

BEFORE CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act
1991 and Private Plan Change 12

REQUESTER Wooing Tree Holdings Limited

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GEOFFREY BEWS
(DIRECTOR OF WOONG TREE HOLDINGS LIMITED)**

1st November 2017

Introduction

1. My name is Geoffrey Bews. I am a director of Wooing Tree Holdings Limited, the requester, and director of Wooing Tree Vineyard Limited. I am authorised to present this evidence on behalf of the directors of the company.

Qualifications and Experience

2. I hold qualifications in Information Technology from the Otago Polytechnic and have had 17 years' experience (1987-2004) in New Zealand, Switzerland and United Kingdom in this field. I have previously been employed by the National Bank Of NZ, Telecom NZ, IBM UK Limited and JP Morgan Suisse. Since the inception of Wooing Tree Vineyard in 2001, and in conjunction with directorship and management of our business, I have been responsible for all production related activities for the business.

Wooing Tree's Vision

3. Wooing Tree Vineyard was established in 2001 and is now a premium Central Otago wine producer with multiple awards and accolades to its credit. The company is owned by four directors, all family, and all working in the business. The Wooing Tree brand is renowned within the wine industry, both here in New Zealand and internationally. We pride ourselves in producing premium wines grown from our Central Otago vineyard site that are sold around the world. The seed for our vision was planted back in 2000 during the search for suitable viticultural land. The selection of our site was justified on two equally important factors, being the land's grape growing potential and its proximity to the Cromwell township and State Highways 8B and 6. It was our belief back then that the growth in the wine industry, the Cromwell town itself, and associated tourism of our region would become an important factor to the success of our business. This growth is now apparent throughout the region, and what we are proposing through this plan change request will create a significant community asset that locals will be proud of, as well as a destination that visitors to our region will enjoy and want to return to.
4. Our development is aimed at having a vineyard look and feel as our brand is strongly linked to our site and the iconic Wooing Tree itself. We will be providing premium residential areas for those wishing to live here, and well designed, modern tourism based retail and commercial facilities that further cement Central Otago as a premium wine tourism destination. We also feel it paramount to cater for this growing tourism market by offering a targeted experience where visitors will reminisce. The result of all this will mean more visitors, more

overnight stays and more overall value to the community. In addition, we are proposing a roading and pedestrian solution over and above what is required, that will provide an important and safe link via walking and cycle ways between the existing town centre and properties to the north of SH8B, McNulty Inlet and beyond. The four company directors are determined that the same care and attention that we instil in our brand and our wine will be applied to the development of our land.

Consultation

5. I outline in the following paragraphs the consultation that Wooing Tree has undertaken in developing this plan change request.

6. Central Otago District Council – Meeting

On 22nd August 2016 we met with council representatives Louise van der Voort & Peter Greenwood to discuss our intention to develop our land and the RMA processes to follow. We also spoke briefly on topics of services infrastructure and the consultation process with NZTA.

7. Information Evening – Neighbours & Other Key People

On 5th December 2016, the Wooing Tree team provided an information evening inviting all our affected neighbours and other key people within the community. This was an opportunity for the guests to learn first-hand about our vision, concepts and ideas. We engaged in both group discussion and one on one answering any questions. We provided a handout pamphlet summarising this presentation and encouraged further feedback.

8. NZTA – Meeting

On Thursday 18th May 2017 we met with NZTA in Dunedin to discuss our development concept and gain an understanding of their position regarding the proposed roundabout and underpass infrastructure.

9. Janeen Wood – Central Otago Queenstown Trails Network Trust

We have maintained contact with Janeen Wood over the past year discussing how our plans might fit with the proposed cycle trails project to link Wanaka, Queenstown, Cromwell and Clyde. Discussions primarily focused around where and how the cycle trails and our proposal could link up. A suggestion from Janeen, and noted in the submission from David Garth Stark, was to provide a

link to the north-west corner of the site so that access from McNulty Inlet via the Rotary Glen could be made possible.

Submissions

10. Several public submissions have been received that I will comment on below.
11. Cromwell & Districts Community Trust (8/2) states ***“The submitter also had occasion to write to Transit New Zealand in April 2013 (letter attached to submission) requesting the installation of an underpass for safety reasons. The submitter hopes that this proposal will ensure that we finally get an underpass under the highway.”*** This statement confirms the necessity for an underpass to service the needs of the community existed well before our application was lodged with the Council. In addition to this, soon after we presented our vision and plans to the community in December 2016, we received copies of correspondence from neighbours that had been sent to Council on previous occasions, also expressing concerns of the safety when crossing SH8B and asking for an underpass solution. While this infrastructure forms part of our plan change request, we believe funding for this infrastructure should be a shared cost between the Central Otago District Council, Cromwell & Districts Community Trust and NZTA.
12. William Robert Dunbar & 25 Others (11/12) states ***“The short vine rows as shown on the plan are completely impractical from an operational viewpoint. They will be short lived if in fact they are planted at all.”*** The total area of the buffer zone is approximately 4.27 hectares and to have producing vines is a necessity for the forecasted increase in our wine production. It is our intention to run the vine rows parallel with the property boundary to maximise the land use. I address this topic later in my evidence in my response to the Section 42A report.
13. Jill Alexa Herron (18/5) states ***“Cromwell has the potential to grow as a tourist destination and we need to protect that now. This proposal will only detract from the unique setting Cromwell is fortunate enough to have and would destroy the town’s rural outlook. Due to the contour of the land general traffic, tourists and some businesses will be looking straight into multiple backyards, despite the buffer zones.”*** As stated in our vision previously, with our proposal we are aiming to grow our town as a tourist destination and further cement Cromwell and Central Otago as a place that visitors will want to return to time and time again.

14. Graeme & Jan-Marie McDowell (23/12) states ***“The submitters oppose this as the Wooing Tree already have an existing entrance roadway. They believe the new entrance way is wanted to stop any disruption to their existing entrance way which would hinder traffic to their business. Their existing entrance road way already caters for heavy vehicles which are required for vineyard associated activities therefore could cater for any traffic needed with construction.”*** The proposed temporary access in question will be the only access to the Wooing Tree Cellar Door. The existing entrance way leading to the Cellar Door will be removed during development works to allow for new residential lots as part of this development stage. Once this stage is completed, and the proposed roundabout is constructed, this temporary access will be formed and become the designated access way to the Wooing Tree Cellar Door, leading from the roundabout. As depicted on the concept plan, on the northern boundary, a service access way to the Business Resource Area (2) zone will also be created as part of this development stage.
15. David Garth Stark (33/3) states ***“The submitter is in favour of the proposed underpass to provide pedestrian and cyclist access across the state highway. There are an increasing number of residents on the northern side of state highway 8B and it would be great to have a safe way to get across an increasingly busy road. This would also promote walking and cycling access from the town centre to the lake adding to the town centre’s appeal and capitalizing further on the investments that the Council has made in the Big Fruit reserve area and the town centre. The underpass will also assist with access from the town centre to the proposed cycle trail that will run alongside the lake. It would be great to see a subdivision plan that provided for an off-road access through the subdivision utilizing the underpass and going to the lake via Rotary Glen if that was possible.”*** It is our intention to include cycle links to our boundary by the north-east corner of the property exiting to Shortcut Road. Discussion with the Central Otago Queenstown Trails Network Trust regarding another link to the northern corner to facilitate access towards the Rotary Glen has occurred.
16. Gordon McAlpine Stewart (34/12) states ***“The further fragmentation of Cromwell’s business and retail precincts to the detriment of the Mall is also contrary to the Cromwell Community Plan’s vision of the importance of enhancing and maintaining focus on the vibrancy of the Mall as being a “stand out issue” (c.f. page 23 of the Cromwell Community Plan as attached to the submission). Of particular note in the Cromwell Community Plan is the finding of the “Urbanisation Report” that the Cromwell Mall has twice the amount of retail***

space expected of a town of its population. It is difficult therefore to see the justification for a further commercial area to service the town." Our proposal for a tourism based light retail/commercial area is aimed at servicing the ever-increasing tourism market. We believe it will also benefit the existing businesses by encouraging more visitors to our region.

17. Gordon McAlpine Stewart (34/14) states **"It is unclear as to whether the proposed buffer areas along SH6 and SH8B are to remain in private ownership or become public reserves. While it is fully appreciated that the requestor may wish to continue to maintain this area in vines, the submitter believes the Council must take a longer term view in the wider interests of the community at large and the residents within the development. The requestors and/or their viticultural entity are not going to be around forever. A long narrow (only 30m wide) vineyard held in a separate privately owned freehold title is unlikely to be a commercially viable proposition in the long term. From a practical viticultural management viewpoint, the submitter points out that by the time suitable headlands for machine manoeuvring are taken into account, the vineyard rows will only be a few metres long."** Wooing Tree Vineyard is a family owned premium Central Otago wine business. As stated from the outset of these plans, it is our intention to continue to grow our wine business well into the future. The inclusion of vines in the buffer areas, reinforces the link of our brand with the vineyard and tree itself, provides the vineyard village appeal and displays the "shop front" that is required for our business.
18. Hessel Christiaan Van Wieren (37/1) states **"Concerning provision of allowing shops and commercial development seems at odds with the previous (or current) plans to bring more life or use into the current Mall area."** This is addressed by my previous comment.
19. Hessel Christiaan Van Wieren (37/4) states **"That the provision of a buffer zone should include a mound/raised area parallel to the state highways with plantings so as to provide a sound barrier and a visual effect."** This is addressed by my previous comment.
20. William Finlayson White (40/9) states **"It will split the business retail area of Cromwell."** This is addressed by my previous comment.
21. Janeen Margaret Wood (41/4) states **"The submitter suggests that a safer location would be to the west of Barry Avenue and an exit/entry point onto the Big Fruit Reserve."** We have been advised by OPUS International Consulting, that the construction of the underpass should be in conjunction with the roundabout

as it is a more cost effective solution. We agree the underpass should exit and link the existing footpath on the immediate west side of Barry Avenue.

Response to section 42A report

22. Mr Whitney has prepared a report pursuant to Section 42a of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**the Whitney report**) and a number of findings and/or recommendations have been raised. The following is my response to these:

PROVISION FOR HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

23. ***“Explain why a minimum lot area of 400m² is more appropriate than, say, a minimum lot area of 500m² with respect to land currently identified as Residential Resource Area (11) in Plan Change 12”***¹. The mix of residential zones as proposed in PC12 provides a better offering to potential purchasers. It is our belief that the RRA 11 zone with a minimum of 400m² lots, allows for better scope in the design of the layout offering lot sizes from the minimum 400m² up to 1000m². Our proposal includes a maximum of 100 lots within the RRA 11 zone that has a total area of 8.32 hectares. Without this maximum there would be a possible 166 lots over the same area.
24. ***“Give consideration to whether the Residential Resource Area (3), which has a minimum lot area of 1000m² should apply to the strip of land closest to State Highway 8B”***². Other experts have addressed this point in their evidence.

BUSINESS RESOURCE AREA (2)

25. ***“We have significant reservations whether the Business Resource Area (2) is necessary to enable the continued operation of the Wooing Tree Cellar door and associated operations.”***³ As stated in our vision above, we believe the Business Resource Area (2) will provide a unique tourism destination that compliments the existing town centre, the recent Mall and surrounding area upgrades. Our Cellar Door operation is one of our main business streams and it is vital that we continue to grow this by offering more for visitors to see & do. The wine industry in general is continuing to be approached by major tourism companies looking for more on offer to their clients. In response to submissions and the Whitney report, we have engaged Natalie Hampson to advise us on the Business Resource Area (2)

¹ Whitney Report – Page 6 Paragraph 3

² Whitney Report – Page 6 Paragraph 4

³ Whitney Report – Page 7 Paragraph 8

proposal and the types of businesses that should be located there. Ms Hampson has detailed this in her evidence.

26. ***“Provide a plan which shows the existing Business Resource Area (2) being allocated to other purposes being Residential Resource Area (3), the Residential Resource Area, and the Residential Resource Area (11).”***⁴ We do not agree with this recommendation. It will have a detrimental effect on the continuation of our wine business. The area of the land designated for the Business Resource Area (2) has been designed to emphasise the remaining vineyard area, cellar door and overall vineyard village look and feel. The continued association of our brand with our vineyard location is key to the future success of our business and we feel that to substitute the Business Resource Area (2) with a mix of Residential Resource zones, and to develop these, will heavily detract from this. An analogy could be, that we would not start a new wine business by placing our cellar door in the middle of an existing residential development. This business model would be doomed for failure in our view.

VISUAL ENTRANCE TO CROMWELL

27. ***“Given that the practicality of the current provisions for the buffer strip have been raised by submitters we anticipate that the requestor will address the above matters further at the hearing.”***⁵ This topic is also addressed in Mr Espie’s evidence. We have proposed vine plantings along the RU buffer land as a means of continued grape supply for our wine business. Depicted in the documents lodged “Attachment E. – Proposed Zoning Plan”, the vine rows are shown in the direction as currently planted. Several submissions also raise issues about this area. Further analysis on how to best utilise this area as a productive vineyard has resulted in a design to plant 9-11 rows of vines, 2.0 – 2.5 metres in width, parallel with SH8B and SH6. At current average vine yield levels, this area will produce between 1105 – 1360 cases of wine, being approximately 10% of our forecasted case sales per annum. The retention of this area by Wooing Tree Holdings, will ensure the continued upkeep, as we do currently with our site. Retaining the RU buffer strip in productive vines, will also reinforce the link between our brand and the remaining vineyard.

⁴ Whitney Report – Page 8 Paragraph 6

⁵ Whitney Report – Page 10 Paragraph 2

ROUNABOUT, UNDERPASS & CONNECTIVITY

28. ***“The restriction contained in proposed Rule 7.3.6(vi)(e) [which requires the provision of a roundabout and underpass] anticipates that new development may occur to the east of the proposed Business Resource Area (2) without the provision of the roundabout and underpass. We anticipate that the requestor will provide justification for this aspect of the proposal at the hearing.”***⁶

The development of land east of the proposed Business Resource Area (2) is likely to be stage 1 of the overall development. As the Whitney report states, the development of this area will provide capital resources to assist in funding the roundabout. It must also be noted that Wooing Tree is providing a roading solution, at significant additional cost, over and above what Mr Carr, our traffic engineer, is suggesting is required to facilitate this development. It will deliver considerable public benefit. Wooing Tree in turn would appreciate Central Otago District Council gifting the land on the southern side on SH8B to NZTA to facilitate the construction of the roundabout and underpass in its current proposed location.

29. ***“As noted above the relevant rules provide for a new temporary access from the existing Wooing Tree Tasting Room to Shortcut Road or internally within the property to a new road to access Shortcut Road. The submission by G & J McDowell (23/12) opposes this on the basis that Wooing Tree already have an existing entrance off Shortcut Road. We note that the existing access serves the development authorised by RC 050408 and we question why provision needs to be made for such alternative access in Rule 7.3.6(vi)(e). We anticipate that this matter will be addressed further by the requestor at the hearing.”***⁷

The request for a new temporary access way is required due to the development of the residential land east of the Business Resource Area (2). The existing Wooing Tree Cellar Door access road will be removed during this development as it currently lies where new lots will be created. We are proposing a temporary access way linking the Wooing Tree Cellar Door facility through the undeveloped Business Resource Area (2) area and meeting up with the newly formed road within this new residential area.

⁶ Whitney Report – Page 11 Paragraph 6

⁷ Whitney Report – Page 12 Paragraph 8

Conclusion

30. Wooing Tree has undertaken significant time and investment in developing this plan change request. It has engaged a number of experts to assist in pulling the proposal together and in advising us on technical aspects of the development. We believe this proposal represents the best future use of our land and delivers a variety of benefits to the wider Cromwell community.