

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of a submission by WEL Networks Limited in
respect of the Proposed Plan Change 5 to
the Hamilton City District Plan pursuant to
Clause 6 of Schedule 1 to the Act

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SARA BROWN FOR WEL NETWORKS LIMITED

14 September 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Sara Brown, and I am a Senior Planner employed by WEL Networks Limited (“WEL”). I hold a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Waikato.
- 1.2 I have worked as a planner for 11 years in local authorities, the electricity distribution sector and as a consultant.
- 1.3 I have read the Section 42A Report prepared by the Council Planner.
- 1.4 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note and I agree to comply with it. The evidence within this statement is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information provided by another party. I have not knowingly omitted facts or information that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

2. WEL Networks Limited

- 2.1 WEL is an electricity distributor operating under the Electricity Act 1992, who owns, operates and develops electricity distribution infrastructure in the Waikato Region to provide line function services to approximately 98,098 installation connection points. This includes the distribution of electricity to residences and businesses within the Hamilton City.
- 2.2 As an electricity distribution company, WEL owns, develops and maintains the electricity network of lines, poles, cables, substations and associated infrastructure. WEL is also an approved requiring authority pursuant to section 167 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (“RMA”) for its lines network functions.
- 2.3 WEL is currently investigating sources of renewable energy to provide a source of low-cost electricity to energy-impooverished customers in the Waikato region.

3. WEL’s overall position on the Proposed Plan Change 5 of the Hamilton City District Plan – Peacocke Structure Plan

- 3.1 WEL’s electricity infrastructure supports the sustainable management and efficient use of natural and physical resources as promoted in Part 2 of the RMA.
- 3.2 A fundamental part of enabling people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing under section 5 of the RMA, is the provision of a secure and efficient supply of electricity.
- 3.3 The benefits of WEL’s electricity infrastructure in achieving sustainable management are also enshrined in the RMA through section 7(b) and 7(ba) that, in achieving the purpose of the RMA,

requires particular regard be given to “the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources” and “the efficiency of the end use of energy”.

- 3.4 Further, WEL has become involved in developing renewable energy projects and how these might benefit the people of Hamilton and the Waikato, thus achieving the purpose of the RMA through section (j), which requires particular regard to be given to “the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy”.
- 3.5 WEL is generally supportive of the overall intent of Proposed Plan Change 5 of the Hamilton City District Plan – Peacocke Structure Plan (“Plan Change”). However, WEL submits that amendments are required to enhance the provisions within the Plan Change to provide for the importance of electricity and telecommunication infrastructure as provided in Part 2 of the RMA.

4. Specific Provisions Supported by WEL

- 4.1 WEL supports the provisions of the Plan Change (as recommended in the section 42A report), as set out in the table below.

Submission Point	Provision
Chapter 3A: Peacocke Structure Plan	
37.1	Objective DEV01 – PSP: O25 – <i>Development of the Peacocke Structure Plan area occurs in a staged manner that ensures the efficient and effective delivery of infrastructure.</i>
37.2	Objective DEV01 – PSP: O26 – <i>The timing, type and intensity of new urban development is integrated and aligns with the planning and provision of network infrastructure.</i>
Chapter 4A: Medium Density Zone: Peacocke Precinct chapter	
37.3	Chapter 4A: MRZ PREC1 PSP: P22 – <i>Residential development considers and responds to the future effects of climate change.</i>
Chapter 23A: Subdivision Peacocke Precinct	
37.6	SUB-PREC1-PSP Rule 12: Telecommunications, Electricity, Gas, and Computer Media <i>1) Telecommunication, electricity, gas and ducting for computer media shall be provided at the time of subdivision, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant network utility operator and the relevant standards of the applicable zone. 2) Telecommunication, electricity, gas and ducting for computer media shall be underground where possible.</i>

	<p>Note</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acceptable means of compliance for the provision, design and construction of infrastructure is contained within the Waikato Local Authority Shared Services Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications (RITS) 2. Where density exceeds the outcomes anticipated by the Waikato Local Authority Shared Services Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications (RITS) development will need to be undertaken in consultation with Hamilton City Council.
37.4	<p>MRZ - PREC1- PSP: P19</p> <p>Development should encourage the efficient use of energy and water, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporating water-sensitive techniques. 2. Reducing the use of reticulated electricity (37.4). 3. Utilizing solar energy. 4. Providing for electric bikes an electric vehicle (37.4) charging network throughout the area.
37.5	<p>Chapter 23A: SUB – PREC1-PSP: P16</p> <p>Create high amenity streets by designing the transport corridor to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide for high quality pedestrian and cycling facilities. 2. Provide for public transport and associated stops on identified routes. 3. Provide for on-street parking in recessed parking bays to ensure carriageways are kept clear from parked cars. 4. Including planting and landscaping and stormwater management devices. 5. Create a low speed environment. 6. Provide sufficient space in the berm for infrastructure, free from landscaping (37.5) 7. Provide for electric bikes and electric vehicle charging stations (37.5)
37.7	<p>SUB-PREC1-PSP: R16 Design standards</p> <p>1) The standards of Rule SUB – PREC1-PSP: R12-R21 shall not apply to the subdivision of land to accommodate a network utility service.</p>
37.8	<p>SUB-PREC1-PSP: R16 Subdivision Suitability</p> <p>1) All subdivisions creating fee simple allotments shall ensure that new allotments (excluding any utility, road or reserve allotment, or allotment subject to amalgamation) are of a size and shape to enable activities anticipated in the zone.</p>
37.9	<p>Chapter 25 – 25.2.5 Rules – Specific Activities – 25.2.5.1</p> <p>25.2.5.1 Earthworks in the Peacocke Medium Density Zone: Peacocke Precinct c) Earthworks within the Peacocke Structure Plan shall be no more than 600m³ in area, unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. It is in conjunction with an associated subdivision consent; or ii. It is associated with works authorised by an existing resource consent or requiring building consent. <p>Provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Earthworks undertaken by a Network Utility Operator are exempt from I to iii

	above (37.9).
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5. Specific Provisions Requesting Amendments by WEL

- 5.1 WEL does not support the recommendation at 37.10 contained within the section 42A report. WEL had requested an amendment to Table 15-6b: Criteria for the form of Transport Corridors in the Peacocke Structure Plan, which includes the ‘desirable’ berm area to be set aside as a service corridor.
- 5.2 The reasoning for the submission is to remove the word ‘desirable’ from the service corridor berm width requirement and replace with ‘required’ to ensure that more scrutiny is placed on achieving a higher level of compliance.
- 5.3 The Council Planner’s report rejected the request and stated that *the service corridor widths detailed within the table are aligned with the Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications (RITS) and are consistent with city-wide provisions in Table 15-6a. Sufficient flexibility exists to allow varied service corridors and transport corridor layouts to be considered during the consenting process as all new transport corridors are a restricted discretionary activity. The term ‘desirable’ is used throughout the corridor cross-section tables to enable some flexibility to exist.*
- 5.4 WEL submits that the berm widths provided for in Table 15-6b are sufficient to enable underground utilities as well as footpaths, amenity planting and road furniture. A width any less will likely create long term issues such as utility congestion, potential root damage to utilities and disruption of planting and furniture during maintenance and upgrading of utilities.
- 5.5 In response to the Council Planner’s reasoning in the report for rejecting the request, we note that the RITS does not set a minimum width for berms. Further, it is noted that WEL plans to submit the same request as part of Plan Change 12 to amend the city-wide provisions contained in Table 15-6a to ensure consistency. It is also noted that the restricted discretionary activity status currently provides for a level of flexibility regardless of the wording, however the word ‘required’ rather than ‘desirable’ may encourage a higher level of achieving compliance with the berm widths to avoid long term problems.
- 5.6 WEL requests that Table 15-6b: Criteria for the form of Transport Corridors in the Peacocke Structure Plan be amended, as per submission point 37.10.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 WEL **supports** recommendations made in the Council Planner’s Section 42A Report on the Proposed Plan as outlined in Section 4 of my evidence.
- 6.2 WEL **supports in part** the recommendations made in the Council Planner’s Section 42A Report subject to the requested amendments as outlined in Section 5 of my evidence.

6.3 Subject to the requested amendments by WEL, overall the Plan Change reflects sound resource management principle and practice and will achieve the purpose of the RMA.

Dated 14 September 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Brown', enclosed within a thin yellow rectangular border.

Sara Brown
WEL Networks Limited