

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name : OMARAMA STATION**

**Lease number : PO 369**

### **Public Submissions – Part 2**

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 10**

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11.10.12

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



Dear Sir,

I enclose this submissions on the preliminary proposal for the Omarama Pastoral Lease. Thankyou for the opportunity to make submissions on this proposal and for arranging permission for us to inspect the lease.

Yours sincerely

Janet Ledingham

Email [jlendingham@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jlendingham@xtra.co.nz)

## Submission on the Preliminary Proposal for Omarama Pastoral Lease

Janet Ledingham,

Forest and Bird member, Dunedin Branch, with a strong interest in the ecology of the High Country

This submission is written with reference to the objectives of tenure review as set out in the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, and the government objectives for the South Island high country, especially the following:-

24.2.

- *(a) (i) to promote the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable.*
- *(b) To enable the protection of the significant inherent values of reviewable land*
  - *(i) by the creation of protective measures; or (preferably)*
  - *(ii) by restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control.*
- *to secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land.*
- *to ensure that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the NZ Biodiversity Strategy to progressively establish a network of high country parks and reserves.*

### CPL 24 Objects of Part 2

- The objects of this Part are—
  - (a) to—
    - (i) promote the management of reviewable land in a way that is ecologically sustainable;
    - (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
  - (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; and
  - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b), to make easier—
    - (i) the securing of public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land; and
    - (ii) the freehold disposal of reviewable land.

This submission is based on knowledge of the lease from an NGO day inspection this month with the lessee Richard Subtil and the Crown Agent, Mr Ken Taylor and a day trip to Mt St Cuthbert to study lichens in April 2012. . We have also consulted the Conservation Resources Report (CRR), the field survey reports on Vegetation, Landscape, Invertebrates, Fauna and Aquatic Fauna used in the preparation of the CRR, the descriptions of the two QEII covenant values and the PNA Survey information on two recommended areas for protection, RAP Benmore 3 and RAP Hawkdun 1. We are familiar with the significant inherent values SIVs on the adjoining leases and Oteake Conservation Park. Since we were unable to visit the Ewe Range (including the QEII covenant there), the wetland on the south side of Mt St Cuthbert, the SR1 Scenic Reserve and the vegetation in Old Man Creek, we are reliant on the above reports and discussion on the inspection day for detail on the significant inherent values (SIVs) in these areas.

### Introduction

Those on the inspection trip are very grateful to Richard and Annabel Subtil, the lessees, for permission to inspect the lease and with Richard Subtil and the Crown Agent Ken Taylor leading the inspection we appreciated the opportunity for discussion of the past, present and likely future management of the property which has been in the hands of the Wardell family for three generations.

We were left with an appreciation of the mountainous nature of much of the lease and the good condition of the tussock country on the St Cuthbert Range above about 1100m, but while

acknowledging the sympathetic management of the current lessees we concluded that the lease is being managed under a system which may be sustainable in the short term but not in the long term without appropriate inputs, an opinion clearly stated in the 'Martin Report' (1994) from the Working Party on Sustainable Land Management of the High Country, commissioned by three Government Ministers.

We felt that freeholding such a large area with covenants was not the best way to ensure that the present condition of the SIVs and land resources of the property can be guaranteed into the future, even with continuation of the current management and even less certainty should the Station change hands in the future and be under less sympathetic management.

The Omarama lease of approximately 8781 hectares is on the St Cuthbert Range and the northern part of the Ewe Range and extends down to the lower Ahuriri plains at around 420m at SH8. Significant waterways on the lease include Omarama Stream, Cattle Creek, Old Man Creek and Glen Creek. The lease is mountainous with some deeply incised valleys rising to Mt St Cuthbert at 1558m and on the Ewe Range, which has an upland plateau, rising to above 1600m.

There are two existing QEII open space covenants on the lease, one on the St Cuthbert Range which includes much of the RAP Benmore 3 and the other on Ewe Range which includes much of the RAP Hawkdun 1.

The landscape vales of the lease are high as it forms the highly visible southwestern edge of the Waitaki Basin. Views across the Basin and all around from vantage points such as Mt St Cuthbert are outstanding. To the west is the Wether Range, north looks towards the Ben Ohau Range, Ohau, Pukaki and the main Divide and east to Benmore and the peaks and land surrounding it.

**I note the following general summary of significant inherent values from the Omarama Station Vegetation Report, M Davis (2005)".** Other commentary about the significant inherent values is given in the sections referring to each of the preliminary proposals

### **Summary of Significant Inherent Values**

- Alpine tall tussocklands occur on the summits of the Cuthbert and Ewe Ranges and are generally in good condition. They include original slim snow tussocklands and some induced narrow-leaved snow tussocklands. Good condition cushion vegetation has been induced from slim snow tussocklands on the summit of the Ewe Range.
- Subalpine narrow-leaved snow tussocklands are extensive on both ranges, and their condition varies from good to poor at lower altitudes. They have mostly been induced, though some would originally have been present on bluffs and among woodlands.
- Short tussock grasslands are common on mid slopes, giving way to exotic grasslands on lower slopes and fans. Most are induced and their condition is moderate to poor.
- Rocklands support original shrublands, sparse herbs and grasses in very good or good condition on both ranges. Shrublands are common in gullies and gorges. They represent original communities and many contain threatened plants, including good populations of *Carmichaelia kirkii* and *Hebe cupressoides* to a lesser extent.
- Small floodplain wetlands in Omarama Stream, Cattle Creek and Glen Creek are very modified due to exotic plants. Their plant succession is compromised, grazing is widespread and artificial drainage is common along the Omarama Stream.
- Alpine cushion bogs are an interesting feature of the Ewe Range. They represent an original community type and are generally in very good condition. Seepages are small and rare on mountain slopes elsewhere on the two ranges.

I estimate that the lease consists of approx. 300ha of pasture, a further 3,250ha of over-sown and top-dressed land with the balance of the lease, approx. 5070ha, of unimproved land being LUC Class VIIe. i.e. this indicates severe limitations for sustainable pastoral use. Above 1000m we estimate there is approx 4,150ha, all of which is LUC Class VIIe.

### **The proposal:**

#### **SR1 Approximately 81ha to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as a scenic reserve**

As described in the proposal 'This area is currently fenced with a scenic reserve recently established on the adjacent Glen Creek area. The area concerned includes shrubland, rock outcrops and wetlands with vegetation that are highly representative of this area.' We note the recorded presence of a range of lizards insects and birds, including the NZ falcon.

**We fully support the designation of this area as a Scenic Reserve which will allow a completion of the Glen Creek Scenic Reserve.**

#### **SR2 Approximately 80ha to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as a scientific reserve**

SR2 covers the Omarama Sream with a 25m marginal strip, together with 30ha of associated wetlands at the confluence with Cattle Creek and a separate drainage channel.

As described in the CRR, 'The area contains a wetland with a range of representative bird and fish population and elements of the original vegetation.' It is also a significant eel habitat treasured by local Maori and the Runholders and the drainage channel is a habitat for Big Nose Galaxid.

We note from the CRR that the wetland has low-medium naturalness values. It seems to be dominated by exotic plants, but does support some indigenous wetland plants including a threatened sedge, *Carex tenuiculmis*. Davis, in his report on the vegetation, (Omarama Station Vegetation Report, 2005) recommended that the area should be protected by a covenant.

**We support the designation of Scientific Reserve for this area to protect the eel and galaxiid habitats and as a bird habitat.**

### **Area Proposed for freehold**

**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.**

I believe that much of the country within the proposed freehold area should rather be rearuned to the Crown as Conservation Area for the reasons as discussed below.

### **Protective Mechanisms (Mt St Cuthbert):**

**CC1 Conservation covenant under Sections 40(1)(b), 40(2)(a) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 over approximately 1160 ha to protect tussock grasslands, shrublands and associated vegetation.**

This area on Mt St Cuthbert has multiple significant inherent values where vegetation is concerned, well described in the CRR and in the Davis report on the vegetation.

CC1 includes diverse vegetation communities over a significant altitudinal range that are highly representative of the original vegetation and parts of it are classified as "critically underprotected" land environment which support indigenous vegetation

The area visible to the western side of the vehicle track passing through CC1 is largely modified and has a number of exotic species including sweet vernal, briar and sorrel and has extensive areas of hieracium.

The upper reaches of Old Man Creek, which is included in CC1, has extensive indigenous shrubland on its western side and its vegetation is well described in the CRR as follows

'The upper reaches of Old Man Creek have some of the best shrublands on the property, containing species rarely seen (or not seen) elsewhere. Extensive grey shrubland in this area contains scattered broadleaf. A population of the threatened *Hebe cupressoides* (25 plants) is present below a large waterfall. Plants directly beneath this waterfall include mingimingi, broadleaf, mountain wineberry, *Hebe rakaiensis*, *H. subalpina*, *Olearia odorata*, korokio, weeping matipo, shrub pohuehue, lawyer, little hard fern, mosses, lichens, prickly shield fern, native jasmine, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *Asplenium richardii*, *Senecio wairauensis*, bristle tussock, *Chionochloa conspicua*, uncommon kowhai and the threatened *Carmichaelia kirkii*. The largest broadleaf is about 6 m tall with a trunk diameter of around 40 cm. Two mountain totara are perched next to the waterfall, and two more are present above the waterfall though they may be hybrids with snow totara. Shrublands are extensive above the waterfall and an estimated 60 plus *Hebe cupressoides* plants were counted through binoculars. Occasional plants of yellowwood were also seen. Overall naturalness varies from medium in accessible areas to high adjacent to the waterfall. Representativeness values are high.'

Old Man Creek shrublands are also home to native bird species, NZ falcon, silvereyes, South Island tomtit, grey warbler and fantail as well as introduced birds. Falcons have also been reported in the area. Southern Alps geckos are present in the rocklands of the Old Man Creek complex. The uncommon grasshopper *Sigauss minutis* was found at 800m in the headwaters of the Creek.

The Old Man shrublands in the upper reaches with their rare plants, native birds and important gecko and invertebrate populations deserve maximum protection as a CA to preserve these important SIVs and the unique landscape, as described under Landscape Unit 1 in the CRR.

Advice from soil scientist Dr M Floate, who was present on the inspection on behalf of FMC, is that most of the land within CC1 is classified as LUC Class VIIe, and therefore has serious limitations for pastoral use and may not be capable of supporting ecologically sustainable pastoral production unless it is very carefully managed, with regular replenishment of soil nutrients (especially sulphur) removed in animal products.

My own observations backed up by the CRR, including the values of the land to be preserved (as set out in Schedule 1, CC1 - St Cuthbert Range) and the individual reports on vegetation (Davis), fauna (Sedgely) and invertebrates (Chinn) lead me to advocate that CC1 rather be designated CA to ensure adequate protection of the SIVs for all time.

I am aware that such a designation, which included the existing QEII covenant, was originally proposed and preferred by the Department of Conservation (DOC) as a means to best protect the SIVs.

Consideration could then be given to limited grazing on the land below about 1100m, controlled by rigorous monitoring, as a means to best protect the indigenous vegetation including the tussocklands.

**Continuation of an Open Space Covenant pursuant to section 22 Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977 over approximately 865ha to protect high altitude tussock grassland and associated vegetation.**

SIV's within the Covenant are currently high. The diverse vegetation communities are of high importance, highly representative of the original vegetation and tall tussockland ; vegetation values include 10 threatened plant species

The top area at and around Mt St Cuthbert has areas of talus and scattered rock outcrops both of which support plant communities and a number of mosses and lichens. Numerous pipits and some New Zealand falcon also favour this habitat- a falcon was seen when I was on a lichen study trip to

Mt St Cuthbert in April 2012. In the CRR the tall tussockland, which lies mostly within the QEII covenant, is described thus:-

'Slim snow tussockland is extensive on summit spurs and upper slopes around Mt St Cuthbert. Tussock cover is 50-60%. Other prominent species are lichens, blue tussock, bristle tussock, mouse-ear hawkweed, *Raoulia grandiflora*, *Raoulia subsericea*, king devil hawkweed, mountain clubmoss, sheep's sorrel, patotara and *Scleranthus uniflorus*. Species diversity is naturally low, especially in the densest tussock (up to 80% cover) near the rolling summit.'

I also note the comments on grazing impacts- '**Sheep grazing has caused local die back of slim snow tussock, especially near the vehicle track and around talus patches where stock access is easier. Grazing impacts also increase as altitude declines on northern slopes. Patches of golden speargrass indicate past burning.**'

In addition Sedgely (J Sedgely Assessment of the fauna values (birds and lizards) of Omarama Pastoral Lease, 2005.) comments on the tussock grasslands on Mt St Cuthbert

– 'High altitude tussock grasslands are dominated by *Chionochloa macra* on the top of Mt St Cuthbert grading into *C.rigida* at slightly lower altitudes on ridges leading off the mountain. **Somewhat degraded by grazing, with areas of bare ground and weeds**, these grasslands are interspersed with numerous areas of rock outcrops, talus slopes and gently sloping screens.'

There is a rare wetland/seepage on the south facing slopes of Mt St Cuthbert at 1448m. According to the CRR 'Its margins are characterised by bogrush, while the remainder is dominated by mosses, *Hydrocotyle novae-zeelandiae*, liverworts, *Colobanthus apetalus*, *Euchiton mackayi*, *Psychrophila novae-zeelandiae*, threatened *Ranunculus maculatus*, *Leptinella squalida?*, *Juncus novae-zeelandiae*, *Carex* sp., *Epilobium* sp., blue tussock and scattered browntop. Naturalness is medium-high to high, and representedness is high.'

Full protection with no grazing is surely vital to preserve this rare seepage and currently limited grazing is allowed under the terms of the Covenant. To us this is a further reason why the Covenant should become part of a CA with more rigid conditions to prevent any stock damage.

**Access** as currently proposed, to allow public enjoyment of the St Cuthbert Range is not satisfactory and will be discussed in a later section.

### **Recommendations re protective mechanisms for CC1 and the existing QEII Covenant on the St Cuthbert Range**

**CC1 and the existing QEII covenant together cover the upper part of the St Cuthbert Range, including Mt St Cuthbert and extend down to include the significant shrublands in Old Man Creek and overall provide a valuable altitudinal sequence which deserves protection as a CA .**

**It is most important to preserve the diverse vegetation communities that are highly representative of the original vegetation over a significant altitudinal range and to be aware that parts of it are classified as "critically underprotected" land environment which support indigenous vegetation. This would be best achieved by designation as a CA with a limited grazing concession for the lower areas below about 1100m.**

**I do have concerns about the effects of the proposed continued grazing on the ecological sustainability of the unimproved tussock grassland areas in CC1 and the QEII Covenant and are sure a CA designation over the tussock grassland above about 1100m would confer better protection.**

**The land below about 1100m I submit could be sustainably managed with a controlled grazing regime and careful uses of nutrients such as is happening under the current management. Perhaps a sustainable management covenant (SMC) designation with regular monitoring specified would be appropriate.**



**The Old Man Creek shrublands in its upper reaches with their rare plants, native birds and important gecko and invertebrate populations deserve maximum protection as a CA to preserve these important SIVs and the unique landscape.**

**I strongly submit that CC1 and the QEII Covenant should be designated as a CA as we have suggested above to conform with the aims stated in the CPL Act as follows**

24.2. (a) (i) to promote the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable.

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

- (i) by the creation of protective measures; or (preferably)
- (ii) by restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control

### **Protective Mechanisms (Ewe Range):**

**CC2 Conservation covenant under Sections 40(1)(b), 40(2)(a) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 over approximately 1425ha (shown as CC2) to protect tussock grasslands, shrublands and associated vegetation.**

and

**Continuation of an Open Space QEII Covenant pursuant to section 22 Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977 over approximately 420ha to protect high altitude tussock grassland and associated vegetation.**

Since we were unable to inspect the crest of the Ewe Range, only went a short distance into CC2 and did not reach the QEII Covenant I am dependent on the CRR description and SIVs noted – see below

Crest and upper slopes of the Ewe Range

**'The crest of the Ewe Range** supports slim snow tussockland, which grades to narrow-leaved snow tussockland with decreasing altitude. Bogs are also common on the range crest and adjacent slopes. Shrubland is extensive in incised valleys and on other rocky slopes, while rockland vegetation is scattered across the area. Short tussock grassland and exotic herbfield are found on middle and lower slopes.

#### Rockland, boulderfield and stonefield

Patches of flattened, lichen-covered rocks are found on summit ridges of the Ewe Range. On lower slopes, talus supports shrublands as described above. Rock outcrop plants include mosses, lichens, porcupine shrub, *Helichrysum intermedium*, *Celmisia densiflora*, *Hebe pimeleoides*, common broom, threatened coral broom, blue tussock, *Rytidosperma* spp., *Colobanthus acicularis*, blue wheatgrass, patotara and hawkweeds. Naturalness is medium to high, and representativeness is medium-high to high.

#### Wetlands

Cushion bogs are present on the gentle upper slopes of the Ewe Range. Cushion bogs are typically dominated by comb sedge, bog rush, mosses and *Luzula pumila*. Other species present are *Euchiton mackayi*, *Epilobium komarovianum*, *Euphrasia dyeri*, *Gentiana amabilis*, threatened *Ranunculus maculatus* and *Carex pyrenaica* var. *cephalotes*? Drier mounds within bogs support comb sedge, threatened *Carex muelleri*, *Psychrophila obtusa*, blue tussock, *Kelleria croizatii*, *Pernettya nana*, dainty daisy, bog rush, lichens, red woodrush, *Plantago uniflora*, *Celmisia sessiliflora*, *Phyllachne colensoi* and mouse-ear hawkweed. There is some localised sheep pugging in the wettest parts, but overall naturalness is medium-high to high.

**With decreasing altitude, smaller bogs and drier parts of larger bogs become degraded by sheep grazing. Trampling and pugging is common, plants are pulled out and browntop, sweet vernal and mouse-ear hawkweed become prominent. It appears that stock are hastening the transformation of these bogs to dry land'.**

**I submit that the summit crest and ridges should be designated as a CA rather than CC2 – and that the QEII Covenant be incorporated as part of the CA.**

**It is important that no further grazing damage occurs in the wetlands on gentle upper slopes of the range and a CA designation with grazing excluded would ensure this.**

#### Tall tussockland

Slim snow tussockland occurs on the range crest and adjacent slopes, forming a mosaic with bogs and localised areas of hummocky cushionfield. Lichen is frequently co-dominant with snow tussock. Other prominent species are *Pernettya alpina*, *Phyllachne colensoi*, mountain clubmoss, mouse-ear hawkweed, blue tussock, *Luzula pumila* and alpine fescue tussock. Additional species include *Rytidosperma pumilum*, sheep's sorrel, *Pimelea oreophila*, threatened *Agrostis subulata*, fescue tussock, *Kelleria dieffenbachii*, *K. lyallii*, threatened *Carex muelleri*, *Euphrasia dyeri* and red woodrush. Tussock cover is commonly 15-20%, and occasionally up to 50%. **Naturalness and representativeness is high.** In other areas alpine fescue tussock and blue tussock are locally dominant. **On some spurs and knolls, sheep grazing has resulted in the dominance of short tussock and a cover of mouse-ear hawkweed of more than 25%.**

**A CA designation would have the best chance of allowing tussock recovery and suppressing weeds.**

'Higher-altitude narrow-leaved snow tussockland has a tussock cover of around 25%. Hybrids with slim snow tussock are common. **Other prominent species are king devil hawkweed, blue tussock, mouse-ear hawkweed and fescue tussock.** Further species include *Epilobium glabellum*, red woodrush, *Raoulia subsericea*, sheep's sorrel, mountain oat grass, *Scleranthus uniflorus*, *Rytidosperma pumilum*, *Geranium sessiliflorum*, catsear, creeping pohuehue, harebell, *Carex breviculmis* and patotara. Naturalness is low-medium to medium, and representativeness is low-medium'

**A CA designation would have the best chance of allowing tussock recovery and suppressing weeds.**

'Mid altitude narrow-leaved snow tussockland (at c.1100 m) typically has a snow tussock cover of 15-20% and naturalness values of low-medium, reflecting the increased cover of exotic plants. Other common plants include lichens, blue tussock, king devil hawkweed, mouse-ear hawkweed, browntop and fescue tussock. **Pig rooting is common.** Small frost-heave exposures on ridge tops support the tiny grass *Agrostis muscosa* and Lindsay's poa. Mid altitude snow tussockland on broad spurs has snow tussock cover of approximately 20%. Other prominent plants are king devil hawkweed, blue tussock, fescue tussock and mouse-ear hawkweed. **Pig rooting is evident and naturalness is low-medium.** On shady slopes and in gullies, the snow tussock cover tends to be greater. In contrast, steeper sunny slopes in the southeast catchment of Cattle Creek have a very sparse cover of snow tussock'.

#### Short tussockland

Alpine (c. 1500 m) short tussockland **where the original slim snow tussock has been removed by grazing** is dominated by mouse-ear hawkweed, fescue tussock, blue tussock, browntop and king devil hawkweed'.

**It is probable that the slim snow tussock would recover if grazing was removed.**

'Additional plants are patotara, threatened *Carex muelleri*, *Acaena caesiiglauca*, *Scleranthus uniflorus*, golden speargrass, sheep's sorrel, red woodrush, *Luzula pumila* and wire moss. Pig rooting is present and naturalness is low-medium. Representativeness is low. On mid to lower slopes, sparse fescue tussock occurs with king devil hawkweed, mouse-ear hawkweed, haresfoot trefoil, sweet vernal, tall oat grass, snow tussock (uncommon), *Olearia odorata*, golden speargrass and matagouri. Silver tussock is prominent on stream terraces and fans'.

#### Herbfield

Exotic herbfields on dry, degraded lower slopes support tall oat grass, scabweed, viper's bugloss, haresfoot trefoil, king devil hawkweed, woolly mullein and sweet brier. Scattered matagouri, mingimingi and *Olearia odorata* are sometimes present, and naturalness and representativeness is low. Where shattered rock needles are abundant, more indigenous plants are present such as blue tussock, creeping pohuehue, *Geranium sessiliflorum*, scabweed, *Scleranthus uniflorus* and *Myosotis* sp. "roundleaf".

**From the proposal we note and agree with the stated significant inherent values of land to be preserved i.e.-**

**CC2– Ewe Range.**

'The area supports the threatened plant species *Carmichaelia kirkii*, *Hebe cupressoides*, *Carmichaelia crassicaule*, *Carex muelleri*, *Ranunculus maculatus*, *Urtica aspera* and *Agrostis subulata*.

The area supports diverse vegetation communities over a significant altitudinal range that are highly representative of the original vegetation including higher altitude tall tussockland (slim snow tussock), shrubland, scrub, rockland and cushionfield and includes vegetation on unusual hummocky topography that is not found elsewhere in the district.

The area also supports areas of montane tall tussockland, short tussockland, rockland, shrubland and scrub which have some modification but also support vegetation that is representative of the original vegetation.

Parts of the area are classified as a "critically underprotected" land environment which supports indigenous vegetation.

The area supports the threatened bird species New Zealand falcon and the threatened lizard species spotted skink.

The area supports breeding or feeding sites for good populations of indigenous lizard and invertebrate species within relatively extensive associated habitats.

The area makes an important contribution to the natural quality and integrity of the Canterbury high country landscape and especially to the Waitaki Basin landscape with the naturalness of the indigenous vegetation over most parts of this area contributing to its high inherent landscape values.

The area contains some important landscape features including the gorged upper reaches of Cattle Creek, the upland plateau of Baldy Knob and the northern Ewe Range with parts of the area visible from public viewpoints in the Waitaki Basin.

The area forms an integral part of the scenic and aesthetic values of the wider landscape of the Ewe Range-Hawkdun Range landscape'.

**Summary of recommendations**

**i strongly submit that CC2 and the QEII Covenant should be designated as a CA to conform with the aims stated in the CPL Act as follows**

**24.2. (a) (i) to promote the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable.**

**(b) To enable the protection of the significant inherent values of reviewable land**

**(i) by the creation of protective measures; or (preferably)**

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

**CC3 "Conservation covenant under Sections 40(1)(b), 40(2)(a) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 over approximately 25ha and identified as CC3 to protect shrubland on a rocky outcrop."**

**We support the creation of CC3 to protect the values described in the proposal and in the CRR and other reports but suggest that there should be an easement to allow interested members of the public to access this outcrop.**

**Access Provisions**

The proposed access provisions for the public are not acceptable as they stand and in no way fulfil the requirement of the CPL Act ---'to make easier—

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

**The St Cuthbert Range and Ewe Range**

The proposed access from the SH 83 up onto CC1 on the St Cuthbert Range is very steep and uninviting and will discriminate against the less fit and able members of the public who would wish to get up onto the St Cuthbert Range and to Mt St Cuthbert itself. We note that the CPL Act has the requirement ---‘to make easier—

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

**I believe there should be 4WD access up the main vehicle track to the start of the QEII covenant to allow as many people as possible to enjoy the vegetation, tors and talus and the tussock country, Mt St Cuthbert itself and the extensive and wonderful views. We know the lessee’s position is that permission can always be sought from him but we believe something needs to be written into the proposal to formalise the access provisions for this area .**

There are other instances in the Oteake Park and elsewhere of 4WD access is controlled by the issue of keys and we would have no problem with such access being only for the drier months and not over winter. We note that the QEII Covenant conditions lay down access with the permission of the lessee.

**Similarly, without some 4WD access, eg, to the start of the proposed CC2, the Ewe Range crest and tops would be out of reach for day trips for those most likely to be interested in the rich botanical mosaic there and would prevent many enjoying the botanical delights and views along the Range.**

**I suggest that there is a feasible through route, as outlined below, from the St Cuthbert Range across to the Ewe Range which would be attractive to trampers and ask that this be considered as part of the review.**

Mt St Cuthbert summit -WSW to a saddle between Cattle Creek and Glen Creek - ridge at pretty much 1,000m leads SE through 1,085m to s height 1,166m close to a track leading S to the Otematapaio boundary, then W along the Omarama/Otematapaio boundary) to the Berwen boundary.- From there a ridge-top walk the length of the Ewe Range and S to the Hawkduons would be possible.

### CC3

We believe that an easement for access to CC3 should also be in place to allow those interested in the SIVs there to visit them if they wished. Alternatively if it was rather designated a CA, public access through easement would need to be secured

### Right to wander at will on CC1 and CC2 and the QEII covenants

**We firmly believe that the public should have the right to wander at will on foot over the higher areas of the St Cuthbert Range including the QEII covenant, on the range crest and upper slopes of the Ewe Range and the QEII covenant in CC2. This would be compatible with the requirement stated in the CPL Act ---‘to make easier—**

**(ii) the securing of public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land’. If these areas became CA as we are recommending, rather than freehold with CCs and intact QEII covenants then access would be allowed**

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Richard and Annabel Subtil, the lessees, for permission to inspect the lease and Richard Subtil and Ken Taylor for leading us on the inspection trip and for valuable discussion along the way.

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## References

- Bowie, Scott. Omarama Pastoral Lease, A Report on the Aquatic Fauna Survey, April 2005, 18p + map.
- Chinn, Warren. Invertebrate Assessment of the Omarama Pastoral Lease, April 2005, 11p + appendices.
- Davis, Mark. Omarama Station Vegetation Report, April 2005, 19p + map + appendices.
- Martin Report from the Working Party on Sustainable Land Management of the High Country, (1994)
- Petrie, Alan. Omarama Pastoral Lease Landscape Assessment, November 2004, 10p + photographs + map.
- Sedgeley, Jane. Assessment of the Fauna Values of Omarama Pastoral Lease, April 2005, 15p + photographs + maps.

## Figures



Figure 1. On CC1 over 1000m close to the vehicle track. Land not capable of sustaining continued grazing.



Figure 2. View from the QEII covenant on the St Cuthbert Range –towards Benmore. Good tussock cover. April 2012



Figure 3. Close to the top of Mt St Cuthbert looking to Lake Ohau. Tussock in good condition. April 2012.



Figure 4. As in Figure 3, but looking towards Mt Cook



Figure 5. View west to MT Aspiring



Figure 6. From close to the top of Mt St Cuthbert looking north , Ohau in top right. The QEII covenant area of tussockland visible here should all be part of a Conservation Area . April 2012.



Figure 7. Mt St Cuthbert and the complex of talus and tussock





Figure 8. Near Mt St Cuthbert looking west to the Ewe and Wether Ranges. One of the numerous rocky mounds festooned with lichens and plants.



Figure 9. Near Mt St Cuthbert, a large rocky area with much of interest to botanists and botanical trampers.

**NB. Figures 2-9 illustrate the scenic and other values that should be able to be accessed and enjoyed by members of the public, both 'young and fit' and 'more mature and not as fit anymore'.**



Figure 10. View of the rocky face that is designated CC3. There should be an easement to allow access to enjoy the values there.



Figure 11. Looking up Cattle Creek with the 4WD track visible up on the hillside . 4WD access through, eg, a key system at least to the top of the middle ridge where the track disappears from sight, (see arrow), would make it possible for more people to access and enjoy the Ewe Range tops with their botanical and Scenic values.



Figure 12. The south side of Mt St Cuthbert from the point we reached on CC2 at about 1100m



Figure 13. From the same point as Fig 12 looking NE across the steep country, Baldy is off to the right. The country in the foreground is degraded to some extent and longterm, could only sustain very light grazing with monitoring in place. Tussock regeneration would be more likely to occur without grazing as a CA.

## **Submission 11**



Our ref: 22015-001

15 October 2012

The Manager  
Land Information New Zealand  
Crown Property and Investment  
Private Bag 4721  
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: OMARAMA PASTORAL LEASE**

Thank you for your letter of 17 August 2012 and accompanying report concerning this tenure review.

The NZHPT is New Zealand's lead agency in historic heritage management. It is an autonomous Crown Entity established under the Crown Entities Act 2004. Its purpose is to promote the identification, protection, preservation and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand, as provided for in Section 4(1) of the Historic Places Act 1993. Section 54(2) (a) of the Act empowers the NZHPT to advocate its interest at any public forum or in any statutory planning process. This includes High Country tenure reviews undertaken pursuant to Part 2 of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

We recognise that pastoral lease tenure review offers a 'one off' opportunity for the appropriate recognition and protection of significant inherent values, which includes historic and archaeological values. In that regard, our usual experience in tenure review matters, based on the operating process guided by DOC in Otago is that historic heritage values, including archaeological values, are given the same weighting as other significant inherent values, and that ordinarily, these should be assessed at the same time, to allow an integrated approach to management of the values identified. We acknowledge in this case however that the assessment of inherent values was administered from the DOC Canterbury tenure review team and in this case there has been no historic or archaeological assessment done for Omarama Station. The 'Historic' information provided in the August 2005 Conservation Resources Report clearly is derived from just a 'desktop type' analysis.

Accordingly, NZHPT has undertaken its own investigations of the following sources in order to comment on the heritage values of Omarama pastoral lease;

- reference to the NZ Archaeological Assn. site record database (Archsite) for up-to-date information on recorded archaeological sites;
- checking of early Survey Office (SO) plans; and
- reference to the Robert Pinney publication *'Early Northern Otago Runs'*.

Omarama PL along with several neighbouring properties originally came out of the Omarama Run, first taken up in 1858 by Harrie Carr Robinson. The significance of this is that the heritage values of Omarama are interrelated, rather than separate from, values on other runs in the locality. NZHPT has previously commented on this when we replied on the Twin Peaks tenure review.

The NZHPT believes there is a likelihood that Maori, early pastoral and surveying sites of interest are on Omarama Station. The Lindis Pass was a recognized Maori route. Maori traveller seasonal sites are present in this general area with rock art found at nearby Cluden PL in 2010. The Omarama Run, from which Omarama PL was taken, will have had a number of early station buildings, pack tracks, huts, and fences also established. SO Plan 1376 shows Omarama Station and clearly details a number of features of heritage interest.

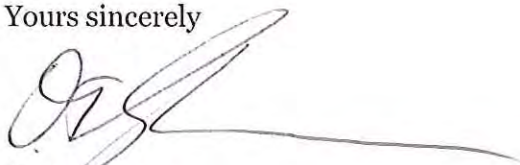
The NZHPT believes that the assessment of heritage values on the station has not been thorough enough and accordingly the Preliminary Proposal is not appropriately informed on those values. The 'one-off' opportunity nature of tenure review requires that proper assessment of all values be undertaken in order to ensure significant inherent values are not missed from the opportunity for protection. The protective mechanisms outlined in the Proposal (both the Covenant under the Reserves Act 1977 and the QE II Open Space covenant) do not afford recognition or protection to any heritage values.

Omarama should have further heritage research done and where appropriate a field evaluation undertaken to enable proper consideration and assessment of appropriate levels of protection for historic heritage values.

Additionally, it is important that current and future owners are made aware that any ground disturbance work affecting archaeological sites is subject to the archaeological authority process under the Historic Places Act 1993. If any activity by the owner or purchaser of the land may modify, damage or destroy any archaeological site(s), an authority (consent) from the NZ Historic Places Trust must be obtained for that work prior to commencement.

Please let me know if you have any queries with respect to the above. NZHPT would be happy to advise on an appropriate assessment programme for Omarama PL.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Owen Graham', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Owen Graham  
Area Manager (Otago/Southland)

## **Submission 12**

C/O Recreational users forum  
C/. 30 Earnsleugh rd.  
Alexandra 9320  
14 October 2012

TO:  
The Commissioner of Crown Lands,  
Land Information New Zealand,

RE: Omarama Station Tenure review

## **CORUF**

Central Otago Recreational users forum is a committee representing some 50-60 groups and individuals with recreational interests. We can describe our members as general public of varying fitness levels wanting to enjoy their chosen outdoor pursuits. Most have a number of interests but all require reasonable 4WD access to give them a real opportunity to enjoy their chosen recreation which is often family orientated..

We wish to thank the farmer for allowing our representative Jan Kelly to visit their Omarama station.

## **PROPOSAL**

2.1 CORUF approves the small area being added to Otamatakou Scenic Reserve for the purpose of tidying up the boundaries. (SR 1)

2.1 The small area being restored to full crown ownership (SR 2) and access is approved by CORUF

### **2.2**

2.2I MT CUTHBERT and the EWE RANGE

We won't comment on how this area should be set up as we're not sure how the QE11 open space covenant can be handled.

We understand the farmer is very conservation minded and know they will carry on the good practices they have adopted. This proposal will give such minded persons a great deal of satisfaction in the future however I'm sure they can see that a proposal like this will benefit this area only while they are the owners and maybe the area should become conservation land with grazing concessions. This would allow outcomes the farmers have created to be protected forever.

We wish to convey our disappointment that this chance to make available a good 4WD access to Mt Cuthbert which provides wonderful view over the McKenzie basin has been overlooked. CORUF would like to see the track leaving from farm building area become a public access to this prominent point. This will allow the general public to participate in such a wonderful landscape. We will comment later about the access routes being proposed in this review.

2.2II We are in favour of the protective Mechanism for CC3 as it supports the threatened New Zealand falcon and the indigenous Spotted skink lizard species.

### Access issues

We would wonder why access such as those proposed in this review is not proposed under a "reasonable access" code.

Red dots on this tenure review map may be referred to as access routes however when the route is not always on a formed track but goes cross country for gross distances with no allowance for



camping one would have to say why even do this. We would suggest the powers that be look at the term reasonable access as a starting point in Tenure reviews.

If you want an access route available but wish to exclude the general public then this is a good example.

### **GENERAL**

From a recreational point of view this review promised a lot -Refer.Conservation Resources report, 2005 .2.7.3

Quoted walking,tramping.skiing,scenery appreciation, nature study and photography, mountain biking, horse riding and 4WD activities

In reality with this review most of these activities are not available to general public.

We would propose that any Tenure Review being done give “reasonable access” and be for the “general public “of New Zealand.

Thank you for the chance to comment  
Alan Mackie

## **Submission 13**



## OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD

Box 5244, Dunedin 9058 Tel: (03) 474 5644 Email: [alhooper@doc.govt.nz](mailto:alhooper@doc.govt.nz)

Our ref: SBC-08-34

15 October 2012

LINZ - Crown Property and Investment

Private Bag 4721

CHRISTCHURCH 8140

(via email to: [Pastoral&tenurereview@linz.govt.nz](mailto:Pastoral&tenurereview@linz.govt.nz) )

Dear Sirs

### **Review under Crown Pastoral Land Act: Omarama Station Pastoral Lease (Po 369)**

The Otago Conservation Board appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Proposal for the review of Omarama Pastoral Lease.

The Otago Conservation Board (OCB) is appointed by the Minister of Conservation to represent the wider Otago community in advocating for the protection of biodiversity, recreational opportunities and the conservation of natural and historic resources throughout Otago. The Board takes a strong interest in tenure review and makes submissions on all proposals in the Otago area.

Although Omarama Station is, in an administrative sense, part of the Canterbury region, it has particular relevance to the Otago Conservation Board for two important reasons:

- 1 Geographically, it is on the northern slopes of the Oteake Conservation Park, and the higher altitude part of the lease would be a logical addition to the park as well as providing secure access to the park from North Otago/South Canterbury;
- 2 The proposal in its current form represents a major departure from previous approaches to tenure review and could entail significant losses to the public in general.

The current management of the station has been relatively light in its impact on the land and it is tempting to take this into consideration, but we must remember that circumstances can change and both leasehold and freehold land does, on occasions, change hands. For this reason, it is crucial that this tenure review must be future-proofed to ensure that conservation values and public rights of access are preserved, not just for the next 10 years or so, but for all future generations.

In this process of converting Crown land to private hands, the public has the right and expectation that their needs will be met, that sites of inherent value will be adequately protected, and that the land will be managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.

### **Background**

A representative of the OCB participated in a property inspection on 19 September 2012, as part of a joint visit with various NGO representatives, which included Emeritus Professor Sir Alan Mark and Mr Ken Taylor, the LINZ negotiating agent. We were hosted

and guided by the lessee, who gave the group a warm welcome and guided us over a large part of Omarama Station.

In brief, the lowland portions of the lease consist of developed pasture with no significant indigenous habitat values apart from the wetland vegetation mentioned later.

The hill slopes are predominantly highly modified short tussock grasslands with pockets of indigenous scrub communities, some of which were identified as containing significant populations of rare species such as *Hebe cupressoides*. Professor Mark considered these slopes to be fragile and susceptible to overgrazing and erosion. The lessee reported that the last fires here were 60 years ago, yet recovery of the short tussock appears negligible.

Higher up the hills, phasing in at around 1000 metres on Mt Cuthbert and the Ewe Range, are narrow-leaf snow tussock (*Chionochloa rigida*) and the less common slim tussock (*C. macra*) areas which formed superb tussock grasslands at 1200-1300m and higher. These areas have been used for late summer grazing at relatively low densities of sheep. However, even very low densities of sheep will have a big impact on palatable herbs such as *Celmisia* and *Anisotome*.

The lessees stressed their history of careful management of the farm for the last two generations of the Wardell family, which was conspicuous in the voluntary establishment of two high-altitude QE2 Covenant areas, for which they should be heartily commended.

### **Objectives of Tenure Review**

The Otago Conservation Board supports the objectives of tenure review as set out in the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, specifically:

- *to promote the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable*
- *to protect significant inherent values of reviewable land by the creation of protective measures; or preferably by restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control*
- *to secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land*
- *to ensure that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the NZ Biodiversity Strategy.*

Until now, this has been achieved by retiring most land above 900 to 1000 metres into Conservation Areas; placement of Conservation Covenants over areas of intermediate value or those susceptible to overgrazing and erosion; protection by way of Conservation Areas of other lower altitude areas of high conservation value; and freeholding of areas of sustainable farmland.

### **The Preliminary Proposal**

The predominant feature of this preliminary proposal is the disposal, by way of freehold title, of almost all the lease - a huge 8620 ha which is (98.2%) of the total lease. This includes all of the high altitude tussock grasslands, to the summit of Mt Cuthbert and the crest of the Ewe Range, erosion-prone Class VIIe land, and communities of rare shrubs. A mere 161 ha (1.2%) is being proposed for transfer to full Crown ownership and control.

We consider this to be a radical departure from previous tenure reviews, yet there is no explanation or obvious reason why this should be. No evidence is presented that the degraded mid-slopes can be sustainably farmed, or that continued grazing of the high altitude areas is consistent with recovery of the smaller and depleted herbaceous flora.

And importantly, this change has major implications for public access and enjoyment of the high-altitude areas as freehold ownership would preclude any wander-at-will

possibility. This is something that the New Zealand public has enjoyed for generations in our mountain parks and has come to expect as an outcome of tenure reviews. If the Crown is going to relinquish ownership of the productive parts of these pastoral leases, the public expects control and access to the high altitude areas in return.

As representatives of the people of Otago, appointed to work for the best outcome for conservation and public enjoyment of our resources, it is our duty to oppose this proposal in its entirety.

It is evident that the current lessees have managed Omarama Station conservatively and the high altitude tussock grasslands are in relatively good condition. It is tempting to take this into consideration when viewing the proposal, but the reality is that the management record is irrelevant. What we are discussing is the future and no one knows what that entails in terms of management. Circumstances frequently change, and nothing about the future ownership of the lease or management of the land can be certain in private hands. For example, Lake Hawea Station had been in the same family for a hundred years but it was up for sale halfway through tenure review; and Wyuna Station sold immediately after its review.

With these concerns in mind, the OCB opposes the proposal but would like to offer the following counter-proposals which are in keeping with past reviews in Otago and which have served well the demands of protection of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem services (soil and water conservation), public access, and enjoyment and maintenance of productive and viable farming operations.

**Specifically, these counter-proposals are:**

- 1. (Analogous to 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.
- 2. (Analogous to 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.
- 3. All of the proposed CC2 (Ewe Range) and including the adjoining QE 2 Covenant returned to full Crown ownership and control.** Limited grazing may be permitted, with appropriate monitoring and careful management
- 4. The proposed CC1 (Mt St Cuthbert), and the adjoining QE 2 Covenant, be destocked and returned to full Crown ownership and control,** above about 1100m (as marked by tall tussock communities). Limited grazing may be permitted, with appropriate monitoring, for up to 10 years, to enable farm management to be adjusted.

The 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.

- 5. The proposed CC3, over approximately 25ha, be returned to full Crown ownership and control to protect significant shrubland on a rocky outcrop.**

#### **Access Proposals**

The access provisions in the current proposal are by and large good. However, we would like to see two changes:

A. The proposed route from SH83 (H to summit of Mt St Cuthbert) should follow the obvious ridge immediately to the west of the fence line rising from SH83. Currently, it appears on the large scale DTZ map that the proposed easement follows the fence line, which would be a ridiculously difficult and impractical route.

B. There needs to be a new access easement from Mt St Cuthbert that connects with the Ewe Range by crossing the watershed high-altitude saddle above Cattle Creek. This is such an obvious and desirable route that it is difficult to understand why it wasn't included, especially as it would have no impact on farming operations. We note that it was included in the earlier Preliminary Proposal from May 2005.

In conclusion, the Otago Conservation Board considers that the current Preliminary Proposal for the tenure review of the Omarama Station Po 369 fails to fulfill the obligations, under the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, of promoting the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable, of protecting significant inherent values, and of ensuring that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the NZ Biodiversity Strategy. There are also inadequacies in access proposals.

Consequently, the Otago Conservation Board opposes the proposal in its current form.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abigail M. Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Associate Professor Abigail M. Smith  
**Chairperson**