

**BEFORE A COMMISSIONER APPOINTED BY THE SELWYN
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF applications by KeaX Limited for
resource consent to establish a solar
array at 150 Buckleys Road,
Brookside.

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF AMANDA LEIGH ANTHONY
ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT
(LANDSCAPE PLANNING)**

Dated: 23 February 2023

KeaX Limited
Applicant
Campbell McMath
(campbell@keaenergy.nz)

Applicant
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- 1.1 My full name is Amanda Leigh Anthony. My qualifications and experience are outlined within my primary evidence dated 9 February 2023. Since writing my primary evidence, I have read the evidence of Paul Andrew Smith, dated 16 February 2023 and comment, where necessary on this, in my Summary of Evidence.
- 1.1 Following the review of submissions and the s42a report, a revised landscape mitigation strategy is proposed to address landscape matters raised. The submitters have sought that construction of the solar farm should not commence until all landscaping reaches 2m in height. Mr Aimer supports this approach.
- (a) I would like to note that the revised mitigation planting strategy is not illustrated within the visual simulations prepared in September 2022. These visual simulations were prepared as a guide for the Council and their landscape peer reviewer, Mr Densem, to illustrate what the proposal could look like from representative public viewpoints. Based on this, I consider the visual simulations out of date as the planting strategy has been revised to address the concerns of the submitters.
- 1.2 Regarding Mr Smith's evidence:
- (a) I respond to his query as to whether or not the mitigation planting will grow in the first instance. As illustrated in the Site Photographs contained in my Graphic Supplement dated February 2022, the Site is capable of growing vegetation. This is apparent through the established and mature shelterbelts within and bordering the Site boundaries.
- (b) The proposed mitigation planting will be implemented with appropriate ground preparation, fertiliser (should this be required) and irrigation to ensure the best growing conditions are provided to give the plants a good head start. As previously described in my primary evidence, these details will be captured in the Landscape Management Plan which is a proposed condition of consent and will be maintained for the life of the solar farm.
- (c) As for plant growth rates, I agree with the expected growth rates sourced from the Southern Woods website at 5 years. However, due to planting larger grade species at a height of approximately

2m within the 'gaps' along Branch Drain Road and Buckleys Road from the beginning, the proposed mitigation planting should achieve, if not succeed the expected growth heights after five years.

- (d) I agree and acknowledge that by implementing larger grade plants, growth within the first year may be slower as the plant adapts to its new environment. However following this, the plants should make good progress based on the ground preparation, fertiliser and irrigation proposed.
 - (e) The proposed plant species all have varying growth rates. The 'gap' planting would consist of the faster growing, bushy, species, such as Ribbonwood, Kanuka and Hoheria and supplemented with pittosporum varieties as well as flaxes. This will provide a layered approach to the mitigation planting resulting in filtered and softened views of the solar arrays from day one.
 - (f) As previously mentioned, the solar arrays will be at a maximum height of 3.02m above ground level, so while the LVA relied on a 4m plant height, a majority of the proposal would be screened once the proposed plants reach a height of just over 3m.
 - (g) The alternative to implementing native plant species is introducing a double staggered row of exotic shelterbelt species which is faster growing and can reach 4m+ in height in a shorter time frame than native plant species. While the use of exotic plant species would not result in an adverse landscape effect, this alternative would not contribute to enhancing biodiversity in the area.
- 1.3 I am informed by Ms Kelly that as of right, the Site could be converted into a forestry block or be covered with tunnel houses without consent, potentially up to 8m in height. I consider that both of these options would be visually prominent and in contrast to the local landscape but would not require mitigation planting or screening to maintain or enhance the rural character and amenity values of the rural area.

1.4 In conclusion:

- (a) While the Site will transition from an open rural landscape to a landscape of energy infrastructure, in my opinion, the proposed mitigation planting along the Site boundaries will visually contain the proposal within the confines of the Site and screen it from neighbouring views over time, therefore limiting the character change to the immediate Site area.
- (b) The concerns of Mr Aimer in his s42a report and the submitters have been addressed through the revised mitigation planting strategy and by recommending a Landscape Management Plan be prepared for the Site.

Amanda Leigh Anthony

23 February 2023