

**BEFORE SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER**

the Resource  
Management Act 1991

**IN THE MATTER**

a request by Hughes  
Development Limited for a  
private plan change to  
the Selwyn District Plan to  
rezone 163 Halkett Road  
and 1066 West Coast  
Road in West Melton for  
the development of  
approximately 124 lots

**AND**

**Hughes Development  
Limited**

---

**EVIDENCE OF JAKE HUGHES ON BEHALF OF HUGHES DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

Corporate  
13 March 2023

---

---

**Counsel acting:**

I M Gordon Barrister  
Stout Street Chambers PO Box 117  
Wellington  
P: 04 4729026  
Email: [ian.gordon@stoutstreet.co.nz](mailto:ian.gordon@stoutstreet.co.nz)

## **Introduction**

1. My name is Jake Hughes. I am a qualified Quantity Surveyor, holding a National Diploma in Quantity Surveying. Since 2009 I have held the position of Managing Director of Hughes Developments Limited (**HDL**), a property development company based in Christchurch. Prior to joining HDL, I worked in the residential construction sector in both New Zealand and the Middle East.
2. Within HDL I have responsibility for land acquisition and identifying new development opportunities. It is in that capacity that I have specific responsibility with respect to the development proposal for 163 Halkett Road and 1066 West Coast Road, West Melton (the **Site**) and Plan Change 74 (**PC74**).

## **Scope of evidence**

3. My evidence outlines HDL's experience within the land development sector in New Zealand and in the Selwyn district and West Melton specifically and outlines the Company's aspirations with respect to the proposed development of the Site.
4. In preparing my evidence, I have revisited application and supporting documents filed by HDL in relation to PC74. I have also reviewed the submissions and further submission lodged on PC74, and the s42A Report prepared by Mr Friedel. My evidence specifically responds to those submissions and the recommendations made by Mr Friedel in that report.

## **Executive summary**

5. HDL is a well-resourced and experienced land development company with extensive experience in the Selwyn District and in West Melton specifically.
6. In our view, enabling residential development on the Site will provide a logical and appropriate extension to the existing residential neighbourhood and make a positive contribution to the West Melton township as a whole.

7. We are committed to ensuring that all our developments are sustainable and environmentally responsible. To that end we have implemented a number of measures to ensure a low impact development designed to integrate with its environment, with developer-led and funded initiatives such as solar street and reserve lighting and rainwater harvesting. We are also investigating options to reduce the use of fossil fuelled private vehicles by implementing an electric vehicle ride share system.
8. Our experience in the Selwyn District property market and West Melton specifically indicates strongly to us that the Council's capacity and demand analysis is inaccurate. We consider that there is significant demand for a range of housing types in West Melton, including from people who have already made their home here and wish to stay as they and their families grow and change. It is our view that providing for such changes will add to the diversity and vibrancy of West Melton.
9. The expert evidence prepared for PC74 and the assessment in the s42A report adequately addresses the major matters raised in submissions. I note that at the conclusion of the notification period calling for submissions on PC74, a considered effort was made to address matters of concern. Accordingly, our ODP and accompanying narrative were amended prior to the further submission period. A further series of amendments have been undertaken as a result of recommendations from Council's urban design and transport experts.
10. I support the recommendation contained in the s42A to rezone the Site and believe this represents a positive outcome for West Melton.

#### **HDL**

11. HDL was formed in Christchurch in 1986 by my father Robin Hughes. In the 37 years since that time, our specialty has been in building and marketing a range of residential subdivisions, both large and small, across New Zealand. With our roots in Canterbury, much of that development has occurred within the Selwyn District and to date we have delivered some 3300 sections across four separate developments in Selwyn.

12. Among our notable residential developments are Northwood, the first master planned residential subdivision in Christchurch (1000 lots) and Faringdon, a large-scale residential neighbourhood in Rolleston which has utilised a variety of innovative processes (including the Special Housing Accord and the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act to develop some 3000 sections to date, together with 50 affordable homes which we believe demonstrate that small budgets and great outcomes can go hand in hand.
13. Within West Melton specifically, we have developed Gainsborough (204 lots) and subsequently Halkett Grove after taking on the risk and responsibility for completing the necessary 10km sewer pipeline needed in West Melton and thus unlocking both that development and the wider residential potential of the area.
14. As long-standing developers, we have weathered many different types of conditions and have a deep understanding of the cyclical nature of land development markets. We consistently take a long term view of both our developments and our relationships – be those with neighbours, councils, contractors, our purchasers, other developers and/or our wider community. We value our reputation and believe that our success to date comes out of our simple commitment to act with integrity at all times.

### **The Site**

15. In keeping with our development philosophy, we identified the current West Melton Site (on the eastern boundary of the existing Gainsborough community) as having the potential to provide additional residential development and adding to the wider community without compromising the existing character of the township.
16. Specifically, we considered that the Site would enable further residential development in a manner which was complementary to that already provided for in the township, including in Gainsborough and Halkett Grove; adding additional recreational opportunities in the form of the newly created reserve, and providing an increased population base to support the existing facilities of West Melton including the school, newly completed Community Centre, pre-

schools, supermarket, food and beverage operators and the petrol station.

17. By designing a development which is immediately adjacent to and able to be integrated with, the existing development within West Melton, the new residential area contributes to a compact and accessible urban form which makes good use of existing infrastructure, including the existing pedestrian and cycling networks, and integrates well with its surroundings.
18. In our assessment (which is supported by our urban design team) it is a logical and appropriate extension to the existing residential neighbourhood and will make a positive contribution to the West Melton township as a whole.

#### **Response to section 42A report**

19. I have read the relevant sections of the s42A Report prepared by Mr Friedel and note that there are two specific matters that I wish to address: sustainability, and the demand for residential accommodation in West Melton. I also outline the company's response to other matters raised by Mr Friedel.

#### Sustainability

20. Turning first to the issue of sustainability, I note that as developers we are constantly adjusting and changing our product and our methodology to ensure the best possible outcomes for our purchasers and for our community. This includes ongoing evaluation of our environmental footprint.
21. As a company, we undertake a number of sustainability initiatives within our developments, including:
  - prioritising naturalising existing waterways and wetlands to protect their ecological value;
  - retaining existing trees and planting wherever appropriate;
  - undertaking extensive planting to supplement existing vegetation;

- making provision for future public transport; and
- limiting the amount of aggregate imported to site by harvesting and crushing road metals onsite.

22. With respect to the West Melton development, as set out in response to requests for information from Council in relation to PC74, HDL has committed to a low impact development ethos which uses design to maximise solar gain, provides opportunities for walking and cycling and utilises energy efficient technologies for infrastructure.
23. In addition, HDL has committed to ensuring that all street and reserve lighting is solar powered and each section is fitted with a rainwater tank and pump (as required) for rain water harvesting purposes at the time of subdivision.
24. HDL is also proposing to plant large swathes of native planting along the east and south borders, which will be protected by way of covenant. The development itself will contain an extensive swale network within the road corridors and this will remove contaminants from the stormwater before it is discharged to ground.
25. These initiatives are all developer led and as such are fully subsidised by HDL as the developer. This will ensure that these environmental initiatives are implemented from the outset and avoid placing the responsibility of cost on the purchaser.
26. In addition to the above, HDL are currently researching the concept of a community owned and operated Electric Vehicle which would be available to residents by way of a booking app on their devices (phone/ipad etc). By way of an example as to how this might work, the vehicle could be an electrical powered van which could take 12 people at a time to a park and ride facility in, say, Rolleston. The passengers could then board public transport to their place of work. In our view concepts of this nature are the way of the future and will ultimately go some way towards reducing greenhouse gases caused by fossil fuel powered vehicles.

### Demand

27. Mr Colegrave has provided expert economic evidence and I have had the benefit of reading that evidence. I note that Mr Colegrave considers that the capacity modelling undertaken by the Councils significantly underestimates the demand for new residential accommodation and significantly overestimates the available supply.<sup>1</sup> This is echoed by Mr Jones.<sup>2</sup>
28. These findings are very consistent with my observations and the observations of others at HDL. Specifically, it is our experience that modelled capacity analyses are notoriously inaccurate.
29. By way of example our Rolleston Development, Faringdon, sold more than 850 sections over an 18-month period during 2021 – 2022. This alone equates to roughly 31% of the HBA's projected short term demand from a single development over half the 3-year short term duration.
30. In addition, following the completion of Gainsborough & Halkett Grove, HDL has amassed a significant database of potential purchasers who have expressed an interest in purchasing a section in West Melton. A number of these people are existing residents within Gainsborough & Halkett Grove who wish to build again to better suit their age and stage in life. HDL is in the business of building community not just developing land, and in our view, it is important for a well-rounded and well-functioning community that a diverse range of housing product is provided for.
31. From our knowledge of the market and potential market, we are keenly aware of a high level of demand for homes in West Melton. We have 'empty nesters' looking to stay in West Melton but wanting to downsize from their large family sized house in Gainsborough to something more appropriately sized for their needs. They still want the generous section size and the privacy that goes with it, but wish to build, say, a 3-bedroom house instead of their current 5 bedroom house. Alternatively, the extra space available allows for a small family flat or similar to be built to help with first home aspirations of

---

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Mr Colegrave at paragraphs 52-54.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Mr Jones at paragraph 16.

siblings. In addition, we have families with teenage children who are looking for more space as their family grows. Again, they wish to stay where their family is already established but with a different housing type to better suit their needs.

32. Our prospective purchasers also tell us they want to be on the northern side of State Highway 73 (**SH73**) as this is where the majority of the township's amenity is located.
33. There are very few locations within Greater Christchurch where this type of residential development (particularly the larger lots) can be achieved and for many of our prospective purchasers, West Melton is unique in this regard. In addition, as I have mentioned, for many, it is already home and the community they wish to continue to live in. Unfortunately, these factors are not well represented in the HBA projections.

#### Other Matters

34. For completeness, I record here HDL's position on each of the specific recommendations contained in Mr Friedel's report:
  - HDL supports ensuring that 'future connections' to the east are identified on the Outline Development Plan (**ODP**).
  - HDL supports the establishment of post and rail fencing to the southern boundary of the Site but does not consider this is required on the western boundary that borders the Gainsborough and Halkett Grove subdivision given this is largely fenced already with a 1800mm high timber paling fence.
  - On the advice of our urban design team, HDL does not support the inclusion of a minimum net density. We prefer the designed controls contained within the ODP to deliver outcomes that are consistent with West Melton's low density character.
  - We support the inclusion of a shared path on the Halkett Road frontage but do not consider this to be necessary or appropriate on West Coast Road (SH73).
  - We support the identification of a walking and cycling



connection through the central reserve

- We support a road connection with a footpath and cycling facility from the Site to Rossington Drive.
- We support the implementation of traffic calming measures along the north-south aligned Primary Road to discourage through traffic between West Coast Road and Halkett Road.
- We support the DP narrative referencing the need to investigate and undertake identified future transport network upgrades.

### **Conclusion**

35. HDL is an experienced and well-resourced land development company with extensive experience in the Selwyn District and current knowledge of market demand. We continue to experience strong demand for additional residential development in West Melton and we consider that PC74 and rezoning of the Site would enable this to occur in an efficient and effective manner, integrating well with the existing community and making efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Jake Hughes

13 March 2023