

The Hills Resort Zone – Plan Change Hearing

My name is Emma Hill. I am a director of the entities representing the partnership responsible for The Hills, and I am also associated with the landowner entities.

I have prepared a full statement of evidence dated March 2026. Today I'll briefly highlight the key points and respond to matters raised by Mr Todd and Dr Galloway.

Summary of Evidence

The Hills has evolved over several decades as a carefully considered, landscape-led project.

From the outset, our intention was to create something more than a golf course — a place where landscape, golf, art and experience come together. That philosophy continues to guide what we do.

In 2023, our family entered into a partnership with Ric Kayne and Jim Rohrstaff. Our relationship developed over several years and is grounded in shared values around quality, design integrity and long-term stewardship. Together, we're working to position The Hills as one of the world's leading golf and lifestyle destinations.

Significant investment is now underway. This includes a full redesign of the championship course by OCM, a new training facility, clubhouse extensions, and visitor accommodation — all reflecting a commitment to elevate the experience at The Hills.

The plan change is driven by the golf course redesign. Some activity areas in the existing structure plan need adjustment to sit safely outside golf corridors and ball dispersion areas.

This is not about increasing development, it's about refining the planning framework to accommodate an improved golf experience.

The plan change also addresses the Farm Course, which has very low use and is not economically viable.

The proposed homes largely reinstate previously consented development and will be delivered in a low-density, landscape-led way.

More broadly, the continued evolution of The Hills will strengthen the region as a premier international golf destination attracting high-value visitors.

Response to Submitter Evidence (Todd / Galloway)

I have reviewed the evidence of Mr Todd and Dr Galloway, which focuses on the location of the Sports Garden Activity Area.

Firstly, this area naturally lends itself to the activity.

It is relatively flat and sits next to the main access road so can be developed with minimal earthworks and disruption. Locating these types of facilities away from the centre of the club is also consistent with comparable private clubs — for example, at Tara Iti the recreation area is located 1.6km from the clubhouse and central facilities.

Secondly, the location of the SG area is driven site constraints.

The reality is, this is the only suitable area available. The rest of the land is either within ball dispersion corridors or identified for residential and visitor accommodation, associated LAMA landscaping and access roads. There simply aren't any other areas of sufficient size, with good landform, to accommodate the facility.

Thirdly, the Sports Garden is for members and guests staying on site. It is not for the public.

Use will be modest and intermittent, and recent amendments have reduced its scale.

It is very well separated from neighbouring properties and more closely associated with the eight residential lots we have to the south, which will form part of The Hills community. In practice, having this facility nearby may reduce owners creating individual courts and recreation areas on their properties, and therefore reduce overall cumulative effects.

In summary, the proposed location has been chosen because it is the most appropriate within the resort both physically and in terms of use.

Conclusion

The proposed plan change is a logical and necessary step to align the planning framework with an improved golf course design and the long-term vision for The Hills.

Our ambition is not simply to develop property, but to build a club that will endure for generations, one that enhances the landscape, contributes positively to the region, and stands comfortably alongside the great golf destinations of the world
