



Screen Producers and Directors Association of New Zealand

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Aspiring Review

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Submission on Mt Aspiring Discussion Document

The following is the Screen Producers and Directors Association's submission on the discussion document released by the Department of Conservation for the Mt Aspiring management plan. SPADA would be more than happy to be contacted for clarification of any of the details of this document or any other matter relating to filming in National Parks.

Background

- SPADA is the foremost industry organisation representing film and television producers and directors in New Zealand. We have 300 company and individual members. Our mission statement is to be *the leading advocate for a robust screen production industry which strives to enhance the diversity of screen culture in New Zealand.*
- SPADA's interest in making a submission on the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan discussion document ("the Plan") derives from the fact that our members and associates have a long tradition of filming around and in National Parks in New Zealand. These members include film-makers at work on feature films, television programmes and commercials.

- As a separate exercise SPADA is developing a set of filming protocols with Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu. The filming protocols will be available by mid-May.
- We respect the twin aims of National Park philosophy: *Preservation as far as possible in its natural state, and freedom of entry and access for public enjoyment.*¹ It is in our interest just as much as it is in the interest of DOC, Ngai Tahu and park visitors that the Park is respected and nurtured and that access be subject to some restriction. SPADA is committed to ensuring that access to the park for film makers, as well as for other concessionaires, is operated openly under fair and easily understood guidelines.

SPADA is grateful for the chance to have input into the draft plan at this stage and encourages the Mt Aspiring Conservation Board's efforts to consult on the future management of the park

Our submission relates to the following issues:

1. Park Values

Our submission:

The term "park values" can be ambiguous. In the document under the heading *Park Values* the term would appear to be referring to the physical features of the park. Later in the discussion document however, under Air Access, the term "park values" refers to natural quietness and remoteness.

We seek the following in the draft plan:

SPADA suggests that, if the management plan refers to "park values", a thorough definition is provided at the outset.

2. Increasing Visitor Numbers

Our submission:

SPADA understands the concerns about increasing visitor numbers but presumes that this increase is largely from recreational independent visitors. We would be concerned if efforts to manage numbers adversely unnecessarily limits responsible filming activity.

We seek the following in the draft plan:

That any policies regarding managing the increase in visitor numbers recognise that the main increase derives from recreational independent visitors and not from concessionaire activity.

¹ National Parks Act 1990, Section 4

3. Zoning

Our submission:

SPADA is concerned that changes to the zoning of Mt Aspiring National Park may unnecessarily prevent concessionaire activity. Blanket restrictions on the use of certain areas within the park do not allow for situations where it may be possible to allow access if any adverse effects can be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

We seek the following in the draft plan:

That any zoning restrictions allow for exemptions provided the Department's concerns have been sufficiently addressed.

4. Air access

Our submission:

As with zoning restrictions the suggestion of a blanket ban on landing sites, flight paths or times of day for flying, runs the risk of preventing concession applications where it may be possible to allow this kind of air access if Department concerns have been addressed. Also, requiring all concessionaires to use the same flight paths and landing sites may increase pressure on specified sites. SPADA notes the suggestion of developing a voluntary code of practice with aircraft operators and suggests this may be an appropriate way of developing practical policy(s).

We seek the following in the draft plan:

That concessions for air access be judged on a case-by-case basis and the individual merits of each application are taken into account.

That the department liaises with aircraft operators to develop a voluntary code of practice.

5. Commercial Operations/Enterprises

Our submission:

The Department's concerns in this section seem to be based around increasing visitor numbers. Again we refer to the point raised in the discussion document: that concessionaire activity is likely to account for only a small percentage of the overall increase in park visitors

As to concessionaire activity itself, the record of film crews fulfilling their concessionaire requirements has, on the whole, been excellent. The screen production industry recognises the need to protect our natural heritage: among other things, it is in the industry's best interests to protect the landscapes which we film. We believe it would be beneficial to film maker concessionaires and to the department if there was recognition and provision for filming activity as separate from other concessionaire activity. Filming in National parks has conditions and challenges unique from other

concessionaire activity. SPADA would be more than happy to be consulted further on this matter.

We seek the following in the draft plan:

That the record of film makers as responsible and pro-active concessionaires is recognised.

That the draft plan makes provision for film-making activity as separate from general concessionaire activity and that any policies concerning film-making, commercial or otherwise, involve consultation with the screen production industry prior to their inclusion in the draft management plan.

SPADA believes that industry consultation on issues and policies surrounding National Parks is the best way to develop a mutually beneficial and lasting working relationship between the screen production industry and the Department of Conservation. This kind of relationship will help both the Department and the screen production industry navigate future issues in Mt Aspiring and other National Parks.

We urge the department to consult with us prior to any policies regarding filming - commercial or otherwise - being included in the draft management plan for the Mt Aspiring National Park. It is in both our interests that the draft plan proposals focus on genuine issues so that discussion is not side-tracked by matters which can be clarified beforehand.

We forward to hearing from you. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wrightson
Chief Executive
[sent unsigned by email]