

583

584

Statement on behalf of the Levin
family of 280 Polson Hill Drive
(submission 583) and Levin Farming
Company (submission 584)



Brief history

My wife and I have just celebrated 20 years of marriage

We have 2 children Nate aged 11 and Kelly aged 8

My wife has spent her whole life farming and or associated with the land and I have been involved in the rural scene for the last 30 years.

We moved here to Palmerston North in 2000 to further our education and acquire new skill sets to help supplement our farming income.



Brief history

In 2005 we sold our 670 acre Hunterville farm and bought the 150 acre block we now call Rangeview Farm. I am currently employed at Massey University whilst my wife is responsible for the day to day running of the farm.

Our purchase of Rangeview farm has reinforced our commitment to the local Aokautere community.

I am currently the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees for our local primary school - Aokautere School.

I have **been** involved in coaching both junior cricket and soccer teams.

Objections to MRP application

We have several reasons for objecting to the MRP proposal;

1. Visual impact
2. Ecological Impact on the Reserve
3. Noise
4. Future land use
5. Cumulative Affect



280 Polson Hill Drive

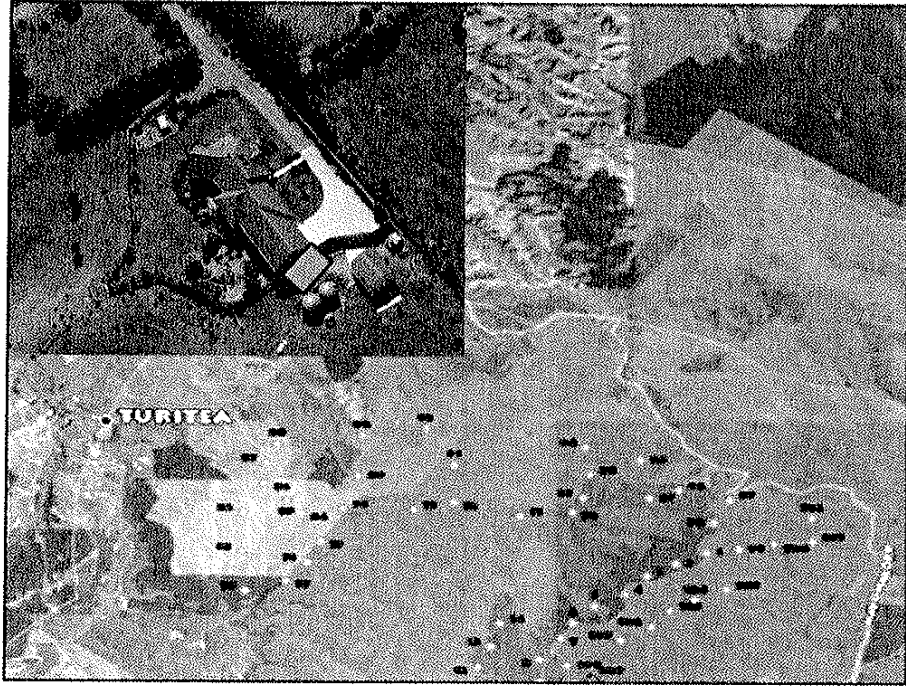
Purchased the 4 1/2 acre block in 1999

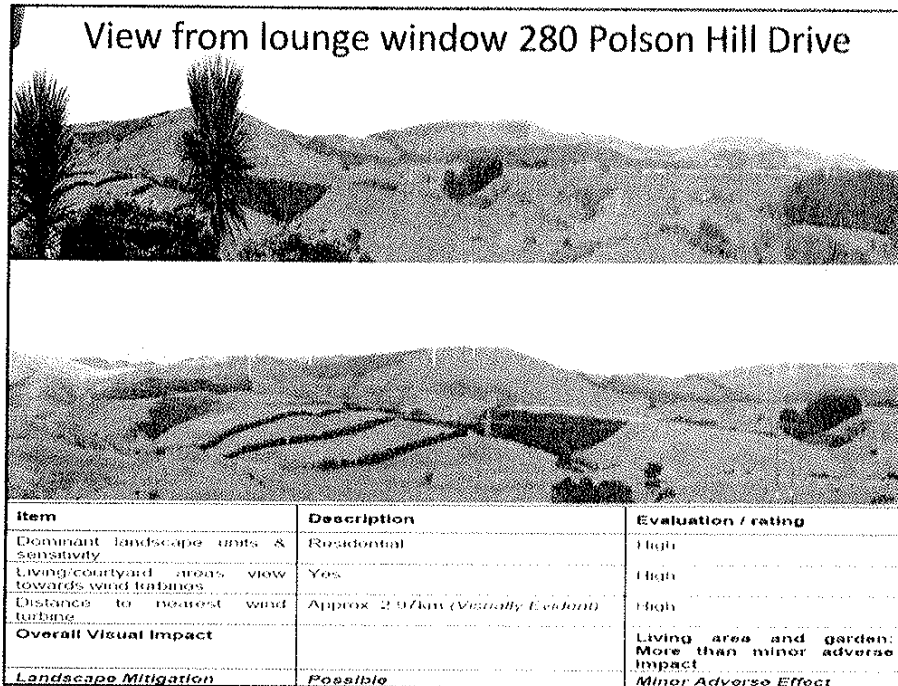
Decision to purchase was based on 3 main criteria

1. Close to the city but isolated from the noise and the glow of city lights.
2. Fantastic rural views delineated by the Tararua Ranges
3. A back section lot that precluded further subdivision

Our architect was asked to design our home to take advantage of the rural views rather than the city lights.

Over the last ten years we have turned a house into a home and have continued to enjoy an active, outdoors lifestyle.





The Tararua Ranges are a region defining landscape and as mentioned above we designed our house to take full advantage of the vista.

I don't think there has been a visitor to our house who hasn't remarked on what a superb view we have

One question that needs to be answered is who has ownership of the skyline or the view as we see it from our lounge window. For the most part I suspect ownership belongs to the council as they determine through their zoning policies what type of activities are permitted on the land. In this case the part of the range that we view is zoned rural-residential. The private landowners involved in the scheme have a right to farm their properties the way they see fit but turning the skyline into an industrial park does not fit the purpose the land was zoned for.

I think that it reasonable for the residents of Aokautere, Pacific Drive and Turitea - who built their houses prior to the council's public announcement of a possible deal with MRP - and who chose to orient their houses to the range rather than the city, to have expected the view to remain substantially rural. The fact that the Turitea Reserve, for so long sacrosanct in terms of access, stood as a barrier to any large scale industrial development would also have reinforced the continued integrity of the view.

It is possible that our situation is unique in that we have 2 separate properties and that are dominated by MRP's proposed industrial site.

From our lounge and according to the photomontage produced by Alan Wyatt we will be able to see 93 turbines cluttering and totally dominating our view.

In the images provided you can see that our house also looks out over our farm and that the farm runs parallel with the range.

Landscape Mitigation

Landscape mitigation may be possible through additional planting along the garden edge which would be a continuation or extension of the existing boundary planting. However it must be recognised that the owner of this residence runs livestock on the hills in the middle distance and enjoys the view to these hills. So if additional planting was to be envisaged it would need to have an open canopy structure that allowed through views. *Figure 121* shows a potential landscape mitigation measure for views from this location.



RVP25 – 280 Polson Hill Drive	2.97km (WT88)	More than minor adverse effect	Recommended Minor adverse effect
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Mitigation in our case is clearly not an option yet Alan Wyatt persists in believing that MRP has access to some magical bush/tree they can plant just outside our lounge, that limbs and leaves in just such a way to allow sporadic views of our farm yet hide all visual aspects of the windmills (if this was the case MRP would be in the horticulture business making a large fortune instead of here trying to make a small fortune). Alan Wyatt and his persistence that all things can be mitigated are synonymous with MRP's whole approach to this project; however just as in this case, just using the word mitigate doesn't make it true. In my submission I noted that I found 380 plus references to the word mitigate with in MRP's original consent application, so even if 2/3rds of the mitigation circumstances are creditable that still leaves a possible 126 ecological disasters waiting in the wings. I know this is a stretch of logic and maths but considering the ecological importance of the Turitea Reserve, as well as it's "health" being intrinsic to a large portion of our water supply, even one disaster is too many.

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Noise

As well as the visual impact which was to a large degree was the easiest issue to target there has been a ground swell of complaints regarding noise and a growing awareness of the intrusion of background noise into the lives of a lot of the residents living in the lee of the proposed as well as existing windfarms. I read the noise report by Neville Hegley and managed to survive till Paragraph 4.4.2 Acceptable Limits where I lost it and decided to leave that to the more informed. I would like to add however that up to the point that I got lost it appeared to me that the word limit in this context resembled the use of the same word in respect to a multinational company's overdraft ie there was no defined limit.

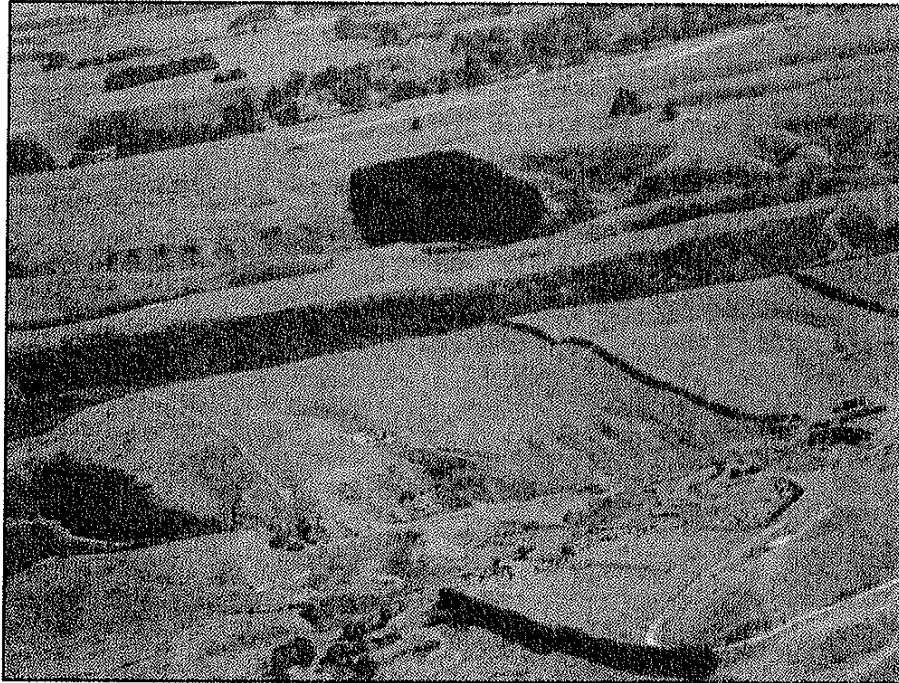
I don't need a sound meter to know that our home is quiet during the day and that you can hear a pin drop at night, so it is alarming to believe that we will - according to data that indicates south-easterlies are prevalent 35% of the time - be swamped by 35Db (our house is in the 35dB envelope) background noise generated by the windmills. A large part of the reason people choose to live outside the urban areas is to escape the constant background drone. I do know that peace and quiet for us exists well below the 35db standard and probably more in line with results mentioned by Mrs Harker yesterday of 20 → 30dB

Rangeview Farm

Purchased in 2005

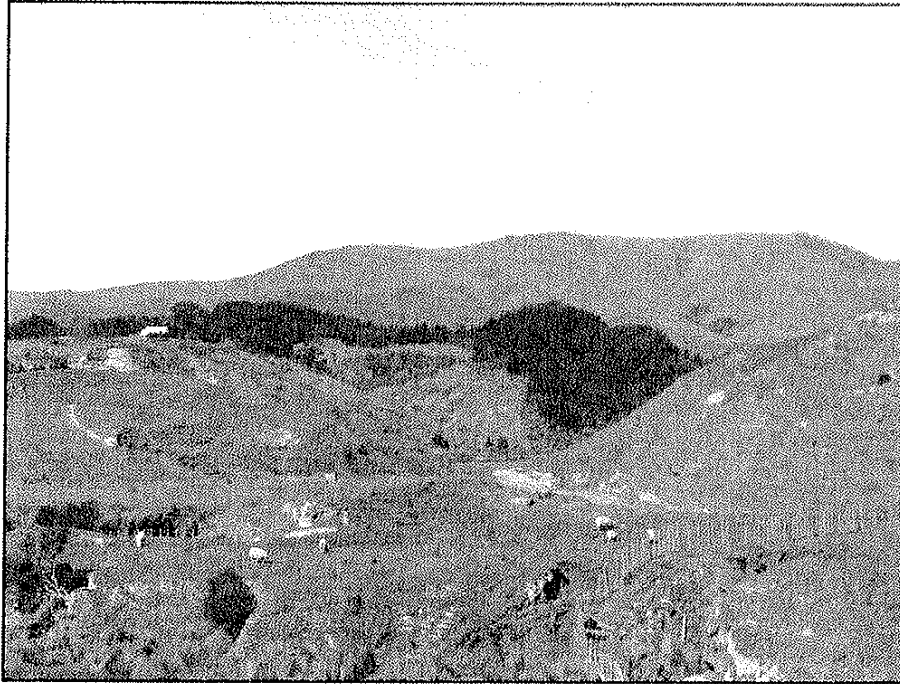
- Decision to purchase was based on location
- Viewable from our home on Polson Hill Drive
- Proximity to the city and potential for subdivision
- Our farm has a unique balance of land topography, flat to undulating as well as some moderate hill country.
- Approximately 23% of the land is planted in trees including a 27 acre 6 year old pine plantation, paddocks separated by windrows, and some aesthetic landscape plantings.
- Farm named for the landscape that dominates the area



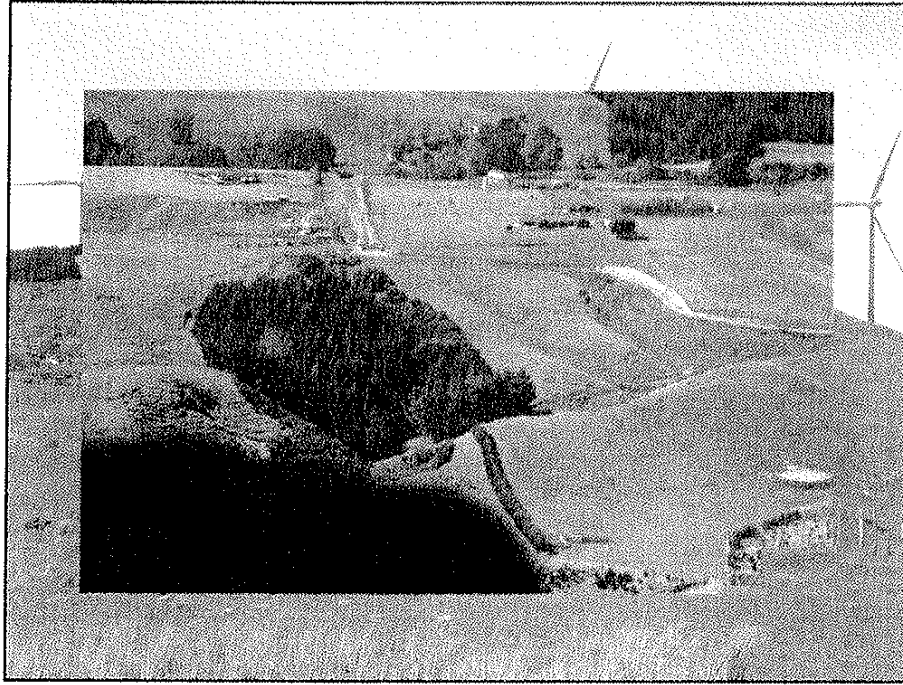


Rangeview Farm

This property was purchased in 2005 to continue our link with farming for and operates as a sheep and beef unit. There were 2 major influences when making the decision to purchase this block; Firstly we could see most of it from our lounge window (and this sort of negated the need to build on it immediately) and secondly we recognised that there was potential for subdivision in the future as it is zoned rural-residential. Although we have no intention of developing this property it does provide us with extra options if we were ever to put it back on the market. We now find this farm boundaries the Turitea Wind Farm, is less than 1.6 km from the nearest windmill (no. 88) and in the lee of a great number of them 94 I think.



“Lifestyle” subdivisions have been creeping further towards the range but I would eat more than one hat if the topography would allow for units to be surveyed down to the minimum single hectare blocks.



I have a lot of farming friends and I don't know one that would accept the rationale of "public good" as reasoning for having their land defaced by turbines or, who would live with the constant motion and audible hum (that would in effect steal their peace and solitude all farmers I know enjoy) except for substantial financial gain.

This land is zoned rural/residential.

The Windfarm will have a significant affect on the Levin Farming Company's work environment.

The windfarm will have significant impact on future development of land on the eastern side of the river.

The council has recently recognised Aokautere as a preferred option for city expansion.

Future development will be restrained by the visual impact of the windfarm as well as the increased background noise generated by the project.



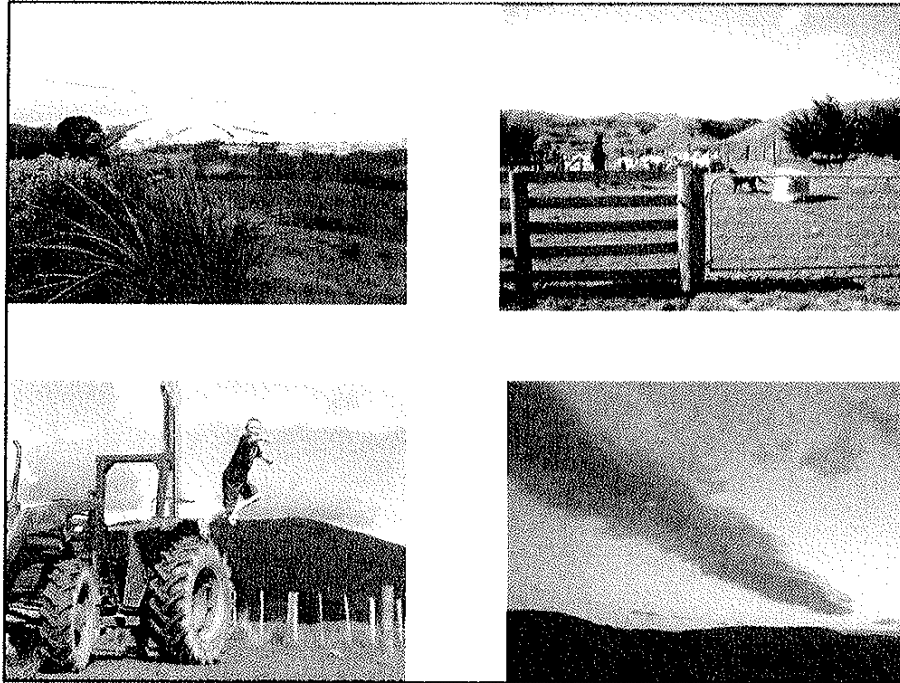
I have 2 issues here the first being personal.

My wife and I have worked long and hard (often in difficult circumstances) to be able to afford to be in the position we are in today and it seems wrong, no is wrong that our financial well being is about to be usurped for the "public good" and that a large SOE can attempt to change the environment and lifestyle of a large population in the quest for greater market share and shareholder return. If the landowners that are part of the project are going to be compensated (richly from what I can gather) then those that are going to be adversely afflicted/affected need to be compensated as well.

The second relates to what appears to have been a recurring theme judging by the few submissions I have heard over the last 2 days. Both Horizons and PNCC are looking seriously into future planning re further inevitable expansion of the city and the foothills of the ranges must be in the forefront of their minds. This area of land is a safe, flood free area for residential and rural residential development. There has already been reasonably significant development i.e. 2,004 dwellings (2006 census) on the eastern side of the bridge from Aokautere to Linton with new areas being rezoned from rural-residential to residential. We cannot keep protecting the expanding city with higher and more extensive flood protection levees as this can only create other issues either upstream or downstream. Also the most productive farmland in the region is being swallowed up by housing where as the land in the foothills will never be farmed as intensively.

Cumulative Affect

I haven't mentioned visual cumulative effect as it is blindingly evident every time you look out the window with the imagination to superimpose MRP's industrial windmill park onto the landscape in front of you.



It is my sincerest hope that this project will not go ahead because it reeks of short term gain for long term pain and also because of the personal cost to me as well as a significant number of other families who find themselves in a similar position. The whole sych of the area will be changed forever- the ecology of the reserve altered to a degree that cannot be repaired if MRP get a better deal elsewhere – a watershed of at least 3kms from the project will have a discernable background noise imposed on it – the relatively constant spinning blades will be a constant distraction.

Lastly ,politically Kiwis would like to lead the world to carbon neutrality and be the clean green nation we want to believe we are. This is a fantastic aspiration but we must also recognise individual, family, and local community rights. I would like to challenge the board to set precedence in this case and create a setback area of 3.5km from all non consenting residential or rural-residential properties. There has been a lot of anguish throughout this consent process and it is largely due to the lack of guidelines or precedence. This is the first windfarm project that I know of in New Zealand that will impact on such a large population base and therefore a great opportunity to ensure the protection of the rights of individuals and communities. Thankyou.