

9 September, 2021

The Hearings Panel
Waipa District Council

(by e-mail)

Dear Hearings Panel members,

Regarding The Resource Consent Hearing - Festival One Ltd

We are grateful for the opportunity to make a brief submission regarding the proposal that the 'Festival One' event being held in the Whitehall area. We have read the documents provided by the Applicant, and also the Regulatory Report prepared by Aidan Kirkby-McLeod for the Waipa District Council Hearings Panel.

We occupy properties that are close to the proposed site for Festival One – at 178 Whitehall Road (Howse) and 196 Whitehall Road (Weijers).

Firstly, we acknowledge that considerable time and effort appears to have been invested by the Applicants since the previous hearing was deferred at their request in late 2020. We recognise that this will have come at meaningful cost - financially and otherwise.

We also acknowledge that it is perfectly reasonable for the owners of the property (Mark & Robyn Gardner or entities associated with them) to undertake temporary events on their property that are consistent with the District Plan.

We would like to request that the Hearings Panel take the following points into account when considering whether to provide consent for the proposed event to take place, and (if consent is to be given) what conditions to place on that consent.

In our opinion, the proposed event (Festival One) is not a normal rural activity, and does not need to take place in the Whitehall district. We feel that the introduction of an event that is intended (eventually) to bring 12,000 people to our quiet rural area is a major departure from what would be considered 'normal'. While there are always circumstances that may mean that, for reasons of necessity, something out of the ordinary is permitted to occur, in this case we would argue that there is no necessity involved in this application. With an event centre like Mystery Creek (and others) already existing in the region we would ask the Hearings Panel to consider whether it really is necessary for such a significant deviation from what is currently permitted in the District Plan to take place at all.

In the event that the Council does agree that it is a necessity that the event takes place, we would request consideration be given to the following matters.

1. **That the consent be issued for a maximum of 5 years.** We note from the Regulatory Report (Section 4 – Background) that previous consents for Festival One (and its predecessor Parachute Music Festival) to take place at Mystery Creek (an established large event venue) have been for periods of 5 years. Given that this is a new venue, at a location that is not used for large events, it would seem wrong to provide for a longer term of consent than was allowed for at Mystery Creek.

2. **That the requirement for annual review of the event included in the conditions (Appendix 8: Point 38) be strengthened.** We agree that the suggested 'community liaison meeting' provides a useful way of reviewing how the event operated, and engaging constructively with local residents to find ways of improving for the future. We ask that the condition be strengthened to require that:
- a. A community liaison meeting occurs annually after each event.
 - b. The liaison meeting be convened and lead by an independent 3rd party;
 - c. The outcomes of the monitoring of all consent conditions be presented as a part of this meeting.
 - d. That a written report arising from the meeting (including any agreed actions) be approved by the independent 3rd party, and distributed to all parties mentioned in the condition as well as Waipa District Council within 20 working days of conclusion of the meeting.
3. **That this be the only activity that does not meet the requirements of a temporary event in the Rural Zone which is consented to occur on the property.** The introduction of additional large events at this location would cause it, in practice, to become a large events venue. As mentioned above, we do not feel that there is any requirement for this given the existence of other existing large event venues in the region. We ask that the Hearings Panel agrees that, if consent is given for Festival One to take place at this location, that it be the only event of its type (requiring consent as a Discretionary Activity) that will occur at the venue each year.

Thank you for your consideration of these points as you make your decision on this Application.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Howse (178 Whitehall Road) and Henk Weijers (196 Whitehall Road)