

**BEFORE AN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS COMMISSIONER  
AT STRATFORD**

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act  
1999

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of an application by Airport Farm  
Trustee Limited to the Taranaki  
Regional Council to renew an air  
discharge consent for a poultry  
farm at 58 Airport Drive, New  
Plymouth

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ROWAN WILLIAMS ON BEHALF OF  
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. My name is Rowan Williams.
- 1.2. I hold the qualification of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Massey University, New Zealand. I am an Associate member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 1.3. I am the Relationship Manager in the Planning Team at New Plymouth District Council (the "Council"). The role of the relationship manager is to ensure a one council approach leading to integrated and responsible development outcomes.
- 1.4. Prior to my role as Relationship Manager, I was the Planning Consents Lead from 2014 - 2020. Before this, I held various consenting roles within the Council's Planning Team focused on subdivision and land development over a period of approximately 25 years.
- 1.5. I have authority to provide this statement on behalf of New Plymouth District Council.

**Code of Conduct**

- 1.6. I confirm that I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it while giving oral evidence before the Hearings Panel. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

**Scope of Evidence**

- 1.7. The Airport Farm Trustee's Poultry Farm, the subject of this hearing, is located in an area that is earmarked for future urban development in New Plymouth's Proposed District Plan ("PDP"). Specifically, it is zoned as Area R, a Future Urban Zone (FUZ). The Council's interest in this hearing relates to the potential

implications of the renewal of resource consent 20-05262-3.0 on Council's urban growth strategy and the urban development capacity of Area Q and Area R. I also note the Council owns one of the properties that is located within 400m of the Poultry Farm.

- 1.8. This statement of evidence provides:
- a) An overview of NPDC's regulatory obligations to plan for and provide sufficient development capacity;
  - b) A summary of NPDC's current growth strategy;
  - c) Information in relation to the current District Plan Review process in relation to New Plymouth District Council's (NPDC) urban growth plans for Dev 1 - Bell Area Q Structure Plan Development Area and Future Urban Zone - Area R
  - d) A description of the current and anticipated growth activities occurring in the Bell Block Area;
  - e) A brief analysis of the potential implications of the renewal of resource consent 20-05262-3.0 on Council's urban growth strategy and the urban development capacity of Area Q and Area R.

## **2. NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT 2020**

- 2.1. The NPS-UD took effect in August 2020 and recognises the national significance of providing sufficient development capacity as well as having well-functioning urban environments.
- 2.2. The following objectives and policies of the NPS-UD are considered relevant to TRC's consideration of consent 20-05262-3.0.

*Objective 2: Planning decisions improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets*

*Policy 2: Tier 1, 2, and 3 local authorities, at all times, provide at least sufficient development capacity to meet expected demand*

*for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term.*

- 2.3. It is noted that NPDC and TRC are Tier 2 local authorities and are required to consider these policies in consenting decisions.
- 2.4. Bell Block Area Q is an important component of the development capacity required for the New Plymouth District to meet expected demand for housing in the short and medium term.
- 2.5. The on-going operation of the Poultry Farm within an area earmarked for future urban development has the potential to undermine Council's ability to deliver its development capacity and to release future growth areas as planned.

### **Housing and Business Capacity Assessment**

- 2.6. The Housing and Business Capacity Assessment (HBA) 2019, was developed in accordance with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (2016). The New Plymouth District Council and the Taranaki Regional Council must provide sufficient development capacity for the New Plymouth district to meet demand over a 30- year period.
- 2.7. The housing component of this assessment has been updated in accordance with the National Policy Statement Urban Development (2020)<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.8. The summary of key results on page 3 confirms '*Overall, the HCA indicates that the New Plymouth District has sufficient housing development capacity for the short term (within three years), the medium term (between three and ten years), and the long term (between 10 and thirty years)*
- 2.9. Under the 2016 assessment, Area Q represented 11-12% of the District's short and medium term land supply needs. This increases to 13-14% for the short to medium term in the 2021 housing update.
- 2.10. The 2016 assessment identifies Stage 3E of Area Q as being available for residential development, once sufficient infrastructure is in place to support the

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<sup>1</sup> [National Policy Statement - Urban Development \(npdc.govt.nz\)](https://www.npdc.govt.nz/Policy-Statements/Urban-Development-Capacity).

development. The required infrastructure relates to the realignment of Airport Drive, which is planned to take place by 2024.

- 2.11. The approach for projected long-term future capacity for housing in the district is outlined on page 27 as follows:

*“Projected long-term future capacity for housing in the district is split across the following areas:*

*• Short term - capacity will be provided by undeveloped residential land and infill development, including the plan-enabled growth of Bell Block Area Q Structure Plan Development Area.*

*• Medium term - capacity will be provided by undeveloped residential land and infill development, with the addition of rezoned residential land, the structure plan development areas and rural lifestyle.*

*• In the long term, capacity will extend out to include all the Future Urban Zones areas identified in the PDP.”*

- 2.12. Area R is currently identified in the 2016 HBA as being available for urban development in the long-term (after 2028). Development of this land will require rezoning through a statutory plan change process. The majority of this land is earmarked for commercial/industrial use with a small amount (on the western side of the realigned Airport Drive) assessed with potential for residential.

### **3. NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT GROWTH STRATEGY**

- 3.1. New Plymouth District Council has a cohesive growth strategy which is designed to strengthen the city and provide for anticipated population growth.
- 3.2. To accommodate this growth, the district will need an additional 11,592<sup>2</sup> new dwellings over the next 30 years. This means that on average we will require 386 dwellings per year. The Operative District Plan does not have enough planned capacity to meet housing demand in the long term. The Proposed District Plan allows for a feasible capacity of 13,964 dwellings, which provides for the extra housing demand.

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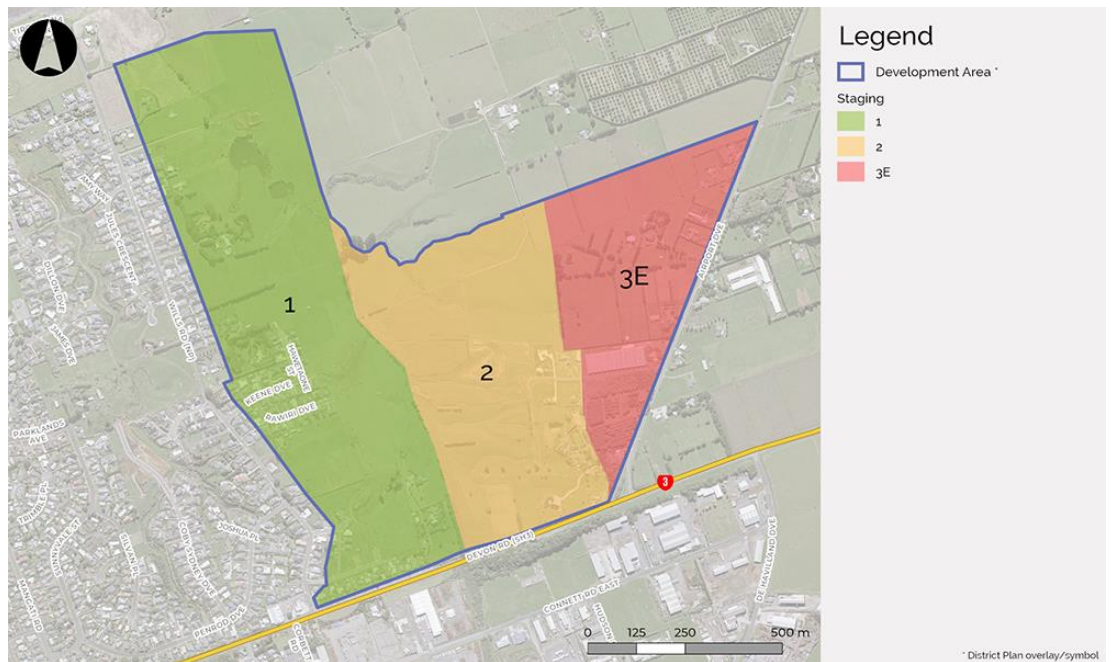
<sup>2</sup> The NPS-UD requires an additional capacity margin of at least 20 per cent in the short and medium term, and 15 per cent in the long term (over and above the projected demand). This is to factor in “a proportion of feasible development capacity that may not be developed”.

### **Bell Block**

- 3.3. Bell Block is New Plymouth's primary growth area and within which NPDC anticipates that a high proportion of residential sections to meet NPDC forecasted growth will be provided both short term (2021-2024) and medium term (2024-2031).
- 3.4. There are two residential growth areas in Bell Block, one located west Bell Block and linking Parklands Avenue to Pohutukawa Drive adjoining Summerset Retirement Village and the other adjoining the East boundary and referred to as 'Area Q Development Area' (Area Q). 'Area R' is the FUZ area adjoining Q.

### **Area Q**

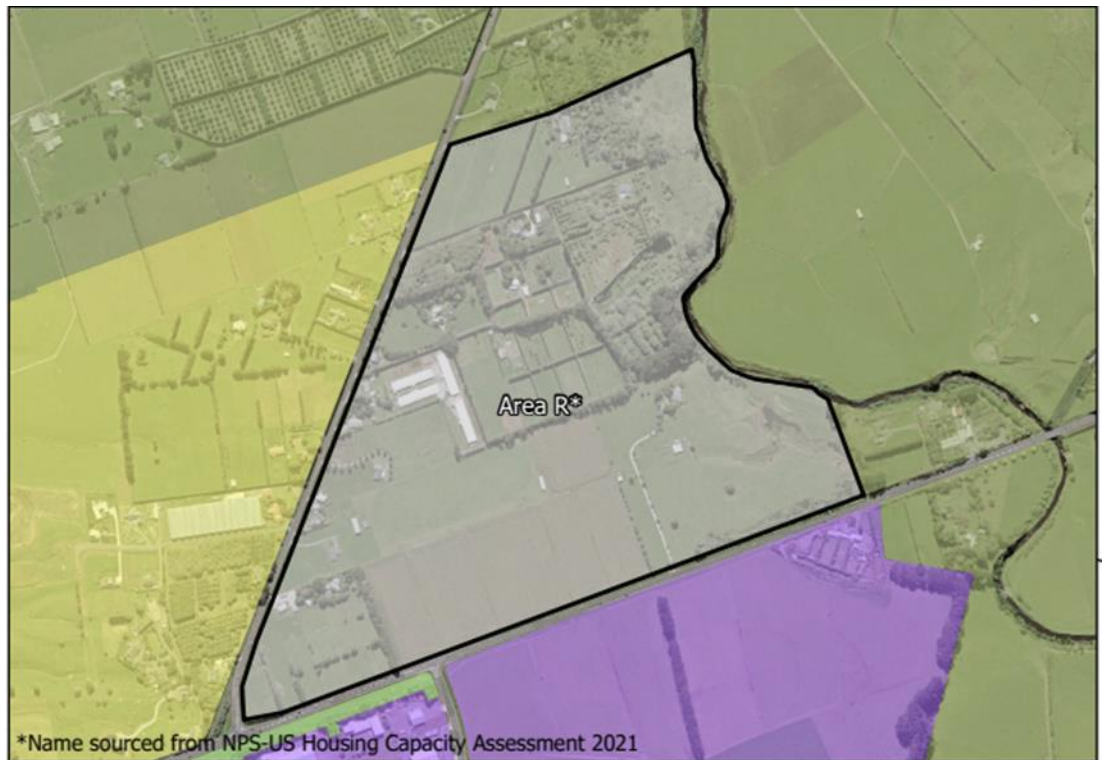
- 3.5. Bell Block Area Q was rezoned from Rural Environment Area to Residential A Environment Area in 2014 through a statutory plan change (PLC09/00020). This resulted in the Area Q Structure Plan, a staging plan (Figure 1) and provisions enabling the development of Bell Block Area Q for residential activities, being included in the Operative District Plan.
- 3.6. Taranaki Regional Council, Ed Whiting (Airport Farm Trustees Limited) and Tegel Foods Limited, submitted on the plan change, on the grounds of reverse sensitivity, given the potential for sensitive activities to establish in proximity to the poultry farm at 58 Airport Drive.
- 3.7. The staging plan developed through the plan change restricted residential development within Stage 3E as a prohibited activity until Area R (eastern side of Airport Drive) is rezoned and Airport Drive realigned. These provisions were included, in part, to address reverse sensitivity effects. There is currently insufficient infrastructure in place to support residential development of Stage 3.



- 3.8. A subsequent plan change was made in 2017 (PLC14/00042) to enable a limited amount of residential development in Stage 2 of Area Q in a timely manner. This plan change allowed for 30 habitable buildings to be developed where access is obtained from Airport Drive.

### Area R

- 3.9. Area R is subject to the new Future Urban Zone (FUZ) which will be considered through the District Plan Hearing process. The FUZ is a transitional zone which enables land to be used for a range of general rural activities. It provides for the district's long term land supply. The FUZ cannot be used for urban activities until the site is re-zoned for urban purposes and meets the strong policy directives of the zone.
- 3.10. The way Area Q is staged refers to Area R being urbanised, including a new intersection and road alignment for Airport Drive. This will need to be determined through the Proposed District Plan Zone Hearings and subsequently the way in which it will be urbanised will occur through a Plan Change process in the future.



#### **4. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT IN BELL BLOCK**

- 4.1. The housing demand in the Bell Block is strong with projected population growth of 985 people over the next 30 years. Development is occurring in the Bell Block area in response to demand. The proposed Parklands Avenue development is anticipated to provide over 200 additional dwellings. Over 100 of these dwellings are anticipated for 2022 with the balance likely to be released by 2025. In Area Q an additional 210 dwellings are expected through 2022-24.
- 4.2. As described above, the current planned supply of lots in the area will contribute significantly to meeting demand in New Plymouth District in the short term.
- 4.3. NPDC is working proactively with developers to provide housing supply in New Plymouth. There are concerns about land supply availability in the region and active speculation for future opportunities. Feedback from developers (through Developer Forums) has indicated concerns with availability and the quality of remaining zoned land for development.
- 4.4. New Plymouth is facing major issues with basic infrastructure assets, particularly water infrastructure (water supply, wastewater, storm water). The focus of the next ten years is to address the issues with existing infrastructure, whilst providing infrastructure for the required growth the district is expected to



experience. Council budgets, are directed towards the renewal of existing infrastructure in the short term.

### **Infrastructure capacity in Bell Block**

- 4.5. The Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF) is part of the Government's \$3.8 billion Housing Acceleration Fund announced in March 2021. NPDC as a Tier 2 Authority has approached the IAF for funding to construct the necessary infrastructure to support developments in five growth areas. The Bell Block area has progressed to the Request for Proposal (RFP) Stage.
- 4.6. This fund is a contestable process and is designed to allocate funding to infrastructure projects enabling meaningful contributions to housing outcomes in areas of need. This is through the allocation of funds to new and upgraded eligible 'enabling' infrastructure such as transport and three waters.
- 4.7. The Projects and timing for the Bell Block Growth Area projects is refined in line with the hierarchy of needs to allow growth to proceed (i.e. Bell Block wastewater trunk main upgrade is required prior to 2030, thus is lower in the hierarchy, to allow the supply chain to focus on more important projects earlier in the programme).
- 4.8. Funding of these projects would enable construction timeframes to be brought forward where necessary, allowing the demand for sections from developers, enabling supply of sections, whilst providing the infrastructure the community requires to support this growth.
- 4.9. The hierarchy of Projects as identified in the Long Term Plan and 30 year Infrastructure Strategy are as follows:
  1. Bell Block to New Plymouth Transport Connections 2022 to 2024
  2. Parklands Avenue and SH3 Transportation Upgrades 2022 to 2026
  3. Bell Block to City and to Airport Transportation Connections 2023 to 2024 (this includes Waitaha Stream Bridge and Underpass Area Q 2023 – 2024, and Airport Drive/Area Q Intersection 2023-2024)
  4. Coastal Pathway extension (Bell Block to Airport Portion) 2022 to 2024
  5. Bell Block Court Place making 2023 to 2025
  6. Sewer Upgrade 2022 to 2023 (West Bell Block)

7. Bell Block wastewater capacity upgrade Hickford Park to NP WW Treatment Plant 2024 to 2027
8. New Water main Area Q to Airport Drive 2023 to 2024
9. Waitaha Shared Pathway Stages 1 and 2 2026 to 2027

## 5. PROPOSED NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN

- 5.1. The Proposed District Plan (PDP) was publicly notified in September 2019. The Council is currently hearing submissions on the PDP with decisions required by September 2022.
- 5.2. While the FUZ is a new zone introduced as part of the PDP, it largely adopts the existing Future Urban Development (“FUD”) Overlay provisions from the Operative District Plan (“ODP”). The FUD Overlay layer is applied over Rural Environment Areas.
- 5.3. Interim Guidance has been provided from the Independent Hearings Panel that only long-term land supply will be served by the FUZ.
- 5.4. A submission has been received on the Proposed District Plan for Area Q seeking to replace the prohibited status for residential development within Stage 3E, with a non-complying status.
- 5.5. Submissions have also been received on Area R in opposition to the FUZ zoning and to accelerate the urban zoning of parts of Area R (however, these are not related to the Poultry Farm).
- 5.6. These rezoning hearings are scheduled for April this year.
- 5.7. The Section 42a report for the Future Urban Zone (FUZ) provisions have been released with the hearing set on 3 March 2022 [Hearing 17\(b\) - Rural Production Zone, Rural Lifestyle Zone and Future Urban Zone \(npdc.govt.nz\)](#). This hearing outlines the purpose and function of the FUZ on page 27 as follows:

*“The FUZ is proposed as a key District Plan mechanism to safeguard future options for urbanisation of land which is spatially connected to existing urban areas. The FUZ serves the need to identify and provide for sufficient housing and industrial development capacity for the long term, meeting the requirements of the NPS-UD. However, it is important to acknowledge that the FUZ only seeks to maintain existing land use activities within generally a rural land use context and that any urbanisation will be subject to a separate*

*plan change process including a robust assessment of infrastructure and services through a structure plan process”*

- 5.8. The issues around the timing of development in the FUZ zone are directed by land supply issues and land supply requirements of the NPS-UD. The FUZ area is rural and will not have development potential until any rezoning and structure plan process occurs.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1. The NPDC Growth Strategy provides clear direction as to the supply of land for urban growth purposes in short (0-3 years; releasing land in Stages 1 & 2), medium (3-10 years; releasing land in Stage 2. Stage 3 only if development accelerated and issues resolved. Plan for Area R for release after 2028) and long term (10 plus years; remainder of Area Q developed. Area R developed). Area Q is already zoned residential so provides capacity in the short term.
- 6.2. Bell Block Area Q is therefore a critical component of New Plymouth District's urban growth and development capacity.
- 6.3. This application has the potential to impact the development of Bell Block Area Q to align with infrastructure provision and rezoning. In assessing the application, consideration should be given to the effects of the activity on the residentially zoned land and anticipated residential growth within Bell Block Area Q. The consent timeframes should be aligned to the strategy to release land in Bell Block Area Q and should be no later than its current lapse date of 2026. New Plymouth District Council does not support a consent with a duration through to 2038.

**DATED:** 8 February 2022



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**ROWAN WILLIAMS**

**on behalf of the New Plymouth District Council**