

**Before the Hearing Panel
At Wellington**

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)
In the matter of Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region
(Hearing Stream 3)

Application for directions regarding Hearing Stream 3 evidence

Date: 1 September 2017



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MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL

- 1 Hearing Stream 3 is scheduled to begin on Tuesday 5 September.
- 2 Section 42A reports were made available online on 7 August 2017.
- 3 Evidence was provided by Mr Williamson on behalf of Wairarapa Water Users Society and Ongaha Farms Limited on Monday 28 August 2017. The Panel granted an extension for this evidence on 21 August 2017, which allowed it to be filed on 28 August, rather than 22 August.
- 4 The evidence of Mr Williamson has now been reviewed by experts for Wellington Regional Council (**Council**). Council considers that there is value in the technical experts discussing this evidence further - specifically as it relates to the Lower Ruamahanga Groundwater Management Zone (**area**). The Council's experts want to do this before providing their evidence on that area.
- 5 Accordingly, the Council is seeking directions from the Panel on how this can be worked into the Hearings process. The Council submits that the following steps might be appropriate:
 - 5.1 The technical experts for the Council address all areas of their previously filed evidence at the hearing on 5 September, other than the evidence relating to the Lower Ruamahanga Zone.
 - 5.2 The submitters present their evidence and submissions in the usual way.
 - 5.3 The technical experts (for Council and Wairarapa Water Users Society/Ongaha Farms Limited) then enter into expert witness conferencing to discuss the evidence provided by Mr Williamson and an appropriate way forward.
 - 5.4 That expert witness conferencing take place on Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 September 2017, subject to the availability of Mr Williamson.
 - 5.5 Following expert conferencing, the Council will return to the Panel with information on what was agreed and a clear

timeframe of when any further evidence (if required) will be supplied to the Panel and what implications that has on the date for right of reply from the Council experts. This could be by Friday 29 September.

- 6 Council appreciates this places a delay on hearing all evidence on this section of Hearing Stream 3. However, Council considers that further conferencing and potentially the provision of additional evidence, will assist the Panel in making a robust decision on the issue of the appropriate categorisation of the Lower Ruamahanga Groundwater Management Zone (in terms of the extent of connectivity between surface water and groundwater). Council also considers that this delay will not prevent the Panel from issuing its final decision.
- 7 At this stage the Council anticipates that the parties for expert witness conferencing will only be Mr Williamson and the Council experts (Mr Thompson, Dr Gyopari, Dr Mzila and Mr Hughes).

Dated: 1 September 2017



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Kerry M Anderson / Emma L Manohar
Counsel for Wellington Regional Council