

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 Dr Gabrielle Julya Howard Wall

Dated: 7 July 2023

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EVIDENCE OF DR GABRIELLE WALL

- 1 My full name is Dr Gabrielle Julya Howard Wall.
- 2 Qualifications:
 - 2.1 Masters in Industrial Psychology (1st class honours).
 - 2.2 PhD in Educational Psychology.
- 3 Relevant experience:
 - 3.1 Extensive experience in consultation relating to education networks including new schools, closures, mergers, re-locations, co-locations, satellite provision, and second campus configurations.
 - 3.2 Experience in development and implementation of enrolment schemes across education networks.
 - 3.3 Experience in schooling design, including efficient masterplanning and proactive planning for roll growth or roll composition change.
 - 3.4 Prior knowledge and involvement in the North Canterbury education network specifically, through involvement in schooling consultation processes, education brief preparation for existing schools, supporting the learning community cluster in the Rangiora area, and as a statutory appointee.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 4 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

- 5 This evidence outlines potential options for accommodating additional primary and secondary aged students into the education network, with consideration also given to special education students and early childhood provision.

SUMMARY

- 6 The proposed plan change (*PC31*) is outside the Ministry of Education's projected infrastructure boundary, therefore Ministry-derived student number projections are not available. A methodology is outlined based on Census data and Ministry-held datasets that concludes the proposed plan change would likely generate an additional 200 - 250 primary aged students and 150 secondary aged students. Of these, approximately 200 would need to be accommodated in the local state primary network, and 75 within the local state secondary network.
- 7 Three viable options are outlined for how primary aged students could be accommodated in the education network:
 - 7.1 The residential redevelopment area remains within the Ōhoka School zone and students access Ōhoka School as the local state school.
 - 7.2 The home zones of Ōhoka and Swannanoa Schools are amended so that some of the residential development is within the Swannanoa School zone.
 - 7.3 A new Year 1 - 8 primary school is constructed on the earmarked site (via Education overlay) within the residential development.
- 8 The residential development area is encompassed by the current enrolment scheme home zone of Kaiapoi High School, and suitable public transport would be available for students to access the school. Based on future projected growth in Rangiora and its surrounds, it is considered that it would be preferable for secondary aged students to access Kaiapoi High School as the local state secondary school option.
- 9 It is noted that approximately half of the secondary aged students currently residing in the relevant area (Statistical Area 2 (SA2): Mandeville-Ōhoka, Swannanoa-Eyreton, and Clarkville) attend state integrated or private schools, hence the relatively low projections for the number of students accessing Kaiapoi High School.
- 10 Consideration is also given to special education and early childhood provision.

STUDENT NUMBERS AND SCHOOL NETWORK CAPACITY

- 11 The proposed residential redevelopment in PC31 is outside of the projected infrastructure boundary for the Ministry of Education, thus is a departure from the Ministry's current projected numbers for

school-age children and the projections that are being used for resource and development of the local schools. I have developed estimates of the likely number of primary and secondary aged students using the following outlined approach.

- 12 The data on population projections are informed from the 2018 Census data and data available from Stats NZ, and Market Share data is drawn from Ministry-held datasets. Population data is specific to the three local SA2 areas, Mandeville-Ōhoka, Swannanoa-Eyreton, and Clarkville:
 - 12.1 2018 Census data indicates an estimated 2.95 people per household across the SA2 areas.
 - 12.2 There are 850 dwellings in the proposed residential areas.
 - 12.3 Using the census data as a reference, we could expect approximately 2,507 people entering the Ōhoka community.
 - 12.4 There is a projected proportion of 8.64% of the population being primary aged (5-12) in 2035, and 5.88% being secondary aged (13-17) in 2035, with these numbers gradually dropping with time.
 - 12.5 Based on these projections, we would expect 216 primary aged students, and 147 secondary aged students, should all the proposed dwellings be filled and the census data continue in a similar trend.
 - 12.6 Should family typologies change, these numbers will likely change and can only be used as an estimate for actual student numbers.
 - 12.7 Residential developments can, at times, be associated with higher child per household ratios with young families moving to these developments, and with time these numbers decline as the children age.
- 13 State school market share is also important to consider, as Ōhoka currently has a significantly different trend with regards to market share compared to other areas including Kaiapoi and Rangiora.
- 14 Within the Ōhoka School enrolment scheme area, 83% primary aged students attend a state school, 8% attend state integrated schools, and 9% attend private schools. For secondary aged students living in Ōhoka, 47% attend state schools, 22% attend state integrated schools, and 31% attend private schools. If this trend continues following the development of PC31, this would lead

- 20 This means that there are implications for existing schools in the Waimakariri educational network should a site be dedicated to a new school or should a local school(s) undergo expansion to accommodate the additional numbers of school aged children in the Ōhoka area. Ōhoka Primary School, Kaiapoi High School and potentially Rangiora High School will face increases in roll to accommodate local students if the plan goes ahead with the existing school network and current enrolment scheme home zones.

PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION

- 21 There are a number of different viable options for accommodating the predicted increase in primary aged students in the network.

Option 1:

The residential redevelopment area remains within the Ōhoka School zone and students access Ōhoka School as the local state school

- 22 This would increase the roll of Ōhoka School significantly. The roll was 207 students as at July 2022, and could reach 450 students over time in this option. 207 is below the average roll of primary schools in the Waimakariri District, which is 244 students. Five of the 22 primary schools in the Waimakariri District have rolls above 400 students.
- 23 While I have not examined the existing buildings on the Ōhoka School site, the existing site size would generally be considered to be sufficient to support a roll of this size.
- 24 It is noted from the school's submission that it wishes to retain its rural character and that it views its current roll size as a component of that character.
- 25 The Ōhoka School Board of Trustees is also concerned that not enough consideration has been given to transport, parking, road safety, and pick-up/drop-off if additional primary aged students were to be accommodated at Ōhoka School.
- 26 A variety of transport methods are used by the community to transport students to and from school. Ōhoka School has indicated that many students arrive by private vehicles and this exhausts parking capacity and creates traffic congestion. Ōhoka School states that it is working with the Waimakariri District Council and the Police on how safety can be improved in the area for students to enter and exit vehicles safely before and after school.
- 27 The Board has indicated that parking is at capacity and additional cars will have associated safety implications without improvements

to the parking facilities. There are a range of common property solutions that could be used to address this. The Ministry and school could consider creating an alternative entrance, such as a parking area away from the road or a 'kiss and drop' bay where caregivers stop for only a very short time.

- 28 Ōhoka School currently operates two Ministry-funded bus routes, one of which includes Bradleys Road, and one of which includes Whites Road. It would not require a significant variation of these bus routes to give bus coverage to the proposed plan change area.
- 29 While this may vary once roading is completed, it is likely that some students living in the southwest of the residential development area would qualify for Ministry-funded school transport assistance, because they would be living more than 3.2km from Ōhoka School (the closest state school at which they are able to enrol).
- 30 Students residing within 3.2km of the school are not eligible from a Ministry-funding standpoint. However, these students would be allowed to travel on the buses for a fare payable to the transport service provider, as long it does not disadvantage eligible students, such as by them not having a seat.

Option 2:

The home zones of Ōhoka and Swannanoa Schools are amended so that some of the residential development is within the Swannanoa School zone

- 31 Swannanoa School currently has a roll of 287 students, and did not put in a submission as part of the plan change consultation process. I note that the school is not currently accepting out-of-zone enrolments.
- 32 To amend an enrolment scheme home zone the Ministry of Education is required under schedule 20, clause 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020, to formally consult with:
 - 32.1 The board of the school.
 - 32.2 The parents of the students at the school.
 - 32.3 The people living in the area for which the school is reasonably convenient.
 - 32.4 The students and prospective students of the school (depending on their age and maturity).
 - 32.5 The boards of other schools that could be affected by the proposed scheme.

- 33 This option would spread the impact of additional students across the network, and would allow students living in the southwest of the residential development to access a more geographically convenient school than Ōhoka School.

Option 3:

A new school is constructed on the earmarked site (area with Education overlay) within the residential development

- 34 The space for residential rezoning has a site earmarked for potential education provision on Whites Road. The Ministry of Education has not been consulted about its interest in establishing a new school on the earmarked site at this stage.
- 35 Primary school sites can vary significantly, based on aspects such as whether there is adjacent green space (such as council-owned parks or reserves), or whether the site utilises multi-storey buildings. Most primary school sites in Canterbury are 3 – 4Ha in size.
- 36 It is my evidence that the site that has been earmarked for a school, if required, is therefore appropriately sized at approximately 4.6Ha, and well situated for access by primary aged students dwelling within the PC31 area and the surrounding area.
- 37 The Minister of Education has discretion under section 190 of the Education and Training Act 2020 to establish a school, to designate the year levels of that school, and to provide for different year levels to be phased in over time where relevant.
- 38 Section 209 requires that the Minister first consult with the boards of all state schools whose rolls might be affected before establishing a new school.
- 39 While the type of school to be established would be determined by the Minister, there are insufficient secondary-aged students to justify a secondary school, and the site's nearest education neighbours are Year 1 - 8 full primary schools. I therefore deem it highly likely that a school established on the site would also be a Year 1 - 8 primary school, which would cater to approximately 200 - 250 learners.
- 40 This could be a new state school, or there is potential for it to be a second campus of one of the neighbouring schools.
- 41 It is noted that active transport to the site within the masterplan area that is earmarked for schooling would be more straightforward and would involve travelling shorter distances than for options 1 and 2.

SECONDARY EDUCATION PROVISION

- 42 The residential development area is entirely within the current enrolment scheme home zone of Kaiapoi High School. The Rangiora High School enrolment scheme home zone ends at Bradleys Road. Students living on the east side of Bradleys Road would be eligible for enrolment in either school.
- 43 There is further projected growth in Rangiora and the surrounding areas compared with Kaiapoi and its other zoned areas. It makes sense that the residential development area would remain in-zone for Kaiapoi High School and that Kaiapoi would be the state secondary school option for those students living in the development area.
- 44 If similar state school market share were maintained, approximately 75 of the projected additional secondary aged students would access state schooling. The vast majority of these could be expected to do so at Kaiapoi High School. There is an existing Ministry-funded bus route to Kaiapoi High School that covers the Ōhoka area, which could be slightly re-routed to also service secondary aged students living in the residential development area.
- 45 The remaining 75 students could be expected to access state integrated and private schools in Christchurch City. **Mr Simon Milner's** evidence discusses two possible public transport solutions to connect the residential redevelopment with Christchurch City, being an extension of the existing Route 92, or an on-demand service. Either of these solutions would provide public transport options for secondary aged students wishing to access state integrated or private schooling options within Christchurch City. There are also three existing bus services that connect Rangiora and Kaiapoi with specific state, state integrated and private schools within Christchurch City, which could also potentially be extended to service the residential redevelopment area.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

- 46 The residential development could also consider the inclusion of special education and early childhood provision. This would ensure that families with children who have additional learning needs that make them eligible for access to special education schools are included within the network.
- 47 Pītau-Allenvale is the special school that provides specialist education to the Northwest region of Christchurch and the surrounding area. Pītau-Allenvale currently has a base school in Bryndwr and several satellite units on site at other schools, although the base school is being rebuilt in Belfast, due for completion in 2024.

- 48 The principal of Pītau-Allenvale, Ian Poulter, indicated that there is demand in the area and an identified need for specialist education. He believes there is a need for satellite provision of specialist education in the area, not necessarily on the potential school site, but somewhere local for families in Ōhoka, particularly as it grows. Pītau-Allenvale is currently in discussions with the Ministry regarding satellite provision in Rangiora, which could be broadened to include consideration of the Ōhoka area.
- 49 The early childhood network currently consists of Sweet Pea Early Learning Centre and Swannanoa Preschool. Sweet Pea is a private early childhood centre that operates from 7.30am until 5.30pm and is located near the intersection of Tram Road and Bradleys Road. Swannanoa Preschool is a community-based provision that operates from 9.00am – 3.00pm and is located on the grounds of Swannanoa School. Based on the capacity of these current providers, I consider it highly likely that the demand for early childhood provision would quickly outpace the current provision.
- 50 The Chief Executive of Kidsfirst, Sherryll Wilson, has indicated that Kidsfirst would have an interest in early childhood provision within the residential development area, ideally situated next to the site earmarked for education provision as a first preference, or within the site as a second preference. Further early childhood providers were not engaged with, as many families accessing private providers with longer operating hours prefer to do so close to their place of work rather than their place of residence.
- 51 It is noted that new regulations mean that establishing an early childhood centre will require approval from the Minister of Education, likely following a needs analysis conducted by the Ministry to assess educational requirements for the network.

CONCLUSION

- 52 It is my opinion that the Ōhoka educational network could successfully accommodate the increased numbers of students based on recent census and Ministry data and related population projections and student population proportions.
- 53 The configuration for doing so would require further engagement with the Ministry of Education, local schools including Ōhoka School, Swannanoa School and Kaiapoi High School, and local early childhood education providers. One option for increasing primary provision is to establish a new primary school within the residential development area (within the Education overlay area).
- 54 Should adequate planning and engagement be undertaken (which I understand the applicant is willing to do), I believe that the

educational network in the area could successfully accommodate the residential rezoning under PC31, and could continue to provide access to high quality state school education for school-aged children living in the residential development area.

Dated: 7 July 2023

Dr Gabrielle Wall