

**BEFORE THE PANEL APPOINTED ON BEHALF OF CENTRAL OTAGO
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Under	The Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act)
In the Matter	of an application for subdivision and land use consents to undertake a two-lot subdivision and a building platform and residential dwelling RM260040
Between	KEVIN JOHN PAULIN Applicant
And	CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT COUNCIL Local Authority

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF KEVIN PAULIN

DATED 27 JULY 2026



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BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF KEVIN PAULIN

Introduction

1. My full name is Kevin John Paulin. I am the Applicant and reside at the property subject to the consent application at 1043 Earnscleugh Road, Alexandra (**Site**) along with my wife Margaret. We have personally owned the property for the past 12 years.
2. We have made this application to support our son Robert and his Partner, Kathryn, build their family home and life near us in Clyde.
3. I am also a director of Clyde Orchards (1990) Limited (**Clyde Orchards**).
4. Clyde Orchards has also submitted in support of the application, as it owns the property at 2196 Hawksburn Road, which is across the road from the Site.
5. My evidence is intended to provide assistance to the Hearings Panel in terms of the rural productivity of the Site. In this evidence, I discuss:
 - (a) My experience.
 - (b) My history with the Site.
 - (c) Productive capacity of the Site.

My experience

6. Clyde Orchards operates in Earnscleugh, Bannockburn and Ardgour with 100 hectares of orchard blocks across 9 sites. I grew up on the family orchard and was educated locally at Dunstan High School, before completing a science degree at the University of Otago. I have

been within the horticulture industry for over 40 years, working full time on the family orchard and representing the third generation of the Paulin family to grow fruit on this land. Over that time I have been directly involved in establishing, managing and expanding orchard blocks across Earnscliffe, Bannockburn and Ardour, gaining first-hand experience of the specific soil, climate and frost conditions that determine which sites in Central Otago can sustain commercial fruit production and which cannot. I have also contributed to the wider industry through many years on the Otago Fruitgrowers Advisory board, and 10 years on the Summerfruit NZ board, first as a grower representative and then as an export director. Clyde Orchards currently employs 12 full-time and up to 150 seasonal staff, and we continue to look at expansion opportunities using new orchard technology, including automated rain-cover (cravo) systems.

7. Clyde Orchards is a family-run business, owned and operated by the Paulin family for over 100 years. We specialise in cherries and Flatto peaches, and export cherries to markets including Taiwan and China. The business now operates across more than 100 hectares over nine sites: approximately 40 hectares on four sites in Earnscliffe (including 6 hectares under fully automated cravo rain-cover), 30 hectares on four sites in Bannockburn, and 30 hectares on one site in Ardour. Each site has been selected specifically for its suitability to the crops planted there, reflecting our extensive experience in identifying land capable of sustaining productive, high-quality fruit growing. My experience in growing fruit is complemented by 30 years' involvement in packing and marketing our production, including as a part owner and director of CVE Exports, one of the most successful grower-owned New Zealand export companies dealing directly with customers in Asia, with Taiwan as our main export market for the past 30 years. We have also worked jointly with the Yummy Fruit Company to enable direct sales to all the major supermarket chains and retail outlets.

History with the Site

8. The Site was purchased by my father in the early 1970s, with the intention of establishing a block of apricots. It was fully planted, along with one of the first overhead irrigation systems in the district, installed for frost protection. Despite my father's extensive experience as a fruit grower, the planting was not successful; most trees, particularly on the bottom terrace, survived only a few years before dying from bacterial blast. In the 1980s, part of the lower block was replanted in apples, again without lasting success. Nectarines were subsequently trialled on the site for a period but were also eventually removed due to poor tree health and fruit quality. The bottom terrace has not been planted in the last 20 years. Only in the past six years have we had some success growing Flatto peaches on the higher terrace, which we deliberately selected as the only part of the Site we believed could be productive.

9. Myself and my wife Meg purchased the Site from Clyde Orchards 12 years ago and built our home on the Site 2 years later. Beyond its role as our home, it holds significance as land that has been in the Paulin family for over 50 years. Our son and his partner wish to build on the property to support intergenerational living, allowing our family to remain close to one another while maintaining independent households. The Site's location also provides convenient access to the family business, supporting its ongoing operation and reducing the need for travel. Living close to family in this way provides practical day-to-day support and strengthens our resilience and wellbeing as a family over the long term.

Productive capacity of the Site

10. In selecting land for orchard development, frost risk is a hugely important factor, along with soil type. Low-lying land on valley floors is generally the least desirable, as nearly all of our successful plantings are on higher land with better frost drainage. Soil structure and fertility

are also critical, as they directly affect fruit quality and long-term tree health. Our Bannockburn and Ardgour blocks, for example, sit within favourable micro-climates with low frost risk and good soil structure.

11. The bottom terrace of the Site does not share conditions conducive to fruit growing. The bottom terrace has very light, sandy soil with poor fertility, unsuited to stonefruit production, combined with poor cold air drainage that leaves it significantly colder overnight than our other orchard land. These combined factors have made repeated attempts at planting apricots, apples, and nectarines, unsuccessful over more than 40 years. As a consequence of that experience, we consider further commercial planting on this terrace to be uneconomic.

12. The Site is terraced, and this has a direct and significant effect on growing conditions within it. The lowest terrace is at least 2°C colder overnight than the higher terrace where our home is located, and at times has been recorded as up to 3°C colder than our other Earnsclough orchard blocks. This makes the lower terrace significantly more prone to frost, and when frosts do occur, they are more severe. This cold air drainage, combined with the light sandy soil, created the conditions that caused frost damage to new growth on the original apricot plantings, allowing bacterial blast to take hold and kill otherwise strong, healthy trees. This is a pattern we have seen repeated across multiple planting attempts (apricots, apples, and nectarines) over more than 40 years. In my experience, this part of the Site is not suited to commercial fruit production. The proposed Lot 2 location of the site is best suited to accommodating a dwelling and production of vegetables or nut trees. The proposed inhabitants of Lot 2 are more likely to make productive use of the land.

13. The Site is identified within the Central Otago District Plan as being located in an area with 800 or more growing degree days (GDD). While GDD is a useful indicator of accumulated seasonal heat at a regional scale, it is not intended to assess the productive capacity of individual

sites and does not account for localised topographic and microclimatic effects.

14. As discussed above, the Site is subject to site-specific microclimatic conditions that are not reflected in the District Plan's GDD mapping. These conditions are the primary factor influencing the Site's productive capacity and have had a greater effect on horticultural viability than the regional GDD classification.
15. Accordingly, the mapped GDD value should be given limited weight when assessing the productive capacity of the Site. The long-term performance of the land provides a more reliable assessment of its productive capability and demonstrates that the proposed subdivision is aligned with the Site's actual land use capability.
16. If the Site was suitable for use as an orchard, then we would have developed it accordingly many years ago. Due to the qualities of the lower terrace I have described in this evidence, it does not hold productive capacity as an orchard.
17. As mentioned, the lower terrace may have some productive capacity for vegetables and nuts. The location of the house does not limit that as it is located on the steeper land which, in my experience you would largely avoid if putting in vegetable patches or a nut grove. For that reason, I don't think the proposal will limit the productive capacity of the land at all.

Dated 27 July 2026

K J Paulin