

**BEFORE A HEARING PANEL  
CONSTITUTED BY HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

*IN THE MATTER OF* an application dated 21 December 2020  
for regional consents by Grenadier  
Limited to develop the Douglas Link  
Golf Course at 765 Muhunua West Road,  
Ohau

*IN THE MATTER OF* Part 6 of the Resource Management Act  
1991

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HAMISH EDWARDS**

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**Applicants' Consultant:**

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- [1] My name is Hamish Edwards and I want to state up front, I have huge respect for the land at Ohau and see this as much an ecology and sustainability project to restore and revitalise the land and its ecosystem as I do about building a world class golf experience for my guests.
- [2] I am a co-founder of the Xero Limited. I have considerable experience in project delivery and the capacity and appetite to conceive and deliver a final product that exceeds expectations.
- [3] I have a connection to the region and if you don't mind I would first like to acknowledge my Scottish and Welsh ancestors.
- [4] Further I would like to acknowledge my father Douglas Edwards and my mother Gail Edwards 'ne Craig.
- [5] My family have lived in the Wellington, Kapiti and Wairarapa region for more than 100 years. I myself grew up in Wellington and see the region as my home.
- [6] My parents use to have a beach house in Waikanae, and I use to play in the dunes, at the beach and in the sea.
- [7] The name Douglas is important to the Edwards family in that it is the name given to the first born son in each generation.
- [8] It is for this reason, coupled with the fact it is my father's name that I want to give this name to the golf course. The land is still Ohau.
- [9] Over a decade ago, I started playing golf and instantly fell in love with the game.
- [10] I started travelling overseas to play golf and after a trip to Ireland where I play on Links Courses that were built, in some cases, 200 years ago, I felt an amazing sense of place, history and found myself thinking of all the people who had stood on this land before it was my turn.

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- [11] I came back to New Zealand and started looking for land that would be suitable for a traditional Links golf course.
- [12] After a fairly extensive search around New Zealand we found Campbells farm at the end of Mahunoa West Road.
- [13] The land is outstanding for Links Golf. We believe we could possibly build a golf course that will be rated as a top 100 golf course in the world.
- [14] The Douglas Links will be an eco-lead golf course comprising, Links style golf course, clubhouse, and small amount of accommodation.
- [15] The Douglas Links will be a golf course for all New Zealanders. It will be fairly priced and available for all to play. We will not build an exclusive golf course for wealthy overseas tourists.
- [16] We will include modest accommodation for up to forty people so they might stay for an evening and enjoy the wonderful views of the land, river and sea from our clubhouse.
- [17] The Douglas Links will be a walking only golf course, we will have limited man-made objects on the golf course. We want the land to look pure and natural.
- [18] We will restore the dunes to their natural state. The Douglas Links will be a shining example of dunes restoration and maintenance. Further we will look to share our findings, learning and the results with the wider ecology community. This will form a key aspect in the customer experience.
- [19] Sense of place is another key ingredient of the guest experience. We will tell the story and history of the land. I have been to a number of golf courses where this is done very well, such as Old Head in Ireland, and poorly like Wee-Ko-Pa in Arizona, an Indian Reservation, where it is done very badly. We have already had a number of discussions with various locals to understand the history of the area. This includes members of the Marae Committee at Ngāti Kikopiri, Ngāti Tukorehe and Muaūpoko Tribal Authority (MTA).

- [20] The food we serve in the clubhouse will be locally sourced, possibly grown on site and will showcase what the region has to offer. From olive oil to local wine.
- [21] In the construction of all build buildings at the Douglas Links we will endeavour to be eco-led and consider sustainably in selecting construction materials.
- [22] Finally, I want the guest experience to be welcoming, fun, relaxing and inclusive for all levels of golfer.
- [23] Community is very important to us. This golf course is likely to be in place for the next 100 plus years. It will become a long-standing member of the local regional community.
- [24] We have from day one respected our neighbours and sought their thoughts and support for the Douglas Links. This is confirmed by positive supporting submissions from our immediate neighbours. We have had meetings on site with Iwi and some very constructive discussions with MTA, Ngāti Kikopiri and Ngāti Tukorehe which resulted in changes to some of our plans. We will continue to listen and find the best results for all stakeholders.
- [25] As this is a commercial golf course we want to look of it to be one of scenic beauty so it is in our interests to maintain the dunes and keep them looking natural.
- [26] It has been suggested that the best use of this land is an Eco Park and I cannot think of a closer realistic option than a golf course for this land.
- [27] The total cost to build the course, restore the dunes, remove all exotic species from the land, build the clubhouse and accommodation will be approx. \$40-50m.
- [28] A significant amount of this capital spend over 2-3 years will go into the local economy. We will hire local people and local contractors. For example, we have about a years' worth of work for Pritchard's just to remove all the pine trees from the land.

- [29] The Douglas Links will not make massive profits and what profits we do make will be reinvested into the preservation of the land.
- [30] If we are not granted consent to build the golf course then the alternative for his land is probably 50+ housing sites, a retirement village or it remains a farm and the dunes further degrade until all native species have been overtaken by exotics. Possibly the worst outcome for this land would be a dairy farm.
- [31] We are asking almost nothing of the local council but their support and input.
- [32] I have always said that if we have enough support for this project I will do it. To date that is almost all we have had from everyone we have spoken to. I feel like the region and local communities understand the benefit a world class golf course will bring to the local region.
- [33] Finally, we have 17 supporting submissions, an MOU with Ngāti Kikopiri and consent from the Horowhenua District Council. We had a constructive hui with Ngāti Tukorehe at their marae. Although there was some frank discussion about differences we have had about Douglas Links, I am optimistic because we have found some common ground on some aspects of the proposal and there could be a path forward on remaining areas at issue. There is a site visit between members of Tukorehe and Douglas Links this week and we have agreed to keep talking to resolve issues where we can.
- [34] When we have finished the building the Douglas Links and in the many years following its construction it will be proud New Zealand example of a true Links course that is eco-led and a huge asset to the local region.
- [35] Our guests are in for a real treat at the Douglas Links. I am positive they will absolutely love it.
- [36] I hope after careful consideration of the evidence and submissions you grant us consent. We are ready to go on this project and we relish the opportunity to get started.

Dated 13 April 2022

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Hamish Edwards