

**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

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE IN CHIEF OF RICHARD GEMMELL**

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## **Introduction**

1. My name is Richard Maurice Gemmell
2. My wife, Jan and I own a hill country farm in the Wairamarama district. It is proposed by Contact Energy to take the external transmission lines and the associated 40 metre high pylons through this district.
3. I have been a sheep farmer for all my working life and have owned our present property since 1978.
4. I have a diploma in Sheep farming (with distinction) from Massey University.
5. We have run a farm-stay operation from our property and currently do bed and breakfast accommodation.
6. I have shown a commitment to farming and to various community organisations during our 31 years in Wairamarama.
7. I am making a submission against the overhead transmission lines because I believe that New Zealand's future prosperity will be enhanced by doing everything possible to improve our "Clean Green" image.

## **Concerns With Overhead Transmission Lines**

8. **Visual Pollution.**  
Clear open spaces are becoming more important and valued aesthetically. Currently the area west of the Waikato River between Raglan in the south and Port Waikato in the north is pristine countryside. The preservation of our rural countryside is a responsibility on all citizens as this rural image is a significant marketing tool for our rural produce and for tourism, both of which contribute significantly to New Zealand's gross domestic product.
9. **Health Effects.**  
A study by the stakeholder advisory group on ELF-EMF's (electromagnetic frequencies) reporting to the British Government said that "research has shown high exposure had links to various illnesses, including childhood cancer, adult leukemia and miscarriage" (NZ Herald October 30, 2008). The California Department of Health produced a report in 2002 which concluded that EMF's were responsible for an increase in childhood leukemia, adult brain cancer and miscarriage. Although there are also studies which show no harmful effects from exposure to EMF's, we (as an exporting nation) must be sensitive to the perceptions of our customers. If a European house-wife perceives overhead transmission lines to possibly be bad for health, we must take their perceptions into consideration. As an example of customer sensitivity Silver Fern Farms are removing barking dogs from the meat processing plants as the dogs are perceived as frightening the sheep. The traceability of livestock in the future could mean that meat from farms away from pylons has a premium value.
10. **Disruption to Farming Operations**  
Overhead transmission lines and the pylons clearly interfere with farming operations on the affected properties. Any restrictions on aerial fertilizing and spraying will have a negative effect. I understand Contact Energy is

negotiating compensation on those properties. Other potential negative effects in the future are:

- a) Cultivation is less efficient where pylons are located.
- b) Location of new buildings will be restricted.
- c) Future subdivision will be restricted.
- d) Forestry planting will be restricted.

11. Negative Effect On Alternative Incomes For Farmers.

The area where the transmission lines are proposed to run is pristine countryside located just over an hour South of Auckland International Airport. This obviously has enormous potential for future developments such as tourism, lodges, farm-stay, tramping, cycling, film-making and filming advertisements. We need to take a long-term view and preserve our valuable pristine countryside for future generations. See further evidence from witness Mr Ross Jennings.

12. The Need To Promote New Zealand's Clean-Green Image.

Image is a very important marketing tool. We want the rest of the world to perceive New Zealand to have a clean green rural image. This is important in a time of recession to give New Zealand a marketing advantage. Air New Zealand needs potential visitors to expect New Zealand to be attractive and non-industrial and different from the over-crowded situations many of them come from. In an increasingly health-conscious society we must portray our produce as coming from a natural environment. The ministry for the environment should support decisions which preserve our environment and protect our important industries of tourism and farming. See further evidence from Mr William Eriksen.

13. The Negative Effect Of Pylons On Farm Values.

The perception of a negative market impact of a 220KV transmission line might be greater than reality. However we must be mindful of the impact of perception on the market. The reasonableness of public fear can be irrelevant; if the public's fear depresses the market value then the loss should be compensated. With a lot of farmers nearing retirement age this is an important consideration for pylon-affected properties. Because of the pristine nature of Wairamarama I would expect a large drop in the value of affected properties.

## Summary

14. To protect our precious environment the overhead transmission lines must not be allowed to proceed. As stated in the Contact Energy Guidance, Volume 3, Appendices, Item 3, the final condition: "overhead lines are imposing structures on the landscape and have a negative visual effect. Land use is restricted within the easement which is much wider than the cable easement". I appreciate underground transmission will cost this Australian listed company more than the overhead transmission but I believe it is a price that must be paid to protect our environment and those vital industries which rely on our natural clean image.