BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Proposed Plan Change A: Growth Rezonings

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KILLIAN DESTREMAU
ON BEHALF OF TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

ECONOMIC GROWTH FORECASTS

25 NOVEMBER 2026

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The key conclusions of my evidence are:

   a. The Tararua District is projected to experience population and economic growth. Additional industrial and residential land is required to accommodate the projected population and employment.

   b. Under the business as usual (BAU) scenario, Tararua's productive gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to increase from $830 million in 2022 to $1.2 billion by 2053, with approximately 1,400 additional full-time equivalents (FTEs) and 56 additional hectares of occupied industrial and commercial land. Under the aspirational scenario, GDP reaches $1.6 billion, with approximately 4,100 additional FTEs and 118 additional hectares of occupied industrial and commercial land.

   c. The Tararua District Council *Final Urban Growth Strategy* and Mr Batley's evidence identify a limited supply of vacant industrial land capable of accommodating development at scale. Additional supply will need to be provided in sufficient quantities to respond to the projected growth. Enough capacity would need to be provided to attract demand, signal supply to the market to invest for the long term across Dannevirke, Woodville, Eketāhuna, and Pahiatua as well as rural Tararua.

B. INTRODUCTION

2. My name is Killian Destremau. I am the Deputy Chief Economist at Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL).

3. I have been engaged by Tararua District Council (**the Council**) in relation to the review of the Tararua District Plan. BERL prepared forecasts of Tararua's GDP, employment, and occupied commercial and industrial land to 2053, including for Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua, and Eketāhuna.

4. The forecasts are set out in *Long-term economic forecasts: Tararua District Council* (BERL, 2023) (**the BERL Report**), authored by Nick Robertson, Diana Russell, and Hugh Dixon. The report informs the Council's review of the Tararua District Plan.

5. This statement restates the growth context and the two scenarios in the BERL Report over the 30 years from 2022 to 2053. I also briefly refer to *Tararua District land assessment* (BERL, 2026), prepared by Killian Destremau and Hugh Dixon, which projects residential land demand and supply in Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua, and Eketāhuna to 2055. I have not updated either the 2023 or 2026 forecasts.

C. CODE OF CONDUCT

6. I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I confirm that I have stated the reasons for the opinions I express in this statement, considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from those opinions, and that the issues addressed in this statement are within my area of expertise.

7. I have addressed the following issues in this statement:

    a. The growth context.

    b. The BAU and aspirational scenarios.

    c. Forecasts for Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua, and Eketāhuna.

8. Statements expressed in this statement are made within the scope of my expertise.

9. My evidence relies on the data and forecasts in the BERL Report; I have not independently updated them.

D. SCOPE

10. My evidence addresses matters related to the long-term economic growth context and scenarios for Tararua district.

11. In preparing this statement, I have reviewed the following information:

a. The BERL 2023 and 2026 reports, including their supporting tables. Economic growth and commercial and industrial land projections are drawn from the 2023 report. I also briefly refer to the 2026 assessment of residential land demand and supply.

12. My evidence does not address planning provisions.

E. BACKGROUND

13. Tararua is the third largest district in New Zealand (424,000 hectares), with four urban areas (Dannevirke, Woodville, Eketāhuna, and Pahiatua) surrounded by a large rural area. In 2022 Tararua's GDP was $830 million (excluding owner-occupied dwellings), employment was 6,962 full-time equivalents (FTEs), and occupied commercial and industrial land was 131 hectares (95 industrial, 36 commercial).

14. The forecasts follow an employment-led approach to estimating future commercial and industrial land requirements. Population and wider economic growth provide the underlying context for projected GDP and employment growth. Forecast employment is then translated into land requirements using the existing relationship between FTE employment and occupied land by industry.

F. GROWTH CONTEXT, SCENARIOS, AND RESULTS

Growth context

15. Commercial and industrial land is needed to accommodate the projected growth. The forecasts show additional demand of between 56 hectares (BAU) and 118 hectares (aspirational) of occupied land by 2053, on top of the 131 hectares occupied in 2022. Most of this additional demand is for industrial land. The land provided also needs to be sufficient to accommodate long-term demand and attract investment across Dannevirke, Woodville, Eketāhuna, and Pahiatua as well as rural Tararua.

16. With regard to the current supply and vacancy of industrial land, the Tararua District Council *Final Urban Growth Strategy* and Mr Batley's evidence identify a limited supply of vacant industrial land capable of accommodating development at scale.

17. Further, Te Ahu a Tūranga – Manawatū Tararua Highway opened in June 2025 and has become a key gateway to Tararua. It connects the district to the rest of the Manawatū-Whanganui region. Population growth is expected to be driven by this better connectivity and by increased business activity in the district, which will need to be catered for. BERL assumes a 0.2 percent uplift above the baseline population growth because of the new roading infrastructure.

Scenarios

18. The BAU represents a continuation of established demographic and economic trends. Population growth is based on the Stats NZ high population projection, while economic and employment growth draws on BERL's national economic forecasts, translated to the Tararua economy and its industry structure.

19. The aspirational scenario provides a higher-growth pathway, reflecting stronger population and economic outcomes and the Council's ambitions for economic development, including targeted additional growth in Woodville. It is an indication of the land requirements that could arise if growth exceeds the BAU trajectory. The 2023 aspirational scenario assumes that Tararua's industries grow by one percentage point per annum more than under BAU, alongside stronger population growth.

Growth projections

20. Under the BAU scenario, Tararua's population is projected to increase by around 3,300 people, or 17 percent, between 2022 and 2053, reaching 22,350. The aspirational scenario assumes stronger urban growth, with the population of the four main centres increasing by approximately 4,090 people, or 37 percent, between 2023 and 2053, including an 80 percent increase in Woodville.

21. The forecasts assume that Tararua will benefit from long-term national economic growth. Under BAU, Tararua's productive GDP increases from $830 million in 2022 to $1.208 billion in 2053, compared with $1.605 billion under the aspirational scenario. Because the land forecasts are ultimately linked to employment, employment increases from 6,962 FTEs in 2022 to 8,330 under BAU and 11,091 under the aspirational scenario by 2053. Rural Tararua and Dannevirke account for much of the absolute increase, while the aspirational scenario produces particularly strong growth in Woodville. Under BAU,

occupied commercial and industrial land increases from 131 hectares in 2022 to 188 hectares in 2053, while under the aspirational scenario it reaches 250 hectares. Most of the additional requirement is industrial land.

22. BERL's 2026 residential land assessment also compared projected demand with available supply in Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua, and Eketāhuna to 2055. An additional 47 hectares of residential land is required under the medium scenario; 94 hectares under the high scenario; and 117 hectares under the aspirational scenario to cater for the projected growth. Mr Batley's evidence notes that the aspirational scenario has been adopted within the plan change, with the additional supply to be provided in sufficient quantities to respond to the projected growth.

Economic centres forecast

23. Dannevirke is the largest centre. It is forecast to grow steadily to about 6,800 people and a GDP of $361 million by 2053 under BAU, and 7,000 people and a GDP of $441 million under the aspirational scenario, with employment increasing from about 2,250 FTEs to 2,700 under BAU or 3,330 under the aspirational scenario.

24. Woodville is the centre most dependent on the scenario adopted. Under BAU it is forecast to grow modestly to about 2,250 people and 228 FTEs. Under the aspirational scenario, if the Council attracts industry, it could reach 3,000 people, 700 FTEs, and 24 hectares of mostly industrial land.

25. Pahiatua is forecast to grow steadily to about 3,600 people and 1,221 FTEs under BAU, or 4,000 people and about 1,560 FTEs under the aspirational scenario, with occupied business land increasing from 23 to 32 or 39 hectares.

26. Eketāhuna is the smallest centre. Under BAU, it is forecast to grow slowly to about 720 people and 228 FTEs. Under the aspirational scenario, it would nearly double to 1,000 people and 372 FTEs.

G. SUBMISSIONS

27. I have not considered submissions as part of this work.

H. CONCLUSIONS

28. The population and economic growth drivers summarised in the BAU, and aspirational scenarios indicate that the Tararua District is expected to grow over the next 30 years. Additional land capacity to accommodate future industrial activity and residential growth will be required.

29. The Tararua District Council Final Urban Growth Strategy and Mr Batley's evidence identify a limited supply of vacant industrial land capable of accommodating development at scale, supporting the need for additional industrial land to be zoned. To respond to the projected growth, additional industrial land supply will need to be provided to accommodate projected growth across Dannevirke, Woodville, Eketāhuna, and Pahiatua as well as rural Tararua. Enough capacity would need to be provided to attract demand and signal supply to the market to invest for the long term.

Killian Destremau

25 November 2026