

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act 1991

**A N D**

**IN THE MATTER**

of hearing submissions and further submissions on the  
Proposed Waikato District Plan

**Hearing 18 – Rural**

**PARTIES REPRESENTED**

**MIDDLEMISS FARM HOLDINGS LTD**

**BUCKLAND LANDOWNERS GROUP**

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**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF  
ROBERT JAMES PRYOR  
ON BEHALF OF MIDDLEMISS FARM HOLDINGS LTD AND BUCKLAND  
LANDOWNERS GROUP  
DATED: 25 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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## **1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 1.1 My full name is Robert James Pryor.
- 1.2 I prepared a statement of evidence dated 8 September 2020 in relation to the submission by Middlemiss Farm Holdings Ltd and the Buckland Landowners Group, seeking an enhancement subdivision opportunity and the enabling of rural related activities and development subject to appropriate management. I refer to my qualifications and experience in my original statement of evidence and do not repeat those matters here.
- 1.3 The purpose of this statement is to provide a brief summary of my original evidence.

## **2. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 I consider that the Proposed Waikato District Plan's (**PWDP**) Rural provisions of a minimum lot size of 40ha, with an allowance for a single additional title of 0.8-1.6ha to be created for every 40ha balance is overly restrictive, and in my opinion the relief sought by the submitter can manage change and mitigate potential adverse effects on rural character.
- 2.2 I acknowledge that while rural production activities are critical to the future sustainability and functioning of the district economy and social wellbeing, the underlying reality is that some areas of the existing rural environment are inappropriate for farming activities and more suited for land-use management practices with associated lifestyle activities.
- 2.3 The relief sought by the submitter is a tool which can expedite ecological enhancement, while ensuring that fragmentation of larger landholdings is minimised and sensitively designed development is allowed to occur. This can be achieved through:
- (a) Appropriate mechanisms for siting, building design and materials to maintain rural amenity values
  - (b) Indigenous revegetation work to restore important ecological linkages and reinforce distinctive landscape patterns in rural areas, as well as increasing the visual absorption capacity of rural areas, through vegetative screening and backdrop integration planting.
- 2.4 I consider that there are a number of site specific design responses for subdivision provisions that could be applied to avoid, remedy, and mitigate, any potential significant adverse effects of buildings and structures on rural character and amenity including minimising earthworks, rural character building design guidelines and clustering of lots into hamlets to engender a more rural character.
- 2.5 In my opinion indigenous revegetation planting can be successfully utilised to restore important ecological linkages and reinforce distinctive landscape patterns in the Waikato

rural areas, as well as increasing the visual absorption capacity of rural areas, through vegetative screening and mitigation and integration planting.

- 2.6 The protection, enhancement, and restoration of degraded natural and physical resources – watercourses, streams, gullies, and steep, unstable erosion prone land is a priority. Streams and watercourses would be revegetated to enhance the site’s vegetative framework, wildlife corridors and landscape amenity and rural character. This would also assist with the visual integration of future development, while better managing extreme rainfall events. Steep unstable slopes, in particular those associated with drainage gullies and steep escarpment faces, would be retired from farming use and revegetated, enhancing future land management, by restricting inappropriate land use activities while enhancing the visual integration of built development.
- 2.7 Vegetative framework planting within the lots would include backdrop, foreground, and shoulder planting, designed to partially screen dwellings while also grounding built form and fragmenting constructed form.
- 2.8 I therefore consider that incentive based enhancement subdivision to restore fragmented ecological patterns and biodiversity, with positive environmental outcomes, is an innovative and integrated land use planning strategy. In my opinion it could be successfully implemented in appropriate locations in rural areas without adversely affecting the rural character and amenity values of the Waikato rural countryside. I have visited the Middlemiss enhancement subdivision site at 95 Jericho Rd and consider it to be a success.



**Robert James Pryor**

