

UNDER

the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER

of an application by Panuku Development
Auckland Limited for upgrades to the eastern
cruise ship berth at Queens Wharf in downtown
Auckland.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NOELENE BUCKLAND, CITY CENTRE RESIDENTS GROUP
25 February 2019

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Noelene Buckland and I am an Auckland city centre resident.
2. My background covers 25 years in local government including roles as an elected member, various elected member appointments, senior manager/acting CEO, project management, relationship management and contracting. My primary interest is in Placemaking, the public realm, facilities and amenities.
3. I have Master's degree in Public Sector Management, am an Associate of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand and a NZ Justice of the Peace.
4. My current roles include a city centre Body Corporate Chair, Chair of the City Centre Residents' Group (CCRG), a member of the City Centre Master Plan reference group, the AM36 CLG and the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (ACCAB).
5. Today I am speaking on behalf of the Auckland City Centre Residents' Group (**CCRG**). The Auckland City Centre Residents Group are co-submitters with Urban Auckland and others¹ and have adopted the evidence and legal submissions of Urban Auckland.

SUBMITTER DIFFICULTIES

6. Before I start on my presentation, I would like to comment on how challenging it is for those parties who do not have access to unlimited ratepayer funding to contribute on an equal footing in a resource consent application and hearing such as this. While we may have access to some legal advice, and other professionals who volunteer their time, it still leaves a huge gap in what is possible.
7. On that basis, and recognising the experience and skills of the hearing panel before us, my presentation will focus on the impacts we believe this proposal will have in a real world situation. My input to this conversation will focus on the work that is being done now to create a world class city for the people who live and work here and for the many visitors that will want

¹ Auckland Architecture Association Inc, Auckland City Centre Residents' Group Inc, Character Coalition Inc, Civic Trust Auckland Inc, Devonport Heritage, 2017 Inc, Parnell Community Committee Inc & Stop Stealing our Harbour Inc.

to come here because of this work. Our key message is that getting it right comes before getting it done. Nobody has ever built a world class city on cheap, quick temporary fixes.

AUCKLAND CITY CENTRE RESIDENTS GROUP

8. The Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (**ACCAB**) has a Placemaking role that supports councils' statutory purpose of –

'enabling democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.'

9. The CCRG works with Heart of the City and the Karangahape Road Business Association, and others, on Placemaking and economic development projects in the city centre and particularly those projects funded from the City Centre Targeted Rate. In fact around \$130M of funding has been allocated to the downtown area for local infrastructure and public space improvements from that rate, plus the sale proceeds of other public space.

10. The CCRG actively supports economic development including cruise/tourism, public transport and great public spaces. To refer to public spaces as something that sits isolated from other activities, or is unimportant because it is not overcrowded, undersell its value to a city. In the word of the famous Danish Architect, Jan Gehl – first life, then spaces, then buildings – the other way around never works".

We describe great public spaces as -

'the identifiers of cities; the places we all want to visit, photograph, explore, share and remember'.

11. Public spaces, in all their forms, contribute hugely to economic development and we know this from the recent Auckland Council 2017 report on the 'Business Case for Walking' which demonstrated that by pedestrians literally putting their best foot forward, by having walkability front and centre in transportation, is not only good for transportation, health and social

cohesion but makes total economic sense. This in turn justifies ongoing investment in enhancing walkability as a key tool to deliver liveable, vibrant, economically flourishing cities.

12. Quite public spaces are even more valuable. The Quiet Revolution state that urban quiet areas are vital to public health quoting the World Health Organisation that noise from road traffic is the second most harmful environmental stressor affecting human health after air pollution. In Europe 125 million people are affected by noise pollution every year. The detrimental effects of noise arise mainly from the stress reaction it causes in the human body and that addressing noise pollution is therefore imperative.
13. The Boffa Miskell report of the same year 'The Value of the Urban Realm Toolkit for Auckland' is also instructive and the following quote from page 25 of that report tells the story -

*By being very clear that the value of public realm is to users, the VURT tool, and the PERS evaluation that underpins it, helps to refocus assessors of streetscape quality on the attributes that matter to how people use public realm, rather than on how public realm is designed. To date in Auckland, there has arguably been an over-emphasis on design quality - the quality of design detailing and materials for example - **without an explicit acknowledgement and framework that says it is how all these things come together to benefit the user, that is what matters and is where the value of investing in public realm lies.***

14. As with business, people also have different needs for different spaces and at different times. Sometimes they just need a quiet space to sit, watch, relax and reflect which is exactly what the northern end of Queens Wharf provides. It does not need activating, it does not need noise, it does not need promoting – all it needs is proper connections i.e. streetscapes, so that the users of the various areas can find their way around Queens Wharf in a coherent manner and to coherent spaces i.e. the reason why people want to go there.
15. On Queens Wharf, that is currently not the case because the Cloud, which was developed to be a temporary facility for the 2011 RWC, was designed for a short life and should have already been removed. However with the decision to keep the facility until after the AM36 event that timeline has changed but that does not change the intention of creating a great public space as a logical extension of arguably the most important street in New Zealand i.e. **how these things come together to benefit the user.**

16. We need also to be mindful that once the City Rail Link and Light Rail on Queens Street is completed, the footfall in the space around the Queens wharf precinct will increase dramatically as will the need for more ferries and recreational open space on Queens wharf. As an example, work is underway now on a trial to pedestrianize the lower end of Queen Street with buses using the two centre lanes as though they were Light Rail – the learning from this will assist with the final designs and the full pedestrianizing of Queen Street.
17. We also need to take into account the 150,000 predicted population growth in the city centre within twenty years, confirming that the need for more and better ferry facilities and public open space in the prime waterfront area is the highest priority. On top of that is likely to be an even larger increase in workers and visitors so the idea that Auckland can ‘wait’ 35 years for better pedestrian/people facilities on Queens wharf is a fallacy – work is underway now and the wharf has to be an integral part of those plans.
18. This is why the current publicly approved Placemaking plans (CCMP/Waterfront Plan) for the city centre provides for Queens wharf to be a shared property where major public space, cruise/events and ferries can be accommodated in the same area. That is also why the people of Auckland have supported the repurposing of Shed 10 as a cruise ship venue so that the heritage value of Queens’ wharf is maintained – albeit in a different form and place.
19. A 90m extension into the harbour, for an unconfirmed length of time, would negatively alter the ecosystem of that shared space for both people and communities, and have a more than minor impact on the amenity values together with the social, economic, aesthetic and cultural aspects of the Queens’ wharf precinct. This is due to the overwhelming scale of the large cruise ships that the dolphins are designed to accommodate. When referring to amenity values, I am referring to the definition in the Resource Management Act 1991 as ‘those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes’.
20. In November 2017 the NZ Herald reports the Chair of Councils planning committee as commenting that the proposed mooring dolphins constituted ‘Ocean Sprawl’. “The Waitemata is owned by all of us and we all have to stand up collectively and defend ocean sprawl on the harbour. There are small towns arriving and they have phenomenal environmental impact” – we can only concur.

21. Rather than an open, light, welcoming spot to relax in and enjoy the pleasantness of water vistas in a quiet reflective location, the proposed extension to accommodate oversized cruise ships will result in users of the public space on the north and eastern edges of Queens wharf being dwarfed by a massive wall of steel and glass that blocks all views to the east and north east and leaves them sitting in a dark, shaded space – especially during morning hours. The scale, intensity and proximity of the vessel, will also be intimidating with noise, air and traffic pollution an additional unknown factor.
22. A recent trial of buses along the western side of Queens wharf to pick up cruise ship passengers and then exit through the centre of the wharf suggests wall to wall buses for hours at a time. Assuming something like 46 passengers per bus and some 4,000 cruise ship passengers/crew disembarking something in the vicinity of 90+ buses will turn the public spaces on that wharf into a bus motorway. Even if 1,000 passengers choose to use taxis, some 65 buses will still be needed. The CCRG believe that there is no demonstrated need for these buses at all. Auckland Transport are proposing new ferry berths on the western side of Queens wharf for its full length and ferry passengers will be required to walk the entire distance from Quay Street – if this is good enough for locals it must be good enough for visitors.
23. The construction of those new ferry facilities will also mean that the traditional ‘spare’ cruise ship space will disappear leaving just two cruise berths in Auckland. In the event that three vessels are in Auckland at the same time, which occurs quite frequently, another location still has to be found for one of them so we end up in exactly the same situation we are in currently.
24. Further, the proposed new public space on Quay Street, i.e. a 4,000m² extension into the ferry basin between Princes and Queens wharf, not only removes ferry space now, and in the future, the council planners report indicates that it will also reduce the available space on Princes wharf, thus limiting berthing capacity at that wharf to cruise ships of a maximum length of 294m. It is quite difficult to calculate from the various images provided thus far but assuming these calculations are correct, I can only describe this situation as farcical.
25. We also do not understand why the application for the mooring dolphins is referenced in many of the papers as an “upgrade” when in fact it is an extension to an existing structure. The RMA does not have a definition of ‘upgrade’ but the Cambridge English dictionary describes it as – ‘to improve the quality or usefulness of something’ and the Oxford dictionary uses ‘to raise

(something) to a higher standard'. Clearly something must already exist in order to have an upgrade and mooring dolphins have never been a part of the existing heritage structure on Queens' wharf so it is impossible to upgrade. There is a huge difference between changing the use capacity of a structure and changing the structure itself – in this case, one is an upgrade and the other an extension.

26. This RC application is not about an 'upgrade', or the value of cruise ships to Auckland, or even how well the current arrangements may, or may not, work. Neither is it about how many people use the wharf for recreational purposes. This application has more to do with how POAL can find the easiest and cheapest option of providing berthage to the very large cruise ships visiting Auckland without having to do anything themselves.
27. The facts are that the New Zealand government and Auckland Council are the only parties who have contributed to the provision of facilities for the cruise industry in Auckland over the past twenty years. It is taxpayers and ratepayers who spent \$40M buying Queens wharf off POAL for cruise, events and public space. The current operational challenges with Princes wharf stems from an earlier POAL decision to sell the lease on that wharf to a property developer and thus they now have little control over the use of facilities needed for cruise visits. As far as we are aware, no investment has been made by the cruise industry in cruise infrastructure in Auckland.
28. If we get it right, we can create a wonderful place on Queens' wharf that every cruise ship passenger will want to visit, just as they do in many other cities. The social, economic, aesthetic and cultural benefits of great public spaces are well known and referenced earlier with examples such as the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House, St Pauls Cathedral, the Sagrada Familia and being the primary drivers of tourism. Cruise infrastructure is quite variable across the globe with larger ships often berthed in industrial areas of ports, or in the harbour, as they currently do in Auckland but still people still get off those ships and head straight for these national icons of their culture.
29. We also know from a 2015 Buzz Channel Public Spaces survey in Auckland that the most preferred option within the environment category was for spaces that allowed people to sit, relax and admire the harbour views and trees and green spaces without any physical barrier between them and the water. In the community, arts, culture and heritage category the

preferred options was something that reflected the maritime history of Auckland and retained the industrial character of heritage sites. Where else could this be but on Queens Wharf.

30. Cruise ships have not suddenly got bigger – they have been getting larger, more frequent and more popular for the past fifteen years and POAL must be aware of this because other Ports all around the world are.
31. Their own website states that - *We are a vital tourism hub and handle around 100 cruise ships annually. Each cruise visit benefits the local economy by about \$1.5 million and adds to the vitality of Auckland. Ports of Auckland supports the cruise industry through the provision of berthage, marine and logistics services on the Waitematā Harbour.*
32. POAL has, or has access to, a wide range of experts, including Panuku, and we heard from some of them during this hearing. Clearly they have the capacity to understand the business they are in and to manage it appropriately. The primary message from their experts was that the cruise ship industry is so valuable to Auckland that immediate steps have to be made to accommodate the larger vessels now. Our only advice to POAL is to get on with implementing Auckland Councils' Central Wharves strate - enough time and money has been wasted already!
33. It is only a few short years since the government, the Mayor and Council told us there would be no more extensions into the harbour and that undertaking has to be upheld.
34. The publicly approved City Centre Master Plan and Waterfront Plan make no mention of the extension from the end of Queens wharf, and the integrity of those plans, along with the consultation process that led to them, needs to be upheld. We do note at this point, that the 23 November 2017 Council meeting agenda, did not include the item on the mooring dolphins because the officer reports were not ready at the time the agenda was distributed. Our elected members were faced with a 100 page addendum report being presented to them on the day of the meeting, along with many other agenda items, so not an ideal environment for major Placemaking decisions about our harbour, waterfront and city centre.
35. The people of Auckland are the only people who should be approving long term plans for their city and waterfront and those rights, and access to process, must be upheld.

36. The remaining vestiges of heritage around Queens wharf, the ferry terminal and associated buildings, together with the Admiralty Steps, are essential aspect of our city heritage and it is important that these are protected for future generations.
37. Queens is the last wharf available in Auckland that can accommodate the Placemaking initiatives the people of Auckland have said they want on their waterfront.
38. The CCRG reminds POAL of the vision statement they have on their website. .

Our vision is 'Working for Auckland, Kia Kaha, Kia Maia'.

Kia Kaha, Kia Maia translates as 'give of your best, be confident in your ability'.

This reflects our commitment and contribution to our community and economy.

Our values underpin how we deal with each other and how we make decisions.

39. In the spirit of this statement, the CCRG would like to see a clear demonstration of that commitment from POAL to the cruise ship community, along with the associated contribution to our economy, because the only solution to the current cruise ship challenges in Auckland sits with them through the early implementation of Councils central wharves strategy.
40. Anything else is the wrong solution, to the wrong problem, at the wrong time and in the wrong place – the people of Auckland deserve better than that.
41. We support the Council planner's assessment of this application and respectfully request that consent be refused.

25 February 2019