

Before Kaipara District Council

In the Matter of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

And

In the Matter of an application for Private Plan Change 82 (**PC82**) by **MOONLIGHT HEIGHTS LIMITED** to rezone 39.2 ha of land at Awakino Road, Dargaville from Rural Zone to Residential Zone

Evidence of Craig and Rachael Williamson on behalf of Moonlight Heights Limited

(Corporate/Landowner)

Dated 21 July 2023

Jeremy Brabant
Barrister
Foundry Chambers
Level 4, Vulcan Buildings
PO Box 1502, Shortland St
Auckland City
021 494 506
Email: jeremy@brabant.co.nz

Introduction

1. We (Craig and Rachael Williamson) make this statement in support of Moonlight Heights Limited's (**MHL**) application for Private Plan Change 82 (**PC82**). I (Craig) am a Director of MHL which owns the majority of land that is the subject of PC82. The PC82 site comprises 39.2ha and is located approximately 2km northeast of Dargaville's CBD.
2. We have both lived in Dargaville from a young age with both sets of our parents having strong local ties to Kaipara. All our families are involved in the local area's agriculture sector (dairy, kumara & agricultural contracting).
3. We have brought up our 3 children (aged 21,19 & 12) in Dargaville, all of whom still reside in the town. We are committed to enabling and achieving high-quality residential outcomes on the site which we believe will provide increased housing opportunities for the Dargaville community and beyond.

Operation of Existing Farm Businesses

4. We own and are actively hands on in our kumara growing business, growing 80ha. We are shareholders in the Delta Produce Co-Operative where we have our crop processed. Rachael is on the Board of Directors at Delta Produce also.
5. We currently employ 4 full time staff, plus ourselves, to help manage the kumara business. During the planting or harvesting season, we can employ up to an extra 40-45 seasonal staff. At least half of these staff are local, and the rest of the staff are backpackers in New Zealand on a working holiday.
6. The majority of the local staff live with their families. Any out of town staff generally have family or friends to stay with as there is a distinct lack of proximate cost-effective (i.e. hostel) accommodation in town. We currently accommodate the backpacker staff on-farm, in temporary accommodation that has been on farm for many years. Many of the backpackers travel in camper vans.

7. In addition to our farming business, we also have a mechanical and engineering contracting business which serves the local farming and forestry communities. We started this to help ourselves maintain our own machinery, but it has grown steadily, and we now employ 3 full time diesel mechanics, 3 fabrication engineers (2 are apprentices) and 2 admin staff.

Demand for Residential Land

8. As identified above, there are limited options for new, cost-effective, and local accommodation in Dargaville. In our experience, it is particularly difficult for temporary workers working in the farming sector to find suitable accommodation.
9. In addition to worker demand, we are also aware of the current lack of new-build options for local residents and interested homeowners.
10. Since we first bought the land with the view to develop, we have had countless locals or friends of locals asking when the sections were going to be available. Some of these people have even expressed a desire to put a deposit down to secure a section.
11. We believe there is demand for increased residential development in Dargaville. Further details relating to Dargaville's anticipated growth and residential expansion is set out in Mr Heath's economic evidence. From our perspective, we consider that taking the first steps towards supporting residential growth now will be of positive benefit to Dargaville moving forward.
12. Through PC82 we seek to enable and promote high-quality residential housing in close proximity to both the CBD and rural employment opportunities.
13. MHL has engaged a team of expert consultants to advise on the most appropriate way to achieve our vision. To that end, our expert team are supportive of a residential rezoning and have proposed a set of new precinct provisions to provide for an increased range of housing opportunities and

densities. Those provisions also seek to manage any potential effects arising from future residential use and development of the land.

Conclusion

14. The residential rezoning of the site will enable increased residential housing opportunities for people and communities in Dargaville now and in the future.
15. Through this plan change process we have ensured that the rezoning proposal and any future housing development will be appropriately guided by bespoke planning guidance and will achieve positive housing outcomes.

Craig and Rachael Williamson

Dated 21 July 2023