

**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 Hauauru Ma 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 Hauauru ma Raki Wind Farm
Proposal

Brief of Evidence in chief of Eric Bernard Allan

My name is Eric Bernard Allan. I am a farmer owning a property with my wife Elizabeth Ann Wright at 1441 State Highway 22 Opuatia. We have owned part of our property for 23 years. We have owned the balance of our property for some 10 years.

I oppose the wind farm given that there is no national strategy to determine which areas of New Zealand should be used for wind farms. The present case by case approach is, in my view not a rational strategy for determining which landscapes should be affected by wind farm development.

I am also giving evidence to oppose the planned route of the pylons from near State Highway 22 to the Markham property and to ask that they be not allowed, or if they are allowed, that they be put underground.

Contact Energy want to put two pylons on our property. They want to cross through the middle of our property with pylons and wires. They wish to enter our property with wires from a pylon on the Lochiel property, have two pylons on our property and extend the wires to the property belonging to Mr. Bruce Middleton.

We oppose the proposed pylons and wires on the following reasons:

Contact wish to build a pylon and have wires central to the view from State Highway 22 just past our gateway heading south. This is an exceptional view, looking out over the Opuatia valley and flood plane and looking out to the country to the south and the east. State Highway 22 is a very popular route for tourists, often in campervans. Many tourists stop to admire this view. Under Contact's plan a pylon and wires would be central to this view. The view would be severely compromised.

Coming from the south, after leaving Opuatia and just as one passes the urupa at Opuatia a beautiful valley opens up to view. The Kowhai Stream runs down this valley. Under the present plan that Contact has, this view would have at least 5 pylons in sight, and the associated wires. The view would be severely compromised, and destroyed as an unspoilt rural view. I acknowledge that this view is, in part, a 'reverse' view to part of the view from our home.

The proposed pylons and wires would severely compromise the view from our home. After purchasing our property we spent some years deciding how best to build our home to best appreciate the view from our planned house site. The view stretches from a distant view of the Coromandel Ranges to near views of the north Waikato. Our home looks across to Lake Waikare, to Taupiri, to the Hakarimata Ranges to Pirongia to Mt Kariori. The proposed pylons and wires would be central to our view from Lake Waikare to Mt Kariori. This is our most beautiful view. It is also a south facing view meaning that the light often shows the view to exceptional beauty.

Contact has made the comment in their evidence in chief from Mr. Lister that the effect on our view could be ameliorated by planting. Given the elevation of the house and the

view and the height of the pylons that cross our property with their wires I must say that such a suggestion is illusory to put the kindest interpretation on it. The elevation would preclude the planting being effective at lessening in a minimal way the impact on the view of the pylons for close to a generation. The pylons would emerge well above any planting. The wires would remain highly visible regardless. The corridor would preclude planting close to the pylons. Such planting even if possible would impact negatively on farming.

Apart from being our home, our property is also a farm. We have an airstrip which we use. Although it has two fences across it each fence has a section which we remove when it is in use as an airstrip. Our neighbours, Stephen and Janet Markham also use this airstrip and the fertilizer bin is in fact in their property. Their daughter Adele also uses the airstrip to fertilize a property she farms. Approximately 30% of our farm is most effectively fertilized by aeroplane. Frequently we fertilize the whole property as this can be a better option than mixing ground and aerial topdressing.

The airstrip would be made inoperable by the pylons and wires. The wires would be directly in the flight path of the planes at takeoff. Contact has reportedly offered the shared use of an airstrip some four kilometers away on a property which they have reportedly purchased. They have also suggested helicopter spreading.

Our existing airstrip is perfectly situated for fertilizing our farm. The Board may be aware that shared airstrip and fertilizer bin facilities are notoriously difficult to operate. Frequently farmers want to use the airstrip at exactly the same time due to climatic conditions, e.g. rainfall, dry weather access to an airstrip, or due to other considerations e.g. seasonal cheaper pricing by fertilizer companies etc. Practical considerations can also include aspects such as one farmer arranging with others to have use of an airstrip then to have the fertilizer delivered, then for rain to delay spreading, or to have aircraft unavailability such that 3 weeks later fertilizer is still in a bin. Meanwhile other farmers have placed orders, arranged delivery etc only to find the bin is still full and it cannot be delivered. Ease of protecting the fertilizer from the elements is also an issue. Covers have to be checked to protect a highly valuable asset prior to spreading.

In addition there are issues of airstrip quality. If cattle are grazed on airstrips in winter they damage the strip. Different pilots and different aeroplanes would seem to tolerate different levels of damage to the airstrip surfaces. Livestock have to be moved at critical times. Frequently pilots require cattle to be removed days before for reasons of safety. Again it can be a farming nightmare to share airstrips with people with whom it may be difficult to work.

We have been very fortunate to have always worked well with Stephen and Janet Markham and their daughter Adele over the 23 years since we became neighbours. We do not believe that it would be as easy to work with many other people.

In addition the proposed alternative airstrip involves a drive of approximately 8 kilometres. It may also involve use of a 4 wheel drive to access it. This is inconvenient

to us. When organizing and applying fertilizer, frequently, we need to access the airstrip, the bin and the pilot or fertilizer advisor.

From our point of view, one of the added values of our airstrip is that it would enable us to top-dress nearby land if we purchased such land. We would lose this right if we lost our airstrip.

The proposed pylons would also limit our farming operations in other ways. Firstly pylons and wires affect flight paths. Planes can no longer fly the most efficient route. They must fly to avoid pylons. This can mean much increased flying time as they fly short runs to fit into areas not encumbered by pylons.

Secondly we are unaware of the effect of the pylons in terms of the ability to spread fertilizer over or near the areas under or adjoining the pylons. Again this affects flight paths and the ability to earn an income from our farm.

The pylons would clearly limit our ability to cultivate parts of our property and thereby to crop it.

We are deeply attached to our property having farmed it for 23 years. We have planted trees, conceptualized and built our home there, constructed ponds, planted them, fenced waterways wherever possible. Our prime concerns are for the beautiful and unique views in the Kowhai Stream valley from both the road and from our house, and the views from S H 22 heading south over the Opuatia Flood plain.

We are also aware however of the impact on the value of our farm. While this is not a matter for primary consideration by the panel we note that Contact through Mr. Mills makes extensive comments about compensation. The proposed pylons do have a major effect on the value of our property. They impact on the view from our home in a very severe way. Many friends have simply told us to sell out because of the effects of the pylons. Wayne Mills at a meeting in 2008 said that our home was the home most severely affected by the pylons. Mr. Lister in his evidence Page 63 Para c would seem to acknowledge the severe impact on the view from our home. The alignment that he refers to in fact worsened the effect of the proposed transmission line on our home and on the Kowhai Stream valley. His comment that the views “are attractive but are not particularly noteworthy” can hopefully be addressed by way of a site visit by the Board on Inquiry. Our numerous friends and visitors have invariably expressed the view that the view is indeed noteworthy.

Contact offered to provide a photomontage to ‘show’ the effects of the pylons from our home. Their photomontage is attached to, and is part of this evidence. The 35 to 45 metre pylons are from a distance scarcely 300 metres from the house. Since then I have reviewed other pylons of a similar height at a similar distance and found them vastly more visible than they appear in this photomontage. The photomontage does show how high above the sky line the first pylon is and how close to the skyline the second pylon is. The wires remain somewhat less prominent in the photo but, in my submission, not in

reality. The proposed transmission line would also mean that we viewed at least two other pylons from our home on Mr. Middleton's property and the associated cables. We would also view the pylon planned for Lochiel adjacent to State Highway 22 and its wires whenever we drove to or from our home and from much of our property.

Our property consists of two titles. If we or the beneficiaries of our estate want to maximize value they may offer the property in two titles. The only realistic site for a home on Lot 4 is looking directly at the pylons and wires at close quarters. Very few buyers with financial options would consider purchasing Lot 4 with a house site which is so compromised.

Put simply, the proposed pylons would dominate our property and immensely impact on our enjoyment of the property.

In addition Contact wish to have option to place pylons within a wide corridor. The width of that corridor can mean that the impact of the proposed pylons and wires could be far more severe on landscape values and the view from our home than the Board could be led to believe by Contact's proposed pylon placements. The corridor could allow the pylons to move considerably closer to our home than is implied by the information

In her evidence Ms Yorke builds a case for why the proposed transmission line should emerge over SH 22 where it does, to cross our property. Clearly it is not possible for us as individual property owners to critique or challenge this with any genuine expertise. This illustrates the inequity which exists in such processes. Notwithstanding adjustments of the proposed line that Contact may have made elsewhere, they have made no serious proposals in our situation. We would also not wish to advance an argument to protect our property at the expense of our neighbour's properties and their enjoyment of their properties. Simply arguing to move the proposed line onto neighbour's properties for our benefit is not in keeping with our values.

I am aware that the matter of the health effects of transmission wires is still a matter of debate. It is far beyond my ability to attempt to enter this debate with any specialist expertise. I simply make the point that this is a matter of serious concern to me, and one which will be judged in years to come by greater expert knowledge and research. As it stands there is a strong and credible body of thought that there are health issues with transmission wires. There is also uncertainty in regard to the effects of the transmission lines on farm animals.

In Contact's evidence in chief, by Mr F C Geoghegan Page 14 Para 68/69 says that Contact proposes a lapse period of 10 years and then in their draft consents would appear to want an indefinite period.

I note the Half Year Report of Contact for the period ending 31 December 2008. Page 3 notes "while Contact is making good progress on consenting two North Island wind farm sites the current economics of wind will require energy prices to rise before execution of wind projects would be justified. There is a significant role for wind in New Zealand's

energy future and Contact is preparing its projects for execution when market conditions support them.” I have no difficulty with Contact requesting that any consent run for four years even though I oppose such a consent. However I consider it unreasonable that Contact ask the Board of Enquiry to extend this period. Beyond four years Contact may well have identified alternative transmission technology if they have not already done so. In my submission any consent required for a date in 2013 should be heard by a Board of Enquiry sitting at that time and considering the generation, technology, landscape and other issues of 2013. While in my submission a maximum of four years is appropriate. I must urge the Board to determine that a period of 10 year or an indefinite period is entirely unreasonable, the more so given the statements by Mr. King and Mr. Baldwin referred to in the Contact Six Month Report referred to above in which no time frame is given.

I consider that this is an excessive period for landowners to be in limbo not knowing whether the project will proceed and therefore being limited in planning for their properties. Again, in my view a period of four years would be appropriate if the Board was to grant such a consent.

The issue of abandoned infrastructure is of concern to us. Various recent cases have been in the news recently including a chemical factory and a meat works. The events of the past year have demonstrated how seemingly iconic companies have become insolvent. There is a risk that wind farms and transmission lines could be decommissioned for what ever reason. If the Board was to grant approval to this proposed wind farm we would seek a condition that any structures be removed forthwith if the wind farm ceases generation for any significant period of time. Insolvent companies are rarely able to carry out such work and so I submit that Contact should be required to post a bond with a credible authority to guarantee that such work could be completed forthwith, regardless of the financial viability of Contact.

Contact makes considerable mention of the processes that they have followed regarding consultation with people affected by the proposed external transmission line. They acknowledge that they have made some errors. In my submission almost every stage of our good faith negotiations with Contact has involved significant errors on the part of Contact to a degree which I can only describe as deplorable. Apart from the short notice they gave of the initial proposal, requesting a meeting with us at very short notice, we then had a visit by agents of Contact. Mr. Inger, an engineer seemed not able to interpret a map he and Ms Townsend presented which purported to show sites of proposed pylons. Next we had a visit with a Contact Representative and their agent. They were very late causing great inconvenience, the more so because we had a very sick family member. Next we had a totally incorrect photomontage sent to us which showed an extra pylon and pylons in new and different places to any that had been proposed before. (We did however appreciate Contact’s efforts to provide their photomontages.) Next we had a letter on plain paper purporting to be an official communication from Contact, and as recently as in the last fortnight we had yet another incorrect photomontage sent to us yet

again. However, on this occasion, to their credit they discovered their error within a day and sent a correct copy!

In addition, as implied by Mr. Lister on page 63 (c), each change Contact proposed to make increased the impact on our property and on the valley of Kowhai Stream.

We are acutely aware of issues of common good. We currently have a gas pipeline through our property. The Natural Gas Corporation is an excellent organization to work with and we do so with limited inconvenience to each of us and with very great good will. We would negotiate with Contact warmly if they chose to put the cables underground. They state that this is too expensive. In our view it is the real cost of the project, to underground in critical areas such as crossing S H 22 and the valley adjoining State Highway 22 and elsewhere where landscape values are seriously impacted by pylons. One of the major issues of the first quarter of the new millennium is that of landscape values. It is inherent to being a New Zealander of rural heart that we treasure our landscapes. Some of us are from rural backgrounds, some from urban but many take some of their deepest identity and some of their greatest delights from our rural landscapes.

Power transmission is critical to any developed society. However, given the destructive effects of many forms of transmission on landscapes and farming it is critical that power companies develop technology that mitigates these effects to the greatest degree possible. Obviously I am not a technical expert. Contact employs many technical experts. In my submission it behoves the Board, Contact and all New Zealanders to consider how to protect landscape values and realities. Surely with existing transmission wires criss-crossing our country, and the area in question, Contact can develop transmission options from proposed projects such as this wind farm that can avoid ever more lines of pylons and wires. We are not on this earth to bequeath our grandchildren strip forests of pylons and wires.

In summary

- 1 I request that my evidence should be considered in conjunction with that of my wife Elizabeth Anne Wright. I am in agreement with her evidence but we have each focused on particular areas rather than repeat much evidence to the Board.
- 2 I do not oppose the provision of energy to the country by means of wind farms/ turbines but consider a national strategy in regard to effected landscapes should be finalized before approval is granted for the current project. The present case by case process has some strengths but also profound weaknesses when one considers the issues faced and how to best protect landscape values while enabling power generation.
- 3 I do oppose overhead pylons and wires for the reasons outlined. I request the Board of Enquiry, if it approves the wind farm to make a condition that undergrounding must occur at the very least across SH 22 and across all properties whose owners oppose overhead transmission.

- 4 Should approval of the wind farm and pylons be granted there should be stringent provisions relating to decommissioning and removal of pylons wires and any other transmission structures within a specified brief period of time and a bond to cover this contingency lodged with an appropriate authority such as the Regional Council.
- 5 Should approval of the wind farm be granted there should be a time frame imposed such that the consent should lapse within four years unless Contact has commenced generation and transmission to the National Grid.