BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER ON BEHALF OF THE DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL

UNDER	the Resource Management Act 1991
IN THE MATTER	an application for resource consent of LUC-2015-469
BY	Blueskin Energy Limited
	Applicant

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF JANET RHONA STEPHENSON

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Introduction

1. My full name is Janet Rhona Stephenson. I am a social researcher at the University of Otago with an academic background in sociology, planning and human geography. I worked as a professional planner 1987-2001, and then lectured in the Masters of Planning course at the University of Otago 2002-2009. I gained my PhD in 2005 on the topic of cultural values in landscapes. Since 2011 I have been the Director of the Centre for Sustainability, a University of Otago research centre with a focus on interdisciplinary research on sustainability issues in agriculture, food, energy and environment. My main research specialty in recent years has been social research relating to energy behaviour change and energy transitions.

2. My submission is based on the involvement I have had over the years in the community engagement relating to the wind project, and wider community aspirations about a sustainable and resilient future for the Blueskin area.

Community responses to windfarms

3. In my research, I have undertaken several pieces of work that have examined aspects of community response to windfarms. Included in this was a 2010 research contract for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) to examine whether societal acceptance issues were significantly limiting the establishment of new renewable energy generation projects such as wind farms, and to identify the key characteristics of social acceptance/resistance in the New Zealand context. The research, undertaken by myself and Maria Ioannou, examined the resource consenting process for all electricity generation facilities over the previous 10 years, looked at patterns of support and opposition, interviewed key players (applicants, opponents and supporters) of selected proposals, and reviewed literature about community response to windfarms and other facilities.

4. Our findings, published in the report 'Social Acceptance of Renewable Electricity Developments in New Zealand",[1] concluded that the public would be more likely to find new renewable energy facilities acceptable if twelve criteria were met:

   (a) They have some level of knowledge and familiarity with the technology;

   (b) They consider the development is suitable in relation to the qualities of the site;

   (c) The proposal does not have significant impacts on themselves and other tangible and intangible qualities that they value;

   (d) They feel that developers have listened to their concerns and dealt with them respectfully and honestly;

   (e) They feel trust and good faith in the developer;

   (f) The type, scale, and rate of proliferation of the technology is acceptable to the people of that region at that point in time;

   (g) They have a stake in the development, or there is another tangible flow of benefits back to the affected individuals and community/ies;

   (h) They have some certainty as to likely future constraints on developments – that is, that they do not feel obliged to oppose every proposal as a matter of principle in order to prevent proliferation;

   (i) They feel that their voices and concerns will be considered credible in the consenting process;

   (j) The management and effects of the plant over time continue to be seen in a positive light by the public;

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[1] Stephenson, J., & Ioannou, M. (2010). Social acceptance of renewable electricity developments in New Zealand. Commissioned by Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago

(k) They feel that trade-offs are openly and satisfactorily discussed and regularly revisited; and

(l) The public and communities feel that they are contributors to the energy transition rather than onlookers.

5. Based on this work I gave a number of talks in 2011-12 including to the NZ Planning Institute and NZ Wind Energy Association, and published an article in 2013[2] on 'Seven Assumptions about Public Opposition to Renewable Energies'. At this time there was a great deal of discussion both at NZPI and in the wind industry about whether (and how) applicants might go beyond the usually accepted parameters of consultation.

Consultation expectations under the RMA

6. Section 36A of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) states that an applicant and a local authority do not have a duty under the RMA to consult any person about resource consent applications. Nevertheless, there are times when it is good practice to consult – consultation can reveal issues that may need to be addressed in an Assessment of Environmental Effects, and can assist in the adjustment of a design to ensure that concerns are addressed as far as is practicable.

7. Case law has established that "consultation involves the statement of a proposal not yet fully decided upon, listening to what others have to say, considering their responses and then deciding what will be done"[3]. New Zealand's 'Quality Planning' site[4] which outlines best practices, states that for resource consents, consultation "generally occurs with people who may be adversely affected by, or have a specific interest in, a resource consent application, and is essentially a process about:

(a) providing enough information to an interested or affected party to enable them to understand a proposed activity

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[2] Stephenson, J. and Ioannou, M. (2013). Seven assumptions about public opposition to renewable energies. *Planning Quarterly* 191:24-30

[3] Wellington International Airport Ltd v Air NZ [1991] 1 NZLR 671 (Court of Appeal)

[4] http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/supporting-components/consultation/introduction-to-consultation

(b) discussing the resource consent application with them

(c) receiving any comments they might have on the proposal and, where appropriate, amending the proposal to be more acceptable to the consulted parties

(d) gaining all the necessary information to provide a thorough and complete application'

Beyond consultation

8. At the NZWEA and NZPI events, discussions were held about the potential value of going beyond this 'best practice' consultation process, which usually occurs once a site has been chosen and design developed, and instead engaging with communities from a very early stage before these aspects have been fully decided. The idea was that through early engagement, key aspects that communities might otherwise be concerned about, such as project location and design, could be discussed and developed with community input, so that the final proposal reflected community interests as far as possible. Early engagement would also assist in revealing whether the community was averse to the idea of the development, in which case there would probably be little sense in proceeding; or whether there was general community support, in which case it would make sense to proceed, and to design the proposal taking into account, as far as possible, the responses revealed in the engagement process.

9. EECA, whose remit includes encouraging more renewable generation, also became interested in this idea of going 'beyond consultation'. I will pick up this theme again after I have covered other relevant research undertaken relating to wind farms and the Blueskin energy initiatives.

'Silent Majority' research

10. I have also, with colleagues, undertaken other research looking at the attitudes and perceptions of people who do not make submissions on windfarms[5]. This research revealed that it cannot be assumed that

[5] Stephenson, J., Lawson, R., Hoffman, M. (2013) Giving voice to the 'silent majority': exploring the opinions and motivations of people who do not make submissions. Policy Quarterly 9(1): 26-33; and Stephenson, J., Lawson, R., and Hoffman, M. (2013) The

people who don't make submissions support a proposal, nor that they oppose it – they are likely to have a variety of views but probably hold them less strongly than people who submit in support or opposition. We concluded that the submission process only captures part of a community's views on a proposal, and that therefore it is important to use other means to gauge and take into account community views including forums, surveys, and the use of visual communication techniques.

Research relating to the BRCT wind proposal

11. My involvement with the Blueskin Resilient Community Trust's energy initiatives began in mid-2007 when I set a group of Masters of Planning students the task of planning for a resilient, self-sustaining Waitati community by 2017 (i.e. within 10 years). The students spent time speaking with Waitati community residents and produced an impressive body of work, covering areas such as transport, food production, water supply, social connectedness, flood protection and local energy. This was presented back to the Waitati community at a well-attended event in the community hall.

12. In early 2008 a meeting between the then Waitati Energy Project members and the steering committee of Otago University's Otago Energy Research Centre (OERC), of which I was a committee member, led to the realisation that there could be mutual benefits. A process what set up whereby OERC members or their students could approach the WEP if they were interested in undertaking research, and WEP could suggest topics to OERC on the understanding that all research would be independent of the WEP. Part of the agreement also was that any research findings would be shared with the community – often in presentations at the community hall, and reports were deposited at the Waitati Library.

13. A number of pieces of research were undertaken, as detailed in Chapter 2 of the report 'Blueskin People Power – a toolkit for community

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Silent Majority – understanding the opinions and motivations of non-submitters. Planning Quarterly 193:16-22

engagement'. [6] These included two household surveys looking at the energy performance of homes, people's energy practices and aspirations for the future, research on children's mobility in the community, and an analysis of people's experiences of the Home Energy Rating Scheme in Waitati. Several studies were particularly germane to the wind project, which I will describe shortly.

14. In addition, in June 2009, the Otago Energy Research Centre offered BRCT to facilitate an 'integrated thinking' workshop for the community on its energy ambitions. It was held on 30 July 2009 as an all-day workshop at the Waitati community hall. Expert facilitation was provided by Paul Stephenson, of Synergia, supported by Professor Rob Lawson and myself of OERC. Selected community leaders and representatives of community actions and groups (covering as wide a range of interests as possible) were invited by BRCT to participate in this exercise, and almost all attended. The workshop, involving 14 community members, aimed to develop a collective vision for the energy project as well as wider community sustainability objectives, and in doing so provide direction for BRCT. Strong support was received for the wind project as part of the broader aspirations of the community representatives to achieve a resilient and sustainable future.

15. To return to the wind-related research projects: Geography student Matt Hoffman carried out interviews with community members for his study in 2008 called "Is Small Beautiful? Attitudes towards community-owned wind energy in Waitati". Geography climatology students carried out initial wind testing in 2009 as a class exercise. And over the summer of 2010-11, Geography student Seth Gorrie undertook a study of public perceptions about the wind cluster concept, interviewing householders in the various communities in the Blueskin area. [7]

16. Seth's research identified generally positive views in the community towards the wind cluster idea, but also some people who had had little

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[6] Willis, S., Stephenson, J., Day, R. (2012). Blueskin People Power — a toolkit for community engagement. Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, Waitati, Otago. Commissioned by Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.
[7] Seth Gorrie (2011) "Blueskin People Power - Piloting a community engagement tool-kit for renewable energy developments in New Zealand conditions". Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago.

understanding, or had not heard about it. Also the research described some concerns and questions that people had about the idea of a local wind cluster. He recommended that BRCT develop a website to "assist with ensuring the project becomes part of the everyday conversation in the community" which was subsequently done by BRCT.

17. Findings from this research informed a further project I was involved in, the 2011-12 community engagement project and resulting 'Toolkit for Community Engagement'.

Trialling and developing a community engagement toolkit

18. In 2011, EECA followed through with their interest in what might be involved in going beyond 'best practice' consultation under the RMA, and part-funded a project that would see the BRCT trial a process of deeper early engagement around the proposed wind cluster. Part of the requirement was that this trial would then be written up for EECA to inform them and others of the outcomes and insights from the engagement process. The report from this work is "Blueskin People Power – a toolkit for community engagement"[8].

19. During 2011-12 I was involved in helping design the community engagement process. My role here was mainly to provide guidance, on the basis of the prior research described above, to BRCT and to consultant planners Ros Day and Andrew Henderson who led the engagement. I attended one of the 'open days' run at various community halls as an observer. I also worked with Ros Day and Scott Willis to write up the findings for the report, which included reviewing and summarising the history of engagement with the community, analysing the outcomes of the 'open days' and other material, and helping write this up as a 'toolkit' for community engagement which might help others wanting to follow a similar path.

20. The 122-page report provides a great deal of detail as to the multitude of ways in which community engagement had occurred prior to 2012, and the details of the engagement methods used during the 2011-12 EECA-

[8] Willis, S., Stephenson, J., Day, R. (2012). Blueskin People Power — a toolkit for community engagement. Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, Waitati, Otago. Commissioned by Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

funded project. By this point the wind concept had proceeded to a stage where a preferred (but not confirmed) site had been identified, possibilities for the number and type of turbines were under consideration, and options for structure, governance and funding of the project had been identified but not decided. These matters were all part of the engagement process in order to get community feedback on how to proceed from here.

21. The engagement process included local publicity, and online survey, community open days at local halls, follow-up individual discussions with anyone who wished for more information or to give more feedback. The details of this engagement are exhaustively described in the 'Toolkit' report. Some points to highlight are:

22. Local publicity about the proposed wind project included household leaflet drops, newspaper advertisements, Blueskin Energy Project website and e-newsletters, and public noticeboards.

23. Community open days were held at Long Beach Hall, Warrington Hall and Waitati Hall. In the lead-up to the open days, three advertisements were placed in the *Otago Daily Times*, and aimed to ensure wide media spread to capture the attention of the widest possible group. E-newsletters were also used to promote the open days and follow-up activities. Posters on public noticeboards also advertised each open day and invited participation from anyone interested.

24. Three open days were held (11 September 2011 at Long Beach, 17 September at Warrington and 18 September at Waitati). In total, 95 'parties' (individuals or groups) were recorded attending. Of these, the highest proportion of visitors attended the Waitati open day (42%), with the remaining visitors equally divided across the Warrington and Long Beach open days (28% and 28% respectively).

25. The open days aimed to provide as many opportunities as possible to explain the project to the largest number of people possible, and to encourage greater participation and ongoing engagement. These events were particularly significant because:

    (a) This was the first time BRCT had pulled together all the high-level elements of the project into a complete package (albeit with

several key matters still undecided and needing community input).

(b) This was the first time the project had been presented to settlements outside Waitati.

(c) This was the first time professionals had been involved to provide assistance on engagement.

26. The engagement team designed the open days as an opportunity to get a good 'feel' for the level of community support. Unless there was a demonstration of a significant level of support, the project would need to be reconsidered. Much thought went into how to design the open days to allow wide participation and good information, and to gauge community feelings about the energy project, without being directive.

27. A wide variety of visual aids were created, as well as different means of collecting community members' perspectives on the project (see following sections for details). Scott Willis as project manager was available the whole time at each open day, representing the project. BRCT trustees, with their general knowledge of the project, were available to talk about project details and also about the work of the Trust. Community volunteers/friends of BRCT were enlisted to be available to talk to people about specific aspects, capture their comments, show them associated material and generally 'host' the public. Planners Ros Day and Andrew Henderson were present at the open days as well but took a back seat, focusing on capturing people's feedback on Vox-Pop forms and stickies, answering questions about planning issues, and observing the process for the team debrief at the end of each day. This reflection at the end of each day was invaluable in both capturing impressions while fresh in the mind, and in fine tuning details for the subsequent open days.

28. The most commonly represented residential location of attendees was Waitati (35%), followed by Warrington (25%), and then Purakanui (14%). The open days also attracted interest from the wider Dunedin area, including those living in Port Chalmers, St Clair, North Dunedin, and Brighton.

29. There were many different forms of engagement and invitations to respond at the open days. These included poster displays on:

(a) the origins and aims of the BEP;

(b) Preliminary BEP feasibility issues;

(c) Ownership and business structure options;

(d) Preliminary BEP prospective turbine sites;

(e) How to become involved;

(f) Who to contact with any queries, concerns, ideas.

30. While the open days were really about communicating the energy project in general terms (because specifics had not yet been determined), the engagement team did not want people leaving with no idea of what a wind cluster might look like in the landscape. Caution had to be taken to not be overly prescriptive, but the project team decided to risk giving emphasis to the preferred site to allow visualisation of what turbines would look like in the landscape. Four images of the Porteous Hill site were manipulated to show four WindFlow 500 turbines as viewed from three different locations around Blueskin Bay (one image provided a scale).

31. A screen at the open day had a 3D Google map which allowed people to have a virtual flyover of the wind cluster sites investigated in the Blueskin Bay area, and to view these sites from up close and from afar. It provided a sophisticated 'gaming style' perspective which elicited a great deal of interest.

32. Alongside the techniques for communicating the wind cluster concept, a number of other energy-related elements were used to 'liven up' the space. There were static noticeboard displays of articles and cartoons relating to the project or wind power in general, a Wind-Up Electricity Demonstration Unit from EECA; a TV powered bicycle; making paper, stick and pin windmills; and a remote-controlled helicopter with LED lights.

33. A series of "Vox-Pop" forms designed to encourage attendees to record any views or concerns regarding any aspect of the BEP. The forms were positioned at the end of the poster display so that attendees were able to 'post' views anonymously in a ballot-box. Other leader statements included "My concern is ...", "My vision is ...", "Listen Here!", "You want to know what I reckon?", "Has anyone thought about..?". In total 31 Vox-Pop forms were posted over the three open days.

34. A roll of plain white paper was laid out on a flat surface which attendees could "graffiti" with their "thought-tags". The idea behind this was that it could allow doodling as much as formal comments, and would also be a place for children to be creative. The goal was to make participation and engagement as inclusive as possible. People particularly appreciated this format and often responded to other comments already on the paper.

35. To gain an appreciation of how the community viewed the various options in relation to the proposed business structure and ownership of the BEP, attendees were asked to cast a "straw poll' vote on one of three general options presented in the poster display. The options were:

    (a) Community Co-Operative;

    (b) Joint Venture;

    (c) Company Structure.

    Most attendees, before leaving, were provided with a literal short straw to post in one of the three 'business structure' containers.

36. Of the 95 recorded attendees, 72 voted in the straw poll. The straw poll was not designed to choose the final business entity (there still remained too many unknowns to provide the full pros and cons for each option) but instead to get a feel for the community preferences for the business entity and thus allow more efficient investigation of a model that might best fit community desires.

37. Prior to leaving the event, participants were asked to provide their contact details if they desired to be kept informed of the project, and were given the opportunity of recording any final thoughts and

impressions within a comments book. Comments made were generally very supportive.

38. During each of the open days, the team involved were available to discuss any aspect of the proposal with community members. The key messages from any verbal discussions were recorded, where possible, via post-it notes, and included in the record of each open day.

39. After the open days, the BRCT invited follow-up discussions with people who didn't manage to get to an open day but wanted more information, or who might prefer an informal setting to a public event. The concept was promoted via the enlarged BEP Update E-list and in articles in both the Blueskin News and Rothesay News. At the time of writing the report there had been one meeting requested by members of the community, and a number of one-to-one enquiries, particularly after the first 2012 pamphlet drop when the BEP office received a flush of telephone and email enquiries, resulting in a spike in E-list newsletter subscriptions.

Survey

40. The online survey occurred after the open days and was promoted and distributed to the community via the local newsletter, the BRCT regular E-newsletters and the new website. Analysis of the survey was completed in March 2012 when 49 completed survey responses had been received (more responses were received after this date but not in time to include in the report). Some key findings were:

    (a) A large majority had heard about the project from the BRCT via the various media channels including Blueskin News, the BEP Mailing List, and the Otago Daily Times.

    (b) 10 of the respondents had attended an open day, while 25 reported they had not attended an open day. The remaining respondents did not respond to this question.

    (c) Nearly half of the respondents (47%) lived at Waitati. Warrington was the second most represented with 19%.

    (d) Respondents generally value landscapes in the Blueskin area. The most commonly reported reasons were 'value wild places'

and 'beautiful, functional, and productive'. Some viewed the landscapes as being multi-functional. Others signalled they did not want any further developments on the landscapes unless further discussion occurred.

(e) Almost all respondents supported the proposition that the community should try to meet its energy needs within the local rural landscapes. Just one respondent disagreed.

(f) With regard to site preferences, 46% of respondents indicated a preference for the Porteous Hill site (BRCT's preferred option), while a further 28% of respondents indicated it was too early to comment in relation to site preferences for the turbines. 5% did not want to see turbines anywhere.

(g) When asked if they would be interested in investing in the local wind cluster if it was a viable project, 72% indicated 'YES' and 5% indicated 'NO'. Others (23%) commented that investment would depend on their financial circumstance.

(h) In relation to personal capital investment to get the wind cluster established, 11% thought they would contribute $10,000, 30% would contribute $6,000; 16% would contribute $3,000; and 14% would contribute $1,000. Around one third of respondents were unsure with regard to this question.

(i) When asked if they would be interested in signing a long-term contract with one of the electricity retailers if there was some protection from price increase and a rebate on electricity bills, 85% of those who responded to this question indicated 'Yes', while 24% responded with 'No'.

(j) In relation to community dividends, 85% of those who responded to this question were in favour of a modest community dividend as well as a return to investors. A similar proportion of respondents would value the community dividend going back into supporting local energy initiatives such as insulation and solar hot-water. Up to 67% of respondents also supported the reinvestment of community dividends into other community initiatives.

(k) In relation to ownership and business structure, the Community Co-operative/Limited Liability option was the most preferred option, followed by the Joint Venture option. Least favoured was the Conventional Company Structure.

(l) In relation to the role of the BRCT and its approach in relation to the Blueskin Energy Project, the most commonly selected statements were that the BEP project is progressing at the right speed, that it is an inclusive process, and that 'it feels serious'.

Overall findings

41. Overall, the community feedback from the structured engagement showed strong support for the project in a general sense, as well as some specific areas in which people's views differed or in which they had some concerns.

42. Across the three open days, attendees had many questions about all aspects of the BEP, including lifespan of project/turbines, capacity of the distribution system, spatial extent of the distribution system, financial feasibility of project, project design, characteristics of turbines, financial accessibility for residents, and environmental effects of turbines. Key areas of community concern included the validity of the wind data to date and the resulting interpretation of the project feasibility; the perceived lack of ethical investment underpinning the BEP; and how realistic the stated projected benefits to the community/shareholders would be. This highlighted where further information and discussion was needed as the project was developed further.

43. The survey results revealed that the Porteous Hill site was overall the most preferred site, although a number of respondents felt it was too early to comment. The majority of attendees who expressed a view at the Open days were not concerned with the detail of prospective sites at this stage in the project. A small proportion expressed concern about Mopanui as a potential site; suggested that other sites should be investigated; and raised concerns about environmental effects of the project - bird life, visual impact and health impacts.

44. A number of attendees were also interested in discussing wider energy issues other than the proposed turbine cluster, which reinforced BRCT's

broader aim of supporting an integrated energy community involving both energy demand and supply, including work on home insulation, home energy advice, and encouraging solar installations.

45. The community signalled a strong preference for either a community co-operative or a joint venture. No great support for a company structure was expressed in either the online survey or the open days. At the open days, numerous community members were interested in discussing how the ownership and business structure could be established, and many contributed ideas in relation to what form the business structures could take. Community members also raised the concept of 'ethical investments'. Future engagement activities should harness this community interest and knowledge, with the view of developing a business and ownership structure that is acceptable to and supported by the community.

46. The results of the online survey indicated support for community investment in the wind cluster. Many indicated they would be willing to consider personal capital investment. However, the results also indicate a level of reservation and caution in relation to financial uncertainties – both personal financial circumstances, and lack of confidence in the vitality of the BEP.

47. The findings also signalled community interest in a future arrangement with an electricity retailer if there was some protection from price increase and a rebate on electricity bills. Many residents also indicated support for a modest community dividend as well as a return to investors, and the reinvestment of the community dividend going back into energy initiatives such as insulation, solar hot-water and other community initiatives.

Results in relation to the '12 propositions'

48. We concluded in the 'Toolkit' report that, in relation to the '12 propositions' outlined at the start, the results from the engagement process was as follows:

49. i) *The public have some level of knowledge and familiarity with the technology*;

The BEP engagement outcomes demonstrate a clear interest within the Blueskin Bay community for wind technology. Some community members have visited the Horseshoe bend turbine cluster and others have seen turbines in operation elsewhere. Some members have also been involved in helping with the wind-testing devices. The outcome of the public perceptions research shows a level of community interest in relation to the selection of turbines with a clear preference for NZ-made wind technology. A key theme resulting from community feedback via the community open days was the community interest in the design and characteristics of wind turbines, including factors such as the lifespan and capacity of the wind turbines, physical characteristics of the turbines in relation to height, size, colour; the performance of turbines in extreme weather events; and the perceived reputation of wind turbine technology providers.

50. *ii) The public consider the development is suitable in relation to the qualities of the site; iii) The proposal does not have significant impacts on the public and other tangible and intangible qualities that they value.* The BEP engagement outcomes demonstrate that the Blueskin community is intimately aware of the study area and potential REG development sites under consideration by the BRCT. An emerging community preference for the Porteous Hill site is evident. There were some potential community concerns in relation to the impact of a wind turbine development on landscape values, visual qualities of the rural environment, potential for bird strike, and potential for health impacts. Generally, open day attendees showed interest in the potential sites presented, and the reasoning behind the preferred site option. Overall, participants were generally comfortable with the prospective site options presented with the knowledge that they would have a future opportunity to be involved in site selection. The results of the online survey indicate that survey respondents consider the most suitable site to be Porteous Hill, aligning with the BRCT preferred site.

51. iv) *They feel that developers have listened to their concerns and dealt with them respectfully and honestly; v) They feel trust and good faith in the developer; vi) The public and communities feel that they are contributors to the energy transition rather than onlookers:* The engagement outcomes demonstrate that there has been overall a

positive reception to the BRCT engagement initiatives to date and that the community is eager to become involved throughout the different project development stages. In this case the BRCT is the proponent for the development on behalf of the community, and so there is no external developer as such. The results of the online survey showed that the majority of respondents had a positive view of the approach of the BRCT in relation to the BEP project.

52. vii) *The type, scale and rate of proliferation of the technology is acceptable to the people of that region at that point in time.* The engagement outcomes demonstrate that overall the community is generally receptive to and supportive of wind technology. The community has expressed particular support for the energy philosophy underpinning the project in relation to the energy future of the Blueskin community area. The results of the online survey showed that the significant majority of respondents supported the proposition that the community should try to meet its own energy needs within the local rural landscape with wind energy technology. There were also some alternative views within the community regarding other forms of energy solutions distinct from wind energy solutions. This demonstrates a deep community awareness of alternative energy solutions within the area, an interest which is supported by BRCT's wider vision.

53. viii) *They have a stake in the development, or there is another tangible flow of benefits back to the affected individuals and community(ies).* The engagement outcomes demonstrate strong community interest in being involved in the decisions surrounding the ownership model. The public perceptions research highlighted a strong community interest in shaping the community ownership model into a form which will provide individual shareholder as well as community benefits. The online survey results show that the majority of respondents were interested in personally investing into the wind project depending on the viability of the project and personal financial circumstances. The majority of respondents were interested in some level of personal gain from their investments through mechanisms such as price rebates and protection from price increases. The majority of respondents were also in favour of a modest community dividend in addition to a return for investors. Some views expressed at the open days related to concerns about the financial feasibility of the

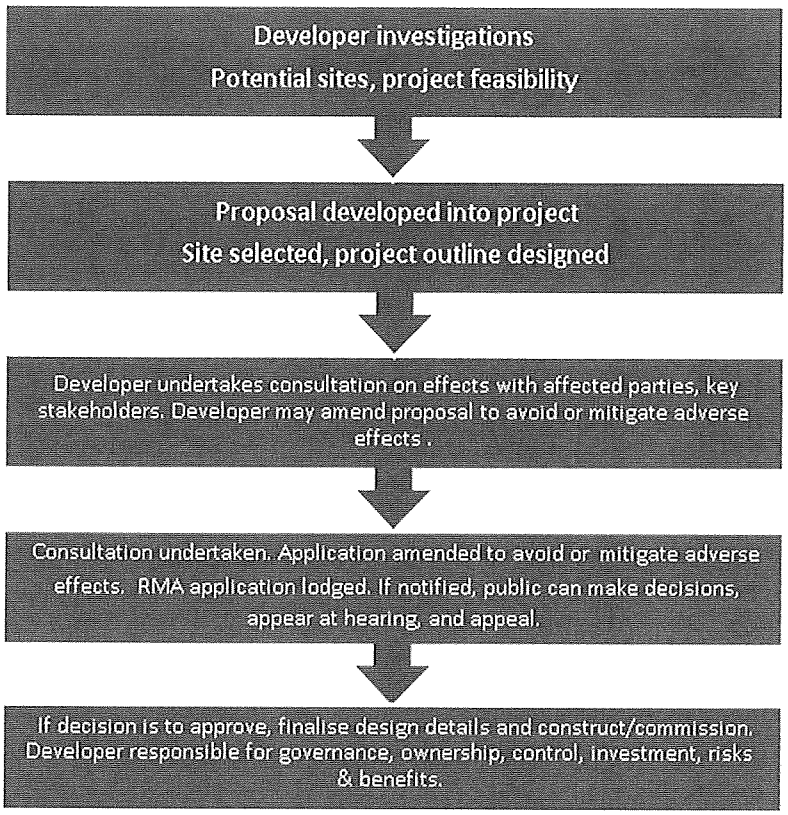
project and the opportunities for local households to participate. Others were concerned regarding the perceived lack of guarantee for profits to be realised through the wind project and the perceived lack of finance for the project. It is expected that a successful development of the Blueskin Energy Project wind cluster will provide a mechanism to develop other community benefits with pro-environmental outcomes, such as further subsidised insulation and household photovoltaics. These associated outcomes, if achievable, would provide wider community benefit than simply electricity from renewable generation.

54. ix) *They have some certainty as to likely future constraints on REG developments – that is, they do not feel obliged to oppose every proposal as a matter of principle in order to prevent proliferation; x) They feel that their voices and concerns will be considered credible in the consenting process; iix) The management and effects of the REG plan over time continue to be seen in a positive light by the public; xii)They feel that trade-offs are openly and satisfactorily discussed and regularly revisited.* The engagement outcomes demonstrate an awareness within the community regarding the future resource consent requirements and other recent high profile windfarm proposals in Otago. Across all engagement initiatives there has been a strong indication that the community is generally confident in BRCT as a community advocate and its role in ensuring the interests of the community are put first. Notably, the BRCT is actively engaging with the Dunedin City Council regarding the development of its first Spatial Plan which addresses the future potential for small-scale energy developments in Dunedin City. It is anticipated that this document will provide further certainty regarding future renewable generation developments in Dunedin.

55. Overall we concluded that the 12 areas had been well addressed in the engagement process since the inception of the wind project idea, and that the engagement had also identified areas that would need to continue to be addressed as the project design was finalised.

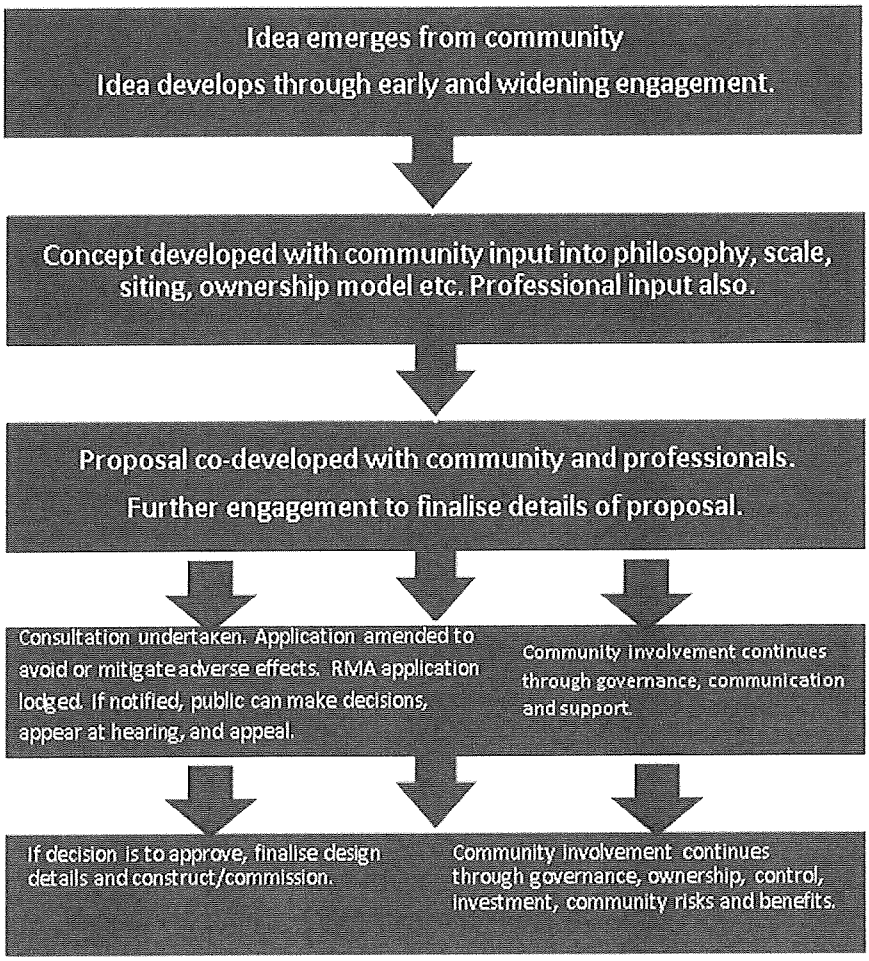
56. As a final concluding point, we noted that the usual consultation process for a resource consent looked something like this:

Consultation model:



57. In contrast, an idealised engagement process would start far earlier and involve the community throughout the process and indeed in the post-consent process as well, as follows:

Engagement model



58. It has been my experience and observation that between 2008 and 2012, BRCT's consultation relating to the wind farm has well exceeded 'best practice' consultation and is well aligned with the 'engagement' model shown above. Since then I have not carried out any more research with the wind project although I have followed progress with interest through the emailed BRCT Update which has kept me up to date with progress, and occasional conversations with BRCT members.

Conclusion

59. The extensive engagement and recording of community views on the wind proposal has made it clear that there is widespread support for the wind project, as detailed above.

60. Our work on the 'silent majority' highlights the importance of data other than submissions to help understand community perspectives, as many

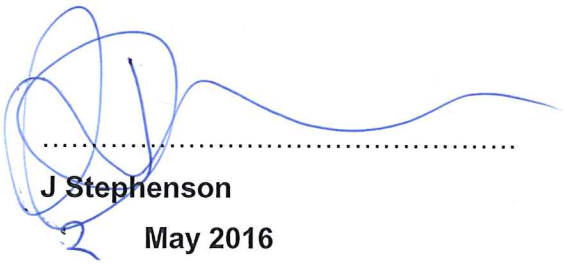
people do not make submissions. The independently produced findings on community perspectives are therefore germane to this hearing.

61. In light of the '12 propositions' for developing a proposal with community support, the BRCT engagement process and overall design of the project has done a good job of addressing the 12 points. Issues that were identified through the engagement process that are relevant to the resource consent process have been addressed in the design of the proposal and the assessments of effects.

62. The BRCT process has been exemplary with regards the concept of engaging early with communities in the process of developing a proposal. It is not unexpected that there will still be concerns about the proposal from some members of the community, but this cannot be put down to a failure to consult with the community.

63. I have recently been engaged in research on the emergence internationally of 'prosumer communities', a term for where people are collaborating on the generation and sharing of electricity in a variety of innovative ways. In this light, the BRCT's activities are leading the way in New Zealand. BRCT is also frequently cited by agencies, organisations and other communities as an inspiration as to the potential for communities to get involved in small-scale local generation so as to increase community resilience.

64. I am personally inspired by the BRCT's hard work, mostly voluntary, that they have put in to building a vision by listening to what the community wants, and working to realise that vision using exemplary means of community engagement from the inception of the project.



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J Stephenson

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