

**BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL FOR TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of a submission by Contact Energy Limited on Proposed Plan Change 43 to the Taupō District Plan relating to the Taupō Industrial Environments

---

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MARK BULPITT CHRISP**

**ON BEHALF OF CONTACT ENERGY LIMITED**

**PLANNING**

**9 AUGUST 2023**

---

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1 My full name is **Mark Bulpitt Chrisp**. I am a Partner and a Principal Planner in the Hamilton Office of Mitchell Daysh Limited, a company which commenced operations on 1 October 2016 following a merger of Mitchell Partnerships Ltd and Environmental Management Services Ltd (of which I was a founding Director when the company was established in 1994 and remained so until the merger in 2016).
- 2 My evidence is given on behalf of Contact Energy Limited (**Contact**) in relation to Proposed Plan Change 43 (**PC43**) to the Taupō District Plan (**TDP**) relating to the Taupō Industrial Environments.
- 3 I have the following qualifications and experience relevant to the evidence I shall give:
  - a. I have a Master of Social Sciences degree in Resources and Environmental Planning from the University of Waikato (conferred in 1990) and have more than 33 years' experience as a Resource Management Planning Consultant;
  - b. I am a Certified Commissioner under the Ministry for the Environment's 'Making Good Decisions' course;
  - c. In addition to my professional practice, I am an Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning at the University of Waikato. I am also the Chairman of the Environmental Planning Advisory Board at the University of Waikato, which assists the Environmental Planning Programme in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in understanding the educational, professional and research needs of planners;
  - d. I have appeared as an Expert Planning Witness in numerous Council and Environment Court hearings, as well as several Boards of Inquiry (most recently as the Expert Planning Witness for the Hawke's Bay Regional Investment Company Ltd's proposed Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme);
  - e. I appeared as an Expert Planning Witness in the Board of Inquiry hearings that led to the granting of the resource consents for the

construction and operation of Te Mihi Power Station and the Tauhara Power Station (and associated steamfield activities);

- f. Environmental issues associated with the development, expansion, and on-going operation of industrial activities, particularly within the energy sector, is one of my specialties. I have been a planning advisor for the following industrial / energy projects over the last three decades:
- i. Wairākei Binary Plant (1994 – 1998);
  - ii. Te Rapa Dairy Factory Expansion and Co-generation Power Plant (1996 – 1997);
  - iii. Ohaaki Geothermal Power Plant Re-consenting (1998 – 1999);
  - iv. Tauhara I Geothermal Power Development (now called Te Huka Power Station) (1999 – 2000);
  - v. Tongariro Power Scheme Re-consenting – advising the Waikato Regional Council (2000 – 2002);
  - vi. Wairākei Geothermal Power Plant Re-consenting (1999 – 2007);
  - vii. Resource consents for exploratory drilling on the Wairākei - Tauhara Geothermal System (2007);
  - viii. Resource consents for the Te Mihi Geothermal Power Station (2008);
  - ix. Resource consents for the Tauhara II Geothermal Project (2010);
  - x. Resource consents for the ongoing operation of the Ohaaki Geothermal Power Plant (2013); and
  - xi. Resource consents for the ongoing operation of the Wairākei Geothermal Power Scheme (referred to as GeoFuture) (2019 – 2022).

- 4 I am very familiar with the Taupō District. I have worked for Contact and other clients within the Taupō District over the last 30+ years. Through this work I also have considerable experience with the TDP and other statutory documentation relating to the management of natural and physical resources within the Taupō District.
- 5 In relation to statutory planning matters, I have been an advisor to Contact in relation to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement, the Waikato Regional Plan, and the TDP as they have evolved over the last three decades. This has included, in particular, the formulation of planning provisions relating to the management of geothermal resources and associated uses of those resources in the Waikato Region and the Taupō District.
- 6 I am a member of the:
  - a. New Zealand Planning Institute (Full Member) (NZPI);
  - b. New Zealand Geothermal Association; and
  - c. Resource Management Law Association.
- 7 I confirm that I have read the 'Code of Conduct' for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. My evidence has been prepared in compliance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my area of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 8 In preparing my evidence, I have:
  - a. Reviewed the notified version of PC43;
  - b. Prepared the submission on PC43 by Contact;
  - c. Participated in meetings with TDC planning personnel in relation to the issues raised in Contact's submission;
  - d. Reviewed the Overarching s.42A report prepared by Ms Hilary Samuel on behalf of TDC covering Plan Changes 38 - 43; and

- e. Reviewed the s.42A report prepared by Mr Matt Bonis on behalf of TDC specifically relating to PC43.

## SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 9 PC43 seeks to rezone two areas from Rural Environment to Taupō Industrial Environment, referred to as Areas 4 and 7.
- 10 The purpose of my evidence is to provide the planning rationale for the outcomes sought by Contact in its submission on PC43. My evidence will only briefly discuss Area 7 on the basis that the s.42A report recommends that Contact’s submission be accepted. The primary focus of my evidence relates to Area 4 in relation to which the s.42A report recommends that Contact’s submission be rejected.

## AREA 7 - NAPIER ROAD AREA

- 11 In its submission, Contact supported the proposed rezoning of the 3.5 hectare block of land on the corner of Napier Road and the East Taupō Arterial (**ETA**) to Taupō Industrial Environment (referred to as Area 7) as shown on the plan below.

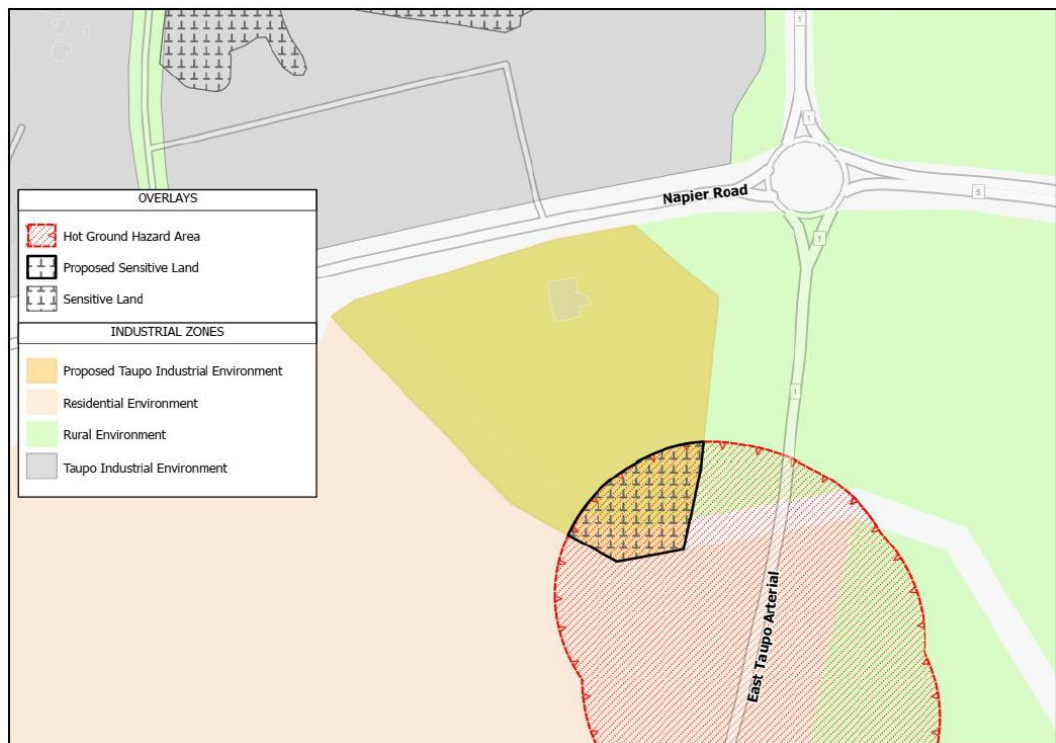
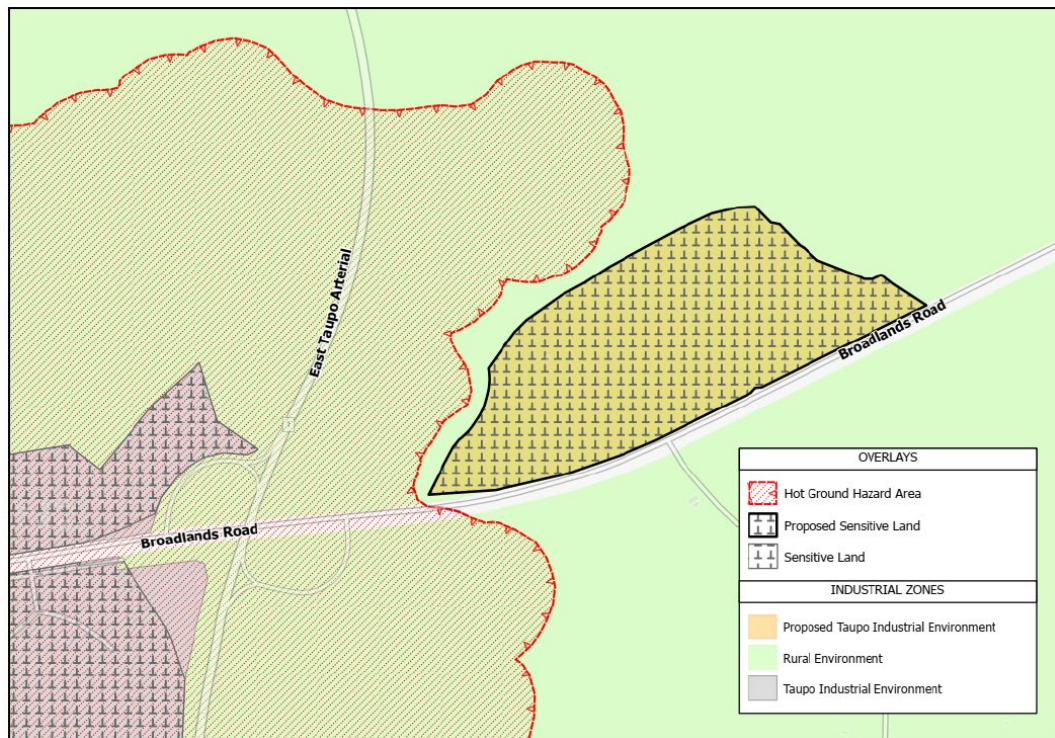


Figure 1 – Proposed Rezoning of Area 7

- 12 The current Rural Environment zoning of this land on the Taupō township side of the ETA is somewhat of an historical anomaly. An industrial zoning of this site is compatible with the surrounding environment including the land on the opposite side of Napier Road and Contact's Tauhara Geothermal Development Consent Area on the opposite side of the ETA (see **Annexure 1**).
- 13 Contact seeks that Taupō District Council adopt PC43 as notified insofar as it relates to Area 7, i.e. rezone it to Taupō Industrial Environment. The s.42A report recommends that Contact's submission be accepted. I agree with that recommendation.

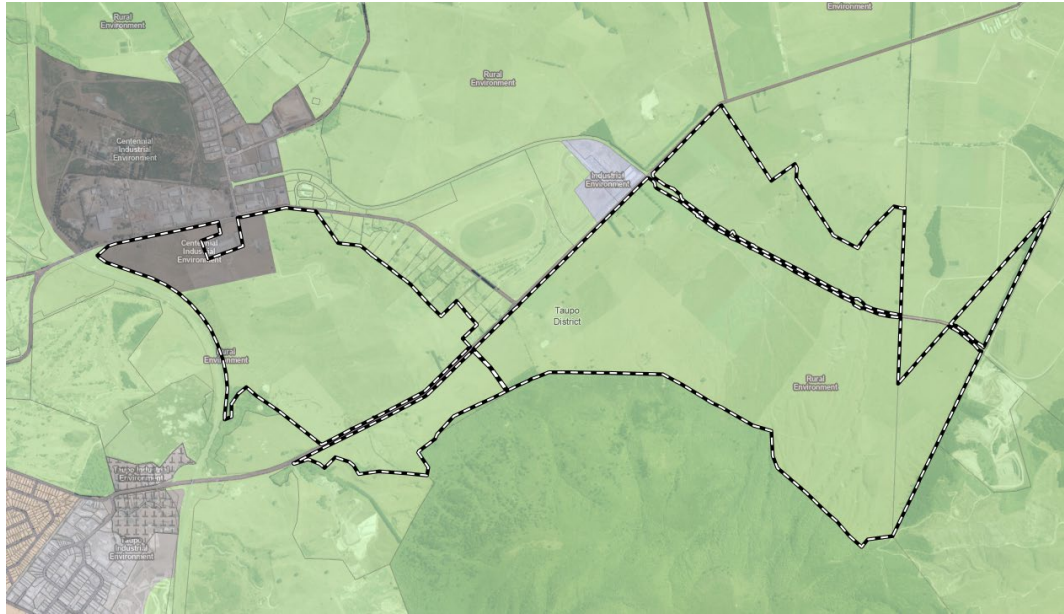
**AREA 4 – BROADLANDS ROAD AREA**

- 14 The second area proposed to be rezoned as Taupō Industrial Environment as part of PC43 is on Broadlands Road to the east of the ETA as shown on the following plan.



**Figure 2 – Proposed Rezoning of Area 4**

- 15 The eastern half (approximately) of this area is land owned by Contact which forms part of larger Record of Title comprising 764.24 hectares as shown on the following plan.



**Figure 3 – Contact’s Landholding on Broadlands Road**

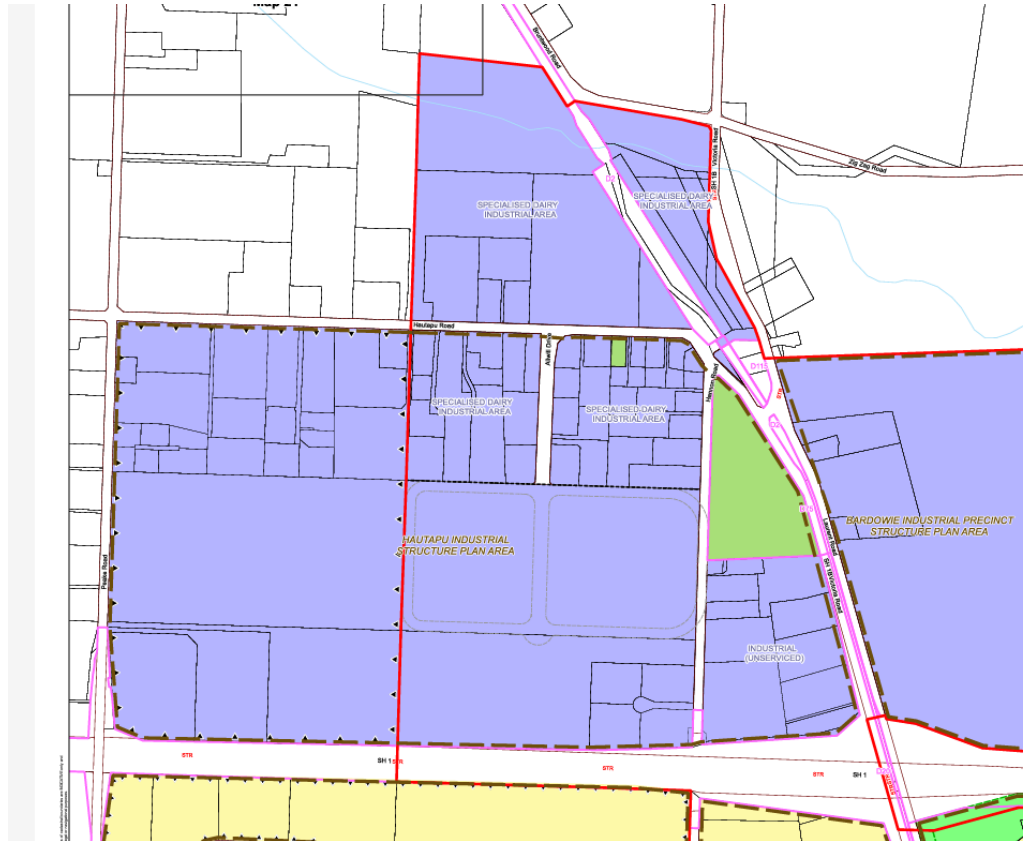
16 In his evidence, Mr Heath explains that:

“The purpose of the rezoning is to provide Taupō district with further zoned industrial land supply to assist in meeting forecast demand in the long term (30 year), as well as provide for a variety of sites suitable for different business sectors (industrial and trade) in terms of location and site size within the district.”

17 The purpose of the proposed rezoning is understood, and I fully support Council ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of industrially zoned land in the Taupō District. However, the rezoning of the part of Area 4 owned by Contact will not assist in meeting the forecast demand. That is because, as noted in Contact’s submission and the evidence of Mr Williams, Contact has no intention to develop (or allow others to develop) this part of its property for industrial purposes (at least in the foreseeable future). The rezoning this land is likely to create false expectations and the outcome will not assist Taupō District Council meet its obligations under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

18 On the basis of the above, Contact seeks that its land on Broadlands Road not be rezoned to Taupō Industrial Environment and instead retain the current Rural Environment zoning.

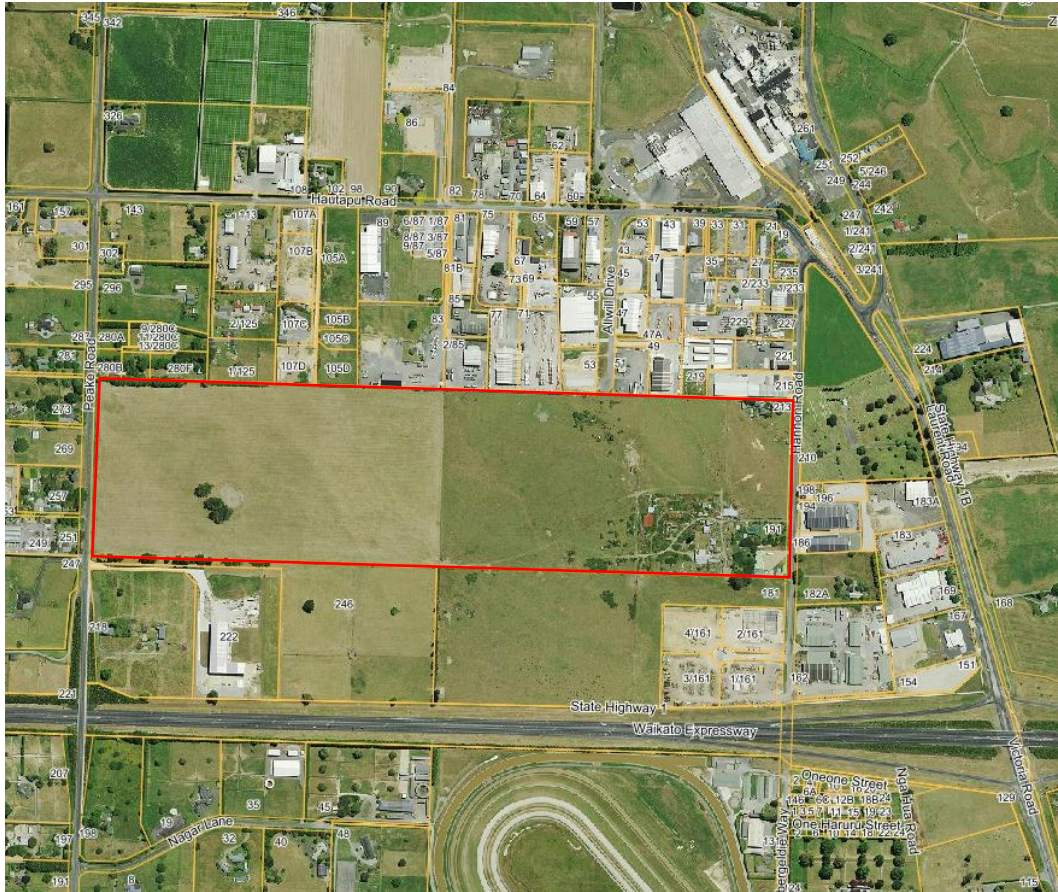
19 Mr Heath and I are involved in Plan Change 17 to the Waipā District Plan (PC17) in relation to the rezoning of land for industrial purposes at Hautapu, north of Cambridge. The following is the planning map relating to the Hautapu Industrial Area.



**Figure 4 – Hautapu Industrial Area – Zone Map**

20 Waipā District Council is having to rezone additional land (by way of PC17) to meet the demand for industrial land because, despite being zoned Industrial Zone for well over a decade, the owner of the largest piece of land (shown on Figure 5 below) has refused to make his land available for industrial development.





**Figure 5 – Hautapu Industrial Land Not Developed**

- 21 It would be unfortunate, and serve no purpose, if the same type of situation occurred in the Taupō District. A better outcome, in my opinion, would be for TDC to identify, as a result of consultation with landowners, areas that are both appropriately located for industrial development and where the relevant landowner(s) is/are willing to make their land available for industrial development. Only in those circumstances will demand actually be met.
- 22 Attached as **Appendix 1** is an evaluation of the proposed rezoning (as proposed by PC43) in relation to s.32AA of the RMA. The key conclusions of that analysis are that:
- a) The proposed rezoning of Contact's land will not meet the objective, which as stated by Mr Heath, is to assist in meeting forecast demand in the long term (30 year).
  - b) It is inefficient to rezone land for a purpose that the landowner has confirmed will not occur. The inefficiency arises because there will be an insufficient supply of industrial land and, like PC17 in the Waipā

District, additional plan change processes need to be embarked upon (at great expense) to rezone alternative areas.

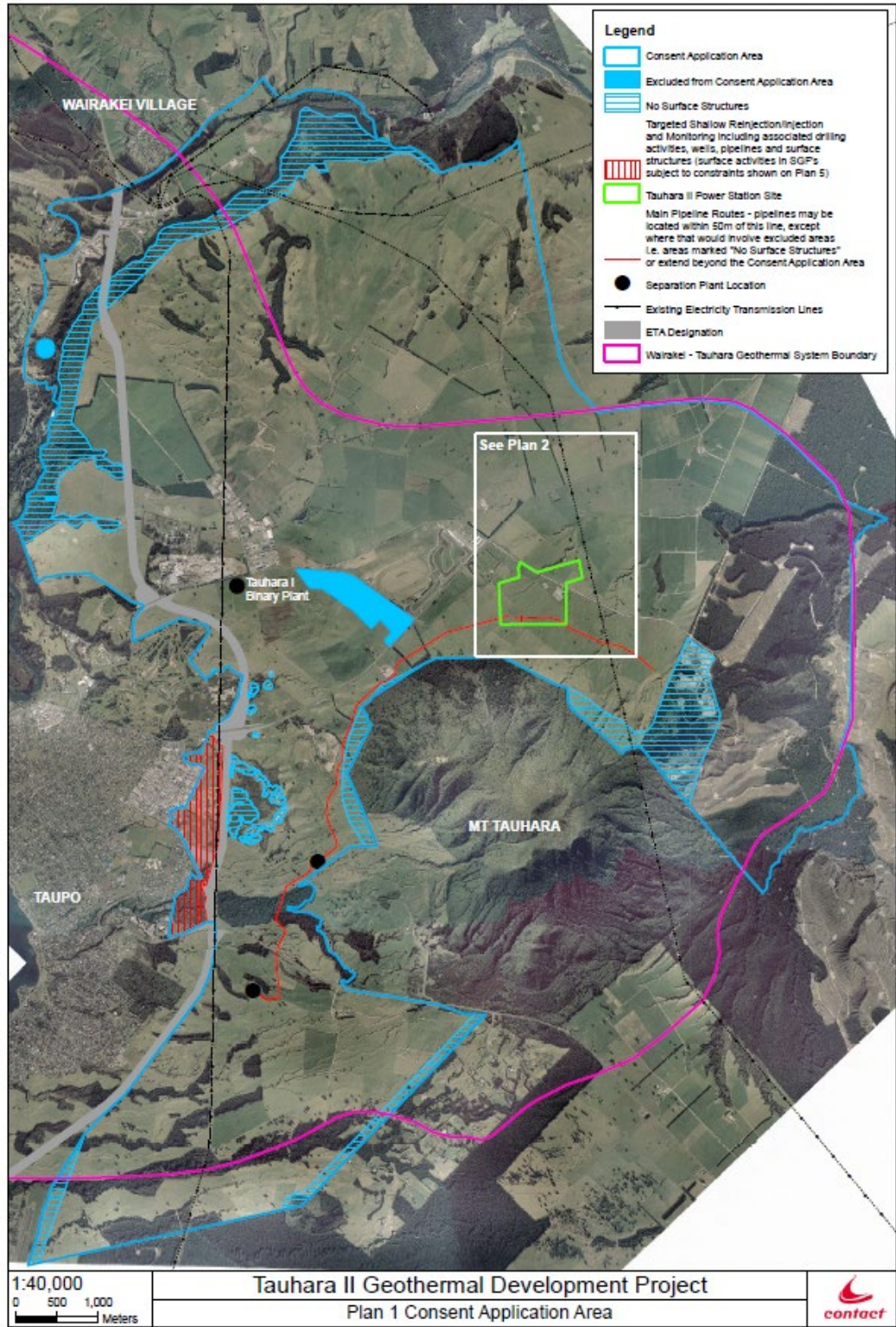
- c) Given the 30-year timeframe, there will be new iterations of the TDP produced over that timeframe, including potentially as a result of the Natural and Built Environment Bill being enacted.

## **CONCLUSION**

23 In conclusion, in my opinion, based on the above:

- Area 7 should be rezoned from Rural Zone to Taupō Industrial Environment; and
- The part of Area 4 owned by Contact Energy should not be rezoned to Taupō Industrial Environment and instead retain the current Rural Environment zoning.

# Annexure 1: Contact's Tauhara Geothermal Development Consent Area



## **Appendix A – Section 32AA Evaluation of Changes Sought by Contact**

In accordance with paragraph 8 of Minute 5, the following provides an evaluation of the changes sought by Contact in accordance with s.32AA of the RMA.

### ***Whether the amended objectives are the best way to achieve the purpose of the RMA.***

The proposed rezoning of Contact's land will not meet the objective, which as stated by Mr Heath, is to assist in meeting forecast demand in the long term (30 year). On that basis alone, the proposed rezoning is not the best way to achieve the purpose of the RMA (and PC43 in particular).

### ***The reasonably practicable options for achieving those objectives.***

A better way to achieve the objective, is for TDC to identify, as a result of consultation with landowners, areas that are both appropriately located for industrial development and where the relevant landowner(s) is/are willing to make their land available for industrial development. Only in those circumstances will demand actually be met.

### ***The environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits and costs of the amended provisions.***

#### ***The efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions for achieving the objectives.***

It is inefficient and ineffective to rezone land for a purpose that the landowner has confirmed will not occur. The inefficiency arises because there will be an insufficient supply of industrial land and, like PC17 in the Waipā District, additional plan change processes need to be embarked upon (at great expense) to rezone alternative areas.

Given the 30-year timeframe, there will be new iterations of the TDP produced over that timeframe, including potentially as a result of the Natural and Built Environment Bill being enacted.

### ***The risk of acting or not acting where there is uncertain or insufficient information about the provisions.***

The risk of acting in the manner proposed is that false expectations will arise and there will be insufficient industrially zoned land to meet demand.

## Appendix B – Strike-through of Changes Sought by Contact

In accordance with paragraph 8 of Minute 5, the following sets out a strike-through of the changes sought by Contact.

