

EVIDENCE 44
TOPIC PC85AD, 86A-B, 87, 102, 114
SUB# Rural Plan Changes
DATE 07-07-2017

Whangarei District Plan Hearings PC85 A-D

Grower case study Sue Culham

I am Sue Culham who with my husband Shane have an avocado orchard (trading as Puripak Avocados Limited) at 662 Ngunguru Road, Glenbervie, Whangarei.

We have 16 Hectares with 9ha planted in Avocados for export and domestic supply. We have water resource for irrigation purposes which is consented.

We are currently proposed to be in the Rural Production Environment

We are winners in the Ballance Farm Environment Award Winning.

We grow in this area as avocados are a subtropical fruit, which require certain climates and soils to grow to export quality. There are 3 main growing regions in NZ, Bay of Plenty, Whangarei and the Far North. We grow avocados in Glenbervie due the soil type, climate, topography, water, natural shelter from native bush surrounding the property and the economic benefits for the district. Soil type being the number one factor for growing, we are seeing less soils for avocados being protected in the Whangarei District.

The main challenges with growing in the area include the weather patterns, reverse sensitivity, and restricted water takes.

If we are left in RPE we will be able to run our business as we do today. Having a good relationship with our neighbours is key as they understand our requirements for running our horticulture business. I consider that this area of Whangarei that should be protected from land development.

The Proposed Plan Change will affect our area:

School

- Glenbervie Primary (Public) School is currently running at capacity, already incorporating, Glenbervie, Pautaua and Whareora living areas and is currently zoned. It is a school that is reliant on rain water and septic tanks. School buses run along Ngunguru Road. At peak times it is dangerous for the school children catching these buses no shelters or accessible layby areas. This road is currently not conducive for more Rural Living blocks.

Water

- Water takes will be an issue if more bores are granted through Resource Consent within the RLE.
- RLE will require water tanks for roof catchment, with potential restrictions on spraying. Chemical usage is a requirement for horticulture businesses, although sprays these days are more pest targeted they are still a requirement for export markets. Even Organic use sprays and fertiliser

Sewerage

- How will this impact on the environment if sections are granted to 4000m²?

Roading

- Roothing will become more congested than what it currently is, Ngunguru Road cannot cope with the amount of traffic during peak hours, there are no footpaths, street lighting, you can't even ride a bike into the nearest school as it is far too dangerous. The road would need to be upgraded and widened if there was an increase in Rural Living density. Residents from the Ngunguru and Tutukaka coastal areas use this road daily travelling to and from Whangarei City for work.

Rates

- Rate Increases will impact our business due to the cost of land values increasing, under Rural Production rates are presently at a sustainable level.

Factors that will impact on our business if the RLE is extended to Ngunguru Ford Road will be:

- Reverse Sensitivity (currently have case on this if required)
- Restrictions on buildings
- Restrictions on commercial enterprise/activities
- Restrictions on Spraying
- Restrictions on noise from rural production such as bird scarers
- Potential problems during harvesting season/traffic/trucks
- Rate Rises – Cost of running the business with land values rising to urban values.
- Increasing rural density will put pressure on birds in the native bush areas as they would be at risk of predation by cats.

Alternative areas for Rural Living:

- In the original Draft Plans Ngunguru Ford Road was an option but was discounted due to the fact the road was not tar sealed. After a drive down this road and looking at the current houses this road is tar sealed for approx. 2.6 kilometres. The area is already starting to have smaller sections showing progressive development. The soil type is not viable for horticulture, but with the country living that residents are looking for it will be an area that should certainly not be discounted. The Rural Living Environment proposed in Glenbervie is approximately 1 Kilometre long (roading). No thought was put into the neighbouring properties of the proposed RLE/RPE. If one property can subdivide down to 4000m² and the neighbour only 20 hectares and both expected to work together in a Rural Environment, this will cause major issues and eventually farming will be on the out. "Build a motorway and they will build around it"
- Rate Rebates for Horticulture/Farming businesses within the RLE.

Final Word:

I would like to see the WDC councillors and planners get out of their chambers and get on the road. We have offered many times through Horticulture NZ for them to take a trip and see what we actually do out in the Rural Areas of our district and see what economic and social worth we put back into this community. Get a sense of what will be lost when these beautiful and historical landscapes with amazing soils, stone walls, and incredible old native trees are chopped out - and - up for a Rural "Lifestyler"