

Good morning,

My name is George Williams and I stand before you as a Williams family member, a permanent resident of Mangakuri Beach, as someone who is strongly opposed to the proposed development at Mangakuri Beach.

I stand here with my mother Vicky Williams and in memory of my late father, Mark Williams.

My father Mark, knew Samuel Williams and was one of the original recipients when Samuel opened up Mangakuri Beach to family and dear friends. Mark was asked when he was 12 if he would give up his position at the beach for some older family members with children on the understanding that he would have a section in the future. Unfortunately Samuel passed away and this promise was lost.

It wasn't until 1973 at a wedding that Mark was approached by a cousin, Pam Wilder, who asked if he would like to buy her section and he duly accepted.

Mangakuri is not just a beach on the east coast, it is the most special place in the world for those of us who are lucky enough to know it.

I have spent a lifetime there and I have seen how well it has been looked after and how everyone is deeply committed to seeing this unique place safeguarded for generations to come.

This is not about exclusivity or about wealthy owners just trying to keep it for themselves, this is about the uniqueness of a stretch of coastline that Samuel Williams had the foresight to protect and want for family and close friends to be a part of.

The character of Mangakuri beach is unlike anywhere else because of this incredible foresight. We are a very close-knit community and the proposed development, with its number of houses, would transform our beach into something unrecognisable. We risk losing the very essence of what makes our community special.

When we were first made aware of this proposal to develop the south end, (not as you would expect by the courtesy of friendly communication with neighbours who have always had such a warm and strong relationship with Mangakuri Station), we were shocked that we were given no consideration. In particular, how affected those on Okura road could be and how distressing this would be and is for them. We of course stand as one, as we always have and always will. Community cohesion is threatened in a world where we see this being eroded daily.

We have all been dismayed at the way this has been handled, the lack of communication, the lack of respect, the greed to just make money with no consideration for how those who have been here for a lifetime would feel.

Not one of the trustees for Mangakuri Station are family or friends of this beach, not one of them has any respect for this community and they have come in like a wrecking ball with flagrant disregard for how people feel.

My late father Mark, advocated for there to be a family member on this trust so as to provide a moral compass to their decision making. This has not happened and I believe if there was we would not find ourselves here.

The Trust have talked about how hard farming is on the coast and that the farm cannot make money. I agree, farming anywhere is hard especially in the current climate but I grew up on a farm, in fact, I grew up on the farm (Aramutu) that borders Mangakuri station to the west and particularly in the 1980's, farming was really put to the test. The so called expertise of the trustees should surely be able to farm this farm, they are supposedly leaders in the primary sector. Today, the new threat is the great forestation of our countryside and in another sign of the disregard for this community, the trustees have stood in front of us and said that if they cannot get this development across the line then they will simply sell and it will be all in trees.

Trees would be amazing, (not pines) rather natives or species that suit this environment, as my mother and father have done as well as so many at Mangakuri. Trees along the coastal face would be an amazing legacy to help stabilise the land. We have seen in 2011 and indeed last year in 2023 how fragile this coast is and how we are to expect more extremes. Surely further coastal development in such a fragile and vulnerable area is pure madness and totally irresponsible?

My father Mark, in one of his last opportunities to speak with these trustees, suggested that they look at selling the Kairakau block back if it is just a matter of money. The point being, there are plenty of options open to them that wouldn't cause distress like this proposal does. I don't quite understand why you would want to push on with something knowing how much it will upset your neighbours?

I have read through all the expert reports, paid for by the trust and I am sure they know their stuff and are highly respected in their fields. In all of the reports not one takes into consideration how we might be impacted, not one of them.

An incredible aspect to Mangakuri is the first view you get as you arrive at the crest of the hill. This unobstructed vista is breath taking and really does make the worries of the world melt away. Any visitor feels this but it will be drastically altered if any such development were to go ahead. It is quite simply an area of outstanding natural beauty that is at risk of being destroyed for future generations of residents and visitors.

Not one person at Mangakuri Beach wants to see this development happen, not one person is happy with how the Mangakuri Station Trustees have handled this and not one person at Mangakuri Beach will accept anything other than a complete cessation to these hostilities.

I want to see harmony brought back to this special place, where we have a great relationship with the farm again and we work and communicate well together. We all want to see the Mangakuri Station do well, we all care about our neighbours and it has always been that way.

For our ancestors, we thank you for what you have created at Mangakuri Beach and I only hope we can keep it as you wished, as you wanted, today and for all the tomorrows.

Again, I am standing here, most importantly, as the son of Mark Williams, for his memory, I strongly oppose this incursion into our lives. For his memory I will stand up for this community every day I am alive, for his memory, I ask you to consider what this place in the world means to us.

I thank you, from myself, my mother Vicky and my late father Mark, for allowing us the time to be here today and for us to be able to share our submission with you.

George & Vicky Williams, 209 Williams Road, RD 14, Havelock North 4295.