

Submission for Te Awa Lakes Hearing

I am Russell Alexander, Co-founder and CEO of Hobbiton Movie Set situated between Matamata and Cambridge. One of the largest International tourist attractions in NZ.

Independent reports say this brings in \$78m to Matamata annually, (4 years ago with growth over \$100m now). We employ over 300 people directly let along indirectly (probably 450 now). We have 650,000 visitors per year visit 80/20 international/domestic split.

We as a region need these sort of developments, the Te Awa Lakes would be a gateway to Waikato and this is a real bonus for our region as Waikato is really progressing in tourism. As Auckland International gateway has problems with logistics/traffic and no real attractions.

It is our opportunity to create housing/infrastructure/tourism – clusters needed.

People need a central base as they only come to us for 2 hours. We have Raglan, Waitomo, Hamilton, Cambridge etc.

The track record of Perry Group: my understanding is that the Perry Group underwrote the Waikato Stadium, in some way, and how would Hamilton be a “real city” without a stadium. Look at what the Cambridge Avanti Veladrome has done for Cambridge and Waikato with the Perry Group being a major driver. It’s massive as Cambridge is the home for rowing and now cycling, actually sport and leisure. This also extends to the cycle trail – a John Key initiative years ago expanding throughout region (linkage).

As a summary we are lucky this is a private entity, not public money and what an opportunity for both Hamilton and the Waikato.

I am totally supportive and would like to submit this one-page submission for the record.