**TOM WATTS – LVA**

* Good afternoon, My name is Tom Watts, I am a registered landscape architect and was engaged by Te Puna Industrial Limited in April 2022 to assess the potential landscape and visual effects of the Application and provide recommendations on landscape mitigation and compliance with landscaping requirements of the Structure Plan
* I have over 13 years’ experience as a landscape architect and urban designer, where I have undertaken numerous landscape assessments within rural areas, to assess potential effects on landscape values, and establish where landscape mitigation is required.
* This landscape assessment was undertaken in accordance with the concepts and principles outlined in the NZILA landscape assessment guidelines – Te tangi a te manu. This process included
	+ Site visits and assessment of the existing landscape values, which can generally be described as modified and degraded pastural land, with farm drains to control stormwater. This has resulted in the loss of the majority of native species and landscape patterns that would have historically dominated these low-lying area. The sites history and cultural context is also understood, however it is recognised that it is not my role to assess the cultural landscape.
	+ Secondly, I identified a visual catchment based on site visits and desktop assessment, which resulted in 43 private properties being identified, primarily along the sides of the valley to the south. These properties experience varying degrees of long views and visibility towards the site, based on elevation, topography, existing vegetation and orientation of the site and dwellings. Private view shafts from the north were also identified, and public views from Te Puna Station Road as vehicles travel east and west.
	+ Mapping of the visual catchment in relation to the site was undertaken, comprising aerial maps, contour data, and dwelling locations.

* + A reverse approach was applied to assessment, whereby viewshafts from within the site, looking back to the viewing audience was assessed, to establish potential levels of visibility. In order to understand view shafts, this process included assessment of photography, topography, existing vegetation and dwelling locations, orientation and elevation.
	+ The landscape outcomes sought by the Structure Plan were incorporated into the landscape mitigation plan and applied to the external and internal boundaries of the site, as well as the design of a naturalised wetland in the eastern portion of the site.

* + The statutory context was taken into consideration in the rating of effects, including the industrial zoning of the site and the anticipated industrial uses for the site as provided for by the structure plan.
	+ Taking the above into consideration the level of landscape and visual effects were ultimately determined.
	+ Following lodgement, consultation with councils’ technical landscape expert (Dave Mansergh) on landscape and visual matters was undertaken in March of 2023, which resulted in some tweaks to the LVA.

**In summary the following conclusions have been drawn from my assessment**

* I am of the view that the sequencing of landscaping and composition and planting are in accordance with the structure plan. Where there is a departure with the bund removal along Te Puna Station Road, this has been mitigated by planting more established trees. This ensures that screening to this boundary is established from the outset.
* Notwithstanding that the landscape outcomes of the structure plan are met, I have looked at views on the visual catchment and effects are considered to be appropriately mitigated.
* The physical landscape effects have also been considered. The transformation of pastural land into industrial yards, inherently requites a level of bulk earthworks to raise and develop the site. It is recognised that there will be a moderate to high degree of change associated with developing rural land into industrial yards, however given that industrial land uses are anticipated by the structure plan, this level of earthworks is anticipated.
* Lastly, the establishment of a naturalised wetland on site which transforms and restores an area of boggy degraded pastural land into a wetland with native species to manage storm water, is considered a landscape and visual amenity improvement in the eastern portion of the Site.

Taking the above into consideration, the ultimate effects ratings are summarised as;

* + low to very low visual effects on receptors within the surrounding rural visual catchment, subject to the landscape mitigation proposed; and
	+ low physical landscape effects associated with the earthworks and development of the Site, when taking into consideration the anticipated land development required to form the industrial yards in accordance with the Structure Plan.

I am happy to respond to any questions on my evidence.