

BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
("RMA")

AND

IN THE MATTER of a submission by KiwiRail Holdings
Limited on the Proposed Te Tai o
Poutini Plan ("TTPP")

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MICHELLE GRINLINTON-HANCOCK ON BEHALF OF KIWIRAIL HOLDINGS LIMITED

CORPORATE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Michelle Grinlinton-Hancock and I am the Manager of the RMA Team for KiwiRail. I have over 20 years of RMA and planning experience and am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have a Bachelor of Resource and Environmental Planning (Hons) from Massey University.
- 1.2 I began my career in planning and resource management in 2000 and have over the course of my career worked as a planner in Council processing applications, as well as a consultant where I prepared consent applications and submitted on district and regional plan provisions on behalf of clients.
- 1.3 Prior to working at KiwiRail, I was the programme manager for the Ministry of Environment Making Good Decisions Programme while I was employed at WSP. I am also a certified Commissioner under the Ministry of Environment Making Good Decisions Programme.
- 1.4 I have worked at KiwiRail as a Senior RMA Advisor, Team Leader and now Manager of the RMA Team for over four years.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

2.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of KiwiRail and relates to the matters contained in the TTPP, which KiwiRail submitted on.

2.2 My evidence will outline:

- (a) KiwiRail's infrastructure and activities within the West Coast region; and
- (b) the need for noise controls and a vibration alert layer.

3. KIWIRAIL IN THE WEST COAST DISTRICT

3.1 KiwiRail is a State-Owned Enterprise responsible for the management and operation of the national railway network. The rail network is an asset of national and regional importance. Rail is fundamental to the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout New Zealand. There continues to be ongoing critical investment in the maintenance and expansion of the rail network to meet future growth demands and improve transport network efficiency.

3.2 To assist with New Zealand's move towards a low-carbon economy and to meet the needs of New Zealand's growing population, rail services will grow. Recognising that rail produces at least 70 percent less carbon emissions per tonne of freight carried compared with heavy road freight, plans to accommodate more freight on rail are underway.

3.3 The Westport (WPTIL), Stillwater – Ngakawau (SNL), Rapahoe (RPOE), Midland (including Greymouth) (MDLND), and Hokitika (HKTKA) Lines all extend through the West Coast. In addition to investment in the maintenance of these lines, KiwiRail is investing in a redevelopment of the Westport Depot.

3.4 The Midland line runs 100 trains and 29 light locomotives weekly, while the Hokitika line currently services 14 weekly trains. The designated corridor of the Stillwater – Ngakawau line passes through Westport and is a key part of the KiwiRail network nationally. This line is an active line that has services (comprising 68 trains per week) scheduled between Monday and Saturday.

3.5 These assets form a key part of the KiwiRail network nationally. Growth in the use of rail is expected as part of the mode shift in freight moving off road and onto rail as part of New Zealand's goal to reduce emissions. KiwiRail seeks to protect its ability to operate, maintain and upgrade these assets into the future.

These assets are of regional and national importance, supporting the movement of freight and passengers through the country via rail.

4. NOISE AND VIBRATION

4.1 Acoustic and vibration standards are important controls to ensure the ongoing health and wellbeing of people, and are instrumental in ensuring that reverse sensitivity effects on rail are minimised, particularly where intensive residential development is proposed adjacent to the rail corridor.

4.2 KiwiRail is supportive of urban development. KiwiRail is a responsible infrastructure operator and has an ongoing programme of upgrade and maintenance work to improve track conditions over time which helps to minimise potential noise and vibration. However, as outlined in Dr Chiles' evidence, residual noise and vibration effects cannot be entirely internalised within the rail corridor and have the potential to cause ongoing disturbance and adverse health effects to communities surrounding the rail corridor.¹

4.3 Planning instruments are an appropriate tool to manage adverse effects of rail activities on adjacent land users. It is critical that the TTPP appropriately addresses these issues so that health and wellbeing impacts on neighbouring communities are minimised and the ongoing operation and efficiency of the rail network can be maintained.

4.4 A particular concern for KiwiRail is the potential for reverse sensitivity effects to arise from new or intensified sensitive activities (eg dwellings) developing near the rail corridor. Reverse sensitivity is a well-recognised resource management concept which refers to the impact that locating new, sensitive activities adjacent to existing lawfully established effects-generating activities has on the ongoing operation of those existing activities. New developments, or higher density redevelopment of existing sensitive uses, can result in greater numbers of individuals being subject to adverse noise and vibration effects. This can result in increased complaints and operational constraints on the rail network (such as limitations on operating hours) which can constrain the ongoing operation and future development of the rail corridor.

4.5 In its submission, KiwiRail sought:

- (a) the retention of the objectives and policies relating to noise in the TTPP;

¹

Statement of Evidence of Dr Stephen Chiles dated 6 August 2024 at [4.1].

- (b) the inclusion of controls requiring acoustic insulation and ventilation to be installed in new (or altered) sensitive uses within 100 metres of the railway corridor; and
- (c) the inclusion of controls within 60 metres of the railway corridor, for buildings containing new (or altered) sensitive uses to be constructed to manage the impacts of vibration.

Noise

- 4.6 As set out in the evidence of Dr Chiles, the understanding of noise effects and necessary mitigation has evolved in the past decade. Dr Chiles' evidence demonstrates that adverse noise effects are experienced 100 metres from the railway corridor and KiwiRail generally seeks acoustics controls to that effect.²

Vibration

- 4.7 Dr Chiles' evidence demonstrates that rail vibration has a very real effect on neighbours (with the potential to result in reverse sensitivity effects on KiwiRail) that requires mitigation. He considers that vibration effects are experienced more than 100 metres from the rail corridor, but that a control to 60 metres would manage the worst of vibration effects.³ These effects will only increase as the rail network continues to grow. Ms Heppelthwaite supports vibration controls.⁴ This need for vibration controls has also been accepted by the s42A author, Ms Evans, and the Council's technical expert, Mr Peakall.

5. RESPONSE TO SECTION 42 REPORT

- 5.1 Mr Peakall does not consider a distance of 100 metres for the proposed noise controls to be necessary "given the likely intensity of use of rail corridors in the District".⁵ As illustrated by the volumes included in my paragraph 3.4 above there are several busy lines in the West Coast District for which a 100 metre buffer based on the technical evidence of Dr Chiles is appropriate and necessary.
- 5.2 On current forecasts, KiwiRail accepts there is a lower volume of traffic on the Rapahoe and Hokitika rail lines. Consistent with its approach in other parts of New Zealand, KiwiRail would accept a noise and vibration alert information overlay for these two lines, as further described in Ms Heppelthwaite's

² Statement of Evidence of Dr Stephen Chiles dated 6 August 2024 at [6.1].

³ Statement of Evidence of Dr Stephen Chiles dated 6 August 2024 at [6.4] – [6.5].

⁴ Statement of Evidence of Catherine Heppelthwaite dated 6 August 2024 at [7.2].

⁵ Statement of Evidence of Stephen Peakall dated 19 July 2024 at [54].

evidence.⁶ **Appendix A** includes a map showing the Rapahoe and Hokitika rail lines as well as the other West Coast rail lines.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 For the reasons set out in the evidence of Dr Chiles, Ms Heppelthwaite and above, the setbacks and noise and vibration controls sought by KiwiRail are appropriate and necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the rail network in the West Coast.

Michelle Grinlinton-Hancock
6 August 2024

⁶ Statement of Evidence of Catherine Heppelthwaite dated 6 August 2024 at [7.2].

