

BEFOR 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

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF STEWART WILLIAM FLETCHER

Date 28 February 2023

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

1 Introduction

1.1 My name is Stewart Fletcher and I have provided planning evidence regarding resource consent application RC225180 for KeaX Limited to establish a solar farm at 150 Buckleys Road, Brookside.

1.2 I attended the first day of the Council Hearing and below I provide brief comments summarizing my evidence, observations from the first day of the hearing and comment on potential conditions.

2 Summary of Evidence

2.1 My evidence conditions three key points:

- (a) The resource consent application should have been processed on a publicly notified basis.
- (b) There is potentially other parties who should have been notified of the application.
- (c) A more considerate design of the proposal should have occurred and in not doing so potential effects have not been avoided, remedied or mitigated.

3 Day 1 Hearing Observations

3.1 Amendments to the proposal, being stronger landscape controls, have been made to better address potential effects. This reiterates my question as to notification.

3.2 I remain unclear as to the question of irrigation. Irrigation would be important as to any productive use of the property and also establishment of plantings. I do not recall irrigation being mentioned in the application documents but it was briefly mentioned at the hearing. I also remain unclear as to whether the site could be used as a productive unity but have previously noted that regardless, the agricultural productive capacity of the site will significantly reduce.

3.3 It is clear that there is a demand for accessibility to electricity substations for solar farms. We heard that the available capacity at the Dunsandel substation has

been taken by another solar farm. In considering the implications of the NPS-HPL, I question whether care needs to be taken in allocating space for different generators as, from a simplistic perspective (and depending on what is considered an operative need), by establishing a solar farm on highly productive land this takes away the opportunity to establish a solar farm on land which is not highly productive.

3.4 I remain unclear as to the operation of the batteries and whether they would operate at night.

3.5 Mr Reeves, in his summary evidence reiterates that noise from the solar farm will be clearly audible at times during the day. This reiterates my opinion that the proposal will introduce non-rural sounds into the local environment with consequent amenity related effects.

3.6 In the conclusion of her summary statement Ms Amanda Anthony specifies that the site will transition from an open rural landscape to a landscape of energy infrastructure. Which measures are proposed to reduce the effect I consider that the local community will be well aware that the site will consist of energy infrastructure including due to the impacts of noise.

4 Potential Conditions

4.1 The submitters have provided brief comment to me regarding additional conditions which could be imposed, if it is determined that resource consent can be granted.

4.2 I remain of the opinion that there are procedural flaws in the resource consent process and even if these are overcome significant consideration needs to be given to the design of the proposal. As such I am hesitant to imply that conditions may address the concerns. The submitters also remain of the opinion that resource consent should not be granted. Nevertheless, the suggested condition points raised by the submitters are as follows:

- a) A 150 metre strip from property boundaries should be established right around the whole project (based on the north island solar farm planned). Planting should be scaled from tall trees down to smaller plantings positioned 5 metres to -8 metres off the boundary and the rest of the

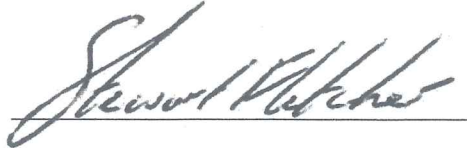
space to the end of the 150 metre strip a mowed track for fire track/fire break.

- b) All inverters and eventually batteries (although the batteries should be applied for in 5 years which would enable an understanding of the initial impacts of the proposal) need to be positioned in the middle of the Ward block and middle of the Price block to help reduce acoustic issues.
- c) The solar farm is not installed until all perimeter plantings are 4 metres minimum in height, no timeframe as growth slow due to soils.
- d) Water wells - testing of all wells annually every property south and southeast of the perimeter of the solar farm for 5 kms from the Caldwell road corner (tracking this from the power station down Buckleys road. (leachates).
- e) With regards to the Kewish property - if the project goes ahead the panels shall be moved 150metres away from the Kewish's. It is noted that if it is still sought for the panels to be close by the Kemish's property should be purchased by the applicant.
- f) A bond should be held for the disposal of the panels \$1m (held by the council).
- g) Solar Farm capped at 35 years term no right of renewal – for long term of protection of soil.
- h) A Bond to be held for Mr Casey -loss of crop income approx. \$100k per annual for the life of the solar farm (held by the council/solicitor).
- i) Evidence shall be provided online under this consent that all tests and conditions are continued to be complied with on an ongoing basis.
- j) A clause should be included that if the solar farm was to be sold the new owners would be liable.

- k) Public liability should be held by the consent holder for \$20m-\$30m,
evidence of this shall be provided annually, to all neighbours and council.

Stewart Fletcher

Dated 28 February 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stewart Fletcher', is written over a horizontal line.