

BEFORE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("**RMA**")

AND

IN THE MATTER on Proposed Change 6 (National Policy Statement for Urban Development) ("**PC 6**") to the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement ("**RPS**")

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL BROWN
FOR KIWIRAIL HOLDINGS LIMITED**

CORPORATE

19 JUNE 2023

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 My name is Michael Brown. I am the Group Manager Planning and Land Use for KiwiRail Holdings Limited ("**KiwiRail**"). I have the qualifications of a BSc (Hons) and a LLB from the University of Otago. I am a qualified lawyer and have over 20 years' experience in property, planning, environmental law, and the management of large infrastructure projects.
- 1.2 Prior to working at KiwiRail, I was the Head of Planning at Wellington International Airport which involved advising on planning, feasibility studies, property management, development, contract management, environmental compliance, and customer service. I have also worked at the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority where I oversaw all procurement and property functions for the business, involving management of external advisers, providing internal legal advice, and leading future focused discussions.
- 1.3 This evidence sets out the drivers for KiwiRail in the management of housing intensification in the Bay of Plenty region. The busy Bay of Plenty rail network supports the vital movement of freight, and will continue to grow in volume and frequency of trains in the years to come.
- 1.4 It is important that PC 6 appropriately manages the effects of urbanisation, including reverse sensitivity effects arising from the location of sensitive activities next to the rail corridor. I consider this can be achieved in PC 6 through amendments as set out in Ms Heppelthwaite's evidence.

2. KIWIRAIL'S OPERATIONS IN THE BAY OF PLENTY

- 2.1 A transport modal shift to more climate-friendly modes of transport, like rail, is critical to reduce carbon emissions. As a result, rail is experiencing a renaissance as evidenced by the recent significant investment made by the Government in the railway network, demonstrating a strong and continued confidence in the current and future potential of rail. This investment programme is focusing on improving the resilience of these networks and to support future growth. Ms Heppelthwaite summarises the Central Government strategic direction on these investments in her evidence.
- 2.2 Throughout the country, KiwiRail is building a rail network that can support more frequent passenger services, with faster journey times, and also generate critical greater capacity and resilience for freight trains. KiwiRail is only expecting train

volumes and frequencies to increase across both the national and Bay of Plenty networks, in alignment with the growing focus on transport connections for the region and its development (including through PC 6).

- 2.3 The Bay of Plenty region services what is commonly referred to as the "Golden Triangle" in terms of rail freight. This area is the key rail link between the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland, incorporating traffic servicing the Ports of Auckland and Tauranga, with significant links to Palmerston North, Kinleith and Kawarau. This network provides a critical route for freight imports but also key export markets, such as dairy and logging. The types of freight carried on rail here is a mix of container and bulk freight, with the primary bulk product carried being logs from the forests of Kawarau and Murupara. Generally speaking, container traffic focuses at the Port of Tauranga, whereas bulk freight and logs are the focus at Mt Maunganui.
- 2.4 Within the region KiwiRail operates the East Coast Main Trunk Line, the Murupara Line, and the Mt Maunganui Line. All very busy freight lines, with approximately 188 train movements per week west of Tauranga, 56 train movements per week between Tauranga and Mt Maunganui and 90 train movements per week west of Mt Maunganui through Kawarau and Murupara. KiwiRail expects these already busy lines are only going to become busier as demand for rail freight increases.

3. IMPACT OF HOUSING INTENSIFICATION ON RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3.1 In the Bay of Plenty region all services are powered by diesel locomotives. While noise for electrified trains comes from the track levels, diesel trains also generate noise approximately 3.8m above track. Vibration is also caused by the movements of all trains across the tracks and differs depending on a combination of track and ground conditions. As such, trains create lawful noise and vibration effects both in and around the rail corridor.
- 3.2 KiwiRail has an ongoing programme of upgrade and track maintenance. However, noise and vibration effects cannot be entirely internalised within the rail corridor and have the potential to cause ongoing disturbance and adverse health and wellbeing impacts to communities next to the rail corridor.
- 3.3 The greater the intensity of housing and other development adjacent to the rail corridor, the more pressure on this interface and therefore the greater the risk of these impacts occurring. Unless managed appropriately this co-location of new residential development and existing infrastructure can cause a range of effects.

KiwiRail regularly receives complaints from residents about train movements, including night time movements, and requests to constrain operations.

- 3.4 To ensure rail can provide a competitive alternative to road and support New Zealand's transition to a lower emission transport network, we need to enable it to operate as efficiently as possible. This means no restrictions on operations, including on night time operations or train volumes, now and into the future.
- 3.5 Those looking to locate near the rail corridor will experience noise and vibration effects. KiwiRail takes a very pragmatic approach to housing and development near the rail corridor. Intensified housing in these areas can occur, provided it is achieved in a safe and healthy way and that essential rail infrastructure enabled, protected, and provided for. It is more important than ever that these issues are carefully managed as the relevance of rail transport continues to grow. The amendments sought by KiwiRail as outlined in Ms Heppelthwaite's evidence will ensure this can be achieved in the Bay of Plenty.

Michael Brown

19 June 2023