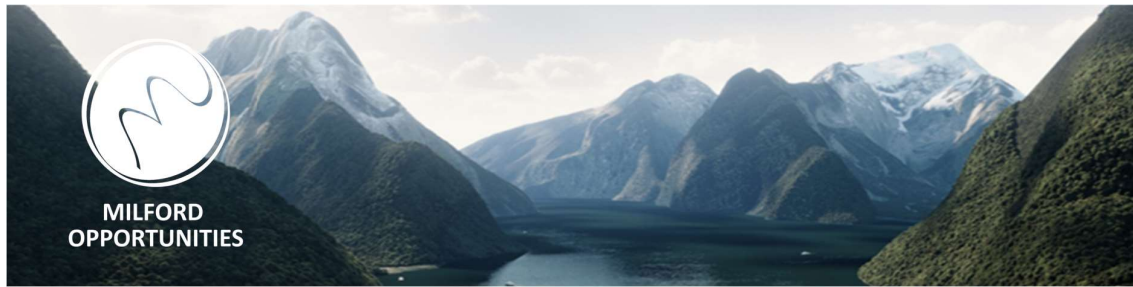


Climbing / recreation access feedback

15 June 2023

1. Milford Road and Deepwater Basin

- The Darran Mountains surrounding the Milford Road are 'the' climbing pinnacle in NZ. They are logistically challenging, have extreme weather, and are suited to experienced climbers. Accessibility and flexibility are important. New systems under the Masterplan need to support the climbing community as well as other stakeholders.
- Climbers have minimal impact on the environment and in general support the ideas that the Masterplan promotes. For example, the park and ride system could have positive impacts on tourist traffic and emissions.
- However, there is a concern that there is little mention of climbing and associated issues in the plan, and that the things that are important to climbers may be overlooked, causing unintended adverse consequences.
- It is important to ensure that the needs of outdoor recreationalists are not ignored due to the focus on managing tourist traffic.
- Climbers access a range of sites along the Milford Road. Many of these are not at current congestion points or at designated car parks. Increasing the width of the shoulder or creating pull-off areas would future-proof these sites. Sites include road shoulders near the Babylon and Little Babylon crags access track, and the road shoulder near the Chasm Crag access track.
- Climbers frequently spend multiple days, sometimes up to a month or longer in the Darran Mountains, often overnighing at Homer Hut and in the backcountry (while parked along the Milford Road). The permitting system needs to enable climbers to operate in this way.
- The permitting system needs to be online so that climbers can make sensible decisions at short notice, avoiding the incidence of 'work-arounds' and unsafe practises.
- Climbers access a number of nationally significant climbing areas from Deepwater Basin, including Mitre Peak, Sinbad Gully, Airport Wall etc. Parking at Deepwater Basin is critical.
- Any permit parking system needs to ensure that spaces will be available for recreational users including climbers, providing flexibility to make and change plans at short notice based on the weather forecast.
- Park and ride is unlikely to be appropriate for climbers, and it may not run at times that suit climbers (early morning starts and late finishes).
- Australians should be included in the carpark permitting system as they are currently a significant part of the climbing community who frequent the Darran Mountains.
- There is concern that there doesn't appear to be a lead for recreation on the board or within the unit and feel that key issues might be overlooked.



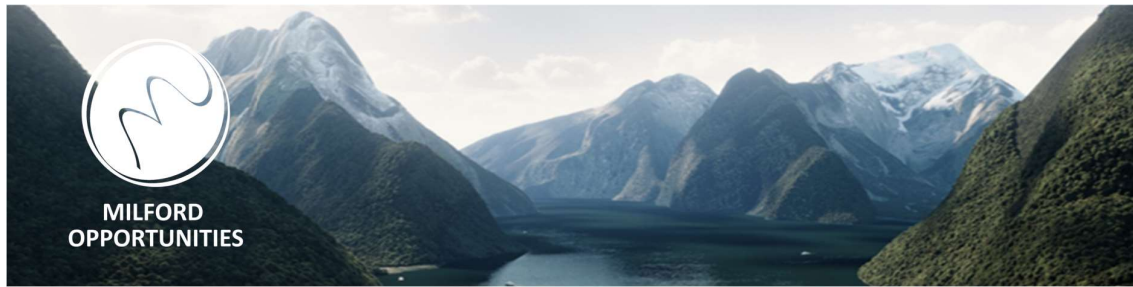
2. Homer Hut and surrounds

Current state: Access to hut can become difficult when walkers park on the driveway or in front of the gate.

- Increasing incidence of the general public using Homer Hut water supply and toilet.
- Climbers more frequently involved in providing assistance to walkers who get themselves into trouble through lack of experience.
- Management of health and safety is an issue for the Gertrude Saddle walk.
- Gravel extraction takes place but could be managed in a way that mitigates flooding risk at Homer Hut.
- Fiordland National Park Management Plan encourages the establishment of accommodation for a range of users but very few options exist for camping and some of these have been discontinued. Need to establish more camping closer to climbing areas in the Darran Mountains.
- Very few camping sites permitted at Homer Hut and there is a need to increase these.
- There is a need to create a buffer between Homer Hut users and the public accessing the Gertrude Valley.

3. Recommendations and feedback on proposals in the Masterplan:

- Private vehicle access: and parking along the Milford Road corridor and Deepwater Basin for recreational purposes, including climbing and mountaineering activities, should not be limited or restricted (outside of general road closures).
- Permits: This system needs to have an 'allocation' for private recreational users to ensure permits are available as and when required as opposed to the allocation being taken up by commercial or other operators. This plan should not inadvertently restrict access for users particularly who wish to use the park for recreational purposes which is one of the two primary goals for establishing the park.
- Flexibility: Any carpark permitting system needs to be online, flexible and user-friendly, allowing booking and changes at short notice in response to weather conditions, and enabling parking access early in the day and late at night.
- Road shoulder: Increase the width of the shoulder or create pull-off areas at the base of the access tracks for the Babylon / Little Babylon crags and the Chasm crag to future-proof these areas.
- Dedicated carparking: Given the potential demand on parking at Deepwater Basin, areas could be dedicated to recreational (small footprint users) and commercial users. These need to be near the waterfront or at least easy walking distance from the waterfront.
- Australians: Include Australians in the recreational use carpark permitting system.



- Board: Create a dedicated Recreation Lead position within the MOP team and on the Board to ensure that outdoor recreation needs are given adequate attention.
- Node location: A node at the start of Gertrude Saddle Walk will encourage more use and significantly exacerbate existing issues. Recommend the node be located elsewhere - Little Farm could be an alternative site.
- New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) hut access: Strategies should be put in place to ensure the NZAC hut is not used for people who are accessing Gertrude Saddle for the day due to the increased capacity of the node (if it is placed at Gertrude Saddle).
- Additional camping options: within the national park should be created, to provide affordable accommodation options for recreational users staying for longer periods.
- Hazard mitigation: The opportunity to combine gravel extraction occurring near Homer Hut with mitigation of flood risk at the hut should be investigated.