

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF AMANDA LEIGH ANTHONY
LANDSCAPE PLANNING

DATED: 4th March 2024

My full name is Amanda Leigh Anthony. My qualifications and experience are outlined within my primary evidence dated 16 February 2024. The following is a summary of the key matters addressed in my evidence and comment is provided on amenity matters raised in Stewart William Fletcher's evidence (planner for the submitters) dated 23 January 2024.

Key matters addressed in my primary evidence:

I have assessed the proposal as having very localised, adverse landscape effects of **low-moderate** (equating to minor), reducing to **low** beyond the Site over time due to the proposed mitigation planting. The adverse visual effects will range from **low to low-moderate** for public viewing locations and **neutral to low** for private viewing locations following the construction of the solar farm. As the mitigation planting is established within the 'gap' areas and grows to form a dense impermeable screen, the adverse visual effects will reduce to **very low** from all public viewing locations and **very low to neutral** from all private viewing locations.

Confirmation of plant species and discussion on native vs exotic plant species

Mr Bigsby sought clarity on the proposed plant species as described in the s42A report. As set out in Section 7.0 of my Landscape Effects Assessment (LEA), the proposed plant species shall consist of fast-growing, evergreen exotic shelterbelt species (*Cupressus x ovensii*, Oven's Cypress or a similar plant species with a very rapid growth rate). The exotic plant species (Oven's Cypress) was selected based on its very rapid growth rate, existence in the local area and the visually impermeable barrier it forms. To clarify, a 'similar plant species' as referred to in my LEA is considered to be another 'Cypress' variety that is capable of a similar growth rate and forming a visually impermeable barrier.

While I acknowledge that both Mr Bigsby and Mr Craig support a mix of native and exotic plantings, which I agree with, it has been made reasonably clear through the submissions, that neighbouring properties are concerned about the potential visibility of the solar arrays. To ensure the Proposal is visually contained in the shortest period of time possible, exotic fast-growing shelterbelt plant species have been proposed. Shelterbelts (specifically

cypress varieties) are a common feature across the local Brookside area and the proposed planting will continue a similar pattern and character.

Further to this, the Glint and Glare analysis and findings are also based on the existing vegetation in place around the Site boundaries (consisting largely of exotic species) in addition to the proposed mitigation planting.

Native plants are generally slower growing than exotics and given the context and concern from the submitters of the potential visibility and visual effects of the proposal, exotic planting has been proposed.

Effects on rural amenity (character) values

Regarding Mr Fletcher's evidence on rural character and amenity, Mr Craig (landscape expert on behalf of SDC) and I (also a landscape expert) agree as to the nature and extent of adverse effects on rural amenity values as they relate to the Site.

However, I respond to Mr Fletcher's statement in paragraph 21 of his evidence, which states:

On the basis of the characteristics of the area, it is suggested that there is a higher sensitivity to persons being impacted by a significant change in the nature and character of the application site particularly in reference to the character of the local area. It is considered that this change to the amenity and character of the local area will be more than minor for those persons in the local area, including those that pass by the site, either by vehicle, cycling or walking.

As set out in Te Tangi a te Manu¹, which is the Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, it states: *Change itself is not an effect; landscapes change constantly. Effects on landscape values are assessed against the existing environment and the relevant statutory provisions. Provisions often anticipate change and certain outcomes for landscape values.*

As described in my primary evidence in paragraphs 10.3c – 10.3g, the relevant statutory provisions within the ODP and PODP anticipate change in rural environments.

Within that context, I remain of the opinion that, from a landscape and visual perspective, the effects of the Proposal on rural amenity (character) values for nearby residents and

¹ Refer to paragraphs 6.03 – 6.06.

persons in the local area will be at most minor, reducing to less than minor as the proposed mitigation planting establishes, and therefore appropriate.

Overall, I also note that:

- Mr Craig agrees with the observations and conclusions reached in my Landscape Effects Assessment.
- Mr Van der Velden agrees with my glint and glare findings and concludes that once all mitigation measures have been taken into account, the overall impact will be less than minor for both dwellings and road users.
- The concerns of Mr Bigsby in his s42a report and the submitters have been addressed through the Revised Landscape Mitigation Plan and the proposed condition requiring a Landscape Management Plan to be prepared for the Site.