

## **Murray & Helen Bignell**

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**Date:** 19 May 2019 10:27 p.m.  
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**Subject:** TO PRINT - PCI Hearing - Block 2

### **Hannah & Tony Bignell**

**Lease:** 250ha sheep, beef and dairy support

**Location:** 114 Wall Road Maihihi, Otorohanga. We feed directly into the Maihihi stream which in turn feeds into the Mangaorongo stream.

Good morning, my name is Hannah Bignell, and this is my husband Tony and our daughter Isla. Tony hates public speaking more than I do so some how I ended up with this job.

As of six weeks ago, we now lease Tony's parents 250 hectare family farm, Beau Brae, in Maihihi. We are currently carrying 200 of our own breeding sheep as well as store lambs, beef heifers and dairy grazers.

Now, I'm sure you've all probably heard that old saying:

The first generation makes it...  
 The second generation maintains it...  
 And the third generation blows it...

Well, we're here today as that third generation, trying our absolute best to ensure that this doesn't happen to our family.

We're here today, fighting for an asset that is not even ours but it's our responsibility to protect it.

We're here because we're determined NOT to be the generation that blows it but the generation that grows it; and under PC1 as it stands now, this won't be possible.

We have worked closely with Bill and Sue Garland over the last three years and, if you've had the pleasure of visiting their farm, you too would be hugely inspired by what they have achieved as a couple over the past 40+ years. As a result, we too have big plans for Beau Brae.

We want to optimise the productivity of the land. We want to build on the bio diversity already present and we want to fence off and plant up the existing wetland areas.

But after being leased out for the past 15 years, there is also pressing work to be done to the water system, the fences, and the yards. The list is long but it's what we've chosen to do with our lives.

Tony is 32 and I am 29. 2026 may seem like an insignificant number to many. Years away. But to us, these will probably be the most significant years of our lives. Not only because we are now bringing up our own family, but because these are the years that will make or break us.

Up till now we have saved as hard as we possibly could, investing in rental properties along the way to ensure we could make Tony's dream of taking over the family farm a reality. We took over the lease six weeks ago and life has never been busier.

We now have a lot of pressure on us, and the uncertainty surrounding our financial capacity to continue down this path, definitely adds to this pressure.

But we chose it.

We chose it because we are passionate about the industry. We chose it because we respect the land and we love our animals.

We are the next generation, mentored by industry leaders like Bill and Sue Garland, that this industry needs. But there is only so much uncertainty we can risk before we will have to start looking at other options. And in my opinion that is incredibly sad.

We understand the reasoning behind the Healthy Rivers framework and we whole heartedly support the end goal. As children, we swam in these streams and drank the water from our hands and we want that too for Isla

and even her children.

But this is not the way to do it. To quote Bill himself -

**"Well designed rules should not penalise people who are not causing the problem"**

We, should not be benchmarked against those who have manipulated the system. We, should not be hamstrung in our capacity to make Beau Brae financially viable by someone else's management practices. We, at the very least, should be included in making the decisions around the most productive use of this land into the future.

We, should not be penalised.

We want to control how Beau Brae will look and feel for our future generations and that will not be possible under this blanket set of rules.

In my opinion, the only way forward from here is on a farm by farm or case by case basis, based on actual water testing at the site, monitored against individual Farm Environment Plans.

There is still a long way to go and we are committed to doing our part. We can only hope that there will still be a future for us in this industry once these hearings are over.

Thank you for your time.