

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act  
1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Proposed Canterbury Air  
Regional Plan

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SIMON COOPER  
ON BEHALF OF WINSTONE WALLBOARDS LIMITED**

Dated 23 November 2015

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 My name is Simon Cooper. I am the National Manufacturing Manager for Winstone Wallboards Limited.
- 2 I have been employed by Winstone Wallboards for over 15 years, and have held the position of National Manufacturing Manager for the past two and a half years. In this role, I form part of the company's Senior Management Team.
- 3 My evidence describes Winstone Wallboards' business in Canterbury, including its plasterboard manufacturing and distribution facility in Opawa Road.
- 4 I am authorised to give this statement of evidence on behalf of Winstone Wallboards Limited.
- 5 Winstone Wallboards is New Zealand's largest manufacturer and marketer of gypsum plasterboard, drywall systems, associated products and services. The company has been operating since 1927 and manufactures plasterboard systems under the GIB® brand name. Winstone Wallboards is part of the Light Building Products division of Fletcher Building Limited.
- 6 The GIB® brand is an iconic New Zealand brand and Winstone Wallboards has a proud heritage of being a New Zealand focused and New Zealand based company. Production of plasterboard started in Auckland in 1927. To meet growing demand in the South Island, the company invested in a greenfield plant in Opawa Road in 1961 and this facility continues to operate today. The business also has Auckland manufacturing and distribution facilities located in Penrose as well as a distribution centre in Wellington. Regular innovation and investment in the interior wall and ceiling lining business has kept Winstone Wallboards at the forefront of the New Zealand building supply market.

### **Opawa Road site**

- 7 The Opawa Road site manufactures GIB® plasterboard for domestic and export markets. The site also contains Winstone Wallboards' sole South Island distribution centre. With the exception of a few

specialty product lines, all plasterboard for the South Island market is manufactured and distributed from the site. Even though the site was originally commissioned in 1961, continuous investment in both manufacturing technology and site infrastructure has resulted in the plant retaining its status as a highly efficient, world class manufacturer of plasterboard. Post the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, significant investment in the plant and people have enabled the business to fully support the rapid growth in plasterboard volumes required for the rebuild while continuing to meet demand for the rest of the South Island. This would have been difficult to accomplish without a locally based manufacturing capability.

- 8 The Opawa site currently employs 64 full time staff in a range of highly skilled roles from operations, engineering, technical support, sales and management. In addition, the site provides full time equivalent employment for in excess of 30 contractors. The site also brings significant value to the local economy in terms of raw material logistics, finished goods distribution and the engagement of many specialised services to help maintain and operate the facility.
- 9 The business has invested heavily in the site in the past decade, spending in excess of \$30m to upgrade site capacity and capability. Over \$10m has been specifically invested in environmental improvement projects over this period. These projects have included:
  - (a) a 35,000T bulk gypsum store shed, eliminating the need for external storage of the gypsum stock pile which was previously prone to generating dust;
  - (b) a truck wheel wash facility;
  - (c) water sprays for external yard dust suppression;
  - (d) upgrades to the Plastermill dust collection equipment to improve particulate removal and allow more rapid repair of bag house failures; and
  - (e) installation of combustion process heat recovery technology to improve energy efficiency and reduce discharges to air. An

improvement in energy efficiency of over 10% has been realised.

### **Air discharges**

- 10 The site has the following air discharge points:
- (a) A discharge stack from the Plastermill processing plant. Natural gas combustion processes are used to dry and calcine gypsum in the process of manufacturing plaster. Air mixed with the combustion gas exhaust stream also carries away water vapour from the process. The Plastermill utilises modern dust collection equipment to remove particulates from the exhaust stream. The stack also has a particulate discharge detection instrument that continuously measures particulate concentration. Alarms are automatically raised should concentration limits be exceeded.
  - (b) A supplemental Plastermill process heating exhaust stack that vents natural gas burner combustion gases. The gases do not contact gypsum or plaster so do not need to be passed through a dust collector.
  - (c) A discharge stack from the plasterboard dryer. The dryer removes excess moisture from plasterboard as part of the manufacturing process and this is exhausted to atmosphere as water vapour, along with the natural gas burner combustion gases.
  - (d) A number of minor dust collector discharge points. Dust collection is used in many areas of the process to control internal dust levels in the operational areas.
  - (e) An electricity network peak demand load shedding diesel generator exhaust stack. This generator is limited to 850kW in capacity and only runs when the lines operator or transmission grid operator requests peak electricity load management, or for maintenance.
  - (f) A site emergency power diesel generator exhaust stack located in the warehouse. This 250kW unit supplies emergency power

for lighting and critical business IT systems in the event of a failure in electricity supply from the network.

- 11 By international plasterboard industry standards, the site uses best practice technology in its processes for minimising discharges to air. The site has a comprehensive computerised preventative maintenance system that ensures all sensitive air discharge equipment is maintained in good working order at all times.
- 12 Current manufacturing activities levels could be described as being at their peak, to support the Christchurch rebuild. There are no currently planned changes in capacity or output that would affect air discharges from the site.
- 13 The site is zoned Business 5 zone under the operative Christchurch City Plan and Industrial Heavy under the proposed Christchurch Replacement District Plan. The site holds an air discharge permit for the manufacturing activities on the site as a whole (CRC921758.1, granted 2006) and a separate air discharge permit for the electricity network peak demand load shedding diesel generator (CRC093728, granted 2010). Both of these consents expire in January 2030.
- 14 Winstone Wallboards understands the importance of being a good neighbour in the Opawa area. In response to concerns raised by the Council, the company invested heavily in infrastructure to fully enclose the outdoor gypsum stockpile, and install dust suppression systems for external yard spaces. There have been no dust related complaints or concerns received since these new facilities were commissioned in 2005. The company continues to monitor boundary dust via a series of monitoring stations. In fact, monitoring in recent years has shown that there is typically more dust coming onto the site from external sources, particularly on the site's Opawa Road boundary, than is measured coming off the site.
- 15 Winstone Wallboards has a National Environmental policy (attached) which focuses on protecting the environment and strives for continuous improvement in the areas of energy efficiency, water use efficiency, and waste minimisation. The company also provides strong technical support to the New Zealand building industry, promoting the use of sustainable construction practices, design principles and measures.

### **Feasibility of relocation**

- 16 The Opawa Road site represents a significant investment in manufacturing capability over 50+ years for Winstone Wallboards. However, by world standards it is now considered very small in scale. It would not be financially viable for the business to relocate this manufacturing capability within Canterbury. The significant (\$100m +) investment in a Greenfield site could not be justified when compared with alternative supply options. An enforced move from the Opawa Road site would most likely mean the end of plasterboard manufacturing in the South Island.

**Simon Cooper**

**November 2015**



## Environmental Policy

We are committed to working together to protect the environment by reducing the impacts associated with our manufacturing, construction and extraction operations, and the distribution and use of our building materials.

We will:

- Implement projects and programmes that improve our energy efficiency and reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Reduce our waste to landfill and work with our supply chain to ensure that our operations, our product composition and design take account of the waste hierarchy.
- Ensure all our manufactured products use raw materials from verified sources where these are available.
- Improve our water efficiency and minimise the impacts from water discharged from our operations.
- Provide innovative, practical system solutions to enable buildings and infrastructure to be sustainable.
- Support industry education on sustainable construction practices, design principles and measures.
- Commit to meet regulatory and industry standards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Adamson'.

Mark Adamson  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Fletcher Building Limited**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Thomas'.

David Thomas  
**General Manager**  
**Winstone Wallboards**

**Date:** 10 March 2015