

BEFORE THE INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER OF

the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

an application to the Invercargill City Council by HWCP Management Ltd for resource consent to demolish, alter and redevelop land and buildings in the Central Business District on a block bound by the east side of Dee Street, the south side of Esk Street, the west side of Kelvin Street and the north side of Tay Street

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF TOM CAMPBELL
ON BEHALF OF HWCP MANAGEMENT LTD**

11 March 2019

Introduction

1. My name is Tom Campbell and I am the former Chair of the Southland Regional Development Strategy Governance Group. This evidence is in support of the resource consent application by HWCP Management Ltd to redevelop the central city block bound by Dee, Esk, Kelvin and Tay Streets.
2. By way of background, I first came to Southland after emigrating from Scotland in 1981, to work as a Chartered Engineer at the Tiwai Smelter. I worked for Comalco, which became Rio Tinto, becoming its managing director of operations in New Zealand and the United Kingdom and global head of research and technology for Rio Tinto Alcan based in Canada. I am now a full time independent director and serve on the Boards of Todd Corporation, PowerNet, Electricity Invercargill (as Chair), Southern Generation Limited (as Chair), and Port Otago Limited. I am also Chair of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, and a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Directors.
3. I was appointed to Chair the Southland Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) Governance Group by the Southland Mayoral Forum in October 2015 and in this role my task was to lead the development of an Action Plan capable of achieving the strategic objective of increasing the population of Southland by 10,000 people by 2025. This Action Plan was developed by nine Teams comprising in total 102 volunteers from the local community and business. The Action Plan was launched in November 2016.

SoRDS

4. SoRDS is a region-wide initiative focused on building a thriving and prosperous future for Southland. SoRDS was initiated by the Southland Mayoral Forum in 2014 to address the problem of depopulation, which is threatening the region's social and economic viability. Funded by four local councils, local businesses and community funders, SoRDS is a unified Southland approach,

building on local energy and leadership to address the static population and develop a more diverse and resilient regional economy.

5. Despite strong economic growth in Southland since 2007, the shrinking population is the number one concern in the region. The static population growth, coupled with the impacts of an ageing population, means that by 2025 the region's population is forecast to drop to 1.8% from the current 2.3% of New Zealand's population. The region needs people, interaction and activity to drive economic growth so that we can sustain a high quality of social and economic life.
6. The Southland Regional Development Strategy has one primary goal: 10,000 more people living in Southland by 2025, with the secondary goal of diversifying the economy and strengthening local business. Total liveability is the key to SoRDS based on a simple formula – seeing more people seeking to study, live and work in Southland when negative perceptions around distance and climate have been overcome. The Action Plan that was launched in November 2016 identified nine Major Projects and forty Key Actions to achieve the primary and secondary goals.
7. Invercargill Rejuvenation was to be achieved through three major transformational projects for the inner city. These are the joint venture between Invercargill City Property Group and H.W. Richardson Group to develop an inner-city precinct incorporating retail, hospitality, apartments and entertainment creating a heart for Invercargill City, along with the Invercargill Licensing Trust's new hotel and Invercargill City Council's arts precinct project. In November 2016 the Action Plan was launched before an audience of over 400 Southlanders and two senior Government Ministers. Speaking at that event I said "if you twisted my arm to name the one project of greatest importance to the SoRDS it would be Invercargill Rejuvenation".

8. The SoRDS governance group was disestablished in 2018 and with many of the critical projects moving into the implementation phase it was time to pass the baton on to those councils and other organisations that are best placed to manage and nurture them to their full potential. It has been an exciting and fulfilling process to be a part of and it is particularly pleasing to see this anchor project moving into the development phase, a critical building block for a prosperous and resilient Southland.

Rejuvenation of Invercargill City

9. The SoRDS identified the rejuvenation of Invercargill city centre as one of nine critical areas of focus to achieve the overall goal of 10,000 more people living in Southland by 2025. As outlined in the Action Plan, “the inner city of Invercargill does not provide sufficient of the modern essentials of urban lifestyle to attract and retain population in the numbers required for the success of SoRDS and the region. While there are “good bones” in the city, it lacks a central focus, with many buildings in a poor state and insufficient lifestyle infrastructure. The opportunity is to skip a generation and create a compact, contemporary, vibrant regional city”.
10. During the SoRDS development project the leadership team and myself spoke to many community groups and focus group meetings. A recurring theme from participants was the poor state of the city centre and the lack of reasons to travel there. Also many individual employers and employer groups spoke to SoRDS teams about the difficulty of attracting staff to work in Invercargill due to a perceived lack of vibrancy. We formed the view that rejuvenation of the city centre is pre-requisite to achieving the SoRDS as a whole.

Conclusion

11. The SoRDS’s primary goal of attracting 10,000 additional people to live here will not be achieved without a significant uplift in the vibrancy of Invercargill

city centre. I consider the HWCP proposal to be a very important, perhaps the most important, component of that.

12. I thank the Commissioners for their consideration of this statement of evidence.

Tom Campbell

11 March 2019