

**IN THE MATTER OF:** The Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF:** Hearings on submissions concerning  
the Proposed One Plan notified by the  
Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council  
– Water Section

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NATHAN NEILL BAKER ON BEHALF OF HIGGINS  
GROUP LIMITED**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. My name is Nathan Baker. I am a Senior Planner for Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd (*Beca*) in its Wellington Office. I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I hold a Master of Environmental Science degree from the University of Otago. I have 10 years planning experience gained in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
2. I am familiar with the Proposed Horizons One Plan (*One Plan*) to which these proceedings relate, having represented Higgins Group (*Higgins*) throughout the One Plan submission and hearing process.
3. I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court. The evidence in my statement is within my area of expertise. I am not aware of any material facts that I have omitted that might alter or detract from the opinions I express in my evidence.

## WATER HEARING: CAUCASING OUTCOME AND PROGRESS TO DATE

4. Higgins made a number of submission points to the Water Sections of the One Plan. Broadly, those submission points related to the One Plan diluting the provisions relating to gravel extraction in the Operative Regional Plan for Beds of Rivers and Lakes and not adequately providing for gravel extraction activities. In the Planning Officer's Report for the Water Section, most of those submission points are recommended to be rejected and returned to in the Supplementary Report.
5. Based on the Planning Officer's Report and the caucusing to date, Higgins seeks three key outcomes from the Water hearing, being:
  - (a) A specific rule for large-scale gravel extraction that adequately provides for gravel extraction activities as a Discretionary (Restricted) Activity;
  - (b) A more certain Policy 6-32 for gravel extraction, particularly around allocation and exceptions for exceeding the annual allocable volumes of gravel, including a more flexible approach that deals with the variable nature of the aggregation/degradation process, relates to natural rates of replenishment and relates to the specific impacts of gravel extraction. The approach of the Hawke's Bay Regional Resource Management Plan appended to Higgins original submission to the One Plan provides an example of how to support a more certain Policy 6-32; and
  - (c) A more strategic management framework for the region's gravel resource that recognises and provides for the link between gravel extraction and the provision of the region's infrastructure.
6. Outcome 5(a) has been resolved. Recommended Rule 16-15(a) satisfies Higgins submission point requesting a specific rule for large-scale gravel extraction. I support the wording and matters of discretion recommended by the Planning Officer for proposed Rule 16-15(a). I also support proposed Rule 16-2A relating to gravel extraction in protected rivers and proposed Rule 16-15 relating to small-scale gravel extraction.

7. The other two key outcomes above have yet to be fully resolved. The caucusing process to date is working well, with the most recent meeting on 13 October 2009 with Planning Officer's Ms Clare Barton and Ms Natasha James confirming resolution of outcome 5(a) above and further narrowing issues 5(b) and 5(c).
8. At this stage, I am not in a position to be able to give evidence on outstanding issues 5(b) and (c). I am caucusing with the Planning Officers for the Water Hearing and hope to have these matters resolved and able to be reported in the Planning Officer's Supplementary Report due towards the end of November 2009.
9. Higgins remains keen to assist Horizons to reach a resolution on these matters if possible before the Water Hearing early next year.

Nathan Baker

19 October 2009