

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act
1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of applications to the **WAIKATO
DISTRICT COUNCIL** and
WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL
by **WEL NETWORKS LTD** for
resource consents to authorise the
establishment, operation and
maintenance of 28 wind turbines for
the generation of electricity and
associated activities on the
Wharauoroa Plateau near Te Uku

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF CHRISTOPHER JOHN DAWSON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Christopher John Dawson. I hold the qualifications of a Diploma in Parks and Recreation Management with Distinction from Lincoln University (1989), a Bachelor of Social Science with Honours majoring in Geography and Resources and Environmental Planning (1996), and a Post Graduate Diploma in Resources and Environmental Planning from Waikato University (1997). I have eleven years experience in resource management planning in New Zealand and I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and the Resource Management Law Association.
- 1.2 My work experience over the past eleven years has involved preparing, processing and reporting on subdivision and land use applications for projects throughout the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, King Country and South Auckland. More recently I have been involved with structure planning in Raglan, Whitford, Cambridge and Te Kauwhata along with industrial land strategies for several territorial local authorities.
- 1.3 I am currently employed as a Senior Planner at Bloxam Burnett and Olliver (BBO), a firm of consulting engineers, planners and surveyors based in Hamilton. I have worked in this capacity since February 2001.

Involvement in the project

- 1.4 I have been involved with the WEL wind park project since December 2005, have visited the site and the surrounding rural areas and local settlements numerous times and am very familiar with the project, site and surrounding locality. My role in the WEL wind farm project is to facilitate consultation with key stakeholders, landowners and the general public.

Expert Witness Code of Conduct

- 1.5 I have been provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court's Consolidated Practice Note 2006 [2006] NZRMA 357. I have read and agree to comply with that Code. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying upon the specified evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

Purpose and Scope of Evidence

- 1.6 The purpose of my evidence is to outline the consultation processes undertaken by WEL Networks in relation to the wind farm, including consultation with tangata whenua groups, affected parties, surrounding landowners, key stakeholders and other interest groups. I will discuss the methods used, the actions and outcomes and the material changes that were made to the project as a result of the consultation feedback.
- 1.7 This evidence needs to be read alongside the evidence of Mr Underhill who also addresses project announcement, communications and public consultation.
- 1.8 Against that background, my evidence will address the following:
- (a) Summary of evidence (Section 2);
 - (b) Overview of project (Section 3);
 - (c) Development of the consultation strategy (Section 4);
 - (d) Consultation with potentially affected parties (Section 5);
 - (e) Consultation with key stakeholders (Section 6);
 - (f) Comments on submissions relating to consultation (Section 7);
 - (g) Proposed conditions (Section 8);

(h) Conclusion (Section 9)

2. SUMMARY

Information sharing and consultation strategy

2.1 WEL developed an information sharing and consultation strategy in the early phases of the project, which was designed to achieve a specified set of objectives.

Communication and consultation with potentially affected parties

2.2 Early on in the development of the project, it was decided that communication and consultation would be early, proactive and comprehensive. For this reason, information sharing and consultation began before the design of the project had been fully developed so as to understand local issues before finalising plans for the project.

2.3 A public project announcement was made and a mailout undertaken soon after the start of the technical investigations. Five public meetings at local communities around the wind farm site were also held for the purposes of sharing information with the community.

2.4 Letters were sent to over 300 local landowners offering the chance for an in-home visit to discuss the project and 25 such visits took place between May and November 2006.

2.5 Two public open days were held on 24 May 2006 and 27 November at which WEL's technical experts were available to answer questions and discuss the project.

2.6 In addition, three chartered flights were organised to take any interested parties to Palmerston North for a tour of the Te Apiti wind farm. Forty three people took the opportunity to visit the Te Apiti wind park.

2.7 The purpose of WEL's comprehensive consultation strategy was to understand locals' concerns from an early stage. The key issues arising out of the consultation process were those relating to visual, noise, property values and transportation. WEL responded to each of these concerns with further investigations and, in some cases, altering aspects of the proposal.

Consultation with key stakeholders

- 2.8 WEL also undertook consultation with key stakeholders, including tangata whenua, Department of Conservation, the Civil Aviation Authority, Telecom, Transit New Zealand, the Waikato District Council Roding Department, Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game, Te Uku Community Hall and Te Uku School.
- 2.9 Significant consultation was undertaken with tangata whenua, including meetings between the CEO and Chairman of the WEL Board and members of Ngati Mahunga. Tangata whenua appointed a Cultural Advisory team and developed a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report which made recommendations to WEL in respect of the project, which were taken account of in the design of the project; “Te Hauhiko O Wharauoa”. In my view, the lack of iwi submitters is representative of WEL’s comprehensive consultation with tangata whenua in relation to this project.
- 2.10 Agreements have been reached with the Department of Conservation, the Civil Aviation Authority, Telecom and Transit New Zealand as a result of WEL’s consultation with those parties.
- 2.11 The consultation undertaken for the wind park project has provided WEL Networks with a clear understanding of the issues of concern to the surrounding landowners and key stakeholders. These have been addressed where possible through design changes, conditions or mitigation measures.

Key outcomes of consultation

- 2.12 A summary of the key measures agreed are:
- (a) A protocol has been agreed with Ngati Mahanga on accidental discovery processes;
 - (b) A viewing platform, parking and road safety improvements have been proposed in the vicinity of the Te Uku Hall;
 - (c) A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Department of Conservation to address potential effects on native birds and bats.
 - (d) A memorandum of understanding has been signed with Telecom to address potential impacts on the operation of the Te Uku Telecom tower;
 - (e) Agreement has been reached with the Roding Department of Waikato District Council over upgrading and improvements to Plateau Road;

- (f) Several of the turbines will be lit at night to ensure appropriate visibility for passing aircraft and a declaration has been obtained from the Civil Aviation Authority;
- (g) Turbine 22 was removed from the wind farm layout and replaced with turbine 29 in response to public concern over visibility

Frew submission

- 2.13 Mr Frew's submission raises issues in relation to the consultation process undertaken by WEL. As consultation manager for the wind park project, I had to select consultation methods that best met WEL's strategy. I consider that the combination of open days, in-home meetings and meetings with key stakeholders was the most effective way to undertake consultation on this project.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- 3.1 The WEL wind farm involves the construction of 28 wind turbines on the Wharauora Plateau on a broad ridge south of Te Uku village and north of the Pirongia State Forest Park. An access road will be constructed from the west along the general alignment of Plateau Road and through the wind farm itself. Detail of the proposal is covered in the evidence of Mr Roger Burchett.

4. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY

- 4.1 An information sharing and consultation strategy was developed in conjunction with WEL Networks staff and Mr Roger Burchett as project director, at the commencement of the wind farm project to achieve a number of specific objectives:
- (a) To provide a clear understanding of the issues of each stakeholder group or individual with an assessment made as to the validity of that issue, whether any mitigation is possible and changes made to the application where appropriate.
 - (b) To allow for appropriate identification of "cross over issues" that require liaison between members of the consent team to adequately address.
 - (c) To develop a clear consultation record detailing the meetings held, issues raised and response to each issue and what changes were made to the application, if any.
 - (d) To provide sufficient information for a consultation section prepared for inclusion in the consent application.

- (e) To allow for clear and robust consultation evidence presented to the Council hearing and Environment Court if required.

5. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION WITH POTENTIALLY AFFECTED PARTIES

5.1 This section of my evidence will discuss the consultation that was undertaken following on from the initial public announcement and public meetings, through consultation meetings with surrounding landowners, public open days and extensive discussions with key stakeholders. The consultation record is **attached** at **Appendix 1**.

Initial announcements and public meetings

5.2 As outlined in Mr Underhill’s evidence, WEL’s consultation philosophy on the WEL wind park project was to share information with the community and key stakeholders at a very early stage in order to get ideas and feedback before the project design and development had progressed too far down the track for community input to make any real difference to the project.

5.3 The information sharing process began with a public announcement of the project on 11 March 2006 and a public communication mailout at the same time. The different groups and the respective information sent out are detailed in Table 1 below: Table 1 – Communication Strategy – March 2006:

Group	Number	Information sent
All WEL customers west of the Waipa River to Raglan and north to Te Akau	2000	Personalised letter Four page tabloid Question & Answer booklet
Remaining WEL customers	66,000	Personalised letter Foldout brochure
Top 100 businesses in the Waikato	100	Personalised letter Four page tabloid Question & Answer booklet

5.4 A series of public meetings were held when the wind resource was reasonably well understood and a preliminary turbine layout had been developed, but few other details were clear. The project team wanted to know what the local landowners, affected communities and key stakeholders views were before completing their investigations and finalising the project parameters.

- 5.5 The first public meeting was held in Te Uku, followed by successive meetings in Te Mata, Raglan, Kawhia and Te Akau. Each meeting consisted of a project briefing by Mr Mike Underhill, WEL Networks Chief Executive along with a discussion of project details by Mr Roger Burchett, Project Director. A question and answer session followed each briefing and project staff were available to answer specific questions.
- 5.6 An offer of guided trips to the Te Apiti wind farm near Palmerston North was also made at each of the public meetings to provide any interested party with a chance to see and listen to an operating wind farm.
- 5.7 This initial communication work ensured that a reasonable level of public awareness of the project was out in the community. A general introductory letter was then prepared, introducing the consultation team (Kellie Ellis – Project Delivery Manager at WEL and Chris Dawson – Consultation Manager) and offering a chance to meet and discuss any questions or concerns.

Consultation with landowners

- 5.8 Letters were initially sent to all landowners within 5 kilometres of the wind park site; a distance adopted based on the surrounding topography and the advice of the project landscape architect. All those property owners owning land immediately adjacent to the wind park site were specifically identified and phone contact made offering the opportunity for an in-home meeting with the consultation team.
- 5.9 A total of 25 out of 213 surrounding and adjacent landowners took up the offer of an in-home visit. The initial visit comprised an explanation of the project detail, the review of a large aerial photo of the site containing the preliminary locations of the initial 24 turbines and the access road. The general project parameters including timeframes, turbine height, noise, visual, ecological, traffic and property valuation details were generally the key matters raised by most landowners during the course of each visit. Meeting notes were prepared following each in-home meeting and information or follow up tasks completed. Some of the landowners were visited twice during the course of the project development.

Public Open Days

- 5.10 An important aspect of the consultation work was the two public open days held at the Te Uku Hall on:
- (a) Wednesday 24 May from 12.00 noon to 6.00 pm; and

(b) Monday 27 November 2006 from 2.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

- 5.11 The purpose of the Open Days was to provide a forum where members of the public were able to sit down with the technical consultants working on the project for WEL and discuss any questions or concerns face to face. Each open day ran from early afternoon until the evening to allow sufficient time for people to visit and discuss their concerns.
- 5.12 Technical consultants in the areas of visual, noise, property values, ecology, archaeology and technical operations were available at each open day and fact sheets on key issues were prepared for people to take away with them. Copies of these fact sheets are part of Attachment 1 to my evidence. Key areas of interest during both open days were visual, noise and property valuation issues.
- 5.13 The open day held on 24 May was timed to ensure that the technical consultants had commenced but not completed their investigations. This open day was an opportunity for the sharing of concerns and for additional work to be undertaken by specific consultants if required.
- 5.14 The open day held on 27 November was timed to ensure that the technical consultants had largely completed their work and provided an opportunity for them to discuss those findings and answer questions. Over 160 people attended the open days, many of whom attended both days.
- 5.15 In my opinion the consultation undertaken with local landowners and potentially affected communities has been comprehensive and has enabled the WEL project team to understand and respond to the key issues of concern to local people. Several aspects of the project were amended as a result of the consultation feedback.

Site visit to Te Apiti wind farm

- 5.16 One of the challenges with the consultation process was that wind farms were not a familiar sight for most landowners, with the closest operating wind farm located near Palmerston North. It was therefore difficult for the landowners to fully appreciate the size, shape and sounds associated with an operating wind farm. The consultation team offered each landowner an opportunity to visit the Te Apiti wind farm near Ashurst on a chartered plane from Hamilton.
- 5.17 Three chartered flights were undertaken over the course of the wind park investigation period and a total of 43 people took up the invitation of a wind farm trip. Each trip was lead by a WEL staff member who organized the day and pointed

out key points of interest along the way. A chartered bus took each group up to the Te Apiti wind farm, stopping at points along the route that corresponded with the distances of interest at Te Uku. Each bus stopped at a 10 km point, which corresponded to the approximate distance from Raglan to the wind farm site. Stops were also made at the 5 km point, corresponding to the distance from Te Mata to the wind farm, the 3 km point, corresponding to the distance from the Te Uku village to the wind farm site and then the public viewing platform at Ashurst.

- 5.18 The bus then drove up into the centre of the Te Apiti wind farm and stopped at the publicly accessible turbine to allow time for people to see, touch and listen to the turbines in operation. The purpose of each trip was to allow everyone a chance to form their own opinion about wind farms, beyond that offered by viewing pictorial and written material.

Issues arising out of consultation

- 5.19 The primary purpose of the surrounding landowner consultation was to try and understand the concerns of the local community early in the process and to avoid, remedy or mitigate those concerns, where possible.

Visual Issues

- 5.20 The primary concerns expressed in the course of the consultation visits were the visual effects of the wind farm followed by the potential noise impacts. An explanation of the visual and noise work being undertaken by other members of the consultant team was given during those visits. Specific visual concerns were noted and passed onto the project landscape architect to take into account of in his assessment work. The concerns expressed through the visits was also collated and fed back into the project team meetings to ensure that all factors were assessed when making project decisions.
- 5.21 Partly as a result of this consultation and in response to the concerns over proximity and visibility, Turbine 22, which was the closest of all proposed turbines to residential properties, was replaced with Turbine 29 to offset this concern. The location of a turbine at position 29 is supported by the relevant landowner. There is further discussion on the locating of turbine 29 in the evidence of Mr Burchett and Mr Mansergh.

Noise Issues

- 5.22 Several of the closest landowners expressed a concern over the potential noise impacts that may arise from the operation of the wind park. This information was

relayed to the acoustic consultant working on the project to take into account in his overall assessment. Mr Hegley was also present at both Public Open Days held at the Te Uku Hall in May and November 2006 and was able to discuss noise issues directly with interested parties. Mr Hegley will address noise related issues in his evidence.

Property Valuation Issues

- 5.23 Many landowners expressed a concern that the wind farm would adversely affect their property values. WEL engaged the services of professional valuers to undertake property valuations for nine local landowners to ensure they were properly informed on any potential impacts. Each of these valuations was confidential to the property owner concerned. Mr Doug Saunders will address valuation issues in detail in his evidence.

Transportation Issues

- 5.24 A number of landowners consulted were concerned at the potential traffic impacts during the construction period for the wind park. Particular concern was raised in relation to the possible use of Van Houtte Road as the primary site access. Concern was also expressed in terms of the existing development around the intersection of State Highway 23, Matakotea Road and Okete Road where the Te Uku School, Te Uku Store and Te Uku Hall are located. Particular concern was expressed over the potential for construction traffic to conflict with morning and afternoon peak periods at the school.
- 5.25 Further assessment of the Van Houtte Road as primary site access was carried out by the project team. A combination of alignment concerns over Van Houtte Road along with concerns over the cost of any road upgrade and visual concerns over the extent of earthworks required to achieve a suitable road grade up to the Wharaurua Plateau resulted in a decision to look at alternative access options.
- 5.26 Roding and traffic related issues are covered in the evidence of Mr Keyte and Mr Apeldoorn.

6. CONSULTATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- 6.1 This section of my evidence will describe the consultation undertaken with key stakeholders identified before and during the preparation of the Assessment of Environmental Effects. It will describe the actions taken during the consultation with each party including measures such as site visits, provision of information and discussion over draft consent conditions. I will also comment on the specific

amendments made to the project description and project details resulting from this consultation.

Tangata Whenua

- 6.2 The WEL project team placed a lot of emphasis on establishing a good working relationship with tangata whenua early in the project development. Early contact was made with Ms Angeline Greensill of Tainui Awhiro in Raglan, who advised that the wind park was within the rohe (area) of Ngati Mahanga. Discussions with Mr Eru Thompson, Ngati Mahanga Trust Board Chairman resulted in an initial meeting to brief the iwi on the project.
- 6.3 The WEL Chief Executive, Mr Mike Underhill, the Chairman of the WEL Board, Mr Rodger Fisher and members of the project team met with members of Ngati Mahanga at their marae in Frankton in early March 2006, prior to the public announcement of the project. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the project and to request Ngati Mahanga to advise WEL how they would like to be consulted on the wind park project.
- 6.4 A follow up meeting was later held with members of the Ngati Mahanga Trust Board on 2 June 2006 at the Aramiro Marae, Waitetuna Valley. The meeting traversed issues such as information sharing, provision of cultural heritage advice and the engagement of an independent Ngati Mahanga cultural advisor for the project team. Sunnah Thompson and Wally Crawford were appointed to fill this role, with the subsequent appointment of Kawana Pihama to complete the 3 person team.
- 6.5 The 2 June meeting was followed up with a further meeting on 21 June to clarify the roles of the Cultural Advisory team and to confirm the details for the Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) that was to be prepared by Ngati Mahanga for the project.
- 6.6 The boundaries of the Ngati Mahanga rohe area those described in section 6 of the Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) attached as Appendix H to the application:

“The Mahanga rohe boundary begins at the summit of Pirongia on the peak called Mahaukura and runs N/E to a position on the Horotiu/Waikato river formerly called Horotiu but now known as the Narrows. From there it stretches to Pukeiahua at the junction of the Waipa and Waikato rivers. Up the Waipa to Nga Tokorua o Te Rawhatihoro, a stream near Karakariki, where it turns right in a straight line to the west and Parawai stream. This stream is an outlet of the Waitetuna River at Whaingaroa harbour.”

The boundary then follows the harbour to Putoetoe (Raglan) and the Oporuru River. It then turns S/W and up the Oporuru estuary to Takapaunui and Te Hutewai to Pakaraka and Ruapuke. It then follows the sea coast to Ngati Te Wehi rohe then S/E to Pakoka stream. The western boundary of Wharauoa turns north to Tutaenui near the Waitetuna River , then turning south along a range of hills to Tukumarū, still south to Pukeruru, Putou to Tuporotangi south again to Te Tihi o Tonganui thence to Te Papatapu on Aotea harbour and follows the seashore to Pakoka. Then from Pakoka back to Mahaukura on Mount Pirongia.

- 6.7 It was agreed that WEL would resource Ngati Mahanga to prepare a Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) to record the history of Ngati Mahanga with respect to the wind farm site and discuss any sites or areas of cultural significance on the site along with recommended mitigation measures.
- 6.8 As part of the preparation of this report two full days of field work were carried out with Ngati Mahanga members in conjunction with the project archaeologist, Mr Warren Gumbley to verify the location, significance and extent of any cultural heritage sites. As a result of these visits the location of a significant pa site, Te Tihi-o-Tonganui, was verified. The fieldwork also confirmed that cultural artefacts could be uncovered during the extensive site earthworks, or the development of the two borrow pits to be established on site for the production of aggregate. It was also identified during the field work that the site of the original Vanhoutte homestead should be protected from adverse effects during development.
- 6.9 The CHAR recommended the following mitigation measures be taken:
- (a) The wind park be named “The WEL Wind Park – Te Hauhiko o Wharauoa;
 - (b) Any wind farm construction be designed to avoid the Te Tihi-o-Tonganui pa site. This is captured by condition 35 in the Proposed District Council consent conditions (see Appendix 1).
 - (c) Silt control measures be in place during construction to prevent silt from entering waterways. This issue is captured through a requirement for an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) in the consent conditions for Environment Waikato and a requirement to include this ESCP in an Environmental Management Plan for the site under condition 4 (see Appendix 1).
 - (d) Agreed protocols are in place between Ngati Mahanga and the applicant should artefacts be discovered during earthworks. This issue is captured by conditions 36 and 37 in the Proposed District Council consent conditions (see **Appendix 2**).

- 6.10 In my view, WEL's consultation with iwi was comprehensive and that is demonstrated by the fact that there have been no submissions made by iwi on the proposal.

Department of Conservation

- 6.11 The Department of Conservation (DoC) were identified as a key stakeholder due to the proximity of the wind park site to the Pirongia Forest Park, Bridal Veil Falls and various local areas of native bush. A number of meetings were held with DoC staff during 2006 and 2007 to discuss issues of concern including potential effects on indigenous bats and birds, sedimentation of local watercourses and potential mitigation options to address both matters.
- 6.12 Discussions over the potential effects of water takes and discharges in the vicinity of Bridal Veil Falls as a result of the Te Mata Quarry were concluded successfully. DoC agreed with the mitigation and rehabilitation measures proposed as part of the quarry expansion application. The Regional consent for the quarry expansion has been granted and I understand that the District consent is forthcoming.
- 6.13 As a result of extensive consultation and liaison between the project ecologist, Mr Gerry Kessels and DoC staff, a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") was signed with DoC in respect of avifauna effects from the wind farm. DoC was satisfied that the level of risk is not unacceptable and was concerned to have monitoring undertaken to confirm that this was the case and mitigation measures which would address any effects which might arise.
- 6.14 The MOU was designed to record the areas of agreement over monitoring and mitigation measures WEL would undertake as applicant. The MOU records the parameters of a comprehensive monitoring programme including the setting up, implementation and reporting. Agreed mitigation measures to address potential effects of the wind farm in terms of both population and strike effects for bats, falcons and other indigenous birds recorded in the agreement include financial contributions to local programmes that support the maintenance of healthy populations of falcons and bats. The elements of the agreement have been set out as conditions of consent in Appendix 1 to my evidence.

Air Safety

- 6.15 Consultation was undertaken with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to determine the effects of the wind farm on the safe and efficient use of airspace by aircraft. Consultation was also undertaken with the operators of the Raglan airstrip (Waikato District Council) and a representative of the topdressing pilots utilising the

area (Superair Ltd) to ensure that their issues were understood and addressed where possible.

- 6.16 The CAA responded by confirming that the wind farm would constitute a hazard in navigable airspace and issued a Navigable Airspace Determination under Rule Part 77 of the Civil Aviation Rules in December 2006. Following some amendments to the turbine layout a revised Determination was issued in June 2007, which included a direction in relation to those turbine required to be lit. CAA will also update aeronautical obstacle maps as part of their standard processes.
- 6.17 Waikato District Council are the operators of the Raglan Airstrip. I met with Mr Nicholas Wells, Property Manager to discuss the wind park project and he had no concerns with the proposal. I also spoke with Mr Mark Delaney of Super Air, who had no issues with the proposal provided that the requirements of the CAA determination were met. Proposed Conditions which reflect the CAA requirements are included in Appendix 1 to my evidence.

Telecommunications

- 6.18 Early consultation was initiated with Telecom due to their role as operators of the existing Te Uku telecommunications mast. These discussions along with the preparation of a radiofrequency report by Broadcast Communications Limited (BCL) (now Kordia) were critical in assessing what impact, if any, the location of the turbines would have on the communication paths to and from the existing mast. The radiofrequency report resulted in the movement of several turbines to avoid potential interference. The BCL report was provided to Telecom and a Memorandum of Understanding signed early in the development of the project. Telecom have no issues and have subsequently withdrawn their submission.

Transit New Zealand

- 6.19 Transit New Zealand was identified as a key stakeholder due to the proximity of State Highway 23 to the site and the need to utilise the State Highway for some of the operational traffic. Transit New Zealand staff were briefed early in the development of the project and the potential impacts on State Highway routes to the site were specifically discussed.
- 6.20 It was agreed that a copy of the Assessment of Environmental Effects and the Traffic Impact Assessment would be forwarded to Transit New Zealand staff. Specific work was undertaken by Mr Tony Keyte, civil and traffic engineer from Bloxam Burnett & Olliver on traffic volumes, routes and loadings and this is discussed further in his evidence.

- 6.21 It was agreed with Transit a public viewing platform would be important to provide a single safe and accessible location for public to view and find out more about the wind park. The viewing platform would consist of a raised wooden platform with some interpretive displays providing general information about the wind park operation.
- 6.22 Mr Keyte investigated a number of options concluded that the Te Uku Hall was the most appropriate place and several discussions along with a meeting were held with the Te Uku Hall Committee. A proposal for some marking improvements to the State Highway 23 / Matakotea Road / Okete Road intersection were also proposed to slow through traffic and improve turning movement safety with the provision of right turn bay pockets. Transit New Zealand has approved these measures in principle subject to a further review at the detailed design stage.
- 6.23 Traffic impacts on the State Highway network will be minor and the bulk of the construction traffic will be travelling between the Te Mata Quarry and the site on Plateau Road. A letter was received from Transit New Zealand on 10 April 2007 confirming their approval and setting out conditions to satisfy their concerns. WEL has accepted these conditions and they are reproduced in Appendix 1 to my evidence. Further conditions relating to traffic safety issues are referred to in the evidence of Mr Keyte and Mr Ashby.

Waikato District Council Roading Department

- 6.24 Waikato District Council's Roading Department are a key stakeholder due to their role as owner of the local roading network and specifically their responsibility for Plateau Road (formed and unformed sections). A series of meetings was held with property and roading staff, including a site visit with the Roading Group Manager, Mr Ian Gooden. The proposal was to form a new private section of road from the Te Mata Quarry to connect part way along Plateau Road, to upgrade the eastern section of Plateau Road and then form a significant section of the existing paper road up onto the Wharauroa Plateau. Some preliminary survey work confirmed that the existing farm track crossed and recrossed the paper road but did not follow it exactly.
- 6.25 A proposal was developed and presented to Council to form Plateau Road along the general route of the existing paper road that would effectively cross and recross the paper road boundaries. A letter of approval was received on 21 December 2006 from Waikato District Council confirming the ability for WEL to cross and recross the paper road section of Plateau Road should the wind park be

approved. Agreement was reached with Council that the development of the paper road would not preclude cycle and pedestrian use.

Auckland / Waikato Fish and Game

- 6.26 Local representatives of Auckland / Waikato Fish and Game were briefed on the project and provided with copies of the technical reports on ecology and civil engineering. They had no concerns and provided written approval to the proposal on the basis of the measures proposed to prevent adverse effects on waterways.

Te Uku Community Issues

- 6.2 Several meetings were held with representatives of the Te Uku Hall Committee and the Te Uku School. Various issues of concern relating to local infrastructure were discussed and options for input from WEL were canvassed, including improvements to both school and hall facilities. While it was decided that the best inputs that would be of benefit to the community were to provide some upgrades to the Te Uku Hall, grounds, and adjacent road works in conjunction with the proposed viewing platform,
- 6.3 As a result of this consultation a generic design was developed for the Te Uku Hall site, in discussion with Hall Committee representatives. This also involved (in addition to the construction of the viewing platform), the sealing and marking out of 23 parking spaces (with recycling depot container removed), an upgraded tennis court, an improved entrance and perimeter carpark fencing along with the sealing of Matakotea Road for a short distance until just south of the Hall property.
- 6.4 Te Uku Hall Committee and school representatives both expressed concern over the State Highway speed environment through their settlement and wanted to explore any possible means of slowing down through traffic and making turning movements into Matakotea and Okete Roads safer. Following some investigation and discussions with Transit New Zealand over options, it was suggested that the provision of threshold treatments, flush medians, localised widening and right turn bays would provide greater safety for both through and turning vehicles. A schematic plan showing the proposed Te Uku Hall and State Highway improvements to be funded by WEL Networks is attached as **Appendix 3** to my evidence. This generic plan has been approved in principle by Transit New Zealand and the Te Uku Hall Committee (both approvals subject to detailed design approval).
- 6.5 WEL has subsequently revisited the agreed viewing platform design to make it a complying activity and thus avoid the need for resource consent – this matter is on

hold at the moment given that some members of the committee oppose the project. They have requested that the issue of the viewing platform be left till after the completion of the resource consent process.

- 6.6 WEL also engaged a landscape architect to discuss the school's aspirations with them and subsequently provided concept plans of the improvements.
- 6.7 A meeting was also held with the owners of the Te Uku Store to better understand the issues surrounding vehicles speeds and traffic conflict outside the store and around the State Highway 23 / Okete Road / Matakotea Road intersection.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 As a result of the consultation undertaken for the wind park project, a clear understanding of the issues of most concern to the surrounding landowners and key stakeholders has been developed.
- 7.2 The key outcomes of WEL's consultation are set out below:
- (a) A protocol has been agreed with Ngati Mahanga should any suspected archaeological items be discovered during site works. In addition conditions have been developed relating to the fencing and protection of key sites and the attendance of Ngati Mahanga representative during earthworks in the vicinity of those key sites.
 - (b) A viewing platform has been proposed in the vicinity of the Te Uku Hall to focus public interest to a location with safe State Highway access. Additional road safety improvements are proposed to State Highway 23 at the intersection of Okete and Matakotea Roads as a way of providing some additional local benefits and slowing through traffic. If a location at or near Te Uku Hall is not available, a viewing platform will be provided at an alternative appropriate location.
 - (c) A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Department of Conservation to address potential effects on native birds and bats.
 - (d) A memorandum of understanding has been signed with Telecom to address potential impacts on the operation of the Te Uku Telecom tower.
 - (e) WEL will be upgrading the upper portion of Plateau Road to cope with the increased numbers of heavy trucks accessing the site from the Te Mata Quarry along with constructing a section of private road from the Te Mata Quarry to the mid section of Plateau Road.

- (f) Several of the turbines will be lit at night to ensure appropriate visibility for passing aircraft and a declaration has been obtained from the Civil Aviation Authority.
- (g) Turbine 22 was removed from the wind farm layout and replaced with Turbine 29 in response to public concern over visibility.
- (h) WEL investigated micro hydro and biomass power generation as a result of feedback through consultation.

7.3 In addition, WEL proposes to assist in the establishment of a community liaison group to facilitate communication between the consent holder and the community before, during and after the construction of the wind park. The purpose of the community liaison group would be to facilitate timely, accurate and regular communication between the consent holder and representatives of the community before, during and after the construction of the wind farm. Conditions to enable this to occur are attached as Appendix 1 to my evidence.

8. **FREW SUBMISSION**

8.1 Only one of the submissions received on the application specifically refers to consultation and that is submission 25 lodged by Stephen Frew. Point 2 of Mr Frew's submission states that he is concerned about: *"the management of the public consultation that has deliberately avoided public meetings since the companies negative public reception at the first meeting."* The submission goes on to say: *"I also strongly object to the way the consultation process has been managed to not allow the community to consult each other."*

8.2 The purposes of the consultation strategy as set out in the Assessment of Environmental Effects was to inform stakeholders and potentially affected parties about the issues and implications of the wind park, to communicate those concerns to the project team and seek to address those concerns where possible. As consultation manager for the wind park project, I had to select consultation methods that best met this strategy. I consider that the combination of open days, in-home meetings and meetings with key stakeholders was the most effective way to undertake consultation on the wind park project.

8.3 In my experience in resource management planning over the past eleven years, I have found public meetings to be very ineffective at achieving an understanding of specific issues. However I am aware that the local community did organise a public meeting held at the Te Uku hall during the submission period.

8.4 In my opinion, the wind park consultation was effective in achieving its purpose and providing the wind park project team and the potentially affected parties with a clear understanding of the proposal in sufficient time to influence aspects of the project.

9. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

9.1 In my opinion the consultation with the local community organisations has been appropriate. This consultation in conjunction with the public open days and the in-home meetings has provided a good appreciation of the concerns of the local residents and enabled some of their concerns to be addressed.

9.2 In my opinion, the consultation for the WEL wind park project was carried out as proactively and extensively as possible and I consider it to have been very effective in gaining an understanding of the issues and addressing or mitigating those issues where possible.

Chris Dawson
November 2007

Appendix 1
Consultation record

Appendix 2
Proposed Conditions

Appendix 3

Te Uku Community Hall Viewing Platform