

Before an Independent Hearings Panel
Appointed by Waimakariri District Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Submissions and further submissions on the Proposed
Waimakariri District Plan

and: Hearing Stream 12D: Ōhoka rezoning request

and: **Carter Group Property Limited**
(Submitter 237)

and: **Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited**
(Submitter 160)

Summary of evidence of Garth Falconer

Dated: 1 July 2024

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SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF GARTH FALCONER

- 1 My full name is Garth James Falconer.
- 2 I prepared the following statements in support of the Submitters' rezoning request:
 - 2.1 Statement of evidence dated 5 March 2024; and
 - 2.2 Supplementary statement of evidence dated 13 June 2024.
- 3 The settlement of Ōhoka is relatively old but its growth has been stunted. It now finds itself on the periphery of the second largest city in the country – a city that has expanded rapidly in recent years, particularly following the earthquakes. Ōhoka is free of natural hazards and is an attractive place to settle.
- 4 The Panel will appreciate from reading my primary and supplementary evidence that my views on the proposal largely diverge from that of Council's urban design experts in relation to urban form, connectivity, accessibility, the relationship with Mandeville, and village character. I note that the issue of whether the proposal will result in a positive urban design outcome is not challenged by these experts. The proposed form features a series of wide ecologically restored stream corridors that extend across the site, graduated lot sizes, a network of open spaces and paths, provision of local convenience retail, and a park and ride facility. None of these key elements and their arrangement are challenged, indeed they are agreed upon. We can agree that this form of change from an urban design perspective is good.
- 5 Rather the issue appears to be the bigger picture of accommodating growth and where it goes. Council experts refer to planning documents, several of which were prepared some time ago, and to what exists in part today. However, a lot has changed in the last decade. The National Policy on Urban Development was issued in May 2020 by central government frustrated by the performance of local territorial authorities in respect of properly planning for and accommodate more housing (Objective 1 and Policy 4).
- 6 Fundamentally, Mr Nicholson and Mr Knott do not consider the need for the provision of a diversity of housing to meet the demands of the growing population of Greater Christchurch. They defer to planning documents that are, in my opinion, outdated (e.g. CRPS 2012 and WDC District Development Strategy 2018). They have been surpassed by the ongoing evolution of the region. Population growth in Waimakariri District has been increasing rapidly of late. In the period from the 2018 census to 2023, it has increased 11.3% or 6,744 people¹. Despite this, Waimakariri District population growth is lagging substantially behind that of Selwyn District where there

¹ Statistics New Zealand, NZ.Stat tool

has been an increase over the same period of 17,583 or 29% making it the fastest growing district in the country where the average was 6.3%. One likely reason for the growth disparity is that Waimakariri District Council is not responding to and meeting housing needs of different types and in different locations in quality designed environments compared to Selwyn District.

- 7 In my 36-year career working with communities the length and breadth of the country (from Mangawhai in the north to Wānaka in the south) who are facing change and determining their path, I observe that they all want to live in a 'village'. But what exactly a 'village' is, most people (urban design experts included) struggle to define. I think that, essentially, people want community relationships and support, safe person to person engagement, closeness to the natural world, good healthy recreation, and healthy food. The establishment of farmers markets over the last 20 years have been one of the key features of the creation of these villages. In the first year of the Matakana Market, we weren't sure if it would survive the first winter. But it was swamped with people coming from far and wide to commune to buy local produce, a coffee, and meet friends. Subsequently a bus service into Auckland has been put in place and a cycle walkway to Omaha established to service the Matakana village. Village character can be created. This is a point that Mr Nicholson and Mr Knott agree on. Therefore, it is the location and form of that creation that should be the focus of this discussion.
- 8 In my opinion, Ōhoka has real potential to be a well-provisioned, coordinated and prosperous village, but it currently falls short. There are several vestiges of community facilities including the Domain, the Hall, and the school 1.6km away. It does have a vibrant market that attracts several thousand people weekly, but apart from that there is little else than a clustering of large expensive lifestyle lots. The only shop is part of a car repair garage with a very limited convenience offering.
- 9 In my opinion, Ōhoka is a most suitable place for residential living. The indicative plans contained in my evidence in chief demonstrate that this site can contribute to the provision of much needed housing and help contribute to the well-functioning urban environment of Greater Christchurch.

Dated: 1 July 2024

Garth Falconer