

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL

IN THE MATTER 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.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NEIL HICKMAN

Dated 5 November 2021

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1. My name is Neil Hickman.
2. I am the representative for Lexus Trustees 11, the owner of the property at 48 Acacia Bay Road, which is the block of land within the Plan Change area identified in Mr Crawford's evidence as block "F".¹
3. As Mr Crawford explains in his evidence, the Plan Change area consists of a number of separate land parcels involving multiple owners. Within that group of land owners, three have joined together as applicants. They are:
 - a) Lexus Trustees 11 Limited (**Lexus Trustees**) at 48 Acacia Bay Road with a land area of 14.55 hectares;
 - b) AJ Rajasingham, LPT Trustees No, 124 Limited and Thiru Trustee Company Limited at 24 Acacia Bay Road with a land area of 9.09 hectares (**Rajasingham block**);
 - c) C N Top Investment Limited (**C N Top**) at 6 Poihipi Road with a land area of 22.27 hectares.

(applicants)

4. Today I am speaking on behalf of the applicants, who collectively are all very pleased to be advancing this proposal which will enable the supply of much needed housing in Taupo.
5. Through our trustee company my wife Michelle and I purchased our property in November 2016 in the knowledge that while it was a lifestyle block, it was likely to one day be urbanised. We are not developers and primarily we purchased the property because we love the location.

¹ Statement of Evidence of Hamish Crawford dated 20 October at paras 31,32.

6. It is a 10 minute walk from our house to the roundabout opposite Countdown supermarket in town, and about a 15 minute walk back up the hill again. The walk to town from our property is via various reserves and footpaths on quiet streets and is a very pleasant, short walk that my wife and I make multiple times a week. It is clear to me that the Plan Change area is well connected to town and an easy stroll or bike ride away from the amenities, shops, restaurants and employment opportunities on offer in Taupo.
7. Shortly after purchasing the property we were approached by Gloria McLaughlin and Andrew Kusabs, who are the representatives of Rangatira 8A17, one of the other blocks of land within the Plan Change area. They wanted to talk about a proposed roading configuration through our property to support their development ambitions.
8. We had numerous meetings and discussions with Gloria and Andrew. The Rangatira 8A17 consultant David Rankilor focussed primarily on various subdivision layouts of the 8A17 land and how the roading network would interact with our land. We consulted with Council's Development Engineer, Roger Stokes, at this time who encouraged us to consider a more comprehensive approach to potential development, including having Docherty Drive connect to Acacia Bay Road through our land.
9. Once we had a basic agreement with Rangatira 8A17, I approached my northern neighbour AJ Rajasingham, and then had a couple of meetings with various Council staff over the first half of 2017. The signals from Council were very positive and we came away confident that pursuing a residential zoning change was going to be good for Taupo.
10. We approached Hamish Crawford of WSP in August 2017 to help us take this forward. With Hamish, we attended further Council meetings and were advised by Council that they would be very supportive of a comprehensive Structure Plan and Plan Change if we were able to include

the C N Top land to the north of Poihipi Road. Council advised that they were concerned about the current Poihipi Road/Wairakei Drive roundabout, and a realignment of Poihipi Road to opposite Huka Falls Road would be a significant advantage to the proposal.

11. WSP then invited CN Top to join the plan change and various further meetings with the 4 parties being Rangatira 8A17, CN Top, AJ and Jade Rajasingham, and ourselves. For their own reasons, while they signalled ongoing support for the Plan Change, Rangatira 8A17 opted out of entering into a contract with WSP, and so final contracts were entered into in May 2018, which firmed up the arrangements between the three land owners who make up the applicant group.
12. Despite Rangatira 8A17 opting out, they still remained involved and told us that they would fully support us through the process. They provided cultural advice to us and stated that a Cultural Impact Assessment would not be required, and in fact would be seen as something of an insult to them. They also told us that Rangatira E were supportive of our application for the Plan Change and that Gloria would provide a letter of support from them. It seems that their position was not as I had understood it to be.
13. Moving forward and with Covid arriving on the world stage time has flown by. The Nukuhau Private plan change application was submitted Nov 2020, since then I have had lots of meetings with Hamish Crawford and various Council staff members. All the meetings have been very positive and in more recent months the benefits of the Plan Change in terms of addressing the growing housing supply shortage have become more and more obvious.
14. This is hardly surprising – we have an adult child recently return to Taupo and we understand first-hand how difficult it is for young people to find accommodation, either to rent, or to buy, in this town. There seems to be

a massive shortage of housing, and we are very pleased to be able to provide additional options for housing with this proposal.

15. Thanks for your time, and I would be happy to take any questions.

Neil Hickman

5 November 2021