

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL APPOINTED BY KAIPARA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter Private Plan Change 85 (Mangawahi East) to the Kaipara District Plan

EVIDENCE OF NICHOLAS WILLIAM BENNETTS ON BEHALF OF KAIPARA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Infrastructure Planning

1 December 2025



Warren Bangma
T: +64-9-358 2222
warren.bangma@simpsongrierson.com
Private Bag 92518 Auckland

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My full name is Nicholas William Bennetts.

1.2 I hold the position of General Manager, Service Delivery at the Kaipara District Council (**the Council**). In that role I am responsible for the delivery of the Council's water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, roading, community services, parks and recreation, solid waste, bylaw compliance and animal compliance services.

1.3 I have a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Canterbury. I have approximately 35 years' work experience, working primarily in the commercial sector.

1.4 I have held senior General Manager roles in operations since 2019, most recently as General Manager Local Government at Citycare Property, part of Citycare Group. In that capacity, I was accountable for the delivery of 14 contracts, overseeing \$150 million in revenue and the leadership of approximately 600 employees. Prior to my tenure at Citycare Group, I established and managed the New Zealand Red Cross grants programme following the Canterbury Earthquake, ensuring effective distribution of funding to support community recovery. Earlier in my career, I spent 22 years in the energy sector, working with Mobil Oil, United Networks, and Meridian Energy in a range of operational and leadership positions. These roles provided me with extensive experience in infrastructure management, service delivery, and stakeholder engagement across complex industries.

1.5 I have been asked to provide evidence to the Hearing Panel relating to the Council's wastewater planning for Mangawhai, and the Council's position on the proposed shared use path connecting Private Plan Change 85 (**PC85**) to Mangawhai Village.

1.6 Although I have set out my qualifications and experience above, I am presenting this evidence as a Council representative, rather than as an independent expert witness.

- 1.7** I am authorised to make this statement on behalf of the Council. I understand that this statement will be attached to the report under section 42A of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) that is being prepared by Jonathan Cleese.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1** In this evidence I will:

- (a) provide an overview of the Council's wastewater planning for Mangawhai;
- (b) address relevant funding identified in the Council's 2024-2027 Long Term Plan;
- (c) provide the Hearing Panel with an update on the current position in relation to the formation of a new water CCO for Northland, that will assume responsibility for two waters; and
- (d) address the Council's position on the proposed shared use path connecting PC85 to Mangawhai Village.

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1** The Council has identified the parts of Mangawhai that are to be serviced by the MCWWS. The areas to be serviced by the MCWWS include recently re-zoned land at Mangawhai Central, the Rise, and the southern one third of Mangawhai Hills. However, it does not include the land proposed for re-zoning as part of PC85.

- 3.2** The Council is planning a series of staged upgrades to the MCWWS to increase its capacity to 6,500 connections. This is sufficient to provide for development currently enabled in Mangawhai, including development enabled at Mangawhai Central, the Rise, the parts of Mangawhai Hills that will connect to the Council's system, the Metlifecare Retirement Village, several large vacant land holdings, and for ad hoc housing development through vacant section build-outs and ad hoc infill

redevelopment of existing residentially zoned sites. However, it is not sufficient to provide for the 989 additional equivalent residential connections enabled under PC85, as well. Accordingly, the Council's current planning for wastewater does not include servicing PC85, and the Council does not agree to this area being serviced.

- 3.3** Servicing PC85 as well would require the Council to identify and plan for further upgrades to the MCWWS, over and above those it has already identified. This includes the need to identify, consent, and build an entirely new treated wastewater disposal solution. The Council is unable to commit to this, given the impending transfer of the Council's responsibilities for wastewater to the planned new Water CCO and possible re-organisation of local government in Northland.

4. THE COUNCIL'S WASTEWATER PLANNING FOR MANGAWHAI

- 4.1** The Council owns and operates the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme (MCWWS).

- 4.2** The MCWWS was first established in 2009 to reduce reliance on septic tanks and to improve the water quality of the Mangawhai Estuary. Under the scheme wastewater from connected properties is treated at the wastewater treatment plant at Thelma Road, before being pumped to the Council's effluent disposal field at Brown Road. The number of properties connected to the scheme has progressively increased from around 800 properties when the scheme was first commissioned in 2009, to approximately 2,900 equivalent connections today.

- 4.3** In terms of the Council's wastewater planning for Mangawhai:

- (a) The Council has identified in its wastewater planning the extent of future possible areas to be serviced by the MCWWS. The areas to be serviced by the MCWWS include recently re-zoned land at Mangawhai Central, the Rise, and the southern one third of Mangawhai Hills. However, it does not include the land proposed for re-zoning as part of PC85. Mr Cleese has prepared and **attached** to his section 42A Report a plan showing in green the parts of Mangawhai the Council has identified to be serviced

by the MCWWS (with the boundaries of the different plan change areas overlaid over the top). A copy of this plan is **attached** to my evidence as **Attachment 1**.

- (b) The Council is planning a series of staged upgrades to the MCWWS to increase its capacity in response to growth. The nature of these upgrades is described in detail in the evidence of Mr Cantrell.¹ However, in summary, the Council's wastewater planning involves increasing the capacity of the MCWWS to around 5,500 connections through upgrades to the Mangawhai Wastewater Treatment Plant (**WWTP**), conveyance network, and by providing for disposal of treated effluent by subsurface drip irrigation at the Mangawhai Golf Club (in addition to the existing effluent disposal site at Brown Road). A resource consent to enable the below ground drip irrigation of the golf club is currently lodged with NRC, and funding for the associated capital works is included in the current LTP. It is anticipated that the first stage of the below ground drip irrigation will be operational by the end of 2026, with the second stage of increased volumes operational by the end of 2028, pending successful stage 1 monitoring outcomes.
- (c) The Council will then look to further increase the capacity of the MCWWS to around 6,500 connections by additional upgrades to the treatment plant, coupled with additional treated effluent disposal at the Mangawhai Golf Club via above ground irrigation. This final stage requires the agreement of the Golf Club, obtaining the necessary consents, and the inclusion of the capital and operational funding in a future LTP. Beyond that, a new treated wastewater disposal option will need to be identified, costed, and consented. Possible options for this could include further land based effluent disposal at a new site or disposal by an ocean outfall. However, this has not been the subject of specific assessment, costing or funding.

¹ The Evidence of Mr Cantrell, section 4.

- (d) The Council's current planning provides for a capacity of 6,500 connections. This is sufficient to provide for the development currently enabled in Mangawhai, including development enabled at Mangawhai Central, the Rise, the parts of Mangawhai Hills that will connect to the Council's system, the Metlifecare Retirement Village, and for infill housing on existing residential sites.²
- (e) However, the Council has no plans to provide wastewater servicing to the plan change area beyond the existing reticulation of the camping ground. This area falls outside of the areas identified in Mangawhai for wastewater servicing by the Council. The Council's focus is on servicing land within Mangawhai (i.e. Mangawhai Village, Mangawhai Central and Mangawhai Heads) where growth has already been approved.
- (f) Overall, as explained in greater detail in Mr Cantrell's evidence, while the proposed upgrades of the MCWWS will provide sufficient capacity to provide for residential growth that is already enabled in Mangawhai, there is not sufficient capacity to provide for PC85 as well.³
- (g) Servicing the additional 989 equivalent residential connections enabled under PC85, as well as the development already enabled in Mangawhai, would require the Council to identify and plan for further upgrades to the MCWWS. In particular, it would require the Council to identify and plan for a solution for further effluent disposal (in addition to disposal at Brown Road Farm and the Golf Club). In my view, it is not reasonable for the Council to do so given that the Council's current wastewater planning will provide for 6,500 connections, and this has been assessed as sufficient to provide for the next 30 years of growth.⁴ Furthermore, the Council is unable to commit to investigating and planning for this, given the impending transfer of the Council's responsibilities for wastewater to the planned new Water CCO for Northland (as outlined in part 7 of my evidence).

² See the evidence of Mr Cantrell, at paragraph 4.12 for further detail.

³ See the evidence of Mr Cantrell, at paragraph 4.12(b).

⁴ Projected to be a further 2,500 dwellings, based on Mr Foy's projections, as outlined in paragraph 2.6 of his evidence.

(h) Accordingly, while the applicant proposes that PC85 connect to the MCWWS and that it will construct a new wastewater pipeline and associated pump station upgrades to enable this, the Council is not planning for this, and does not agree to this area being serviced due to the more fundamental constraint presented by the absence of a treated wastewater disposal solution. “

(i) Given the nature of these issues, and the impending transfer of responsibility for wastewater planning from the Council to the new CCO these issues cannot be addressed by way of a development agreement.

5. RELEVANT FUNDING IDENTIFIED IN THE 2024-2027 LTP FOR WASTEWATER UPGRADES

5.1 This part of my evidence addresses relevant funding identified for wastewater upgrades in the Council’s 2024-2027 Long Term Plan (**LTP**).

5.2 The LTP was adopted on 31 July 2024. The LTP covers a period of only 3 years, as a result of the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery Act 2023, where central government reduced the time period for LTPs from the usual 10 year period, to assist Councils that were affected by severe weather events in 2023.

5.3 In relation to the MCWWS, the LTP includes:

- (a) \$800,000 in funding in the 2025 financial year;
- (b) \$4 million in funding over the 2025-2027 financial years for the effluent disposal fields at the Mangawhai Golf Club;
- (c) \$135,000 in funding over the 2024-2027 financial years for minor pump replacements.

(d) \$3 million in wastewater network and pump capacity upgrades over the 2025-2027 financial years; and

(e) \$1 million for upgrades to the Mangawhai WWTP.⁵

6. THE NEW WATER CCO FOR NORTHLAND

6.1 At the present time the Kaipara District Council has responsibility for water, wastewater and stormwater within the Kaipara District.

6.2 However, Northland is proceeding towards implementation of a new Council Controlled Organisation (**CCO**) with responsibility for three waters.

6.3 Based on current estimates, it is likely that the new CCO will be established on 1 July 2026; and operational by 1 July 2027. Accordingly, operating the MCWWS and responsibility for planning and funding upgrades will become the responsibility of the new CCO (and not KDC).

6.4 It is also possible that, based on recent announcements from Central Government, there may be a broader re-organisation of local government in Northland in the coming years.

7. THE COUNCIL'S POSITION ON THE PROPOSED SHARED USE PATH FROM PC85 TO MANGAWHAI VILLAGE

7.1 As outlined above, the applicant has proposed as part of the infrastructure needed for PC85 a 3.0m wide shared use path connecting the plan change area to Mangawhai Village, including over the Insley Street causeway.

7.2 The Council has developed a shared use path in Mangawhai running from Mangawhai Heads to Mangawhai Village.

⁵ Kaipara District Council Long Term Plan 2024-2027, page 144.

- 7.3** At the current time, the Council has no confirmed work programme to extend the shared use path to the plan change area. There is no funding for this in the LTP.

Nicholas William Bennetts

1 December 2025

Attachment 1

