

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act  
1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF** discharge and land use resource  
consents for the operation and  
maintenance of the Wairoa  
wastewater treatment plant and  
sewer pump station overflows

**BY** **Wairoa District Council**

**Applicant**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANDREW JOHN HERON ON BEHALF OF  
WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

16 November 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My name is **Andrew John Heron**.
2. I am a Project Engineer at the Wairoa District Council ("**WDC**").
3. My evidence is given in relation to the application by WDC for resource consents to Hawkes Bay Regional Council ("**HBRC**") for discharges and associated activities for the Wairoa Wastewater Treatment Plant ("**WWWTP**").

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

4. I have the following qualifications and experience relevant to the evidence I shall give:

### **Education / Qualifications:**

- a) Partial completion of an NZCE (stage 4 completed); and
- b) National Certificate in Environmental Health and Safety.

### **Employment history:**

- a) Project Engineer at WDC (3 years);
  - b) Construction Manager at QRS Wairoa (9 years);
  - c) Project Manager at QRS Wairoa (10 years);
  - d) Engineering Officer at Duffel Watts and King (1 year);
  - e) Engineering Officer at WDC (11 years); and
  - f) Civil contractor and labourer at Metz and Son (3 years).
5. I am a Registered Engineering Associate.
  6. Throughout my working career I have been involved in range of civil construction projects, including roading and three waters infrastructure.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

7. I confirm that I have read the 'Code of Conduct' for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. My evidence has been prepared in compliance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## OVERVIEW

8. I have lived in Wairoa for 52 years. Like many Wairoa residents, the Wairoa River has played a big part in our lives. There are numerous stories residents can share, with many revolving around the river and being in it.
9. Over the years I have seen the river used for sailing, rowing, water skiing and swimming. The local swimming club used to run a competition called 'King of The River', being the quickest to get to the other side and back.
10. For most of my life our family has lived close to the river. When we were younger, we regularly swam and fished at the river.
11. Just like our family, many in Wairoa have used the river for fishing, including catching whitebait, herring, kawhai, flounder and mullet.
12. The presence of wastewater discharges into the river is well known. I believe people are aware of the discharge, and while they may not fully support it, it does not stop them from using the river.

I think the current recreational use of the river has decreased. There used to be a lot more sailing, water skiing and rowing on the river. Waka Ama do use the river now frequently. At one time there was also a canoe club and racing boat races. This is despite the fact that it was not until the 1980's that untreated wastewater was removed from the river. Prior to 1980, basic primary treated wastewater went directly into the river. At this time, other discharges were also going straight into the river, including the blood pipe from the freezing works. There was always mention of the state of the river but people did not seem to mind at the time. I do not think the decline in river usage is linked to river water quality.

13. In recent years effort has been put into improving the wastewater discharge. While changes have been made, there have been failings to do with treated wastewater overflowing. This overflow is of a quality much better than has historically gone into the river. We are unable to make changes to the current overflows as we do not have a resource consent.
14. I support the need to improve the way we manage and discharge the wastewater. Ideally, all discharges should come out of the river, but realise that full removal will be problematic as soils get too wet for irrigation in winter. Regardless, we are making improvements and the wastewater quality is better now than it has been in the past.

**Andrew John Heron**

**16 November 2020**