

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : ISLAND HILLS

Lease number : PC 034

Summary of Preliminary Proposal

A Preliminary Proposal is advertised for public submissions as per Section 43 of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

The report attached is released under the Official Information Act 1982.

SUMMARY OF TENURE REVIEW PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

ISLAND HILLS PASTORAL LEASE

January 2016



**SUMMARY OF THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL
FOR THE TENURE REVIEW OF
ISLAND HILLS PASTORAL LEASE
UNDER THE CROWN PASTORAL LAND ACT 1998**

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1. Details of Land under consideration
 2. Summary of Proposal and description of proposed designations

1. Details of land under consideration:

Lease Name: Island Hills

Lessee: Island Hills Station Ltd

Location:

Island Hills pastoral lease is located within the Organ Range beyond the end of Tekoa Road approximately 39 kilometres west of Culverden

Legal Description:

Part Run 261 Canterbury Land District

Area:

5082.6 ha more or less (subject to survey)

Type of tenure:

Pastoral Lease

Term of lease:

33 years commencing on the first day of July 1986 and expiring on 30 June 2019.

Computer interest register identifier:

CIR CB529/39

2. Summary of proposal and description of proposed designations:

The designations plans, and all covenant and concession instruments can be found in the proposal document.

2.1 Area to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as conservation area (CA).

1642 hectares approximately is designated as land to be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control as a Conservation Area pursuant to s.35(2)(a)(i) of the CPLA 1998 shown edged pink and labelled CA on the designation plan included in the proposal document.

This area (CA) is proposed for retention to protect an array of significant inherent landscape and ecological values.

CA includes the west faces of the Organ Range in the Gorge Stream catchment as well as a south facing basin in the upper right branch of the Silver Brook. The boundary of CA with the balance of the pastoral lease generally follows a north to south direction over the summit of the Organ Range. Starting at the north end the boundary follows a prominent ridge out of Gorge Stream on a steep north facing slope. The boundary then follows the main ridge of the Organ Range over Mt Skedaddle, the Spider Web and over Clay Knob where it thereafter drops a south facing ridge into the Silver Brook.

CA contains high landscape values characterised by rock tors and outcrops occurring in steep tussock land which forms an extensive cover interspersed with a diverse mix of native sub-alpine herbs, grasses and shrubs. The area provides a habitat for a number of species of native fauna including the threatened New Zealand pipit, falcon and kea. The area also provides habitat for notable invertebrate species such as weta, weevils and two species of grasshopper as well as providing habitat for non-threatened species of lizard and other natives.

CA is not to be fenced due to the availability of natural boundaries and a lack of available feed limiting stock access.



Photo 1: North west faces below Mt Skedaddle and Spiders Web



Photo 2: View south toward the Silver Brook from point 1560. East aspect of Clay Knob indicated.

2.2 Area to be disposed of as freehold

3441 hectares approximately is designated to be disposed of by freehold title to the Holder pursuant to s.35(3) of the CPLA 1998 shown edged green on the designation plan included in the proposal document, and subject to protective mechanisms.

The area primarily comprises the east faces of the Organ Range within the pastoral lease draining into the Mandamus River along with northern aspects in the Gorge

Stream catchment. The boundary follows the boundary of the pastoral lease and CA described above.

The proposed freehold comprises a mix of land units which are assessed as being capable of ongoing ecologically sustainable limited grazing and other economic uses from recreation, tourist activities and bee farming. Significant Inherent values are contained within this area and it is proposed that these be protected by way of covenants. An existing QEII Covenant in place over the Bush Creek catchment is intended to be brought down against the freehold title. Surrounding areas will be subject to a conservation covenant to ensure the adequate protection and sustainable management of the SIVs which are described in more detail below.

Continuation of an Open Space Covenant - QEII

Continuation of an Open Space Covenant under s.22 Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977 under Section 114 of the Land Act 1948 over approximately 600 ha of land shown shaded blue and labelled as QEII on the designation plan included in the proposal document.

The Island Hills pastoral lease is subject to an existing QEII Open Spaces Covenant registered on 2 November 1992. It is proposed that this existing covenant be brought down in its existing form to protect the ecological and landscape values on the land.

QEII generally comprises all land contained within the Bush Creek catchment extending from the valley floor to summit ridges. This area contains significant inherent ecological and landscape values characterised by the high degree of naturalness and the aesthetics of the sequence of native vegetation from valley floor to ridge top rocky environments in the Bush Creek catchment. A dominate feature of the area is its remnant beech forest which contributes heavily to the high ecological and landscape values.

The land provides an important habitat for healthy populations of non-threatened species of indigenous birds and lizards as well as being a potential habitat for threatened or at risk species of birds.

The QEII covenant seeks to protect and maintain open spaces values of the land and to protect native flora and fauna particularly the beech forest. The covenant prevents the owner from undertaking activities which would be prejudicial to the land as an area of open space. Specifically the covenant contains conditions preventing grazing and subdivision.

It also provides constraints to vegetation removal, soil disturbance, taking or damming of water, introduction of plants and the construction of structures. However it does provide for the lessee to maintain the existing access tracks through the forest within the covenant area and to maintain and upgrade Bush Hut. This includes clearing tree growth to within 40 metres of the buildings.

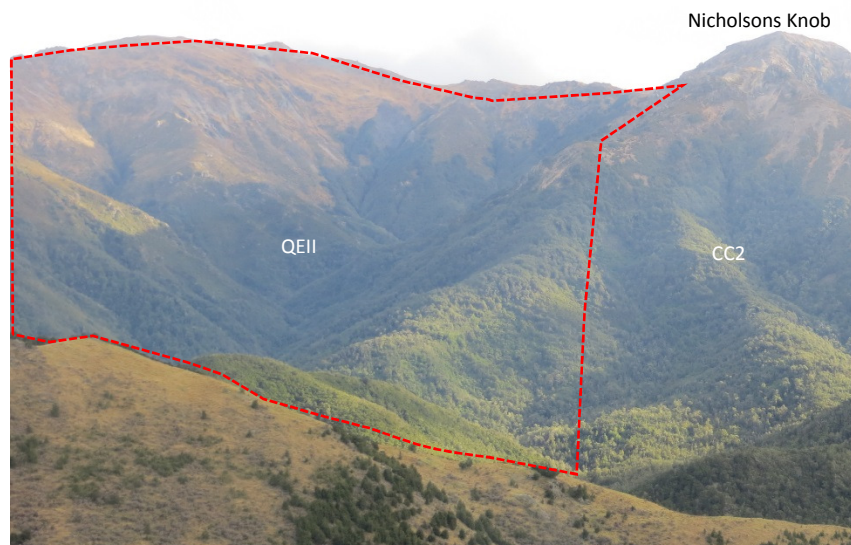


Photo 3: Looking west toward the Bush Creek catchment with the east face of Nicholsons Knob in the right of shot.

Conservation Covenant – CC1

Conservation Covenant under s. 77 of the Reserves Act 1977 pursuant to s.40(1)(b) and s.40(2)(a)&(b) of the CPLA over approximately 774 ha shown shaded yellow and labelled as CC1 on the designation plan.

The covenant providing for CC1 is presented in Appendix 4 of the proposal document attached to this report. CC1 and CC2 are provided for in one single covenant with the Special Conditions of the covenant allowing for limited grazing and farm management inputs to be applied to CC1 only.

CC1 comprises undulating terrain over the northern corner of the Island Hills pastoral lease within the lower Organ Stream and upper Mandamas River Catchment areas. The land also includes the lower northern end of the Organ Range and an area of north facing slopes into the Gorge Stream catchment.

Significant inherent values of the land include high botanical values associated with areas of remnant and regenerating native vegetation. This includes extensive manuka and kanuka hillslope cover as well as mountain beech, porcupine shrub, matagouri, mountain tauhinui, *Hebe* spp, *Helichrysum lanceolatum*, mountain wineberry and native broom. These botanical values in turn support high landscape values and recreation values.

The land also provides habitat for indigenous fauna which is representative of the original communities including lizard, bird, fish and invertebrate species. DOC have identified that the property provides habitat for the following threatened bird species; eastern falcon (nationally vulnerable), black shag (naturally uncommon), NZ pipit (declining), South Island rifleman (declining) and South Island Robin (declining).

The land contains remnant formation of a pack track constructed in part by Sir Charles Upham.

The proposed designation of this land as freehold land subject to a conservation covenant aims to protect the above mentioned significant inherent values while providing for continued economic uses including summer cattle grazing, farm management access over the pack track and to Valley Camp Hut, recreational walking tracks and bee farming.

The conservation covenant aims to achieve this by introducing the following provisions over CC1;

- ▲ Allowing grazing by beef cattle only at a stocking rate not to exceed 250 cows with calves or 350 dry cows. The stock may graze for any continuous 120 day period during the period from 1 November to the 30 April in each calendar year.
- ▲ Introducing controls on over sowing, top dressing and spraying.
- ▲ Require the owner to control certain pest plants and animals.
- ▲ Provides for continued use and maintenance of the existing vehicle track to the Valley Camp Hut.
- ▲ Allows for use, maintenance and enhancement of the Hurunui High Country Track.
- ▲ Allows for continued use of the pack track route from Valley Camp Hut to Gorge Stream.

The covenant also prohibits the following activities without the Minister of Conservation written agreement except as provided for above.

- ▲ Felling, removal or damage of any tree, shrub or other plant
- ▲ Planting of any tree, shrub or other plant
- ▲ Erection of any fence, building or other improvement for any purpose
- ▲ Burning
- ▲ Cultivation, earth works or other soil disturbance
- ▲ Damming, diverting or taking of natural water
- ▲ Prospecting or mining for minerals
- ▲ Erection of utility transmission lines across the land.

There is currently no fencing within CC1 and no new fencing is proposed due to the availability of natural boundaries and a lack of available feed limiting stock access beyond the area.

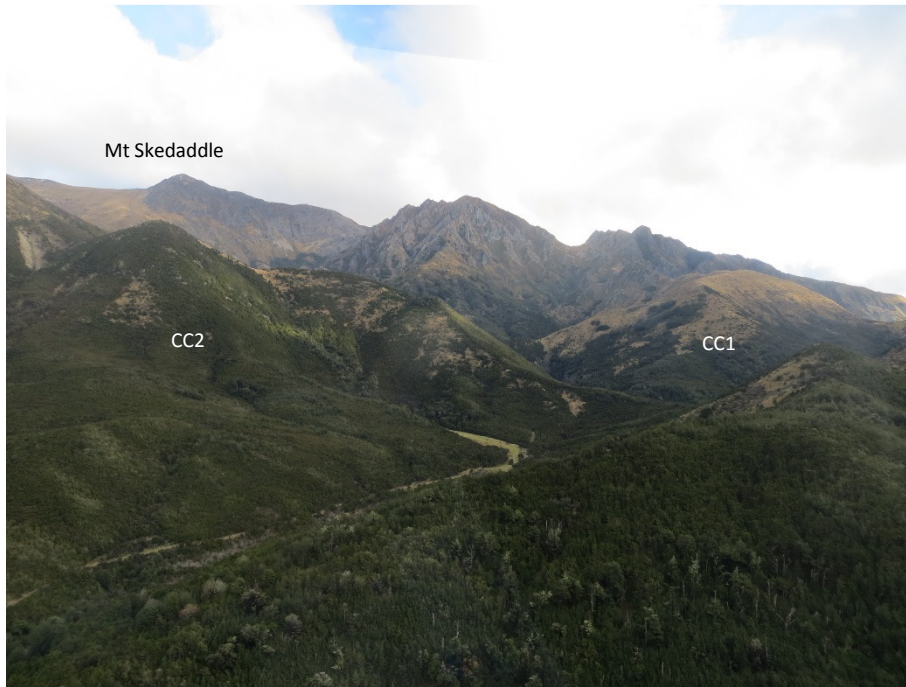


Photo 4. Looking West over the Organ Stream catchment. CC1 on the right of shot. CC2 on the left of shot. Mt Skedaddle and the Spiders Web on the skyline.



Photo 5: View toward north west taken from north of point 561 at southern end of CC1. Organ stream, CC1 in the foreground and low hills in the centre and to the right.



Photo 6: North end of CC1 looking south west over CC1 (dashed line indicates those parts of CC1 visible – not the boundary of CC1)

Conservation Covenant – CC2

Conservation Covenant under s. 77 of the Reserves Act 1977 pursuant to s.40(1)(b) and s.40(2)(a)&(b) of the CPLA 1998 over approximately 1866 ha shown as shaded yellow and labelled CC2 on the plan.

The covenant providing for CC2 is presented in Appendix 4 of the proposal document attached to this report. CC1 and CC2 are provided for in one single covenant with special conditions providing for limited grazing and management inputs over CC1 only.

CC2 comprises higher altitude areas within the Mandamus River and Gorge Stream catchments with prevailing east faces. More specifically this includes east faces below Nicholson's Knob, the upper Organ Stream Catchment along with the north end of the Organ Range and its north facing slopes into the Gorge Stream catchment. Altitude generally ranges from 500 to 1600m with the majority of areas being at the higher end of that altitude range.

Significant inherent values of the land include high botanical values associated with areas of remnant and regenerating native vegetation. This includes extensive manuka and kanuka hillslope cover as well as mountain beech, *Coprosma* spp, porcupine shrub, matagouri, mountain tauhinu, *Hebe* spp, *Helichrysum lanceolatum*, mountain wineberry, *Corokia cotoneaster* and native broom.

Habitats on the covenant support populations of three plant species at the extremity of their range or very uncommon in this area: *Hebe hectorii* subsp. *demissa*, *Pachycladon fastigiatum* and *Helichrysum depressum* X *filicaule*. Additionally, kanuka forest and manuka scrub on sunny slopes support populations of two at risk plant species: *Traversia baccharoides* and *Senecio dunedinensis*. Other threatened plant

values include *Coprosma acerosa* (declining) on montaine screes and *stenostachys gracilis* (data deficient) in beech forests.

The land also provides habitat for indigenous fauna including lizard, bird and invertebrate species. DOC have identified the land provides habitat for the following threatened bird species; eastern falcon (nationally vulnerable), black shag (naturally uncommon), kea (naturally uncommon), NZ pipit (declining), South Island rifleman (declining) and South Island Robin (declining). DOC also identified the area provides habitat for the large ground beetle (*megadromus rectalis*) at the extremity of its range.

All parts of the area retain a high level of naturalness which supports high landscape and recreational values. The fluted rock formations (organ pipes) on the Organ Range are iconic and striking and hold high significance for landscape values.

The proposed designation of this land as freehold land subject to a conservation covenant aims to protect the above mentioned significant inherent values while providing for continued economic uses including recreational walking tracks and bee farming.

The conservation covenant aims to achieve this by introducing the following provisions over CC1;

- ▲ Require the owner to control certain pest plants and animals.
- ▲ Provides for continued use and maintenance of the existing vehicle track to the Valley Camp Hut.
- ▲ Allows for use, maintenance and enhancement of the Hurunui High Country Track.

The covenant also prohibits the following activities without the Minister of Conservation's written agreement except as provided for above.

- ▲ Grazing of the land by livestock
- ▲ Felling, removal or damage of any tree, shrub or other plant
- ▲ Planting of any tree, shrub or other plant
- ▲ Erection of any fence, building or other improvement for any purpose
- ▲ Burning
- ▲ Cultivation, earth works or other soil disturbance
- ▲ Damming, diverting or taking of natural water
- ▲ Prospecting or mining for minerals
- ▲ Erection of utility transmission lines across the land.



Photo 7: View of CC2 on western faces below Nicholson's Knob



Photo 8: CC1 in foreground with view toward south west direction into the head of the Organ Stream catchment at the rear of shot being CC2.



Photo 9: North faces at north end of CC2 within the Gorge Steam catchment