Resource Consent Applications for subdivision and land use for a rural lifestyle development at Horahora Road, Lake Karapiro

K & L Tylee

Applicant

South Waikato District Council

Consent Authority

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE IN CHIEF AND REBUTTAL STATEMENTS

OF

REBECCA RYDER

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Dated: 21 October 2026

Counsel Acting:
Phil Lang
Barrister
PO Box 19 539
Hamilton
Phone: 021 870 660
Email: phil@plang.co.nz

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a Landscape Architect and Partner at Boffa Miskell Limited. My evidence and rebuttal address the landscape, natural character and visual amenity effects of the proposed 73-lot rural lifestyle subdivision at 597 Horahora Road, and responds to issues raised through submissions, the Council's Section 42A Report, and the evidence of landscape architect Shannon Bray.

2. My overall opinion remains that the proposal can be appropriately integrated into the Waikato River landscape through the implementation of the Landscape, Visual Amenity and Mitigation Management Plan (LVAMPP), the proposed design controls, and ongoing landscape management measures.

SITE AND PROPOSAL

3. The subject site comprises approximately 45.6 hectares of Rural Lifestyle Zoned land between Horahora Road and the Waikato River. It contains elevated river terraces, two vegetated gullies and areas of ecological value along the river corridor. While the site forms part of an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL10), it exists within a broader environment which has been already modified by pastoral farming, hydroelectric infrastructure, recreation facilities and rural lifestyle development.

4. The application seeks consent for a staged 73-lot rural residential subdivision. Since lodgement, the proposal has been refined to:

    - Reduce lot numbers from 81 to 73;
    - Increase average lot sizes;
    - Reduce overall development density;
    - Significantly reduce earthworks, particularly within Stage 3;
    - Retain more of the existing terrace and gully landforms;

- Provide a 10-metre esplanade strip along the Waikato River frontage; and
- Increase native planting, ecological restoration and habitat enhancement.

LANDSCAPE, NATURAL CHARACTER AND VISUAL EFFECTS

5. The proposal will result in a clear change from open pastoral land to a rural lifestyle environment. However, the design has deliberately sought to respond to the natural and cultural values of the Waikato River corridor through:

- Retention and integration of legible river terrace patterns;
- Protection and enhancement of gullies and wetlands.
- Extensive native planting throughout the site.
- Building location, height and appearance controls.
- Restoration of ecological corridors and riparian margins .
- Public access provisions including the esplanade strip.

6. I reviewed and concurred with the assessment of natural character effects as being low-moderate adverse and the landscape effects as moderate initially, reducing to low-moderate as planting establishes. The Council's landscape peer review, of Mr Dave Mansergh, generally agreed with these findings and accepted that there was no landscape basis upon which consent should be declined, provided the mitigation package is implemented in full.

7. Visual effects will be experienced for neighbouring residents, road users and river users in the short term. However, these effects will progressively reduce as planting grows and matures over the first 5 – 10 years for each stage of the development.

RURAL LIFESTYLE ZONING AND CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

8. A key issue raised through submissions and rebuttal evidence concerns whether the proposal achieves cluster development as anticipated by the Rural Lifestyle Zone policies.

9. While the site shape presents constraints, particularly in Stage 1, the subdivision has been designed as a coordinated landscape framework rather than simply a pattern of individual lots. The clustering outcome is achieved through the combination of dwelling placement across and within stages, extensive planting networks, gully protection and open space structure.

10. The design response considers not only landscape factors but also ecological, wastewater, stormwater and engineering constraints. In my opinion, the development achieves the intent of cluster development while responding appropriately to the site's own physical characteristics and the Waikato River environment.

OUTSTANDING NATURAL LANDSCAPE (ONL)

11. The proposal is located within part of the wider Waikato River ONL. I acknowledge that residential development will introduce change; however, I do not agree that such change will materially diminish the ONL to the extent suggested by submitter evidence.

12. The proposal incorporates substantial measures specifically intended to maintain and enhance ONL values, including:

    - Limiting earthworks and retaining natural landforms.
    - Protecting and restoring gullies, wetlands and indigenous vegetation.
    - Reinforcing landscape patterns through extensive native planting.
    - Maintaining visual and physical connections with the Waikato River.
    - Applying long-term controls over future buildings, planting and management.

13. The site forms a component of a much larger ONL that already contains rural housing, rural lifestyle development and productive land uses. In my opinion, the proposal will not negate or seriously diminish the ONL status of the site as part of the Waikato River landscape.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

14. A central component of the proposal is the LVAMPP. This framework ensures a coordinated landscape outcome across private lots, open space areas and ecological restoration areas. It establishes requirements for:

    - Site-wide mitigation planting.
    - On-lot planting.
    - Maintenance and replacement of vegetation.
    - Building integration and landscape design.
    - Ongoing management in perpetuity.

15. The objective is not simply to mitigate development effects but to create a coherent landscape structure that enhances the Waikato River corridor, protects ecological values and maintains legibility of the river terrace landforms over time.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSION MATTERS

16. In response to Mr Bray's evidence, I have addressed in my rebuttal statement that I remain of the view that:

- The proposal appropriately responds to landform, river relationships and ONL values.
- The landscape strategy provides for a clustered development outcome through multiple considerations of landform, vegetation cover, viewshaft protection and site coverage of buildings.
- Each stage can achieve a coherent landscape framework independently avoiding reliance between stages.
- Long-term landscape management can be effectively secured through the detailed implementation of the LVAMPP and consent conditions.
- The proposal will not undermine the ONL status of the overall ONL and the approach to its identification.
- Provision has been made for future relocation of the Waikato River Trail within the proposed esplanade strip when agreement is reached with relevant stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

17. The proposal represents a managed transition from pastoral land use to rural lifestyle development within an area specifically zoned for that purpose. Through reduced earthworks, restoration of ecological features, extensive native planting, public access provisions, design controls and long-term management through the LVAMPP, the subdivision has been designed to integrate with the Waikato River landscape and its associated values.

18. For these reasons, I conclude that the landscape, natural character and visual amenity effects of the proposal can be appropriately managed to integrate with the Waikato River landscape character. In turn the approach will enable the proposal remains consistent with the relevant landscape, visual and natural character objectives and policies of the South Waikato District Plan

Rebecca Ryder

Landscape Architect | Partner

Boffa Miskell Limited

21 October 2026