

Before an Independent Hearings Panel
appointed by Christchurch City Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: The hearing of submissions on Plan Change 14 (Housing
and Business Choice) to the Christchurch District Plan

and: **Orion New Zealand Limited**
Submitter 854

Summary Statement of Melanie Karen Foote (Planning)

Dated: 18 April 2024

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SUMMARY STATEMENT OF MELANIE KAREN FOOTE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My name is Melanie Karen Foote. I am a Principal Planner at Resource Management Group here in Christchurch. I have provided a brief of evidence dated 20 September 2023.
- 2 This summary gives an overview of my evidence and responds to some issues raised in rebuttal evidence filed by Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and by the Council reporting Officer Ms Oliver.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Overview

- 3 The medium density residential standards will enable development that is likely to result in a significant increase demand for electricity while also limiting land area available for electricity distribution infrastructure and equipment. It is important that intensification takes into consideration electricity infrastructure.
- 4 To summarise Orion is seeking:
 - 4.1 Electricity distribution infrastructure (including the significant electricity distribution lines and the lower voltage lines) must be protected from hazards and risk associated with in appropriate residential intensification. This is via a SEDL Qualifying Matter (QM) and a new QM for lower voltage lines.
 - 4.2 Sufficient land must be provided for new infrastructure to service an increase in intensification. This is via a proposed a proposed new servicing standard. While this is not a Qualifying Matter it is vital to the successful uptake and delivery of residential intensification.

ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO THE QM FOR LOWER VOLTAGE LINES

- 5 The Section 42A report of Ms Oliver has rejected Orion's submission in relation to the lower voltage QM on the basis that the planning rules related to the lower voltage lines would needlessly duplicate the NZECP 34:2001, and result in an administrative cost to Council. As such she does not support the setbacks for lower voltage lines.
- 6 Mr Joll¹ agrees with Ms Oliver and considers a more appropriate mechanism would be to include an advice note located at the beginning of the 'built form' provision.
- 7 Mr Joll's evidence for Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities also states that the existing District Plan provisions are deemed to give effect to the CRPS and that the SELD QM as notified reflects those provisions. He considers the relief sought by Orion for the lower voltage lines is not necessary to give effect to the CRPS. I disagree with Mr Joll and, as explained in my evidence, Orion's electricity network is defined in the CRPS as "regionally significant infrastructure", and "critical infrastructure". The CRPS definitions do distinguish between SEDL's and the balance of the electricity distribution network such as the lower voltage lines. The CRPS is directive and requires reverse sensitivity effects and incompatible activities to be avoided. This means that the whole electricity distribution network should be protected.

- 8 To assist the Panel, I have prepared a S32AA assessment that is attached to my hearing statement that evaluates the proposed setbacks further. Based on this evaluation I consider protection of the lower voltage lines, inclusion as a QM and as an amendment to the existing non-complying activity standard is the most efficient method to ensure clearance distances outlined in the NZECP 34:2001 are met.
- 9 I consider that the proposed mechanism provides a complementary and practical protection for Orion's strategic assets. As Mr O'Donnell has explained, the degree of regulation through NZECP 34:2001 and under other statutory and non-statutory instruments is not sufficient as Orion frequently has to resolve breaches or potential breaches. This change is necessary given the amount and type of development enabled by the MDRS.

ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED SERVICING STANDARD

- 10 A key concern of Orion's relates to ensuring that PC14 takes into account the need to integrate network servicing infrastructure alongside new medium density residential development. This is not a matter that falls under the QM category, I consider it is a "related provision" that supports or is consequential to the MDRS under section 80E(1)(b)(iii).
- 11 Council's Section 42A Officer does not appear to have addressed the servicing standard proposed. Mr Joll on behalf of Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities¹ states he could not find the proposed wording or details of the activity status of the rule. He considers a more appropriate mechanism would be to include an additional advice note at the beginning of the relevant built form provisions.
- 12 To assist the Panel, I have undertaken a s32AA assessment of the proposed planning mechanism attached as **Appendix One** to my hearing statement. Based on this evaluation I consider a new rule is justified in order to safeguard Orion's operations and to ensure provision of electricity whilst providing certainty to landowners and developers early on in the development process. Further this approach gives effect to the higher order planning documents.

CONCLUSION

- 13 Orion seeks to:
- 13.1 Implement a QM to protect SEDL's and the lower voltage lines; and
- 13.2 As a related provision ensure there is sufficient space set aside for infrastructure that will be required to service increased development.
- 14 The S32AA analysis demonstrates that the proposed QM in relation to the lower voltage lines, and the proposed servicing standard are both the most effective means for achieving the objective.

¹ Rebuttal Evidence of Mr Joll, Kainga Ora – Homes and Communities, dated 9th October 2023, paragraphs 3.9-3.10, pages 3-4

Melanie Foote

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MF', with a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

18 April 2024