

Before the Waikato District Plan Review Independent Hearings Panel

Submitter No. 827; FS 1319

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991
IN THE MATTER of the Proposed Waikato District Plan
REGARDING Hearing 1 – Chapter 1 Introduction

PRIMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SARAH MCCARTER

SENIOR PLANNER

TONKIN & TAYLOR LTD

on behalf of New Zealand Steel Holdings Limited

23 September 2019

Table of contents

Introduction	1
Scope of evidence	1
Overview of NZ Steel's Submission	1
Submission Points for Hearing 1	2
Conclusion	5
Appendix A : NZ Steel proposed changes to Council redline	

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Sarah Catherine McCarter.
- 2 I am a Senior Planner at Tonkin & Taylor Limited and have been with the company for six years. I have twelve years' planning experience in New Zealand. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science from Victoria University of Wellington and a Masters of Environmental Legal Studies (Honours) from the University of Auckland. I am a Full Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute, and a member of the Resource Management Law Association.
- 3 I am familiar with the Proposed Waikato District Plan ('the Plan') and specifically the provisions relating to the submission and further submission lodged by New Zealand Steel Holdings Limited (NZ Steel). I was involved in drafting the original submission for NZ Steel.
- 4 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the 2014 Environment Court Practice Note and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions I express. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.
- 5 I am authorised to provide expert planning evidence on behalf of NZ Steel Holdings Limited (NZ Steel).

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 6 My evidence deals with the following:
 - a An overview of NZ Steel's submission;
 - b References in Chapter 1 of the Plan to mineral extraction in the Waikato District.

OVERVIEW OF NZ STEEL'S SUBMISSION

- 7 As set out in Mr Huggins' evidence, NZ Steel runs an iron sand mining and processing operation at Waikato North Head (WNH), an area also known as Maioro. Mining activities were established at WNH in 1968, and NZ Steel holds a Mining Licence for the iron sand mine, which is operative until 2066. The mining activities at Maioro support NZ Steel operations at Glenbrook Steel Mill, located in the Auckland region.

- 8 NZ Steel's submission addresses a number of parts of the Plan with the primary focus being that the Plan as notified does not adequately recognise the long-standing existing nature of the WNH mine site or recognise and provide for the contribution that the WNH mine makes to the social and economic wellbeing of the Waikato District and New Zealand as a whole.
- 9 NZ Steel's submission sought that (notwithstanding that the Mining Licence authorises its activities at the WNH site), the Plan should appropriately provide for NZ Steel's activities at the WNH site, in order to better reflect the on-the-ground reality, provide continuity from the operative Waikato District Plan and enable users of the plan to have a clear understanding of activities that are lawful at WNH.
- 10 For the purposes of this hearing, I will not provide detailed discussion of my opinion in relation to this primary focus of NZ Steel's submission, other than to note that I support the relief sought, as I will address that in evidence at subsequent hearings. However, this brief context is useful in relation to the two NZ Steel submission points that are addressed in this hearing.

SUBMISSION POINTS FOR HEARING 1

- 11 Two of NZ Steel's submission points are being heard at Hearing 1:
 - a Submission point 827.38: Retain 1.4.3 (1.2.3 in the marked up version attached to the s42A report / 'the redline version') as notified.
 - b Submission point 827.39: Request a new section in Section 1.5 (1.3 in the redline version) to address productive rural activities and mineral extraction within the Strategic objectives and directions, as follows:

Mineral extraction

Waikato District contains a number of established extractive industries, including sand mining and coal mining, along with areas where extraction of mineral resources may potentially occur in the future. These activities are important to the economic wellbeing of the district, and should be effectively and efficiently utilised in a sustainable manner. These activities are commonly located in rural areas where reverse

sensitivity can be an issue for established extractive industries.

- 12 I have read the section 42A report prepared by Deborah Donaldson (Perception Planning Ltd) dated 3 September 2019 on Chapter 1: Introduction of the Plan. I understand that this provides background information to plan users about the Waikato District and information which illustrates the purpose of and direction taken by the Plan.
- 13 Ms Donaldson recommends that NZ Steel Submission Point 827.38 is accepted, and that Section 1.4.3 is retained as notified. I concur with this recommendation.
- 14 Ms Donaldson recommends that NZ Steel Submission Point 827.39 is rejected on the basis that area or topic-specific objectives and policies are found within specific topic chapters within Section B of the Plan.
- 15 I agree with many of the changes proposed by Ms Donaldson to the Introduction chapter, including deletion of the reference to ‘Strategic objectives and policies’ in Section 1.5 (1.3 in the redline version). This clarifies the intent of the introductory chapter i.e. that it is intended as an introduction and not to state objectives and policies which are presented later in the Plan.
- 16 Notwithstanding this, I consider that the “Description of the district and issues for the Waikato” (Section 1.2), and the “What does this mean for Waikato?” (Section 1.3) sections of this introductory chapter set important context for the balance of the Plan.
- 17 I note that Section 1.2, in setting out issues for the district, includes a list of economic challenges which includes acknowledgement that the mining sector is important to the district due to its share of the GDP, but that it is a sector that is facing challenges. Section 1.4.2.3 (1.2.2.3 in the redline version) states:
- (viii) *A decline in the mining sector, with coal resources in particular becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to access, as well as public concerns about the environmental impacts of coal and mineral mining in the region, are a concern, considering its share of the district’s GDP.*
- 18 Therefore, I consider it is also important to include reference to the mining sector in Section 1.3 as this will help to frame issues which are addressed

in subsequent chapters. I consider that the important role that mineral resources and their extraction play in the economic wellbeing of the district should be consistently referenced throughout the Plan.

19 I note that the energy sector has specific mention in Section 1.3.7.6, as follows:

a The district plan recognises the national and regional importance of existing energy resources and infrastructure, which include coalfields, coal mines, Huntly Power Station, gas, electricity transmission and distribution, and coal conveyance facilities, as well as renewable energy. The plan addresses the positive and adverse effects of energy infrastructure and development.

20 Given the importance of the mining sector to the District and the challenges faced by the sector, I consider that it would be appropriate to include similar recognition for mineral resources (noting that there is some overlap between the energy sector and mineral resources, specifically coal).

21 On this basis I am of the view that mineral resources should be specifically recognised in Section 1.3.

22 Based on this, the following wording should, in my view, be added to Section 1.3 as a new Section 1.3.7.8. This text is modified from the NZ Steel submission, in response to the proposed clarifications to this section of the Plan through the section 42A report, and with reference to Section 1.5A of the Operative District Plan and Section 1.3.7.6 of the redline version (see above):

Mineral extraction

a Waikato District contains a number of established extractive industries, including sand mining and coal mining, along with areas where extraction of mineral resources may potentially occur in the future.

These activities are important to the economic wellbeing of the district, and should be effectively and efficiently utilised in a sustainable manner. These activities are commonly located in rural

areas where reverse sensitivity can be an issue for established extractive industries. Access to, and utilisation of, these resources needs to manage the positive and adverse effects of mineral resource extraction.

CONCLUSION

- 23 In summary, I support the Council's retention of Section 1.4.3 (1.2.3 in the redline version) and the changes proposed to clarify the intent of the introductory chapter.
- 24 However I consider that mineral resources and their extraction should be consistently referenced throughout the Plan, and therefore wording should be added to Section 1.3 as a new Section 1.3.7.8 which recognises the importance of mineral extraction and the challenges that the sector faces.

Sarah McCarter

23 September 2019

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Appendix A: NZ Steel proposed changes to Council redline

Insert new Section 1.3.7.8:

1.3.7.8 Mineral extraction

- a Waikato District contains a number of established extractive industries, including sand mining and coal mining, along with areas where extraction of mineral resources may potentially occur in the future.

These activities are important to the economic wellbeing of the district, and should be effectively and efficiently utilised in a sustainable manner. These activities are commonly located in rural areas where reverse sensitivity can be an issue for established extractive industries. Access to, and utilisation of, these resources needs to manage the positive and adverse effects of mineral resource extraction.