

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS
IN CHRISTCHURCH**

TE MAHERE Ā-ROHE I TŪTOHUA MŌ TE TĀONE O ŌTAUTAHĪ

UNDER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the hearing of submissions on Plan Change 13
(Heritage) to the Christchurch District Plan

AND

IN THE MATTER of Canterbury Regional Council (submitter 689)

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ISOLINA O'BRIEN
ON BEHALF OF THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

PLANNING

6 June 2025

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Isolina Olivia Berry O'Brien.
- 2 I am a Planner at the Canterbury Regional Council (**Regional Council**). I have held this position for 3 months. Immediately prior to my current role I worked as a Planning Hearings Officer at the Regional Council which included planning and administrative work. In total I have 18 months' experience in planning.
- 3 I have a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Sociology from the University of Canterbury.
- 4 I have been asked by the Regional Council (submitter number 689) to prepare evidence in respect of Plan Change 13 to the Christchurch District Plan (**PC13**).
- 5 Whilst I am an employee of the Regional Council, I have prepared this evidence in my capacity as a planner and, although I acknowledge that this is not an Environment Court hearing, I confirm that I have read and am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it while giving any oral evidence during this hearing. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, my evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 6 My evidence addresses:
 - a. Overview of PC13 to the Christchurch District Plan (**CDP**);
 - b. The objectives and policies of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement which are relevant to PC13;
 - c. The original submission of the Canterbury Regional Council; and
 - d. The Section 42A Report recommendations relevant to the Regional Council submission.
- 7 In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed the following documents and evidence:

- a. The remaining notified provisions of PC13 following PC14 decisions;
- b. The Section 32 Report to PC13;
- c. The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement;
- d. The Regional Council submission on PC13;
- e. The Section 42A Report of Glenda Dixon; and
- f. The Section 42A Report of Suzanne Richmond.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 8 The Regional Council's original submission supported the new and amended provisions of PC13 including the introduction of Residential Heritage Areas (**RHAs**). It is my view that the provisions of PC13 give effect to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (**CRPS**) as required by the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**).
- 9 I have reviewed the Section 42A Report's prepared by Suzanne Richmond and Glenda Dixon and I agree with the recommendations made. My evidence focuses on the application and interpretation of the CRPS in relation to the provisions of PC13.

OVERVIEW OF PC13

- 10 My understanding of PC13 is that it seeks to clarify and simplify the current rule framework for historic heritage in the CDP. It also aims to better reflect and protect the historic heritage of the City, specifically buildings which are of collective rather than individual significance, through the introduction of RHAs.
- 11 It is my understanding that PC13 was originally notified at the same time as PC14 which provides for housing intensification and medium density development within most residential zoned land within the City, unless a qualifying matter is applied. Historic heritage is a qualifying matter. The parts of PC13 which were heard as part of PC14 have now been removed from PC13.
- 12 The Regional Council supported PC13 as notified, in its original submission.

Statutory Framework

- 13 I agree with the description of the statutory framework at paragraph 2.1 of the Section 32 Report.

Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

- 14 I agree that the CRPS objectives and policies at paragraph 2.1.5 of the Section 32 Report are relevant to PC13. I have below expanded on the application of those objectives and policies.
- 15 **Objective 6.2.3 Sustainability** provides that recovery and rebuilding undertaken in Greater Christchurch retains identified areas of historic heritage value. It is noted that intensification of residential development needs to protect historic heritage value because of its contribution to the identity and character of the area.
- 16 **Policy 6.3.2 Development form and urban design** sets out that business, residential and rural residential development must give effect to the principles of good urban design to the extent appropriate to the context. One such principle is tūrangawaewae which is the sense of place and belonging. Historic heritage is listed as an element of tūrangawaewae which should be used to reflect the appropriateness of development to its location.
- 17 **Objective 13.2.1** requires the identification and protection of significant historic heritage, items, places and areas, and their particular values that contribute to Canterbury's distinctive character and sense of identity, from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. As noted in the principal reasons and explanation for this objective, it is essential in providing for the social, economic and cultural well-being of the community.
- 18 **Objective 13.2.3** notes the importance of enabling the repair, reconstruction, seismic strengthening, and on-going conservation and maintenance of historic heritage while acknowledging the economic costs associated with these matters. The principal reasons and explanation for this objective notes that the loss of built heritage as a result of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes has increased the value of the remaining built heritage in the Canterbury region.

- 19 **Policy 13.3.1** requires that the protection of the historic and cultural heritage resource of the region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, is recognised and provided for.
- 20 This policy also sets out criteria for identifying and assessing the significance of the historical and cultural heritage resource, which Territorial Authorities must meet in setting policies and objectives. The criteria should be based on the following matters:
- a. Historic
 - b. Cultural
 - c. Architectural
 - d. Archaeological
 - e. Technological
 - f. Scientific
 - g. Social
 - h. Spiritual
 - i. Traditional
 - j. Contextual
 - k. Aesthetic
- 21 Territorial authorities must also work with Ngāi Tahu to identify historic heritage of significance to them and consider historic heritage items, places or areas of significance or importance to communities in the process of identifying and assessing the historic heritage resource.
- 22 **Policy 13.3.4** relates to the appropriate management of historic buildings. It requires that the social, economic, and cultural well-being of people and communities is recognised and provided for by enabling appropriate repair, rebuilding, upgrading, seismic strengthening and adaptive re-use of historic buildings and their surrounds in a manner that is sensitive to their historic values. It is noted in the principal reasons and explanations for this policy that economics will often be a factor as to how quickly or easily re-use can be achieved, and will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Regional Council Submission

- 23 The Regional Council's original submission supported the introduction of RHAs, the new and amended Abbreviations and Definitions, and the amendments to Sub-Chapter 9.3 Historic Heritage. The amendment to

8.9.3 Exemptions, which would affect CRC operations, was also supported.

Section 42A Report recommendations

- 24 I agree with Glenda Dixon's interpretation of CRPS Objective 13.2.1 at paragraph 8.11.6 of the Section 42A Report. Objective 13.2.1 is clear that historic heritage contributes to Canterbury's distinctive character and sense of identity and therefore, in a local context, should be protected from inappropriate, subdivision, use, and development. This objective is implemented by Policy 13.3.1 which requires the historic and cultural heritage resource of the region is recognised and provided for by identifying and assessing its significance.
- 25 I have reviewed the amendments recommended by the Section 42A Officers, as detailed in 1.2 Appendix B and 4.2 appendix 2, and the associated 32AA evaluations.
- 26 In relation to RHAs I agree with Glenda Dixon at paragraph 3 of Appendix A that the changes to the proposed amendments do not affect the conclusions of the Section 32 evaluation. It is my view that the recommended changes provide further clarity and improve the function of the rule framework while not diverging from the original policy intent.
- 27 I also agree with the 32AA evaluation of Suzanne Richmond, and it is my view that the recommended changes to the notified provisions give effect to the CRPS.

CONCLUSION

- 28 On reviewing the recommended amendments and associated 32AA evaluations in the Section 42A Report, I consider that these recommended changes to the notified provisions give effect to the CRPS.

Dated this 6th day of June 2025



Isolina O'Brien