

BEFORE THE TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of Resource Consent Applications RM120928V2 (land use change of conditions), RM190790 (land use), RM190789 (subdivision), RM190791 (land disturbance), and RM191308 (water permit)

By The Integrity Care Group Limited
(Applicant)

And in respect of proposed changes to the existing retirement village (Olive Estate Lifestyle Village) at Lakehouse Crescent, and a proposed extension of on to a site at Hill Street, Richmond

EVIDENCE OF CHRISTOPHER WARD
Dated this 10 February 2021

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1 My name is Christopher Walter Ward.
- 2 I am the Managing Director of Policy Works Limited, a consultancy company that specialises in working with local government to deliver community outcomes. I have over 12 years' experience working in and with local government.
- 3 I graduated with distinction in 1997 with a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from the University of Stirling.
- 4 In 2009 I joined Nelson City Council as a Community Policy Advisor. My work included the development of Reserve Management Plans and development of policy for Saxton Field Sportsground.
- 5 In 2011 I was employed by Nelson City Council as Manager Strategic Response. I managed a team of 11 policy and planning advisors that worked across all Council activities, including RMA plan changes; Parks and Reserves policy; and development of Asset/Activity Management Plans.
- 6 In 2013 I was employed by the Nelson City Council as Manager Environmental Programmes – responsible for the delivery of non-regulatory projects and programmes to meet Council's environmental outcomes.
- 7 In 2014 I was appointed as Group Manger Community Services, with overall responsibility for delivering the Council's Long Term Plan work programme for Community Development, Parks and Reserves, Libraries, Festivals and Heritage. I managed the business of both the Sports and Recreation Committee and the Community Services Committee.
- 8 I established Policy Works Limited in 2018. Since then, I have worked with a number of councils and other agencies to provide strategic advice, policy direction and options assessments aimed at delivering better outcomes for communities.
- 9 In preparing this evidence I have relied on:
 - (a) a site visit to the Olive Estate Lifestyle Village development area;
 - (b) review of relevant Tasman District Council's planning and policy documents and Council reports.

CODE OF CONDUCT

10 Although not required for this hearing, I confirm that I have read and agree to be bound by the Environment Court Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses and confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express in the following evidence. The evidence I give is within my expertise.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

11 I have been engaged by Integrity Care Group Limited, owners of the Olive Estate Lifestyle Village, to review proposals for the provision of green space within the Village development by the owner instead of vesting a public reserve in Tasman District Council.

12 I will restrict my comments to the Local Government Policy Framework and the relevant content of the Officers Report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

13 The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA02) sets out the purpose of local government, which is:¹

(a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and

(b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

14 The LGA is not prescriptive about how councils should achieve (b). Councils have the ability to deliver services and facilities themselves, to contract these out, or to work with others in the community to deliver the desired outcomes.

15 Under LGA02, every three years councils have to develop a Long Term Plan (LTP) which sets out their work programme and priorities for the following ten years. Tasman District Council's current LTP was approved in 2018.

16 The LTP contains a vision, mission and a set of community outcomes that are the goals the Council seeks to achieve as follows:²

Vision: Thriving Communities Enjoying the Tasman Lifestyle

Mission: To Enhance Community Well-Being and Quality of Life

¹ LGA02, s 10.

² Tasman District Council Long Term Plan 2018-28.

Outcomes:

- 1. Our unique natural environment is healthy and protected.*
- 2. Our urban and rural environments are people-friendly, well-planned and sustainably managed.*
- 3. Our infrastructure is efficient, cost-effective and meets current and future needs.*
- 4. Our communities are healthy, safe, inclusive and resilient.*
- 5. Our communities have opportunities to celebrate and explore their heritage, identity and creativity.*
- 6. Our communities have access to a range of social, educational and recreational facilities and activities.*
- 7. Our Council provides leadership and fosters partnerships, a regional perspective and community engagement.*
- 8. Our region is supported by an innovative and sustainable economy.*

17 The Olive Estate proposal delivers many of these outcomes, as it:

- Provides a well-planned, people-friendly community environment
- Makes private infrastructure available for use by the general public, delivering cost-effectiveness for the Council
- Provides a range of active recreation opportunities for the community, enhancing wellbeing
- Delivers a partnership approach to support an innovative and sustainable contribution to the local economy

18 Sitting underneath the LTP is a series of policy and planning documents that provide more detail on how the Council intends to deliver the identified work programme.

19 The following are of relevance to this evidence:

- Tasman District Council Reserves and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2018
- Tasman District Council Open Space Strategy 2014
- Tasman District Council Age-Friendly Policy 2019

20 The Council also deals with specific issues as they arise through Council reports. The following report is referenced in this evidence:

- Tasman District Council report RCD19-04-2 'Levels of Service Report' 04 April 2019.

TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL RESERVES AND FACILITIES ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018

21 Tasman District Council Reserves and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2018 describes the strategies and work programmes for the Council's reserves and facilities activity.

22 The Activity Management Plan sets out the Levels of Service that will be provided by the Council to its community. The Level of Service relating to open space provision is identified as:

An interconnected open space network and recreation facilities that provide a range of leisure opportunities and meet the needs of users and the community

23 There are two relevant measures identified:³

- *The total area of park land provided by Council exceeds the minimum of 4 ha per 1000 residents required by the Tasman Resource Management Plan*
- *At least 85% of properties zoned Residential are located within 500 meters of open space*

24 The area of park "space" across the district, as of 30 June 2018, was 15.8 ha per 1000 residents, 11.8 ha per 1000 residents more than the Levels of Service performance measure.⁴

25 The Activity Management Plan identifies that it is meeting the performance measure that 85% of properties zoned Residential are located within 500 metres of open space. For those properties not within 500 metres of a Council reserve, Council has identified alternative open space, e.g., school grounds, that can be used by the community.

26 Under its current performance measures, there is no requirement for Tasman District Council to provide a new public open space area.

³ Tasman District Council Reserves and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2018, page 32-33.

⁴ This performance measure is taken from the Tasman Resource Management Plan, Policy 14.1.3.1.

TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2015-2025

27 The Tasman District Council Open Space Strategy defines open space as:⁵

Areas of land or water that the public has a level of free physical or visual access. This includes 'green spaces' such as parks, reserves, walkways and cycleways, and estuaries, the sea, harbours, coast, streams and rivers, and their margins.

28 It goes on to state:

... it is recognised that privately owned open space also makes a considerable contribution to the development of an open space network.

29 The strategy identifies that a survey of residents found walkways and cycleways were the most frequently visited setting with 44% of respondents using them once a week or more. Local or neighbourhood parks, although probably the most accessible open space setting considered by the study, were visited less frequently (44% visited at least 1 to 2 times a month) than rural recreation settings (57%).⁶

30 The Vision for the Open Space Strategy is:⁷

Tasman is a wonderful place to live and visit. A key component – the region's comprehensive network of well-managed open spaces – is highly valued by residents and visitors alike.

31 In relation to managing the quantity of open space in the District, the Strategy states:⁸

The Tasman District is renowned for its peri-urban, rural and coastal areas of open space, and investing in these, rather than small urban reserves may provide greater benefit for all residents.

32 In my opinion, the proposal by Integrity Care Group Limited is entirely consistent with the Vision and Policy outlined in the Council's Open Space Strategy. The proposed green space provides the public with a level of free physical and visual access and it contributes to the wider network of open spaces, and does not "need" to be owned by Council i.e., it is achieved in any event. What is proposed is wholly consistent with Council's vision, outcome and strategy.

⁵ Tasman District Council Open Space Strategy, page 9.

⁶ p42.

⁷ p21.

⁸ p23.

THE LANGDALE DRIVE PETITION

- 33 On 13 December 2018 a petition, with 175 signatures supporting a reserve on Lot 57 (corner of Langdale Drive and Stedyl Crescent, Richmond, approx. 160 m from the entrance to the village), was delivered to Tasman District Council's Community Development Committee.
- 34 The Community Development Committee received a report on the issues raised by the petition on 04 April 2019. It reviewed the Levels of Service as they applied to the Richmond Ward. The report states:⁹

The accessibility level of service requires at least 85% of properties zoned Residential to be within 500 m of open space ...

The performance measure of 85% does enable some gaps and, in most cases, there are school grounds or other open space areas that offset the shortfall ...

Analysis of reserve provision in the Richmond settlement area shows that the 500 m proximity to open space is achieved in the entire residential area except for a small gap in the vicinity of Roeske Street. (emphasis added)

- 35 The report included a map of Richmond showing the extent of coverage of reserves. I have attached this as appendix 1a. I have also added a 500 m radius to the site of the indicative reserve (appendix 1b).
- 36 The report notes that gaps in coverage can be provided by school grounds or other open spaces.¹⁰ I consider that the Olive Estate proposal provides an 'other open space'.
- 37 The report concludes:¹¹

The current policy framework for open space provision and accessibility in Tasman are soundly based and are being achieved. The levels of service are consistent with those of other New Zealand local authorities.

SOCIAL WELLBEING OUTCOMES

- 38 The Tasman District Council Reserves and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2018 states:

The provision of open spaces and recreational facilities contributes to the development of healthy, active, functioning communities. Council recognises that

⁹ paras 4.5-4.6.

¹⁰ para 4.5.

¹¹ para 10.1.

it plays a key role in creating the environment in which communities can prosper and enjoy improved health and wellbeing. We therefore aim to ensure that adequate parks and reserves are provided for the community and that these are managed and maintained in a way that meets community expectations and encourages community involvement.

39 This is consistent with the ‘social wellbeing’ outcome identified by LGA02.

40 The Vision from Tasman District Council’s Age-Friendly Policy¹² is:

The Tasman District will be a vibrant age-friendly community where older people are valued, visible and socially connected. Council services, activities and housing will be accessible and affordable.

41 Its guiding principles¹³ include:

- *Make provision for the ageing population in our strategic plans, recognising that the key issues (social connection, accessibility and affordability) are interconnected.*
- *Recognise that an age-friendly community is one that almost always works for everyone.*
- *Focus on areas which align with the purpose of local government, as defined in the Local Government Act.*
- *Recognise that there are already a great number of services and facilities that provide positive outcomes for older people, which the Policy will build on and promote.*

42 Olive Estate Lifestyle Village’s focus is catering for the needs and expectations of people aged over 55. The entire development is designed to provide age-friendly facilities. The proposal to open green spaces for public access enhances social connection and accessibility, and so contributes to enhancing the social wellbeing of Tasman District residents. There is no need for the space to be vested in, and owned by Council, for it to be “provided” or made available to the public.

43 Walking is one of the most popular forms of activity for older adults. Olive Estate Lifestyle Village already provides a well-designed walkway network with multiple green spaces, a pétanque court, community gardens, a children’s play area and a large pond.

¹² p4.

¹³ p4.

All are landscaped to a high quality. The proposal to further extend this green walkway network will further enhance the wellbeing of the users.

RESERVES PLANNING CONSULTATION

- 44 One of the key factors that Councils need to take into consideration when planning facilities is: what are the needs and views of the local community?
- 45 Need is assessed by looking at the demographics of the relevant community, identifying issues facing that demographic and options for addressing those issues. Consultation is then scaled to the level of the issue – for district wide issues, such as the draft LTP, all residents should have the opportunity to have their say. For local issues, such as planning for a local park, the consultation may be restricted to those living in the immediate vicinity of the proposal.
- 46 Olive Estate Lifestyle Village caters to the over 55s. It currently has 218 residents with an average age of 74. This number will increase if the proposed development goes ahead. Given the location of the requested indicative reserve, it would seem that the majority of the need for the park would be generated by residents of the Village.
- 47 The need would therefore be identified as facilities for older adults to remain connected and stay active. It is unlikely that a rectangular grassed reserve would be identified as a preferred option for this demographic. Instead, a series of connected green areas with seating and other activities, as is proposed by Olive Estates, would, in my opinion, better meet the need.
- 48 Any consultation would focus on people in the Village and some surrounding streets. In my opinion it is highly likely that, given the choices, the residents of the Village would support the green network approach.

OFFICER'S REPORT

- 49 Attachment 4 to the Officer's Report includes a report on 'Integrity Care Group – Provision of Reserves' by Rosalind Squire.
- 50 In her assessment¹⁴, she states that '*The location and size of the indicative reserve in the TRMP provides a clear indication that a reserve is recommended in this area in order for Council to meet its levels of service for reserve provision in the area.*' I imagine that may have been the expectation when the TRMP was drafted, namely that the land would be developed as a standard residential subdivision, but that is not what has happened. That said, Olive Estate Lifestyle Village is making the land available,

¹⁴ p15.

to the extent the public may wish to access it, but that is by choice, not because of any 'need', actual or perceived.

- 51 As I have identified previously, Council's RCD19-04-2 'Levels of Service Report', and Council's Activity Management Plan both state that Levels of Service for Richmond are currently being met (with the exception of Roeske Street).
- 52 The map provided¹⁵ omits some of the reserves which were included in the Council Report.¹⁶ It has not identified Hart Road Reserve Walkway, Olympus Way Reserve Jimmy Lee Creek Reserve or Selbourne Avenue/Cropp Place Reserve. Those omissions rather lead her to an unsupported conclusion – if one adds the areas covered by these Reserves, then it is clear that greenspace is well provided for in the near vicinity and beyond.
- 53 Ms Squire's report acknowledges that land is being offered by Olive Estate for public use, subject to the following conditions:
- (a) the design, construction and maintenance would be the responsibility of Olive Estate;
 - (b) in recognition of the close proximity of the spaces to the villas and care facility, there would be some ability for Olive Estate to ask individuals to leave if they are behaving anti-socially and causing a nuisance to residents; and
 - (c) the timing of when public access is made available so that it would be consistent with the construction and operational schedule.
- 54 I note the high standard of design and maintenance of the existing network, which exceeds that of nearby public reserves (e.g. Chelsea Avenue Reserve and Hart Reserve). I have attached photographs (appendix 2a; b; c) which show these reserves and some of the existing landscaping in Olive Estate.
- 55 The Council's Reserves and Facilities Management Plan 2018¹⁷ shows that the its cumulative renewal expenditure is forecast to be less than its cumulative depreciation over the next 15 years. This is likely to lead to existing open space assets, such as open space areas being run down rather than improved over that timeframe.
- 56 With regard to the other conditions; (b) is not dissimilar from the rights the general public have if they are being subject to anti-social behaviour and nuisance and

¹⁵ p16, figure 9.

¹⁶ appendix 1a.

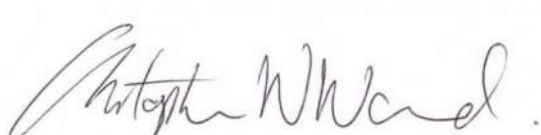
¹⁷ p69-70.

condition (c) is consistent with the approach taken by Councils to ensure people's health and safety whilst work is being undertaken on a reserve.

CONCLUSION

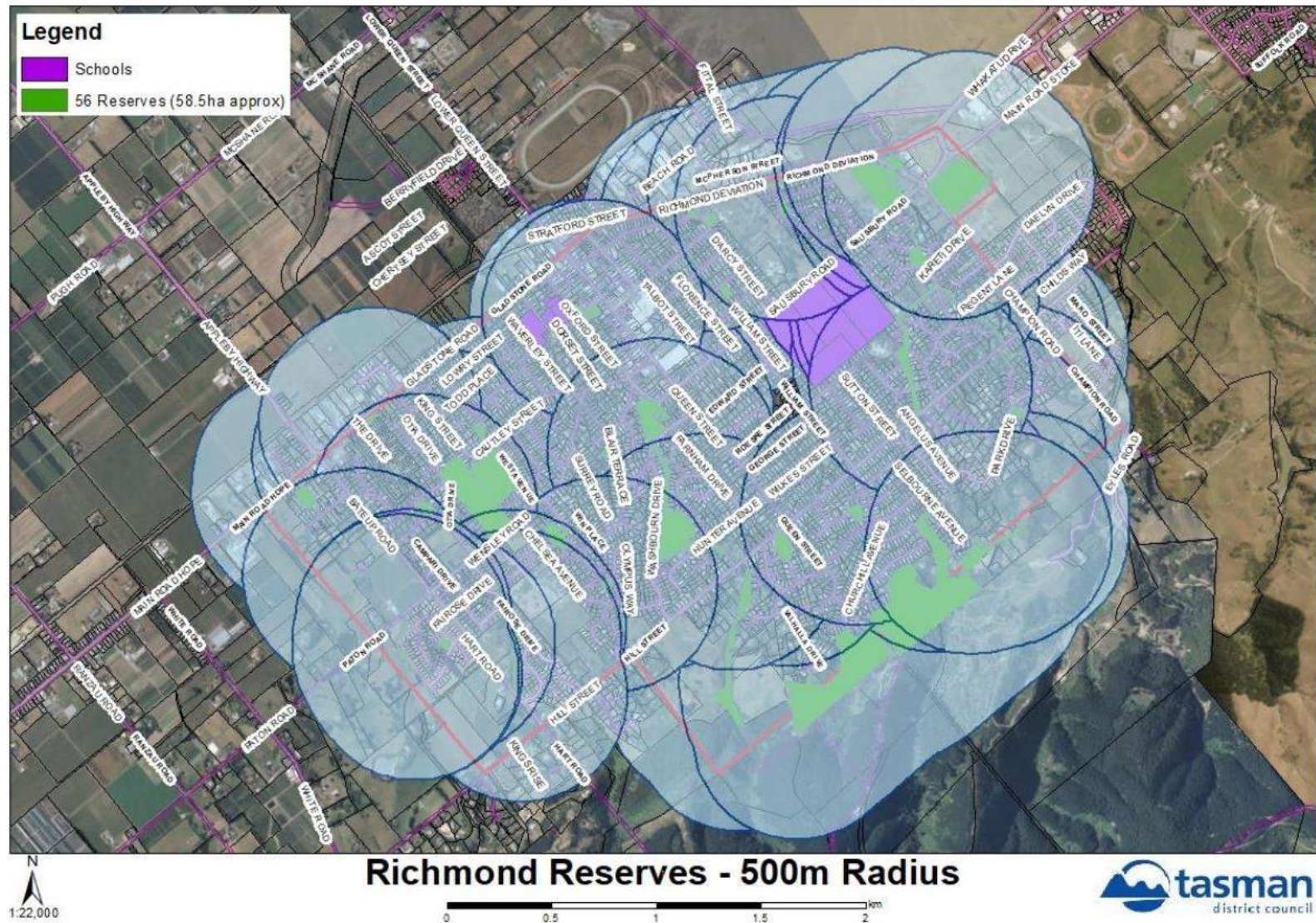
- 57 There is no requirement on Council to provide additional vested reserve in this part of Richmond nor any need for it in this location. It currently provides 15.8 ha per 1000 population, 11.8 ha more than its Level of Service.
- 58 Mapping analysis, provided in a Council Report, shows that the addition of a new reserve would not increase the number of properties to be within 500 m of open space.
- 59 I believe that the proposed approach will deliver better outcomes for the local community than the installation of a standard vested Council reserve. Olive Estate has higher maintenance and design standards than the Council has delivered in other local reserves, and the community receives significant benefits from the proposal at no cost to the Council.
- 60 Improved signage should be installed at public access points to encourage the wider community to access and use the space.

Dated this 10th day of February 2021

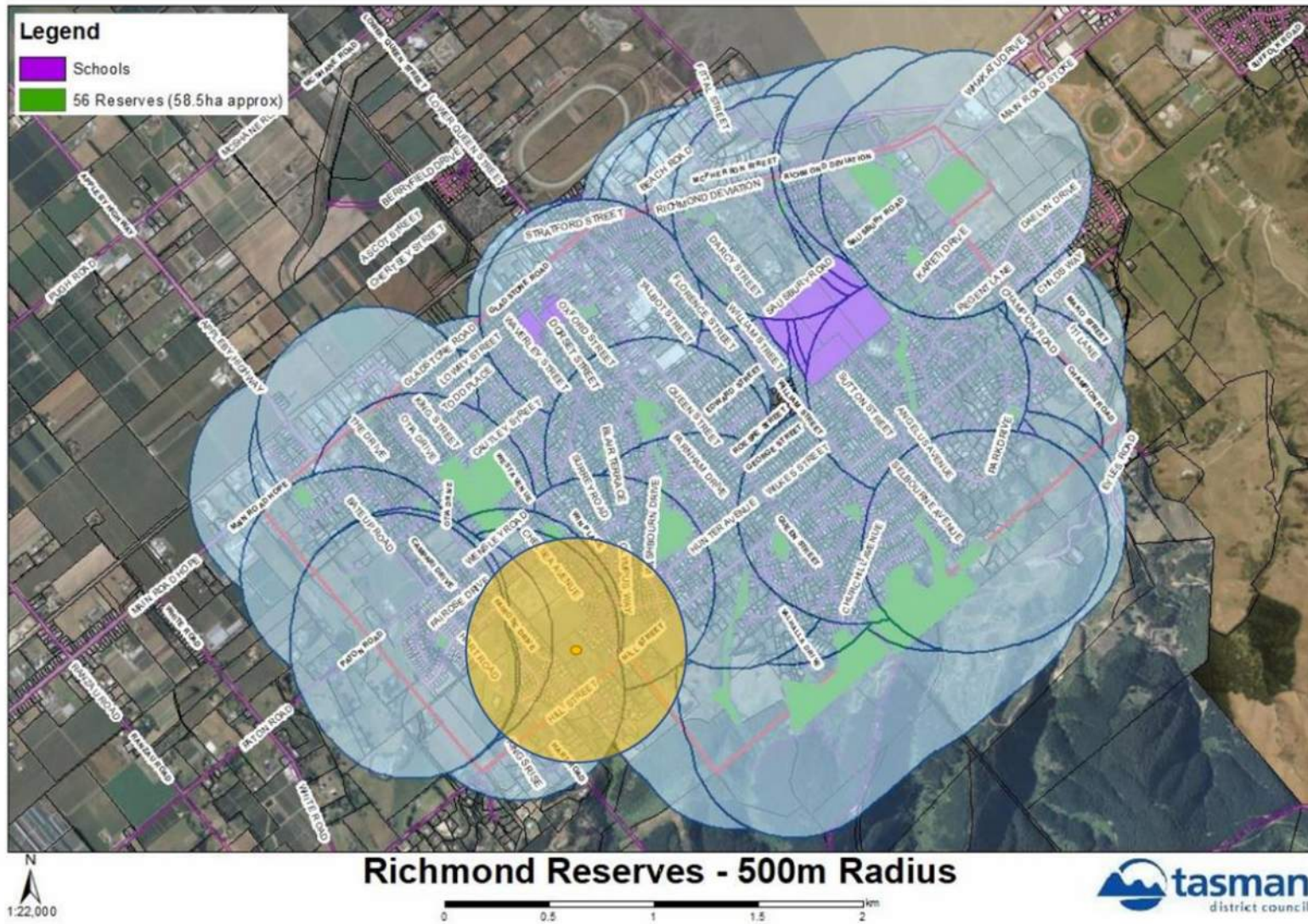


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Christopher Ward

Appendix 1a: Map taken from Tasman District Council Report RCD19-04-2 'Levels of Service Report' 04 April 2019.



Appendix 1b: Map taken from Tasman District Council Report RCD19-04-2 'Levels of Service Report' 04 April 2019 with shaded (orange) area showing 500 m radius from area shown as indicative reserve



Appendix 2a: Hart Reserve



Hart Reserve – improvised BMX track



Hart Reserve – walkway



Appendix 2b: Chelsea Avenue Reserve



Chelsea Avenue Reserve



Chelsea Avenue Reserve



Appendix 2c: Olive Estate – pond area



Olive Estate – landscaping



Olive Estate – play area



Olive Estate – pétanque court and community garden

