

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act (“**the Act**”)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the hearing of submissions on the Proposed  
Lower Hutt District Plan

Opening Hearing

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HANNAH RITCHIE**

**FOR NEW ZEALAND PORK INDUSTRY BOARD**

**(NZPork)**

**April 2026**

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## **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

1. My name is Hannah Ritchie. I am currently employed as the Environment and Planning Manager at NZ Pork. Prior to this role, I held the position of Senior Environmental Advisor at NZPork from 2019–2023. Additionally, I have worked as a policy advisor for the Foundation for Arable Research and spent seven years in resource management roles at Canterbury Regional Council.
2. I have a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Southampton and a Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Management from Lincoln University. I am accredited as a Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP) by the Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand.
3. While this is not a hearing under the Environment Court, I have read the Environment Court’s Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, and I agree to comply with it. My qualifications are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where I state I am relying on what I have been told by another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## **INDUSTRY CONTEXT**

4. The New Zealand Pork Industry Board (NZ Pork) is a statutory industry body funded by producer levies. Its role is to represent the interests of New Zealand pig farmers and support a sustainable and profitable domestic pork sector.
5. The New Zealand pork industry is a small but well-integrated primary production sector, with fewer than 70 commercial producers nationwide. Pig farming activities can give rise to effects such as odour, and are therefore particularly sensitive to reverse sensitivity and land use conflict arising from the encroachment of incompatible activities.

## **SENSITIVE ACTIVITY DEFINITION**

6. NZ Pork submitted in opposition to the Proposed District Plans' definition of "Sensitive activities", which is framed as a set of sub-definitions linked to specific environmental effects, as follows:

*Sensitive activities means, as the context requires:*

1. *activities most sensitive to natural hazards,*
2. *activities potentially sensitive to natural hazards,*
3. *activities sensitive to gas transmission infrastructure,*
4. *activities sensitive to hazardous substance risks,*
5. *activities sensitive to industry,*
6. *activities sensitive to light,*
7. *activities sensitive to noise,*
8. *activities sensitive to privacy intrusion, or*
9. *activities sensitive to the National Grid.*

7. Our concern is that this approach narrows the scope of the definition to particular effect types, with the consequence that effects associated with primary production activities, particularly those relevant to reverse sensitivity, are not adequately captured.
8. We note that the S42A report rejects our submission on the basis that the alternative definition put forward by NZ Pork would not align with the structural framework of the PDP. We acknowledge this rationale, especially in the context of the Plan's structure, which is characterised by a relatively limited General Rural Zone (GRUZ), alongside extensive urban and natural open space zones.
9. Notwithstanding this, we observe that, in many other district plans<sup>1</sup>, and several national instruments<sup>2</sup>, the definition of "sensitive activity" is applied more broadly in the context of managing reverse sensitivity and land use conflict. This is a key issue for the pork industry, where activities such as

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<sup>1</sup> Including Wellington District Plan; Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan; Horowhenua District Plan.

<sup>2</sup> Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009; National Policy Statement for Infrastructure 2025.

odour generation can give rise to constraints from encroaching sensitive land uses.

10. Therefore, while we acknowledge the particular structural issues the reporting planner has identified at this time, it remains of interest to NZ Pork that the plan provides a robust structural framework for primary production activities as per the General Rural Zone description set out in the National Planning Standards<sup>3</sup>:

*Areas used predominantly for primary production activities, including intensive indoor primary production. The zone may also be used for a range of activities that support primary production activities, including associated rural industry, and other activities that require a rural location.*

11. Given the above, NZ Pork does not seek further amendment to the definition at this stage of the hearings process. However, we signal that this issue remains of interest to us, and may need to be revisited during the GRUZ hearings, where the adequacy of provisions relating to reverse sensitivity and the protection of primary production activities (including intensive indoor primary production) will be addressed.

**Hannah Ritchie**

**April 2026**

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry for the Environment. November 2019. National Planning Standards.