

**BEFORE A BOARD OF INQUIRY
NORTHERN CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991
(the Act)

IN THE MATTER of a Board of Inquiry appointed under
section 149J of the Act to consider
notices of requirement for designations
and resource consent applications by the
New Zealand Transport Agency for the
Northern Corridor Improvements Project

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF
SHARON MARY WILLIAMSON
FOR THE HARBOUR HOCKEY CHARITABLE TRUST**

25 May 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My full name is Sharon Mary Williamson. I am the chair of the Harbour Hockey Charitable Trust (HHCT).
- 1.2 I have a Bachelor of Commerce in Management and Accounting from the University of Auckland. I am a member of the Institute of Directors and the Australasian Investor Relations Association.
- 1.3 I have been a Trustee of the HHCT since 2009, and Chair since 2014. I was previously also Chair of the North Harbour Hockey Association (NHHA) from 2010 to 2013. Currently I am an elected member of the Hockey New Zealand Board. Professionally, my background is in marketing, management and corporate communications, and I currently work as an Investor Relations Consultant.
- 1.4 I am authorised to give this evidence on behalf of HHCT.
- 1.5 The current North Harbour Hockey Stadium (NHH Stadium), which is located on Rosedale Park off Jack Hinton Drive, is being partially acquired by the Crown for the Northern Corridor Improvements Project.
- 1.6 As set out in the HHCT submission, HHCT supports the Northern Corridor Improvements (NCI) project subject to its requirements that the NHH Stadium is relocated to its proposed new site in accordance with the agreed timeframes and the new facility is constructed on terms agreed with HHCT.
- 1.7 HHCT has been working with the NZ Transport Agency to achieve these outcomes since February 2015. Planning for the new NHH stadium is well advanced as set out in my evidence below.
- 1.8 Subject to these requirements, the HHCT supports the project as being necessary to relieve the extremely high level of congestion that exists in the vicinity of the NHH Stadium. This congestion impacts significantly on hockey operations and the experience for members of the community who use the NHH Stadium.

2 THE NORTH HARBOUR HOCKEY STADIUM

- 2.1 The existing NHH Stadium is located on Rosedale Park, off Jack Hinton Drive. This site is owned by AC and administered by AC Parks. HHCT holds a community ground lease from AC, and owns all the assets and improvements on the site. The existing NHH Stadium is the central regional base for hockey development, training and games in an area that extends from Devonport to north of Warkworth, and from

Massey to Helensville in the west. As well as being a central competition venue, the facility is the training and meeting base for all NHHA's 11 affiliated hockey clubs and for many of its 99 affiliated schools; and as such is the heart and soul of the hockey community.

- 2.2 The existing facility currently operates with three water-based artificial pitches (including one FIH certified international competition pitch), one satellite (sand) pitch, a pavilion and associated car parks. The three water-based pitches are located within the main complex. The fourth (sand) pitch is located 900m to the north-west within the wider Rosedale Park complex, and adjacent to Alexandra stream. The lease also includes a grass field, reserved for a fifth artificial hockey pitch originally planned for construction in 2017-18.
- 2.3 Plans for an upgrade of the NHH Stadium were at an advanced stage before the NCI Project was identified. This project had been in the planning since 2011 and by the end of 2014 the resource consent was granted, the fundraising programme was on track for completion in early 2015, and construction was planned to commence in mid-2015. The planned upgrades included an expansion to the existing pavilion, upgrade of floodlights to meet FIH requirements, upgrade of pitches, permanent training facilities for HNZ's national high performance programme, additional permanent seating and temporary seating infrastructure for national and international events.

3 THE IMPACT OF THE NCI PROJECT

- 3.1 The upgrade project was put on hold in early 2015, after HHCT was advised by the NZ Transport Agency that all its planned NCI Project design options would affect one of our existing pitches plus an adjacent field within HHCT's lease area, on which a fifth pitch was planned to be built. The land is intended to be acquired (in part) by the Crown for the NCI Project.
- 3.2 Consequently, when HHCT learned that two pitches would be affected by the NCI Project, we were absolutely clear (and still are) that the only viable 'equivalent reinstatement option' for losing these pitches was to relocate the entire facility. Only this would ensure that NHHA and its clubs would be able to continue to operate efficiently and effectively in its centralised model, and maintain the ongoing viability of the NHHA and its clubs. As HHCT has had to predominantly fund all our pitches and facilities from its own revenues, supported by council and community grants, this requires both HHCT and NHHA to have a sophisticated financial and operating

model. Splitting up the facility is therefore an unacceptable option and would have a catastrophic impact on the operations of NHH, the financial viability of the facility, and social fabric of the North Harbour Hockey community.

- 3.3 Since early 2015 until now, HHCT and NHH have worked with NZTA and Auckland Council (as the landowner) to evaluate the options and provide input into the design process. A Hockey Working Group (HWG), which comprised of NZTA, Auckland Council, Watercare, hockey representatives and advisors, was formed in February 2015 to investigate and evaluate the four options. The option of relocating the NHH stadium to Watercare's Pond 2 site was chosen, and in July 2015 the HWG commenced designing and planning for a facility at Pond 2.
- 3.4 However, there were significant geotechnical issues at Pond 2, due to ground instability as it had been previously used as a fill site. This would result in a huge increase in costs and significant pressure on timeframes. By March 2016, following several months of design and risk mitigation investigation, it was apparent that other site options needed to be investigated.
- 3.5 Further work was undertaken by Auckland Council, NZTA and Watercare to identify and evaluate suitable options in mid-2016. Following initial evaluation of 11 sites, and further detailed evaluation (including a multi-criteria analysis) of three options, Rosedale Park was identified as the only suitable site. HHCT provided input into both of these processes, and rated each site in respect of its strategic and amenity value.
- 3.6 There were two options within the Rosedale Park site, being the current proposed site for the NHH Project on the western portion of Rosedale Park, and an option at Rosedale South, which would require the facility to be split between two sites on either side of Jack Hinton Drive (something which has never been acceptable to HHCT or its partners). It was confirmed in August 2016 that the Rosedale West option would be the proposed site.

4 THE NEW NHH FACILITY

- 4.1 The proposed NHH facility has been designed to replace the facility which was already planned, on a 'like for like' basis. The proposed NHH facility works include:
 - a Construction and operation of four new water-based artificial hockey pitches;
 - b A two-storey pavilion building;

- c A central 'Village Green' space between pitches to provide for a pedestrian plaza and warm up area;
 - d Two landscaped parking areas;
 - e Pole-mounted floodlighting;
 - f Permanent spectator seating; and
 - g Ancillary facilities and infrastructure, including footpaths, a new pedestrian crossing on Bush Road, and a bridge to connect pedestrians from the existing sand pitch at Rosedale Park North to the new NHH facility.
- 4.2 The proposed site for the new NHH facility is on the western side of Rosedale Park which is accessible via Bush Road. The site is owned by Auckland Council and administered by Auckland Council Parks, and will, subject to completion of the relevant processes, be leased to HHCT. The site is currently occupied by the North Harbour BMX Club and Rosedale Pony Club, which are both proposed to be relocated as part of a separate property and lease negotiation and resource consent application processes. These negotiations and applications are currently underway.
- 4.3 A resource consent application has been lodged for the NHH facility and is being heard by independent commissioners on Monday 29 May 2017. In parallel with this process, the Upper Harbour Local Board has resolved to notify the lease for the new site in order to complete the processes required by the Reserves Act 1981. In addition, HHCT and the NZ Transport Agency have entered into an agreement relating to the delivery of the new NHH facility on the site.

5 TEMPORARY UPGRADES

- 5.1 In addition to the working with the NZTA on a new NHH facility, HHCT has also reached agreement with the NZTA regarding temporary upgrades to the existing NHH facility. These temporary upgrades are required so the existing stadium can host international events scheduled to take place prior to the new facility being complete. These events have been scheduled for several years, and the expectation was that they would be held at the existing NHH facility, upgraded in accordance with the resource consents obtained in 2014. However, as I have explained, the NCI Project prevented this upgrade from occurring. Therefore, it was important that the NZTA assisted HHCT to put temporary upgrades in place (such as temporary and lighting and seating) to allow the international events to proceed.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 As detailed above, the NZ Transport Agency and HHCT have been working together for several years to find a solution for the relocation of the NHH stadium. Work is well progressed with resource consents for the new facility currently being processed by Auckland Council and the Upper Harbour Local Board agreeing to notify the new lease for public consultation. HHCT supports the development of a new NHH stadium at Rosedale West which will provide a number of benefits including the following:
- a The ability to accommodate new players;
 - b The provision of a permanent training base for New Zealand's national teams (the Black Sticks men's and women's teams);
 - c NHHHA will be able to continue to sustainably operate and grow under its current model as a centralised sporting and community hub - for competitions, training, programmes and events for its 7000+ members and supporters;
 - d The ability to host international hockey events, which in turn can raise the profile of hockey in New Zealand and have wider economic and sporting benefits for the Auckland region; and
 - e The new site will provide connectivity to the existing pitch on the eastern pitch on the Alexandra Stream, which will enhance and future-proof the hockey facilities as well as enhancing the connectivity of Rosedale Park.
- 6.2 The new NHH stadium at Rosedale West will mean that HHCT is able to continue with existing operations and planned upgrades, which were in place prior to the NCI Project being proposed. HHCT and NHHHA support the NCI Project provided that the new NHH Stadium proceeds.

Sharon Mary Williamson

25 May 2017