

**BEFORE THE HEARING COMMISSIONERS  
IN TIMARU DISTRICT**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**"the Act"**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Proposed Timaru District Plan  
**Hearing G – Growth and Designations**

**Statement from George Harper**

**For George and Rachel Harper (Submitter 109)**

**Members of Joint Submitter Group (Submitter 108)**

**30 June 2025**

Due to other commitments, I am unable to present in person.

I request my Statement be tabled for the Commissioners' consideration.

## 1) Lack of Timeliness

Timaru District Council's District Plan Review has been ongoing for 10 years, having commenced with the Growth Management Strategy process back in 2015.

TDC is finalising this process under an exceptional extension granted by the Minister for the Environment to exceed statutory timeframes.

TDC can—and indeed must—do better. Business investment decisions require certainty, and the District Plan Review process has not provided this.

Perhaps this lack of certainty helps explain why Timaru District's population growth was only 0.8% in 2024, and GDP growth was negative, at -0.6% (Table 1). This result, even considering the modest national growth figures, with national population growth sitting at 1.7% and GDP growth at 1.4% is concerning.

As per Table 1, other nearby districts we compare ourselves with fared considerably better. Timaru District is the only one that didn't meet or exceed the national figures.

**Table 1: Comparative population and GDP Growth Data for 2024.<sup>3</sup>**

District	Population Growth	GDP Growth
Timaru	0.8%	-0.6%
Ashburton	1.9%	1.8%
Waimate	2.8%	2.9%
Mackenzie	3.7%	3.0%

## 2) Reticulated Wastewater Provision – Main North Road, Templer Street, Bennett Road, Geraldine

Timaru District Council has stated: "There is no funding identified in the LTP to provide or contribute towards reticulated wastewater infrastructure to service this area."<sup>4</sup>

Much has been written by various report writers about the pathway for further on-site wastewater systems in this area under the CRPS.

It goes without saying that, if such a pathway exists, any on-site system will be required to meet exacting environmental outcomes to be consented by ECAN.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Infometrics, 2024.*

<sup>4</sup> *Mr Kevin Kemp, TDC, 2025.*

The current government is very clear in its focus to support growth. Mr Bonis' recommendations within the s42A report—severely limiting or delaying any proposals for rezoning to accommodate growth opportunities for Geraldine through this plan review-- risk stalling the town further.

Without a clearly articulated vision, TDC will have to continue being reactive, undertaking further organisational restructures and imposing even greater rates and cost burdens on its ratepayers to deal with the financial challenges it faces. Timaru District will continue to show barely any population growth and ongoing negative GDP growth—just as we saw in 2024.

The sufficiency of land available remains a matter of considerable concern to submitters and no doubt will be the subject of the Commissioners' careful attention.

**George Harper**

**30 June 2025**

