

**BEFORE THE**

Waikato Regional Council

IN THE MATTER OF

Healthy Rivers Wai Ora Plan  
Change 1 and Variation 1A

STATEMENT OF  
RACHEL AND JONATHAN BARTON  
Arapito Station Ltd  
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Contact for service

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1. My Full name Rachel Ann Barton

2. I am current Chair of the Waikato Regional Councils Waipa catchment committee, Founding Member of the newly formed King country River care group, Past Waitomo sheep and Beef rep for Federated farmers

3. I am married to Jonathan and we have three teenage children all boarding at schools in Hamilton. Jonathan is a joint owner of Greenplan forestry investment and Greenplan Holdings Ltd.

4. I have a Bachelor of Commerce and Management from Lincoln and recently finished a Post Grad in Agri Commerce from Massey. I am a member of the institute of directors and have held directorship roles in Greenplan forestry investments, GFM and Greenplan holdings Ltd, and currently a director on our family business Arapito station Ltd.

5. Generationally the Barton family have been strong supporters of the Kokako recovery program that was developed at the Mapara Reserve in the Aratoro valley of which we live. We have supported DOC workers, PHD students and Auckland regional Council (ARC) on the research and relocation of some of the kokako to new areas around the country. We have always been supportive of pest control initiatives. We have over 150ha of native bush on our farm and been in discussion with Doc consultants on creating a corridor of natives to help link up and support the movement of Kokako as they glide from area to area.

5. Jo's father John started farming in 1972 after being a rural farm consultant, John, purchased part of Arapito with silent partners of whom he brought out in the 80's, through this time he experienced hard times with interest rates reaching 22%, subsidies coming off and stock prices bottoming out as the European market reduced their importing of NZ Meat, to survive and keep ownership of the family farm that is today, he created Greenplan forestry Investments in 1993. Jo was able to get into farming through leasing the remaining pasture land (250ha) from this parents after purchasing a neighbouring property which we placed 145ha into trees with the view that we would put it back to pasture after harvest - 30yr timeframe, not a 10yr timeframe.

6. Today Jo and I run Arapito Station Ltd a traditional hill country sheep, Beef (550ha) and forestry (800ha) enterprise in the Aratoro Valley and lease a further 200ha all situated in the west coast zone. Our goal has always been to run an economically and environmentally sustainable farming enterprise for future generation to enjoy.

7. While the PC1 doesn't affect us directly at this stage, we are still situated in the Waikato regional council and have concerns on PC1 limitations, potential costs and uncertainty that it creates when you consider it is only for a 10yr timeframe and may continue to be changed in 10 yr intervals over the next 80 yrs.

8. Over the last 26yrs we have seen a lot of change within our rural community through the inclusion of forestry companies coming into the area. Surrounding us two primary schools have closed,(plus two more further out) the amount of school bus runs have been reduced and lengthen in time travelled, when jo went to school, a local school bus would come up our road to get him, that school is now closed and our children had to travel for an hour on



a local school bus to get to primary school from the age 5yrs ( that's after a 15min ride to the bus stop). Services to our gate have stopped, we travel 5km(10km round trip) to get our rural mail which only comes 2 maybe 3 time a week, our landlines are poor as Chorus wont upgrade them and we have no cell phone coverage. Internet is expensive as we can only use satellite which is farmside, power outages are a regular occurrence in the winter months due to trees falling on lines, electricity lines fees are expensive as we are the end of the line we now have to be responsible for maintenance and repair for 8km of power line and water to our managers house has had to be rerun due to the forestry drying it up.

While these things are real to us and we manage them, and some may think it should all be in trees, the Aratoro valley is our slice of paradise it is my children's sanctuary that as teenagers they love to come home to every weekend even when there is limited internet and no cell phone coverage for them to keep in touch with friends. It is there home that they love!! I am highlighting this to make you aware of the effects forestry can have in areas. We are still forestry people, but its effects on community's especially rural ones is real. ,

9. Friends from town love to bring their kids to our place to give them the farming experience and we encourage it, we have families from wellington and Hamilton that have been coming to our place for docking for the past 22years, the fathers still come but there children are all now working, Two years ago we celebrated our 20yr anniversary on them coming down, Jo has 15 mates only two others are farmers the rest are made up of businessman from town that have been coming down for Duckshooting for that past 25yrs, Farms and our traditions need to be valued otherwise they will be lost.

10. Generationally our son would like to farm, and we would like to be in a position to support him if possible. This PC1 creates a lot of uncertainty in regard to where it is heading and how hard it will be to farm with the extra costs involved through fencing, water reticulation and limited land use and uncertainty around rules from regional council getting harder every 10 yrs as they work to achieve their vision and strategy over the 80yr timeframe.

11. We support the concept of the vision and strategy, we just have concerns that it may not be realistic in achieving. We know that we are just the custodians of the land and should look after it for the next generation. We run an extensive system and believe that it's the intensification of land use that is largely the cause of some of the problems. This isn't just isolated to farming, urban areas have the same problem with sewage system that can't support its increased population or too old to support them and needs upgraded as well as lack of housing, which once built, will increase pressure on our countries infrastructure.

I have supporting photos of our farm with unfenced waterways with native bush that we have promoted to regenerate. To go and fence that makes no sense and is costly for little or no benefit.

12. While we appreciate that there is always areas that we can improve on, we feel, like others, if we managed our farming system in a responsible way we shouldn't be penalised or used to help offset others that don't. Hence the reason we support local catchment plans

and farm environmental plans that look at your farming practise and best utilisation of your land use, as all farms are different, and so is there farming system and catchments. Responsible farming practises shouldn't be used to offset others that aren't. Target the areas that need addressing, such as nitrogen- it hasn't been proven to be a big issue in some areas where as sediment is, so create a flexible approach to dealing with these areas of concern don't place more importance on one contaminate over another, treat them the same and deal with the ones that effects that catchment or farming system.

13. Potential Costs for us to implement PC1 if it was to come into effect in our area, are as follows:

Total est cost – \$215,150 - \$221,000

Fencing – Approx 10km fencing est cost \$70,000

Water reticulation – est \$140,000

Farm Consultant – Farm Plan \$5000 -\$10000

NRP reporting – est\$150 -\$1200

Limited flexibility - priceless

Uncertainty.-priceless

Stress/wellbeing.- priceless

Plus under LUC rule.

Cost to replant forestry area 800ha - \$ 2,400,000

There can be arguments/discussion around this – revert to native still pay rates on that land how do you offset that cost as they continue to rise. We have seen that with forestry land rates have still increased in our district – would banks let you borrow on that? – I would think not, as we know Banks don't borrow on forestry land so I can't see them doing it for Native so therefore your asset would be devalued, the List goes on. Farmers don't have guaranteed wages from a Government department, whereas some of these decision makers do. Our incomes and costs are susceptible to Government policy changes such as international trade agreements, Health and safety regulation/compliance costs, environmental, employment law, other influencing factors are market fluctuations both locally and overseas, exchange rates and most importantly the weather of which we cannot control.



14. Finally I feel that central government need to take a step back and have a good look at how regional and district councils function, and stop treating each regional council in isolation, take a holistic view on it and assess whether the system and structure that we have had over the generations is still the best system when you take a closer look at new environmental issues, the way regional councils function at the moment isn't the most effective or efficient way to deal with environmental issues now and for the future, the structure to move forward to address these continually evolving environmental problems. I believe Central Government should create a national standard approach like they have for forestry harvesting and regional councils long term need to restructure the way they do business and start to be situated in the communities, potentially located back out in the provinces with the district councils so they understand the true issues and help educate and support catchments within these regions rather than being centralised and looking at the issues from afar where it doesn't affect them, they need to work closer with the farmers/landowners to solve problems, don't continue to take a back seat approach and create blanket rules that they hope will fix the problem that that area may or may not have. I truly believe that in order to address these areas of concern the central government needs to support the regional/district councils a lot more and that the costs and the blame shouldn't be all on the farmers to fix, which appears to be the trend at the moment, After all the government and MPI have promoted increasing production and export earnings for years, what did they think was going to happen to a small country environmentally when you keep pushing the production banner.

15. Our country is growing in population and so are environmental issues throughout New Zealand, with these added pressures new areas of development need to be explored and supported, and maybe it's time things got relooked at in a better way to help us all move forward as a country in a more economically and environmentally sustainable manner. An example of this is we have a rest area at the top of the main road, the back of this rest area is a native reserve with bush and a stream that runs through it. Lots of people stop there and there is no toilets, so yes, they go into the bush right next to the stream and do their business. That isn't sheep and cattle affecting that waterway. Its increased population, tourism and people moving around a lot more, But the farms on either side of that rest area will get blamed by the regional or district council for the waterway being high in some contaminant, and our district council will not see it as a priority when looking at allocating limited funds to the district plan and there LTP.

Conclusion: I would like to thank you for your time and consideration in listening to our views, and I hope that you will come up with better solutions after considering everyone's views on the PC1, that will be more practical in approach such as catchment plans/groups and individual farm environment plans that are not as costly to farmers, communities and regions as this current plan change wishes to impose.

Once again thank you for your time.



























