

4th May 2018

John Stace
Advisory Board Member
Craggy Range Vineyards Ltd
253 Waimarama Road
Havelock North 4294

Dear John

Re: Te Mata Peak 'Craggy Range Track'
Rehabilitation Report Peer Review

As you are aware, I have been engaged by Craggy Range to undertake an independent peer review of the 'Investigation Into Options for the Te Mata Peak Track' report that has been prepared by Hudson Associates, April 2018 (hereafter referred to as the 'Hudson Report'). This letter sets out the findings of my review.

Background

The track was granted consent by the Hastings District Council (RMA20170324) in October 2017, and construction commenced shortly afterward. During construction there was significant public, iwi and media tumult in regard to the effects of the earthworks, and construction was halted. Craggy Range then engaged Hudson Associates, landscape architects, to investigate options to remedy and/or mitigate the visual effects. This letter provides a peer review of the recommendations that have been presented in the Hudson Report.

The focus of my review is to look ahead. I have not considered the consenting process or whether there were any faults or deficiencies in this process. I also have not reviewed any of the resource consent application material, other than the granted consent and the related conditions. My baseline premise is that a consent has been granted, the track has already been constructed, and what is sought now is an investigation on how to reduce the effects being experienced.

In undertaking my review, I have met with John Hudson of Hudson Associates on several occasions to discuss his approach to exploring remediation options, and iteratively provided feedback on various draft reports. I have walked the full length of the track, and viewed it from the top of Te Mata Peak and several locations along Waimarama Road (including from the Craggy Range car park). I have also read the geotechnical report that was commissioned by Hudson Associates.



Although I am aware of the varying public and interested parties' opinions on the track, the opinions contained in this review are my own. They are based on my professional assessment of the track, its effects, and the recommendations set out in the Hudson Report. I have not assumed that any particular outcome is favoured, and I have not considered the cost of rehabilitation or where additional funding (if necessary) might come from.

Methodology

The Hudson Report sets out the methodology used in the remediation assessment on pages 4 and 5. It considers that there are five categories for consideration, as follows:

- ▶ Remediation – fill the track with existing spill material and preclude any future access
- ▶ Restoration – completely reinstate the track using geotextile methods and additional fill material, then regrass
- ▶ Provide Additional Mitigation – undertake additional work (that is within the scope of the original resource consent) to minimise the perceived adverse landscape and visual effects
- ▶ Compliance – complete the track in accordance with the conditions of the resource consent, but do nothing further
- ▶ Forced Abandonment – completely abandon the track, an option that may be necessary if the existing resource consent is required to be set aside

Later in the report, 'alternatives' are also considered that may involve other parties or that may have planning implications.

In investigating the options, further technical advice has been sought in the fields of geotechnical engineering, planning, plant identification and orthomapping. Overall, the report is set out in a format that would be expected of a technical landscape report.

I am of the opinion that the Hudson report has been prepared using a sound and detailed methodology. It sets out the landscape context, considers the effects that have occurred (or are perceived) as a result of the partial construction of the track (including the implications of land management), before investigating the options available and their likely effectiveness. All of these appear to have been considered from a landscape basis, independent of any particular agenda or directive.

Landscape Context

Pages 6 to 17 provide a detailed description of the landscape in which the track is situated, and I consider this is based on sound assessment and research.

Of particular note, the landscape description considers the track as part of the existing environment. I agree that this is an appropriate determination, given that it has a consent and has been constructed. Any potential solutions for remediation of the effects of the track cannot be 'theoretical' – they must be practical solutions based on it physically being present.



I also note that a commentary has been provided on the cultural value of Te Mata Peak, but that a specific Cultural Impact Assessment has not been commissioned or provided. I am aware that Ngāti Kahungunu have cultural associations with the eastern side of the peak (where the track is located) that are not fully explained in the public domain. I would anticipate that through ongoing dialogue with Ngāti Kahungunu such values can be better understood, and appropriate measures can be considered through a collaborative process.

Effects

The Hudson Report provides an analysis of the actual and perceived landscape and visual effects of the track. It notes that effects change over time, particularly during the day as shadow lines extend, then recede, across the hill face. I note that visual effects will also change throughout the year as vegetation colours change, and over time will recede similar to other tracks in the vicinity.

I agree with the Hudson Report that the linear forms of the track contrast with the smooth cover of the grazed pasture (page 18). I also note that additional effects may result over time depending on the wider land management regimes used between the boundary fences (which is addressed on page 29), and the development of new 'shortcut' tracks (considered on page 24).

Overall, I am of the opinion that the Hudson Report has appropriately assessed and/or addressed the actual and potential landscape and visual effects of the track, and therefore has provided a suitable baseline for considering the effectiveness of remediation solutions.

Evaluation of Options

The Hudson Report has considered a wide variety of options to address the effects of the track, including:

- ▶ Management of loose fill that has been pushed over the banks
- ▶ Battering back of cut slopes and re-grassing
- ▶ Weed management
- ▶ Wider land management, including relocation of fences
- ▶ Planting, of different scales and types (including full revegetation of the entire site)
- ▶ Using geotechnical methods to stabilise new fill
- ▶ Using structures such as retaining walls and boardwalks
- ▶ Considering alternative routes

I have been involved in discussions with Mr Hudson about the potential effectiveness of all of these options, and we have independently evaluated the pros and cons of applying each, or how a combination of options might work.

Following my own review of the options presented and assessment of the physical landscape, I concur with the conclusion of the Hudson Report, at page 31, that none will ensure total removal of the visible indentation that has been created by the construction of the track. I agree that any



rehabilitation is an exercise in minimisation of effects, and cannot hope to be full remediation to the pre-construction condition. However, I also consider that some of the alternative options considered, such as revegetation, would likely result in positive landscape outcomes.

The lack of a Cultural Impact Assessment makes it difficult to ascertain whether any of the above options provide appropriate mitigation of cultural landscape effects.

I am also mindful that there is demand for the track, as outlined on pages 15-17 of the Hudson Report. Walking up the track, on this side of Te Mata Peak, is now becoming an established, and possible, activity within the existing landscape. Removing the track in its entirety would result in adverse effects on recreational users.

In my opinion, agreement to which options are undertaken will require an evaluation by Craggy Range that considers additional factors outside the scope of the Hudson Report and this peer review (such as legal/planning constraints and investment requirements). Ideally, such decisions would be made in collaboration with key stakeholders, including Council and iwi. It is likely that a combination of options is likely the best approach (alluded to on page 31 of the Hudson Report), or consideration of additional measures that provide enhancement to the landscape as a whole.

Therefore, I am of the opinion that the approach taken to group the options into categories loosely based around remediation, restoration, additional mitigation, compliance and alternatives is useful for decision making. Such approach allows a general direction to be considered, before detailed plans are prepared.

Overall, I consider that the Hudson Report outlines, and considers the effectiveness, of all the available options. It does not provide a recommendation on which option should be undertaken, but I consider that this is appropriate. Such a decision is best made by Craggy Range, in collaboration with others, after which detailed plans can be prepared for the chosen approach.

Conclusions

In general, I find that the Hudson Report has appropriately assessed the effects of the track, and comprehensively outlines the available options for mitigating these effects. I concur with the findings of the report that the track cannot be fully remediated or removed.

I also agree that a forced abandonment option is by far the least desirable option from a landscape and visual effects perspective. At the very least, the track should be completed to comply with the existing resource consent conditions. However, I also consider that there are potential options available that might provide overall enhancement of the landscape (such as revegetation), whilst allowing retention of the walking activity that has now been established.

In addition, I consider it would be useful to develop a longer-term maintenance plan that provides for the control of plant weed species, and management of the track surface to reduce slippage and maintain user safety.



John, thank you for the opportunity to provide advice on this matter. Should you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Shannon Bray
NZILA Registered Landscape Architect