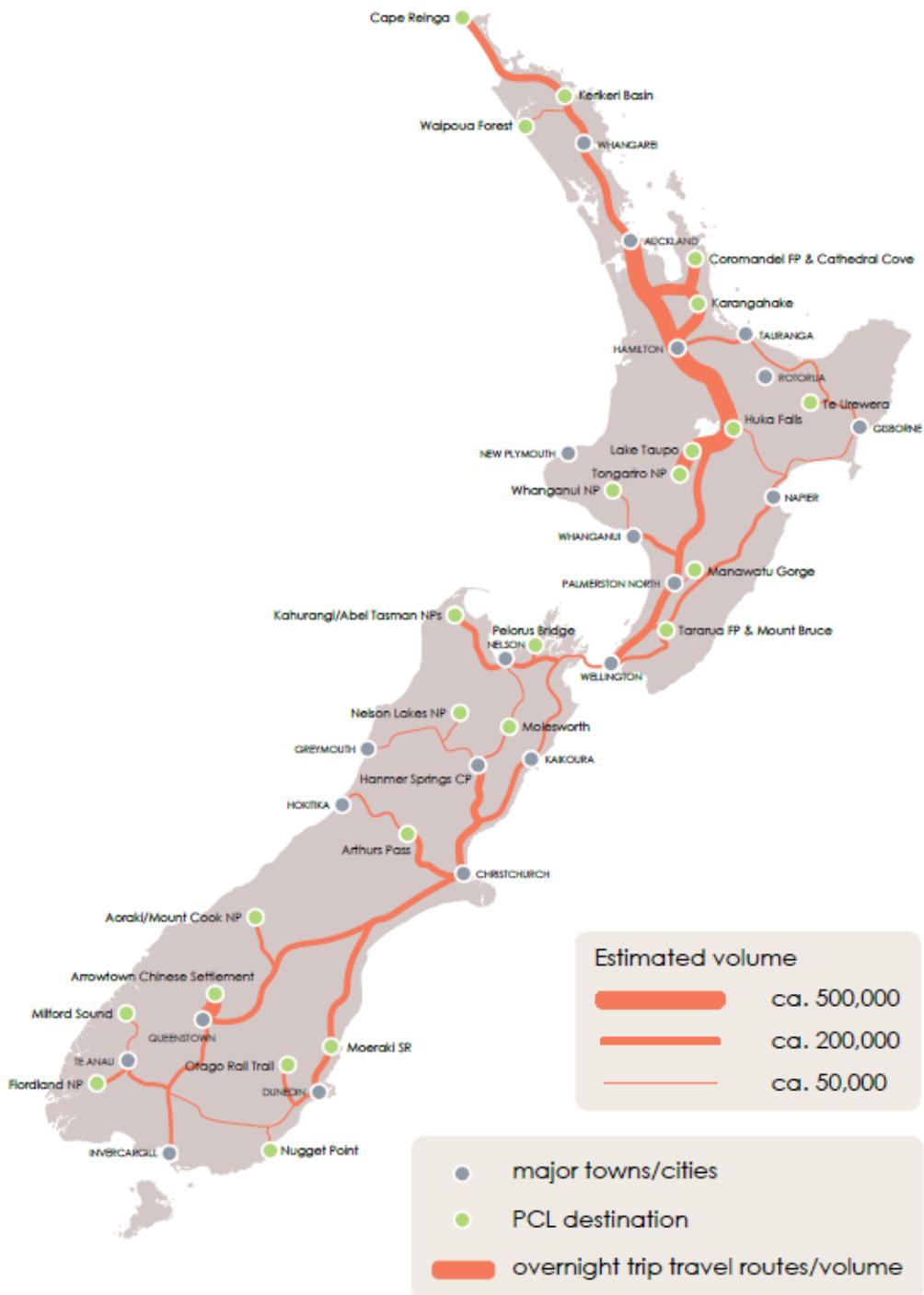
# Appendix 1

## Changing demand for recreation



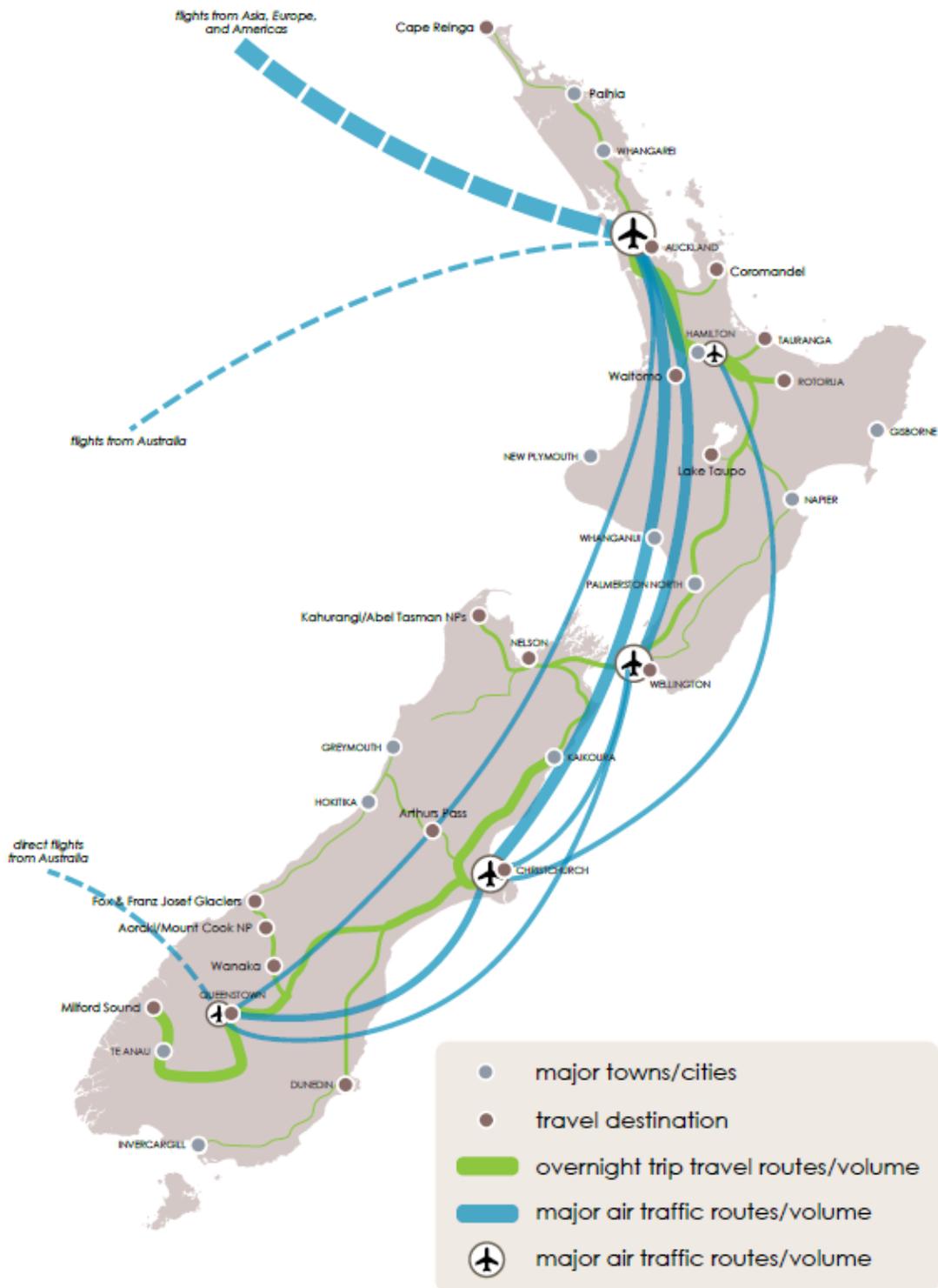
# Appendix 2

## Domestic visitor travel routes to PCL



# Appendix 3

## International visitor travel routes (all markets)



# Appendix 4

## Map 1 - Walking easements

