

CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL

SPEAKING NOTES TO RESOURCE CONSENT RC230328

Applicant : **Clutha Plains Trust**

- 1 I would like to thank the Panel, for the opportunity to speak to the submission we presented for the Clutha Plains Trust Maori Point Road Resource Consent application.
- 2 My name is Lloyd Morris, my wife & I have recently built a home on our nearby farm at 185 Jolly Road Tarras. I am a civil engineer by profession, with some experience in the design & construction of civil infrastructure, development of industrial & commercial buildings and navigating the associated regulatory regime, but speak here in a private rather than professional capacity.
- 3 Reflecting on the content of the Submissions tabled in response to the Clutha Plains Trust proposal, both in support & opposition, it that seemed to me that both supporting and objecting submissions were more or less wanting a similar outcome, to protect what we have at Tarras, but seeking to progress that end in two opposing ways, one to stop development and the other to control it, both to the same end.
- 4 Tarras is an enigma, on one hand there is nothing special about it and on the other it has immeasurable value. It is nothing special in the sense that there are many small communities very similar to Tarras, largely undiscovered gems throughout Central Otago, and New Zealand for that matter.... on the other hand, to the people who have called Tarras home, it is an incredibly special place, it is seductive, it gets under your skin, it has "a stickiness of place quality", it is genuinely "good for the soul".

Tarras, located at the foot of the Lindis Pass, is one of several key transport gateways into Central Otago, when you reach Tarras you can split your travel into a number of different directions. To understand Tarras, is to understand the "essence of community". Tarras is a place where the land is worked, horticulture, viticulture, farming ... its a place to live and play, a place to make a home when you have travel to work nearby, it's a place to retire and enjoy that 'autumn journey'.

The once former thriving Tarras Community has moved through a cycle measured in decades, where their young grew up, left to gain an education, build careers and lives leaving behind an aging core. Tarras has been steadily attracting new residents wanting to carve out a life in the country, young couples & families, the average community age is lowering, and of course new families bring different skillsets other than just the traditional farming related. We have mechanics, tradies, legal & professional people. It is now possible with the advent of Starlink for people in certain employment to "work from home", contracting their services afar. They all need to have somewhere to live.

(LDM note / delete .. what is Tarras ... it's a brilliant array of colours in an ever changing seasonal landscape, its the long suffering inversion fog in winter, the diligence of

farming activities with tractors humming all night getting things done at the right time of year, its travellers crowding out the Tarras cafeteria, the community ba-b-q's at the local school in summer while kids swim in the pool, that persistent and dominant nor-wester howling down the valley from Wanaka, its ice hanging on the fence lines in winter, the flashing of orange & white lights on either ends of the spray irrigators at night as they work ... it is the 'exceptional sound of silence' on a still night).

- 5 The Tarras Community Plan, created by the Tarras residents, is a novel innovative approach by a proactive community to shaping its own destiny, to determine what are the qualities that are important in our Community and to bind them into a document, so that there is a no mis-understanding guideline, bound into the Central Otago District Council documents, it's a "thing" and its real.
- 6 The trick has always been how to encourage people into the Community, whilst maintaining true to our common values, and growing those areas of the Tarras plan in an orderly manner that brings all the residents along. My view for opposing and supporting submitters is that the proposal by Jonny Trevathan offers an elegant solution, seeking to quietly offer a mature opportunity for the community to expand with a reasonable number of new clustered lots, so not one or two lots in a random, disjointed and under whelming manner, but also retaining a productive working farm, allowing lot owners co-shareholder ownership of the farm with the financial benefits and responsibilities that brings, to enjoy the benefit of larger then normal lots whilst living in a country environment, it is easier to develop out and maintain a small curtilage to a high standard particularly if private covenants hold owners to account, and all the while in harmony with the existing landscape. There is little argument that conventional small rural holdings are notoriously unproductive, difficult to maintain to any standard especially when ownership has family, and your working, and have other time children commitments and often a visual nightmare without order. This proposal seeks to avoid that potential.
- 7 For the record I have visited the site when Jonny Trevathan (JT) offered an open public invitation to do so, and have walked and driven over the farm upper and lower terraces where he showed me his vision for the property, why he placed elements of the development where he did, what he was trying to achieve and how he intended to reduce any potential impacts. I note his comment that it was important to him that he be a good neighbour, I do not know how many Submitters took up the offer to view the proposal.
- 8 The CODC S42A report recommends declining the application on the basis the proposal does not pass the S104D regulatory gateway being inconsistent with CODC Sections 4.3.3 & 4.4.2 & 4.4.10 noting ;

"The applicant has not established that adverse effects of the proposal on the rural character and amenity and landscape and visual amenity are no more than minor and that the proposed mitigation will be effective within a reasonable timeframe"

The RMA allows the consenting authority to grant Resource Consent approval for a non complying activity if the adverse effects on the environment will be minor or not contrary to the Objects and Policies of the relevant Plan.

The report further notes the application is “assessed as inconsistent with, not contrary to and so consideration can be given to granting consent”.

9 Planning Maps highlight a natural hazard, flooding on the lower terrace.

The local Central Otago environment has many terrace systems, so for clarity, referencing the lower terrace is to reference that just above beside the Clutha River, at the bottom of Bowman Lane on the same level as where the Marsh residence is located. The upper terrace is that level that extends over that entire area of land encompassing the proposal, Maori Point Road between SH8, Bells Lane (including the CIAL lands) and even the bottom terrace of our farm. This upper terrace referred is not a skyline terrace system, it is simply the main large flat farming terrace. There are other higher terrace systems and mountain ranges surrounding the property in the distance behind. Skyline breaches are all but impossible from the lower terrace due to the set back angles intersecting the top edge of the escarpment, not to mention the mountain range in the background.

The proposal is not located on the lower terrace, it does not go anywhere near the flooding designation, but that area of land is contained on a common title that encompasses both terrace systems.

Because of that hazard designation there is no opportunity for a permitted baseline.

10 The rural landscape is characterised by tree planting for shelter belts, cluster amenity planting around dwellings and commercial tree forests. In this case the shelter belts are straight lines alongside fencelines and boundaries, which is very common, providing shelter for stock from the predominant northerly winds, slowing the wind which sucks the moisture content out of irrigated pastures. If you are running irrigators then you need relatively large, uninterrupted paddocks ... so shelter belt placement is practically based, a long established principle. To suggest that treeline placement for this proposal is somehow inconsistent on the property is to not appreciate the wider context.

The applicant has already established Covenanted plantings quite some years ago seeking to enhance the amenity of the property, which is part of the farming ethos that says you look after the land that you earn your income from. I note that there have been recent plantings alongside the existing driveway to the gate and this development proposal intends retiring further less productive escarpment areas with even more planting.

There is a suggestion that there may be an over reliance on screen planting, given the harsh Central Otago environment screen planting is everywhere and is a dominant form,.

- 11 Driving the Cromwell to Wanaka Highway I used the opportunity to stop on the side of the road to look across the western side of the Clutha properties to see what the visual outlook was. The question becomes what is the visual landscape you are expecting, when the 'distant scene' outlook is characterised by what you expect to see, distant shelter belt tree lines, with buildings dotted along the edge of the Clutha, some discrete, other buildings in more exposed positions clearly to look over the Clutha River, various plantings, farm pasture, lots of water irrigators, and in the fore ground, orchards & other plantings and general farmland scenes that create the visual clutter that embraces rural life. To some extent the view would depend on where you stop and when you are driving on an open road at any speed it is questionable that you see anything specific within a view line. We were not using binoculars and arguably the proposal would not create anything that you would not expect to see or that would be absorbed into the context of the existing environment, nor would you expect it to be treated any different from what is established. I don't believe there were any objectors from that side of the Clutha.
- 12 The S42A report noted that "the Applicant suggests that the land proposed for the farm park has not been capable of effective productive use over a long period of time but does not provide any supporting evidence to support this".

There is an Aurora power line that crosses the paddock and which prevents the installation of a water irrigator. Moving it is possible, but expensive and JT advised the subdivision would be able to fund the moving. As things are the subdivision area is not irrigated and is clearly from a farming perspective is not as productive as the irrigated lands.

The report also noted that the development will occupy an area of 13.26ha of land including mitigation planting. $13.26/132 \text{ ha} = \sim 10\%$

I noted that including the two arms of the new road, retirement of one of the existing roads traversing the escarpment, and ignoring the 'mitigation planting' on the steeper escarpment faces the area of land is in the region of 5ha which is more like $\sim 3.8\%$ of the total farm. I thought this was important as it suggested the proposal was taking more of the productive farm than it was.

- 13 The Clutha Plains Trust commissioned the Align Landscape report. This report was required, generated by the application, and responded to the original draft layout and informed the final presentation detail that was notified.

CODC directed a landscape peer review be commissioned from one of two CODC specified reviewers. SLR subsequently produced a report with an alternate view, contrary to that of the Align report. The CODC S42A was ultimately informed by the SLR view report ultimately informing the S42A report and CODC recommendation for RC decline.

I understand additionally JT listened to concerns raised by objecting submitters and took steps to mature the original application with tweaks to thoughtfully attempt to mitigate opposing submitters concerns.

- 14 There were two Landscape assessments that underpin the S42A reporting, I have read both and tend to agree with the Align report and have less empathy with the CODC peer review by SLR. I am however reminded these reports are professional offerings that table individuals own experience and reasoned determination. The S42A report tends to favour the SLR peer review assessment.
- 15 In terms of the practical components necessary to service the proposal there are no practical impediments ;

Roading : NZTA do not have a problem with intersection location of the private to public, nor the proximity to SH8, the sealed portion of Maori Point Road where the internal road intersects has excellent sightline visibility being on the inside of a slight curve and is sited at a point where the traffic environment is low speed as cars are slowing down to join SH8 or conversely in the other direction turning the corner into Maori Point Road from SH8. Internal roading builds on the existing gravel road into the property with two new roading branches specifically feeding the two housing cluster locations. Internal roads can be built to a CODC standard, remain a gravelled surface, and be private so as to not cause any on going obligation to CODC. In any regard it is likely there will be a gate t the road I understand, the internal roads will be private property, there will be stock and privacy considerations. JT noted one of the current internal roads down the escarpment to the lower terrace will be removed, minimising the total length of total road in service to almost but not quite what is already present.

Sanitary Sewer & Stormwater : Mt Iron Geodril / Gavin Tippett is a well respect geologist, excellent at what he does and there are no anticipated bearing foundation problems, ground soakage or particular sewerage disposal characteristics. There are many sewerage reticulation systems available on the market offering both gravity and powered treatment options, with all offering both primary and secondary treatment characteristics. Partially buried water tanks offer multi use opportunities to harvest rainwater for drinking, landscape watering, and fire fighting reserves, treatment of water for household use is commonly "point of use" with filters and UV treatment and as a continuous supply source if the reticulated bore water was to be taken off line for maintenance at any time.

Shelter belts : Progressive removal of existing tree lines that are now considered to be wildling species and replanting with other acceptable species over time should not reasonably cause an issue for neighbours, presumably neighbours will have or be investing in their own wind mitigation planting relative to positioning of their dwellings, in any case the strong dominant wind is from the north (the other side ... upwind of neighbours) and there are no down wind residences.

- 16 **Reverse sensitivity** : Reverse sensitivity to neighbours and from neighbours is unlikely to be a problem, the existing farm noises are unchanged (vehicles, tractors, stock, dogs), the lights at either end of the travelling irrigators will continue to flash

orange and white at night, outdoor lighting can be conditioned if that is considered necessary, there are no dust generators beyond normal farming activities. In short I do not believe the residents and neighbours will be in exception to each others activities, and which are conditioned by a standard CODC rural clause in any case.