

**BOARD OF INQUIRY
HAUAURU MA RAKI WIND FARM PROPOSAL**

In the matter of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the matter of resource consent applications by Contact Wind Limited in respect of the Hauāuru mā raki Wind Farm Proposal

And

In the matter of notices of requirement and a resource consent application by Contact Energy Limited for transmission infrastructure related to the Hauāuru mā raki Wind Farm Proposal

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE IN CHIEF OF GRAEME JOHN BLACK

Counsel Instructed:
Trevor Robinson
Wellington

Tel 64-4-472 1755. Fax 64-4-472 1766. PO Box 8018 Wellington
trobinson@xtra.co.nz

Solicitor Acting:
H Rosemary Dixon
Contact Energy Limited

Telephone 64-4-462 1284. PO Box 10742, Wellington
rosemary.dixon@contact-energy.co.nz

Introduction

1. My name is **Graeme John Black**.
2. My wife Philippa and I own one of the farms that Contact Wind proposes to put wind turbines on as part of its Hauāuru mā raki (“HMR”) Wind Farm Project.
3. I note that my wife and I are also submitters in support of the project in our personal capacities.
4. I am giving evidence to explain to the Board of Inquiry what I see to be the benefits of the wind farm to land owners like us and to our community.

Personal Background

5. Our farm is made up of 630 hectares located just on the southern side of the boundary of Franklin District and Waikato District. It fronts onto the coast at Waikorea Beach just south of Crayfish Point. Contact Wind proposes to put 8 wind turbines on our land. Those turbines are labelled E031-E036, G001 and G011 on Plans 6 and 8 attached to the consent applications.
6. My wife and I have owned the property since August 1977. We moved there from our family farm at Kopuriki, near Galatea in the Bay of Plenty. We were effectively forced to sell our share of the family farm to make way for the Aniwhenua hydro scheme.
7. Our farm is a sheep and beef operation. I have farmed it myself for almost all of the time we have owned it. Recently I have employed a stock manager, but my wife and I still live on the property.
8. In the 31 years that we have been living here the area has changed. In some respects, that has been for the better. In others, less so.
9. The roads are generally better, but in some cases only marginally so. When we arrived, the road had only just been put through to connect the farm to Matira Road and there was no road through to Pukerewa. That was only put through in the 1980s. The Coast Road running through our farm was so rough in August 1977 that stock trucks had difficulty getting to the farm.

10. Even now though, there are still issues with the state of the Coast Road, and other local roads generally. For instance, this last winter, the international car rally passed through our farm and also used the Matira Road. During the week prior to the rally, Waikato District Council did some repair work on the route being used by the rally. Locally, that included fixing up the Matira Road which had been impassable for some weeks prior to that.
11. Repair work done on the Coast Road at one location was obviously not considered good enough by the rally organisers, and so for the rally they erected triangle hazard signs. Even with hazard marking, the rally traffic did considerably more damage, leaving a large hole in the road. The hole was eventually fixed more than one month later after the Mayor of Waikato District inspected it at my request, but not before a car ran aground on the hole doing damage to its engine mountings.
12. From my discussions with the Mayor and senior Council officers, I think that the District Council now accepts that our roads need a more permanent solution. That is certainly my view.
13. In the time we have been here, there has been a definite drop off in the number of families in the area. Our three children have long since grown up and moved out the area but when they went to Te Akau School in the late 1970s and 1980s, it had a roll of 80, perhaps a little more. The roll goes up and down but it now struggles to get to 40. That trend has not been limited to the southern end of the wind farm project site. Naike School has closed, which has resulted in a few more children going to Te Akau School.
14. Overall, I would say that the average age of the farmers in the area has generally increased.
15. Other signs of modern civilisation are pretty slow in reaching us. There is very patchy cell phone coverage where we are. Dial up internet access is so slow that you may as well not bother and although better internet access is available through Farmside, via a satellite, it does not work everywhere, it costs us \$100 per month and it is not perfect by any means.

Initial Wind Farm Development Proposals

16. I was first approached by Al Yates of Wind Farm Group in early 2004 to discuss the possibility of putting wind turbines on our land. Al outlined a

potential scheme which would involve us as one of three landowners in the wind farm, which would have around 40-50 turbines.

17. My immediate reaction was that this was the best bit of news I had had for a long time because, in particular, it offered a possible means of establishing a sensible route for public access to Waikorea beach through our property. I have files several inches thick of my dealings over the last 28 years with Raglan County Council and more recently Waikato District Council regarding this issue. Having a turbine access road would mean that beach access could only require a short piece of additional road to be put in from a wind farm access track.
18. Although a wind mast was put up by Wind Farm Group on my land relatively quickly, development of the wind farm concept has taken a lot longer than I had been told in 2004 and the nature of the project has changed a lot as well. Wind Farm Group was already working on other proposals in the area and the end result of one of those other proposals (Waikawau Wind Farm) being amalgamated with the turbines in our area, and of extension of the wind farm site area to the south of us, towards Te Akau, is that the proposal is now much larger than it was originally proposed.

Benefits of Wind Farm Development

19. I am personally happy to be participating in the wind farm development, assuming it proceeds as planned, for a number of reasons.
20. First and most obviously, there is a clear financial benefit to my wife and I. Depending on the power price and the number and size of the turbines ultimately installed, that could be in the range of \$120,000-\$180,000 additional income per year. That sort of income base will also make a difference to the capital value of our farm.
21. From my perspective though, it is really important that, as far as I can see, once the wind farm is constructed, there will essentially be no effect on the operation of our farm. Yes, there will be some inconvenience during construction, but I don't believe that it will be that serious. Once it is finished, it will be a perfect two tier operation with farming and wind farming working together alongside each other. Stock will be able to graze right up to the turbines. The cattle clearly are not going to do any harm to the turbines and the turbines are not going to make any difference to the quality

of beef and lamb that comes off the property. I can also see there being some benefit to us from the wind farm creating both new tracks and better tracks for us to access different parts of the farm.

22. I think it is really important, however, that the benefits of the wind farm are not just to the landowners. I have already talked about the issues we have on an ongoing basis with the quality of the roads in our area. Building and maintaining the wind farm will require substantial improvements to be made to those public roads. I understand for instance that each of the 180 turbines will require up to 400 cubic metres of concrete alone for the foundations. The current roads will not stand up to this sort of heavy use.
23. I personally would like to see a situation where, when the wind farm is completed and the public roads have been substantially upgraded for the heavy traffic associated with the wind farm, the Coast Road from Port Waikato to the southern end of the wind farm is sealed. At that point, a minimum amount of additional preparation should be required and I would like to think that the two District Councils, in conjunction with the national roading authority, would step in to complete the job that Contact Wind has started. That would give a much needed infrastructure improvement to the District, and everyone would benefit.
24. If we lose the opportunity for a third party like Contact Wind to give us a major input into road improvements, if anything substantial is to be done, the entire cost will be borne by the local ratepayers.
25. The combination of roading improvements and the availability of access to the beaches that could follow from the wind farm project going ahead will provide huge opportunities for business and tourism developments. Because of the poor quality of the roads and limited access to the West Waikato beaches, few people appreciate just what an asset the beaches potentially could be. The Coast Road is so close to Auckland International Airport that it is potentially a significant tourist route for overseas visitors, offering something quite different to the packaged options available in Rotorua and Taupo. There are already tourist ventures along the Coast Road and adjacent to it, but there could be many more: greater use of the caves in the area, unique limestone outcrops, views out over the Tasman and of the windmills to name a few.
26. I am also hopeful that our telecommunications will improve as a result of the wind farm. I know that this is not a given, due to the difficult terrain, but my

understanding is that it could potentially make provision of broadband, for instance, a lot easier. The telecommunication companies should be given every encouragement to this end.

27. I know that the HMR wind farm will provide funding both for schools and for the community through the proposed trusts. I suppose I am a little old fashioned, thinking that it is better if the community stumps up for ongoing running costs of its facilities. To my mind, they are valued more that way, but there will be people who get benefits out of the proposed trusts. Thus I have no problem raising funds for capital improvements, but day to day running of the existing clubs and facilities should continue to be financed by the local community, not Contact Wind.
28. There will obviously be other opportunities at a lower level for local people, such as for anyone with a truck or a digger. Local fencers will also be in demand. It might be a short term thing but that sort of opportunity can set someone up in business if they have the get up and go to make it happen.
29. I have stood on our land for 30 odd years watching the wind blow by. It has not given any return to anyone. All it has done is get me frustrated from time to time. This wind farm is a real opportunity for everyone.
30. Other people will talk about the benefits of providing more electricity from the HMR wind farm. I just see it at a personal level. I have lived through many years where in the autumn, people start talking about lake levels, then they start talking about possible restrictions in the use of electricity. To me, that just means that there is not enough electricity generation capacity in this country. If there is not enough capacity, that means that New Zealand as a whole cannot guarantee a possible new industrial investor that energy will be available to it. To my mind, given the opportunities for energy generation in this country, that is a ridiculous situation.
31. While I suppose the opponents of the wind farm would say that I am biased because I am getting a financial benefit if it proceeds, I don't have any issues myself with the visual aspects of a wind farm. I have been to Palmerston North both with the Wind Farm Group team and privately and have seen the Te Apiti and Tararua wind farms up close. My personal view is that I would much prefer to see windmills on the horizon than have the whole area blanketed in pine forest, which is what has happened to the area around Galatea, where we lived before moving to West Waikato. While that does not seem a likely prospect now, it was a real possibility in

the 1990s, and it could possibly comeback into favour at some point in the future.

32. I think it is for these sorts of reasons that, from my observation, more people in the area are positive about the project than negative.
33. The support of local people depends on the infrastructure improvements I have outlined actually happening. Without them, while we will have provided much needed electricity for New Zealand, the only real beneficiaries locally will be those with wind turbines on their properties like me, and I believe that would be unfair. The wind farm developers cannot be expected to fund all of the improvements that would make our community a better place. The wind farm offers us an opportunity but the District Councils, the telecommunication companies and other statutory bodies have to play their part too.
34. With any opportunity, there is a risk that things will not pan out the way we would hope. I personally would be gutted if this opportunity were not seized so that the whole community benefits from it proceeding.

G J Black