

**BEFORE THE GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL AND HUTT
CITY COUNCIL
EASTERN BAYS SHARED PATH PROJECT**

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of applications for resource consents by Hutt
City Council under section 88 of the Act, to
carry out the Eastern Bays Shared Path Project

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF IHAKARA JAMES PUKETAPU-DENTICE
(STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND ENGAGEMENT) ON BEHALF OF THE
APPLICANT**

30 November 2020

BUDDLE FINDLAY
Barristers and Solicitors
Wellington

Solicitors Acting: **David Allen / Libby Cowper / Esther Bennett**
Email: david.allen@buddlefindlay.com / libby.cowper@buddlefindlay.com /
esther.bennett@buddlefindlay.com
Tel 64-4-499 4242 Fax 64-4-499 4141 PO Box 2694 DX SP20201 Wellington 6140

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QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1. My full name is **Ihakara James Puketapu-Dentice**. I am the Director of Economy and Development at Hutt City Council ("**HCC**").
2. My evidence is given on behalf of HCC in relation to its applications under section 88 of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("**RMA**") for resource consents for the Eastern Bays Shared Path ("**Project**").
3. I am of Te Āti Awa and Ngāi Tūhoe descent.

BACKGROUND AND ROLE

4. Since commencing my role at HCC on 3 June 2020 I have been responsible for the strategic management of the Project. In my role (in relation to the Project) I have focussed on:
 - (a) engagement with iwi;
 - (b) engagement with the wider community;
 - (c) engagement with Greater Wellington Regional Council ("**GWRC**"); and
 - (d) management of the COVID-19 funding processes.
5. I am familiar with the Project area having lived in Lower Hutt for 29 years. In addition to working with the HCC team in developing the Project over the last few months (especially in relation to COVID-19 funding), I also provided an update presentation to the Eastbourne Community Board on 3 November 2020 where there were approximately 50 members of the community present, and to GWRC councillors and Senior Leadership Team ("**SLT**") members on 10 November 2020.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. The purpose of my evidence is to provide a strategic overview of the Project, including its significance for HCC and its linkages to other projects and shared paths/cycleways in the region. My evidence also provides an overview of the engagement I have been involved in as part of my role in developing the Project, in particular in relation to iwi engagement.
7. My evidence addresses:
 - (a) engagement with iwi and the cultural effects of the Project;
 - (b) engagement with the community and stakeholders;
 - (c) HCC's approach to the Project and its development since I became involved (including obtaining COVID-19 funding);¹
 - (d) a strategic overview of the Project for HCC, including:

¹ The development of the Project prior to my involvement is addressed in the evidence of **Simon Cager**.

- (i) the Project's key cultural, social and economic benefits for local communities, the district and the region; and
 - (ii) the broader context of the region's plans and projects in relation to cycleways and active transport modes;
- (e) responses to submissions; and
 - (f) responses to the section 42A reports.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 8. The Project is strongly supported by the Eastern Bays community. It fits with the vision and strategies HCC has for Lower Hutt and is a priority and compelling project for HCC.
- 9. Delivering the Project will create a safe and integrated walking and cycling facility along Marine Drive, thereby improving connectivity, and providing significant associated health and wellbeing, social, cultural, economic and recreational benefits.
- 10. The Project also responds to the challenges posed by sea level rise and climate change. It will enhance the resilience of Marine Drive to storm events and provide a foundation for the consideration of further measures in the future.
- 11. HCC has worked with iwi, the community and its consultant experts to develop the Project in a way that balances the importance of, and need for, these benefits, with minimising effects on the coastal environment. Since joining HCC, I have been involved in discussions with iwi and the community about the Project. That engagement will continue through the detailed design and construction of the Project.

ENGAGEMENT WITH IWI

- 12. A critical aspect of my role at HCC has been to re-engage with the relevant iwi authorities, in particular Te Rūnanga o Te Atiawa and Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika / Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust ("**Taranaki Whānui**"); and with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangitira.
- 13. Based on my discussions with both Te Rūnanga o Te Atiawa and Taranaki Whānui, there is a clear keenness to be more actively involved in the Project.
- 14. Taranaki Whānui, through the Mana Whenua Steering Group ("**MWSG**"), has been actively involved in Te Ara Tupua – Ngā Ūranga ki Pito-One shared path ("**Te Ara Tupua**"); I understand Ngāti Toa Rangitira are also able to take up a place on that project's MWSG should they wish to do so.² This Project shares strong similarities with Te Ara Tupua noting that both are shared pathways on the edge of Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington Harbour.

² Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency ("**Waka Kotahi**") recently lodged applications for RMA approvals for Te Ara Tupua (under the COVID-19 (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020).

Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington Harbour is culturally significant to the descendants of Taranaki Whānui, which has been clearly noted in the *Cultural Impact Report* ("**CIR**") prepared by Raukura Consultants (discussed in the evidence of **Morris Love**) and appended to the Assessment of Effects on the Environment ("**AEE**") as Appendix H.

15. It is anticipated that as the Project moves forward into the detailed design and construction phase, iwi mana whenua will become formal Project partners through a mutually agreed governance forum (if not before). Initial dialogue has suggested that a MWSG, similar to that of the Te Ara Tupua project, be developed. This forum will be administered by HCC. HCC is committing to the MWSG framework, including through the proposed conditions of consent. Conditions MW.1 – MW.3 (attached to the evidence of **Caroline van Halderen**) provide for the establishment and operation of the MWSG throughout the construction period. Representatives of Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa Rangatira will be invited to form the MWSG.
16. Taranaki Whānui have noted their desire to ensure their kaitiaki interests and responsibilities are provided for in the Project. This is actively supported by HCC, and is reflected in the conditions of consent providing for the MWSG to participate in:
 - (a) development of the detailed design of the Project to incorporate cultural values;
 - (b) accidental discovery processes (in respect of archaeology and taonga);
 - (c) development and implementation of cultural protocols; and
 - (d) development and implementation of a cultural kaitiaki monitoring regime.
17. As and when we move into the procurement phase of the Project, HCC will ensure iwi mana whenua are brought in and inform this process. Iwi mana whenua involvement in the procurement process will enable them to articulate their aspirations around employment and achieving wider outcomes for their iwi membership as well as the community at large.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

18. The Project has been driven by the wishes of the local community. As set out in the evidence of **Ms van Halderen**, HCC has from the start fully and robustly engaged with the community and stakeholders.
19. On 3 November 2020, the Project Team led an update presentation to the Eastbourne Community Board on the Project. The presentation was very well received by the approximately 50 people in attendance. It was noted by Eastbourne Community Board representatives that the Project was one of the top two priorities for the community, with climate change being the top.

As noted at the meeting, the Project provides a level of climate change resilience for the community. Attendees also expressed their clear desire for the Project to proceed and had noted the positive and proactive engagement with the community throughout the process.

20. On 10 November 2020, the Project Team gave an update to GWRC councillors and SLT members who provided positive feedback and support of the Project whilst also noting their regulatory responsibilities.

HCC'S APPROACH TO, AND DEVELOPMENT OF, THE PROJECT

Background to the Project

21. This is a community-led project which has been strongly supported by the Eastern Bays community for a long time. In 2014 the Eastbourne Community Survey identified completion of the Project, and concerns about climate change and extreme weather events, as the two most important issues for Eastern Bays residents. As noted above, this was reiterated at the 3 November 2020 presentation.
22. The widespread interest in the Project can be seen from the number of submissions (200), with 180 in support³ of the Project and 5 neutral.
23. HCC has a role in delivering land transport outcomes. Active modes of transport, including cycling, have a key role in ensuring sustainable growth and improving the live-ability of the city. HCC is focused on providing its communities and visitors to the city with more and safer transport choices for their journeys, and enhanced wellbeing and recreational opportunities.
24. HCC also has a leadership role with respect to climate change and its effects on regional and local communities, as well as on infrastructure. It also needs to ensure the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources in order to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations. In addition, HCC must contribute to building community resilience in terms of managing the effects of natural hazards and its coastal margins. To this end, HCC will be developing a Climate Change and Resilience Strategy with its community. The Project will not preclude any outcomes of the strategy and will "buy some time" for it to be developed, agreed on and implemented.
25. Key infrastructure services, including the Main Outfall Sewer Pipeline ("**MOP**"), are located within the Marine Drive road corridor. The MOP is an 18km long pipeline that conveys secondary treated wastewater from the Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant (which services 146,000 residents and a large number of local industries) to the outfall at Bluff Point, near Pencarrow Head. Marine Drive (as it is part of the Strategic Transport Network), and the MOP in particular, are Regionally Significant

³ One of those is in conditional support.

Infrastructure,⁴ and along with the road access are important lifeline utilities for the wider community. This infrastructure needs protection through the repair and replacement of seawalls.

26. The existing seawall in places has a residual life of less than five years, and as it has been built in an ad hoc nature over time, it is vulnerable to failure and does not provide effective storm mitigation. Over time sea levels will rise, aggravating the situation.
27. As discussed below, the Project will likely lead to a reduction in maintenance costs to HCC.

COVID-19 and funding

28. Until recently the Project was to be predominantly funded by HCC.⁵ Waka Kotahi proposed some partial funding over the long-term. The phasing of the pathway construction will be done over a number of years and 'bay-by-bay', noting the particular complexities and constraints associated with construction on the harbour edge and adjacent to the only road in and out of the Eastern Bays.
29. In April 2020, the Government launched the Covid Response and Recovery Fund seeking infrastructure projects for potential investment to reduce the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. On 5 August 2020, Julie Ann Genter (then Associate Minister for Transport) announced that the Project had been successful in receiving \$15 million of 'shovel ready' funding from the Government. In addition:
 - (a) the Project also remains eligible for the Waka Kotahi co-funding on the balance of the Project (approximately \$7.5 million). That funding is subject to satisfying the construction funding gateways required; and
 - (b) HCC funding for the Project, also approximately \$7.5 million, is now being included in the draft Long Term Plan ("LTP") 2021-2031, which will go to public consultation in March 2021. HCC plans to adopt the final LTP 2021-2031 on 30 June 2021.
30. Overall, therefore, the Project is forecast to cost approximately \$30 million.
31. The Project's funding recognises the regional and district importance of the Project, the benefits it will provide to the COVID-19 recovery (in particular economic benefits, as explained in the evidence of **Michael Copeland**) and provides the financial certainty for construction to commence in the near term.

⁴ See AEE at 5, 48, 94 and 106.

⁵ \$14.2 million had been allocated in the LTP.

Responding to the Eastern Bays Environment

32. The Project must respond to the coastal environment of the Eastern Bays. Project development included a detailed alternatives assessment to consider other options. Due to the terrain, existing inland properties and driveway/road connections, an inland option was not recommended (as set out in the evidence of **Jamie Povall**). Such an option would also not have provided any resilience benefits to Marine Drive - benefits which are of vital importance to HCC and the local community. Therefore, coastal options were considered.
33. The recommended option (which became the Project) strikes a balance between providing a resilient structure to respond to climate change and providing for safe cycling and pedestrian usage, and doing so in a way that minimises the amount of land to be reclaimed from the coast and the effects on the coastal environment.
34. Following extensive engagement with the community and interested stakeholders, the Project has gone through further design refinement to avoid and mitigate adverse effects on the environment. The result is that while the Project will change the current environment along Marine Drive, it will:
- (a) not have more than minor cultural effects⁶ (the CIR also notes that provision of a safe shared pathway "*would be a welcome addition to the area for all*"⁷);
 - (b) not have a more than minor effect on ecology, including penguins, shorebirds, and seagrass;⁸
 - (c) not have more than minor landscape and amenity effects;⁹
 - (d) have recreational, economic, health and safety and wellbeing benefits;¹⁰ and
 - (e) provide a base for the community to adapt to the effects of climate change.¹¹
35. I support the work HCC's team has done, with assistance from our iwi cultural advisor (**Mr Love**) the community and stakeholders, in developing the four protection areas for penguins and shorebirds (including oystercatchers). At 22,100m², these areas provide a long-lasting opportunity to enhance the ecology of the Eastern Bays (as explained in the evidence of **John Cockrem**) and enable it to better accommodate climate change. HCC also sees these areas as providing for ongoing relationships with iwi and

⁶ See EIC of **Mr Love** and Appendix H to the AEE at 15.

⁷ See EIC of **Mr Love** and Appendix H to the AEE at 15.

⁸ See EIC of **Shelley McMurtrie**, **John Cockrem** and **Dr Fleur Matheson** in particular.

⁹ See EIC of **Julia Williams**.

¹⁰ See EIC of **Robert Greenaway** and **Mr Copeland** (and discussed below).

¹¹ See EIC of **Dr Michael Allis** in particular.

local communities through the sharing of knowledge, planting, protection and ongoing maintenance (and study) of the areas.

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Benefits

36. The Project's benefits are both numerous and a key part of delivering HCC's broader vision, which is: ¹²

"to make Lower Hutt a great place to live, work and play. That is, a city where our people are proud to live, where working and investing here is a smart choice, and where there's always something for our families to explore".

37. In particular, the Project will create a safe and integrated walking and cycling facility along Marine Drive, improving connectivity (between and within the Eastern Bays, to Lower Hutt and to other regional cycle trails) and resulting in significant social, cultural, economic (including through increased tourism) and recreational benefits.
38. We have committed to working further with iwi mana whenua on the proceeding elements of the Project and ensuring their stories and narratives are appropriately integrated into the Project. Similarly, we have a strong desire to work with them in their aspiration to re-indigenise our city and lived environments. The Project presents an amazing and once in a lifetime opportunity to build something that is more than just a path. It will be a celebration of culture and identity, and it seeks to foster a more intimate and positive connection between people, our environment and our shared histories, which will act to enrich our future as people and as a community.
39. Improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians will also encourage the uptake of active modes of transport, providing health and wellbeing benefits, reducing congestion and CO₂ emissions, and most importantly providing sustainable travel choice which aligns with the current Government Policy Statement for Transport.
40. At the same time, the seawall is designed to provide improved resilience to climate change and sea level rise effects along the Eastern Bays, as discussed below.
41. The Project, together with the benefits it will deliver, fit within HCC's vision for Lower Hutt as a *"great place to live, work and play"* and within HCC's key strategies that have been developed to reflect that vision, including:

¹² Hutt City "An Integrated Vision" <<http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Your-Council/Plans-publications-and-bylaws/an-integrated-vision/>>

Environment Sustainability Strategy 2015-2045

- (a) *"safe walkways and cycleways (for both recreational and commuting purposes)" and "and a low carbon footprint, including through the promotion of walking and cycling";*¹³
- (b) *within focus area 3: transport, a goal of developing "a comprehensive cycling network that links all key population centres, provides access through the city, and is in alignment with the Great Harbour Way concept."*¹⁴

Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2048

- (c) *a vision to provide "Infrastructure that meets the needs of today and tomorrow", including by "increas[ing] the resilience, sustainability, and long-term adaptability of the infrastructure";*¹⁵
- (d) *"Ensuring infrastructure is resilient in the long term and adaptable to changing circumstances";*¹⁶
- (e) *progressing the Project as one of the key projects to be "investigated and incorporated into the LTP";*¹⁷

Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2032

- (f) *making "a better city everyday by providing integrated community services which make a world class difference to the people of our city";*¹⁸
- (g) *through the 'Walk and Cycle the Hutt 2014-2019' initiative, creating "A safe and integrated transport system that prioritises active travel" and in terms of cycling specifically, designing and delivering "routes both on and off-road" that "cater for a range of user needs, including commuter and leisure cyclists".*¹⁹

Urban Growth Strategy 2012-2032

- (h) *"fantastic recreational opportunities" and "a transport network [that] contributes positively to our social mobility and ability to get to places to enjoy recreational activities";*²⁰ and
- (i) *"a comprehensive cycling network that links all key population centres, provides access through the city, and is in alignment with the Great Harbour Way concept".*²¹

¹³ Hutt City *Environment Sustainability Strategy 2015-2045* at 13.

¹⁴ Hutt City *Environment Sustainability Strategy 2015-2045* at 23.

¹⁵ Hutt City *Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2048* at 5.

¹⁶ Hutt City *Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2048* at 5.

¹⁷ Hutt City *Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2048* at 25.

¹⁸ Hutt City *Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2032* at 7.

¹⁹ Hutt City *Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2032* at 24 – 25.

²⁰ Hutt City *Urban Growth Strategy 2012 – 2032* at 12.

²¹ Hutt City *Urban Growth Strategy 2012 – 2032* at 42.

42. Overall, the Project's benefits, its linkages with other large projects within Lower Hutt and the cycleway connections, and its fit with the vision and strategies HCC has for Lower Hutt, all make it a priority and compelling project for HCC to deliver.

Resilience

43. Marine Drive provides the only road, infrastructure (including the main sewer line) and utilities connection to the Eastern Bays community.²² As Marine Drive predominantly runs between the houses and the coast, it also provides coastal protection to those properties.
44. Marine Drive is vulnerable to wave overtopping and closure or reduced operation. Presently this necessitates considerable ongoing maintenance requirements of approximately \$55,000.00 per year following storm events. The present 'seawall' is an ad hoc mixture of various structures constructed on an as-needed basis, normally following loss of structural integrity or washouts) over many years. As set out in the evidence of **Mr Povall**, it is vulnerable to failure and does not provide consistent, nor effective, storm mitigation with roughly a third of the existing seawall having less than 15 years of life (some areas considerably shorter).
45. Sea level rise will increase the frequency of inundation and overtopping of the existing structures. As set out in the *Coastal Physical Processes Assessment* (Appendix E to the AEE) and the evidence of **Dr Allis** the threat is imminent with a 16cm rise predicted between 2030 and 2040. Between 2030 and 2040, the present one in 100-year storm event is predicted by Dr Allis to become a once per year storm event on average.
46. It is predicted, as set out in the evidence of **Mr Povall**, that without the Project (or comparable works) such storm events between 2030 and 2040 will considerably increase temporary closures of, and potentially result in the compromise of, ever larger sections of Marine Drive; resulting in an increasingly marginal level of service into the future. That will in turn result in

²² Powerco Limited submitted in support of the Project as it will protect infrastructure within the road corridor. Wellington Water Limited ("**WWL**") adopted a neutral position in its submission, noting "*Marine Parade provides the only corridor for three waters infrastructure that serve the Eastern Bays communities, and contains the main outfall pipelines that serves Eastern Bays, Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata. These assets are regionally critical and represent a substantial capital investment*". Waka Kotahi submitted in support of the Project, noting it will "*create more liveable communities in the Eastern Bays, by providing safe and healthy travel options that will enable an increased mode shift from private vehicle trips to walking and cycling*".

reduced access (including utility connections) to the Eastern Bays and potential severed infrastructure (the most significant being the MOP).

47. The loss of these connections would put the health and safety and wellbeing of some 5,000 people at risk, as well as creating potentially significant regional adverse effects (for example if the wastewater network was compromised, this could cause wastewater to be discharged directly into Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington Harbour). The Project significantly increases resilience and functionality compared to the existing seawalls and provides a design to be adapted in future. In doing so, it buys time for long-term solutions to be considered and, if required, provides a foundation on which additional resilience measures can be constructed in the future.²³

Active transport and community recreation

48. Members of the community and users have noted the unease they feel when cycling and/or walking along the Eastern Bays. The safety issues currently present on Marine Drive are a deterrent for users and reinforce a highly car dependent community. The status quo is, therefore, inconsistent with the Council's and the community's aspiration of a multi modal enabled city.
49. HCC is committed to improving active transport connections,²⁴ and one of the key benefits of the Project is the improved cyclist and pedestrian safety it will bring through the provision of a dedicated path separated from vehicles. These benefits are discussed in more detail in the evidence of **Mr Cager**.

Economic benefits

50. In addition to providing significant cultural (see above), social and recreational benefits the Project also provides economic benefits (many of which are related to those primary benefits). As set out in the evidence of **Mr Copeland**, the economic benefits of the Project include:
- (a) benefits associated with increased expenditure during construction;
 - (b) travel time costs and safety benefits, as well as the related health, connectivity and recreation benefits, for users of the proposed new shared path ("**Shared Path**");

²³ As identified in HCC's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2015-2045, over the next 30-40 years, Hutt City will need to make significant adaptations to address climate change impacts and will need to identify risks, continuously adapt, engage and collaborate and plan proactively for greater resilience.

As part of HCC's strategy to 2045 (identified in its LTP 2018-2028), HCC will work as part of the Wellington Region Climate Change Working Group to address various climate change challenges, such as sea level rising.

²⁴ HCC's Transport Activity Management Plan 2018-28 notes at 8.5.1 that "*the objective of footpaths and cycleways/ shared paths is to provide a safe, comfortable and efficient network of footpaths and facilities catering for pedestrians (including the physically disabled), and cyclists.*" It also notes at 8.5.6 that the Walk and Cycle the Hutt Strategy 2014-2019 was intended to encourage active transport and included development of the Project (among others) as a priority.

- (c) benefits arising from improvements in resilience; and
 - (d) tourism-related economic benefits.
51. These benefits are well aligned with HCC's strategies and policies discussed above.
52. Constructing the Project will also assist with the recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Engagement

53. Twelve submissions were received addressing HCC's engagement with the community throughout the Project's development. While all but three of these were submissions in support of the Project, a number of people did note the slow pace of the Project's development and the engagement process. I understand and acknowledge those comments. Having advanced the funding position and carried out careful Project design (including through engagement), HCC's focus is on delivering this Project as promptly as practicable.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL OFFICERS' SECTION 42A REPORTS

54. The GWRC and HCC section 42A reports include detailed commentary on the Project, why it is being pursued and its potential effects.
55. Both reports recognise the significant benefits the Project will bring, related both to the provision of the Shared Path as a transport link, and the resilience benefits for Marine Drive and the associated infrastructure. The section 42A reports also highlight the community support for the Project.
56. Other witnesses for HCC respond as necessary to commentary in the section 42A reports on potential adverse effects.

Ihakara James Puketapu-Dentice

30 November 2020