

6 April 2020

The Waikato District Plan Hearings Panel
(sent via email to District Plan Administrator)

**REQUEST FOR LETTER TO BE TABLED AT COUNTRYSIDE LIVING ZONE HEARING
ON 7 APRIL 2020**

Dear Panel.

I am writing to you in the hope that you will read this letter and cogitate on the points raised, unless of course you have already done so.

I represent submitter 551 – the Estate of John Robert Robcke & Dinah Leigh Robcke. I made 2 submissions. Submission 2 is relevant in the context of the Country Living Zone (CLZ) hearing and is as follows:

“Oppose Country Living Zone subdivision standards 23.4.2 (a)(i) [net site area of at least 5000m²], 23.4.8 (a)(i) [building platform of 1000m²] and 23.4.8 (a)(ii) [average gradient no steeper than 1:8] as they relate to the Country Living Zone in Glen Massey.

Decision sought:

- *Either: introduce greater flexibility in subdivision development standards for the Country Living Zone in Glen Massey (e.g. minimum net site area of 2,500m² with an average of 5,000m², building platform of 500m², etc.) and make any consequential changes required to give effect to this submission;*
- *Or: rezone the areas of land at 859 and 889 Waingaro Road that were previously zoned Country Living Zone to Village Zone and make any consequential changes required to give effect to this submission.”*

Based upon my research – in which I have looked at comparable development standards in the Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Western Bay, Matamata-Piako, Waipa, South Waikato, Hamilton and Auckland Councils – these standards seem overly conservative. The main reasons given in the S42A report for staying with these development standards seem to be administrative simplicity and maintenance of ‘rural amenity’ which whilst important, need to be balanced with other national and regional policy imperatives such as the protection of high quality soils, efficient use of the land resource, avoidance of reverse sensitivity effects, etc.

Given the stance taken in the S42A report with regard to the CLZ development standards, I have decided that I will focus my energies on the “or” part of the decision sought in my Submission 2 (i.e. rezone the land at Glen Massey from CLZ to Village Zone) which I understand is to be heard later in the year.

Getting now to the main point of this letter, I see in the S42A report that it is recommended that the title of the CLZ be amended to the Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ) so that it is consistent with the National Planning Standards (NPS).

Whilst I do not have any issue with aligning the Waikato District Plan to the NPS per se, I do note that the description for the RLZ in the NPS is as follows:

"Areas used predominantly for a residential lifestyle within a rural environment on lots smaller than those of the General rural and Rural Production zones, while still enabling primary production to occur." (emphasis added)

In the context of the Waikato District, is it being suggested that primary production will be enabled on 5,000m² of land? Even though many of the CLZ areas within the Waikato District are on highly productive soils (which is not the case in Glen Massey), I doubt that viable primary production can occur on such small areas of land – particularly given the often large size of houses, recreation amenities, curtilage, etc. Is the Panel confident that the objectives and policies of the CLZ (or the RLZ for the Waikato District) reflect the zone description in the NPS?

In the case of Glen Massey, this all leads me to the conclusion that the land subject to the above submission should more logically be Village Zone, or Settlement Zone if the NPS directions are to be followed, the description of which reads:

"Areas used predominantly for a cluster of residential, commercial, light industrial and/or community activities that are located in rural areas or coastal environments."

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leigh Robcke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leigh Robcke

Authorised to sign on behalf of Dinah Robcke and the estate of John Robcke