Jenner, Colin

MSLR LTD

6 Other Comments

Would you like to comment on any other aspect of this draft 10 Year Plan?

See attached submission

MSLR Limited, PO Box 121,

Queenstown, New Zealand.

Email: [redacted]

Telephone: [redacted]

Mobile [redacted]

29 April 2015.

The Chief Executive,

Queenstown Lakes District Council,

Gorge Road,

Queenstown 9300.

Dear Sir,

Reference: QLDC 10 Year Plan – 2015 to 2025

MSLR Limited wishes to submit brief details of its Project so that QLDC is made aware of the huge improvements in efficiency and safety which could be realized following the implementation of our Proposal.

In summary, the MSLR Project is a proposed 15 km vehicular drive-on-drive-off electric railway passing through a 13.5 km tunnel, to create a new route for road traffic between the world renowned Milford Sound tourist destination and Queenstown in the southwest of New Zealand's South Island. The new route will halve the present travel time between Milford Sound and Queenstown. This creates a commercial opportunity for the MSLR owners, existing tour operators and acts as catalyst to boost regional tourism. The MSLR Project would be essentially private-funded, although perhaps in some form of public private partnership, with ownership eventually passing to the Government.

The Project History:

The following is a little of the history associated with the Project. The idea was born in 2003 and has been developed over the years with various interruptions.

In 2007/08, we completed a Feasibility Study for the Project. On the basis of the positive results and details prepared for the study, a Concession Application was made to the Department of Conservation (DOC), to permit the Construction and Operation of the Tunnel Proposal. Our Concession Application was accepted by DOC in February 2008, albeit termed incomplete, as it was lacking some additional information, but is still considered a live application.

Thereafter, in mid-2008, two other proposals with similar objectives, halted the processing of our DOC Concession Application.

One of these proposals, the Milford Dart Passage Project was subsequently declined by the Minister of Conservation on 17 July 2013, citing major environmental concerns, which the MSLR Project is able to negate.

The second proposal, the Fiordland Link Experience, aimed at improving access to Milford Sound was also declined by the Minister on 29 May 2014, as he did not believe the proposed complex travel arrangement of 5 modes of transport "was viable as it did not stack up economically or environmentally".

The Minister's decisions of July 2013 and May 2014, clears the way for a renewed thrust to take the superior MSLR Project forward. The Minister is very positive that he has not closed the door to alternative proposals that are able to solve the environmental issues created by the earlier declined Projects, and at the same time present a sound financial model.

The Concept:

As there is very limited accommodation at Milford Sound the vast majority of visitors stay in Queenstown, visiting the Sound on a lengthy day trip of 10-12 hours, with only 2-3 hours at Milford Sound. After many years of steady growth, visitor numbers to Milford Sound peaked in 2007/08 at 494,417 and at the time, projections were being made of growth to 1 million visitors/year. After a decline in visitor numbers 2008/09 as a result of the Global Financial Crisis followed by the 2010/11 Christchurch Earthquakes and visitor resistance to the lengthy travel time and peak time crowding arising from access logistics, visitor numbers have bounced back to 530,000 for the 2013/14 year

As well as removing the burden of lengthy travel, the Project will open up new tourism opportunities by enabling a Milford Sound tour to be combined with other destinations particularly in Te Anau and Glenorchy.

The key features of the MSLR proposal are set out in the attached "Introduction to the Milford Sound Link Rail Project", wherein we reference the **"Lotschberg car transportation - Kandersteg to Goppenstein railway in Switzerland"** on which MSLR propose to model its operations.

The Future:

The proposed MSLR route between Milford Sound and Queenstown is technically and financially feasible. An earlier study by MWH commissioned by Environment Southland cited the MSLR Project as having the best Technical Proposal. Now that the Milford Dart Passage and the Fiordland Link Experience concession applications have been declined, the way is clear for the MSLR Project to progress its application through the Department of Conservation.

The MSLR Project incorporates sound engineering solutions that address environmental concerns as well as working with existing tourism operators**. In additional, the MSLR would become a safe, efficient, sustainable and integral part of the New Zealand transport network.** Combined with a properly funded public relations campaign, a well-planned consultation process, and lessons learnt from the earlier failed applications, MSLR Limited expects reasonable progression of its Concession Application.

Substantial work has been completed on the MSLR Project to-date. However, for the Project to proceed we require the following to take place;

- The 2008 Feasibility Study to be updated.
- An Environmental Impact Assessment must be completed for the Department of Conservation.

- Resource Consents from Queenstown Lakes and Southland District Councils.
- And most importantly, the participation of a solid investor.

Should the Council consider the MSLR Project worthy of further discussion we would be pleased to make a formal presentation.

We look forward to your positive comments.

Yours Sincerely,
MLSR Limited.

Colin Jenner,
Managing Director.

Attachments;

1. An introduction to the Milford Sound Link Rail Project, 20 Novvember 2014.
2. Draft Notes to Department of Conservation, 30 June 2014.
3. Fiordland Monorail Plan Rejected - newspaper report, 29 May 2014.
4. MSLR Limited letter to the Minister of Conservation, 22 July 2013.
5. Milford Tunnel Plan Rejected – newspaper report, 17 July 2013.
6. Letter from Minister of Conservation to MSLR Limited, 05 July 2013.
7. Second Milford tunnel plan unveiled - newspaper report, 28 April 2008.

An introduction to

THE MILFORD SOUND LINK RAIL PROJECT

MSLR Limited,
PO Box 121,
Queenstown,
New Zealand.

20 November 2014

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5. Environmental Issues

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7. Programme

8. Conclusion

Appendix 1; Project Drawings

- MSLR Alignment Details; Drawing No. MSLR 12000
- MSLR Alignment Details; Drawing No. MSLR 12001
- Dart Valley Terminal; Drawing No. MSLR 12012
- Hollyford Valley Terminal; Drawing No. MSLR 1202
- Comparison Map No Drawing Number.

Introduction

MSLR Limited proposes to operate a drive on drive off, road/rail/road transportation system, which will pass through a Tunnel to be constructed beneath the Humboldt and Ailsa Mountains in southwest New Zealand. It will run from the Dart Valley to the Hollyford Valley and will be known as the MILFORD SOUND LINK RAIL (MSLR).

The proposal will see a major improvement to the efficiency of New Zealand's regional road network with a new link between western Otago and Fiordland/Southland. The plan will result in the creation of a direct link for all road vehicles between Queenstown and Fiordland/Southland.

The proposed Railway will enhance the social, economic and environmental goals of the Government's Transport Policy and allow for future growth in Visitor Numbers to Milford Sound, also known at Piopiotahi, well into the next century.

Our Company, which has been working on the proposal since January 2003, has developed an ideal long term solution that caters for and enhances existing transport operations.

The MSLR tunnel and rail system will be constructed to and operate to the highest environmental and safety standards, it will generate considerable environmental benefits through greatly reducing the carbon footprint of each Milford Sound visitor, through a considerable increase in transport efficiency.

The Company and the Team

Company Name; MSLR Limited

Address; PO Box 121, Queenstown, New Zealand, 9348.

Contact Details; Colin Jenner – Managing Director
Email; [redacted]

Greg Harris – Chief Executive Officer and Director
Email; greg@hitec-aerials.co.nz

John Richardson – Company Secretary

The Team;

The Company is headed by Colin Jenner, a Technical Member of the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand.

Greg Harris, as Chief Executive Officer and MSLR Limited Director, is an Electrical Design Specialist.

Lester Neumann, an economist of 30 years experience in Project Evaluation and Development including 15 Years with the Asian Development Bank,

Chris Eden, of Queenstown based Eden Environmental Solutions Limited, assisted in the early stages of the MSLR development as our Environmental Consultant.

Additional Consultants will be brought into the Team as the proposal is developed.

Bankers; ANZ National Bank Limited
81 Beach Street, Queenstown, New Zealand

The Concept

The MSLR concept provides for all road vehicles including bicycles and hikers to travel via a roll on, roll off, rail service, between the upper reaches of Lake Wakatipu, through a rail tunnel to the Hollyford Valley in the Fiordland National Park. The service will provide a missing link in the New Zealand Road Network between Queenstown, Glenorchy and Milford Sound and Te Anau. Such rail systems are a tried and proven concept in mountain regions, with many such facilities providing vital links in Europe.

Milford Sound, one of New Zealand's premiere tourist destinations, is located in the isolated southwest of the South Island in the Fiordland National Park. The region forms part of the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area. Milford is only 75km from Queenstown by air. However, there are restrictions on further expansion of aircraft landings at Milford and the many days per year when aircraft cannot operate due to the effects of weather conditions, in the extremely mountainous terrain.

Present road travel to Milford Sound from Queenstown, the closest major tourist hub for short-stay visitors to the region, involves a 600 km round trip, via valleys, mountainous roads and alpine passes. The MSLR proposal will reduce the journey, via a 13.5 km Rail Tunnel beneath the Humbolt and Ailsa Mountains, to only 240 km. It will enable visitors to use either private or public transport, (tour coach, private motor vehicle, rental car or camper van/mobile home), to efficiently access Milford Sound/Piopiotahi or Te Anau. They will have the choice of a return trip via the MSLR rail, or through the Southland District and the growing tourism centres of Te Anau and Manapouri.

The MSLR railway will provide an efficient near direct link between Queenstown and Milford Sound, via Glenorchy, the Dart and Upper Hollyford Valleys. It is believed that a substantial number of independent travelers will opt for one way travel via MSLR, to facilitate a round trip via Te Anau, or onward travel elsewhere in the Southland Region and beyond. The MSLR proposal will thus enhance tourism opportunities in Southland and Otago arising from the existing travel time savings. For those who choose two-way travel via MSLR, it will halve the present Queenstown to Milford tour time, from ten to twelve hours, to only five to six hours, thereby reducing driver fatigue.

The proposed Milford Sound Link Rail is modeled upon your highly successful drive-on drive off Rail Transportation System and references your operation of the Kandersteg to Goppenstein Railway passing through the Lotschberg Tunnel. We understand that the operators of the English Channel Tunnel used the BLS for its operational modeling. We further understand that BLS has been transporting motor vehicles complete with their passengers through their 14.6 km Tunnel, since 1955, with currently 1.2 million vehicles being transported annually. The safety of the system is demonstrated by what we assume to be over 40 million safe vehicle movements through the Lotschberg Tunnel.

May we suggest to interested parties that they view **YouTube**; **"Lotschberg car transportation Kandersteg – Goppenstein Switzerland"** for an understanding of how our proposal will work. We also state that the Vehicle Transportation illustrated in the YouTube movies are part of a large operating European railway. The MSLR will be very small scale by comparison.

The Project Scope

The Proposal will involve the design, finance, construction and commissioning of a single-track railway, a major tunnel and establishment of a tourist railway together with support infrastructure. The 15.5 km railway will link the Dart Valley, situated to the north of Lake Wakatipu 65 km from Queenstown, and the Hollyford Valley 41km from Milford Sound.

The tunnel will be 5 metres in diameter and 13.5 Km in length.

The entrance to the Dart Valley railway terminal will be situated 200 metres north of the intersection of the Glenorchy − Kinloch Road and Routeburn Road. Access to the terminal from Queenstown will be via the existing sealed Queenstown − Glenorchy − Kinloch Road and Routeburn Road. A short section of Routeburn Road will be upgraded and sealed as part of the Project.

The existing Glenorchy to Routeburn Valley electricity transmission line will also be upgraded for the MSLR operations.

The Hollyford Portal will located close to Gunns Camp in the Hollyford Valley. The Lower Hollyford Road, southwards from the Hollyford Terminus to the Milford Road Intersection, a distance of 7 km, will be upgraded and sealed as part of the Project.

At the Dart Terminal, facilities will include ticket booths, a vehicle queuing area, a small administration office, a maintenance workshop for servicing locomotives and rolling stock, a standby generator, an information kiosk and public toilets.

Likewise, at the Hollyford Terminal, located immediately to the south of the Hollyford Tunnel Portal, ticketing booths, limited staff facilities, public toilets and a vehicle queuing area, will be constructed.

Appendix 1 shows the proposed alignment of the Milford Sound Link Rail Project, together with the proposed layout of the Dart and Hollyford Terminal Facilities.

MSLR plans a minimalistic and sensitive approach to the provision, location and design of all above ground facilities. The surface footprint will be as small as is realistically possible. All facilities will be carefully designed to avoid intrusion on the landscape. Tunnel material will be utilized to establish environmental buffers to reduce the effects of noise and visual intrusion on the adjacent natural landscapes. MSLR will ensure best practice in environmental design and work closely with the community, local and national authorities to ensure the best and most acceptable design of its facilities.

Passenger Capacity

MSLR will be able to operate hourly trains, with up to twelve return trips per day in the summer time, providing an efficient Regional Road Link between the Wakatipu, Milford Sound and Southland. This will enable a spread in the present peak in visitor times in Milford from 11 am to 3 pm, to that of 9 am to 5 pm and even longer during the summer months, thereby enhancing the Milford Sound. Experience and providing full utilization of existing infrastructure and cruise boats in Milford Sound.

Each Train will contain up to:

- Ten single rail-road, low bed rail wagons, each capable of transporting a large tourist coach up to 12.6metres in length and 20 tonnes in weight.
- Ten regular flat bed rail wagons catering for up to 30 light vehicles.

Daily traffic to Milford will continue to originate in Queenstown and Te Anau. As travelers are likely to go to Milford early in the day, the main traffic flow for MSLR will be, to the Hollyford terminal in the morning and to the Dart terminal in the afternoon.

MSLR, operating one train, will have the capacity to transport up to 700,000 passengers per year and well in excess of the anticipated peak of 3,000 passengers/day, to and from Milford Sound Passenger numbers are currently running at about 400,000 per year. MSLR will be able to cater for these numbers, including peak capacity days, and for increases in numbers likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

The addition of a second train would increase the capacity to 7,000 passengers per day.

At a time when the increased Milford Sound visitor numbers outstrip the capacity of the Homer Tunnel and high Alpine section of the Te Anau − Milford Sound Road, even with visitors spread though out daylight hours, the next stage of the MSLR Development will be to construct a 26 Km Light Rail system to convey well in excess of 1 million passengers per year via a second Tunnel, 12.5 Km in length, from a Park and Ride Facility in the Lower Hollyford Valley, for Te Anau or Haast Passengers (assuming the construction of the Haast - Hollyford Road was complete), and from the Dart Valley terminus, a distance of 40 Km, for Queenstown Passengers, direct to the present Coach/Cruise Boat facility in Milford Sound. This would provide a long term solution to the present winter snow clearing requirements thereby solving avalanche risks for winter travelers on the Alpine Road section. It would also provide the long term solution to the Milford Sound parking issues, and generate new land based, Milford Tours to the Cleddau Valley and the Homer Tunnel. Upon commencement of the Park and Ride Light Rail service, the Alpine Road and Homer Tunnel would become a limited access Service Road and be closed to tourist traffic.

As can be demonstrated above, MSLR can address major growth in Tourism to Milford Sound well into the next century, at the same time improve present Regional Land Transport inefficiencies.

The Drive on, Drive off, Rail Transportation System

On the Kanderstein to Goppenstein drive on, drive off Railway, the operator caters for most passenger vehicles from cars to buses and some light commercial vehicles on their fleet of regular flat bed railway wagons with an arched roof or cover.

The following picture illustrates the Kandersteg to Goppenstein Railway. MSLR will cater for light vehicles with the use similar rail wagons to that shown below, but with a lowered roof to enable passage through the 5 metre diameter tunnel.

It should be noted that the MSLR Railway will consist of a single track with the overhead power supply to the locomotives supported by a single row of poles, such that the visual impact of the very short sections of railway outside the tunnel will be substantially less than that shown in the above picture.

The following pictures illustrate the Kandersteg to Goppenstein Railway

MSLR will cater for buses and larger vehicles by the use of MODALOHR low-bed rail wagons for the transportation through the tunnel

Vehicle Marshalling Area with Cars awaiting the next train departure

Then drive to Train Loading Platform

Vehicles boarding the Train

"Drive on"

Drive through the train to your Parking Position

Approaching the Parking Position

Parking Instructions on the side of railway wagon

Sit back and enjoy the train ride,

and the short break in the "drive" to Milford Sound.

Cars unloading at end of the Journey

"Drive off"

The low bed railway Truck or Bus transportation system.

The French designed MODALOHR system is capable of transporting fully laden Semi trailers at only 180mm above the Railway Track, enabling trucks up to four metres in height to pass through existing Rail Tunnels over much of the European Rail Network.

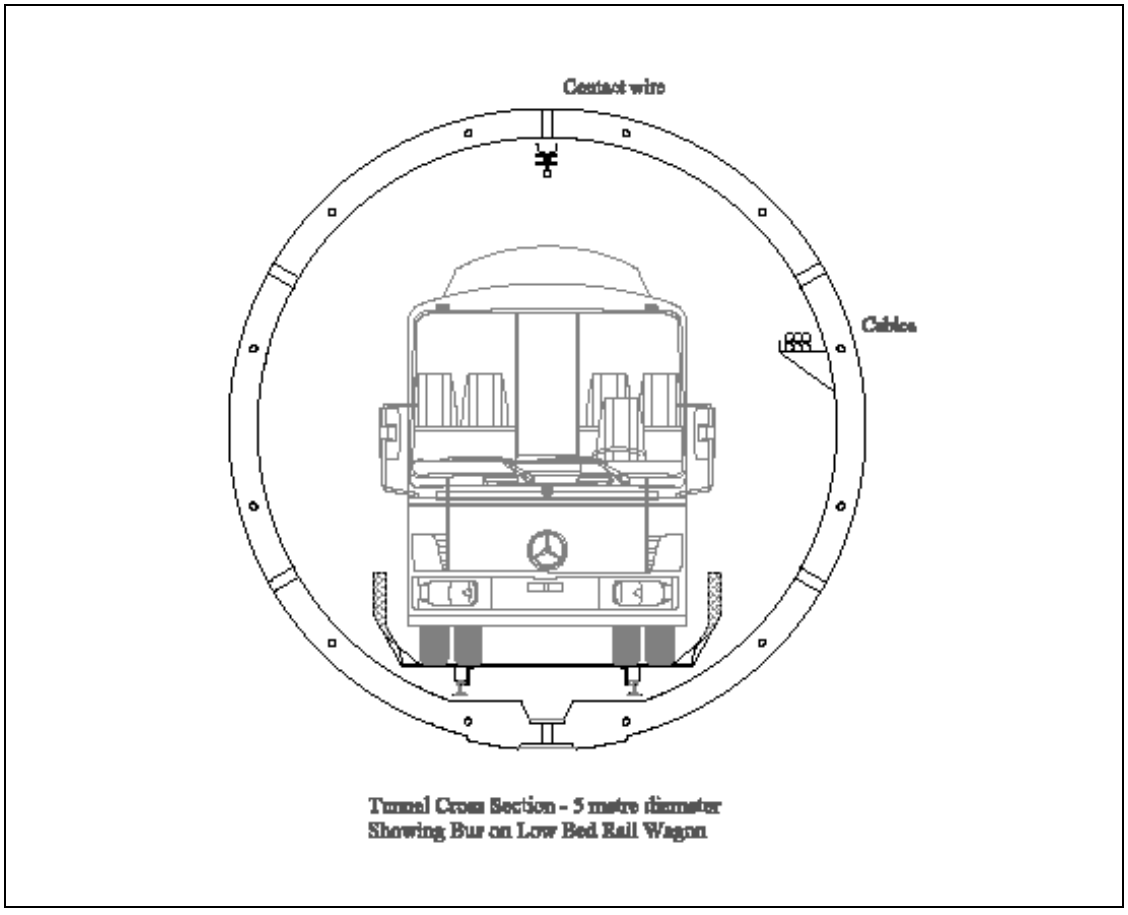


Figure 8: Tunnel Schematic Cross-section

By utilizing a similar system to that of the MODALOHR truck rail wagon, MSLR found the solution to enable the transportation of buses up to 12.5 metres in length and 3.7m in

height, safely through a five metre diameter Tunnel. The illustrations above, show buses on a MSLR MODALOHR bus rail wagon.

Project Costs

An earlier Feasibility Study Report concluded that the MSLR Project was estimated to cost NZ$274.1 million to construct and bring into operation, inclusive of all physical items, environmental protection and mitigation activities, public roads and power supply, physical contingencies, allowances for price escalation, interest during construction, planning and establishment expenses, and working capital.

The tunnel is the major cost item, which along with the electrified railtrack will cost around NZ$200 million, close to three-quarters of the project cost. The locomotives and rolling stock account for a further 10 percent and the buildings, general site works and equipment a further 3 percent. A total of NZ$4.3 million is to be spent on public road upgrading and power infrastructure.

Environmental protection and mitigation is to be an integral part of each component and the costs are built into each works contract.

Environmental Issues

Most of the proposed development will be underground. The portals and terminal facilities will be in the Dart Valley, well outside the Mt Aspiring National Park and in the Hollyford Valley within the Fiordland National Park. The high scenic and conservation values of both locations will place considerable responsibility on MSLR to ensure the highest environmental standards in design, construction and operation. MSLR recognizes this responsibility and will incorporate environmental awareness planning and management into every part of the project.

In particular, the MSLR design encompasses an additional tunnel length of 2,200 metres when compared to failed DART PASSAGE Proposal of MILFORD DART LTD. The additional tunnel length and resulting cost has been allowed specifically to take the MSLR Dart Valley Tunnel Portal and facilities well outside the Mt Aspiring National Park and to preserve the seclusion, solitude and beauty of the lower Routeburn Valley. It will ensure that the conservation and recreation values of this wonderful part of the Park will remain unaffected by development. Effects in the Fiordland National Park will be limited to an area of 6 hectares of secondary growth. All such land is situated within the designated "front country", in which limited development is permitted under the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

Nevertheless, MSLR is aware of the outstanding scenic values of the Dart and Hollyford Valleys where our terminus facilities will be located. MSLR will ensure that the development does not affect these values by extensive landscaping to shield the visual impact.

MSLR is committed to the most rigorous environmental standards in design and construction. Environmental planning, ecological, architectural and other expertise will be engaged to ensure that the best environmental standards are met.

MSLR will work closely with the Department of Conservation, District and Regional Councils, and the local community to identify and address the potential environmental and social affects of the project.

The most up to date environmental practices will be incorporated into the project design, construction, equipment and operation of the proposed development to ensure international best practice.

The footprint and design of the above ground facilities will be kept as low key as possible to minimize the visual effects. The highest standards of design and management will be implemented to eliminate or mitigate environmental hazards during construction and operation.

Over 50% of the material excavated from the Tunnel during construction will be reused in;

- road works/improvements associated with the Project.
- the formation of berms and landscape features to minimize the visual effects of the above ground infrastructure, and eliminate noise from the terminus facilities. Major planting work with approved species will also be undertaken.

MSLR will work with local government and contractors to utilize much of the surplus tunnel rock for other practical purposes.

Public Consultation.

This proposal when it becomes operational will herald significant changes for tourism in Otago and Southland. MSLR believes that these changes will prove positive for almost everyone, as the current daily procession to Milford will change to higher quality round-trip travel. Visitors will have time to stop and appreciate the localities and communities en route.

Nevertheless, this is a major project involving significant change. The affected communities and businesses will undoubtedly have many questions and concerns. MSLR intends to provide every possible opportunity to work with the affected communities of interest and to maintain the highest possible level of transparency during the consent process and development.

A website will be developed. Project documentation will be made available via the website. MSLR will be contactable by any interested person or organization via the website.

As the proposal progresses, MSLR will conduct several rounds of meetings with key stakeholders, organizations and affected communities. These meetings will be intended to provide two-way communication, provide information, and address community concerns that may arise.

The statutory processes contain prescribed steps in public consultation. MSLR will embrace these steps in addition to maintaining an open door approach to community consultation.

The Programme

From lessons learned from earlier failed applications to the Department of Conservation for similar but less environmentally friendly projects and available environmental reports, we anticipate that it will take no more than 3 years to obtain Department of Conservation (DOC) approval for the required Concession to enable the MSLR Project to proceed.

In addition, under the Resource Management Act several consents will be required from the Queenstown Lakes District and Southland District Councils. It is planned for these to proceed in tandem during the latter part of the DOC process.

Following completion of the Approvals Stage, MSLR Limited have allowed for a period of 12 months for Financial Close, Detailed Design Activities, Procurement and Contractor Negotiations, followed by 3 years for Construction.

Dart Passage route @128 Km in Yellow and the failed proposal of Milford Link Experience monorail route @ 195 Km in Blue

Conclusion.

Tourism is New Zealand's second largest export earner,

New Zealand Tourism recorded growth of 28% for the 6 years to 2007 to reach 2.45 million visitors, at an average increase of 4.67% per annum.

However, due to the world financial crisis, visitor numbers in 2008 and 2009 showed a slight decline, then with news of the Christchurch Earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, only modest growth was reported, to record an average of 2.85% growth. 2012 saw a decline of 1.4% but with 6% growth returning in 2013, which generated 2.72 million visitors.

Slow moving structural forces are very much in favour of New Zealand tourism. The centre of the global economy is moving closer to New Zealand as Asia develop on the back of industrialization and urbanization.

The long term outlook is positive, particularly from emerging markets like China, India and Indonesia. Their populations are large and youthful; as their economies approach middle income, demand for travel to New Zealand will soar. These emerging markets present the largest long-term growth opportunities.

Therefore, looking further ahead, New Zealand visitor numbers based upon and average annual growth of 4% will see 4 million visitors per annum by 2023.

Given the high profile of Milford Sound to New Zealand Tourism, MSLR is striving to improve its accessibility. Access originally designed in the 1930's must be the focus of an initiative for an infrastructure upgrade to enhance the quality and safety of the "Milford Sound Experience" and to cater for the inevitable increase in visitor numbers.

Such improvements to the access to Milford Sound must be viewed as of major strategic importance to the future growth of the Tourism Industry in New Zealand and particularly the southwest of the South Island.

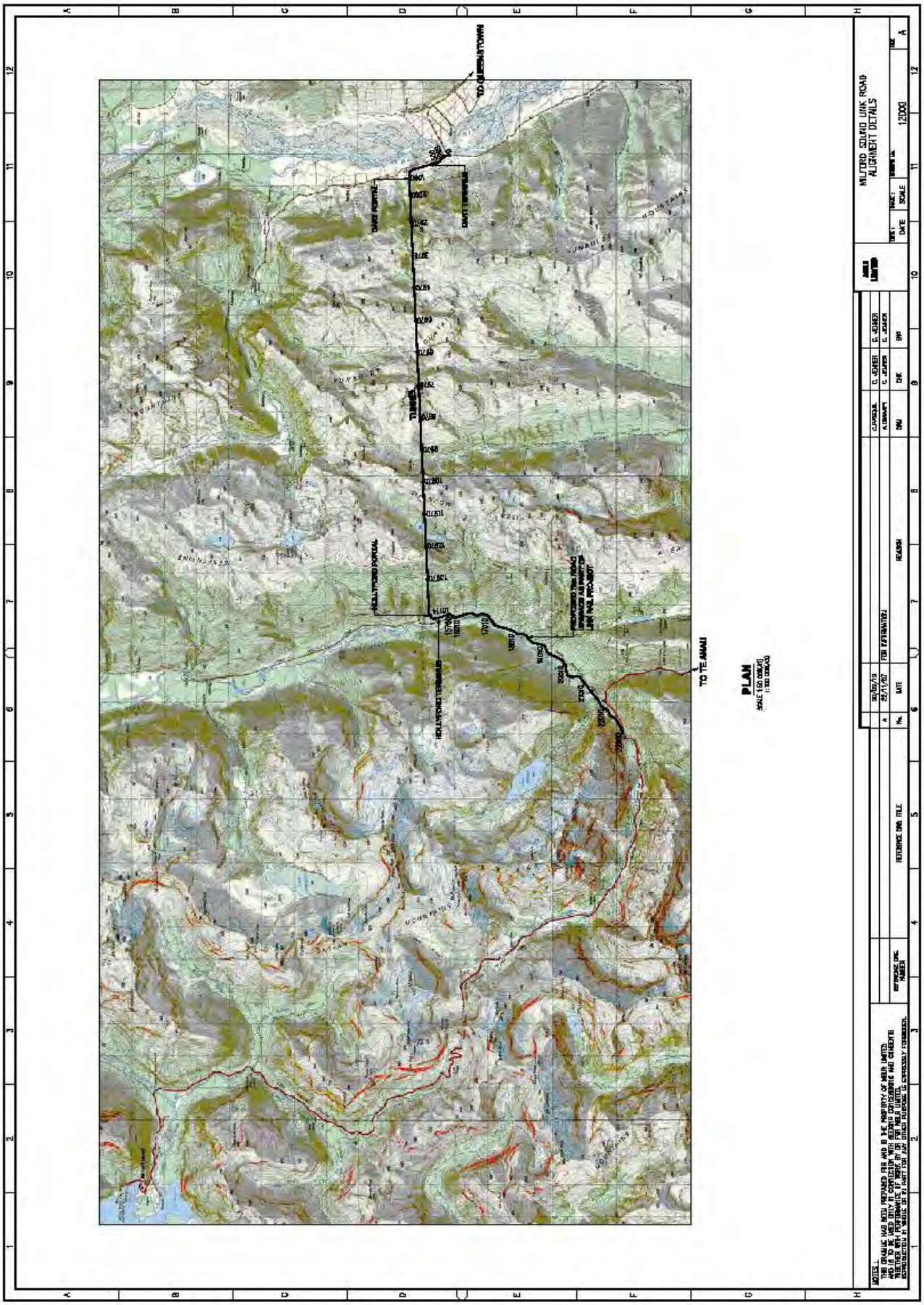
Beyond the visitor numbers, environmental issues and consumer interest in sustainability have become an ever increasing factor in tourism operations worldwide.

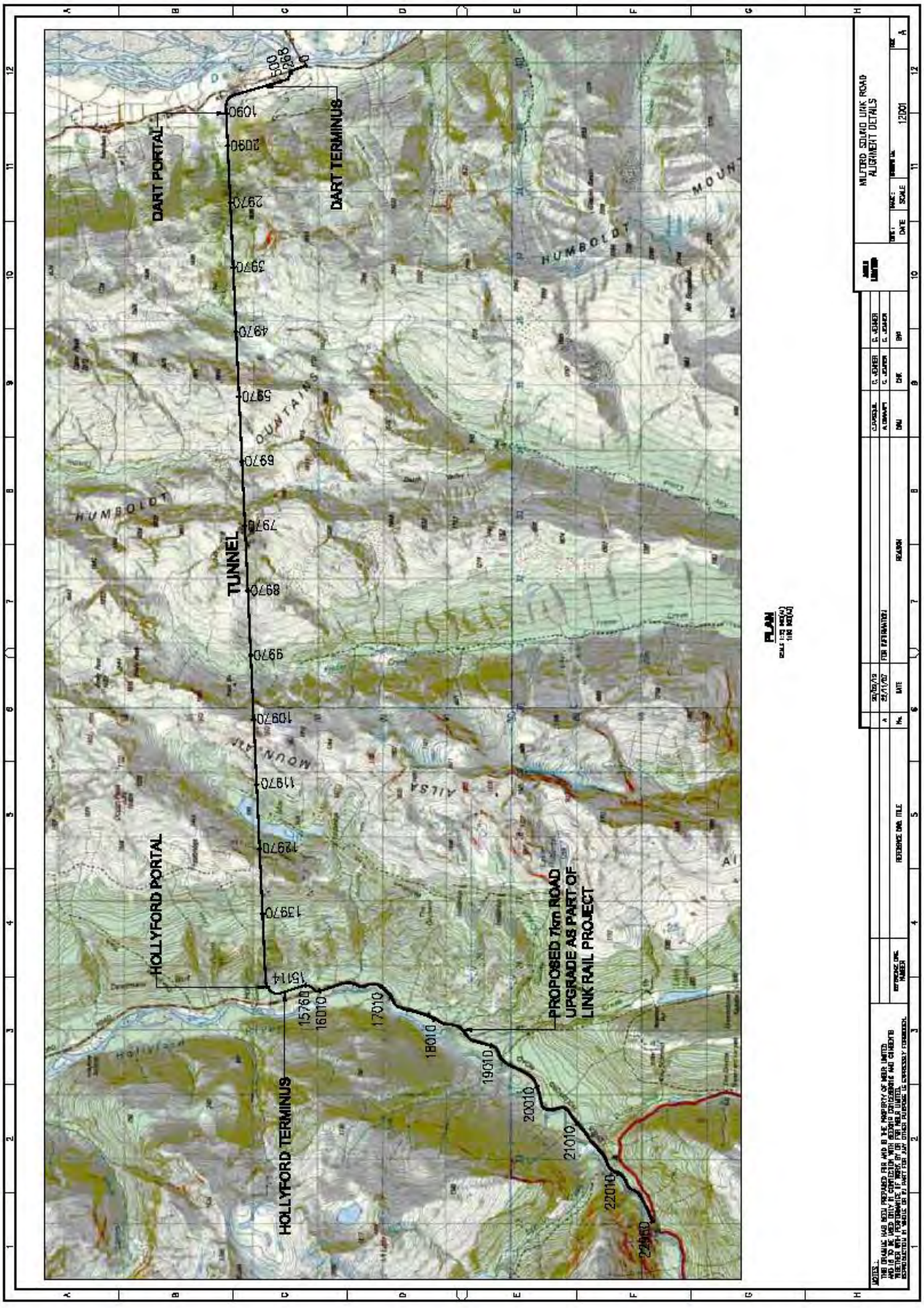
With this in mind, the MSLR Project is able to address the need for transport efficiency, sustainability and protection of the environment and will provide a cost effective regional transportation system between west Otago, Fiordland and western Southland. It will lead to the sustainability of tourism within the region and a reduced carbon footprint for visitors to Milford Sound.

In summary, improved accessibility to Milford Sound as a result of the MSLR Project will not only cater for the projected growth, but by spreading visitor numbers throughout the day, it will increase the visitor experience and lead to better utilization of existing Milford Sound infrastructure.

Appendix 1; Project Drawings

- MSLR Alignment Details; Drawing No. MSLR 12000
- MSLR Alignment Details; Drawing No. MSLR 12001
- Dart Valley Terminal; Drawing No. MSLR 12012
- Hollyford Valley Terminal; Drawing No. MSLR 12022
- Comparison Map No Drawing No.


MILFORD SOUND LINK ROAD
ALIGNMENT DETAILS
PLAN
TO TE ANAU
TO QUEENSTOWN


DART PORTAL
DART TERMINUS
TUNNEL
HOLLYFORD PORTAL
HOLLYFORD TERMINUS
PROPOSED 7km ROAD UPGRADE AS PART OF LINK RAIL PROJECT
HUMBOLDT
MILFORD SOUND LINK ROAD
ALIGNMENT DETAILS
PLAN


LAY-OUT PLAN
MILFORD SOUND LINK ROAD
DART VALLEY TERMINUS STAGE 1


TOLL BOOTH
TICKET OFFICES
OFFICE AND STAFF
FACILITIES (12m x 6m)
MARSHALLING AREA
4 tanes (4m x 129m)
END OF RAIL TRACK
RETAIN BUSH COVER
RETAIN BUSH COVER
RETAIN BUSH COVER
RETAIN BUSH COVER
RETAIN BUSH COVER
CAMP
LAY-OUT PLAN
Note:
1. Red Line denotes approximate boundary between Original Vegetation and Secondary Growth
2. Total Project Area = 3.64 hectares
MILFORD SOUND LINK RAIL PROJECT
HOLLYFORD VALLEY TERMINUS
STAGE 1
12822
MSLR LIMITED


Comparison Map, showing existing highway route from Queenstown to Milford Sound @ 304 Km in Red, the proposed MSLR route @121 Km in Green, with the failed proposal of the Dart Passage route @128 Km in Yellow and the failed proposal of Milford Link Experience monorail route @ 195 Km in Blue
Milford Sound
Milford Sound
Bay
Gunns Camp
Dart Passage Tunnel
MSLR Tunnel
Routeburn Valley
Mount Earnslaw
Dart Valley
Kinloch
Glenorchy
Coronet Peak
Arthurs Point
Queenstown
Frankton
Lake Wakatipu
Mt. Nicholas
Ferry Queenstown to Mt. Nicholas
North Fiord
Te Anau Downs
Middle Fiord
North Mavora Lake
Lake Te Anau
Proposed Monorail Kiwi Burn to Te Anau Downs
All Terrain Bus. Mt. Nicholas to Kiwi Burn
Kiwi Burn
Mavora
Kingston
Te Anau
Hillside
Mossburn
COMPARISON MAP - Queenstown to Milford Sound
304 km
Existing Highway Route via Te Anau
128 km
Proposed Dart Passage Route
121 km
Proposed Milford Sound Link Rail Route
195 km
Proposed Milford Link Experience Route
SCALE
0KM
10KM
20KM
30KM

THE MILFORD SOUND LINK RAIL PROJECT

DRAFT COMMENTS IN REPLY TO DOC CONCERNS RELATED TO THE MT ASPIRING AND FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARKS.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE PARKS - 30 June 2014.

THE TUNNEL

Portions of the Tunnel Alignment pass beneath the Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks before exiting in the latter.

The 5 meter diameter Tunnel passes beneath the Humbolt and Ailsa Ranges for some 13.5 km, running almost due west, from the Dart Valley Tunnel Portal situated on privately owned land, at an elevation of 360 meters, and located 1.1 km north of the Glenorchy - Kinloch Road intersection with Routburn Road, near the Dart River Bridge, to the Hollyford Valley Tunnel Portal, situated in the Fiordland National Park, at an elevation of 160 meters, close to Gunns Camp.

Mt Aspiring National Park

The Tunnel alignment enters Mt Aspiring National Park at Tunnel Station 4+470, Google Earth Coordinates 283377E 5039688S at a depth of 1380 meters, below the surface and runs for a distance of 2,300 meters before exiting the Mt Aspiring National Park at Tunnel Station 6+770, Google earth coordinates 281290E 5039616S and a depth of 1620 meters below surface level, as shown on Drawing Numbers 12003 and 12004.

Due to the depth of the Tunnel below surface level, it can be safely assumed that there will be no impact whatsoever on the Mt Aspiring National Park arising from the Tunnel Construction nor from Operation of the MSLR Railway.

The Fiordland National Park

The Tunnel alignment enters the Fiordland National Park at Tunnel Station 10+370, Google Earth Coordinates 277857E 5039539S, at a depth of 1450 meters below surface level. The Tunnel continues within the National Park passing beneath Lake MacKenzie, some 770 meters below the surface of the Lake, to the Hollyford Tunnel Portal at Tunnel Station 14+070 Google Earth Coordinates 273873E 5038847S and at ground level of 160 meters, as shown on Drawings 12003 and 12004.

Likewise, it can be safely assumed that there will be no impact whatsoever on the Fiordland National Park arising from the Tunnel Construction nor from Operation of the MSLR Railway, from the Park entry point as described above, to the Hollyford Portal.

THE HOLLYFORD TUNNEL PORTAL AND TERMINUS AREA.

Hollyford Valley Tunnel Portal and Terminal Area.

At this time, our preliminary design is based upon Topographical Maps and Google Earth and requires further definition from a Site Survey. The attached drawing number 12041, provides Coordinates for the Hollyford Tunnel Portal and the 6.9 Hectares of land required for the development of the Hollyford Terminus.

The Hollyford Terminus Facilities are generally located in secondary growth vegetation. The proposed Site Survey will pick-up the locations of remaining large trees and where practical, some alterations maybe possible to the proposed layout so as to avoid these trees. Topsoil and mulched vegetation will be stockpiles on available land situated close to the Hollyford Airstrip, well clear of any Aircraft operations, for use in restoration works following completion of Construction activities.

The Longitudinal Section and Cross Sections, drawing numbers 12042 and 12043 provide preliminary details of the likely earthworks required to form the Terminal Area. We estimate some 64,000 cubic meters of fill material, road base-course and rail ballast will be required to create the graded Terminus area for the Railway, Roading and Building Construction.

It is proposed to excavate approximately 2.3 Km of the Tunnel, from the Hollyford Portal by drill and blast methods, thereby generating 64,400 cubic meters of tunnel tailings, for use in the land fill, base-course/ballast to create the Hollyford Terminus as shown on Drawing Numbers 12041, 12042 and 12043. It is proposed that the remaining 11 km of Tunnel will be excavated from the Dart Valley Portal.

Through grouting, and concrete lining of the Tunnel, inflows of water into the tunnel will be minimized. All water flowing from the newly constructed Tunnel will pass through water treatment facilities prior to discharge into the Hollyford River.

Tunnel Tailings will be monitored for “adverse materials”. Should such materials be excavated they will be incorporated into engineered sections of the land fill, where they will be sealed within containment membranes.

Stage one of the MSLR Project will see one rail-track, roading with loading ramps, a vehicle queuing area, parking, two Toll Booths, a Public Shelter, Toilets, a Staff Amenities and Control Building constructed and located as shown on Drawing 12024, 12025, 12026 and 12027. The Hollyford buildings will be of alpine design and will incorporate extensive use of timber with natural colours and a combined footprint of 328 square meters, which includes a 120 square meter Public Shelter and Toilet Building.

Stage two will see a second rail-track and extension to the paved queuing area constructed to allow for the operation of a second Train which is anticipated to follow in 10 years.

Full Engineering Specifications will be developed at an appropriate time with all works being designed and constructed in accordance with the latest relevant Civil/Electrical/Mechanical/Building Codes.

Except for the entrance and exit road locations at the southern end of the development and for an 8 meter wide entrance to the Tunnel Portal, it is proposed to retain a 30 meter wide strip of vegetation alongside the Lower Hollyford Road to provide a natural barrier to the visual effects of the construction and operation of the Terminus.

Tunnel and earthworks construction will be programmed to take 12 months whilst construction of Toll Booths, Staff Amenities/Control Building, Public Shelter and Toilets will programmed to take 6 months. Construction activities will run in parallel with all works completed within 12 months.

It is proposed to negotiate the use of existing and temporary extensions to Gunns Camp to accommodate up to 80 Construction personnel for the construction phase.

Tunnel construction noise will be minimized through the use of silenced generators and compressors. Noise from earthworks operations will be no more than that expected from a road construction contract. Low level construction noise will be generated from the building works.

Effects on other Park users, will be limited to;

- increased traffic on the Lower Hollyford Road, arising from the mobilization of equipment over a 1 month period, general construction traffic arising over a 12 month period and the haulage to and from temporary stockpiles of the stripped topsoil, overburden and mulched vegetation, involving the operation of two dump trucks between the Terminus area and the Hollyford Airstrip.
- As mentioned above, Tunnel construction noise will be minimized, whilst the earthworks, civil and building construction noise will be no more than could be expected from Road Construction activities which regularly occur in the National Park.
- Once in Operation, the hourly arrival and departure of the train will generate wheel noise for 3 minutes upon arrival and again on Departure. Being electrically powered, noise levels from the Locomotives be low level. Obviously, there will be a substantial increase in Traffic using the Lower Hollyford Road, from close to Gunns Camp to the Te Anau – Milford Road intersection.
- To safely accommodate the increased traffic in the Lower Hollyford Road, it is proposed to carry out a limited upgrade and sealing of the section of the Road servicing the MSLR Project.

Effects upon Wildlife.

As part of the Environmental Impact Study, reference will be made to the Milford Dart Project's assessment of its Wildlife Impact, together with further field work to identify at risk colonies of bats and monarch butterflies within the proposed area of Clearing.

Vegetation Clearing will be undertaken over 3 month period during which time Construction activities and resulting ground vibration will encourage resident wildlife to migrate to areas of vegetation close to but removed from the actual Work Site. Should some species require assistance with relocation, then the Project will provide resources to assist with the move.

Future stages of the Project.

MSLR Limited has provided a concept of how a Park and Ride, Light Rail Transport system utilizing a second Tunnel, 12 Km in length, between the Hollyford and Milford Sound, could operate, so as to phase out the use of the Homer Tunnel and High Alpine section of the existing Milford Road, to all except approved freight and commercial operators. This would provide a long term solution to the anticipated

growth in New Zealand Tourism. It is difficult to predict future growth, but such a facility could perhaps be justified in 20 to 30 years.

Just imagine, all visitors travelling to Milford Sound from Te Anau via the Hollyford, or from Queenstown, via the proposed first Tunnel from the Dart Valley, on an electric powered Light Rail Train, with no carbon emissions. Both the Dart Terminus and the Hollyford Park and Ride Stations would have sufficient parking to cater for Queenstown visitors and Te Anau visitors alike. Maintenance and stabling of the Light Rail Trains would be in the Dart Valley well away from the Fiordland National Park.

Whilst we have “floated “ the Light Rail idea, it does not form part of our Concession Application and suggest that it is extremely unlikely to proceed beyond that of an idea for many years to come.

Otago Daily Times

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Fiordland monorail plan rejected

By *Online ODT*
Created *29/05/14*

 [1]
Nick Smith

Plans for a $240 million Fiordland monorail have been derailed by Conservation Minister Nick Smith, who says the project does not stack up economically or environmentally.

"The independent tourism and financial analysis concluded it was not viable," Dr Smith said today.

"There would be a significant impact on the area's flora, fauna and natural heritage.

"The route is not sufficiently defined to properly assess the impacts," he said.

The Fiordland Link Experience proposed a new link between Queenstown and Milford Sound consisting of a 20km boat excursion across Lake Wakatipu to Mt Nicholas Station, a 45km all-terrain vehicle ride to Kiwi Burn, a 43.8km monorail ride to Te Anau Downs and a 90-kilometre coach journey to Milford Sound.

The application included a lease, licence and concession for the monorail and related infrastructure through the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area including the Snowdon Forest and Fiordland National Park.

Dr Smith said the monorail plan had more merit than the Milford Tunnel proposal, and had been a more difficult decision to make.

"I have visited the site twice, met its applicants twice, consulted with the New Zealand Conservation Authority, and spent days reading the relevant reports and responses from the applicants," he said.

Dr Smith said he did not want the decision interpreted as the Government and the Department of Conservation (DOC) being opposed to any proposal for alternative access options in Fiordland.

"The door is still open but proposals will need to be both environmentally sustainable and economically viable."

Riverstone Holdings managing director Bob Robertson said the Minister's rejection of the plan came as a surprise.

"We have proven our commitment to the environment and this project at every step and our plans have been vindicated by experts. To have our application face constant delays and ultimately end up with a decision being made months out from a national election is incredibly disheartening," Mr Robertson said.

"We recognize that there will always be opponents of innovative ideas, but having stuck to this process in good faith, and incurred costs of over $5 million, this is a tough pill to swallow. No business should have to suffer a process like this.

Mr Robertson said reasons given for the decision were deeply flawed.

"The Minister has ruled that he could not be satisfied the project would be financially viable - a decision based on studies he commissioned that two independent expert assessments, commissioned by us, judged to be manifestly wrong as their conclusions were based on old data and made a series of assumptions that could not be justified."

Economic viability could not be truly established until extensive engineering design had been done, a detailed business case had been developed and funding was sourced. That would take at least six months, and would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"To that end, we proposed the following condition regarding the project's viability be included: ‘That the project has been the subject of a robust due diligence process certified by a qualified third party and has subsequently secured all capital (equity and debt) to successfully build, complete and fund the ongoing operations of the business'."

Forest and Bird welcomed the decision, saying it was great news for the World Heritage Area.

"The monorail plans were unrealistic from the beginning, as there is no way the applicant could have restored the old growth forest, tussock grasslands or wetlands the project would have destroyed. It could also have been catastrophic for the bat population," Otago Southland field officer Sue Maturin said.

DOC needed to finish the job it started years ago and classify all stewardship land.

"If it had done, the monorail developer would have been saved the cost of getting his proposal this far. And it would have saved community groups likes Forest & Bird the time and expense of advocating for the protection of the Snowdon Forest."

Labour Conservation spokeswoman Ruth Dyson called Dr Smith's decision "a victory for common sense".

"The monorail would have had a major impact on a special part of Fiordland which is a mecca for trampers and visitors to New Zealand", she said.

"New Zealanders were loud and clear in their opposition to this, with thousands signing a petition opposing the Monorail.

"I am delighted that the Monorail has been stopped in its tracks."

If it went ahead, the monorail development would have been the largest concession ever granted on conservation land.

A hearing commissioner recommended in November that the project should go ahead with extensive conditions.

Dr Smith then visited the site and commissioned a financial viability report for the project to investigate whether there were any risks to Government.

That report found that Government would be liable for significant costs if the project failed.

The development would have cut through both the conservation estate and private land.

Unesco warned the Department of Conservation that the development was "likely to be considered incompatible" with the site's World Heritage status.

But Dr Smith has previously said that many of the 200 World Heritage spots around the world had visitor facilities which were similar to the proposal.

A separate proposal to build a bus tunnel between Queenstown and Milford Sound was rejected in July because it was considered a financial risk to Government and would have cut through two National Parks.

MSLR

Milford Sound Link Railway

MSLR Limited,
Unit 1, 14 Kennaway Road,
Woolston,
PO Box 19-803,
Christchurch.

22 July 2013

Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Conservation,
Private Bag 18888,
Parliament Buildings,
Wellington 6160.

With copies to;
Hon Bill English, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and MP for Clutha/Southland.
Ms Chris Visser, Case Manager, Department of Conservation, Invercargill.

Dear Minister,

Fiordland Transportation Projects and Concession Applications.

Further to your letter of 05 July 2013, we appreciate your comments on our current incomplete Concession Application, and applaud your decision of 17 July 2013, wherein you declined the concession application by Milford Dart Limited (MDL).

Now that MDL are no longer in their former position of being the front runner to develop a Tunnel Proposal, we will immediately embark on the process to address the shortfalls in our Application and note that your MDL decision, clears the way for our superior proposal to move forward, which will address many of your concerns with the MDL application.

We look forward to working with your Department on our Proposal.

Yours Faithfully

MSLR Limited,

Greg Harris

Chief Executive Officer.

Milford tunnel plan rejected

By Online ODT on Wed, 17 Jul 2013

News: Queenstown Lakes ODT

Nick Smith

Plans for a controversial tunnel between Queenstown and Milford Sound have been rejected by Conservation Minister Nick Smith.

"I am declining this tunnel because the environmental impacts are significant and beyond what is appropriate in two of New Zealand's most spectacular National Parks and a world heritage area,'' Dr Smith said.

The minister said there were three main reasons for declining the application.

Dr Smith said the first reason was that it would require depositing half a million tonnes of tunnel spoil that would permanently damage the natural landscape.

The second was the impact of the new roads and portals at each end and impacts on visitors at the entrance to the Routeburn track.

His third was that the engineering works and tunnel required were inconsistent with the Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Park management plans.

Dr Smith said he walked the part of the Routeburn track to see where it would be most affected.

He also considered 1000 submissions.

The minister was responsible for a decision over granting access to Milford Dart Limited for the 11.3km, single-lane bus tunnel, because the development cut through conservation land, including Mt Aspiring National Park.

It was referred to the minister earlier this year by the Department of Conservation because of the huge scale of the project and the huge public interest in the outcome.

The plans stirred heated debate because the tunnel would have been built in prized conservation land which included one of the country's Great Walks, the Routeburn Track.

It would also have allowed buses to bypass Te Anau, which depended heavily on Milford Sound tourism for its economy. A petition created by the Stop the Tunnel lobby group collected 25,000 signatures.

The $170 million tunnel was designed to reduce the nine-hour return bus trip, and the company estimated the improved access to Milford Sound would draw 20,000 visitors a year to New Zealand.

Dr Smith, who is one of the greenest National MPs, has previously said that the decision whether to grant access to the national parks was a tough one.

"You don't get much more spectacular than the Routeburn and Milford Tracks, both of which I've done. It's a very difficult call in that I take the view that national parks are areas where nature rules and human needs come second.''

A separate proposal to cut a 41km monorail and road through Snowdon Forest was still being considered by the minister.

Green Party conservation spokeswoman Eugenie Sage said the decision was a victory for the thousands of New Zealanders who had demanded protection for national parks.

"The National Parks Act, the General Policy for National Parks and national park management plans, developed with community input, have clear rules on what is appropriate in our national parks.

"A private road tunnel would have been at odds with these provisions,'' said Ms Sage.

She hoped Dr Smith would make a similar decision about the monorail.

Forest & Bird advocacy manager Kevin Hackwell said the tunnel would have been a disaster for the surrounding environment and the local communities that depended on through traffic.

"We only hope now, the minister will make a similar decision when considering the proposal to build a monorail through Snowdon Forest in Fiordland,'' said Mr Hackwell.

- by Kate Shuttleworth of APNZ and Isaac Davison

Office of Hon Dr Nick Smith

Minister of Conservation
Minister of Housing

5 JUL 2013

Greg Harris
Chief Executive Officer
Milford Sound Link Railway
MSLR Limited
PO Box 19-803
Christchurch

Dear Greg

Thank you for your letter dated 25 March 2013 commenting on the proposed Fiordland transportation projects and your alternative project.

In an email dated 27 July 2012 (DOC reference: PAC-14-06-230), the Department of Conservation advised that your concession application was still incomplete, and lacked information specifically requested by the Department. The email also referred to the following statement in your letter dated 24 July 2012 "It is our intention to provide the required information progressively."

I am advised that, until such time as all information is received with respect to your concession application, the department is not in a position to progress it or to comment on your proposal.

Yours sincerely

Nick Smith
Minister of Conservation

Second Milford tunnel plan unveiled

The Southland Times
Last updated 00:33 28/02/2008

A new company has entered the race to become the first to build a Routeburn-Hollyford tunnel to cut travel time from Queenstown to Milford.

MSLR Ltd has lodged a concession application with the Department of Conservation.

It is the second company to apply to DOC for a concession to build a tunnel in the area.

DOC's acting community relations manager for Southland conservancy Dave Taylor announced the news to the Southland Conservation Board at its meeting in Invercargill yesterday.

"We've just received the application but it does not have all the information we require. We've sent it back and asked if they can give us more information," Mr Taylor said.

MSLR Ltd director Greg Harris said his company had applied to DOC for a concession to use some crown land to build a single-lane 13.5km rail tunnel from Routeburn to Hollyford.

"The proposal is to go in at the Routeburn station just past the Dart (River) bridge and come out into the Hollyford Valley," he said.

The tunnel's Routeburn portal would be on private land while the Hollyford portal was on Crown land.

There was road access to both sites.

He said DOC had requested the company include final detail of facilities at either portal, such as toilets.

Construction would take two years, however, given the time these types of applications took to process, it was unlikely to open before 2015, he said.

The proposal was for a roll-on, roll-off, rail-based line. It would be able to carry all types of vehicles, providing more market share, Mr Harris said.

It was based on a Swiss model, which the company had studied, but would be new to New Zealand.

Mr Harris declined to say how much the tunnel was expected to cost or how much fares would be.

In December last year the New Zealand Conservation Authority declined to approve an amendment to the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan to allow construction of a new road and tunnel in the Mount Aspiring National Park.

It meant the Milford Dart Company could not proceed with plans to build a $150 million 10.2km underground bus tunnel from part of the Routeburn Rd to the Hollyford Valley because its activities are not consistent with the Aspiring Management Plan.

Milford Dart director Tom Elworthy said at the time that all was not lost and the company would table other options.

He confirmed last night that the company was still looking at options.

"We are still very much alive and kicking," Mr Elworthy said.

Both companies have been in contact with each other but declined to reveal the extent of any discussions.

Mr Harris said unlike the Milford Dart's proposal to build 1.5km of road to access the tunnel's portals, his company's concept did not require building new roads to access the portals because both had existing road access.

The portal at the Hollyford end come under the Fiordland National Park's Management Plan and the Routeburn portal was on private land.