

**Before the Environment Court  
At Auckland**

**In the matter of** the Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions Act 2010 (**LGATPA**) and the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

**And**

**In the matter of** appeals under section 156(1) of the LGATPA

**Between** **Weli Yang, Zhi Lu & Jing Ni**

**(ENV-2016-AKL-000196)**

**Okura Holdings Limited**

**(ENV-2016-AKL-000211)**

**Appellants**

**And** **Auckland Council**

**Respondent**

**And** **Weiti Development Limited Partnership**

**Section 274 Party**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BERNARD GEORGE  
STANLEY ON BEHALF OF THE LONG BAY - OKURA GREAT  
PARK SOCIETY INCORPORATED**

**28 JULY 2017**

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**And Long Bay-Okura Great Park Protection Society  
Section 274 Party**

**And Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Incorporated  
Section 274 Party**

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## **STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BERNARD GEORGE STANLEY**

### **FOR THE LONG BAY OKURA GREAT PARK SOCIETY**

#### **1 Qualifications and Experience**

- 1.1 My full name is Bernard George Stanley.
- 1.2 I graduated M.Sc. with honours in Chemistry from the University of Otago in 1947. Supporting studies included the Natural Sciences of Geology and Zoology. Long since retired, my working life was spent in the chemical industry including management of resins and adhesives manufacturing companies.
- 1.3 My formative childhood years of the 1930's were spent in Thames where hiking the bush trails of the Coromandel Ranges and aquatic pursuits in freshwater streams and "down the coast" occupied much of our leisure time. I am sure it is in this that my love of the outdoors and respect for the natural environment is grounded.
- 1.4 I am a member of an Auckland Council Waicare group regularly monitoring the water quality of the Awaruku Stream at Long Bay. I also maintain liaison with the Long Bay Regional Park staff on behalf of the Long Bay – Okura Great Park Society of which I have been a long-term executive member. I also participate in the annual tree planting days in the Park.
- 1.5 Now poised on the threshold of my 94<sup>th</sup> year on Papatuanuku / Mother Earth and by dint of my virtual daily rambles on Long Bay beach, Regional Park and beyond, I believe I am well qualified to attest to the outstanding recreational facilities and benefits the Long Bay - Okura area provides for the Auckland and visitor public.
- 1.6 I am certain they have contributed significantly to my own continued personal wellbeing.

#### **2 Long Bay – Okura Complex**

- 2.1 For those not familiar with detail of the area, Long Bay – Okura is endowed with an unrivalled array of public amenities encompassing Vaughan Park Retreat and Sir Peter Blake Memorial Marine Education and Recreation Centre (MERC) at the southern end of the iconic Long Bay Regional Park and beach, to Karepiro Bay in the north including the historic Vaughan Homestead and Dacre Cottage, backgrounded by the Marine Reserve and panoramic Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park.

- 2.2 The Okura Catchment constitutes a central feature with the Estuary a jewel in the crown. With over 1.2 million visits annually the recreational benefits of these superb amenities, enjoyed by the people of Auckland and beyond, are huge. Auckland Council statistics reveal of the total 5.5 million visitors to all of Auckland's Regional Parks, Long Bay accounts for about one quarter – such is the popularity of Long Bay-Okura, testimony to its accessibility and rewarding experiences. This statistic takes no account of the many thousands of patrons who avail themselves of non-Council facilities such as Vaughan Park Retreat, MERC and the very popular Okura Bush Walkway.

### **3 Personal Experience**

- 3.1 At the personal level on stepping foot on Long Bay Regional Park and the beach in the morning, the cares of the world fall away under the spell of the unrivalled panorama of the Gulf from Whangaparaoa in the north to Rangitoto in the south – simply awesome in all its moods. But Long Bay – Okura has much more to offer than Park and beach – particularly the Okura Bush Walkway on the northern shoreline of the Okura Estuary and the stroll to Piripiri Point (the northern extent of the Park peninsular and south head of the Estuary).

### **4 The Okura Bush Walkway**

- 4.1 The Okura Bush Walkway begins at the end of the short Haigh Access from East Coast Road. The back to nature traverse through to the coast at Karepiro Bay offers an unrivalled array of outstanding recreational features – a good physical workout, a wide variety of land and marine forms, and impressive range of native flora and fauna, historic sites, fresh air and the overall ambience of nature.
- 4.2 Entering the rare remnant coastal forest at the footbridge, the flora is dominated at the lower coastal level by large pohutukawa, puriri and kaihikatea with an impressive regenerating understory of nikau. The sight of the sunlight filtering through the upper storey of big trees on to the palm fronds is memorable.
- 4.3 Back from the coast the ridges are dominated by impressive large kauri flanked by groves of regenerating kauri “rickers” signalling hope for the future of this iconic NZ tree species.
- 4.4 About the halfway mark the track accesses the spectacular sandspit jutting out into the Estuary providing nesting sites for threatened NZ Dotterel and Oystercatcher. Then on to the Pa site on the north head of the Estuary and down to Karepiro Bay offering an excellent

opportunity for bird watching of migratory and indigenous seabirds feeding on the tidal flats.

- 4.5 And finally, to the historic Dacre Cottage to rest, reflect, refresh and return – a complete recreational experience.
- 4.6 A particular feature and attraction of this outstanding traverse is the sense of remoteness and freedom from urban intrusion it provides. Extensive housing development on the southern shore of the Estuary would seriously impair the superb forest, estuarine and rural vistas the walkway contributes to this outstanding recreational experience.

## **5 Piripiri Point**

- 5.1 Piripiri Point is reached by following the walkway through the northern wilderness section of the Regional Park beyond Vaughan Stream and Homestead. This walkway traverses rolling terrain of open grassland on the ridges and re-afforested gullies. The Gulf marine views to the east from the higher vantage points on the cliff tops are even more spectacular and breath-taking than from lower levels.
- 5.2 Having reached the end of the walkway at the Point the view to the west provides a dramatic contrast of rolling green fields and tranquil waters of the Okura Estuary flanked by the Scenic Reserve and Walkway on its northern shore.
- 5.3 To sit and absorb the ambience of this rural and marine vista, breathing the fresh clean sea air is balm to the spirit.

## **6 Urban Development**

- 6.1 Urban Development in close proximity would seriously diminish this. I understand this would be similar to that imposed on the Awaruku Ridge at Long Bay, a veritable blot on the landscape – large boxes squeezed cheek by jowl on to tiny section with little or no space for softening vegetation. And it would bring in its train a devastating legacy seriously diminishing the recreation value of the Okura Bush and Piripiri Point Walkway experiences for the many thousands of users annually.
- 6.2 I refer to Anthropomorphic Pollution i.e. human created pollution that would follow intensive urban development. Pollution in all its insidious forms:
- 6.3 Visual. The impact on the Okura Bush and Piripiri Point Walkways

- 6.4 Noise. The peace of the natural environment would be shattered for years by the noise from earth moving machinery and housing construction and thereafter by house-hold equipment such as chain saws, mowers, line trimmers, leaf blowers, loud music and traffic – all the sounds that emanate from human occupation.
- 6.5 Light. House and street lighting at night will have a disturbing and disorienting effect on the bird life of the adjacent estuary and bush.
- 6.6 Waste. Plastic bags, bottles, cans, snack wraps and packaging discarded by uncaring residents and visitors.
- 6.7 Sediment. Suspended and dissolved pollutants carried by run-off from hard surfaces.
- 6.8 Traffic. Vehicle noise, exhaust fumes, oil and fuel spills, toxic heavy metals.
- 6.9 All of these pollution elements would adversely impact the natural ambience of the Okura Catchment and ecology of the Estuary.
- 6.10 While under the present Rural Living Zoning some or all of the 4 ha blocks will have a single dwelling built on them, the pollution factor would be significantly less and the natural rural ambience better maintained.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 I firmly believe we as a community have a “duty of care/ Kaitiaki-tanga/ Guardianship” to maintain the present configuration of Rural Urban Boundary (RUB) and zoning of the Okura Catchment as an integral part of the whole Long Bay – Okura complex – a veritable oasis of peace and tranquillity which the citizens of Auckland can readily access to recreate physically, mentally and spiritually from relentlessly increasing intensive urban living.
- 7.2 Lou Sanson, Director General of the Department of Conservation is reported in a recent Listener article as saying, “People are becoming urbanised and when they have got leisure time, nature is the most prized commodity.”
- 7.3 In my view the obvious corollary to this must surely be that we should be conserving our outstanding natural areas of high recreational value, particularly those readily accessible to the large urban areas, such as Long Bay – Okura, on the North Shore of Auckland, to meet this need

and expectation of the populous of the country's largest urban community.

- 7.4 In my view, democratic principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number", should prevail.

Apologies to Joseph Priestly (1733 – 1804) and Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832)

Bernard George Stanley  
28 July 2017