

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name : MT DASHER**

**Lease number : PO 030**

### **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.

**June**

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**SUMMARY OF  
TENURE REVIEW  
PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL  
MT DASHER PASTORAL LEASE  
JUNE 2015**



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

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**1. Details of lease:**

<b>Lease Name:</b>	Mt. Dasher
<b>Lessee:</b>	Mt. Dasher Limited.
<b>Location:</b>	Located on Mole Hill Road on eastern side of the Kakanui Range, approximately 35 kilometres from Oamaru.
<b>Pastoral lease:</b>	Po030
<b>Land Registry Folio ref:</b>	OT 338/30
<b>Legal Description:</b>	Run 571 Waihemo and Kakanui SD..
<b>Area:</b>	<b>7133.7985</b> hectares more or less
<b>Term of lease:</b>	33 years from 1 July 1985

**2. Summary of proposal and description of proposed designations:**

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

**2.1 Area to be restored to Crown control as conservation area**

An area of approximately 2,927 hectares is proposed to be retained in Crown control as Conservation Area, pursuant to section 35(2)(b)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998. This is shown shaded pink and labelled CA1 on the designations plan in the Proposal document in Appendix 2. CA1 will be subject to a grazing concession over approximately 1915 hectares, shown with cross-hatching and labelled GC1 on the designations plan.

This area is the high altitude southern portion of the lease. The area includes the volcanic peaks of Mt Dasher, Kattothrust and Siberia Hill, with a high altitude plateau containing wetlands, cushion vegetation, and red tussock. CA1 includes the upper reaches of Deep Creek and the South Branch Kakanui River.

CA1 is considered to have significant inherent values warranting protection on ecological, cultural and historical, recreational, scientific, and landscape values, as well as ecosystem services, as discussed below.

**Ecological values:**

A number of "At Risk" plant species are found in CA1, which qualify as significant inherent values. These are species classified as deserving of protection on the basis that they are either declining, recovering, relictual, or naturally uncommon. This includes Coral broom (*Carmichaelia crassicaulis* subsp. *Crassicaulis*) (declining), *Anemone tenuicaulis* (naturally uncommon) both found in tall tussock grassland in the area, *Coprosma intertexta* (relict), a shrub found in the Deep Creek area, and *Aciphylla Montana* var. *gracilis* and *Celmisia hookeri* (both naturally uncommon), both found in the volcanic boulderfields. Also in the "At Risk" category are *Myosotis* aff. *tenericaulis* (naturally uncommon), found in wetlands on Siberia Hill, and *Pimelea pseudolyallii* (naturally uncommon) found in tall tussock grasslands and around rock bluffs.



**Figure 1.** Kattothrust, and surrounding wetlands and tussocklands in CA1.

A number of fauna species also qualify as significant inherent values because they are classified as “At risk” or are near their distributional limit. In this category are the Otago Large Gecko (*Hoplodactylus* aff. *Maculatus* “*Otago large*”) (declining), found on rock outcrops and boulderfields, and the South Island pied oystercatcher (*Haematopus finschi*) (declining), found in the tussocklands and boulderfields of Siberia Hill. The large speargrass weevil (*Lyperobius patricki*) observed on Siberia Hill, and the Carabid beetle (*Notagonum* sp) on the slopes of Mt Dasher, are both at their distribution limit.

Area CA1 has a number of originally rare ecosystems including seepages and flushes, cushionbog vegetation, snowbank vegetation, and vegetation associated with volcanic boulderfield

**Cultural and historical values:**

There are also two important 19<sup>th</sup> century surveyors trig stations in this area, used in the early subdivision of the pastoral runs. This includes Trig ‘C’ on Siberia Hill, and Trig ‘B’ on Mt Obi, on the boundary of the lease. A historic stacked basalt cairn is also located in CA1 near Trig ‘C’.

**Recreational values:**

CA1 contains spectacular landforms of recreational interest, including the volcanic cones of Mt Dasher and Kattothrust, the basalt plateau of the Hectors Plateau and Trig C, and extensive boulderfields descending down the slopes from these features.

This area has potential for landscape enjoyment, horse trekking, hunting, mountain biking, tramping, photography and cross country skiing, and Half Moon Hut inside CA1 has potential for recreational use.



**Figure 2.** Boulderfields on north slopes of Siberia Hill, CA1.

**Scientific values:**

Some of the wetlands in CA1 have peat deposits which may be a source of fossil pollen, charcoal and other palaeoenvironmental records. The area also has one of the most extensive exposures of the Dunedin Volcanic Group rock, and of volcanic rock in general, in the South Island high country, including a volcanic vent (Siberia Hill) with a number of different basalt flows. The subsequent boulderfields emanating from the basalt caps and plugs have a morphology which would be consistent with a much more recent periglacial origin. Landforms of this scale and character are uncommon in New Zealand.

**Landscape values:**

The area is a representative example of an original New Zealand landscape, and is regionally significant for its range of relatively unmodified soils and vegetation derived from volcanic rock. It is also regarded as a highly natural and scenic landscape, with its prominent volcanic summits and dark basalt boulderfields that make a stark contrast with the extensive tussocklands.

**Ecosystem services:**

CA1 has significant inherent values associated with ecosystem services, including the potential value of an area with respect to catchment stability, water yield, and carbon sequestration.

The uplands around Mt Dasher, Siberia Hill, and Mt Kattothrust are classified as class VII land in the Land Use Capability (LUC) system, which is land that is identified as having severe limitations to production. In the case of the class VII land on Mt Dasher, this limitation is mostly associated with the risk of erodibility.

The area also contains high potential for carbon sequestration.

The extensive bogs in CA1 are important water-holding areas, reducing flood peaks and sustaining flows during low rainfall periods. Unmodified snow tussock grasslands also assist

with producing higher water yields and reduced flow variability relative to situations where the tussock is modified by grazing or burning.

CA1 will be subject to a grazing concession over part of the area, as discussed under section 3.1.1 below.

**Grazing concession GC1:**

CA1 will be subject to a grazing Concession to be issued to Mt Dasher Limited, over the area shaded pink with cross hatching and marked 'GC1' on the designation plan, being approximately 1915 hectares. A copy of the grazing concession document can be found as Appendix 4 of the Proposal document.

Grazing is to be by sheep ewes only, at a rate not exceeding 0.2 su/ha/annum for a term of 10 years. This concession will reduce the impact of the tenure review outcome on the farming operation, and allow time for adjustment.

This designation will enable full public access to the land, and will exclude cattle, which are the principal threat to ecological values in the area concerned. Some of the most significant vegetation communities in CA1 are shrublands, wetlands, and cushion bogs, and cattle can be particularly destructive of such environments.

The new CA1/freehold boundary is already fenced, being the existing north-eastern fenced block boundaries of the Mt Dasher block and the Trig C block. The fence is stock proof and would be likely to last for another 20 years.

The grazing concession covers two existing grazing blocks and no further fencing is proposed as part of the tenure review. Any fence maintenance will be the responsibility of the concessionaire, or shared with neighbouring land owners.

**Public access:**

Public access to CA1 will be provided via proposed easement 'a-b-c', discussed under section 2.2 below, and also from the Palmerston-Dunback Road (Highway 85) via easements and adjoining conservation land from the completed Shingley Creek tenure review. Future access may also be possible from other adjoining properties along the Kakanui Mountains, should those properties go through tenure review.

**Existing QEII covenant:**

Part of CA1 has an existing QEII covenant which will cease to exist on completion of tenure review. The retention of this land as Conservation Area is seen as offering more appropriate protection of significant inherent values and provision of public access.

**2.2 Area to be restored disposed of as freehold to Mt. Dasher Limited.**

An area of approximately 4,206.7985 hectares is proposed to be disposed of by freehold disposal to the leaseholder Mt Dasher Limited, pursuant to section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998. This is shown shaded green or yellow on the designations plan in the Proposal document in Appendix 2. This area will be subject to a conservation covenant over approximately 55 hectares and public and conservation management easements, discussed below.

This land is almost all below 1000 metres in altitude and is capable of economic use. The vegetation shows greater modification from oversowing, burning and clearing than in CA1, and is composed largely of mixed tussocklands with exotic pasture species. The basal capping, significant in CA1, is largely absent from this country. This is predominantly class VI land and is generally suited to grazing so long as vegetation cover is maintained



**Figure 3.** View south along Grassy Ridge. Proposed freehold land in foreground and middle distance. CA1 land on distant skyline ridge on left hand side of photo.

The lower slopes of the Kakanui River South Branch have scattered small patches of forest dominated by broadleaf (*Griselinia littoralis*), and scattered riparian shrublands including climbing broom (*Carmichaelia kirkii*), leafless mahoe (*Melicytus flexuosus*), *Teucrium parvifolium*, (all declining) *Celmisia hookeri*, and *Einadia allanii*, (both naturally uncommon).

Due to the very scattered distribution of these communities, no specific designation is proposed to protect these areas, and the Department of Conservation has advised that a wider marginal strip would be an appropriate mechanism to provide protection of these areas, which can be enabled under section 24AA of the Conservation Act 1987. This is a matter outside of tenure review.

A more extensive area of shrubland and forest is located in Hectors Creek, to the south of Scout Hill, which is proposed for protection by covenant, as described below.

**Covenant CC1:**

Approximately 55 hectares is proposed for protection by Conservation Covenant under Section 77 Reserves Act 1977 in perpetuity (shown shaded yellow and labelled 'CC1' on the designation plan) as a protective mechanism pursuant to Section 40(1)(c) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

The covenant is proposed over a broadleaved forest remnant and adjoining shrubland in the upper Hectors Creek catchment. A copy of the covenant document can be found as Appendix 5 of the Proposal document.





**Figure 4.** Looking down into shrublands in Hectors Creek, CC1.

This area has vegetation regarded as representative of the pre human vegetation of the area. Dominant species include broadleaf, kowhai, three finger, cabbage tree, marbleleaf, kohuhu, and lancewood. This area was identified as part of an RAP in the PNAP survey of the area (RAP 4 – Hectors, 1992).

This area is a small remnant of forest which was once more extensive. Surrounding land has been substantially modified. The terms of the covenant are designed to ensure that this area does not experience the same fate.

Key terms and conditions include no intentional oversowing and top dressing, no burning, and no chemical spraying or other vegetation clearance. Due to the complex and steep nature of the covenant boundary it is not proposed to fence the covenant so it is not possible to impose specific controls on stock types or numbers. However, most of the covenant is reasonably densely vegetated with woody vegetation, and evidence to date suggests there is limited stock penetration and damage. The covenant conditions specify that there will be no intentional stock grazing.

The proposed conditions are considered to offer a practical solution to protection while still allowing economic use of the surrounding modified grasslands.

**Public and conservation management access easements:**

The proposal includes a public access and management purposes easement (shown with a dashed orange line and labelled 'a-b-c' on the designation plan) and a management purposes easement (shown with a dashed red line and labelled 'b-d' on the designation plan), as qualified designations under section 36(3)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

The purpose of these easements is to secure public and conservation management access to the land proposed for Crown retention CA1. A copy of the easement document can be found as Appendix 6 of the Proposal document.

Easement 'a-b-c' will enable access from the lease boundary south of Scout Hill at 'a', across to the existing farm track at 'b', and then along that farm track to CA1, at point 'c'. The easement 'a-b-c' is to be 10 metres wide, and will provide public access on foot, horse, and non motorised vehicles. Conservation management access, including both motorised and non motorised access, will also be enabled along 'a-b-c'. The easement will only be created on those sections of the track which are not legal road.

Outside the lease, point 'a' is reached via a legal road which is formed as far as the airstrip shown on the designations plan, and is then unformed but accessible on foot through to the lease boundary at 'a'.

The addition of easement 'b-d' for conservation management access along the existing farm track from the northern end of the lease will provide the Department of Conservation with four wheel drive access across the review land to CA1. There is no legal road inside the lease between b and d. Outside the review land, point 'd' is reached following the Mole Hill Road, which is a formed road only partially on a legal alignment. The route 'b-d' has not been proposed as a public access easement due to problems associated with gaining access through this adjoining freehold land, which cannot be dealt with within the tenure review. The Department of Conservation will negotiate their own access arrangement along the road outside the lease boundary.

**Continuation of existing registered easements and unregistered RMA consents:**

The freehold land will be subject to the continuation in force of two appurtenant easements registered on the Mt Dasher title, pursuant to Section 36(3)(c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998. These easements secure farm access for Mt Dasher over some adjoining farmland. The routes offer no practical public or conservation management access and are over land not included in the tenure review. A copy of the existing easement documents can be found as Appendices 7 and 8 of the Proposal document.

There are also three unregistered consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 relating to the proposed freehold land, associated with an existing rural water supply system that takes water from a stonefield near Mitchells Hut. These consents will continue to exist after tenure review. A copy of these RMA consents can be found as Appendix 9 of the Proposal document.