

**Before the Hearings Panel
At Porirua City Council**

Under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the Proposed Porirua District Plan

Between **Various**

Submitters

And **Porirua City Council**

Respondent

**Reply on Notable Trees –
Leon Saxon on behalf of Porirua City Council**

Date: 20 December 2021

INTRODUCTION:

1 My full name is Leon Glen Saxon. I am employed as a consultant Arborist for Arborlab Consultancy Services Limited.

2 I have prepared this reply on behalf of Porirua City Council (Council) in respect of Notable Trees.

3 I have read the evidence and tabled statements provided by submitters relevant to my evidence on Notable Trees.

4 I also respond to the Panel's requests for further information and clarification during questioning on 6th December 2021 in Hearing Stream 3, and in Minute 16.

5 I am authorised to provide this evidence on behalf of the Council.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

6 My original statement of evidence sets out my qualifications and experience.

7 I confirm that I am continuing to abide by the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014.

SCOPE OF REPLY

8 This reply follows Hearing Stream 3 held on 3, 6-8 and 10 December 2021.

9 The main topics addressed in this reply include:

- Root Protection Area
- Answers to questions posed by the Panel

Root Protection Area

- 10 Following questions from the Panel and after listening to submitters, I have given further consideration to the definition of the 'Root Protection Area'. I acknowledge that having three different measurement options within the Proposed Porirua District Plan (PDP) could be potentially confusing. When asked by the Panel Chair if I had to choose one method of the three, my response was that my preference would be to use the trunk diameter multiplied by 12 method only. I believe that the reasons for this were well canvassed during the hearing and I still hold that position.
- 11 Further consideration has also been given to the use of the calculation required for multi-stemmed trees. From a professional arborist's perspective, modern technology is the easiest way to deal with this situation. Multiple, free on-line calculators exist for easy calculations to be completed. There is however, no simple way to define this in the PDP.
- 12 For the trees identified as notable in the PDP, there is only one listing with trees of multiple stems. This is TREE023, which is a listing of two pōhutukawa trees. The trees have single stems at ground level, but divide to multiple stems at approximately 1.4 metres above ground level. A calculation could be made reasonably easily, by measuring the stem just below where it divides.
- 13 Given the limited scenarios where multiple stem calculations are required, in order to keep the definition simple, I consider it most appropriate to exclude the multiple stem calculation from the PDP.
- 14 If the 12 x trunk diameter method is adopted, the following wording could be utilised as the definition; "Means the circular area surrounding a notable tree, measured from the centre of the tree trunk, with a radius calculated by multiplying the trunk diameter by 12 (measured at 1.4 metres above ground level)."

15 I am still of the opinion that the caveat of ‘The maximum RPA radius must not be greater than 15m and no less than 2m’ should be retained, as this is supported by international standards.

TREE008 – 24 Whanake Street

16 Two questions arose from the Panel which are outlined in Minute 16, as follows:

17 *“Did Arborlab enter the Clark property to assess the cluster of notified notable trees on the site?”*

18 I did not enter the Clarks property when I undertook the original assessment in 2018. I assessed the trees from public vantage points. A full STEM assessment was undertaken at that time of the eight nikau and one pūriri.

19 *“Having noted Mr Saxon’s evidence that he did not undertake a full STEM assessment of the trees on the Clark property, has anyone else undertaken a full STEM assessment of the cluster of four remaining Nikau’s recommended to remain as scheduled notable trees?”*

20 With respect to the first part of the question I believe the Panel are referring to 14.1 of Mr Spencer’s evidence. Mr Spencer explained in his evidence that when he visited the site at 24 Whanake Street he did not undertake a STEM assessment. When I assessed the group of eight nikau and one pūriri tree in 2018 I did undertake a full STEM assessment.

Addresses of trees which scored less than the required threshold

21 A question was raised by the Panel during the hearing over the addresses of two trees that I had referred to in my evidence.

22 The question referred to a golden totara tree discussed at point 23.3 of my evidence. This tree is located within the front yard of 8 Capstan Lane, Whitby.

23 The other tree referred to is a Californian Redwood at point 23.5 of my evidence. This tree is located at 61 Seaview Road, Paremata.

Technical terms

24 A question was raised by the Panel regarding the use of the terms ‘air-spade’ in the notified version of the PDP and ‘air excavation’ and ‘hydro-excavation’ as used in the Joint Witness Statement of myself and Mr Partridge. These terms are commonly used in the construction industry and are also well known in professional arboricultural industry.

25 Air excavation is, succinctly, high pressure air, used to blast soil away and used in conjunction with powerful suction which removes the loosened soil. Hydro-excavation is essentially the same process, but using high pressure water, rather than high pressure air, also using powerful suction to remove the slurry created.

Date: 20th December 2021



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