

**Before the Independent Hearings Panel
At Wellington City Council**

Under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of Hearing submissions and further submissions on the
Proposed Wellington City District Plan

**Statement of supplementary planning evidence of Farzad Zamani on behalf of
Wellington City Council**

Date: 16/06/2023

INTRODUCTION:

1 My full name is Farzad Zamani. I am employed as Te Ngākau Programme Manager and previously I held the position of the Urban Regeneration and Design Manager and prior to this I was the Manager of the Council's Urban Design Team (RMA) at Wellington City Council. I have advised the Wellington City Council District Planning team on District Plan matters in my previous positions. Due to my current position, and my conflict of interest, I will refrain providing any comment on Te Ngākau Precinct or any related matter.

2 I have read the respective evidence of:

Stratum Management Limited ID 246 and FS 133

- a. Craig Alan Stewart
- b. Maciej (Mitch) Wiktor Lewandowski

Eldin Family Trust ID 287 and FS 41

- a. Benjamin Robert Lamason

Onslow Residents Community Association ID 283 and FS 80

- a. Stuart Niven

Woolworths NZ ID 359

- a. Kay Panther Knight

Restaurant Brands Limited ID 349 and FS 53

- a. Mark Nicholas Arbuthnot

Willis Bond and Company Limited ID 416 and FS 12

- b. Alistair Arthur Aburn

Z Energy Limited ID 361 & FS 33

- a. Sarah Westoby

Rongotai Investments ID 269 and FS 11

- a. Cameron Peter de Leijer

Wellingtons Character Charitable Trust ID 233 & FS 82

- a. Stuart Niven

Kāinga Ora Homes and Communities ID 391 & FS 89

- a. Matthew Cecil Heale
- b. Nicholas James Rae

Stride Investment Limited and Investore Management Limited ID 470 FS 107 & 405 FS 108

- a. Cameron Wallace
- b. Joe Jeffries

Prime Property Group ID 256 and FS 93

- a. Ian Thomas Leary

Bus Barn Limited ID 320 and FS 95

- a. Cameron Peter de Leijer

Argosy Property No 1 Ltd, Fabric Property Ltd, Oyster Management Ltd and Precinct Properties New Zealand Limited ID 383, 425, 404 & 139 and FS 16

- a. Cameron Wallace
- b. Joe Jeffries
- c. Grant Alexander Burns (Representing solely Argosy Property No. 1 Limited)

3 I have prepared this statement of evidence in response to expert evidence submitted by the people listed above to support the submissions and further submissions on the Proposed Wellington City District Plan (the Plan / PDP).

4 Specifically, this statement of evidence relates to the following reports:

- a. [Overview and General Matters for Commercial and Mixed Use Zones](#)
- b. [City Centre Zone](#)
- c. [Metropolitan Centre Zone](#)
- d. [Local Centre Zone](#)

- e. [Neighbourhood Centre Zone](#)
- f. [Mixed Use Zone](#)
- g. [Commercial Zone](#)
- h. [General Industrial Zone](#)
- i. [Waterfront Zone](#)
- j. [Wind](#)

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

- 5 I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture (Design) and PhD in Urban Design.
- 6 I have worked for Wellington City Council for 3 years. Previously, I have worked both in private practice and academia for more than 5 years.
- 7 I am a member of Urban Design Forum National Committee, NZIA, Urban Development Institute of New Zealand and I am a certified hearings commissioner.
- 8 I confirm that I am continuing to abide by the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023, as applicable to this Independent Panel hearing.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 9 My statement of evidence addresses the expert evidence of those listed above.

RESPONSES TO EXPERT EVIDENCE

Stratum Management Limited ID 246 and FS 133

Craig Alan Stewart

- 10 I acknowledge Mr. Stewart's points regarding the maximum heights in the City Centre Zone. I agree with his assessment that the current cost-effective height range for buildings is around 12-14 floors. Additionally, I concur with his observation that the City Outcomes Contribution (COC) policy may seem prescriptive. However, it is important to note that the COC policy applies specifically to developments seeking significantly greater height than

the existing limits. Therefore, I do not believe that this policy would restrict development capacity but rather enhance the quality of the urban environment, leading to increased demand for higher-density living and a transition towards more sustainable lifestyles.

- 11 The COC policy replaces the Design Excellence Policy in the operative district plan. As we acknowledged during the consultation for the Draft District Plan and based on previous studies, the Design Excellence Policy was deemed vague and reliant on subjective expert opinions. The COC policy aims to address these issues by providing certainty and a clear framework for developing significantly taller buildings. It is not a mandatory requirement but rather a trade-off to improve the overall quality of developments in Wellington. The policy offers flexibility through different methods of meeting the COC, which can be tailored based on the site and specific circumstances of each development in consultation with the Council during the pre-application process.
- 12 I disagree with Mr. Stewart's viewpoint on minimum ground floor heights. Given that the ground floor of residential buildings in the central city may be repurposed for commercial or retail spaces in the future, a minimum 4m ground-to-floor height is necessary to accommodate these potential conversions.
- 13 While I acknowledge some of Mr. Stewart's points regarding minimum residential unit sizes, it is important to recognize that these standards are not intended to hinder developers and architects who deliver high-quality work. Considering our experience with the operative district plan, where standards are often exceeded, reducing the size of units could lead to further reductions through the resource consent process, resulting in the provision of very small and unappealing apartments, such as 24sqm units. Such cramped living spaces are not conducive to human well-being, especially when used as permanent residences. Therefore, I believe that the current proposed unit sizes, although not ideal, strike a practical and appropriate balance.
- 14 I partially agree with Mr. Stewart's points regarding outdoor living space. As he suggests, a mixed approach would be appropriate, and the proposed district plan accounts for this. Developments can incorporate a combination of private balconies and communal open spaces. Balconies and open spaces serve not only recreational purposes but also functional uses such as wet spaces or areas for activities that are impractical within the confines of a small apartment, such as repotting houseplants or painting furniture with

odorous substances. Therefore, I consider the requirements outlined in the proposed plan to be appropriate.

Maciej (Mitch) Wiktor Lewandowski

15 I have taken note of Mr. Lewandowski's points, and since his concerns regarding CCZ-S1 (maximum height), CCZ-S4 (minimum height), CCZ-S5 (minimum ground floor height), CCZ-S9 (minimum residential unit size), CCZ-S10 (outdoor living space), and the COC policy are similar to Mr. Stewart's, my response to Mr. Lewandowski would be the same as my response to Mr. Stewart.

16 I have taken note of Mr. Lewandowski's comments regarding the Building Depth CCZ-S12. While I understand that this can be addressed as a design consideration, it is important to clarify that this standard pertains to building depth rather than length. Its maximum limit of 25m is intended to accommodate a double-loaded corridor residential typology. The purpose of this standard is to prevent the development of long buildings (referred to as "sausage buildings") along the side boundaries facing neighbouring sites. Such elongated buildings can have a significant negative impact on the privacy of future residents and neighbouring sites. Therefore, it is more appropriate to have a stricter control in place rather than relying solely on design guidelines.

Eldin Family Trust ID 287 and FS 41

Benjamin Robert Lamason

17 Considering the Visual Simulation provided, I consider 6 stories would be more appropriate, however, if number of buildings within this viewshaft are designed appropriately with a refined and empathetic architecture they can reach 9 floors without undermining the architectural qualities of Parliament buildings.

Onslow Residents Community Association ID 283 & FS 80 and Julie Ward ID 103

Stuart Niven

18 I acknowledge and agree with Mr. Niven's point, as stated in paragraph 15 of his evidence, that achieving density in urban design goes beyond simply increasing building heights.

19 In line with Mr. Niven's point, which I have also emphasized in my previous evidence statements, I agree that increasing building heights, when considered from an urban design perspective and in isolation, does not necessarily result in inappropriate or negative design outcomes.

20 However, I respectfully disagree with Mr. Niven's view regarding the COC policy. This policy aims to promote positive outcomes, including the provision of accessible units. Considering the proximity of the Khandallah Local Centre Zone to transportation routes and hubs, I believe that this suburban center's future development should benefit from such outcomes. It would be problematic to exempt the Khandallah Local Centre Zone from providing diverse, accessible, and sustainable developments, public amenities, and other beneficial outcomes based solely on the historical urban form of the existing buildings, which are subject to significant changes in the near future.

Woolworths NZ ID 359

Kay Panther Knight

21 I have taken note of the points raised by the submitters in paragraphs 55 – 60 of Ms. Knight's evidence. However, I respectfully disagree with their arguments. The existing design of supermarkets and the prevailing status quo have led to significant challenges for urban centres in New Zealand. These supermarkets tend to be bulky, inward-looking structures that underutilize the available sites, often resembling large box-like buildings accompanied by extensive parking areas. As a result, various issues have emerged, including the creation of unsafe environments, particularly in the car park areas during non-operational hours. Additionally, prime sites and land remain underutilized, while the urban landscape is dominated by monolithic, static, and low-quality street frontage.

22 Given these concerns, I maintain my disagreement with the points presented by the submitters, and I believe that higher standards should be implemented in the design of supermarkets.

Restaurant Brands Limited ID 349 and FS 53

Mark Nicholas Arbuthnot

23 I noted the comments made by Mr. Arbuthnot, specifically in paragraph C to F of the executive summary of the submission. I believe minimum building heights significantly

improve and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment, as it can address underutilisation of sites where the highest density is needed, as most centres have great access to transport and other public amenities. Similarly, I do not believe that minimum ground floor height limits flexibility, indeed, it provides for long term flexibility of the building and the ability for the ground floor to be adapted to different uses.

Willis Bond and Company Limited ID 416 and FS 12

Alistair Arthur Aburn

24 I have noted the comments made by Mr. Aburn regarding the architectural design excellence in COC policy. While I do agree that is a great outcome for the city, however, this outcome should not be an incentive, but needs to be applied to all buildings regardless of their height. This needs to be achieved through the Design Guides direction. Also, design “excellence” is a subjective matter and can prolong the process of resource consent and complicate the assessment.

Z Energy Limited ID 361 & FS 33

Sarah Westoby

25 I have taken note of Ms. Westoby's submission, wherein she argues that "design outcomes may need to be influenced by operational and functional requirements". However, I respectfully disagree with this viewpoint. In my opinion, design outcomes should be primarily influenced by their impact on the urban environment rather than solely focusing on operational or functional requirements.

26 Regarding section 9 of the submission, I also disagree with the notion that minimum building height should not be considered. Minimum building height serves as a valuable mechanism to address underutilized sites, especially in areas where high density is crucial and where access to transportation and other public amenities is readily available.

27 In general, Ms. Westoby contends that applying active frontage and non-residential activity frontage controls to existing service station sites, for activities such as accessory buildings, alterations, maintenance or upgrades, replacement buildings, or additions to existing buildings, lacks environmental, economic, social, or cultural benefits. I strongly

disagree with Ms. Westoby's viewpoint as I believe this argument upholds the status quo, which has negative effects on the environment and urban surroundings, hampers development, and diminishes public amenities. These arguments fail to consider the future of our cities and overlook the importance of transitioning towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

Rongotai Investments ID 269 and FS 11

Cameron Peter de Leijer

28 I acknowledge and agree with the point from Mr. de Leijer on the proposed increase of heights in the Rongotai South Mixed-use Zone being 20m.

Wellingtons Character Charitable Trust ID 233 & FS 82

Stuart Niven

29 I have reviewed Mr. Niven's submission and would like to provide brief responses to the three areas of concern outlined below.

30 With regards to the City Outcome Contribution policy, Mr. Niven argues that if something is considered a "public good," it should be required rather than negotiated. While I agree with the sentiment expressed by Mr. Niven, it's important to note that "public goods" presented as incentives in this policy cannot be mandated as they do not fall under significant consideration within the framework of the Resource Management Act (RMA). However, they can be requested as incentives.

31 With regards to the removal of maximum height limit, Mr. Niven suggests that height limits should remain in place to assess the urban design effects of exceeding those limits. I believe that most buildings requiring resource consent in the Central City will already undergo an urban design assessment. Removing the maximum height limit does not eliminate the need for such an assessment. Therefore, I disagree with Mr. Niven's assertion that removing the maximum height limits implies an unrestricted approach. Regardless of a development surpassing the height threshold, other policies, standards, and the Design Guide will still apply to the project.

32 With regards to the point on urban design panel, I agree with Mr. Niven's statements concerning the Urban Design Panel, and we will take his advice into consideration during the establishment of the Wellington Urban Design Panel.

Kāinga Ora Homes and Communities ID 391 & FS 89

Matthew Cecil Heale

33 I have reviewed Mr. Heale's submission and would like to provide the following response:

34 Mr. Heale argues that height is irrelevant to matters required under COC policy. I disagree with this argument as exceeding the height will result in higher yield and profit. Higher yield, density and height would require higher public amenity for current and future residents of the city. And COC policy is directly addressing this need for public amenity or public goods to improve environmental and social wellbeing of the society.

Nicholas James Rae

35 After reviewing Mr. Rae's submission, I would like to provide the following response:

36 In principle, I agree with Mr. Rae's suggestion to expand the geographical areas of the Centre Zones, as stated in his submission's executive summary. Taking a long-term perspective into account, I believe that these extensions will contribute to a better urban environment and a higher level of public amenity for future residents.

37 I agree with Mr. Rae's recommended verandah and active frontage controls, as outlined in Appendix C of his submission.

38 Regarding Mr. Rae's comments on the verandah requirements for Tennyson or Lorne Street, I would like to provide some clarification. The primary purpose of verandahs is to offer protection from the elements, including the strong winds and rain often experienced in Wellington. On the northern side of streets such as Lorne Street, buildings would provide shade, ensuring that the provision of verandahs does not hinder sunlight. However, on the southern side, the ground floor of certain buildings may receive some sunlight, particularly when there are breaks in the urban form. This allows for better-quality street frontage, especially for hospitality operations, as customers can enjoy the sunlight. I strongly believe that at least one side of the street, regardless of its width,

should have a verandah to create a sheltered continuous network for pedestrians to navigate Wellington's unique climatic conditions.

39 I agree that both sides of Wakefield and Taranaki streets should have active frontages.

40 Similar to Mt. Heale, Mr. Rae argues that "many of the outcomes do not relate to the height of a building" in relation to the COC policy. I disagree with this argument, as exceeding the height limit can result in higher yield and profit. Increased yield, density, and height necessitate a higher level of public amenity for current and future residents of the city. The COC policy directly addresses the need for public amenity or public goods to enhance the environmental and social well-being of society.

41 I agree that fences alongside and rear boundaries could reach a height of 2m. Additionally, I concur that allowing 1.8m fences along front boundaries is not appropriate and should not be permitted.

42 I agree with Mr. Rae's statement that an 8m separation between principal living rooms would not be sufficient. However, after assessing the constrained nature of Wellington sites, I have found it to be the least limiting dimension. It is worth noting that this measurement aligns with the Minimum Daylight and Sunlight (MDRS) standards, which require a minimum of 4m of outlook space for each principal living room.

43 I concur with Mr. Rae's suggestion that another valid approach to achieve the desired outcomes of separation between buildings would be to provide outlook space. However, due to the shapes and topography of certain Wellington sites, it may not always be feasible. Moreover, the implementation of an 8m separation can contribute to a more favourable urban form, especially when applied on a neighbourhood scale to form perimeter blocks. In contrast, outlook space does not significantly impact the general urban form of a neighbourhood.

44 In relation to the Building Depth standard, Mr. Rae asserts that this standard fails to address adverse effects. However, I find his argument lacking in justification. Additionally, his comments regarding featureless side walls do not acknowledge that the Draft District Plan models position the side walls facing the side boundaries, rather than the front boundary, which is precisely what this standard aims to address. Therefore, I disagree with

Mr. Rae's statements on this matter. I believe that this standard effectively prevents the development of elongated buildings along the side boundaries, contributes to the relief in urban form, and offers residents enhanced privacy, communal amenities, as well as improved access to daylight and sunlight.

Stride Investment Limited ID 470 and Investore Management Limited ID 405

Cameron Wallace

45 I have carefully reviewed Mr. Wallace's submission and would like to present the following response.

46 I agree with Mr. Wallace's viewpoint regarding the implementation of a 50m height limit in Johnsonville Centre. As I have stated in previous statements, I firmly believe that an increase in height, when accompanied by high-quality design standards and design guides, does not necessarily result in negative outcomes. In fact, taller buildings in and around centres can offer numerous benefits to the public. They allow for higher density and population concentration near transportation hubs and other public amenities, ultimately contributing to a more efficient and convenient urban environment.

47 Regarding the matter of Active Frontage, I share the same perspective as Mr. Wallace, as outlined in paragraph 32 of his submission. I support the adoption of the 90% threshold as it strikes a balance between maintaining high-quality street interfaces and allowing for some flexibility to accommodate special circumstances and specific requirements of each development. This approach ensures that the overall urban environment benefits from active and engaging street frontages while considering the unique needs of different projects.

48 Similarly, I do agree with Mr. Wallace that Active Frontage standard may have height threshold to enable podium / tower typology.

49 With regards to the comments made regarding Building Separation and Depth, I would like to reference my previous statements made in response to Mr. Rae's submission.

50 I have taken into account the arguments put forth by Mr. Wallace regarding the COC Policy, and I respectfully disagree with his assertion that the proposed policy introduces "subjective

numerical scoring" to a subjective design assessment. Firstly, the numerical scoring in most criteria is based on clear rankings, similar to established standards such as Greenstar. Secondly, I have proposed that for criteria that may be less clear, the Council could provide user guidelines to clarify how those criteria are measured. This also has been also recommended by Ms. Stevens. Furthermore, Mr. Wallace argues that the primary effects of over-height buildings are visual and related to off-site amenities. However, visual effects would be assessed irrespective of the COC, and some off-site amenity effects are indeed considered in the development of the policy. It is important to note that the COC is introduced within the context of proposing significant height limit increases across the city, and its outcomes are expected when a development surpasses the already increased maximum height limit. This approach aims to strike a balance between increased yield and profit for individual sites while considering the broader amenities of neighbourhoods and the city.

51 In paragraph 46 of Mr. Wallace's submission, he highlights a contrast in my statements. I would like to clarify that this interpretation is a misinterpretation. My argument that increasing the height limit in isolation does not lead to negative outcomes was made within the context of increasing lower maximum height limits to provide more housing in suitable locations. However, this does not negate the fact that higher density, to be successful and appealing, requires diversity, sustainability, and accessibility, which is precisely what the COC Policy aims to achieve.

52 In paragraph 49, Mr. Wallace expresses concerns regarding the implementation of the COC Policy. I concur that while the specific details relevant to certain outcomes may be finalized during the building consent process, the intention and plan to achieve those outcomes can be conditioned during the resource consent process. This approach is like other standard resource consent conditions, such as the requirement for a landscape plan or a lighting plan. By conditioning the achievement of desired outcomes within the resource consent process, it ensures that the overall objectives of the COC are upheld and incorporated into the development process.

Bus Barn Limited ID 320 and FS 95

Cameron Peter de Leijer

53 I acknowledge and support the rationale presented in Mr. de Leijer's submission, which highlights the feasibility of development with a 40m height limit. Consistent with my previous statements regarding the increase in maximum height limits, particularly in Johnsonville Centre, I agree with the height limit increase in Kilbirnie from an urban design perspective. Kilbirnie, despite its resilience issues, offers favourable conditions for intensification due to its proximity to the central city, local amenities, and natural or recreational facilities.

54 However, I have reservations about increasing the maximum height limits solely based on a unique design example presented in the submission, as this should be evaluated within the broader planning framework. It is crucial to consider the overall context and impact of such height limit increases, rather than implementing them in isolation. Taking a holistic approach will ensure that any changes to height limits align with the wider planning goals and objectives of the area.

Argosy Property No 1 Ltd, Fabric Property Ltd, Oyster Management Ltd and Precinct Properties New Zealand Limited ID 383, 425, 404 & 139 and FS 16

Cameron Wallace

55 Upon reviewing Mr. Wallace's submission, I have addressed the majority of his points in my response to his other submission on behalf of Stride Investment Limited (ID 470) and Investore Management Limited (ID 405).

56 Regarding his comments regarding the increase in maximum height limits in the Waterfront Zone, I concur that a building height of at least 23.1m for the Meridian Building site would not result in any adverse urban design outcomes. This additional height would only allow for the addition of one extra floor beyond the existing structure, and it is my belief that such a modest increase would not have any negative impacts on the overall urban design of the area.

Joe Jeffries

57 Upon reviewing Mr. Jeffries' submission, I have addressed the majority of the concerns raised in my previous responses.

58 In regard to his assessment of the COC policy, Mr. Jeffries argues that the outcomes should be directly related to the effects of height and that over-height buildings should be evaluated based on their individual merits and impacts. While I agree with this perspective, I believe it is important to note that the assessment process for over-height buildings will still take these factors into account. The COC does not undermine the evaluation process; rather, it aims to address the broader social, environmental, and resilience effects that can arise from significantly taller buildings. By incorporating these considerations into the policy, we can mitigate potential negative impacts and promote more sustainable and balanced development.

Grant Alexander Burns (Representing solely **Argosy Property No. 1 Limited** ID 383)

59 After reviewing Mr. Burn's submission, I would like to address some of the concerns raised:

60 In relation to the issue of subjectivity in allocating points for certain outcomes, I acknowledge Mr. Burn's perspective. I agree that there is a need for clarity in certain matters, which can be achieved through the development of a user guidance document or through further refinement within the plan itself. For instance, when it comes to calculating the reduction in carbon footprint, it is worth noting that there have been significant advancements in this scientific field. Organizations like BRANZ have also provided a wide range of tools that can be referenced to facilitate such calculations. By incorporating these new methods and providing clear guidance, we can ensure a more objective and standardized approach to evaluating the desired outcomes outlined in the plan.

Date: 19/06/2023

Name: Farzard Zamani

Position: Te Ngākau Programme Manager

Wellington City Council