

**Before an Independent Hearings
Panel Appointed by the
Waimakariri District Council**

Under the Resource Management Act
1991

In the matter of submissions and further
submissions in relation to the
proposed Waimakariri District Plan

And

In the matter of Hearing Stream 12A: Special
Purpose Zone Pegasus Resort

And submission by DEXIN Investments
Ltd (**DEXIN**)

**Statement of Evidence of
Keren Bennett
for DEXIN (Submitter 377)**

Dated: 14 May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Keren Bennett and I am a Technical Director at SLR Consulting New Zealand. I have been employed by SLR (formerly 4Sight Consulting) since February 2014.
2. I hold a Bachelor of Science and Post-Graduate Diploma of Wildlife Management, and have over 25 years of professional experience as a consultant ecologist. My experience has largely focused on assessments of freshwater ecological habitats, and the features, values and management of ecological effects associated with land and infrastructure development throughout New Zealand.
3. My role covers a wide range of services including field investigations, data collection and analysis, technical report writing, technical peer reviews, and resource consent hearings.
4. I prepared a report entitled “Pegasus Māketete, 1250 Main North Road, Woodend – Ecological Assessment” dated 21 November 2022 (**Ecological Assessment**). I understand this was provided to the Council as part of DEXIN’s submission and further submission to rezone 1250 Main North Road to SPZ(PR), known as the Pegasus Māketete proposal.

CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

5. While this is not an Environment Court hearing, I nonetheless confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023.
6. I am satisfied that the matters which I address in my evidence are within my field of expertise. I am not aware of any material facts that I have omitted which might alter or detract from the opinions I express in my evidence.

RESPONSE TO UPDATED OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7. Since my Ecological Assessment was prepared, an updated Outline Development Plan (**ODP**) and Master Plan have been prepared by James Lunday of Common Ground Southern for the Pegasus Māketete Proposal.
8. I have reviewed and considered the updated ODP and Master Plan which include a 10m riparian setback on each side of the Taranaki Stream.

9. I can confirm that the updated documents have not altered any conclusion(s) made within my Ecological Assessment, and I consider the proposal can be supported from an ecological perspective for the following reasons:
- (a) The design specifies a 10m riparian setback from each bank of the Taranaki Stream – identified as a ‘landscape setback’ in the ODP. This setback was previously narrower, without a defined width in the earlier ODP. The wider setback will provide a defined buffer for the stream from the surrounding development, and therefore assist in protecting the natural functioning of the stream.
 - (b) The wider riparian setback will also extend the area available for riparian and biodiversity enhancement.
10. For the reasons set out above, I consider the inclusion of the 10m riparian setback to be an improvement on the original proposal.



Keren Bennett

14 May 2024