

MATT PEACOCK PPC48 HEARING SPEECH – 24 JULY 2019


My name is Matt Peacock I grew up in New Plymouth from the age of 9 where my family and I lived close to the beach and we all spent a significant amount of time swimming and surfing.

After schooling in New Plymouth, attending Canterbury University, travelling overseas and returning to New Plymouth I eventually moved out to Oakura. I moved to Oakura because I'd met a group of likeminded people who enjoyed spending much of their spare time at the beach, in the ocean, up the national park and loved living out of New Plymouth in a small rural village.

I live in Oakura now with my wife and 6 and 8 year old girls who attend Oakura School and enjoy the same beach life that I enjoyed growing up in New Plymouth. It's likely you may not have spent any time in Oakura, or even if you have stopped in for a coffee, you will not know how the small town feels to the people that live there so I will give you some idea of my feeling for Oakura.

- At least twice a week I will see people riding their horse down Wairau road along the beach and back up the road to their paddock. Horse poo is often left along the road.
- I drop my kids to school and pick them up several times a week and talk to their teachers, meet other parents and spend time and effort being involved with their education. Many other mums and dads in Oakura do the same thing and make the time and effort to be involved with the small school.
- Sometimes when you walk, or ride, through Oakura you will encounter lots of people you know and it will take you much longer to get to your destination than originally intended. Quite often I will hear children saying 'come on can we go' to their parents in frustration of having to wait for so long to move on because their parents are talking.
- You don't have to invite friends out for a coffee in Oakura, you just turn up to the café and there will often be people there you haven't seen for a while and you'll sit and chat and catch up.
- Children walk and ride bikes to school to reduce traffic congestion around school and because generally it's safe and fun to do.

- Parents allow their kids to bike and walk around to friends' houses, down to the beach and skate park or the 4 square to pick up some shopping for them. As a parent I feel that the Oakura people are watching out for my children when they are out and about. It's said that it takes a village to raise a child and I feel Oakura is testament to this old saying.
- Despite its small size Oākura has a thriving surf life saving club, board riders (surfing) club, a football team, golf club, bowls club, yoga and the town hall is busy most afternoons and nights with various activities from dancing, karate and pickle ball. Many people belong to a number of these clubs and the social aspect of having a great group of like-minded people is amazing. Because everyone knows each other there is very little trouble, parents chip in with running the clubs and coaching the kids.
- Many of the people who live in Oakura have travelled the world and spent time in other cities, towns and communities. There is a diverse range of ethnicities in Oakura and most of these people I have spoken to will tell you Oakura is a special place and that's why they chose to live here. People I've spoken to said they came for a year, 5 years ago, or they visited 3 times, went home found a wife and returned to live in this amazing village and surrounding rural area.
- As Oakura is a small rural village it only has the available space for a small village commercial area for the 4 Square, petrol station and limited shops. There is limited area to expand this area and include additional parking because it is a small village. The same can be said for the village school and the amenities at the beach such as parking, toilets and retail space.

 Private Plan Change 48 application if approved will completely change the small village of Oakura into a much larger, congested town taking away all those village values that attracted me to it. If the plan change is accepted in its entirety it will increase the number of lots and in Oakura by 60%. If I wanted to live in a town, with more than one petrol station or supermarket to choose from I would live in New Plymouth city. But I choose to live in a small rural village that has attributes of a small rural village. PPC48 application if approved will change this.

What would it look like, if for example, the paddocks residents were allowed to subdivide their sections into 400 square metre lots, ruining the rural character of the development and devaluing the primary reason people choose to live there.

I think the PPC48 applicant Mike Mckie's Statement of evidence is completely off the mark when he states, and I quote, "we have listened to and have a very good understanding of the Oakura communities concerns". For if Mr Mckie had understood the Oakura Community he would have noted that over 450 people submitted against the PPC48 application in its entirety and that not a single submission supported the development in full. From this feedback, if the applicant really did have a good understanding of the communities concerns, he would have personally engaged with the community, not through New Plymouth District Council arranged pre-hearing meetings, and realised that there are major issues with his proposal to develop any of his remaining farm land. The applicant has either failed to correctly read and interpret the facts or he is not telling the truth in his statement of evidence.

The applicant previously completed The Paddocks development on upper Wairau Road, Oakura. In the Paddocks final decision commissioners report dated 8th March 2011 there contains numerous statements by Mr Mike Mckie and Oakura Farm Park hired experts that contradict the proposed Private Plan Change PPC48 application. These contradictions include:

- Mr Mckie stating that the current 58 hectare farm would be able to be retained as a *'productive farming unit'* for the Paddocks subdivision to now conveniently being reclassified as *'becoming increasingly marginal farm unit'* in the current plan change request PPC48.
- During the Paddocks hearing Mr Mckie said the *'development of this area protects the open landscape and views of the Kaitake Ranges'*. This is the exact area of the 58 hectare rural land he intends to develop.
- And Mike Mckie concludes in his Paddocks evidence *'that they are trying to achieve a vision that will stand the test of time and says 'his vision was for an eco-friendly environmentally safe guarded and protected project that was future proofed and enjoyable for generations'*. Now doesn't that sound wonderful?

- The Landscape Architect Richard Bain states in his paddocks submission '*The proposed remaining 66.5 hectare farm lot would maintain rural character, particularly with regard to spaciousness, and would maintain extensive views from SH45 up to the Outstanding Natural Area.*' This is the same 66.5 hectares of spacious rural land that Mr Bain has now decided is no longer an important feature in front of the outstanding natural area and can be developed.

To me these statements show that the applicant has been misleading the community, paddocks land purchasers and the council and that the applicant is an inexperienced land developer who believes that he can change statements to suit the best outcome for himself.

In my opinion these are intentional decisions by the applicant and that they are not merely a change of circumstances outcome. I think that since purchasing the farm in 2008 Mr Mckie has always intended to develop the land into residential property and to achieve this he is willing to say what he thinks the council and the people of Oakura community want to hear.

As you are aware part of the PPC48 application process involved the NPDC's own review of the technical information in the application. NPDC hired its own experts to review the technical information and then produce a report that summarises the experts review. I will now provide my own comments on the NPDC S42A report.

From the councils own housing capacity information for Oakura they have calculated a maximum total increase house demand for the next 30 years of between 210 to 247 house's. This is a house increase rate of approximately 7-8 per year or 1.3% pa. Beyond a 30 year time frame population numbers are anyone's guess and a report I've read predicts population decline in the years to come due to an aging population, less number of children per family and even the impact from immigration of older people who have already had their children. This growth rate of 1.3% per year for Oakura is consistent with how Oakura has developed naturally over the last 50 years and what the Oakura Structure Plan states. NPDC 2015 Plans and strategies asset management plan predicts the New Plymouth population will increase on average by approximately 490 people per year or around 0.7% for the next 30 years. This is less

than the Oakura growth rate. It's interesting to note that Oakura has always had a higher priced property market, just like all other beach front areas in New Zealand, and this will not change by developing more land. The price of any new property in Oakura will be above the current 6 times average wage to average property price and be unattainable for most people in New Zealand. For example take the paddocks development, this was approved in 2011 with 26 lots available and there are still 4 lots for sale there. Despite what the applicant will tell us he, like all developers, will be striving to get the highest price for every section in his development. Where are all these people going to come from that can afford higher than normal priced sections?

NPDC S42A report determines the available undeveloped land already zoned residential in Oakura would yield 158 lots. The currently zoned residential land would provide around 20 years of growth in Oakura. Adding infill development into the number of currently zoned residential land available in Oakura, and assuming only 60% uptake on infill development, would yield another 10 years of development and a total of 234 lots available, or 94 – 100% of housing demand in Oākura for the next 30 years. Considering this information why would the council spend all these resources, people's time and energy in processing the PPC48 application?

Further to the land supply in Oakura I've asked myself why would the council decide to give the lion's share of available sections to 1 or 2 individual developers in Oakura when there is available up to 127 infill sections which will give many people in Oakura the opportunity to financially benefit, not just 2 families. If the question is whether these infill section owners will actually subdivide their land I suggest, that from experience, it is the council who makes this process difficult to complete for these onetime small developments and it is the council who should be working on making the infill subdivision process easier and encouraging people to do it when it suits the circumstances. Infill development has many advantages over green field development of which some of these benefits are that there is significantly less carbon producing infrastructure costs, less intense visual and landscape effects and the new lots are instantly located in an established developed area.

Paragraph 13.18 in the S42A report is a major statement by the authors in deciding how the PPC48 application should be assessed. This paragraph suggests that the remaining available capacity for development in Oakura, the future of Oakura, be decided on the current unknown water aquifer capacity. This paragraph goes on to state that in fairness a 50/50 split between 2 land owners is considered fair and reasonable. This conclusion appears more like that of a poker game than a private plan change application. The idea of allocating 167 lots to PPC48 application is a major recommendation throughout the S42A report which has been reached based on the capacity of the Oakura water supply which is from a bore of unknown size and unknown future capacity and quality. I find it unacceptable that such a critical decision be reached with very little consideration to the many other major contributing factors such as landscape, planning, traffic, infrastructure and the community structure plan for Oakura.

The allocation of the remaining 334 lots, or 167 between each lucky card player, fails to mention that the applicant has already had his *'full house'* when he developed the Paddocks subdivision and that now he intends to have his *'royal flush'* also.

The authors of the S42A report have reached some alarming conclusions based on the NPDC expert's review of the PPC48 application. The NPDC experts were hired to review the various aspects of PPC48 application and they all provided a report for their review. For example the AECOM traffic review report appendix 7 identifies, on a number of occasions that the applicant's traffic report is incomplete, and I quote:

'There are inconsistencies between the application documents and the supplementary information. A fully revised traffic impact assessment report needs to be provided that correlates to the amended proposal.'

And further in the AECOM report *'my overall view is that there is a lack of information provided by the applicant for a number of the items as below'*.

However the S42A report authors are satisfied to conclude and I quote *'Taking all these factors into account, overall, I consider the traffic, parking and access effects can be effectively managed through the implementation of various methods'*.

How are the S42A report authors able to come to this conclusion without the applicant providing all the correct and relevant design information as identified in the AECOM report.

The NPDC report authors have based their recommendation on the applicant's traffic expert information which has been identified as lacking in the correct relevant information. That would be like a peer reviewer of a building accepting the design when the design engineer has chosen the incorrect seismic zone or soil type. This is not possible because the whole design of the building would change when the correct design information was used. You simply can't accept that the design would meet code requirements when incorrect design data and analysis is chosen.

With regard to the S42A report Landscape and visual impact assessment the authors conclude in 13.70 *'taking all these factors into account, overall, I consider the landscape and visual impacts would be significant.'* However the report author's recommendations in 1.12 conclude that *'the OFPL PPC48 application is approved in part'*. Again I question the logic of this decision and don't see how the application can even be approved in part when the proposed development will have significant impacts on the landscape and visual aspect. It appears to me that while the S42A report authors acknowledge there will be a significant impact on the existing outstanding natural landscape and visual outlook by developing the land somehow they are still satisfied to approve it in part. Which part of PPC48 application are they approving?

Evidence submitted by Richard Bain Landscape Architect suggests that the proposed development scale is suitable for the Oakura area. I can't see how Richard Bain considers that providing a development that will increase the size of Oakura by 60% is not significant in scale.

The ministry of education has provided a short report to determine the capacity of Oakura School. Their calculations, on the back of a napkin it seems, show that Oakura School is able to support a student size of 1000 children. This is almost 3 times the current school population. The largest school in New Plymouth is Boys High with approximately 1300 students and school grounds 14 ha in size. In comparison Oakura school grounds are approximately 2.7 ha. Without further comments I'm sure you can see the vast difference between the 2 schools grounds

where students can plan. I've produced a plan of Oakura school showing how it would look if 1000 students were there and additional single level buildings were provided. Looking at the plan its quite ridiculous to think the ministry of education would suggest 1000 students could attend Oakura School.

Recent submission of evidence by Lachlan Muldowney in paragraph 131, relating to Social impacts for Oakura, states that once fully developed the total plan change area will contribute to an approximately 20% increase in the total population at Oakura. Mr Muldowney is incorrect with his calculation of population increase. If we take the current number of house's in Oakura of 549, NPDC S42A report table 1, and the proposed number of new lots being 399 this is actually over 70% increase in the number of house's. It appears to me that Mr Muldowney has been basing his assessment of the social impact of the proposed development on a population increase of 20% and not 70% which is a significant difference.

If PPC48 is approved the proposed Plan Change will result in a large scale development lasting many years in a small community village and dramatically increasing the current population. It will result in a land distribution monopoly to the PPC48 Applicant. The applicant will be able to control the supply of land to meet the demand and be able to set the land value at his discretion. This will severely restrict other smaller developments from happening in the Oakura area. In larger towns, such as New Plymouth, there are competing subdivisions which assist in moderating the price of land and improving development quality. This would not occur in Oakura with such a large development proposed by the applicant there would be no room for other land developments.

For the last 18 months I've been involved with the Oakura community in opposing the PPC48 application. It's consumed many hours of my time, early in the morning, late into the night, on weekends and during school holidays with my family. I'm quite certain the applicant has absolutely no idea of the extent to which the Oakura community has gone to oppose his application. He writes how his family recognises the importance of good relationships, and has a very good understanding of the Oakura communities concerns and even enjoyed the

interaction at the pre-hearing meetings. To me these are just words of a salesman. Why else would Mr Mckie take lease of the land in 2005 and by 2008, despite the farm being profitable as the applicant states, he was putting together his plan to subdivide the whole 82 hectares of farm land that includes the Paddocks and PPC48 application land. This isn't the action of a person that understands and wants to work with a community, it's the actions of someone who wants to convert rural land into residential to make money.

Over the past 18 months I've gained a good understanding of how difficult the process is for a community to rally together to oppose a private plan change such as this. The whole process is heavily weighted in favour of the developer who is able to get assistance from the council, and paid experts that write reports in favour of the proposed development, while they build their development concept. The developer has many months or years to put their development proposal together, go back and forth with the council and change their submission as per council requests. On the contrary, the submission process for the community opposing such a proposed development only last 4 to 6 weeks and is completed generally by laypeople who are unsure of the consent application process and the language used in the developers reports. Who in the general public has the time to read and understand a 450 page submission such as PPC48. The community typically has no, or minimal, funding to fight against a proposed land development and unless some members of the community are familiar with the application process, as has been the case in Oakura, and have funds to fight it the developer is often able to get away with much of their proposal. The council needs to assist, engage much earlier and better with the community with these types of major proposed developments and provide at least as much planning support to the community as that which the developer receives from council. It's all far too late to provide minimal support during the 4 to 6 week public submission process. A major part of the councils function is to work with the community and listen to what the people are saying and then act on their opinions, not those of a single developer who does not live in the area and is not part of the community.

In conclusion I would like to make these points about why the PPC48 application should be rejected in full.

- The Oakura structure plan was created by the people of Oakura in conjunction with NPDC. Much time and effort went into creating this vision for Oakura and the plan makes no allowance for the size and housing density of the application. Why spend the time in producing a structure plan and not following it?
- Consultation with the Oakura community concluded that over 450 people took the time in submitting in full against PPC48 application and no single submission was received that support the application in full.
- Oakura has developed naturally and is still increasing in size at a growth rate appropriate for a rural village. If PPC48 is approved it will increase the number of lots in Oakura by 60%. To me this is an inappropriate increase in size to Oakura and in fact to any village or town.
- There is currently available enough residential zoned land in Oākura to provide the forecast house demand for the next 30 years. Let's concentrate of developing this more appropriate infill land and the west FUD which is closer to the beach where people would want to live.
- Despite what the applicant writes in his submissions I've concluded that he has always intended to develop his pristine rural farm land into residential lots solely for the purpose of making money.
- It appears to me, based on the S42A report and associated technical reports, that there is a lack of correct and relevant technical information in the application to adequately assess the impacts of PPC48 on the landscape, traffic, stormwater, water supply and the environment of the Oakura area.
- I'd like to leave you with one final comment. By now I'm sure you'll appreciate the extent to which the Oakura community has and is taking to oppose this application. The reason for this is that Oakura is a wonderful place to live with a community that represents how all communities should and could function. The people are afraid and annoyed that this application will quickly diminish the current community environment due to its size, poor design and location. The applicant has not consulted with the Oakura community, who feel so strongly about where they live and how it should grow, that they are rejecting this application.

Thank you for your time Commissioners



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