

BETWEEN: NZ Transport Agency
Applicant

And: Raumati South Residents Association
Incorporated
Submitter

Statement of Non expert evidence of Jayne Staple, for the Raumati South Residents Association Inc. (RSRA), submitter number 0707.

5 OCTOBER 2012
Introduction

1. My name is Eleanor Jane Staple. I live at 15 The Esplanade, Raumati South. I have lived there since February 2002 and owned the property since January 2000.

2. I am a member of the Raumati South Residents Association (RSRA). I hold the position of chair of the RSRA committee. I have served as treasurer in 2006, chair in 2007 and returned to the committee as chair in November 2010 to the present.

3. I have participated in Kapiti district roading consultation processes in my role as a committee member and chair of RSRA for:
   a. The Western Link Local Road: Kapiti north – south
   b. The proposal for the alternative southern entrance for WLR at 200 Main Road South
   c. The consultation for all the various NZTA proposed expressway routes

Scope of the evidence

4. This evidence will cover:
   a. RSRA’s position on Western Link Road
   b. Our community’s connection with their environment
   c. The separation of part of our village

5. RSRA has consistently presented the view that any Kapiti roading proposals respect the existing Raumati South coastal land forms, our natural environment with its unique flora and fauna and allows us the relaxed lifestyle and recreation that our natural landscape offers.
RSRA’s position on Western Link Road

6. A number of the applicant’s experts make much of how the final proposed route for M2PP expressway saves more wetlands than the WLR designation. RSRA never accepted the WLR designation for the southern entrance between our two junior schools and over our wetlands.

7. Throughout 2006 we consulted with the potential subdivider of the WLR excess land in Raumati South and worked with James Lundy, a noted urban designer to integrate wetland restoration with any future subdivision and to reduce the number of properties affected at the proposed 200 Main Road South entrance. We presented these plans to a Kapiti Coast District Council meeting on 15 June 2006.

8. Mayor, Jenny Rowan indicated at our AGM on 25 November 2007 that “There is a new mood in council to review both the northern and the southern entrances to the WLR. There is serious concern about the size of the road coming into the threshold of Raumati South past the schools. The previous council was not given all the information when it made its decision in 2006”.

Our community’s connection with their environment

9. The following key events demonstrate the focus of our community on sustainable management and the direction of that management in the years before this proposal. The focus and direction has been at odds with anything in the nature of the route and size of this roading proposal:

   a. In 1999, Di Das, a local resident living opposite the entrance to Poplar Ave wetland, initiated a community planting of the road edge to begin restoring the wetland entrance.

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1 Matiu Park, Terrestrial Ecologist, Project Ecologist NZTA; Dr Stephen Fuller Ecological mitigation
b. 30 July 2006 - 80 local residents walked over the sand hills and Millennial Walkway to the Raumati Wetlands to see what was at risk from WLR

c. 23 May 2010 - RSRA sign a partnership with DOC and GWRC to restore the Poplar Ave Wetlands; the first of the three fen wetland restorations we aim to complete. A fen wetland is fed by ground and surface water.

d. July 2013 - we have our final planting at Poplar Ave Wetland and hope to start the next wetland restoration. The next one is Raumati Manuka and then Raumati Peatlands. We hope to continue our partnership with DOC and talk with KCDC and potential developers about working in partnership also.

e. 2006 - Present - RSRA members in association with KCDC plant at Kawatiri Reserve around the Raumati South War Memorial Hall, that earlier residents built in 1953.

f. 2010 - Present - Establish and maintain Raumati South community orchard with 75 trees in association with MOA Orchard resident group with support from KCDC. We have two community gardens established by neighbours in Rainbow Court and Grange Park Ave.

g. August - September 2012 - RSRA members provide own landscape designer, equipment to design, do ground works and plant out a road reserve area on The Esplanade walkway.

10. In respect of expert evidence, we note the following:

11. Matiu Park, Terrestrial Ecologist, Project Ecologist NZTA advises that “Through my involvement in the Project, I have been involved in regular
site visits, as well as numerous meetings with and presentations to stakeholders, including DOC, GWRC, the Queen Elizabeth II Trust, KCDC, and Friends of Waikanae River. I was present at several public open days where I discussed the ecological aspects of the Project with affected residents, members of interest groups and the wider community.”

12. Raumati South Residents Association Committee and our wider membership welcome an opportunity to meet with Matiu Park as we did not hear from him during his stakeholder presentations series or on any other occasion.

13. Matiu Park disagrees with KCDC statement (in paragraph 23) that the Raumati Manuka Wetland is of regional ecological significance. To RSRA the Raumati Manuka and Raumati Peatlands wetland areas are of high local significance. They are the last remaining evidence of the extensive swamp area originally extending from Paekakariki northwards to Waikanae between the dunes and the Tararua foothills that was used as canoe passage by Maori.² The settlers of 165 years ago in our community may not have realised that cutting down the kahikatea forests and draining swamps would aid erosion and the death of huia, but we know preserving what’s left will aid the fernbird,³ provide ‘place-based’ environmental education⁴ for our young people and give our community a sense of wellbeing⁵.

14. RSRA has focused on the protection of our local environment including our chain of wetlands since we established in 2003. We have made significant process in getting their significance increasingly recognised by our local council from days when it was acceptable to dump fill,

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³ Dr Leigh Bull (Avifuana) “I believe the risk to this population is potentially Very High”. Section 18
⁵ Greg Watts, Professor of Transportation Noise, University of Bradford. His studies on tranquility in cities found that running water and greenery greatly improve tranquility and that the feeling of tranquility has been found to speed recovery from stress and improve health. – (13 August 2012) Christchurch Press, Charley Mann
rubbish and undertake earthworks, as happened in 1987, to one of these last remaining natural taonga, the Raumati Manuka Wetland.

15. We are pleased to note also that we have achieved recognition of the importance of the Raumati South Peatlands wetland area:

As outlined in Technical Reports 26 and 27, this area contains a large, ecologically significant wetland - the Raumati South Peatlands. This 11.1 ha manuka-dominated wetland is considered to comprise significant indigenous vegetation under section 6(a) RMA and it was considered accordingly during the MCA process. In addition to being a KCDC District Plan scheduled Ecosite (K131), this wetland also provides habitat for locally uncommon plant species, including species at the southern limit of the Wellington Conservancy.

The separation of part of our village

16. In the our immediate area, this proposal would leave some member households in the very small strip of homes of reduced value on Main Road South, bounded by four lanes of 100kmph traffic and two lanes of 50 kmph traffic. There is virtually no chance these householders will continue to enjoy the Raumati South values they desire and have invested in through their substantial plantings of trees and the creation of relaxed quiet sheltered environment backing onto what was to be a local link road.

17. Residents along Main Road South have transformed their large properties into park like environments with extensive tree plantings, some of which are over 20 years old. They enjoy a semi rural lifestyle with bird life in abundance and the sound of SH1 muffled by their

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6 Matiu Park, Terrestrial Ecologist, Project Ecologist NZTA. Section 194
7 Greg Watts, Professor of Transportation Noise, University of Bradford His studies on tranquility in cities found that running water and greenery greatly improve tranquility. He suggests attracting wildlife, or playing recordings of bird song. – (13 August 2012) Christchurch Press, Charley Mann
extensive planting and positioning of their dwelling at the end of their long properties. The dwellings experience very low background noise levels which now form an essential part of the local environment.

18. If the proposed expressway goes ahead, the strip of houses along Main Road South has the visual and physical barrier of a four lane expressway between them and the rest of Raumati South. Their enjoyment and relaxed Raumati South lifestyle and sense of community are lost.

19. Now their homes will be right up close to the newly positioned SH1. The noise of the truck convoy arriving each night from approximately 2am through to 6am from north followed by the nightly convoy leaving Wellington from 3am will hit more directly.

20. Given that NZTA standard for noise limit sits at 45 decibels and World Health research\(^8\) shows you start to wake at 40 decibels, the relaxed lifestyle Raumati South Residents Association members value is at serious risk; even more so when the number of super trucks begin to increase on state highways.

\(^8\) World Health Organisation – Night noise guidelines for Europe