

Before the Independent Hearings Panel
at Waimakariri District Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Proposed private plan change RCP31 to the Operative
Waimakariri District Plan

and: **Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited**
Applicant

Evidence of Chris Jones

Dated: 6 July 2023

Reference: JM Appleyard (jo.appleyard@chapmantripp.com)
LMN Forrester (lucy.forrester@chapmantripp.com)

chapmantripp.com
T +64 4 499 5999
F +64 4 472 7111

PO Box 993
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Auckland
Wellington
Christchurch



EVIDENCE OF CHRIS JONES

- 1 My full name is Christopher Francis Jones.
- 2 I have 22 years' experience in real estate specifically in the Canterbury Region and 14 years' experience selling down residential subdivisions in Canterbury, specifically in the townships on the fringes of Christchurch city. I have sold over 2,700 sections sold within this time.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 3 Although this is not an Environment Court hearing, I note that in preparing my evidence I have reviewed the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in Part 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with it in preparing my evidence. I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where relying on the opinion or evidence of other witnesses. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 4 I have been asked by the Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited to prepare evidence within my expertise regarding the current Waimakariri residential property market and demand with a particular focus on Ōhoka.

THE ŌHOKA RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET

- 5 Ōhoka is a rurally located village in the Waimakariri District. It is particularly close to the Christchurch CBD when compared to other villages and townships in the District.
- 6 There have been very few sections to come available in Ōhoka over the recent years, there is no consistent supply. Therefore, sales statistics for the areas are not particularly helpful or insightful when considering potential demand. However, this is not in and of itself evidence that there is no demand for residential properties and section in Ōhoka. In fact, the experience of Bayleys has been quite the opposite:
 - 6.1 Of all of the buyers we regularly deal with looking for residential sections or properties in the Waimakariri District, most, if not all of them, would consider or prefer the Ōhoka area.
 - 6.2 Bayleys receive consistent enquiries about whether residential properties are available in Ōhoka.

- 6.3 Recent information supplied from realestate.co.nz shows that Ōhoka was the number one most searched rural suburb in Canterbury from April 2022 – March 2023, followed by West Melton, Tai Tapu, Fernside, and Prebbleton. Further, Ōhoka was the fourth most searched suburb in the Waimakariri District from April – June 2023, behind only the current main metropolitan areas (Rangiora, Kaiapoi, and Oxford). These findings are consistent with our experience and understanding of demand for Ōhoka.
- 6.4 For every 10 buyers we deal with looking for a lifestyle aspect in North Canterbury, all 10 would generally consider Ōhoka as a location. The further out you go (north and west moving away from the Christchurch CBD), these buyers lose interest.
- 6.5 If I had say 10 sections in each of Ōhoka, Kaiapoi, or Rangiora, I am confident that I would sell around 90% of the Ōhoka sections first, before those other locations, that is how popular Ōhoka is.
- 7 People are attracted to Ōhoka for the lifestyle aspect, the amenity, the mature trees, relative to other towns in the District. Buyers looking for a residential-style section or home in the area are being forced to buy 4 hectare blocks of land to do so, or settle for properties further afield, as there are very few residentially sized properties in the area. Most of these buyers will not be using their blocks for rural production, which generally leads to the under-utilisation of productive land in the area. Smaller residential sections are simply not readily available, and I consider this to be an untapped market.
- 8 In general smaller lots will appeal to a greater cross section of prospective buyers, due to lower maintenance, increased affordability and general convenience. Due to these factors they will generally sell faster.
- 9 In the last 12 months Bayleys has sold a significant number of properties in the Ōhoka area, including six properties on Whites Road, close to the proposed development, which illustrates significant demand in the area.
- 10 A recent example is a property on Whites Road which sold at auction to an Auckland buyer. This property had over 45 inspections, which is significantly higher numbers when compared to other lifestyle areas within the Waimakariri District. Bayleys Ōhokahas sold multiple residential properties in the Ōhoka area. On all of these occasions we have received strong demand, including a property in Keetly Place, where we had multiple bidders at auction.

- 11 Further highlighting the high demand in the Ōhoka area is the recent sale of two established residential zoned properties close to the Ōhoka Village, each being approximately 5,050sqm – 5,054 sqm. Both properties sold off market for higher-than-expected prices in the \$1.8 - \$1.9million range, which again demonstrates the extreme demand in the area.
- 12 In summary, I consider there is considerably higher demand for housing in Ōhoka relative to other surrounding areas such as Kaiapoi, Swannanoa, Fernside, and Rangiora, as illustrated in paragraphs 6-11 above.

THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

- 13 I have absolutely no doubt that the product being proposed as part of this plan change will be in high demand, provided it is priced correctly.
- 14 Two zonings are proposed within the site, one with a minimum lot size of 600m² and the other with a minimum lot size of 2,500m² and an average size of 3,300 m². So the proposed plan change would comprise a good range of housing options.
- 15 The sections being offered within the proposed plan change would be slightly larger (at around 600-700m²) than the residential sections being offered in the likes of Kaiapoi, Woodend, and Rangiora. This is a point of difference, which reflects the current amenity and feel of the Ōhoka village.
- 16 The amenities being proposed as part of this plan change will only increase the desirability of Ōhoka to prospective purchasers. The inclusion of a polo field, pub, café, and shops will provide a further point of difference for Ōhoka. These amenities have been much needed in Ōhoka.
- 17 Despite Ōhoka being the most popular lifestyle and residential location in North Canterbury by far, there has been a real lack of growth, and in particular master plan supply. This proposed plan change will provide that supply, through a carefully designed and considered master plan that guarantees the desired outcomes for the development and the village can be achieved.
- 18 I consider this proposed plan change can easily be likened to the proposal to develop Matakana in the North Island. Like Matakana, Ōhoka has a great 'brand' name being well known throughout the District as a great place to live. Yet it currently lacks some critical amenities. The development at Matakana has only enhanced the village by providing much needed and high-quality amenities and the critical mass to ensure the village continues to thrive. I consider the proposed plan change will do this for Ōhoka.

- 19 I do not consider that the proposed plan change site would be economical for dairying. I note, in response to criticisms that the site should be maintained as a dairy farm, that I do not consider this would be an economical use of the land.
- 20 The underlying value of lifestyle blocks in this Ōhoka area is around \$160,000-\$200,000 per hectare, compared to dairying land which is only worth around \$60,000 per hectare. This means that even if the site was not sold to the developer, it is highly likely that it would be sold for the purpose of lifestyle blocks in any case.
- 21 I understand the site can be subdivided into 36 four-hectare lifestyle blocks relatively easily under the current planning framework. These too would be very saleable from a demand perspective. Based on recent comparable sales, I consider a four-hectare section would generally go for between \$650,000 and \$800,000. Comparably, lifestyle/residential established properties of this size readily sell in the \$1.2-\$1.9 million range. For smaller residential sections (in the range of 500m²) I consider these would generally go for between \$475,000 and \$545,000.
- 22 In saying this, the demand is not for four-hectare lifestyle blocks per se, and the comprehensive development plan proposed by the developer, with a range of lot sizes and amenities, will provide a suitable range of housing to cater for demand.
- 23 For completeness, I do not consider the market or demand for land in Mandeville is comparable. Mandeville is far less established and has a significantly different 'feel' to Ōhoka. Ōhoka attracts much higher demand when compared to Mandeville or Swannanoa nearby.

LIKELY IMPACT OF MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL RULES

- 24 I do not consider the introduction of the medium density residential standards into the District Plan will have a material impact on development capacity in Waimakariri.
- 25 This is based on my experience in the Waimakariri District, which clearly shows that those looking to purchase a residential site in Waimakariri do so looking for a stand-alone property with good outdoor living spaces. They are looking for low density living. This is particularly the case for Ōhoka.
- 26 I also consider the vast majority of the Waimakariri housing stock is too new/young to be redeveloped into medium density housing anytime soon.

CONCLUSION

- 27 I consider there is significant demand for residential housing in Ōhoka, relative to all other villages or townships in the Waimakariri District.

Dated: 6 July 2023

Chris Jones