

**UPDATED FUTURE PROOF STRATEGY**  
**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE VANCE HODGSON ON BEHALF OF**  
**HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND LIMITED**

**(PLANNING)**

8 December 2021

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

1. My full name is Vance Hodgson. I am a planning consultant based in Waiuku and I have been employed in resource management related positions in local government and the private sector since 1994.
2. I have been close to and particularly interested in the highly productive land issue all of my planning career. That exposure first gained in student, assistant and senior policy planning roles with the former Franklin District Council where I was involved with the first generation district plan in the 90s and project managed a rural plan change in the early 2000s that looked to refresh the districts approach to growth management and introduced new methods like Transferable Rural Lot Rights to address issues with latent rural subdivision capacity.
3. While not an area of planning I work in now I have previously been involved in rural subdivision activity working for a time for CKL Surveying and Planning in Hamilton and in a private capacity. I provided section 32 report writing assistance to the Auckland Council on rural subdivision methods through the development of the Auckland Unitary Plan.
4. Living and working in the rural environment of South Auckland / North Waikato, I have had a continuous association with the rural production sector and in particular the horticultural industry. From 2012 I have been providing resource

management advice to Horticulture New Zealand (**HortNZ**) on policy matters across New Zealand and do the same for New Zealand Pork. I sit for HortNZ on the Auckland Rural Advisory Panel.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

5. I will not repeat the HortNZ submission, but the key concern expressed is the proposal to separate LUC1 from LUC2 and 3 for the purposes of directing growth management.
6. The Auckland Unitary Plan is the only resource management plan I have had experience with that provides definitions and a specific policy response for LUC1 as Elite and LUC2 and 3 as Prime Land rather than an approach treating LUC1, 2 and 3 (with variations) as a significant resource entity for its productive capacity.
7. As I understand it the Auckland Unitary Plan approach developed as a response to the 2012 Auckland long term spatial plan highlighting the need to carefully consider the direction a growth management strategy might send a region.
8. Clearly LUC1, 2 and 3 is a nationally significant resource, hence the government moves to a National Policy Statement. That to me again signals a need for caution on how this resource is managed and planned for. At present, from a regulatory context we look to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement which treats LUC1, 2 and 3 as that single entity. If the Future Growth Strategy is confirmed as proposed then there will be an inconsistency with the RPS that will create challenges in implementation now and likely dictate a redrafting of the RPS in the future.
9. I completely understand the tensions that exist for the councils, communities and the environment to provide for urban growth that may include greenfield activity when many

of our existing settlements are on or adjacent to highly productive land. Indeed, that is why many settlements are located where they are.

10. However, in my experience it is possible to avoid highly productive land and achieve urban growth objectives. As a planning witness for HortNZ on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan we successfully achieved the shift 175ha of proposed Future Urban Land for 2000 residential dwellings as well as a commercial component from highly productive land on Pukekohe Hill to the other side of Pukekohe and not on highly productive land. I am immensely proud of that outcome and note that the majority of that FUZ land on Pukekohe Hill is LUC2 not LUC1 and now a nationally recognised as a Specific Vegetable Growing Area in the NPS-FM 2020.
11. The case cost HortNZ over \$400,000 dollars to run, requiring surveying, geotechnical assessment, traffic assessment, 3 waters assessment, landscaping analysis, structure planning and legal submissions.
12. A huge undertaking and unfortunately not something HortNZ could repeat in Tuakau this year where significant highly productive land with the same food production qualities as Pukekohe Hill is proposed to be zoned for urban growth in the Waikato District Plan review.
13. Concluding, my comment is one of caution. If we open the door to development on highly productive land, we loose a food production resource for future generations. This is a difficult value judgement exercise but, in my opinion, where there are alternatives, these should be exercised. Jordyn has suggested a site visit for committee members to Tuakau to look at that area of proposed future growth. I think that a useful exercise before a decision is made. I also suggest the committee commission work to assess the impact of the strategy on highly productive land and alternatives.