

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : OMARAMA STATION

Lease number : PO 369

Public Submissions – Part 1

These submissions were received as a result of the public advertising of the Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review.

These submissions are released under the Official Information Act 1982.

Submission 1

From: Geoff-Jillian [j.gclark@xtra.co.nz]

Sent: Monday, 20 August 2012 9:10 AM
RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

To: pastoral & tenure review

Subject: Re Omarama

10 Smacks Close
Papanui 8051
Christchurch.

18th August
Re Omarama Tenure Review,

CCI&CC2 should be restored to Crown ownership and control, if only for soil conservation purposes. I don't agree with the reasons given for not doing this. If SR2 can have controlled grazing under reserve status surely so could the CC1&2 areas under Crown control. Monitoring by government departments will always be limited due to ongoing budget constraints.

Where is SR3 ?

Regards
Geoff Clark

31/08/2012

Submission 2

LINZ
P/Bag 4721
CHCH 8140

Submission re Omarama Station Tenure Review.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit an opinion regarding the above review.

I should start with some background on myself.

I have been a regular visitor to Omarama for the last 40 years. Mostly as a glider pilot and I have a glider based on the airfield at Omarama. I also have a cottage on the airfield. As you may already know the local gliding attracts pilots from all over the world and Omarama is regarded internationally as a "Mecca" for those who seek to enjoy the world class soaring available from this premier site.

Naturally, not every day is soarable and many pilots like myself enjoy day walks in the local area. The recent opening up of access to great spots such as Quail Burn and Dalrachney is hugely appreciated. But the jewel in the crown will be Omarama Station !

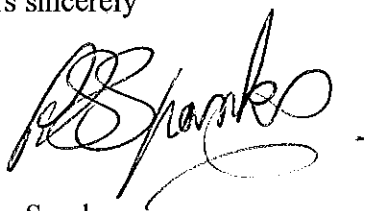
Having studied the proposed access routes I am dismayed at how little thought appears to have gone into it. The extremely steep access on the North side "H" will only be for Ironman contestants! It is also heavily covered with thick waist high vegetation.

You need to choose a gentler ascent and I suggest you do this from behind the saleyards up what we refer to as "Dog Trial Hill" (Just SE of the saleyards)then onto Black Peak and then on up to the summit. This follows the natural lower ridge lines and offers splendid views over the McKenzie to Mt Cook in the North. Another option is up another easy route to Lady Bird hill situated behind the town then on to Black Peak and the summit. These suggestions in tandem could provide a circuit (much more fun than an out and return) of about 2-3 hrs which is a popular walk duration with the ability for the trampler to extend it into a full day walk to the summit.

My other suggestion is to provide an access route between the already planned Cattle Creek (access A) and SR1. (ACFE) This is basically a short cut across the saddle to the north of CC2 allowing a great day circuit (approx 17km) of Mt St Cuthbert. You should be considering how trampers can be offered an overnight camping spot for the much longer circuit already planned ABC-EFG.

This is a unique opportunity that will prove to be really popular with the many visitors to the region as well as the locals. I am more than happy to talk further regarding my suggestions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Sparks', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Roger Sparks
29 Kamaka Cres
Alexandra 9320

Mob. 0274 956 560
Res. 03 44 86 100

Submission 3

9 October 2012

Commissioner of Crown Lands
Land Information New Zealand
Crown Property & Investment
CBRE House, 112 Tuam Street
Private Bag 4721
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

To Whom It May Concern:

Omarama Tenure Review Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission on the Omarama Preliminary Proposal for tenure review.

This preliminary proposal should be congratulated on the multiple provisions proposed regarding public access. I agree with the most of the proposal; however I have a couple of proposed amendments that will be discussed in this submission.

Point 1:

Proposed public access easement “e-f-g” and “f-h”.

I support these proposed easements which will enable public access to the top of Mt St Cuthbert. This will provide for a great day-walk in close proximity to the Omarama township. This track will possibly result in the best viewpoint in the south Mackenzie basin, affording views of Lake Aviemore, Benmore, Ohau and possibly Pukaki. I support retaining the proposed easement from “f” down to “e” at Glen Creek, as this provides for a choice of entry points. I ask that these proposed easements be retained throughout the review process as they give effect to section 24(c)(i) of the CPLA 1998.

Point 2:

Proposed public access easement “a-b” (section).

The purpose of this easement is to provide for part of the access from Hut Road to the Oteake Conservation Park (OCP) on the Ewe Range. The distance from “a” to “b” is approximately 12 kilometres, and while this is not a problem, the conditions proposed for this easement are entirely unreasonable.

The first thing to note is that the easement is proposed to be created under section 12 of the Reserves Act 1977 as stated in Appendix 4 of the Preliminary Proposal. However, the proposed terms of access are entirely contrary to the purpose of providing access to a public reserve (i.e. OCP). The proposal seeks to prohibit motorised vehicles, horses and firearm users from passing along the easement to access the conservation area. While prohibiting dogs is a reasonable condition because of sheep farming in the vicinity, the others are not.

The primary issue is that OCP allows for horse riding and hunting, but the proposed conditions of the easement mean that the public will not be able to access the park to undertake these activities. I fail to see any reason why the proposed easement has such conditions. The Designation Plan shows

fencing “S-T” on the eastern side of the easement, which effectively fences the easement off from the main portion of the land proposed to be freeholded. This means there is no chance of someone horse riding or carrying a firearm of “accidentally” deviating from the easement and trespassing. Furthermore, horses are permitted on the easement for “conservation management access”, so what is the difference? For this reason, there is no reason for restricting these legitimate uses of the easement.

The second issue with this proposed easement relates to the fact that motorised vehicles are not permitted. I ask that vehicles be allowed on the easement from “a” to where the fencing stops at “T”. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Vehicles are proposed to be permitted on the easement “a-b-c” for “conservation management access”. There is nothing in the CPLA that gives priority of access to DOC over the public.
2. There is an existing track along much of where the easement is proposed.
3. As noted above, the fence “S-T” will mean that vehicle users are confined to the track and cannot enter Omarama station.
4. For a member of the public to access OCP from “a-b-d”, the distance is approximately 13.5km. This totally unreasonable; how many people are willing to walk this distance, which may take up to three or four hours, just to gain access to OCP? The easement in its current form is just a token gesture which is unlikely to be used often.
5. Limiting vehicles to “T”, or thereabouts means that the walking distance to OCP is reduced to only 6.5km, a much more reasonable distance. It also means that vehicles can be prevented from travelling up onto the hill country which could result in track damage.

In their 2005 report, Fish and Game called for “tracks and roads” on the property to be made legal for public use. I do not support the need to make these tracks and roads legal merely because they are farm tracks. Firstly, this would be too costly and secondly, it is inappropriate to make all the lessee’s farm tracks open to public use. However, I do reiterate my above point that vehicle access should be provided for from “a-T”. Non-motorised access can then be retained from “T-b”. Page 36 of the CRR prepared by DOC noted that “the existing vehicle track through the property via Cattle and Glen Creeks provides opportunities for through-trips by mountain-bike or four-wheel-drive vehicle”. While I do not support the need for providing 4WD access over the south portion of the station, reasonable motorised access should be provided from “a-T”.

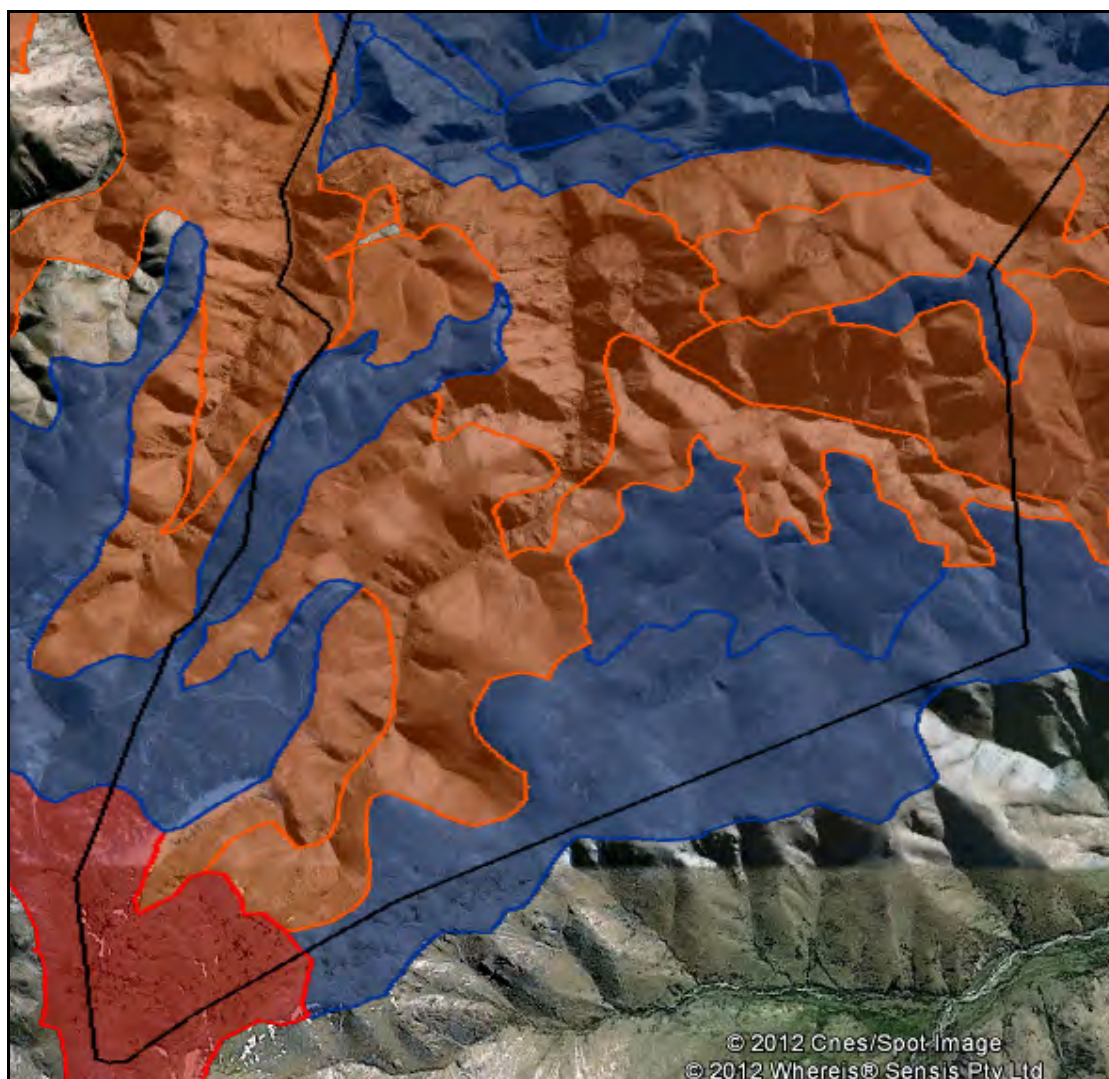
Point 3:

Proposed disposition of Crown land contained within the area labelled CC2 (Ewe Range) on the Designation Plan.

3.1 Introduction:

On the following pages, two maps have been produced to support my submission that I will make under Point 3. The data from these maps has been obtained from credible scientific sources. Data was downloaded from the relevant websites and then colour coded in Google Earth to provide an easily interpreted visual map. Both maps examine the southern portion of the lease, with the first map looking at erosion susceptibility and the second; land use capability.

The erosion susceptibility classification system obtained from the MfE was created as a key component of the original National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry (NESPF). “The project was undertaken by University of Canterbury’s School of Forestry and underwent a rigorous validation process, by land management experts, regional council staff and an independent expert peer review panel” (MfE, 2012). As a result, this system has now been included in the revised NES proposal. The classification system groups land into low, moderate, high and very high erosion susceptibility classes.



MAP 1: Erosion Susceptibility

Source:

Ministry for the Environment. 2012. *Erosion Susceptibility: 4 classes*. Retrieved from <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/forestry/index.html#erosion>

Legend:

Erosion Susceptibility	Colour
Low/ Moderate	Blue
High	Orange
Very high	Red

The second map, on page five uses data held in the NZLRI database, which was obtained from Landcare Research. The following information on NZLRI was obtained from <http://data.govt.nz/dataset/show/1232>

The New Zealand Land Resource Inventory (NZLRI) is a national database of physical land resource information. It comprises two sets of data compiled using stereo aerial photography, published and unpublished reference material, and extensive field work:

An inventory of five physical factors (rock type, soil, slope, present type and severity of erosion, and vegetation). A 'homogeneous unit area' approach is used to record the five physical factors simultaneously to a level of detail appropriate for presentation at a scale of 1:50,000.

A Land Use Capability (LUC) rating of the ability of each polygon to sustain agricultural production, based on an assessment of the inventory factors above, climate, the effects of past land use, and the potential for erosion.

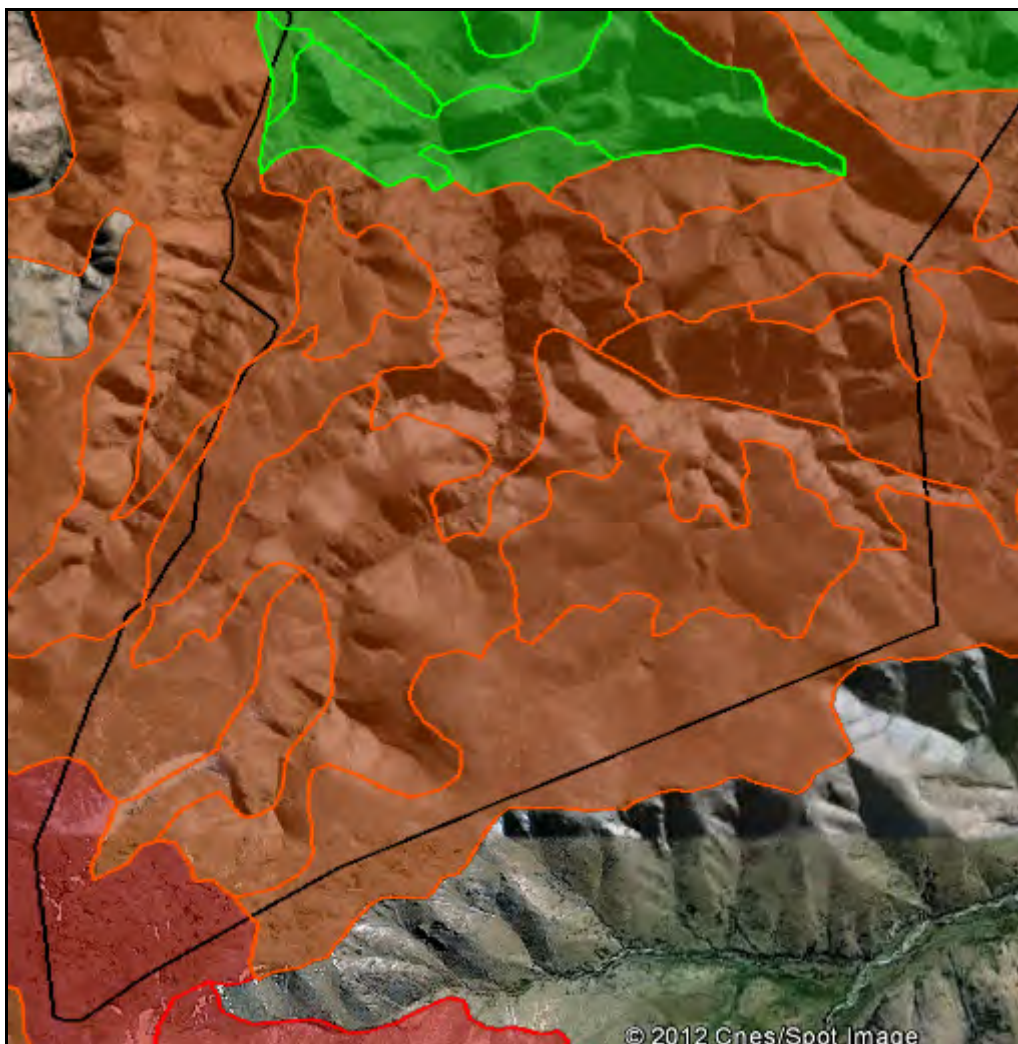
<i>LUC Class code</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Land with virtually no limitations for arable use and suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
2	Land with slight limitations for arable use and suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
3	Land with moderate limitations for arable use, but suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
4	Land with moderate limitations for arable use, but suitable for occasional cropping, pasture or forestry
5	High producing land unsuitable for arable use, but only slight limitations for pastoral or forestry use
6	Non-arable land with moderate limitations for use under perennial vegetation such as pasture or forest
7	Non-arable land with severe limitations to use under perennial vegetation such as pasture or forest
8	Land with very severe to extreme limitations or hazards that make it unsuitable for cropping, pasture or forestry

Table 1: Land Use Class code table

(To be used in conjunction with the legend of Map 2)

Source:

Landcare Research New Zealand Limited. 2008. *Land Resource Information System Spatial Data Layers: Data Dictionary (p.7)*. Retrieved from: www.lris.scinfo.org.nz/file/162-lrislayers_v3/download/



MAP 2: Land Use Capability

Source:

Landcare Research New Zealand Limited, 2012. *Land Resource Information Systems Portal: NZLRI Land Use Capability*. Retrieved from:
<http://lris.scinfo.org.nz/#/layer/76-nzlri-land-use-capability/>

Legend:

Land Use Class Code	Colour
6 or less	Green
7	Orange
8	Red

NB. Refer to Table 1 on page 4 for code meanings

<p>24 Objects of Part 2 The objects of this Part are—</p> <p>(a) to—</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) promote the management of reviewable land in a way that is ecologically sustainable;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) subject to subparagraph (i), enable reviewable land capable of economic use to be freed from the management constraints (direct and indirect) resulting from its tenure under reviewable instrument; and</p> <p>(b) to enable the protection of the significant inherent values of reviewable land—</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) by the creation of protective mechanisms; or (preferably)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) by the restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control; and</p> <p>(c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b), to make easier—</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(i) the securing of public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) the freehold disposal of reviewable land.</p>
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Section 24 CPLA 1998

3.2 Submission

As noted above, my submission relates to the proposed disposition of Crown land contained within the area labelled CC2 (Ewe Range) on the Designation Plan. I have researched this area, which lies from the north of the Ewe Range and extends down to Cattle Creek. I have concluded that much of the land contained within CC2, should remain in Crown ownership to be administered by the Department of Conservation, rather than being freeholded subject to a conservation covenant. My submission is as follows:

1 Erosion susceptibility

It is clear from Map 1 that much of the land contained within CC2, from the Ewe Range down to Cattle Creek is highly susceptible to erosion. Exceptions include the flatter land around Baldy Knob, and to the northeast. The Conservation Resources Report (CRR) prepared by DOC noted that there are several gullies which contain “large rock bluffs and patches of scree”. Retirement of CC2 to DOC will result in less erosion that is accelerated by farm animals and help promote the ecologically sustainable management of reviewable land.

2 Land use capability

Map 2 also helps highlight the need to retire the land contained within CC2. All of CC2 falls within land use code 7 or 8 which is described as non-arable land with severe to extreme limitations. These limitations are implicitly recognised by the proposed conservation covenant which calls for a limit of 0.15 su/ha/yr, with only sheep permitted. The area of CC2 is 1425ha meaning that a maximum of 213 sheep will be allowed on this block. The average stocking rate for a sheep farm is somewhere in the vicinity of 7 su/ha/yr. Under the proposed conservation covenant, this block would run approximately 2-2.5% of the sheep that a farm the same size would run. Again, this highlights that it is not ecologically sustainable to convert CC2 to freehold. Such severe limitations mean the land would be better dealt with by retaining CC2 in Crown ownership and allowing for a grazing concession, if so desired.

The CRR indirectly made reference to the severe limitations of the land contained within the proposed CC2 area. Page 16 of the report notes that tussock cover on the Ewe Range is “commonly 15-20%”, and that sheep grazing has removed the original slim snow tussock and “resulted in the dominance of short tussock and a cover of mouse-ear hawkweed of more than 25%”. Snow tussock is widely known for its superior water-holding abilities and strong root system which helps to minimise erosion. While the proposed reduction in stock density is intended to, and will help slow the degradation of slim snow tussock, the stocking rate proposed to achieve this goal does not make freeholding worthwhile.

3 Botanical values

The “Botanical values map” attached to the CRR shows that all of the land contained within proposed CC2 contains “Botanical values”, which will now be examined. The CRR describes the presence of cushion and herbfield communities, along with alpine bogs on the Ewe range. Page 18, however notes that these alpine bogs are subject to “localised sheep pugging” and that “with decreasing altitude, smaller bogs and drier parts of larger bogs become degraded by sheep grazing”. The CRR concluded that “it appears that stock are hastening the transformation of these bogs to dry land”. Alpine bogs are known to take many decades to fully recover, so it is better that this land is retained in Crown ownership to allow these fragile and intrinsically valuable ecosystems to recover over time.

4 Fauna

Lizard fauna in the high country is under threat from introduced animals such as feral cats, mustelid’s and sheep. Spotted skinks are in gradual decline, and were found to be present around the Baldy Knob area (p.27, CRR). However, these skinks were only found in tall tussockland, which is the exact type being threatened and degraded by sheep grazing at the moment, and if CC2 was to be freeholded. Retirement of CC2 will result in improved habitat for the spotted skink and allow DOC to control cats and mustelid’s present in the area; something which freeholding is very unlikely to achieve. The “Bird and lizard values map” highlights the fact that all the land contained within CC2, has high quality “Bird and lizard values” that are should be protected under by retaining this land in Crown ownership.

Recommendations and conclusions:

1. I support the retention of the proposed public access easements “e-f-g” and “f-h”. This will provide a good walking opportunity for members of the public.
2. I ask that horses, firearms and be permitted on the easement “a-b”, and up to OCP. Motorised access be should also be provided from “a-T”. Proposed easement conditions are unreasonable and the allowance of these activities on the easements will in no way affect any farming operations.
3. I ask that the land contained within the area CC2 be retained in Crown ownership. This land is highly susceptible to erosion, has severe to extreme limitations, is suffering irreversible damage to fragile alpine communities and contains the habitat of threatened spotted skinks. Freeholding this land subject to a conservation covenant will not meet section 24 (a)(i) of the CPLA, hence it should be retained in Crown ownership. If grazing of 200 sheep on CC2 is still desired, then this would be better dealt with by a periodic grazing concession.

Thank you for considering this submission, and I trust it will be given serious consideration.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Stockdill

Date

Submission 4



Otago Tramping & Mountaineering Club Inc

P O Box 1120 Dunedin otmc@ihug.co.nz www.otmc.co.nz

12 October 2012

The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Land Information New Zealand,
Private Bag 4721
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

Dear Sir

Draft Preliminary Proposal – Tenure Review of Omarama Station

I write on behalf of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club which represents over 200 members, mostly in Dunedin. We would like to make the following submission for Preliminary Proposal for the Tenure review of the Omarama Station (Po 369) which is undergoing tenure review under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

We have serious concerns about this tenure review, which seems unbalanced and totally out of character with other recent tenure reviews in that it proposes freeholding large areas of high altitude land with very significant inherent values in the Mt St Cuthbert and Ewe range. These areas are identified as CC1 and CC2 on the Omarama Station preliminary proposal plan.

It is very clear that both CC1 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Mt St Cuthbert range and CC2 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Ewe Range have very significant inherent values. We note that the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998 indicates a clear preference that areas with significant inherent values such as the parts of the Mt St Cuthbert and Ewe ranges discussed above that are not capable of ecologically sustainable farming should return to full Crown ownership and control (as opposed to protection under some other mechanism such as a Conservation Covenant) as part of a tenure review. It is widely recognized that land at this altitude is not capable of ecologically sustainable farming without inputs that are rarely economically viable.

For this reason the club does not support the part of the Preliminary Proposal relating to granting freehold title to CC1 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Mt St Cuthbert range and CC2 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Ewe range. We would be firmly of the view that both of these areas should return to full Crown ownership and control.

We are particularly concerned with the proposal to grant freehold title to the CC2 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Ewe range because this is adjacent to the Oteake Conservation Park and could potentially be added to the park in future. Because the

area connects to the park it is likely to be used by our members during tramping and cross-country skiing trips to the area. Indeed this is recognized by the proposal by having one of the public access easements connect to the conservation park. This public access provision will not accommodate our members' needs however, because the process of cross-country skiing requires a broad area for sweeping turns to maintain control while descending a hill. For this reason we believe that only the "wander at will" access that comes with full Crown ownership and control will accommodate our members' needs. We also have some concerns that the public access provisions for the Mt St Cuthbert range appear to be quite steep and arduous and may not provide practical access most members of the public. We suggest that it be re-routed to cross paddocks from Broken Hut Rd to the main farm track.

Yours faithfully,

David Barnes
Conservation & Recreation Advocacy Officer

Submission 5



Department of Botany

Division of Sciences
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Commissioner of Crown Lands,
C/o Manager,
Darroch Ltd.,
PO Box 27,
ALEXANDRA



October 10, 2012.

SUBMISSION ON THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR TENURE REVIEW: OMARAMA STATION PASTORAL LEASE

Dear Sir,

The document outlining this proposal was forwarded to me by the LINZ Pastoral Team and I appreciate the opportunity to comment on it based on my past knowledge of the ecology of this area when a member of the Otago Catchment Board's High Country Research Team back in the early 1960's, and occasionally since, including when I was supervising the Hawkdun PNA study by Dr Philip Grove (1994) as a University MSc research project. I assume the review process has now been taken over by Darroch Ltd staff in Alexandra since the group of six who visited the property on September 19 last, were accompanied by My Ken Taylor of this company. I appreciated his presence and information provided and also the presence of the current lessee Mr Richard Subtil who provided 4WD transport and shared his intimate knowledge of the property with us.

Background.

We had the opportunity to see first hand the present condition and natural features of the some of the property, close to its upper limits and also to have a meaningful exchange of information and discussion on its past, present and probable future management.

I was generally very impressed by the variable topography and the present vegetation range and condition on the property, which is relatively good, and obviously reflects a long period of sympathetic management over the many years it has been managed by at least two generations of the Wardell family. Recent pig rootings seen in the vicinity of Mt St Cuthbert summit was of concern.

The vegetation and species lists contained in the LINZ Review (August 2012) document, together with the photographs (but captions would have been helpful), although brief, are adequate for the purpose of this exercise and will not be amplified or repeated here.

The property is readily visible from the lowlands in the area, particularly in and near Omarama township, while the upper slopes of the property provide very extensive views of the upper Waitaki catchment, the Omarama and Mackenzie basins in particular. They also provide commanding views of the Southern Alps to the south of Mt Cook.

The short tussock grasslands on the lower slopes with a north to westerly aspect are clearly fragile and highly vulnerable to aggressive management, an aspect obviously well appreciated by the lessee. This also applies to the mixed short-tall (snow) tussock grasslands of the mid slopes and particularly the ecotone between the narrow-leaved (*Chionochloa rigida*) and slim (*C. macra*) snow tussock grasslands at 1200-1300 m, as well as the extensive areas of slim snow tussock grassland on the upper slopes of the property in both the Mt Cuthbert (1558 m) block and also on the upper slopes of the adjoining Ewe Range, to the highest point on the property at 1611 m. Both time and conditions prevented us from visiting the crest of the Ewe Range where extensive cushionfields and fellfields are present and where Grove's PNA study resulted in a Recommended Area for Protection (HAWK 1) of

490 ha, which essentially coincides with the existing QE II Covenant. Here the property adjoins the recently gazetted Oteake Conservation Park. The proposed Covenant area CC2 on the Ewe Range would provide an appropriate extension to this conservation park.

It is highly relevant in terms of both present and future management that much of the hilly and high elevation components of the property has been classified as of Land Use Capability Class VIIe, meaning it is highly vulnerable to erosion to the extent that it has very limited potential for any form of productive use. Indeed, when I was a member of the Land Settlement Board in the 1983-86 period there was a clearly stated Government policy to formally retire all South Island pastoral leasehold lands with this classification (as well as all Cl. VIII lands), because of their actual and/or potential erosion severity. Similarly, under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 (CPLA), which controls the current tenure review operation, there is a clearly stated clause that only lands capable of sustainable productive management should be considered for free-holding; otherwise it should, along with areas of significant inherent values, revert to full Crown ownership and control, to be managed for their public interest values. These include soil conservation, water production, conservation, indigenous biodiversity, landscape, recreational, cultural and/or historical values. While the present management regime might be claimed to be sustainable, in the longer term this would not be so without nutrient inputs to replace those removed with stock production, as was clearly outlined in the 'Martin Report' (1994) from the Working Party on Sustainable Land Management of the High Country, commissioned by three Government Ministers. Long term implications, which must be considered with a free-holding option under tenure review, would also mitigate against free-holding areas of Use Capability Class VI1e land, particularly at altitudes above 1000 m.

The Proposal.

The Preliminary Proposal for tenure review of Omarama Station raises serious doubts as to whether the identified significant inherent values (SIVs) and land resources of the property can be guaranteed into the future, under free-hold tenure, even with continuation of the current management regime. Of the total area of the property (8781.2 ha), almost all, 8620 ha (98.2%) is proposed for free-holding and a mere 161 ha (1.2%) is being proposed for transfer to full Crown ownership and control.

The two existing QE II Open Space Covenants on Mt Cuthbert (865 ha) and on the Ewe Range (420 ha), both at the highest altitudes on the property are proposed to each be substantially extended, or largely surrounded, with Conservation Covenants under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, the **Mt Cuthbert Covenant (CC1)** with a 1160 ha addition. This proposed covenant contains a number of significant inherent values, including areas of indigenous 'grey shrubland' in the upper reaches of Old Man Creek catchment, with such threatened species as *Hebe cupressoides* (apparently 25 shrubs) located below a relatively large waterfall, plus others of *H. rakaiensis*, *H. subalpina*, *Olearia odorata*, *Aristolelia fruticosa*, the threatened shrub *Carmichaelia kirkii*, among others' plus broadleaf, kowhai and *Chionochloa conspicua* with some trees of Hall's totara in the vicinity (not seen on our inspection), an altogether valuable assemblage of a probably relict plant community. These important features, together with the presence of the Southern Alps gecko and the Uncommon grasshopper, *Sigaus minutis*, have been more fully described in the CR Report. Amongst the slim snow tussockland near the summit of Mt St Cuthbert we saw the short tussock *Rytidosperma setifolium*, plus cushions of *Scleranthus uniflorus*, *Raoulia grandiflora* and *R. subsericea* amongst many other species.

The **Ewe Range QE11 Covenant (CC2)** is proposed as a 1425 ha addition, with a wide range of alpine tussock grasslands plus fellfield and cushionfield with a range of representative plant species, well described in Grove's (1994) PNA Survey report (pp. 5.4-5.7). This CC2 would provide a valuable, complementary addition to the adjoining Oteake Conservation Park, and this is **strongly recommended**.

Both conservation covenant proposals, down to variable altitudes, are to have seasonal sheep grazing permitted. I am very concerned that seasonal grazing, particular at the higher altitudes, would never permit full recovery of the grassland and high-alpine ecosystems and their flora, given the known differential plant palatability to grazing animals, including sheep.

This proposal is entirely unacceptable under the terms of the CPLAct and I **recommend** it be rejected outright. The CPLAct is clear that all areas containing Significant Inherent Values (as these two QE2 and the proposed CC1 and CC2 covenants clearly do) are 'preferably' returned to full Crown ownership and control.

The two areas for transfer to full Crown ownership and control, an 81 ha area is to be formally protected without re-fencing, as part of, and to allow the completion of, the **Glen Creek Scenic Reserve (SR 1)** of mixed shrubland, rock outcrops and wetlands, and a second area of 80 ha, **Omarama Wetland** is a proposed **Scientific Reserve (SE 2)**, which includes a 25 m marginal strip alongside Omarama Stream plus 30 ha of associated wetland at its confluence with Cattle Ck. This is a significant eel and Big Nose Galaxiid habitat, which is generally rare in this region. Here limited grazing is being proposed as a 'management tool' particularly to contain exotic weeds while fostering indigenous speies, including the threatened sedge, *Carex tenuicaulis*. These issues were discussed at length on site and it was agreed that any grazing here would need to be very carefully managed and the effects monitored. These **two reserve proposals are endorsed**.

Public access on foot and mountain bikes has been provided for but the long distances and altitudinal issues involved make these less than desirable modes, particularly for walking access and will be further commented on below.

Recommendations.

1. Under the provisions of the CPLAct, outlined above, I **recommend** that all of the **proposed CC2** (which apparently has an existing fence along its lower boundary) and including the **adjoining QE 2 Covenant** located along its upper margin, be destocked and returned to full Crown ownership and control. Limited grazing may be permitted for a certain period, up to 10 years, with appropriate monitoring and discretion, to enable farm management to be adjusted while maintaining conservation values.

2. Under the provisions of the CPLAct, outlined above, I **recommend** that all of the **proposed CC1** and the **adjoining QE 2 Covenant** located along its upper margin, be destocked and returned to full Crown ownership and control, or at least the upper portion of this proposed CC1 area, above about 1100m. The lower boundary should use any existing fencing or even part of the proposed lower boundary if preferable. Here again, limited grazing may be permitted and arranged, with appropriate monitoring, for a certain period, up to 10 years, to enable farm management to be adjusted. Any remaining area of the proposed CC1 which is not transferred to a formal Conservation Area is **recommended** to be held under the protective mechanism of a **Sustainable Management Covenant**, with appropriate conditions and monitoring, in recognition of its high vulnerability to degradation under pastoral management, as well as its considerable SIVs.

I appreciate that these recommendations represent a significant departure from what has been proposed, and it might be construed as a major imposition on the present lessee, particularly given his accepted conservative and lenient management of the property. The **likely precedent-setting implications of the present proposal for future tenure reviews** (there are many properties yet to enter the exercise), however, could be very important. Moreover, there seems to have been much more lenient conditions placed on this particular tenure review exercise since it was initiated back in 2006: Tenure Review 8_3.3: Opening of Formal Consultation, when the proposal was "sent to LINZ".

At this time, no QEI I Open Space Covenants were involved and there was provision for two "Potential Qualified Designations", one of ~1600 ha (presumably the Mt Cuthbert QE II Covenant plus the now proposed CC2), and the second of ~1900 ha (presumably the Ewe Range QE II Covenant plus the now proposed CC1), all to be restored to full Crown ownership and control, and also the same 81 ha proposed Scenic Reserve. These three areas totalled 3581 ha or 41% of the property. The remaining 5200 ha (59% of the property) was proposed for free-holding at this time. This earlier proposal would have been much more consistent with the provisions/requirements of the CPLAct.

This situation would also have been consistent with my recommendations contained in this submission. Creation of an area of the lower part of the proposed CC1 on the Mt Cuthbert block with

a Sustainable Management Covenant, as outlined above, would be acceptable at this time, with continued light grazing in an attempt to sustain the tussockland ecosystem, to be accompanied by adequate monitoring with the use of representative permanent photo-points.

Fencing proposals. I am very concerned with the proposal to construct a new fence of some 7 km length (proposed fence S-T), along the boundary with the Tara Hills (now freeholded) property, where presumably one already exists, in order to separate the proposed easement from the rest of the property. The easement (via "b" to points "d" and "c" beyond this point ("T")) is not planned to be fenced so it is not clear why only the lower section from the legal road to point "T" justifies the construction of an additional fence. The proposal does not provide justification so I therefore reject this proposal for an expensive new fence, the cost for which presumably to be borne by the tenure review fund. The second proposed fence (W-X) can be justified and is endorsed.

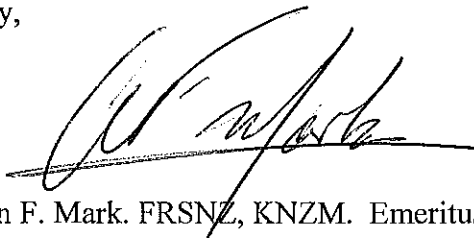
Access provisions have been limited to walking and mountain biking but, given its provision off the Omarama-Otematata highway on to the Mt St Cuthbert Range, the distances are long and involve considerable straight, steep climbing up a fenceline, this access would be very arduous and is therefore considered to be less than satisfactory. Such access is likely to restrict recreational access for whatever purpose, to young and fit people seeking exercise and/or adventure.

Public access should be provided up the main vehicle track to the edge of the existing QE II Covenant which is much more appealing both in terms of terrain and rewarding panoramic views than the route proposed. Older and less fit people, seeking some of the several more passive forms of nature study and recreation, which the area clearly provides, would be discriminated against and strongly discouraged with the access that the document has proposed. Alternative access, at the discretion of the occupier, is not satisfactory as a long-term arrangement for general public access. Public access should also be provided along the most practicable route between the Mt St Cuthbert and Ewe Range covenants. Horse access was earlier proposed but, for some unexplained reason, has now been removed. It should be reconsidered.

An important provision of the CPLAct is that it "make [access] easier" by "the securing of public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land". Clearly this has not been achieved with the proposed plan at this stage. Ideally, 4WD access to the crest of the Ewe Range and the Oteake Conservation Park might be provided through this tenure review process, perhaps vested in the discretion of the property occupier, as exists elsewhere in the high country, subject to prior arrangements and weather and track/road conditions.

I trust that this response and my several recommendations will be given serious consideration in this important exercise and I thank you again for the opportunity to assess and comment on the preliminary proposal for this tenure review of Omarama Station.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. F. Mark', written over a horizontal line.

Alan F. Mark. FRSNZ, KNZM. Emeritus Professor.

Submission 6

The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Land Information New Zealand,
Crown Property and Investment
CBRE House, 112 Tuam Street
Private Bag 4721
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

Chris Pearson
18 Rewa St
Musselborough
Dunedin 9013

To Whom it may concern

I write on to make the following submission for Preliminary Proposal for the Tenure review of the Omarama Station (Po 369) which is undergoing tenure review under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

I do not support this proposal going through in its current form because it would result in free-holding large areas of high altitude land with very high conservation value in the Mt St Cuthbert and Ewe range. These areas are identified as CC1 and CC2 and their adjacent QE2 covenants on the Omarama Station preliminary proposal plan. The conservation resources report makes it clear that both the Cuthbert and Ewe range areas have such high conservation values that would warrant adding them to the conservation estate. The proposal relies on a mixture of conservation and QE2 covenants to protect the land. Even if we accept, for the sake of argument that these mechanisms can provide sufficient long term protection for land of high conservation, (and there are plenty of bad examples which suggest that it can't) there is still the problem of providing public access. This is particularly important for CC2 and the adjacent QE2 covenant on the Ewe Range because this adjoins the Oteake Conservation Park and should be added to the park in future. I want to take this opportunity to point out that Ewe range area is already used by back country cross skiers and it is one of the better places in Otago for this activity due to its topography (which is almost perfect for this activity, and its combination of high elevation and aspect that combine to provide reliable snow. Indeed I personally have been on cross-country skiing trips to the area. While I appreciate that one of the public access easements connect to the conservation park it does not accommodate the needs of back country skiers because the process of cross-country skiing requires a broad area for sweeping turns to maintain control while descending a hill and for this reason only the "wander at will" access that comes with to full Crown ownership and control will accommodate the needs of the needs of the cross-country skiing community. The access easements also do not provide access to Baldy Knob which is almost certain to be visited by recreational users.

I have heard that LINZ considered returning some of the area DOC but decided not to because they wanted to make for provision for continued grazing.



If this really is the issue then I would encourage LINZ and the run holder to consider returning CC2 and the adjacent QE2 covenant area to DOC to allow for public recreational access but with provision of a long term or indefinite grazing lease in favor of the adjacent station. There is precedent for this in the Kawarau Tenure review which I commented on earlier this year. This would accommodate the run holders wish for continued grazing and the publics need for more access to recreational land in the high country.

I just want to close by pointing out that LINZ, by advancing such one sided tenure review proposal threatens the very existence of the Tenure review program. Let's not forget that the program has been very controversial over the last decade. Indeed it is the policy of the opposition to end the program. This program has survived only because of the bedrock support of outdoor recreationalists. It is very unlikely that this support will be maintained in future if, as in this tenure review, no real attempt is made to accommodate recreational access, particularly for a property that adjoins a national park. If the Ewe Range portion of this pastoral lease does not warrant being retained by the crown, what other land could possibly be?

Yours faithfully,

Chris Pearson

Submission 7

The Canterbury/Aoraki Conservation Board,
c/- The Canterbury Conservancy,
The Department of Conservation
Friday 12th October 2012

The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Land Information New Zealand,
Crown Property and Investment,
Private bag 4721,
Christchurch 8140
pastoral&tenurereview@linz.govt.nz

Dear Sir,

Omarama Tenure Review

Submission of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board

The Omarama Pastoral Lease occupies the northern end of the Cuthbert Range and the Ewe Range immediately to the south of the township of Omarama. The flat paddocks along the Omarama Stream and the State Highway down the Waitaki have been substantially improved and are often cultivated for lucerne or other fodder crops, and above them the range's oversown lower slopes, green in spring, rise to tawny and often rocky tops. The boundaries of the areas of the proposed conservation covenants CC1 and CC2 seem to align roughly with the current boundaries between oversown and unimproved country. The lease has a good balance of sunny and shaded country, low and medium altitude, and cultivation and pasture. The lucerne serves to relieve any possible grazing pressure on the higher country. The lease's lower level land resources and its strategic proximity to Omarama provide business opportunities for other land uses and income sources, both agricultural and non-agricultural. Omarama is a growing tourist town, at the junction of state highways, a world-renowned centre for gliding, on the already-popular cycle route being established from Mount Cook to the Pacific Ocean, and in country famous for its scenery, fishing and recreational opportunities.

The native vegetation and inherent values in the higher country are still relatively good, for which the current lessees deserve considerable credit. That does not justify, however, any evasion of the principles embodied in the Crown Pastoral Land Act. In any case, management may change. A new owner may have different aspirations and practices. Even the current lessees may have plans to do things differently in future. As noted below, the terms of the Preliminary Proposal's proposed conservation covenants distinctly contemplate pasture improvement in the higher country.

An important purpose of tenure review is to allow freeholded land, now freed of the exclusively pastoral constraints of the Crown Pastoral Land Act, to be used in other and more effective ways. This is particularly relevant when considering a run of 8,781 hectares, of which it is proposed that only 161 hectares are to be returned to the

Crown, and the remaining 8,620 hectares ~ a considerable part of it, certainly, subject to protective covenants, although extremely easy ones ~ to be freeholded to the current lessee. The purposes of the tenure review provisions in Part II of the Crown Pastoral Land Act are, by section 24, to promote land management in an ecologically sustainable way and to enable significant inherent values to be protected ~ 'preferably' by the restoration of land to full Crown ownership and control. Only after those requirements are fulfilled are two third purposes permitted to arise, to make freeholding easier and to provide for public recreation. There is, then, an initial presumption that land of higher ecological value should be restored to the public conservation estate to be managed by the Department of Conservation. **Tenure review was never intended to result in nothing more than a continuation of *status quo* management of the whole, merely under a new freehold title.** It involved a bargain; the surrender of some parts of a lease to the Crown and in return the freeholding of other land and consequent freeing of that land from the constraints imposed by section 4 of the Act. The Act was, *inter alia*, a response to new understandings of the high country's non-pastoral values and also a dawning understanding that after a century and a half of grazing much pastoral lease land had simply lost its capacity to support pastoralism any more. New ways of living had to be found.

The Board considers that it would be failing in its duty to conservation and the public interest, therefore, if it did not express concern over land allocations which so signally fail to further the purposes of the Act. The current proposal maximises farming opportunities and minimises fine opportunities for the protection of conservation values and public access and enjoyment. **The conservation covenants proposed for the areas CC1 and CC2 are an inadequate substitute for full Crown ownership and control.** We note that the special conditions of the covenants given in the Second Schedule for these areas specifically allow topdressing. Oversowing may, by Clause 3 ('The Owner's Obligations') of the Covenant itself, still be done with the agreement of the Minister, and indeed if topdressing were to be done it would be sensible, from time to time, to oversow as well. Such a regime will hardly promote ecologically sustainable management and protect significant inherent values. What other purpose do topdressing and oversowing have except to introduce more palatable exotic species and increase the land's potential for grazing? The Board certainly accepts that some occasional grazing of the tops might well be useful or necessary for grass and weed control. **The Board believes, however, that the Act's objects can only be met by allocating CC1, CC2 and the areas subject to the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenants to the public conservation estate** and possibly granting grazing concessions to the new freeholder.

The lease's agricultural potential and future prosperity lie not in this higher country but in the very considerable areas of developed pasture and cultivation on the flats and in the oversown lower slopes. When all land above those lower slopes is returned to full Crown ownership and control, the present lessees will still enjoy private ownership of an immense land resource. That will nicely complement the intensively managed and irrigated land which they currently own on the Red Flat, between the Lindis Pass and Broken Hut Roads.

The Covenants' terms are also quite unsatisfactory in other ways. The continued regular presence of grazing animals, there not for the control of exotic weeds and grasses but for mere private agricultural purposes, renders necessary a monitoring programme which will be another call on the Department's increasingly hard-pressed financial and human resources. If there is no monitoring programme, the Minister and

Department are, by the Covenant's terms, simply unable to come to any conclusion or consequently to require any changes in management. But even should there actually be a monitoring programme, the Minister's powers to require changes to management are vague and very much open to dispute. By Clauses 6, 12 and 17 of the special conditions in Schedule II, if there are 'any issues identified with the status of ..species...or deterioration in the condition and extent of the ecological condition' [sic] then the Minister has the right 'to take any necessary steps...including fencing areas of the covenant and adjusting stock access. The Minister will liaise with the owner...and the owner will co-operate'. There is plenty of scope here for disagreement and dispute. Any fencing, like the monitoring itself, will be at the Minister's expense. Any reduction in grazing will, of course, be at the owner's expense. Realistically, given the Department's straightened circumstances and political situation, the Board cannot see much monitoring ever occurring, and much less fencing or 'adjusting' of stock access and numbers. The covenants ~ which, as observed before, are not demanding in their terms ~ will be virtually meaningless for all the control which they will exert on land management. Covenants are, in any case, generally resented by landowners as intrusions and restrictions upon their 'natural' rights, and the Act is therefore right to prefer restoration to full Crown ownership and control to the use of these 'protective mechanisms'. Covenants are much more appropriate for the protection of small discreet areas within larger freehold blocks, rather than as an alternative to restoring larger ecologically valuable blocks to full Crown ownership and control.

The 2004 Landscape Assessment produced for the Department of Conservation by Alan Petrie recognised the prominence of the Omarama Lease, its importance within a wider landscape context and potential vulnerability to change. It recommended retention of much of the higher country in full Crown ownership and control. W. Chinn's invertebrate survey recommended that all the areas of CC1 and CC2 and the existing Queen Elizabeth II covenants be restored to full Crown management. Jane Sedgeley's 2005 survey of lizards and birds found that this pastoral lease 'contained a particularly abundant lizard fauna' compared to most other pastoral leases she had surveyed (page 11). She found significant inherent values in nearly all of the higher country, and recommended that grazing should be removed from all of these areas. 'Both numbers and diversities of lizards declined with increasing intensity of grazing.' Mark Davis's 2005 Vegetation Report also recommended, with ample justifications, that the higher country of the Cuthbert and Ewe Ranges should be retained in full Crown ownership and control. Given these high significant values and the agreed recommendations of these various authors ~ given a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of tenure review, and given the ineffectuality of the proposed covenants ~ given the obvious opportunities for other land uses and sources of income after freeholding of the lower country ~ given all of this, the Board respectfully suggests that this preliminary proposal requires a very serious rethinking before it could be said to be publicly acceptable and consonant with the requirements of the Act.

The Board does, however, support the establishment of the two scientific reserves SR1 and SR2, and Conservation Covenant CC3.

The Board also supports the easements running through lower country to provide public access to the tops. It notes, however, that the easement line from the Omarama-Otematata State Highway, beginning at h, and the line ascending from e, are very steep and challenging in their lower parts, and are likely to be used only by those prepared for arduous ascents. These routes are not impossible, but they would deter

many, and the Board would be sorry to see another cynical example of public access which, while theoretically possible, is in practice calculated to deter. The Board therefore recommends at least one easement reaching the area CC1 (which area, of course, should be restored to full Crown ownership and control) from another direction; very possibly from Broken Hut Road, near the edge of the present freehold and linking up with the existing farm track. Or, since an easement m-n is proposed just a little further to the south, perhaps that could be extended around to the north to connect with the existing farm track. It is perverse that if an easement is to be granted it should be deliberately kept away from an existing practical route.

The Board does not believe, however, that public use of this fine high country, with its very limited grazing potential, should be limited just to those easement lines. The best way of providing for public access on the tops ~ a matter which section 24 considers as important as making freeholding easier ~ is by restoring the areas CC1 and CC2, and the areas under Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenants, to full Crown ownership and control.

In summary, then, the Board recommends that:

- 1. The areas CC1, CC2 and the land currently covered by Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenants should be restored to full Crown ownership and control**
- 2. The Scientific Reserves SR1 and SR2, and the conservation covenant CC3 should be established.**
- 3. The proposed easements for public access should be established, but of course they are necessary only until they reach land restored to full Crown ownership and control. The easement beginning at point h, however, would be better replaced by another gentler one, along the lines suggested above.**

We trust these remarks are of assistance.

Yours faithfully,

David Round

For & on behalf of the Canterbury/Aoraki Conservation Board

Submission 8



North Otago Tramping & Mountaineering Club

PO Box 217
OAMARU 9444

Commissioner of Crown Lands
Land Information New Zealand
Crown Property and Investment
CBRE House, 112 Tuam St
Private Bag 4721
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

13 October 2012

Dear Commissioner

TENURE REVIEW: OMARAMA

The North Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club exists to promote understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment through tramping and mountain climbing. The Club supports the preliminary proposal for tenure review of the Omarama Pastoral Lease, which it sees as consistent with the Club's objectives.

In particular, the Club supports the proposed continuation of the existing QEII covenants and the introduction of conservation covenants in order to protect existing conservation values by creating stocking restrictions and requiring control of pests while allowing continuation economic use of the land. The proposed public access easements will provide practical as well as legal foot access to interesting tramping country.

Yours sincerely

John Chetwin
Vice-President

Submission 9

186 Faulks Road
RD2
Wanaka 9382
15 October 2012

The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Land Information New Zealand,
Crown Property and Investment,
Private Bag 4721,
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

**Omarama Station Crown Pastoral Lease
Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review (PO 369)**

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the review of Omarama Station Crown Pastoral Lease.

I visited the Lease on 19 September 2012, in a group visit arranged by Mr Ken Taylor, agent for Land Information NZ. Mr and Mrs Subtil made us welcome and we were taken on a tour of the property, to the top of Mt St Cuthbert by the farm road, and up onto the downland area of the Ewe Range by the proposed Easement, again on a farm road.

Thank you to the Subtil family for the courtesy of assisting with this visit.

I wish to make the following submissions.

Jan Kelly

Wanaka

Colour copy emailed.

Omarama Station Crown Pastoral Lease PO 369, Preliminary Proposal.

PROPOSAL

2.1 Approximately 81ha to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as a scenic reserve under Section 35(2)(a)(ii) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 and identified as SR1.

We didn't visit this side of the property on the formal visit, and as I haven't walked the 5.5 km in to the Glen Creek Reserve, on the public access easement through Otamatapaio Station, I am thus unable to comment on it personally.

A "Local Walks" map identifies the route in from the highway to approximately point e as 2 hrs, 5.5 km. There are no tracks through the Reserve. The proposed easement e, f, g skirts the Reserve, adding up to another 2 km to any realistic starting point for walking or biking on the easement proposed for Omarama Station.

That route in is for persons on foot or by non-motorised vehicle, there is no provision to enter at this point by horse riding, and no authorised vehicle access approaches the entry point.

I will return to Public Access as an issue, later in the submission.

2.2 Approximately 80ha to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as a scientific reserve under Section 35(2)(a)(ii) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 and identified as SR2.

This wetland, including part of the Omarama Stream which flows through it, is an eel nursery and wetland habitat, the lessees have fenced it from stock to protect and maintain its clean water.

Management Access has been provided via the track m-n, from Broken Hut Road, but not public access.

2.3 Approximately 8620ha to be disposed on freehold title to the current holder subject to protective mechanisms and qualified designations pursuant to Section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

It is not a reasonable outcome that the remainder of the lease should be free-held in its entirety.

In the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, the Crown prefers to restore land to full Crown ownership and control.

Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998

s24 Objects of Part 2

The objects of this Part are—

(b) to enable the protection of the significant inherent values of reviewable land—

(i) by the creation of protective mechanisms; or (preferably)

(ii) by the restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control

Disposing of almost the entire property, especially such a special one, does not fit with these objectives.

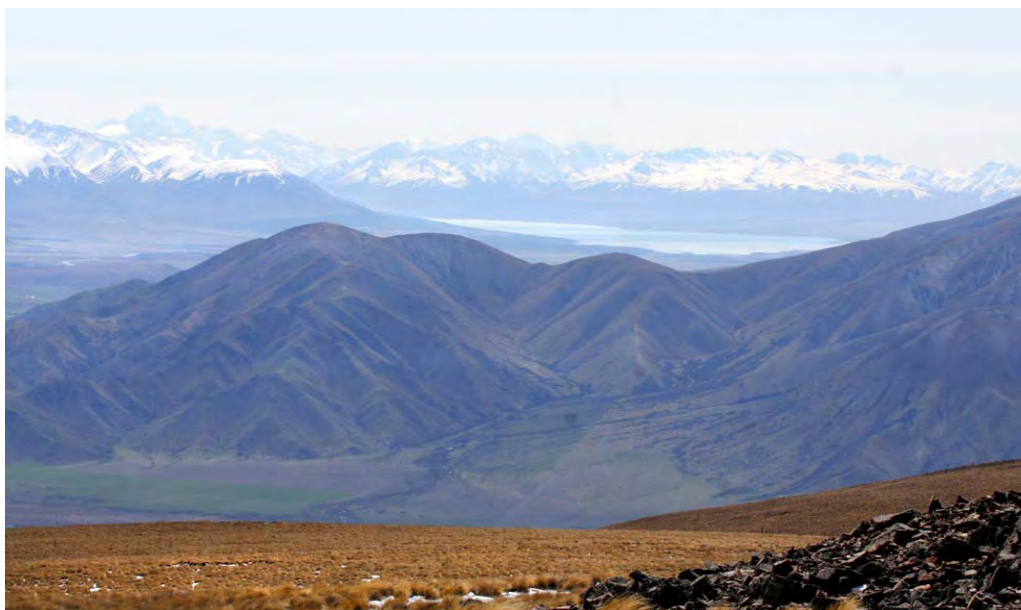
There is supposed to be a public outcome to tenure review, and there is supposed to be a certainty for reviewable high country land that includes long term protection for the values that have been identified during the Review process.

All investigations of the property have highlighted significant values.

It was also noticeable to us, in visiting, that the present owners of the lease both feel and practice a high duty of care to the land. What is critically needed is a provision to translate that vital care into long term, certain, protection that will consolidate and extend the present work, regardless of who is the owner.

The terms of the Covenants can never be strong enough to have that effect into the future, and in the long term the recognised land values are being put at risk by being placed outside of more formal care.

It is recommended that more of the lease be transferred to full Crown ownership and control.



**Mt St Cuthbert summit
north to the Southern Alps
& Mt Cook, and to the
Benmore Range.**



2.3.1 MT ST CUTHBERT.

Proposal: Continuation of a QEII Open Space Covenant over approximately 865ha to protect high altitude tussock grassland and associated vegetation. (Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act 1977).

The high altitude tussock “plateau-like” top of Mt St Cuthbert, including boulder and rock outcrops, has a good cover of indigenous vegetation.

This upland summit is high and exposed, with tremendous views out in all directions, especially to the Alps and Mt Cook. Members of the public who get up here will find it to be a compelling vantage point.

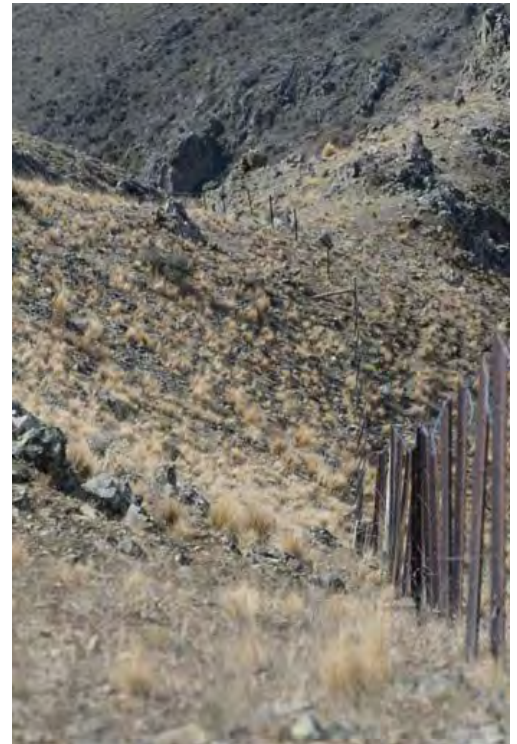
Recommended that these 865 ha of land be returned to full Crown ownership and control, and that the QEII Trust Covenant be subsumed into a Mt St Cuthbert Conservation Area.

Access: the distance between the highway and the summit is around 6 km as the crow flies, longer on the ground by foot; rising from 420m to 1558m.

A significant portion of the proposed easement, to 1100m, is by way of a steep scramble up a fence line, there is no track. In this photo the route is immediately to the left (west) of the fence, outside of CC1 which is on the right of the fence.

It is not a safe route. If one had to come down after dark or in the dusk, it would be hazardous. Given the length of the access tracks in general, it is likely that any of the tracks would have to be used at the end of a long day and so should be better placed.

I **recommend** that LINZ and the Lessees look for another route that reaches the top, that could better be termed “reasonable public access”, in the spirit and intent of the Crown Pastoral Land Act, making for a kinder and more enjoyable approach to this lovely mountain.



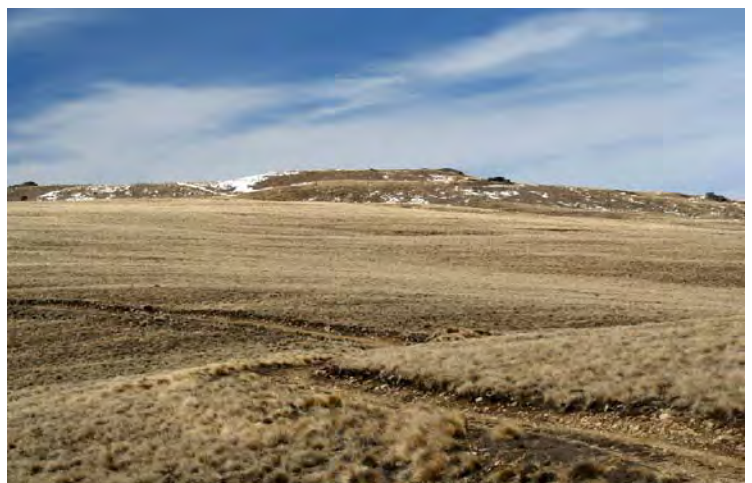
2.3.1. Proposal: CC1 – St Cuthbert Range.

Conservation Covenant CC1 over approximately 1160ha to protect tussock grasslands, shrublands and associated vegetation.

This is the high altitude tussock “plateau” up to the boundary of the existing QEII Open Space Trust Covenant on the summit, both of which are in this photo.

It is an attractive landscape with magnificent views out, as shown above on p3. Once the plateau is attained, it is easy walking. CC1 is not fenced from the QEII Covenant, thus any grazing will have to take into account the proximity of that upper area of more vulnerable land.

Recommended: that this 1160 ha of land be returned to full Crown



ownership and control and that a grazing covenant be placed over the area for a finite period of time, for the benefit of the present Lessees, together with use conditions suitable to the protection of the natural values that have been identified and acknowledged by all parties involved.

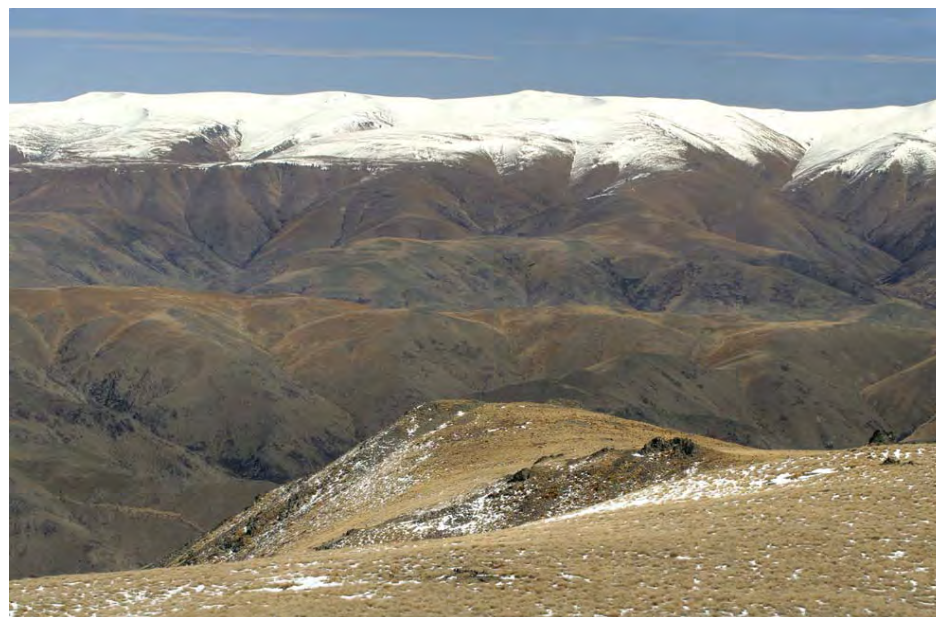
Access to the area is via the route shown in two photos above, from the steep fence-line route to the easy plateau and road easement. A better route could be found to replace the fence-line portion, that is a kinder and less hazardous route, to allow safe and enjoyable public access. Access is further addressed at the end of this document.

2.3.2. EWE RANGE:

Continuation of a QEII Open Space Covenant over approximately 420ha to protect high altitude tussock grassland and associated vegetation. (Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act 1977).

This is the high part of the Ewe Range that is within the Lease, it joins Oteake Conservation Park and Otamatapaio Conservation Area at one end. There is a DOC walking/biking track into the already conserved portion of the Ewe Range from a parking area at Little Omarama Saddle. That DOC track is 7 km long, 3 hrs walking.

The Ewe Range has great landscapes, and is a lovely place to walk. It has high conservation values as recorded in the CRR and in the Preliminary Proposal, and as recognised by the QEII Covenant presently on it.



The Ewe Range QEII Covenant is near the top of this photo and was taken from the summit of Mt St Cuthbert, across the tussock uplands of CC2. Oteake Conservation Park starts at upper right.

It is recommended that the area in the QEII Covenant be converted to a Conservation Area, in full Crown ownership and control. Access to it is discussed below.

There is a natural logic in creating a Conservation Area now, to make it possible to add this complex and valuable area to Oteake Conservation Park at some future time.

CC2 – Ewe Range. Conservation covenant over approximately 1425ha to protect high altitude tussock grassland.

CC2 is a tussock covered “down-land”, the middle slopes of the Ewe Range, accessible from the long easement proposed to run from Broken Hut Road (using a short stretch of unformed legal road, farm tracks along the lease boundary in Cattle Creek valley, and a good quality zig-zag road up onto the tussock. The “downs” area is a coherent upland, although well dissected, and has very good natural values.

The proposed easement to it is approx 9.5 -10 km from point a to the lower edge of CC2, continuing up the ridge to point b at the boundary of the QEII Trust Open Space covenant. A second easement across the contour takes one to the eastern boundary and north along the fence to Glen Creek Reserve, creating a useful circuit. This is route b,c.

It is recommended that the area in the QEII Covenant be converted to a Conservation Area, in full Crown ownership and control, with a grazing covenant with a finite term on it in favour of the present lessees.

2.3.3 Protective Mechanism, CC3 – Cattle Creek Wetland and Rockland/Shrubland Area. Conservation covenant under Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 over approximately 25ha to protect shrubland on a rocky bluff.

This is a bluff on the east side of Cattle Creek with good native shrubland, lizard populations and probably falcons. It is suitable for specific protection, and is adequately covered by a CC designation. Noted: that it seems to have no stock fence.

RECREATION and ACCESS PROVISIONS.

While it is proposed to run a public access easement the length of the lease from the Omarama-Otematata Highway via Mt St Cuthbert to the Ewe Range, joining eventually to the neighbouring conservation land and including one long loop, each of the routes proposed involves a very long walk in (or by mountain bike for the Ewe Range.)

No provision has been made for motorised vehicle access, even though a suitable road exists.

The public access proposed has the following limitations.

1. climb up the front face of Mt St Cuthbert from the Otematata – Omarama highway (route f-h). Rises from 420m to 1558m, up a steep fence line with no track. The route is an easy walk above 1100m
2. walk in 5.5 km on the Otamatapaio easement on Glen Creek, to get to the start of any walk on Omarama Station, to point e.
3. walk in approx 12 km on a farm access track up Cattle Creek and via the downlands (CC2), to get to the start of any walk on the Ewe Range (QEII Covenant)
4. walk in 7 km on the DOC track from DOC's Twinburn parking area, up the face of the Ewe Range to get to the start of any walk on the top of the range (QEII Covenant)
5. the track across CC2 could be approx 15 km from point b to point c, Glen Creek Reserve; in itself this is a good walk, but the distances involved in getting TO this track is an issue.
6. The Ewe Range portions of the easement have mountain bike access provided for, but on Mt St Cuthbert foot only is the rule, making it difficult to make a trip that includes both.

While one of these levels of distance and accessibility would be quite OK, maybe two, it is not reasonable to have all the routes in made so limiting.

The outcome of these 6 points made above is that while Omarama Station is quite near to populations and to a highway, getting into it is proscribed. Effectively and in practice the easements will work to keep all but the enthusiasts out.

Recreation

The Crown Resources Report identifies the following.

2.7.3. The higher altitude parts of the property provide opportunities for walking, tramping, skiing, scenery appreciation, nature study and photography. Lower altitude parts of the property provide opportunities for walking, mountain biking, horse riding and four-wheel-drive vehicle use. Importantly, the existing vehicle track through the property via Glen and Cattle Creeks provides opportunities for through trips by mountain bike or four-wheel drive vehicle. Access through the property could provide opportunities for longer tramping or winter-skiing trips along the Hawkdun ranges to the south.

Page 36, Omarama CRR 27/6/2005, my emphasis

The access provided via the Preliminary Proposal is not in the spirit of the CCR, and not in the spirit of the Act.

Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, Section 24:

Objects of Part 2

(c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b), to make easier—

(i) the securing of public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land;

It is hard to see how the combination of almost no public land forthcoming, and limiting access arrangements, can contribute to the public enjoyment of this reviewable land.

Camping

The Special Easement terms add that *No camping is permitted on Easement Areas "f-h", "a-b-c", "b-d" and "e-f-g".*

It is hard to know how recreationists could make such long journeys across the lease with no opportunity to camp overnight in a trampers tent, all journeys have to be in and out again in the one day. Camping could well be provided for near or in the addition to Glen Creek reserve.

It is recommended that the public access easements are reassessed, to allow for a wider range of recreational activities which this property can and should support, including vehicle access on a,b, and that on the long "foot" trails some provision is made for camping by trampers and mountain bikers.

Thank you for the opportunity to look at this most appealing property.

Jan Kelly
15 October 2012