

**BOARD OF INQUIRY  
TE MIHI GEOTHERMAL POWER STATION PROPOSAL**

In the Matter                      of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the matter                      of resource consent applications by Contact Energy Limited  
in respect of the Te Mihi Geothermal Power Station Proposal

---

**REBUTTAL EVIDENCE OF MALCOLM JAMES HUNT**

---

**Counsel Instructed:**  
**Trevor Robinson**  
Wellington

Tel 64-4-472 1755 Fax 64-4-472 1766 PO Box 8018 Wellington  
[trobinson@xtra.co.nz](mailto: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](mailto:Rosemary.dixon@contact-energy.co.nz)

## **Introduction**

1. My name is Malcolm James Hunt. My qualifications and experience are as detailed in my evidence in chief.

## **Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses**

2. I confirm that I have read the 'Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses' contained in the Environment Court Consolidated Practice Note 2006. My evidence has been prepared in compliance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## **Scope of Evidence**

3. This evidence discusses issues raised in the evidence of Mr Richard Matthews on behalf of Geotherm Group Limited (In Receivership) which currently holds resource consents for its site located along Poihipi Road in the south-western portion of the Wairakei-Te Mihi Steam Field.

## **Evidence of Mr Richard Matthews (on Behalf of Geotherm Group)**

4. I have read the evidence of Mr Matthews. I comment on those issues raised regarding noise only. At paragraphs 4.17 to 4.21 noise issues are discussed.
5. Paragraph 4.17 states that my firm's assessment of noise effects did not specifically address the cumulative noise effects associated with the Geotherm activity authorised by resource consent 020357.
6. For the reasons set out within my evidence in chief at paragraphs 108 to 113, I do not consider any cumulative noise effects associated with the Geotherm Group's noise emissions are likely to occur.
7. Paragraph 113 of my evidence concludes that due to several important technical reasons (including the separation distances involved), there is no likelihood of a significant cumulative noise effect associated with the proposed Geotherm power station, whether this would relate to noise effects on people or cumulative noise adversely affecting compliance with the limits in place to control noise emissions from the generation assets of the Geotherm Group Limited, Contact Energy Limited, or any other party.
8. Paragraph 4.18 of Mr Matthews evidence states that appropriate conditions should be put in place to ensure that cumulative noise levels do not exceed

the District Plan levels and do not adversely affect the ability of the Geotherm development to meet noise limits set in its resource consent.

9. Mr Matthews goes on to say at Paragraph 4.19 that conditions proposed by Mr Daysh do not include a specific noise standard for the project rather the land use consent Mr Daysh proposes relies on compliance with generic District Plan provisions.
10. I note Mr Matthews fails to recognise that the Taupo District Plan noise provisions apply to the proposed development and can be enforced.
11. As stated in my evidence in chief at Paragraph 97 the Te Mihi Power Station will, under a full range of local conditions, be able to comply with the noise limit of  $L_{eq}$  40dBA as per the night time requirements of Rule 4b.3.6 of the Rural Area (Section 4) of the Taupo District Plan.
12. I note Mr Matthews's states that a noise boundary should be defined for noise control purposes. As per comments made at Paragraph 98 of my evidence in chief predicted noise levels for Rule 4b.3.6 (iv) provides an exception to the noise limits where the noise arises from uses at Electricity Core Generation Sites. For such sites a "Noise Control Boundary" is adopted within the District Plan for noise control purposes. However, as noted in my evidence in chief (paragraph 98) the Te Mihi Power Station does not lie within an Electricity Core Generation Site, but is surrounded by a 40 dBA Noise Control Boundary arising from an adjacent Electricity Core Generation Site.
13. Although it is not strictly relevant to the present assessment, I note that the noise arising from the Te Mihi Power Station is within this contour (as shown in **Exhibit MH3** of my evidence in chief).
14. It is important to note that the District Plan sets noise provisions at the 20m notional boundary; this protects areas where people are located i.e. rural residential dwellings. I do not agree with Mr Matthews that a noise boundary should therefore be defined for this site.
15. Compliance achieved with a 40 dBA limit at rural dwellings (as per the requirements of the District Plan) will ensure a higher standard of protection against noise effects than the maximum recommended night time limit within NZS 6802:1991 *Assessment of Environmental Sound*. This additional protection will further ensure that amenity is adequately protected, as required under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Paragraph 112 of my evidence in chief comments on both cumulative effects and the 40 dBA contour.

16. More as a matter of completeness than necessity, I see no reason why a resource consent condition for operational noise could not be included as an additional condition. In my opinion the existing Taupo District Plan noise rules should be adopted as an initial starting point with minor changes to take account of the proposed development and recently released version of the relevant Standards. The proposed condition in the rebuttal evidence of Mr Daysh would in my view provide a suitable level of protection for health and amenity for existing rural residential sites.

### **Summary**

17. The conclusions set out in my evidence in chief remain. I am of the view that in all cases levels of noise effects which (apart from steam venting are all within the permitted activity noise limits of the Taupo District Plan) are will not adversely affect people or the environment. I am of the view that the activity can comply with the proposed noise conditions as set out in the evidence in chief of Mr Daysh and his rebuttal evidence.
18. Overall I have not altered my opinion that the site and surrounding environments remain suitable for the proposed development.

**Malcolm James Hunt**