

**BEFORE THE SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**RC225180**

In the matter of        the Resource Management Act 1991  
*Sections 88-120, Resource Management Act 1991*

Between                **Party**    KeaX Limited

Role       Applicant

And                    **Party**    Robyn Casey, Clark and Elizabeth Casey and Dave  
and Donna Kewish ("Joint Submitters")

Role       Submitter

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**EVIDENCE OF**  
**Date 23 February 2023**

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J M van der Wal  
Barrister  
40 Walker Street Chambers  
Christchurch  
Also at 14 Queen Street  
Blenheim

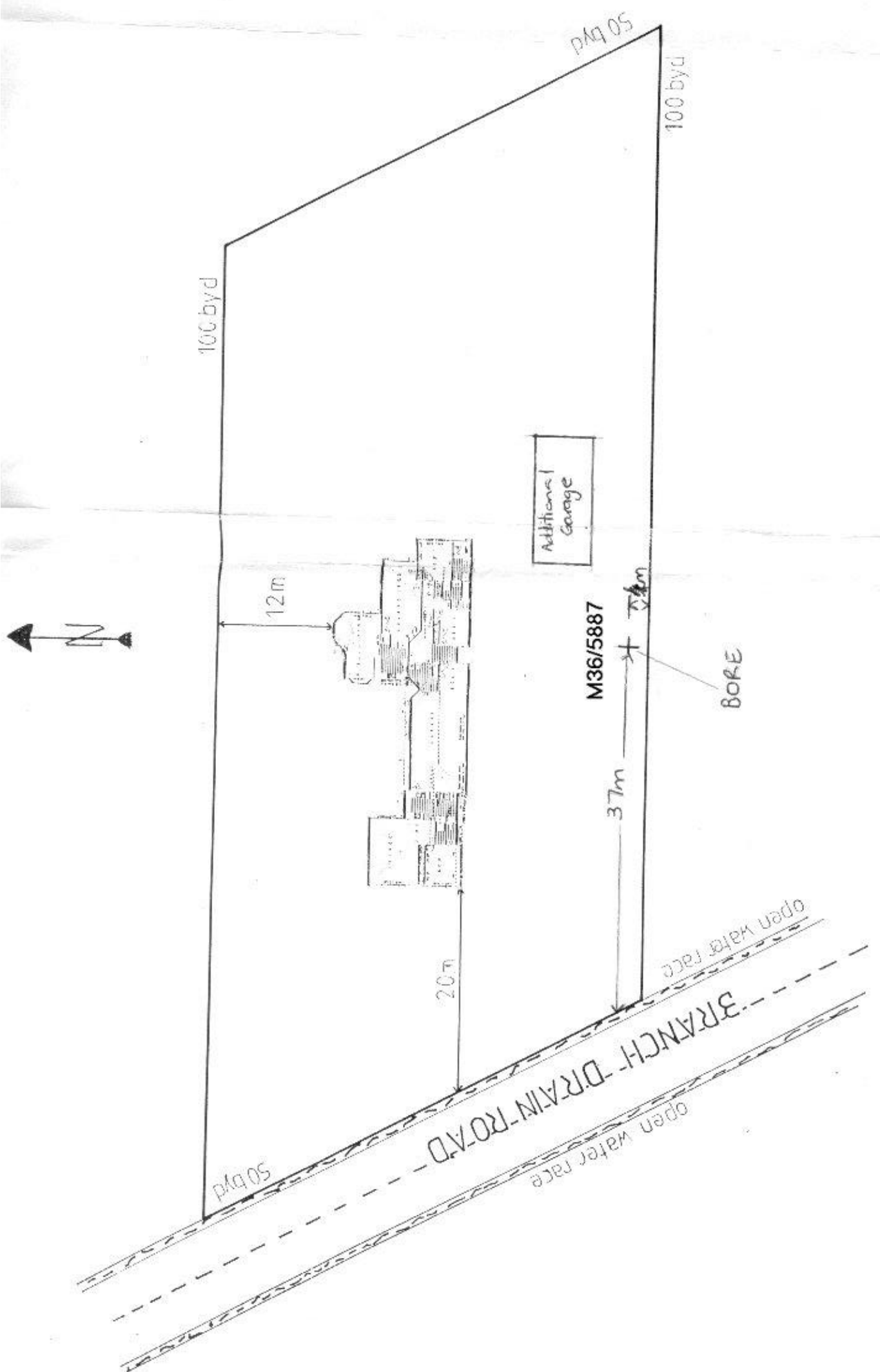
- 1        My full name is Donna Jayne Kewish
- 2        I provide this evidence on behalf of myself Donna Kewish, David Kewish, Robyn Casey and Clark and Elizabeth Casey (“Joint Submitters”), who have made a joint submission and an individual submission in opposition to Application RC225180 (“the application”).
- 3        My husband David, my two daughters and I live at 324 Branch Drain Road. We have lived here since March 2000, after purchasing the title from Clark Casey. It is probably the smallest size land area in the whole of Brookside at 5060 square metres, which is roughly one and a quarter acres. The property consists of a 4-bedroom home at the eastern end with a triple garage in the middle and a one bedroom self-contained granny flat at the other end.
- 4        The solar panels will be too close to our property and the measurements stated in the Application for Consent are incorrect. The Application states the boundary will be 25 metres from the house (APP13, Page 20). When actually, the closest point to the boundary is 12 metres and this from our main living room. (Appendix 1 Site Plan 324 Branch Drain Road). As we are on a very small section we don’t have the acres of land with a house set away from neighbouring boundaries, at only 50 metres wide and 100 metres deep we couldn’t get away from boundary fences which puts the house extremely close to the proposed project.
- 5        By comparison there is a solar farm in the pipeline for Te Aroha, approximately 60 kilometres out of Hamilton. This site is similar in size at 260 hectares, but only 182 hectares will be used for panels. All panels and equipment will be set back from public roads by at least 120 metres and 150 metres from neighbouring houses (Appendix 2 Waikato Times Article)
- 6        Our property has been identified as being the worst for noise during construction and operation due to the close proximity of panels and equipment to our northern boundary hedge (Appendix 3 APP18, Page 13). We appreciate the peace and quietness of the area and love living in a rural community and accept occasional noise from tractors ploughing etc. as part of the country lifestyle as these are only short term but this general

peacefulness is going to be replaced by a constant hum of inverters and cooling systems. I have here a recording of noise from an operational solar farm for you to hear the tonal hum that we will have to listen to everyday. I now wish to play some sound to give an idea (Appendix 4, Sound Recording)

- 7 The proposed planting plan will be insufficient to block the unsightly industrial solar site. As keen gardeners we know the challenges involved in getting plants to grow in this area. Across the road from 56 Buckley's Road there are similar plants that are being proposed by the applicant. These were seedlings in 2012 (Appendix 5 Google Maps photo) and 11 years later, these are still less than 3 metres tall (Appendix 6 Photo of car and hedge). We value the wide open uninterrupted views when walking the dog and travelling along Branch Drain Road and other road corridors in Brookside. Our views to the east towards the port hills will change from rural in character when we leave our property boundary and head north to that of an industrial landscape with rows upon rows of metal solar panels. The same applies to views from the rear of our property towards the east, we will see views of these panels from our living room every day when I open the curtains, this view will be far greater in autumn and winter when our deciduous trees and shrubs will lose their leaves, we will then have a 27-metre-wide view (which is more than half the back section) towards the site.
- 8 In addition, we are concerned that our close proximity, and with a slow growth of the proposed boundary plantings this, will cause us problems with glint and glare.
- 9 The Applicant has had little-to-no community engagement on their proposal. Conversations have been reactionary, rather than proactive with most of the community learning of this via word of mouth and community meetings arranged by the affected parties. In the early days, some neighbours were asked to "keep it quiet". A Brookside resident whilst talking the developer's own wife asked her how she would like it if solar panels were placed across the road from her house too which she replied, "I wouldn't want to look at them".
- 10 KeaX, never sought written approval from us at 324 Branch Drain Road

- 11 We are concerned about the potential risk for a fire breaking out on the site. There has been no Fire Emergency Plan prepared. Given the rural location, the local fire brigades are staffed by volunteers. We believe that with an electrical fire they will just have to stand back and let it burn itself out. It's our understanding that highly toxic chemicals will be released into the air and all residents in the area will need to be evacuated immediately due to health risks.
- 12 We have spent more than 22 years building our rural lifestyle which we love. Whilst we won't be here forever it was our hope that at some point in the not too distant future another family would move in and enjoy the beautiful countryside of Brookside.
- 13 This solar farm project is having a profound effect on my mental health, I have been visited by a member of the rural support trust and it was suggested that I see a health improvement practitioner, to which I have done and am having weekly sessions with a therapist who is helping me overcome the panic attacks I am now experiencing, I have lost weight and I have trouble sleeping due to concerns about this proposal being constantly on my mind. I wouldn't wish this on anyone.
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**APPENDIX 1 – SITE PLAN OF 324 BRANCH DRAIN ROAD**



## **APPENDIX 2 – WAIKATO TIMES ARTICLE**

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/127917289/te-aroha-solar-farm-proposal-generates-support-and-questions-from-residents>



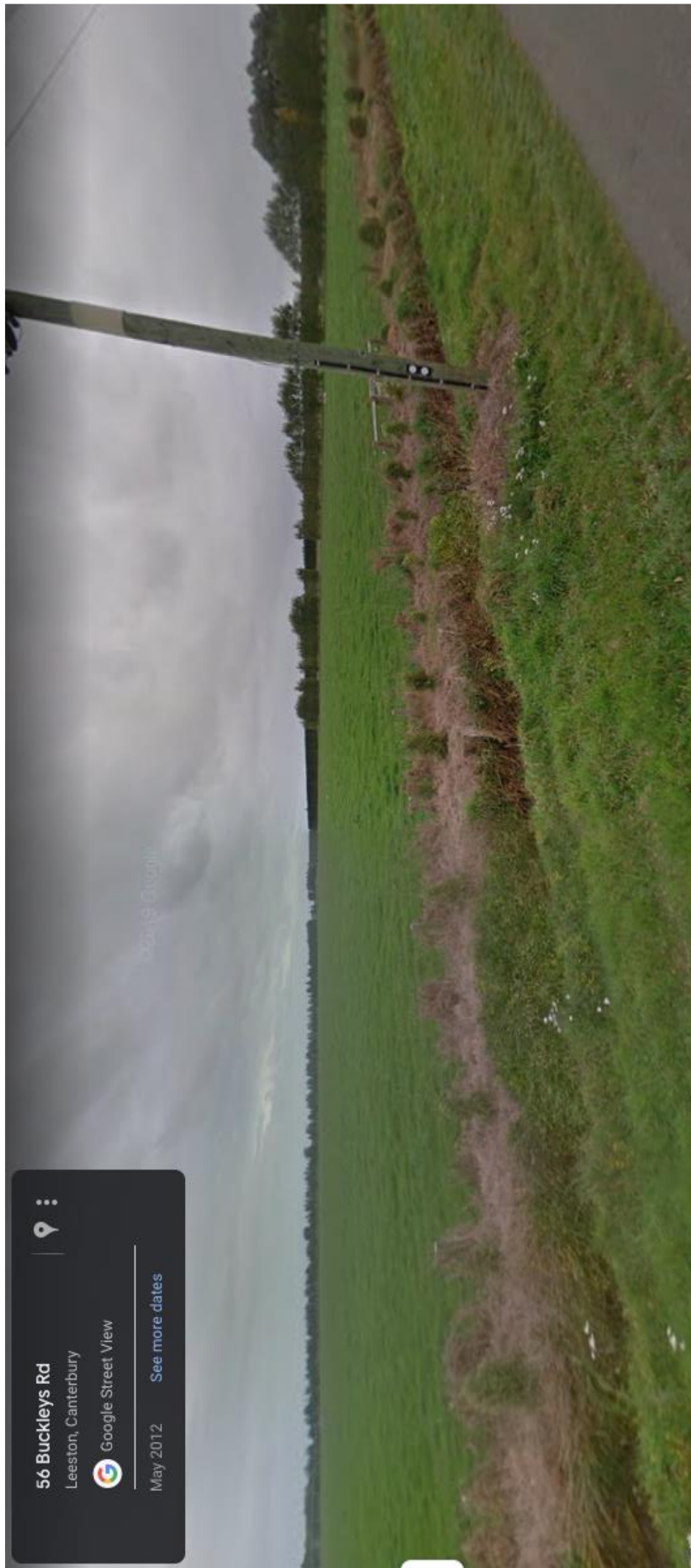
**APPENDIX 3 – ACCOUSTIC ENGINEERING SERVICES APP18, PAGE 13**

241?b? Branch Drain Road, Leeston	42	47	47	40	39
253 Smythes Road, Leeston	37	42	37	30	29
254 Smythes Road, Leeston	37	42	38	31	30
265 Branch Drain Road, Leeston	44	52	47	40	39
277 Branch Drain Road, Leeston	43	48	46	39	38
313 Branch Drain Road, Leeston	45	51	53	46	45
324 Branch Drain Road, Leeston	48	57	74	67	66
337 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	40	40	44	37	36
365 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	42	42	48	41	40
375 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	43	42	50	43	42
381 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	43	42	52	45	44
396 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	42	42	49	42	41
485 Brookside and Irwell Road, Leeston	40	45	41	34	33
870 Hanmer Road, Leeston	47	44	66	59	58
932 Hanmer Road, Leeston	44	45	51	44	43

## **APPENDIX 4 – SOUND RECORDING**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQzTTxWCRUA>

## **APPENDIX 5 – GOOGLE MAPS PHOTO**



56 Buckleys Rd

Leeston, Canterbury



Google Street View

May 2012

[See more dates](#)



## **APPENDIX 6 – PHOTO OF CAR AND HEDGE**



