

Before an Independent Hearings Panel

The Proposed Waikato District Plan (Stage 1)

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

IN THE MATTER OF hearing submissions and further submissions on the Proposed
Waikato District Plan (Stage 1):
Topic 25 – Zone Extents

**HIGHLIGHTS PACKAGE
ROBERT JAMES PRYOR ON BEHALF OF TATA VALLEY LIMITED
(LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL)**

12 May 2021

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1. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1 My full name is Robert James Pryor. I am a registered landscape architect.
- 1.2 I have provided landscape and visual evidence in relation to the proposed rezoning sought by TaTa Valley Limited¹ of the land at 42B Potter Road and 35 Trig Road, Pokeno (**Site**).
- 1.3 The proposed rezoning from rural zoning to the proposed TaTa Valley Resort Zone (**TVRZ**) will visually result in a degree of change to its current open rural landscape character. The current open and undeveloped state of the land, will change to one with some built characteristics, particularly for some of the Site's immediate neighbours. This change will be most noticeable in respect of the proposed hotel. The Site, however, is part of a highly modified rural environment and the Site and surrounding landscape has the capacity to visually absorb the landscape and visual effects of development enabled by the rezoning, due to the physical characteristics and prevailing attributes and rural settlement pattern within the area.
- 1.4 Development enabled within the proposed Hotel Precinct will be more visible from various locations in the surrounding rural environment due to its elevated characteristics and wider visual catchment. Potential adverse visual effects will be addressed through the proposed resource consent assessment criteria in the Precinct provisions.² Development enabled within the balance of the TVRZ will be less visible as many parts of the Site have more restricted visibility due to the intervening landform and vegetation patterns.
- 1.5 The surrounding landscape is of a scale that is capable of accommodating the form, size and scale of development enabled by the rezoning subject to future consent processes. The Site is located within a highly modified 'working' environment and is appropriate for the proposed rezoning since it contains a number of natural landscape features and elements that will assist in integrating and/or screening future development from the surrounding environment. The containing ridgelines, intervening landforms and off-site vegetation patterns mean that views towards the Site are filtered and screened from a number of public and private viewing locations.
- 1.6 The landscape has a good ability to absorb changes within it. While the Waikato River and wetlands designated as an Outstanding Natural Feature extending along

¹ Submitter 574 and further submitter 1340.

² Matters of Discretion 29.7.18(a).

the southern boundary of the Site, the Significant Natural Areas (**SNA**) that incorporate the stands of kahikatea trees beside the river, and the proposed amended Significant Amenity Landscape (**SAL**) on the river flat are high in landscape and natural character values, the Site itself does not have high aesthetic, heritage or rarity values and is typical of that found within the surrounding rural Waikato environment. The modified rural and pastoral nature of the Site and surrounding environment provides the context for the rezoning. In my opinion, development enabled by the rezoning will not adversely affect the existing landscape, and visual character of the Site and surrounding environment. Development enabled by the proposed rezoning is physically located away from these higher quality landscape features and protection is afforded to the stands of kahikatea trees through their SNA designation which will ensure their retention and protection.

- 1.7 While there will be a change in localised rural character from that of the current open pastoral land, to one with future built development and associated infrastructure, the rural character will be reinforced through retaining large open pasture areas on the lower river flats, the retention of the areas of indigenous bush throughout the Site and the existing SNAs and proposed amended SAL on the river floodplain identified under the Proposed Waikato District Plan. Development enabled by the proposed rezoning is physically located away the Site's higher quality landscape features on the River margins and protection is afforded to the stands of kahikatea trees through their SNA designation which will ensure their retention and protection.
- 1.8 Development enabled by the rezoning of the Site would not adversely affect the natural character values of the Site or wider river and rural landscape due to the existing modified characteristics of the Site. Development enabled by the rezoning will have a minimal impact on views to key landscape features in the locality and will not adversely impact upon any of the key landscape elements and patterns in the surrounding area.
- 1.9 The proposed provisions for the TVRZ direct that the development and operation of TaTa Valley Resort is undertaken to manage adverse effects on the amenity and character values of the surrounding rural environment, and the values of the Waikato River. In my opinion, these provisions and expected outcomes will provide an appropriate framework under which any adverse landscape and visual effects can be effectively managed.

1.10 In conclusion, the rezoning of the Site will provide an opportunity for an innovative and environmentally sustainable rural tourism development. In my opinion, development enabled by the rezoning could be visually accommodated within the landscape without adversely affecting the character, aesthetic value and integrity of the Site and surrounding rural environment. Any potential adverse landscape and visual effects on the environment will be acceptable within the surrounding landscape context.

Robert James Pryor

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