STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ELI PARKIN

Introduction

1. My full name is Eli Parkin. I am the Development Manager for Oceania Healthcare Limited, a role I have held since August 2010. My responsibilities at Oceania include overseeing all new developments through the planning, design and construction stages.

2. I have over 15 years experience in the property and construction industry. Previously, I have worked as a property and construction consultant with a background in large commercial, institutional and hospitality projects. I have overseen building projects for clients such as the Ministry of Justice, Brookfield Multiplex and The Langham Hotels.

3. I have a tertiary qualification in Construction Management (Bachelor in Construction, Construction Management, Unitech).

Scope of evidence

4. My evidence will address Oceania's proposal for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Melrose Retirement Village at 159 Waihi Road, Tauranga ("Proposal"). In particular, I will provide the following:

(a) An introduction to Oceania as an aged care operator, and its philosophy of care;

(b) An overview of the demand for services, including the responsibility of aged care operators such as Oceania to provide facilities;
(c) A description of the Proposal;

(d) An explanation of the consultation that Oceania has undertaken with neighbours and how Oceania has taken into account and incorporated their responses in the design of the Proposal; and

(e) A response to matters raised in the submissions received by the Council.

5. I have read the Council Officer's section 42A report.

6. I am authorised to present this evidence on behalf of Oceania.

Oceania - introduction to the company

7. Oceania was formed in 2008 through a merger between the former ElderCare and Qualcare, both of which had been operating in the retirement care industry since the 1980s.

8. Oceania is one of New Zealand's largest owners and operators of residential care facilities with 49 locations across the country, including 24 retirement villages. Oceania provides 3,020 care rooms and offers 1,008 independent living villas and apartments, and directly employs over 3,000 staff.

9. Oceania’s Executive Team is on the board of both the New Zealand Aged Care Association ("NZACA") and the Retirement Village Association, the latter requiring strict standards of operation and service to senior New Zealanders. Oceania has been recognised at the NZACA annual awards. In particular, it won the Supreme Award in 2015, has been a winner of several other NZACA Excellence in Care Awards in 2013 and 2014, and was a finalist in the 2014 NZACA Interiors Built and Grown Environment Award.
Oceania's philosophy

10. Oceania aims to provide integrated aged care services that are located on one comprehensive site. An integrated development with the right mix of accommodation allows residents to remain in their chosen home in the community for as long as possible. Residents can choose to enter an independent living arrangement and later, as their needs dictate, can arrange for care to be provided in their independent unit, or can relocate to an assisted care unit on the same site. This ensures that continuity of care is achieved and that residents' families have a high level of comfort that their loved ones are comfortable and being cared for and provided for. The integrated care approach is consistent with the Government's "New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy".¹

11. Many care facilities around the country are old, depressing, and restrictive in size, and do not have the ability to provide this progression of care. There is strong demand for modern and relatively spacious care suites, which provide our care residents with maximum independence, dignity and privacy, while they are receiving rest home (or, in some cases, hospital level care). I will discuss the demand for aged care services in more detail in the next section of my evidence.

12. Oceania’s residential facilities also offer comprehensive communal facilities and services for the exclusive use of residents. Facilities can include: community halls, theatre rooms, interactive/communal dining, coffee shops, bar areas, small gyms, petanque courts, vegetable gardens, hair salons, physiotherapy and podiatry services. These communal facilities ensure residents are constantly stimulated, and are made to feel well cared for and supported.

13. In keeping with Oceania’s philosophy of care, this Proposal aims to provide an integrated care model to non-hospital care bed level in such a way that the independence and dignity of the residents is maintained for as long as possible. This is to ensure that ageing is not about decline, but about

continued growth, and development. A move into a residential care facility must not mean an end to being part of the wider community.

14. The Proposal will create a vibrant community, attractive to the people who choose to reside there. There will be a range of service options, room sizes, and facilities to satisfy all clients. Further, Oceania will carry out ongoing maintenance and upgrade works in order to keep the facility in excellent condition and to ensure that residents enjoy the highest standard of living possible.

Demand for residential care facilities

15. There is increasing demand in New Zealand for residential care facilities, as outlined in an independent review of the country's ageing population. This trend will continue as the population ages.

16. This comprehensive review of New Zealand's aged care sector had the highest provider participation rate of any comparable international study and remains the reference point for analysis of the aged care sector. Based on solid survey information characterised by large representative samples, particularly on the supply side, the review represents an accurate and thorough assessment of the current position and future projections.

17. In terms of supply of facilities, the review outlines that a 76% increase in sector bed numbers will be needed by 2026 to accommodate the projected increase in extra residents and to replace outdated and ageing facilities. It sends a clear message that supply and additional investment will need to increase significantly in order to cope with that projected demand.

18. Looking directly at Tauranga, the area's over 65 population is forecast to grow by a massive 44% between 2014 levels and 2024 (10 years), representing an increase from around 28,000 to over 40,000 in 2024. This increase is slightly higher than the national average, which is a result of the area's attraction as a North Island retirement destination.

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2 Aged Residential Care Service Review (Grant Thornton New Zealand Ltd, September 2010). The review concludes that in the 20 years between 2006 and 2026 New Zealand's population is expected to grow by 20%, while the over 65 age group is estimated to increase by 84%.
19. In my experience, on top of simply meeting demand, it is important to provide the right level of service in the right place. Our research shows that those looking at retirement care can take up to a year to decide on their preferred facility, with most choosing to remain in a familiar neighbourhood. Retirement villages are of course a residential activity and are best suited to a residential environment. However, retirement villages are also distinctive in terms of how accommodation is provided, including both the care and independent living components, which necessitate a form of development which is beyond a typical residential offering.

20. The Proposal provides for that projected increase in demand, but more specifically, it implements Oceania’s philosophy of care by providing a range of different options within the one facility. Oceania has identified a general lack of suitable modern retirement village accommodation within the local catchment. In this sense, it will increase the number of independent living units, which allow residents to maintain their autonomy and dignity, while retaining access to the appropriate services. Overall, an increased number of people will be able to be accommodated on the site.

The current Proposal

21. The proposal is to remove the existing 110 bed care home, 27 retirement village units and two residential houses, in order to provide for a modern comprehensive aged care and retirement village development that will provide a full continuum of care for residents on the site. (This is in addition to 33 existing retirement village units that will be retained on the eastern side of the site.)

22. The proposed development will provide a 60 bed care facility including associated clinical, operational and communal amenities. It will also provide 209 independent living apartments and 9 new villas (plus 33 existing “villas” that will be retained) that will be offered to senior New Zealanders.

23. There will be a range of common facilities available for use on site for all residents and their guests including residents lounges, activities rooms, gathering spaces, dining, restaurant, café and bar facilities, a hair salon and convenience store.
24. The design of the complex is laid out in 6 ‘wings’ that accommodate the retirement apartments (B1 – B5) and the care home (B6). The new retirement villas are located at the eastern and southern areas of the site. It is proposed that the development will be carried out in 5 stages. The approximate duration of each stage will range from between 9 and 18 months depending on its size. The proposed staging methodology is:

a) Stage 1 – Construct the new 60 bed care facility (B6)
b) Stage 2 – Demolish the existing care facility and construct the main communal facility and 72 retirement village (B4 & B5)
c) Stage 3 – Construct retirement 30 village apartments (B3)
d) Stage 4 – Construct 9 new villas
e) Stage 5 – Demolish 27 existing units and construct 107 new retirement village apartments Block B1 & B2

Consultation undertaken

25. Oceania has been proactive in terms of the consultation undertaken with affected parties. We issued an information package to the affected parties with details of the proposed development and an invitation to meet with Oceania to discuss the development. Subsequently, meetings were held with a number of the neighbours to discuss the development and any concerns they had. The neighbours that Oceania met with were:

a) 27a Tekoah Place
b) 29b Tekoah Place
c) 31a Tekoah Place
d) 157 Waihi Road
e) 94 Sutherland Road
f) 96 Sutherland Road

26. Following the receipt of submissions there has been further consultation carried out with many of the neighbours. Details of this consultation are included in Mr Knell’s evidence.
Conditions

27. Subject to any specific changes recommended by the expert witnesses engaged by Oceania, I confirm that Oceania accepts the consent conditions recommended by the reporting officer.

Conclusion

28. Oceania is a long-standing aged care provider, and has a proven track record in providing modern and spacious care suites and independent living units, which provide our residents with maximum independence, dignity and privacy, while they are receiving rest home or hospital level care.

29. Oceania has been proactive in communicating with neighbours and the local authority to design a Proposal that will create a vibrant community, not only for those who choose to reside there but for the wider area.

30. Overall, the Proposal represents an opportunity to increase the intensity of the current facility in order to provide for the increasing demand for independent living units while minimising the potential effects on neighbours and local residents as much as possible.

31. I believe that Oceania has approached the design of the Proposal in a way that is consistent with Oceania’s policy of providing an opportunity for residents to live in a place that can provide for their evolving needs, and in a location that means our residents are able to maintain their connection with the wider community for as long as possible, while addressing any associated effects.

Eli Parkin
22 June 2016