

30 March 2022

### **Central Hawke's Bay District Council - Hearing Stream 2 - Noise**

- Good afternoon everyone. I'm Natasha Reid from Waka Kotahi, NZ Transport Agency. I am a Principal Planner for the central region, and I am leading the response to this district plan review.
- I am attending this hearing in support of our submission on the matter of Noise and to provide a strategic overview of Waka Kotahi's operations and statutory responsibilities and how this resource management issue affects them.
- I have with me Mr Andrew Sowersby from WSP and he can answer any questions you may have about his planning evidence.
- Also joining me is Dr Stephen Chiles. He is an acoustics engineer and is acting as Waka Kotahi's noise and vibration specialist. Dr Chiles is here to support me with any technical noise questions you may have. He can also answer any questions the panel may have on the noise contour modelling raised in the evidence submitted by Kainga Ora, which I will address soon.
- To provide context, I refer you to section 96(1)(a) of the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA), which requires Waka Kotahi to exhibit a sense of social and environmental responsibility when meeting its statutory obligations and undertaking its functions under the LTMA.
- Waka Kotahi seeks a gradual reduction in health and amenity effects implemented as new activities are established or existing activities are altered near the operational state highway network. This outcome aligns with *Toitū Te Taiao – Our Sustainability Action Plan* which in turn implements the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.
- Achieving these outcomes will in turn, assist regulatory authorities achieving Part 2 of the RMA, by providing for the use of natural and physical resources in a way which enables people and communities to provide for their health and safety (s5(2) RMA), and the maintenance and enhancement of amenity (s7(c) RMA).
- It is acknowledged that the Kainga Ora noise expert, Mr Styles, and Waka Kotahi's noise expert both agree that there can be health effects from road noise that need to be managed. So, this does not appear to be in dispute from the noise experts.
- Waka Kotahi considers that managing health effects from road noise is a shared responsibility between the road controlling authority and adjacent land users. Territorial authorities also have an important role to play in ensuring that planning instruments appropriately acknowledge and address the issue.
- Waka Kotahi addresses the issue by investing significantly in design, construction, and ongoing maintenance to minimise the effects of road noise.
- It is near impossible however, for Waka Kotahi to internalise the noise from all our existing roads where a new noise sensitive activity is established. Even if we could do this, in most areas these measures would not remove the need for land use controls for new and altered sensitive activities.

- There are also significant practicable issues associated with Waka Kotahi undertaking retrospective mitigation. For example, retrofitting acoustic barriers such as a noise wall, is limited by available land and/or ground conditions and by gaps needed between the barriers for property access from state highways.
- Acoustic barriers can also create potential visual dominance and shading issues and require ongoing maintenance costs. They may also not be effective for buildings of more than one storey and may cause adverse visual effects in townships.
- Speed limits are another way of reducing noise, but these already apply though Waipawa and Waipukurau.
- In contrast, locating and orientating a building on a site or the installation of acoustic insulation (for example) are simple, practicable, readily achievable and cost-effective methods for protecting new noise sensitive activities from noise effects from existing state highways
- The Waka Kotahi Guide to the management of effects on noise sensitive land uses near to the state highway network (which was reviewed by Dr Chiles), recognises the social, economic, and health benefits of managing interior working and living environments located near to state highways.
- The guide notes that the management of noise is a shared responsibility and not therefore, a burden on developers:
  - (a) Waka Kotahi is responsible for managing noise effects from new and altered roads (largely through designation conditions);
  - (b) Landowners and developers are responsible for managing the noise effects of new noise sensitive activities seeking to establish adjacent to existing state highways.
- The setbacks proposed by Waka Kotahi and agreed to by Council, do not prevent urban development but simply require mitigation to address the potential health effects on sensitive activities seeking to establish adjacent to existing state highway corridors.
- Regarding noise contour modelling referred to in Mr Styles evidence, we agree that a modelling approach (which then results in a contour on planning maps that shows the extent of where the noise rules apply), is preferable. Waka Kotahi has commissioned nation-wide modelling and our noise contours will soon be available for the CHB region. Unfortunately, at the time of our submission and evidence, the noise contours for CHB are not available. However, these contours may be available later this year.
- I note however, that in many areas our proposed 100m setback is shown to be reasonably accurate in some townships where the modelling is complete.
- In summary, Waka Kotahi supports rules requiring noise mitigation in the PDP.
- Happy to take any questions.