

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL APPOINTED BY WAITAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL

UNDER

The Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act)

IN THE MATTER OF

Hearing of submissions on the Proposed Waitaki District Plan –
Exempt Version (PDP)

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ROBERT BRUCE WILLIS
ON BEHALF OF ROAD METALS COMPANY LIMITED (SUBMITTER 156)
FOR HEARING STREAM 3**

DATED: 6TH OCTOBER 2026



**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ROBERT BRUCE WILLIS ON BEHALF ROAD
METALS COMPANY LIMITED**

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Robert Bruce Willis. I am a senior planner for quarry projects for Road Metals Company Limited (**Road Metals**) in the Canterbury and the Central South Island area. I am based in Timaru but share my work portfolio with others across Canterbury and Otago and other areas where the company has business interests.
- 2 My professional background is in the field of Resource Management Planning, and I hold the Degree of Bachelor of Resource Studies from Lincoln University (conferred in 1995) with a focus on air, land and water management. I am a Full Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 3 I have previously worked for the Canterbury Regional Council (**Environment Canterbury – ECan**), as a Senior Planner, for approximately seventeen years. That role principally revolved around the co-ordination of ECan's involvement in District Planning Liaison for the five southern district councils within the Canterbury Region and promoting the integration and consistency of district and regional planning documents across the wider region and cross-boundary.
- 4 In this earlier role, I also contributed to the development of several regional plans and the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, along with various other statutory planning and policy documents, including the first generation Waitaki District Plan.
- 5 I have also worked extensively with many of the various portfolios within ECan. Accordingly, I am very familiar with the broader resource management issues of significance to the Canterbury region generally, many of which are readily applicable on a national basis.
- 6 I have also worked for Fulton Hogan Company Limited (**Fulton Hogan**) as an environmental advisor for approximately twelve years, before moving to my current role with Road Metals. This current role involves ensuring that the company is compliant with the Resource Management Act and other environmental and statutory compliance requirements. It also includes obtaining resource consents and other regulatory approvals, and involvement in district and regional council policy and plan development, both directly on behalf of Road Metals, or as part of the wider Aggregate Producers Industry Group. Strategic planning is seen as forming an important component of my work.

- 7 I have visited and worked from the Road Metals Oamaru Depot, the subject of this current submission, on many occasions, and am familiar with this and the surrounding area – having been raised in the Waitaki Valley and attending secondary school at Waitaki Boys High School. As noted, I have also been involved in development of the first generation of the Waitaki District Plan as it passed through the hearings and determination processes. I also prepared the Road Metals submission to the proposed Waitaki District Plan – Exempt Version (PDP).
- 8 I acknowledge that I have read and am familiar with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses, contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023, and agree to comply with it. My qualifications and experience are set out above. I confirm that I am authorised to provide this evidence on behalf of Road Metals.
- 9 I have a level of planning expertise in the matters addressed in this evidence given my qualifications and past experience. I am not, however, providing this evidence as an independent expert, but rather in my capacity as senior planner for Road Metals. Notwithstanding this, I confirm that my evidence represents my professional view and is within my area of expertise, except where I state that this evidence is given in reliance on another person's evidence. I have considered all material facts that are known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express in this evidence.
- 10 In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed:
- a) The PDP; and
 - b) Other related submissions on the PDP; and
 - c) Background information on the site held by Road Metals.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 11 My evidence will:
- 11.1 Provide a brief introduction to the Road Metals site at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road;
 - 11.2 Expand on the nature of the submission in the context of Road Metals' strategic and operational requirements; and
 - 11.3 Include a brief commentary on additional regulatory matters associated with the submission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 12 The driver for the zoning change or explicit exemption rules sought by Road Metals for the Road Metals Oamaru Depot encompasses a number of objectives. These are seen as critical to achieving Road Metals' corporate aspirations and the functional needs of the business in terms of improved efficiency, improved safety, reduced operating costs, business consolidation, and strategic planning.
- 13 From an urban planning perspective, the zoning at the depot site provides an interesting conundrum. The site is approximately 7.87ha in size and entry and exit to the State Highway (**SH1**) is by way of slip lanes constructed to New Zealand Transport Agency (**Transit**) standards. The SH1 frontage has been landscaped.
- 14 As a large and self-contained site situated between the Main Trunk Railway and SH1, and located at the northern extremity of the Oamaru urban area, it sits within an extensive Industrial Zone. However, despite its relative congruence with the purpose of the zone, and separation from sensitive receivers, the planning regime restricts the permitted use of the site to, essentially, "light" industrial activities – albeit described as "general" industrial activities.
- 15 Under the PDP, Heavy industrial Activities are restricted to two meat processing plants within the district, despite that zone purpose providing for all "potentially high-impact industrial activities"¹. Other than meat processing, no other areas within the district have been established for these potentially high-impact industrial activities.
- 16 This approach fails to identify or acknowledge other existing Heavy Industrial Activities that exist within the district (and, more specifically, within Oamaru), including the Road Metals concrete batching plant at Regina Lane.
- 17 From a regulatory perspective, to limit the Heavy Industrial Zone to two existing meatworks fails to provide for strategic growth within the district and provides no signals as to the preferred direction of this type of development. The PDP should be forward-looking to identify and provide for more than just the status quo.
- 18 From a sustainability perspective, the Road Metals submission is intended to allow consolidation and co-location of interdependent business interests at a location that is central to key work areas. Reduced vehicle travel, increased efficiencies, improved traffic safety and lower associated carbon emissions will result from this, consistent with the business commitment to carbon reduction.

¹ Defined in the PDP and listed as 15 specific activities.

- 19 Discrete and carefully planned Industrial Zoning removed from the more compact urban areas provides for the synergies of these activities while ensuring that conflict with the amenity of urban activities is minimised.
- 20 From a strategic perspective the PDP should provide for new development, whilst signalling the preferred direction of travel across the various activity types. This would provide greater certainty to the community as to the nature and location of anticipated development, and would allow Council to plan, programme, and deliver the necessary infrastructure to support these activities. Providing a clear direction that anticipates growth provides a more certain planning horizon to the community.
- 21 The Road Metals site at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road contains all of the features and attributes for a Heavy Industrial Zone, as set out in Objectives HIZ-01 and HIZ-02 and supporting Policies. The site is large, with ample capacity to accommodate the anticipated activities. Its location at the northern extent of the Oamaru urban fringe, and adjacent to key road and rail links, provides a logical transition from urban to rural activities within the existing zoning regime. Rezoning will also simultaneously fulfil an identified need for Heavy Industrial activity at this location, whilst removing an existing (un-zoned) Heavy Industrial activity from within the Oamaru urban area.

OVERARCHING PLANNING ELEMENTS

- 22 Like District Plans across the country, the PDP relies on a mixture of zoning, precincts, and designations to arrange the district into distinct areas of control according to their purpose. To this end, zoning serves as the foundational mechanism for managing land use, spatial development, and environmental effects.
- 23 By categorizing land into distinct spatial zones and sub-zones – such as Residential, Settlement, Commercial, Industrial, and Rural – the PDP establishes a clear framework for what activities can occur, where they can occur, and under what conditions. This method of management provides two primary benefits: it offers community and market certainty by signalling preferred long-term development patterns, and it simultaneously prevents incompatible land uses from co-locating, thereby minimising reverse sensitivity and environmental conflicts.
- 24 There are also environmental and economic benefits from zoning. Zoning can be used to isolate high-impact activities (such as heavy industry) from sensitive environments (such as high-density residential areas or ecological reserves), ensuring that noise, odour, and traffic effects are kept within acceptable thresholds.

- 25 Similarly, by delineating areas for specific development intensities, zoning allows councils to strategically align, size, and stage funding for core infrastructure - including three waters, transport networks, and open spaces - reducing public expenditure and avoiding ad-hoc capacity constraints. Zoning also protects highly productive land, natural hazards zones, and cultural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, while simultaneously safeguarding urban amenity values, sunlight access, and open space character for residents.
- 26 Where the boundaries between incompatible activities and zones is clear, such as between sensitive urban uses and industrial activities, this is a straightforward exercise. However, the boundaries between activities within zones can be less clear-cut, particularly at the margins.
- 27 Urban renewal, changing community expectations, regulatory reform, and new activities establishing on green or brownfields sites can all put pressure on established zoning patterns. This is where the strength and certainty provided by zoning comes into its own. But it is not a perfect solution; unanticipated (but appropriate) activities may be overlooked. Inappropriate activities may also seek to occupy and redevelop within activity-specific zones.
- 28 Flexibility of zoning to provide for future development, or expansion of activities, is an important element of this approach. This can provide clear signals to the market and the community of the anticipated nature of future land uses, and the location and extent of those uses. Like the earlier plan, the PDP has prescribed different zones and controls to provide for the different land uses across the district. As noted, while there will always be some tension between activities at the margins, the overall approach is sound and well-established as an effective mechanism to manage the effects of land uses.
- 29 However, where demand does not match supply in terms of available zoned land, this places some strain on the implementation of a District Plan. "Out-of-zone" proposals typically require resource consents, often create tensions with existing users and the established planning regime, and can create precedents against which future proposals are measured. This can also constrain, or even discourage, potential development because of the uncertainties inherent in the resource consenting process that is required for non-conforming development.
- 30 The lack of provision for expansion of the Heavy Industrial Zone within the Waitaki District is an example of this issue and is the basis for the Road Metals submission.

BACKGROUND TO ZONING SUBMISSION

- 31 Road Metals acquired the Pukeuri-Oamaru Road site from Waitaki District Council during 2017. The property is situated towards the northern boundary of the North End Industrial Park. Meetings with the CEO and Mayor during 2016/2017 established a planned three-stage development at the site, beginning with temporary shed construction, followed by consenting and establishment of a new workshop and office complex and, finally, the relocation of the current Kiwi Concrete batching plant from its current location at the eastern end of Regina Lane (immediately south of Waitaki Boys High School grounds).
- 32 Resource consent, building consent, and the other necessary approvals, including from New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, were obtained and the first two stages of development have been completed. This includes extensive landscaping and formation of slip lanes at the site entrance/exit, and retention of the Oamaru entrance feature. A through-road to the Industrial Park, mooted by Council during negotiations, has not eventuated.
- 33 Stage 3 is awaiting the outcome of the District Plan review process.
- 34 The Kiwi Concrete batching plant (a Road Metals subsidiary company) is located at the eastern end of Regina Lane. Its northern boundary is with Waitaki Boys High School, and the Montessori Oamaru Busy Bees nursery and pre-school childcare is located close by, at 6 Regina Lane, to the west.
- 35 Access to and from the Kiwi Concrete site is via Regina Lane, across the Main South Railway Line, to SH1 at a congested intersection. This access has become more challenging as redevelopment of commercial business around this location has occurred over recent years. Stage 3 of the Road Metals strategy has always been to relocate the Kiwi Concrete operation to the new site to capitalise on size, scale, co-location, and the site access safety improvements.
- 36 Under the Operative Waitaki District Plan (**ODP**), the site is zoned Business 3A; the ODP notes that² *“The Council is aware of a demand for heavier industrial sites and has chosen to provide for this demand by providing for an extension of the existing zoning north of Oamaru on the east side of State Highway 1. The area will be covered by a Business 3A and 4 zoning which will limit access to the zone to a single point from the State Highway and will require significant landscaping and set back from the State Highway to reduce the likely adverse visual impact of such development.”*

² ODP Section 14.2.5 Explanation and Reasons for Objective 14.2.2, Policies 14.2.3 and Implementation Methods 14.2.4.

- 37 Under the PDP the site is zoned as General Industrial Zone. The Introduction to the General Industrial Zone³ notes that this zone is applied to areas of the District that primarily contain a range of industrial activities. *“The Zone also recognises and provides for a range of ancillary and other activities that are generally compatible with, and not sensitive to, the adverse effects generated by industrial activities. It also notes that some industrial activities, by their nature or scale, are potentially noisy or have potential to emit odour, are high traffic generators, and can be visually obtrusive. These are defined as potentially high-impact industrial activities. Potentially high-impact industries are only allowed when the activity is located in a manner that maintains the amenity values and where buildings and operations are designed so as to contain or minimise nuisance effects.”*
- 38 The PDP has also zoned two discrete areas within the district as Heavy Industrial Zones. These apply only to two existing meat processing plants – the Alliance Group Pukeuri Freezing Works and a property housing the Lean Metas Oamaru Limited Redcastle Road Abattoir. This latter site has much in common with the Road Metals Kiwi Concrete site, being situated coastally to the east of State Highway 1 and nearby adjacent to the Waitaki Boys High School boundary.
- 39 No other land has this classification, and the PDP objective and policy provisions appear to have been prepared with only these two sites in mind. This approach does not provide for any other permitted Heavy Industrial activities that may wish to establish within the district. Instead, it secures the existing meatworks as the only industries of this nature; any future Heavy Industrial activities across the district will be required to obtain resource consent.
- 40 While the establishment and operation of the Kiwi Concrete activity in Regina Lane was granted land use consent LRC05/21 by WDC in May 2005, at the very least, the PDP should have also secured the appropriate zoning for this activity by rationalising its status to Heavy Industrial Zone. While this oversight does not affect the existing operation, as it is consented, the absence of any other available HIZ land across the district does limit the options for relocation of the business.
- 41 However, Road Metals’ preference, as discussed with Council ahead of the land purchase, is to provide for the relocation of the existing operation to the more extensive Pukeuri-Oamaru Road site. This would capitalise on the synergies of fleet management, workshop, co-location of administrative functions, transport, safety, and other elements that such rationalisation provides. Within the context of surrounding transport links and land uses, such rezoning at a distance from the more sensitive and congested urban area has a number of benefits.

³ Part 3 – Area Specific Matters / Zones / General Industrial Zone.

- 42 This lack of recognition of the established activity, absence of any other land zoned for Heavy Industrial activities across the district, and failure to provide for future demand for Heavy Industrial activities (other than existing meatworks) has prompted Road Metals to submit on this aspect to the PDP.

RELIEF SOUGHT

- 43 Road Metals has submitted on rezoning seeking to, either:

1. Amend proposed Rule GIZ-R2 (DIS-1) to provide an explicit exemption for the construction and operation of a concrete batching plant and associated activities at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road (Pt Lot 1 DP 5732) within a one-hectare block located centrally and to the rear (east) of the site so that this becomes a Permitted Activity within this area of the site; or

2. Amend the Heavy Industrial Zone provisions to include the Road Metals site within the Heavy Industrial Zone and incorporate a description of the provision for a concrete batching plant and associated activities to allow that this may occur as a Permitted Activity within the Road Metals site.

And any associated changes that may be necessary to give effect to this submission.

- 44 In revisiting the proposed relief sought, Road Metals' preference is for rezoning of the site, rather than by way of specific exemption. This is a much "tidier" approach from a planning perspective and includes the Heavy Industrial activity (concrete batching) within the relevant zone. For this approach to be adopted, in addition to rezoning of part or all of the site, some minor wording changes would also be required to the introductory section of the Heavy Industrial Zone provisions to acknowledge that it doesn't simply apply to meatworks, but no further changes would be required.
- 45 On the other hand, relying on a specific exemption to allow an activity can be more complicated than rezoning as it treats the use as an isolated precedent, rather than an integrated part of the District Plan. Where rezoning provides for particular activities in a managed way, an exemption provides a discrete departure from the planning regime in a manner not expressly provided for under the PDP. These types of precedent can undermine confidence in the regime established under the PDP (as well as being administratively problematic).
- 46 It is perhaps worthy of note at this point that issues such as discharges to air (odour, dust) and discharges to land and water (stormwater, contaminants) fall principally under the purview of the Otago Regional Council. It is acknowledged that matters such as land use, noise, and amenity (often applied as a general "catch-all" approach) are matters over which the District Council does exercise

control. The rezoning proposed will allow that the Council can continue to manage those effects in a manner consistent with the purpose of the zone.

- 47 Given the size of the site, the extent of current development, and its location towards the northern extent of the General Industrial Zone and sandwiched between SH1 and the Main South Railway Line, rezoning of the site from General Industrial Zone to Heavy Industrial Zone should not produce any major departure from the current regime within the PDP. Like the Redcastle Road site, having adjacent General Industrial Zoning provides a logical transition as part of the interface between more sensitive receivers.
- 48 For this reason, it is requested that the Road Metals site at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road (Pt Lot 1 DP 5732) is rezoned in its entirety from General Industrial Zone to Heavy Industrial Zone.
- 49 Associated amendments would be required to the **Introduction** to the Heavy Industrial Zone, and to **Objective HIZ-04** and **Policy HIZ-P3**. These amendments could simply be to expand the current reference to two meat processing plants to also include reference to an aggregate processing and concrete batching operation (Introduction), to replace the word “*meat*” with “**products**” in Objective HIZ-04, and to delete the words “*meat processing plants, provided the goods have been processed on the site*” from Policy HIZ-P3 and replace them with the words “**the activities on-site except where they are an ancillary activity to an Industrial Activity**”.
- 50 In the alternative, if the Hearings Panel determines that an exemption from General Industrial Zone rules is a more appropriate approach, amendment will be required to the General Industrial Zone Introduction, to Policy GIZ-P5, and the inclusion of a new exemption Policy and Rule to expressly provide for a concrete batching plant at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road. Definition of the area to which the exemption applies will also be required for the Planning Maps.
- 51 This latter approach, while an option, is considered to be sub-optimal in terms of how the PDP is to be applied. While the proposed rezoning sits comfortably within the existing planning regime, the exemption approach serves to devalue the integrity of the zoning system used.

CONCLUSION

- 52 In conclusion, I consider that the basis for the re-zoning sought by Road Metals fits comfortably with the purpose of the requested zone and with the planning approach that underpins this. The location of the site, to the northern end of the General

Industrial Zone, and the nature of current development and use, is contextually appropriate for the change sought.

- 53 The proposal represents an appropriate land use in the context of the location and current activities at and adjacent to the site. It provides a clear pathway for the relocation of the concrete business, whilst enabling strategic planning by Road Metals to upgrade the operation and remove it from a less suitable location. It will also support the consolidation of business interests by co-locating related services.
- 54 The lack of additional land zoned for Heavy Industrial use within the district – beyond the two existing meatworks sites – presents a barrier to the establishment of new or relocated industries of this type. The change sought is intended to provide for the relocation of an established Heavy Industrial activity from a General Industrial Zone to a new Heavy Industrial Zone, whilst maintaining, essentially, the existing controls appropriate to that zone.
- 55 Putting aside the absence of specific zoning, the relocation of the Kiwi Concrete operation from its current site on Regina Lane to the purpose-built Pukeuri-Oamaru Road site would also have many flow-on benefits to the current levels of congestion at the Oamaru North Regina Lane area.
- 56 Rezoning of the Road Metals site at 134 Pukeuri-Oamaru Road from General Industrial Zone to Heavy Industrial Zone is the preferred outcome sought by Road Metals. If this approach is not considered to be appropriate, an alternative relief sought is to provide explicit exemption from General Industrial Zone rules to allow the relocation of the Kiwi Concrete operation to this site.
- 57 Such an approach is unlikely to affect the integrity of the PDP, as activities at this location (principally heavy haulage and transport depots) lean towards the heavy end of industrial activities. They are also situated between the busy SH1 and Rail corridors and are remote from the Oamaru urban area.
- 58 It is further noted that re-zoning and/or approval under the PDP does not grant carte blanche approval for the activity itself. Discharges to air, land and water are also subject to control under Regional Plans administered by the Otago Regional Council; compliance with these plans and/or resource consents would also be a pre-requisite for relocation and operation of a concrete plant at this location.
- 59 Road Metals has taken a pragmatic approach to this issue. It has previously signalled to WDC its preferred direction of development and followed that programme to Stage 2. The overarching vision has been to consolidate all related businesses onto one site, and to build from this to deliver the outcomes envisaged.

- 60 The activity is not unanticipated in the Industrial Zone setting, even if not expressly provided for, and the proposed redevelopment would be located in an appropriate area to consolidate the co-dependent business activities. It also has a number of positive effects, most notably those which relate to the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources, improved public safety, and the associated economic benefits to the wider community.

R B Willis

6th October 2026