ORAL TESTIMONY ON HUTT DISTRICT PLAN

Stephanie Middleton

15 Whiorau Grove, Lowry Bay

Firstly I would like to thank the Panel Members for giving me the opportunity to appear in person and share with you some aspects of the District Plan that have caused me so much worry and distress.

I have one all important recommendation to highlight but, before doing that, I want to put to you that there is a human side entangled within this voluminous planning exercise and the reports relating to it. I am a widow of 23 years with three now adult children.

The proposed flood overlay (High/MED/LOW) is placing a totally unreasonable burden based on extreme modelling assumption.

The property at 15 Whiorau Grove in Lowry Bay represents the totality of my worldly assets. I have lived in Eastbourne my entire life until the last 12 months and I know the area and have experienced many storms in the past 60 years

When I purchased the property in 2022, after a thorough investigation for insurance purposes and my own peace of mind the Council Officers assured me that there were no risks of which I should be aware.

In particular there was absolutely no history of flooding. I felt reassured and invested in the property.

The core purpose of Local Government is to promote the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of their communities.

In the short time of four years since I purchased the property I have been forced to rent the house and live with one of my children In Auckland to cope with the extraordinary increases in rates, insurances and mortgage repayments.

Rather than promote our economic wellbeing the Hutt City Council's plan, at least in the context of natural hazards, appears to have adopted for modelling the extreme and potentially the most financially damaging predictions arising out of climate change over the next 100 years.

I ask you who would want to purchase property shown to be deemed at least nominally to be at "high risk" of flooding? Would you bother investigating further as how this zoning was contrived? Of course not!

It would seem that some other Councils have done the same, to a point whereas the Minister of Climate Change has felt it necessary to write to Mayors, Chairs and Chief Executives regarding climate change assumptions in Council planning.

You will have the Minister's letter which makes it clear that while "*councils should plan for climate risks, but they must also plan for affordability*" rather than default to the worst case **pessimistic scenario** as the Hutt District Plan appears to do at least in respect to flooding.

S42 states that HCC uses a substantially higher climate change scenario which supports this pessimistic approach as it carries more opportunity and benefits – this is contrary to the recommendations of the minister HON Chris Watt

Officials have been directed by the minister to review their currently planning ASSUMPTIONS and undertake climate related decisions appropriately balancing affordability and value for money

'Prioritise adaptive pathways and staged investment approaches wherever practical, rather than defaulting to immediate construction of infrastructure designed solely around worst-case assumptions'.

'The Government does not consider it appropriate for worse case assumptions to become the default basis for investment decisions that impose significant costs on current and future ratepayers'

If I may I would now like to address my particular concern about the flooding overlays that potentially and significantly devalue my home, quite apart from the unrelated market fluctuations which fall outside the scope of the RMA.

The commentaries I have read in the Officers Report indicate that there are real misgivings about the authenticity of the overlays and their construction.

May I draw your attention to the absurdity of the overlays imposed on my small property at 15 Whiorau Grove, Lowry bay which is well above the Tsunami line.

In the space of 30 metres the overlays show three zones one of **"High risk**" one of **"Medium ris**k" and one of **"Low Risk**".

The rationale for the "**High Risk**" zone appears to stem from a minor water corridor that flows under the front veranda of my house not underneath it as shown on the plan. There is no evidence or record of it ever overflowing in the past even during the most extreme "once in a 100 year" storms experienced in the last two years.

You will see that below the "**High Risk**" zone and still within the boundaries of my property there is a **"Medium Risk**" zone and then believe it or not a third zone of "**Low Risk"**.

Three zones all on the one small property!

Any on-site assessment would show that if the water corridor ever did overflow the natural gradient of the section would cause the water to flow across the medium risk zone into the designated low risk zone and in particular away from the house shown to be at high risk.

Another, but related anomaly, as noted explicitly in the Report, is that the high flood hazard associated with the water corridor is restricted **solely** to my property, whilst in reality, it runs through multiple other properties.

It is acknowledged in the Report that there is an error in the modelling in as much as the flood hazard overlays do not include the adjacent properties through which the water corridor passes.

It is stated that because the current set of mapping sent out for consultation does not include my neighbours' properties, they should be dealt with at a later stage and the present overlays on my section should remain unchanged meantime.

S42A (Pages 90-92 Alastair Osborne Appendix B1.) Flood Modelling

I have reviewed the relevant hydraulic model and can confirm there is an error in the flood hazard overlays at this location as they do not include the full extent of the stream described in the submission and represented in the model (see Section 21).

I recommend the flood hazard overlays are updated to include the missing stream corridors. In the interim, I recommend the flood hazard overlays remain unchanged.

Frankly this is unacceptable, as I can see it being lost in the mist of future time, and will continue to frustrate my attempts to realise my property asset and move to a more affordable residence.

In fairness I earnestly request that the Panel recommends that the "High" and "Medium" hazard classifications are removed from my property until the changes to the neighbouring properties are considered, so that the flood hazard mapping in the locality can be looked at holistically and involve all the land owners.

Below are images of the current flood hazard overlays and the recommended update including stream corridors.


LAYING