



Piopiotahi Milford Sound community update

9 April 2024

In attendance: 10 people

Key points:

- Residents oppose a large staff accommodation block, emphasising its infeasibility.
 - Separation between tourist accommodation and residential areas is crucial.
 - Preference for bespoke staff accommodation options that suit the range of workers preferences and life stages.
- Better infrastructure and management needed in Piopiotahi
- Social facilities, including multi-use communal spaces, are desired for residents.
- There is support for better road management – more people on buses but also need to ensure a high-standards for all bus drivers.

Managed access

- Not impossible – but hard to do to get people out of cars. For me for the carbon footprint fewer cars is good.
- So many tourists driving 60kph and we get stuck behind – then bad overtaking. So, 100 percent good to use buses.
- People might just ignore any rules. I'd prefer to drive if it was just me – I could stop where I wanted take photos etc.
- Other people enjoy getting a bus. You need to give people the options. There are big tour groups, they travel on the bus anyway.
- If it was cheaper to rent a car – why would I get on the bus. Make the bus options cheaper, people would take them.
- But some bus drivers are worse. Had a couple of close encounters with bus drivers. Look at bus accidents on the road. Can also be a problem for bus parking. Not enough space.
- Permits for parking would need to be governed. But could see New Zealanders having a problem with that. Then you get days like this where people have got to walk in the rain.

Accommodation

- We just want to have our own places. We don't want to be near the customers, we've spent the day with them.
- [Some] new accommodation would be good.

- No pub currently – good for the bank account but not for the community. I can go a season and not meet some other workers. Accommodation was a lot quieter then [when there was a pub]. Now more house parties.
- We live and work together - not meeting other workers. Creates quite a stressful environment. Community desperately does need some neutral ground.
- Don't like the idea of all staff together, I'm a quieter worker. Too much to have everyone together.
- Wouldn't want to be living next door to the young ones.
- Being on this side [Freshwater Basin] is so much easier than living in the village. Sometimes you miss the bus. Biking only good some days.

Visitor experience/infrastructure

- Gondola not viable. If you get people up there then you've got to have someone looking after them. It's hazardous up there.
- A lot of people ask – what else can I do here. We have a couple of handouts, but options are limited.
- Not economically viable to run other activities – people bussed in put on boats and bussed out.
- Not much to do other than some four-hour hikes in the area. Lot's of people have got an hour or two – want to see something on the way out. If they've got kids or aren't great at walking there's not much for them to do e.g. 15-20 minute walks. Top of Key summit - not everyone wants to do that.
- Peak time if something happens it might be safer that everyone is on a boat, than at 4pm when everyone is driving out.
- Is there going to be any decision made about a visitor centre etc. Would it close the existing centre?
- What would be in a visitor centre. We like the way it works here with the café now. There could be more stuff, more activities.
- I couldn't believe it when I first came here. Nothing changes except the terminal gets bigger. More boats. It would be really nice if the place wasn't just a boat destination.
- You are in one of the wettest places in the world – but no roof above people – nowhere out of the rain. The walkway to the carpark. You've got elderly, you've got families.
- More and better infrastructure – decent shelters, café, walkways. Other cafes. Gets so busy in here [Southern Discoveries Café]. Only place to come if it's raining, escape sandflies.
- A dairy/visitor centre – not just a boat destination. More things to do here. Places to look at the fjords. Sit and contemplate.

Swinging the market

- Queenstown is the base its marketed as the base, it has the airport, Te Anau doesn't have that.
- A shift to Te Anau is not going to work for everyone.
- There are people who want to just get the cheapest option.

Mana whenua

- How are you tying in mana whenua values in this place? I'm here [as a resident] tied to the land.
- So what type of stories do Kāi Tahu have to tell? They just passed through.
- Mātauranga Māori how does that play out. Those stories are just general knowledge.
- I would want to see Māori being and living here.
- I would be interested in seeing what you have on Kāi Tahu values and aspirations for this place [links provided to YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl-P9AUSPGo> and the MOP Stage 2 report: <https://www.milfordopportunities.nz/assets/Projects/210331-Mana-Whenua-Aspirations-Values-Report.pdf>]

Governance/infrastructure

- I don't really think the place gets that well looked after. There are metal things sticking out everywhere, old broken buildings. No one sees anyone from DOC here.
- MST and MSD do most of the trapping.
- That flood protection work – that won't last. Deepwater filling by a meter a year. Going to push into the land over time.
- I would like to see the tracks well maintained. The chicken wire has lifted off the bridge on the foreshore walk people are tripping over it and cutting themselves. Lookout not maintained. Walkway from the carpark flooded – pushing people onto the road.
- This is the jewel in the crown of NZ Tourism – whole place needs a birthday. Companies holding off because of no certainty.
- Government needs to let companies build new accommodation. Hasn't changed in 20 years.
- Make the consents process much easier.