

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS**

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

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**      **OF**                                      Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1:  
Waikato and Waipa River Catchment

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**HEARING STATEMENT OF LEIGH HAWKINS  
FOR NEW ZEALAND THROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION, WENTWOOD  
GRANGE, WINDSOR PARK & ORS  
DATE 23 APRIL 2019  
SUBMITTERS 72503, 73067, 73095, 82030, 81968, 81978, 81976**

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New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders' Association  
9 Anzac Street  
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New Zealand

## **Introduction**

1. My full name is Leigh Hawkins
2. I hold a Bachelor in Management Studies from Waikato University and am a Chartered Accountant.
3. I have been the Business Manager for Windsor Park Stud for over 15 years and am a part owner of Wentwood Grange Stud.
4. Windsor Park Stud is 365 hectares and located in the Priority 1 subcatchment of Mangawhero. Wentwood Grange stud is 210 hectares and located in the Priority 3 Subcatchment of Waikato at the Narrows.
5. I spent 6 years as a Committee Member of the Cambridge Jockey Club, the largest training establishment in the Country
6. Windsor Park has been NZ Breeder of the year 4 times and Wentwood Grange are 2 time finalists.

## **Scope of Statement**

7. I will provide information from my experience in the thoroughbred industry on horse property management.

## **Equine Property Management**

1. Firstly, it is important to differentiate the different type of equine operations. In the racing sector horse studs (breeding operations) and agistment (spelling) businesses operate quite differently from that undertaking horse breaking, pre-trainers and training operations.
2. Currently in New Zealand training operations are the greatest in number, then agistment properties with horse studs being the least in number. However, horse studs as a general rule are larger in area than training properties, and will make up a larger proportion of equine land area in the PC1 catchment.
3. The horse studs primary objective is to produce an athlete. Horses are not a production animal.
4. Part of a horse studs roles is to provide an agistment service for outside mares that come to be bred. The property therefore needs to be
  - a. Presentable to clients
  - b. Ensure the horses are kept in nice surroundings with fresh pasture and lots of space
  - c. The property is well fenced for safety reasons
5. The cost of agistment for a broodmare is around \$6,000 per year in the Waikato and can be twice that for a young horse. Owners therefore demand that their horses are treated to the highest of standards. Horses need to be kept in clean paddocks free of weeds, owners don't like to see their horses up to their knees in mud or with access to waterways or drains.

6. The horse industry is seasonal. All horses bred in the Southern Hemisphere have their birthdays on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and breeding of thoroughbreds is undertaken to try and ensure the foal is born as close to 1<sup>st</sup> August as possible. However, for a foal to be registered as a thoroughbred it cannot be mated before the 1<sup>st</sup> of September the gestation period for horses being 340 days.
7. All thoroughbred horses are required to be bred naturally. Also, the value of thoroughbred foals bred for racing means that the foaling must be supervised to ensure a healthy foal is born and the wellbeing of the mare. These two factors lead to high horse movements during the season to get mares to the stud of the selected sire and the required foaling services.
8. Management of paddocks include regular harrowing to spread the horse dung around for quicker breakdown and topping for pasture maintenance.
9. No or very little nitrogen fertiliser is used as we don't want grass to grow fast as this creates growth issues in young animals and can cause colic (intestinal issues) in older horses.
10. I have also found that pastures of horse properties tend to be clover dense.
11. We do put on fertiliser for trace elements when needed and advised by regular soil tests.
12. Robust fencing is needed to keep horses away from hazards, as they are high value athletes and need to keep them safe from injury is a top priority. This means waterways will be fenced off where horses have access.
13. None of our decision making is driven towards producing high production pasture, that is not a concern for us. What is of primary importance is allowing a horse to grow as naturally as possible with a minimum of stress as possible.

**Dated:** 23 April 2019

**Leigh Hawkins**

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