

**BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of Proposed Plan Change 37 - Nukuhau (private) by AN Rajasingham LPT Trustees No 124 Limited anors to the Taupo District Council to rezone c.78ha of land in the Nukuhau area from Rural Environment to a mix of General Residential and Mixed Density Residential with a Neighbourhood Shopping Centre overlay.

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KIRSTY NICOLE SYKES**

**Dated 20 OCTOBER 2021**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My full name is Kirsty Nicole Sykes (nee Potts). I am a professional archaeologist employed by WSP New Zealand Ltd (**WSP**). I have been employed by WSP (formerly Opus International Consultants Ltd) since 2015; 2015-2018 in the Hamilton office; and since 2018 in the Blenheim Office.
2. I have an MA in Archaeology, University of Otago 2014; BA with honours, University of Otago 2009.
3. I have nine years of professional experience in the fields of Australian and New Zealand archaeology encompassing both pre-European Māori and pre-1900 historic archaeological sites.
4. I am a member of the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA).
5. I have relevant experience working in the central North Island region for local authorities, government agencies, private companies, contractors and developers. This work has included preparing archaeological assessments; archaeological surveys; mitigation monitoring; and investigations in compliance with archaeological authorities issued by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT).
6. I have been engaged by the applicant to provide evidence in respect of site archaeology to Private Plan Change 37: Nukuhau Private Plan Change (**PC37**).

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

7. I have read the Environment Court Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and agree to comply with it. I confirm that the opinions expressed in this statement are

within my area of expertise except where I state that I have relied on the evidence of other persons. I have not omitted to consider materials or facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I have expressed.

#### **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

8. My evidence will address the assessment of archaeological values of the Nukuhau Structure Plan area.
9. Response to s.42A Report and submitters

#### **SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

10. I reviewed the Archcheck high-level archaeological review prepared by my colleagues, and which formed Appendix K to the PC37 Request. The results of the Archcheck were that no specific archaeological risk was identified.
11. I carried out a site visit in July 2021 and prepared the Archaeological Assessment, September 2021. I identified two depressions on the site where there was considered to be archaeological risk, with the remainder of the site considered to have low archaeological risk.
12. Following provision of the Archaeological Assessment to HNZPT, and further consultation with them, I am carrying out additional analysis and WSP is commissioning work for the Exploratory Authority that HNZPT advise is necessary.
13. In my opinion, the conclusion I reached in the Archaeological Assessment is that the proposed plan change and subsequent development of the site is expected to have minor negative effects on archaeological values.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL REVIEW FOR PC37**

14. My colleagues at WSP (at the time, Opus International Consultants Limited) undertook a high-level archaeological review, an “Archcheck”, of the site between 2017 and early 2019 (Appendix K to the PC37 Request). I was the reviewer of Appendix K.
15. At the time of the Archcheck the location of ground disturbances was unknown. The Archcheck methodology involved the review of the NZAA Site Recording Scheme, historical survey plans, and a brief site inspection.
16. The results of the Archcheck were that: “while no specific archaeological risk was identified, there remains residual risk for the project area due to the wider landscape and project land size”.
17. The Archcheck recommended an Archaeological Assessment Report be undertaken with a view of applying for an Archaeological Authority closer to the time of development. The Archcheck recommended that should an Archaeological Authority be required, that it be a condition of any council consent granted. If an Archaeological Authority was not required, the works were recommended to be undertaken under an Accidental Discovery Protocol (ADP).

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

18. I prepared an Archaeological Assessment Report (dated 7 September 2021; “the Archaeological Assessment”) following discussions with HNZPT and after considering the matters raised in their submission on PC37. The Archaeological Assessment was reviewed by WSP Senior Archaeologist Nick Cable.
19. As part of that assessment, I visited the site on 6 July 2021. I undertook a site walkover and a visual inspection of the surrounding ground, to inspect any potential surface indicators of archaeological material. The purpose of the site walkover and information review was to determine whether any

archaeological sites are located within the site and what types of archaeological sites might otherwise exist.

20. The Archaeological Assessment addressed the archaeological effects of PC37. It evaluated the potential for archaeological sites to be present within the site and assessed the effects of archaeological values that PC37 and the subsequent change development will have.
21. My assessment of the archaeological effects of PC37 addressed the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) section 5 purpose and section 6(f) matters and the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPTA).
22. The Archaeological Assessment concluded that:

“The majority of the Site is considered to have low archaeological risk and thus, low archaeological values. The exception to this is the two depressions identified during the site visit in Area C. There is potential that these may represent an unrecorded archaeological pit site, which in turn would indicate wider settlement or gardening in the general vicinity. Any such evidence would be considered of local archaeological relevance only and therefore is considered to be low significance.”

23. The Archaeological Assessment recommended:
  - a) Stakeholders should be made aware of the archaeological potential of the Site. This may include, but is not limited to, the landowners, local iwi, TDC and developers. The majority of the Site, with the exception of the two depressions in Area C, is considered to have low archaeological risk and low archaeological values. Area C was also considered to have low heritage value even in the situation it is an archaeological site.
  - b) Further archaeological investigation should be undertaken as part of any future development of the part of Area C containing the two

depressions. An Archaeological Authority should be sought from HNZPT for this work.

24. The Archaeological Assessment was provided to HNZPT (10<sup>th</sup> September 2021). HNZPT responded via email (14<sup>th</sup> September 2021)<sup>1</sup>. They noted that the Archaeological Assessment was inconclusive in its findings regarding whether archaeological sites were present within the plan change area. HNZPT considered the work undertaken to date did not provide certainty regarding effects on archaeology. HNZPT suggested that further work be undertaken as per a recent (Authority 2019/498) Rotorua project in which archaeological field investigations were undertaken in advance of the plan change hearing under an Exploratory Authority.

#### **SECTION 42A REPORT AND SUBMISSIONS**

25. The section 42A Report, prepared by Mr Bonis, included as Appendix G, a letter from Lynda Walter, Director of Insitu Heritage Ltd (dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021) to Taupo District Council reviewing the Archaeological Assessment. Ms Walter recommends some additional research prior to rezoning of the PC37 area, and any Authority application; works towards which are underway.
26. The Archaeological Assessment Report has a clear recommendation for further archaeological investigation at the time of land development, including site-specific investigation into Area C. It is essential that this further investigatory step occurs. Potential effects on archaeological sites will arise at the land development stage, and as such, further investigations need to occur prior to this point.

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<sup>1</sup> Email communication from Carolyn McAlley, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, to Hamish Crawford, 14 September 2021

27. In my opinion, the conclusion I reached in the Archaeological Assessment is that the proposed plan change is expected to have potential minor negative effects on archaeological values when the potential effects of PC37 are assessed against the RMA and HNZPTA.



**Kirsty Sykes**

**20 October 2021**