

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 Barbara Warren

Dated: 6 July 2023

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EVIDENCE OF BARBARA WARREN

- 1 My full name is Barbara Warren.
- 2 I am the founder and manager of the Ōhoka Farmers Market.
- 3 I have lived in Ōhoka for 32 years and in the Waimakariri District for most of my life.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 4 In my evidence I consider that proposed plan change 31 could be of benefit to the local and wider communities within Ōhoka, Waimakariri and greater North Canterbury.

THE ŌHOKA FARMERS MARKET

- 5 The Ōhoka Farmers Market has been operating every Friday morning all year since 2009. It is now in its 13th year and shows no sign of declining of stallholders or customers.
- 6 My goal with the market was to provide fresh, local, seasonal, ethical and nutritious food choices to the people of North Canterbury while supporting local growers and food artisans. The Ōhoka Farmers' Market's mission is to make a difference at a local level by creating an alternative and fair food system which encompasses the growers and the customers.
- 7 The market is held every Friday, rain, snow, or shine, between 9am and 12.30pm (12pm in June and July) at the Ōhoka Domain, corner of Mill and Whites Road. Winter markets are generally smaller in size.
- 8 The customer base is according to our data largely from the very local, Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Christchurch regions. Customer numbers on Fridays vary from 500 weekly in winter to over 2,000 in summer. The market is currently fully subscribed to stallholders in the summer.
- 9 Stall offerings include organic seasonal produce, fresh fish, meat and poultry, fruit and nuts from our local small orchard growers, herbs, eggs, honey and preserves, handmade items like soap, jewellery, homewares, clothing, hot coffee, freshly baked goods and other takeaway options.
- 10 The market often offers live music for visitors, and the Ōhoka Domain provides a range of seating and amenity areas.

- 11 There are stall entry requirements for prospective stall holders which ensure that the market maintains its reputation in terms of quality and offerings. Some of these requirements are:
 - 11.1 Stallholders must be the producer of the produce or craft being offered for sale.
 - 11.2 In relation to artisan crafts, preference is given to handmade, bespoke, traditional methods of production and practical crafts.
 - 11.3 All stallholders must have their own gazebo.
 - 11.4 High quality product.
- 12 The market's success is dependent upon:
 - 12.1 the regularity of it;
 - 12.2 its location in the Ōhoka domain which provides good amenity with lots of greenery and mature trees; and
 - 12.3 its proximity to populated areas (being located a mere 20 minutes from the Christchurch CBD and in close proximity to Kaiapoi and Rangiora).
- 13 The support the market receives from regular shoppers is testament to the high quality of the foods sold by the local market growers and producers.
- 14 The market is split into two seasons:
 - 14.1 Winter (May to September, inclusive); and
 - 14.2 Summer (October to April inclusive).
- 15 The summer is the busiest season for the market, where the market is located on the grass in the Ōhoka domain. In the winter, the market shifts to the Ōhoka domain gravel carpark.
- 16 In 2016, the Ōhoka Farmers Market has been voted as one of the top 4 Farmers Markets in New Zealand and top 4 general markets in the South Island.
- 17 The market has put Ōhoka on the map as a community hub for the greater North Canterbury region, not just Ōhoka.

- 18 The photo below is of the market during the summer:¹



Challenges faced by the market

- 19 Summer enables stallholders to park off the road, thereby reducing significantly parking congestion outside the market. However, in winter as the market moves onto the domain's carpark, there are only a small number of parking spaces available to stallholders and customers, increasing the congestion and demand for parking outside the market.
- 20 Parking options in the winter include the small carpark across the road at Ōhoka Hall, or otherwise street parking along Mill and Whites Road. On busier market days, this can result in cars being parked on either side of these roads for kilometres.
- 21 This parking situation in winter has been exasperated over the years despite my attempts to mitigate the situation with Council and a couple of local residents who have made life very difficult. The situation has become beyond my control and the reduced carparking for winter stallholders and customers is having an impact on the winter markets popularity.
- 22 If there is no carparking then customers don't come, despite how much they support might support the market. Despite repeated

¹ Source: <https://www.makeitraw.co.nz/pages/our-places>

attempts to resolve this predicament largely concerning the verges along the roads, the problem remains.

THE PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE

- 23 Our home in Ōhoka adjoins the proposed plan change's southern edge. My husband Andrew Warren and I made a submission on the proposed plan change relating to our property and some concerns we harboured over the existing land drains in the site.
- 24 Mr Tim Carter, the developer, approached my husband and I regarding a possible site for the market within the proposed plan change. Mr Carter approached us as a supporter of the market. We met with him a couple of times and he was empathetic to my issues regarding the market in its winter set up.
- 25 At these meetings, landscape architect Mr Garth Falconer also attended who has a good understanding and appreciation of the benefits that farmers markets offer communities. Together, they proposed a site within the plan change that could be used by the market in winter. Essentially what was offered was an all-weather sunny site, with ample carparking and room to grow for the market to use in the winter. This would be better for the market and therefore the community.
- 26 If designed correctly, I consider this would be an attractive addition to the proposed plan change. Not only would locals be guaranteed a flourishing food market in the winter, but the traders would also be guaranteed an income.
- 27 The market has become a place for community to meet. With the additional carparking spaces (106 in total), congestion on the roads around the market is likely to be mitigated, as is any potential vehicle damage to the domain in wet weather as a result of inadequate access when we transition from winter to summer.
- 28 I understand a park and ride facility is also proposed to help facilitate the provision of public transport to Ōhoka. Any public transport solutions coming out of the plan change would greatly benefit the market and its continued success and growth.
- 29 Aside from the facilities the proposed plan change could provide to the market, the plan change itself will provide additional amenity to the market including, a riverside setting, and proximity to cafes, bars, shops, and toilets which are currently lacking.
- 30 The proposed plan change, with a site allocated for the market in the winter, would be welcomed by the winter traders.

- 31 Although I have not received a formal proposal from the developers, I am confident that they have a genuine interest in ensuring the village of Ōhoka is enhanced and by assisting the market in this way would benefit many.
- 32 I do not expect the market, nor seek to make the market, any bigger at this point in time. Instead, my focus is to make it better. However, I am currently compromised in doing this over the winter due to the existing site restrictions and parking complications.
- 33 I am supportive of the proposed plan change as future residents in the area will provide increased local custom to the market to help it continue to be successful and grow, particularly in the winter months.

CONCLUSION

- 34 The market is a rural market, and that simple fact is quite special. So, I would like to stress that this evidence seeks to support those many small businesses who produce food and crafts from local lifestyle blocks and local towns at the Ōhoka market.
- 35 They will benefit from an improved site over winter because we have outgrown our existing site. In order to avoid any further complications as a result of our existing winter site the proposal by the developers is attractive to us.
- 36 I am hopeful that the developers will provide lifestyle options in the proposed plan change that will enable, enhance and improve and enliven the village of Ōhoka.

Dated: 6 July 2023

Barbara Warren