

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS
APPOINTED BY THE WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
(**RMA**)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Proposed Waikato District Plan

BETWEEN **RANGITAHU LIMITED**

Submitter [No. 343]

AND **WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Local Authority

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF
JAMES DICKSON LUNDAY FOR RANGITAHU LIMITED**

HEARING 25: RAGLAN

(URBAN DESIGN)

21 MAY 2021

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is James Lunday I provided evidence in chief (**EiC**), dated 17 February 2021, on Urban Design matters related to Rangitahi Ltd's submission on the Proposed Waikato District Plan (**pWDP**).
2. I outlined my qualifications, experience and commitment to comply with the Environment Court Expert Witness Code of Conduct in my EiC.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 3 I summarise my evidence as follows:

Raglan's Special Character

- (a) The Powerpoint (Annexure B to my EiC) defines what I consider to be the important elements that make up the existing and future character of Raglan as defined by the exemplar Rangitahi Structure Plan process.
- (b) Despite some of the more recent development detracting from Raglan's special character, the overall urban structure proposed in earlier historical plans for Raglan has generally been preserved, particularly through the circulation pattern.
- (c) The Town is girthed by sea, or to be more accurate by Harbour and Estuary. The urban form has developed as a series of peninsulas connected by causeways. The Harbour and estuaries were the main thoroughfares and today remain as recreation thoroughfares. This urban pattern of development combined with the low impact "bach" architectural style, strong Mainstreet and respect for topography in subdivision, has produced a distinct built character. Raglan's special character, in my view, is nationally if not internationally significant.
- (d) The development of the Rangitahi Peninsula has demonstrated a different approach to other more recent development. I consider that the comprehensive structure planned approach will result in the development of the Rangitahi Peninsula being a positive contribution to Raglan's future character. The Rangitahi Peninsula outcomes so far demonstrate that the development is achieving a high-quality outcome which is closely aligned to the values and characteristics of Raglan.

Raglan's Future Growth

- (e) Raglan's special qualities and unique lifestyle opportunities are likely to lead to strong demand for housing within the town in future. The Waikato 2070 Growth and Economic Development Strategy (Waikato 2070) identifies the potential for significant growth in Raglan. It refers to a potential increase in population from approximately 4,000 at present to 12,500 within the next 50 years.
- (f) The Raglan Development Plan, which sits within Waikato 2070, identifies new future growth areas in Rangitahi South and Raglan West in addition to existing zoned areas in Lorenzen Bay and Flax Cove in Raglan East and Rangitahi and Rakaunui in Raglan West. I agree that Rangitahi South and Raglan West are suitable locations for future growth based on the existing urban form and taking into account the proximity of those areas to the beaches west of the town. The development of these areas will require a sensitive approach to reflect the landscape, environmental, cultural, and settlement qualities of Raglan, in the same way that a sensitive approach was taken for the Rangitahi Peninsula.

A Planned Approach for Raglan

- (g) The lack of a strong spatial planning approach to Raglan, and a reliance on generic planning rules designed for more conventional suburban development, places the unique character of Raglan in danger from infill housing and suburban sprawl. Like the Rangitahi Peninsula, growth should be planned for in a way that does not negatively impact on the character and qualities of Raglan.
- (h) One challenge of the Rangitahi Structure Plan was that, as a private plan change, there was a lack of ability to address wider issues affecting Raglan's character and growth. That is because an earlier Raglan Structure Plan, which had been proposed by Waikato District Council, was subsequently withdrawn. In my opinion, Raglan deserves and requires a spatial plan for the Town as a whole. The strong landscape, historical characteristics, and the national significance of the town warrant this.

- (i) I recommend that a Council-led high-level spatial plan should be prepared to establish the overarching approach to the growth of the town. This should build on the work undertaken as part of Waikato 2070, the Raglan Character Study, the Raglan Naturally Community Plan, the Raglan Landscape Framework (attached to Ms de Lambert's EiC), and infrastructure planning. The process should involve the local community and key stakeholders in identifying values that the community and stakeholders consider are important to plan for and potentially protect.
- (j) Matters which a spatial plan would enable consideration of include:
 - i. How infill development might be accommodated within existing urban areas;
 - ii. How and where new commercial and industrial development should be located to service residential growth, including neighbourhood centres to support walkable catchments;
 - iii. Multi-modal transportation, including an interconnected Raglan wide framework for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connectivity, including confirming appropriate alignments for connecting roads and other infrastructure;
 - iv. Three waters infrastructure;
 - v. Planning for community facilities, such as schools, medical centres and halls with involvement of relevant stakeholders;
 - vi. Well-connected open space networks based on key natural features and attributes of the town, including strong connections to the waters edge (harbour, estuary and beaches) and biodiversity/habitat enhancement;
 - vii. Sufficient land release to have some effect on price escalation caused by housing shortage;
 - viii. Encouraging diversity of house types to reflect changing attitudes, needs and wants based on opportunities such as co-location of higher density development with neighbourhood centres;
 - ix. Input from tangata whenua and the local community;
 - x. Recognition, protection and enhancement of features and special characteristics of Raglan (as recommended in the Raglan Character Study).

- (k) The spatial plan should confirm and guide a series of key actions. This may include, for instance, preparation of some Raglan-specific provisions for inclusion in the District Plan through a plan change. One of the actions should be structure planning for growth areas which should be undertaken to provide a growth area specific response to the high-level spatial plan prior to the rezoning of those areas.
- (l) A structure plan cannot convey or enforce qualitative directives. As with a building, it is the detailed application of a finer grain of guidance that will ultimately give effect to the higher-level planning documents. For this reason, I also recommend that structure plans be supported by a masterplan, supporting design guides and objectives, policies and rules to reflect the specific outcomes sought.

Rangitahi South Future Urban Zone

- (m) Rangitahi is seeking a Future Urban Zone (**FUZ**) over the Rangitahi South growth area, which is immediately to the south of the Rangitahi Structure Plan area. In my view, the southern area of the Rangitahi Peninsula, including the southern part of the Rangitahi Peninsula Zone and the proposed FUZ, could contribute further available land for quality, place based urban growth in Raglan.
- (n) When I was involved in the earlier structure planning work, we had anticipated further development. However, at the time it was perceived that there was insufficient demand for an extension of the Structure Plan further south. Our mapping exercises nonetheless confirmed this area as suitable for urban extension. The mapping work for this hearing, which Ms de Lambert and I contributed to, provides further confirmation of the suitability of this area.
- (o) It is important that a future structure planning process is followed for the southern part of the Rangitahi Peninsula before it is zoned for development. This may involve an extension of the existing Rangitahi Structure Plan. It would be informed by a Raglan-wide spatial plan if the recommendations that I have made in that regard are accepted.

Summary

- (p) I consider that a spatial plan should be prepared for Raglan to protect the character of the Town and its environment, whilst setting out a clear long-term vision for its growth.
- (q) Raglan is not like any other small town in the Waikato, nor should it morph into a suburb of Hamilton. It has national and international significance and deserves the highest level of spatial planning and protection of its built, cultural and environmental qualities.
- (r) I consider Rangitahi South is a suitable location for urban expansion and support the proposed FUZ.

James Lunday

21 May 2021

