

**IN THE ENVIRONMENT COURT OF NEW ZEALAND  
WELLINGTON REGISTRY**

**I MUA I TE KOTI TAIAO O AOTERAROA  
TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA ROHE**

**ENV-2023-WLG-000005**

**Under** Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991

**In the matter of** Otaki to North of Levin (O2NL) Expressway

**Hearing Topic** Shared use path

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**Statement of evidence of Steve Lewis on behalf of Kapiti Equestrian Advocacy Group, Horowhenua  
Equestrian Advocacy Group and NZ Equestrian Advocacy Network  
Date: 21 September 2023**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. My full name is Stephen Charles Lewis, I am employed by the Kapiti Retirement Trust, as the Maintenance and Refurbishment Manager.
2. I have prepared this statement of evidence on behalf of Equine Advocacy Groups in support of the Groups' submissions to on the Otaki to North Levin (O2NL).
3. I am authorised to provide this evidence on behalf of the Groups.
4. I am a builder with 35 years of experience in the trade.
5. Although I am not a member of any of the equestrian groups on the Coast I have dealt with the members of the community through my roles as the President of the Kapiti Mountain Bike Club (KMBC) since 2005 and the Off-Road Cycling Representative on the Kapiti Coast District Council's (KCDC) Cycleways, Walkways, and Bridleways Advisory Group (CWBAG) since 2008.
6. I have been a user of the local trails since I began mountain biking here in the early 1990s. I am a keen advocate of the use and development of off-road trails as a member of the Club. I have been the chief designer and developer of the Clubs trail area at Whareroa Farm on the Coast. The Farm, (a DoC Recreation Reserve), caters for walkers, mountain bikers, and horse riders, along with many other open space users. As part of the KCDC CWBAG I am currently helping to develop a district wide Kapiti Trails Network. As a long-term user of many of the multi-use trails here, I have many years of experience dealing with the other users on these trails, which includes walkers and dogs, runners, families, and horses.
7. My statement of evidence considers the following matters in relation to the Groups submissions on the O2NL
  - Trail design of multi-use trails.
  - Other users' perspective
  - The Kapiti Trails Network in relation to this submission.

## **MULTI-USE TRAIL DESIGN**

8. Multi-use trails obviously need to take into consideration, not only the different users, but also how the different users interact with one another. Users travel at different speeds, at different heights, with different equipment and animals. This does not mean that the trail has to be purposely designed for each user, but it does need to take into consideration a few things. The biggest problem for the interaction between users is the element of surprise. Since cyclists move the fastest, they can cause problems with other users. This can be mitigated by improving sight lines at corners. Increasing the corner radius, or the careful selection of planting on the inside of the corner, or preferably both, will achieve this. If the new shared path on the Otaki to North Levin (O2NL) is similar to the existing Kapiti Expressways paths the radius of the corners are suitable for multi-use but some of the planting could be modified.

## **TRAIL USER (CYCLIST) PERSPECTIVE**

9. As a long-time user of the local trails, I have had many interactions with the other users of these trails. Although some users bristle at the other users, I am firmly of the opinion that anybody who gets outside to use our fantastic landscape deserves to be there and encouraged. Everyone can find some reason to begrudge a different user but as humans we are very good at missing each other and going on our way. A cheery greeting, a friendly wave, a thank you, goes a long way to easing any tensions that these meetings may invoke. As more users encounter each other on the trails, the more the tensions drop away, as the fear of the unknown abates with familiarity. This I have witnessed in my many years of using the multi-use trails in Queen Elizabeth Park, close to where I live.
  
10. As an extension of my role on the CWBAG and trail designer for the KMBC I have been heavily involved in the proposed development of the Kapiti Trails Network. This is a proposal to integrate the different trails (coastal, foothills, & back country) into one combined network (see attached map). One of the key drivers, that has helped greatly in this idea, has been the existing expressway multi-use trails forming a north-south spine that has substantially changed the way people move through the local district. An off-road path now joins Paekākāriki in the south, to Otaki in the north (and potentially Levin). The proposed network incorporates trails in the back-country from Battle Hill in the south, to North Manakau in the north. This would mean that some of the O2NL multi-use trail would be incorporated into the network and if the network expanded further north towards Levin, then the O2NL shared path would be integral to this. Given that similar trail networks around the country have become major tourist drawcards, the network has the potential to become a major attraction for the Kapiti Coast and therefore a major driver for economic development. On this point I think that consistency is the key to the whole development, and therefore the rules that apply to the shared path south of Otaki should apply to the shared path north of Otaki.

## **Conclusion**

I am a firm believer in the premise that trail design should support all the potential user groups into the future. Getting the design right now, means it's right forever, but getting it wrong now also means it is wrong forever.