

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY THE  
NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of an application for a resource consent to build a  
replica of the Mangawhai Wharf by **THE  
MANGAWHAI HISTORIC WHARF TRUST**

Applicant

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF COLIN D LEACH  
FOR THE MANGAWHAI HISTORIC WHARF CHARITABLE TRUST**

**(CHAIRMAN)**

**Dated: 4 September 2020**

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**BROOKFIELDS  
LAWYERS**

A M B Green  
Telephone No. 09 979 2172  
Fax No. 09 379 3224  
P O Box 240  
DX CP24134  
**AUCKLAND**

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## **MAY IT PLEASE THE COMMISSIONERS:**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. My full name is Colin David Leach.
- 1.2. I am the Chairman of Mangawhai Historic Wharf Trust (**the Trust**).

### **2. SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION**

- 2.1 The Trust is submitting this application for consent to the Northland Regional Council for the rebuild of the historic Mangawhai wharf. As chairman of the Trust I have personally had an association with Mangawhai for 24 years. The Trust was set up in July 2018 to promote, develop, and operate a public wharf based on the design of the original wharf at Moir St, Mangawhai Village, for the benefit of the local community and visiting public. The Trust currently has four trustees. Both the NRC and KDC have indicated that they will appoint a Trustee subject to resource consent being granted.
- 2.2 The rebuilt wharf, being in the same position as the original, will be close to the division of the main channel into the tidal northern and southwestern arms of the harbour, and some 6km from the mouth. The end of the proposed wharf is around 2.7km from the ski lane, an area of intensive boating activity, and 3km from the nearest of three fairy tern breeding sites recorded in the 2017-2018 breeding season.
- 2.3 This application is based on the plans of the original wharf, built in 1881. They detail its structure and dimensions and contain sufficient locational detail which, when combined with the remaining groyne structure and original pile remnants, will allow an accurate rebuild.
- 2.4 The Trust's sole purpose is the re-establishment of a functional wharf in its original location and excludes any reclamation or dredging and the wharf will have no provision for power, water, or sewerage.

### **3. THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE WHARF**

- 3.1 There is no doubt that the wharf is an important element of Mangawhai's history. Mangawhai Harbour was an active import/export hub supporting the development of the wider region.

- 3.2 Also important from a heritage viewpoint, the wharf was an amenity used by Mangawhai School for recreation, competitive, and educational purposes. As the recollections of older residents indicate, it was an important recreational feature for children and the community at large.
- 3.3 Commercial use of the wharf was abandoned at the behest of the NZ Defence Force with the outbreak of the World War 2. The wharf was not used commercially after the war and fell into disrepair. It was demolished in the late 1950's having become a safety hazard.
- 3.4 Today, Mangawhai is a rapidly growing community with an influx of residents of all ages. The population of Mangawhai more than doubled between 2006 and 2019 and according to the KDC's spatial plan is expected to double again in a similar time span. Summer has seen numbers at the 3 main camping grounds increase by 60% in the last 5 years with close to 20,000 visitors. This does not even factor in the holiday use of baches. Despite the best efforts of the KDC and voluntary groups adding cultural and recreational options and opportunities across a range of activities, catering for this growth remains a challenge. Of note is the limited access to the harbour for recreation due to the lack of a harbourside esplanade and limited access points. This is particularly true for Mangawhai Village.
- 3.5 Rebuilding the wharf, with the addition of a practical pontoon, will benefit the whole community by providing direct access to the harbour in the Village; facilitating passive water sports; providing a focal point for families to picnic, swim and/or fish; a linkage by water between the Heads and the Village; and a tangible link to our history. It will also add a real point of interest to our growing walkway network; and a point of interest for visitors to linger, enjoy, and then spend time and money in our town.
- 3.6 By way of background, the project to rebuild the historic wharf was initiated by the Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society in September 2016, which has among its wider goals a commitment to the restoration of the harbour's natural and historical features. As a committee member I volunteered to co-ordinate a cross -community team to determine whether there was enough support for such a facility to justify progressing it.
- 3.7 The project team consulted representatives from eleven community-based organisations to assess the level of interest and perceived need for the project.

The two elements identified as determining feasibility were does the community see a need and want the wharf rebuilt and is the project consentable? Feedback was positive from all the organisations surveyed. This provided the stimulus to prepare and submit a resource consent application, commissioning the engineering drawings and assessments required.

- 3.8 The Trust has also kept in regular touch with NRC officers for guidance and advice and it has engaged with Kaipara District Council, which anticipates the wharf rebuild in its Long-Term Plan.
- 3.9 A resource consent application was lodged in July 2018. The Northland Regional Council requested additional information, namely on the local seabed and coastal environment. Expert reports on these matters were subsequently commissioned.

#### **4. FUNDING**

- 4.1 To fund the resource consent the Trust launched a six-week fundraising campaign in October 2019, via PledgeMe, to raise \$80,000 from the local community. This was achieved and is a clear indication of the community's strong support for the project, which had been a feature of the prior open days held.
- 4.2 In relation to funding the build itself, the Trust has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Provincial Growth Fund for \$600,000. This grant, supplemented by donations in kind of \$200,000 and cash donations of \$100,000, will be sufficient to fund the building of the wharf and establish a maintenance fund. This fund can be maintained by occasional fund-raising activities by the Trust which will also be responsible for its expenditure.
- 4.3 The application includes documentation of the community's very strong support and commitment, an introduction to the construction and operational aspects of the wharf, and reports covering the environmental effects and statutory planning requirements of the wharf.
- 4.4 The expert reports that we commissioned identify that the adverse effects from the construction and operation will be minor subject to a range of conditions, which the Trust is committed to meeting. Indeed, as an educational site for the public and as a focus for water activities, the wharf should have a positive effect on the wider environment through the heritage values it represents and the

educational role it can play with respect to estuarine ecosystems, shorebird activity and vulnerabilities, and local history.

- 4.5 In making this application for consent to reconstruct the wharf, the Trust acknowledges local sensitivities and has made adjustments and proposed conditions to mitigate and manage perceived effects. These commitments are recognised in Proposed Conditions of Consent.

## 5. RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

- 5.1 I respond to the evidence from a number of submitters concerning fit for purpose; pontoon; financing; dredging; amenities; commercialisation; boating activity; and security. The submitters are identified by topic in the following table.

	Fit for Purpose	Pontoon	Financing	Dredging	Amenities	Commercial Aspects	Boating Activity	Security
David Goodwin								
Aaron McConchie								
Jennifer Price								
Gavin Riley								
R and L Whale								
Deborah Stone								
Kevin Mathews								
B and H Rogan								
Jennifer Price								
Gayle Forster								
Josephine Corsbie								
Molly Jane Vaughan								
Melanie Scott								
Betty Belcher								
Forest and Bird								
Fairy Tern Trust								

## 6. FIT FOR PURPOSE

- 6.1 The purpose of many wharves and jetties is to access deeper water, otherwise they would not be fit for purpose. Consequently, much of their structure is out of the water. Two Kaipara Harbour examples are pictured below. The wharf at Mangawhai was, and will be, no exception. It will have plenty of water from half tide through to half tide on an incoming cycle. In any event, in today's environment the wharf is not simply intended for boating. It is understood by the community that it is not a deep water wharf but there was overwhelming feedback to replicate what we had in the past while providing an amenity that could be used in various ways by the community today.

6.2 The community identified a wide range of benefits that it will enjoy from the rebuild wharf. These include:

- (a) a destination or stop off point for walking or cycling;
- (b) a destination for a picnic or a coffee;
- (c) a place to fish with children and grandchildren (much safer than the Head's pontoon amongst many boats coming and going situated in an area of very strong currents);
- (d) a place to passively access the harbour, relax and meet other locals;
- (e) a destination point for a boat to pick up or drop off passengers, depending on the tide;
- (f) a place to swim (the currents are weak and much safer than the lower harbour);
- (g) a place to launch a kayak or small sailboat without disturbing the foreshore;
- (h) a place for the school to use as they have lost their beach to mangroves; and
- (i) a place to connect and learn about Mangawhai's history and environment in a meaningful way.



*Shelley Beach wharf on the Kaipara*



Port Albert on Kaipara Harbour

*Port Albert wharf on the Kaipara*



*The old Mangawhai wharf with the tide out*



## 7. PONTOON

- 7.1 The pontoon is the only substantive change from the original wharf reflecting its use by the community for leisure rather than its historical use for trade and travel via flat bottomed scows.
- 7.2 The pontoon greatly increases the benefits of the wharf in that it allows safe access to the level of the water in a situation which is tidal. This is important for those in our community who couldn't otherwise access the harbour.



- 7.3 The pontoon allows for all tide access to the water by those visiting the wharf whether by foot and a platform for safe swimming. It gives disabled access to the water from the wharf and from the sea to the wharf. It provides a safe environment to launch a kayak or similar. It does not require walking or travelling across the foreshore to swim. It does allow boats when the tide is full in to pick up or drop off people.
- 7.4 The Trust is open to a condition which would limit the berthing time alongside the pontoon for any boat to 30 minutes.

## **8. FINANCING**

- 8.1 It has been suggested that the community has better, but unnamed projects to spend its money on. This is a personal view and divergent views of what is a priority is true of any community in New Zealand. Clearly our community thinks otherwise about the wharf and funded over \$80,000 in 6 weeks for the resource consent application. There will be no KDC ratepayer funds involved. The original KDC grant for \$20,000 for the feasibility study came from the MELA fund, a capital fund held by the KDC for community development grants. The funds originally came from selling Mangawhai Harbour Board land.
- 8.2 The funds for the build itself will come from an announced PGR/IRG Grant of \$600,000. This will be supplemented by \$200,000 in donations in kind, leaving a further \$100,000 to be raised by the community and other sources.
- 8.3 The Trust is confident it will have the funding to complete the building and maintenance of the wharf.

## **9. DREDGING**

- 9.1 The Mangawhai Historic Trust is a single purpose trust, with that purpose being the rebuild of the historic wharf with the same dimensions in the same location using the same construction method and similar materials. It is not a purpose of the Trust to dredge or reclaim land and it is not doing so with this application. It is important to note that the rebuild is not focussed on boating.
- 9.2 The Trust is open to a condition that it will not apply to dredge in the future.

## **10. AMENITIES**

- 10.1 The two amenities that have been raised are toilets and parking.

- 10.2 Toilets – there are public toilets 500m away in the village. Also, customers of the tavern, which serves non-alcoholic drinks and food, will be able to use their facilities. It would not be unusual to be out walking or cycling in Mangawhai, or in fact anywhere in New Zealand and be more than 500m from a public toilet.
- 10.3 Parking – The flow of visitors to the wharf will be at relatively low numbers but continuous. They will come by foot using the walking tracks in the vicinity, by bicycle and by car. Some will walk from the village. There is adequate parking opposite the tavern and in Moir Street. The vehicle traffic and number of visitors to the wharf will be nothing like that already associated with the Tavern Market (pictured below).
- 10.4 Customers of the Tavern who visit the wharf will be able to use the Tavern carpark.



*Tavern Market visitors and parking during Level 3 lockdown in Auckland*

## **11. COMMERCIALISATION**

- 11.1 The Mangawhai Historic Wharf Trust will be in effect the owner and operator of the wharf on behalf of the community. It is not a developer and its trustees are

unpaid volunteers motivated only by assisting the community. The wharf will have no power other than solar for low powered lighting for safety and security, no water, and no sewerage.

- 11.2 The only “commercial use” of the wharf that would be considered would be for a sightseeing boat service between the upper and lower harbour should such a service be mooted. This would allow all of the community and visitors to access and learn about the harbour. Such a service could be similar to that operating from Matakana – a flat bottomed boat operating at 4 to 5 knots, in keeping with the harbour speed limits, imparting natural and historical information to users of the service. It could be potentially quite educational.
- 11.3 The Trust is open to a condition which prevents commercial use of the wharf.

## **12. BOATING ACTIVITY**

- 12.1 The first point to make is that in the upper harbour all speed is restricted to no more than 5 knots. Incidentally, the wakes referred to as impacting turbidity in Mr Southey’s submission should not exist in the upper harbour past the southern ski lane buoy, well north of Tern Point. Boats travelling at 5 knots make little noise. Having said that, the upper harbour, from my own observation – almost daily walking the dog - is increasingly used by boats, water skiers, jet skis etc., all blatantly breaking the speed limit. It is neither well signposted nor well publicised and appears not to be monitored or enforced. This boating activity will only increase with the rapidly growing population around the upper harbour, the Village, and in Mangawhai Central. The building of the wharf should not be viewed as a negative factor in this regard. It can display and endorse the speed limits that apply to all harbour users.
- 12.2 The wharf is not likely to bring a rush of boats from the lower harbour. Firstly, it can only be done either side of high tide and secondly it takes a considerable amount of time. The return time from the 5 knot buoy at the southern end of the ski lane to the wharf and back is about 45 minutes, having done it myself. Adding the ski lane and the 5 knot travel between the northern ski buoy to the lower harbour boat ramp means at least 60 minutes travel time in total.
- 12.3 The Trust is open to working with the NRC and other organisations in Mangawhai to ensure the speed limits which exist on the harbour are promoted and adequately policed.

### **13. SECURITY**

- 13.1 Many of the jetties and wharves in New Zealand are in close proximity to cafes, bars and taverns.
- 13.2 The shelter at the end of the wharf is completely open at the eastern and western ends along the line of the finger. The shelter serves a purpose; refuge from the weather and a place to sit, and a secure and sheltered place for educational material.
- 13.3 Mangawhai Tavern has a CCTV security system and has offered to include the wharf as part of its system. Mangawhai Tavern no longer has large outdoor concerts which promoted heavy drinking. It has replaced these with small undercover events.

### **14. CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 In conclusion, in advancing this application, the Trust recognises the benefits and value that the community will derive from the re-establishment of a wharf that played an important role in Mangawhai's past. There is a strong sense of history in our community. It also has a strong vein of voluntarism. These attributes are reflected in the museum, the historic village and activity zone, among other things, all supported by community fundraising and developed using donated labour and materials. Keen local interest in such initiatives among the residents of Mangawhai is also reflected in the support evident already for the historic wharf rebuild. The current initiative will build on this community spirit.
- 14.2 The wharf also has a very real and important role to play in the future of Mangawhai, albeit changed from its primary original function. Its rapidly growing population is already using the foreshore and waters of the upper harbour and future growth, including the development of Mangawhai Central, will only exacerbate this. The wharf has recreational and educational roles to play as a focus for water activities. It can also play a wider role through the positive effect it will have on the wider environment through the educational role it will play with respect to estuarine ecosystems, shorebird activity and vulnerabilities.