

In the matter of the Resource Management Act 1991 and submissions on Plan Change 1 (Awatarariki Fanhead, Matata) to the Operative Whakatane District Plan and Plan Change 17 (Natural Hazards) to the Bay of Plenty Regional Natural Resources Plan.

Verbal evidence from **Greg Ball** presented to Councils' Hearing Panel on **3 March 2020** concerning property acquisition matters.

To summarise my written evidence, because of the extensive experience I've had in New Zealand over many years in dealing with property owners impacted by public works and natural disasters, I've frequently been requested by acquiring authorities to prepare property acquisition strategies for landowners:

- affected by large scale infrastructural projects and,
- affected by natural disasters negatively impacting their ability to reside and operate businesses from potentially unsafe properties.

Property acquisition strategies I've prepared relating to natural disasters and hazards include:

1. 2001 Alexandra Flood Remediation Project involving the acquisition of 100 flood prone properties below a specified contour line,
2. Post the 2011 Christchurch Earthquakes, the 7000+ Residential Red Zone property purchase project,
3. The Christchurch CBD Anchor Project Plan involving 48 hectares of land purchases covering 1350+ separate property interests,
4. The 2018 failed Tauranga City Bella Vista subdivision involving purchasing 21 problematic residential properties, and
5. This 2016 (updated in 2018) Awatarariki Fanhead, Matata property acquisition strategy involving 34 private property parcels.

A consideration for me with my involvement with all of these projects is that all the owners are treated with respect, fairly and reasonably with an even handed approach, and in an open and transparent manner. A common thread with all these projects is that they can cause significant upheaval for affected landowners so therefore it's wise to blend compassion with a degree of liberality when establishing fair settlement packages. That said we're also mindful that projects involving funds from the public purse are subject to public scrutiny and a degree of fiscal prudence is also required to be applied.

In the case of this project, I'm comfortable that the voluntary retreat package provides for liberal landowner settlement packages. Evidence of this is the recent advice I've received concerning extensive landowner engagement to-date with the 34 private owners having resulted in; settlement agreements with 17, recent valuation mediation meeting with two, valuation arbitration scheduled for one, addressing valuation compliance issues involving one valuer affecting nine properties and also awaiting owners valuations for a further two properties.

In summary, I'm completely satisfied that this approved property acquisition strategy offers landowners very fair and reasonable settlement packages should they decide to sell.

**Greg Ball**  
**3 March 2020**