

BEFORE WAIPĀ DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991 ("**RMA**")

AND

IN THE MATTER of Proposed Plan Change 14 to the Waipā District
Plan ("**PC14**")

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF DR GRAHAM THOMAS USSHER
ON BEHALF OF FONTERRA LIMITED**

ECOLOGY

6 MARCH 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Graham Thomas Ussher.
- 1.2 My qualifications and experience are set out in my Statement of Evidence dated 17 February 2025. I repeat the confirmation in my Statement of Evidence that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses.
- 1.3 This statement summarises the assessment described in the Ecology Assessment report and my evidence in chief. It also replies to evidence and submissions of others received following preparation of my evidence in chief.
- 1.4 I have read the further evidence and submissions provided by the submitters to the Independent Hearing Panel that is relevant to my area of expertise. I reply to the following evidence and submission:
- (a) Katrina Andrews for Waikato Regional Council; and
 - (b) Niwha Jones for the Director-General of Conservation.

2. ECOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND USSHER EVIDENCE IN CHIEF

- 2.1 I helped prepare the Ecology Assessment and was reviewer of the draft report. I have visited 185-195 Swayne Road ("**Site**") as part of the Site investigations that RMA Ecology Ltd undertook for this project.
- 2.2 The ecology investigations at the Site included surveys for streams, wetlands, vegetation, lizards, birds, fish, and bats as part of a comprehensive assessment of ecological values and potential effects.
- 2.3 All wetlands mapped on the Site are associated with the Mangaone Stream and adjoining floodplains, and most are heavily degraded by historic farming and stock damage. Usage of the Site by bats is very low, with only two bat detections over a 21-night survey period. Parts of the vegetated Mangaone Stream corridor support habitat suitable for bat roosting, foraging and commuting.
- 2.4 Key focal areas for ecological management arising from the surveys have been around bats, bat habitat, wetland protection, and the protection and enhancement of the Mangaone Stream corridor that traverses the central part of the Site.

- 2.5 The Structure Plan,¹ Design Guidelines and provisions provide a comprehensive basis for the protection and enhancement of ecological values on the Site, with the setting aside of the Mangaone Stream Reserve, and the requirement for a Mangaone Stream Reserve Operational and Maintenance Management Plan.
- 2.6 Recommendations have been made by the Council's Reporting Officer and by submitters to strengthen protections for bats and High Value Bat Habitat within the Mangaone Stream Reserve. I support the amendments proposed by the Reporting Officer and by submitters for a new issue statement,² objective,³ two policies⁴ and description⁵ relating to the High Value Bat Habitat Area.
- 2.7 I also support the remediation of current barriers to fish passage on the Site, and for the inclusion of fish passage as a consideration during the detailed design of stormwater management devices on the Site, and agree that this should be addressed at the resource consent stage.
- 2.8 The Structure Plan, provisions, Design Guidelines, and the requirement for a Development and Operational Maintenance Plan provides assurance that values will be protected and enhanced such that an overall net-benefit for ecology is certain.

3. EVIDENCE OF KATRINA ANDREWS FOR WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL

- 3.1 I have considered the evidence of Ms Andrews. I concur with Ms Andrews' recommendations⁶, in particular that:
- (a) New provision S27.2.26 is revised to include an additional sentence relating to the 20 m buffer around the High Value Bat Habitat;⁷ and
 - (b) An additional (new) assessment criterion under Rule 21.2.7.1 in relation to High Value Bat Habitat within the Mangaone Stream Reserve.⁸

¹ See Appendix B – Mangaone Precinct Structure Plan, at p 10.

² S42A Report Appendix 2, at Provision 7.2.21, p. 3.

³ S42A Report Appendix 2, at Objective 7.3.9, p. 6.

⁴ S42A Report Appendix 2, at Policies 7.3.9.1 and 7.3.9.2, p. 6.

⁵ S42A Report Appendix 2, at Provisions S27.2.26 and S27.2.27, pp. 31–32.

⁶ Evidence of Katrina Andrews at [46] – [47].

⁷ Evidence of Katrina Andrews at [46].

⁸ Evidence of Katrina Andrews at [47].

3.2 I agree with Ms Andrews that these additions proposed in her statement of evidence will strengthen protections of the Mangaone Stream Reserve for bats and bat habitat.

4. EVIDENCE OF NIHWA JONES FOR THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION

4.1 I have considered the evidence of Mr Jones.

4.2 I note that Mr Jones does not recommend any additions or changes to the Provisions; however, he does support the recommendations proposed by Ms Andrews.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 I consider the provisions (including the further suggested changes) as presented in Mr Chrisp's Summary Statement to be appropriate from an ecological perspective.

Dr Graham Ussher

6 March 2025