

IN THE MATTER

of a Board of Inquiry appointed under
S146 of the Resource Management Act 1991
to consider an application by Mighty River
Power Limited for resource consents to
construct and operate a wind farm at Turitea

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF BRIAN MELVILLE WATERS
Dated 22 May 2009

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BRIAN MELVILLE WATERS will say:

Introduction:

1. That is my full name. I live in the Turitea area close to Palmerston North in Manawatu. I am a farmer. My son, Stuart Brian Waters, and I are submitters 592 in connection with this application by Mighty River Power for consents in connection with the proposed Turitea Wind Farm. Stuart and I are the shareholders in and directors of Ngawai Farm Limited. Both Stuart and I have Diplomas in Farm Management from Massey University. Ngawai owns a 563 hectare farm situated on the western boundary of the publicly owned Turitea Reserve. It farms that property together with a further 100 hectare adjoining property which it leases.
2. I am authorised to give evidence on behalf of Ngawai, its shareholders and directors. In the balance of this evidence I will not attempt to maintain strict distinctions between our family, Ngawai and its shareholders and directors.

Connection with the Turitea Area:

3. Our family has owned this comparatively large farm since 1964, and connection with Turitea therefore goes back nearly 50 years. Since it was acquired by the family, the property has been operated as a sheep, beef, forestry and tourism farm.
4. The family is proud of its association with in the area and the manner in which it has acted as guardians of this land for nearly half a century. We have attempted to farm the property in a responsible and sustainable way, and we hope, too, that we have contributed to the Turitea area by doing so.

Reserve:

5. One of the defining features of the Turitea area is the Reserve. Because our family property has shared a boundary with the Reserve, and has therefore been able to enjoy it, we have assumed certain responsibilities. We have for example taken responsibility



over the years for securing the western boundary to the Reserve and controlling entry of the general public via our property.

6. Over the years we have noticed a marked deterioration in the Reserve brought about by pests and weeds. We have ourselves attempted to do everything we can to ensure that pest and weed control on our own property is consistent with best practise so that our property does not contribute to the problem. But, as I say, we have observed a marked deterioration. We view the Reserve as being a very valuable asset for the Turitea area in particular and the Manawatu Region in general, and the principal reason why we are supportive of Mighty River Power's application is that the proposed development will present an opportunity for sophisticated pest and weed control programmes and the possibility of improved water supply in the area. We are very anxious to see the Reserve preserved for future generations. In the nearly 50 years that our family has owned our property, no opportunity of this sort has arisen before. It may never do so again.

Objections:

7. Many objections to Mighty River Power's proposed development are made by the owners of small holdings in the area, and to one extent or another appear to be based on concerns about its potential impact on the immediate vicinity.
8. There is no doubt that over the last 15 years the subdivision of the land in the Turitea area in order to create lifestyle blocks – many of them on ridges close to our farm – has had a significant impact on the area. There was a time when all one could see from our property was uninterrupted pasture. Now, the outlook in almost all directions is much less appealing with many dozens of small holdings and the dwellings and other buildings built on them.
9. We have never had an opportunity to participate in any debate concerning the appropriateness of this subdivision, and the effect that it is having on the area. We do not complain about that. As pragmatic farmers, we take a "live and let live" approach to such matters, accepting that our views about responsible land stewardship

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.M.W.', located at the bottom right of the page.

are not necessarily held by everyone, and for that matter not necessarily correct.

10. Having said that, if anything has had a detrimental effect on the area in recent years, it is the proliferation of small holdings which we regard as much more detrimental than the likely impact of the proposed wind farm, and we find it curious that those who have moved into the area and have been responsible for such radical change now appear to object to the responsible use of public and private land for the purposes of generating electricity in a sustainable way. On this same point we would observe that whereas the changes to the landscape brought about by subdivision are virtually irreversible, the wind farm is something which will ultimately be decommissioned and can be removed altogether leaving the land more or less in the condition it was in originally.

Notice of Development:

11. We observe that some submitters are suggesting - at least inferentially - that they acquired their properties in the area without any notice of the possibility of the development of a wind farm.
12. We find any such suggestion astonishingly. As long term landowners in the area, we have been aware of plans for a wind farm for over 25 years. In this regard, we attach copies of an article which appeared in the Manawatu Evening Standard on 22 September 1981 and a Survey carried out in 1985. These documents amply demonstrate that for many years the prospects of a wind farm have been up for discussion. We would add that we have observed many houses have been constructed since Mighty River Power's proposal became public.

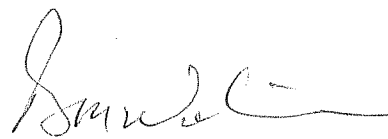
Conclusion:

13. As long term landowners in the area we strongly support Mighty River Power's proposed development as a way of arresting the deterioration of the Reserve and utilising public and private land in the area in a responsible and sustainable way to generate a necessary resource.



14. As a family which has lived and worked in this area for half a century, we have no concerns about the environmental impact of the farm. Certainly in an ideal world we would not choose to live within sight of a turbine. But it is not an ideal world, and we must all make sacrifices. Our family sees this as a very modest sacrifice in the interests of ecologically sustainable utilisation of natural resources, especially given that the development – or rather the revenue which the local authority will derive from it - will also provide an opportunity to contribute to the health of the Reserve.
15. We make no apology for the fact that Ngawai will itself derive some revenue from the placement of turbines on its property. Indeed, we see this as simply another way of harvesting the property's natural resources, and, ironically, in a way which is more environmentally friendly than raising stock.
16. Ngawai Farms is anxious to become a small part of the proposed wind farm, and in that way continue to make a contribution to the area that we have been associated with for so long.

DATED at Palmerston North this 22nd day of May 2009.



BRIAN MELVILLE WATERS