

Good morning Mr Schofield as stated my name is Robert Gunn. I am here to represent myself, my family and the forty staff members that I employ in this town.

I have lived in Marton for fifty-eight years and the company I am CEO of was established in 1953 and is now sixty-seven years old.

In my fifty-eight years I have seen a lot of change. Some good and some not so good.

Growing up as a child in this town was the place to be. We had a very vibrant community with plenty of industry and employment. Which followed on to a vibrant and full CBD. We had five primary schools, an intermediate and three colleges that were all bursting at the seams. We had two rugby clubs, two cricket clubs, two bowling clubs, a soccer club, a tennis club, plenty of netball teams, a hockey club and Marching, plus a lot of hobby clubs for young and old including the NZ Centre for girl guides. None of these struggled for membership and everyone participated.

As a young person this was great. There was always something to do or somewhere to be.

As I grew up and eventually reached college and getting to that time where I had to decide what I was going to do with my life I had options within Marton.

I did not have to leave town because there was nothing here for me. I was able to get an Electrical apprenticeship here with Alf Downs. Likewise, for a lot of my school friends. The only students that left were those going off to university and training colleges.

As I progressed through my work life, I started to see a change. First there was one factory closing as bigger companies centralised their business then a second and a third. Slowly unemployment grew and people started to leave. Along with the bigger companies closing the smaller supporting companies closed as their work also dried up. We were slowly losing our vibrance.

As more companies followed suit our once Vibrant CBD started its decline and has not stopped. Now the community relies on a handful of larger companies to maintain some form of employment.

This story can be told in most rural towns including Taihape, Hunterville, Bulls, and even Mangaweka. These are all towns that make up the Rangitikei

and we are all struggling to survive. We do not even get recognised as a district within our own country we fall under Manawatu or Wanganui.

As you are also aware, I am in favour of this change of land use. I have sat through the two prehearing meetings with an open mind to make sure the horse I am backing is the right one.

I must acknowledge and Thank the Mayor and Kim from Bio Forestry for attending these meetings. I thank you both for your honest answers and willingness to listen to people's concerns. I was also embarrassed by the way these people spoke to you. There was ~~no respect~~ given to either of you. <sup>not the courtsey</sup> Please ~~do not judge Marton people by the way these people spoke.~~ <sup>that should have been</sup> They were not willing to listen to your replies and chose to ignore what you were trying say. At one point I think you answered the same question at least four times. Please do not judge Marton by their actions.

I also listened to the concerns of these people and in their minds their concerns are the most important because it may affect them, they are not looking at the welfare of our community and what is being offered. I saw a willingness from the Council and Bio Forestry to try answer their concerns but there was not a willingness from them to listen.

If this submission does not succeed then these people need to go and face up to the one hundred and twenty people that I am aware of that have just been made redundant in the last two weeks and offer them employment. I am also aware that there are more redundancies to come so our town is not looking so good at present.

This is not solely Covid 19 related these companies have been struggling for some time now and Covid was the last straw.

My biggest fear as an employer is that at some point, I will have to go to someone within my company and tell them they do not have job. Then watch everything they and myself have worked for disappear. Most of my staff are not just employees they are my friends. Most of them being with the company for more than ten years. For some of them this has been their only job since leaving school.

Without economic growth we as a community will decline further. We won't be the vibrant place that people want to come to, we will become another

Patea which relied on one major business which decided to close and so did the town.

As stated earlier we rely on a handful of manufacturers to keep our community employed. We have also stated in our long-term plan as a priority that we need economic growth to give sustainable employment and longevity.

The council has gone and followed up on this request by Rangitikei Rate payers and found some willing partners who are wanting to invest in this region. This has not just happened over night this has been some time in the making. The Council has found a company that Marton ticks all the boxes for without us having to grovel. The only concession is that we make some land available for them.

With the establishment of a company like Bio Plastics it is not only the job opportunities it offers it is also the other small industries that come with it. This in turn creates economic growth and prosperity for our community. Our children will once again hopefully be able to look at a future here in Marton not elsewhere.

As far as I am concerned the Council have been very open about this and whilst they did not have to declare there was a company interested in building here, they did the right thing and told us. This hearing is about a change of land use not a hearing about whether Bio Plastics can build a factory on this land or not.

As soon as Bio Plastics had their confidentiality agreement lifted, they declared their interest to be open and fair to us all. They have bent over backwards to give us as much information as possible but they themselves have not gotten past the planning stage and nothing is set in concrete yet as Kim has said repeatedly. This will be a tragedy for this town if this project fails at the first hurdle.

For you people who haven't lived here for as long as I have, all we are asking for is a chance to get some of what we had back and not having to continue to watch the town that we love Die.

I have read the report submitted by Greg Carlyon and whilst I would prefer option number one, I know it is not realistic in the community we now live in. I am willing to back option number four. *as it appears to be fair to all parties*

Sir the decision that is made here must be for the wellbeing of the whole community not just a few.

Thank you for listening to me. I have also attached a list of the businesses that employ or employed people that I am aware existed or still exist in Marton during my lifetime. I am sure there are others that I have missed but the ones that are in red no longer do.

## **Marton Businesses**

Aitchison Engineering

Hornby Farm Equipment

Marton Wool & Coal

Electro Magnetic Products

Glasgow Electrical

Barraud & Abraham – Liquor Outlet, general store

Broome & Scott - Panelbeaters

Brosco - Sheetmetal

Production Engineering Co

Dalgety Grain & Seed

Marton Seed Cleaning

Marton Carrying Co

Ian Wilks – garage & car sales

Forward Motors

Rootes Group

McKenzie's Garage

CH Campbell Garage

Eric White's Garage

Tipper & Whitford

Cobham Furniture

Dommett's Garage

Marton Sash & Door Mill, Store, tree farm

McIlwaine Timber & Mill

Marton Dale Doors

Sutcliffe's Menswear

Gracies Menswear

Dales Menswear

Frank Pilgrim Saddlery

Butterfield Sports

Saywell's Sport

Jack Williams Machinery

AA Travel

Farmers Co-op

Haymans Toyworld/PaperPlus

Chennile Knitting Mills

Walk on Mats

McBeth Butchery

Laurie's Butchery

BNZ Bank

Centennial Dairy

Marton Hotel

Railway Hotel

White Hart Tavern

Alexander Stewart Pharmacy

McCully's Chemist

Everybodies Music & Book Store

Chainey's Store

South End Mini Market

Post Office Exchange

P & T Workshop

Powerco Appliances

Railway Station goods, sheds, stockyards

Queen Anne Diner

Lake Alice

Skou's Potatoes

Stembridge Bus Services

G J Jensen - Builder

Bromley Plumber & Panel Shop

Superior Stores

Main St Stores

Richards Photography

Peter McDermott Photography

Joe Yin Vegetable Store

Andy Gardner General Carrier

Alf Downs & Son

Snippers Hair Salon

Hogan Plumbing

Cobham Plumbing

Richards Construction

Mitre 10

Winston Lyon Fine China

Bill Twigg – hairdresser

Bill Coburn – Barber

Marrs Jewellers

Kevin Morris Joinery

Jim Murray Cabinetmaker

McIndoe & North – Builders

Allan McNeill Accountants

Jack Baker – Painter Decorator

Ross Kingsley – Painter Decorator

Frank Hughes – Painter Decorator

Harrison Distributors

Maggie May

Woollie Weavers

Richards Chainsaws

Sutton Real Estate

Bev's Gift World

Fred Hammond Metal Crusher

The Cobbler Shoe Store

Stevens Shoe Store

Gallaghers

Nestle

New World

Red Tomato – Restaurant

The Granary Gift Shop

Marton Picture Theatre

Civic Milk Bar

Lyon's Plumbers

McKinnel Machinery

Garden Lane

Cobham Funeral Home

Boerboom Appliance Repairs

Cut Price Grocery Store

Salter – Dentist

Hammer Hardware

Central Joinery

Hutton Electrical

Kakariki Wool

McVerry Crawford

BJW Motors

Marton Pharmacy

Bary Knitwear

Wills Knitwear

Railway Station

Marton Racecourse

3 x Doctors surgeries

Maternity Hospital

Alan Dawson Electrical

Mount View Service Station

Calkin Brothers

Harris Butchery