



Front Cover:
Earth's protective cloak, the ozone layer, is itself extremely fragile under the assault of 20th century technology. One fluorocarbon-based aerosol can has the potential to destroy 3 tonnes of ozone (see article page 4).

Central Otago's Pisa Range, the highest of Otago's block mountain ranges, rises to 1950 metres, runs in a north-south direction for 20 km and averages 9 km across. The Protected Natural Areas Programme has identified a large area on the crest as a "recommended area for protection", describing it as "an outstanding representative area." The vegetation of the Pisa Range rises from alpine fescue and blue tussocklands through biologically diverse cushionfield to sparsely vegetated stonefield on the summit, where it is exposed to severe wind. On this exposed crest the South Island pied oystercatcher, black-backed gull, banded dotterel, black-fronted tern and grey duck brave the harsh elements to breed.

The Pisa Range is public land under pastoral lease. When lessee John Lee was originally granted permission to set up an 80-person cross country ski operation, the Land Settlement Board ruled that he had to grant the public foot access and that any land unsuited for grazing had to be surrendered from the lease. Since then Mr Lee has applied for a 5000-person operation; the Department of Lands has granted permission and waived the conditions set down by the Land Settlement Board. Government ministers are now meeting to review this decision and the precedent it will set unless overturned.

This decision must pose serious questions over the future of pastoral lease administration, whereby day to day management is in the hands of Landcorp and regard must be given to Conservation Department advice on conservation and access issues.