Good ~~morning~~ afternoon Madam Chair, commissioners and everyone present.

My name is Bernadette Winter. I speak on behalf of myself and my 7 children.

We have a 260 hectare dairy farm and 45 hectare run off at Waotu.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my submission.

I strongly oppose the proposed Horahora development.

For more than 300 thousand years the Waikato River flowed through the Hinuera gap, and the Hauraki gulf to exit at the Firth of Thames. 26 thousand years ago the Oranui eruption occurred and debri from this event eventually blocked the rivers route causing it to turn sharply left at Piarere and cut a course through the land to exit into the Tasman sea at Port Waikato.

We have museums and books to preserve historic artefacts and stories of New Zealand's people, but what of the Rivers story? Shouldn't the land formation that tells of a significant event in the history of the Waikato River be preserved? The terraced landscape in the Horahora ~~basin~~ valley indicates the power, movement, flow and story of the river as it cut a path through the valley as it changed direction.

And what a beautiful landscape it created on its journey.

I still clearly remember 30 years ago when I first drove down Horahora road. I was blown away by its beauty. The terraced landscape sitting next to the Waikato River sparkling in the sunshine, surrounded by the green grass and trees. It's one of those experiences that creates a memory that sticks with you forever. I only recall seeing one ~~or two houses~~ there at the time.

I have lived in Waotu for 25 years and have travelled on Horahora road at least 3 times a week. It is my favourite part of the journey, but the addition of more houses over recent years has stolen views and diminished the look of the natural landscape as well as my enjoyment of the drive.

The Waikato River classified as an Outstanding Natural Feature. While the river is beautiful, the surrounding land is both unique and iconic, and the cohesion of both together creates stunning vistas. The wider view encompasses the west side of the river and Mount Maungatautari in the background. Why would anyone want to spoil this?

The 45ha proposed for this development is on land classified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape which should take precedence over any other classification. Natural is defined as a product of nature which can include pasture and exotic tree species but not man-made structures.

A total of 3.5 kilometres of landscape and views along Horahora Road would be permanently ruined by subdivisions allowing up to 71 homes to be built. The current proposal allows one dwelling per section, but allowances for additions of smaller secondary dwellings have not been completely ruled out. 1 shed per property has also been allowed. That's automatically ~~146~~ 142 roofs but potentially ~~219~~ 213 ugly roofs, many driveways, fences, power lines, rubbish bins roads and cars.

Over time, I have no doubt that as people struggle to maintain their large sections which are too small for an animal and very big to mow, they will apply for further subdivisions. How many more buildings will be added when this starts happening.

No amount of building rules regarding size, colour, positioning of buildings or plantings will make the proposed development any less of an eyesore on the landscape. The proposed earthworks will permanently destroy the natural landscape. It is irreversible. None of the proposed earthworks are sympathetic to the land, and will certainly not retain or enhance the natural landscape. ~~Sheep~~ livestock and plantings are sympathetic to the land; the proposed earthworks are about as sympathetic to the land as a sledgehammer is to an egg.

~~78~~ 71 septic tanks on the riverside is a concern for the rivers health. Horahora road soil is classified as highly permeable and free draining. I cannot see how the words 'zoned rural lifestyle' makes ~~78~~ 71 septic tanks suddenly acceptable.

Septic runoff, which contains nitrogen and phosphorus, will not take long to leach through to the river. These contaminants feed algae growth and golden clams.

I have driven through the area in a significant downpour. A waterfall was streaming over the hill onto the ground. A small lake had formed below it. There was no trace of it the next day due to the extremely pourous nature of the land.

Horahora road is listed as a scenic route on Google maps. I often see people stopping and taking photos.

The river trail is extremely popular. I see many people, all hours of the day, walking, jogging and cycling. The area is within easy drive from many towns and offers everyone a chance to escape towns and cities, get back to nature, slow down, explore, heal, make memories, learn, discover and exercise while enjoying the great scenery and ambience of the area.

In all my many travels overseas I have seen a lot of beautiful landscapes, but nothing as unique or as beautiful as the landscape bedside the Waikato River on Horahora road.

Before making a decision on the development, I implore everyone here to take a drive the full length of Horahora road and really look at the amazing scenery. Stop for a while, enjoy

the calm, take in the colours, the play of the shadows around the formations, and enjoy the area the way it is. Simple, natural and beautiful.

The Treaty of Waitangi requires th protection of the Waikato river, which is considered tupuna(ansecdtor) and holds significant mana for the Waikato Tainui Tribe. The Waikato river Authoritys vision and strategy aims to protect the health and wellbeing of the the river for future generations, ensuring the rivers mana and mauri (life force) are respected and preserved.

There is a lot more to land than just its monetary value. The whole Horahora road ~~basin~~ valley is a priceless National treasure which should be solely classified as an Outstanding Natural landscape and should be protected and preserved for future generations to enjoy forever.

We are the guardians and the voice for the land. This proposal is nothing but a blatant act of environmental, geological, ecologicaland social vandalism. It benefits few people but takes so much more away from so many.

It fails to consider the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of people and their appreciation for an unspoilt natural landscape.

I believe that if the development is allowed to go ahead it will be regretted forever and once it is destroyed, we can never get it back.

I want to leave you with this image: Our great, great grandchildren, standing with their children at a lookout on Horahora road overlooking a sea of roofs, snaking roads, fences and hedges to catch a glimpse of the Mighty Waikato River and the mother saying to her children, "apparently this used to be the most amazing landscape. There were no houses here at all. You could easily see the river, and the terraced land told the story of the rivers journey thousands of years ago. I would have loved to see it back then, it must have been stunning".