

Plan change 28 – speaking to my submission

Tena koutou

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to my submission regarding Private Plan change 28.

Ko Gretchen Holland toku ingoa. My name is Gretchen Holland and I am Nelson born and bred. My Holland ancestors arrived in Nelson on the Bolton in 1842. I have Nelson in my bones and in my heart. I have lived in Ralphine Way, in the Maitai Valley, for the last 20 years (my husband for 33 years). I am a NINBY! Not in Nelson's Back Yard.

I have an intimate knowledge of this place. I pick up rubbish daily, I have helped plant trees on organised planting days, I regularly weed those trees and replant or stand them up again after the river has flooded through them, I trap rats and other pests, I weed old man's beard and other pest plants, I collect autumn leaves to mulch my garden, I walk, bike and swim here daily. My grandkids have learned to swim here.

I love this place! I love to listen to the river. The other day, unprompted, my eight year old relative said as we threw sticks into the rapids on the edge of Sunday Hole 'I love the sound of the river'. I love to listen to the birds. Currently the air is full of the sound of kereru wings flapping. The traffic noise of a new suburb would blot out these sounds. I love to watch and listen to other people enjoying these things too. If a new suburb's traffic was streaming past would the young woman sitting in the sun on the seating at Sunday Hole pick that spot to strum her guitar and sing softly? Would the large groups of former refugee families choose to hold their summer picnics at the Branford Park shelter? Or the countless Christmas family gatherings and birthday parties? Would that group of youths choose to leap into Dennes hole after their mountain bike ride if the storm water outlet was right there? I don't think so and I don't know where they would go instead that is so close to town and so safe.

I love that there are no street lights in the valley and that you can see a great night sky from there. A new suburb would destroy that. There would be a loss of quiet space and conflict with recreational values. The whole ambience of the lower valley, the most used part of the valley, would be gone.

The plan change would be contrary to many Nelson City Council's policies and philosophies. Policies like Project Mahitahi, The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance and Strategy, Maitai Ecological Restoration plan, City for all ages, Smart Little City.

In recent years NCC, in collaboration with local iwi, DOC and community groups and with funding from the Ministry for the Environment, DOC and the Covid Recovery Fund will be spending an enormous amount of time and millions of dollars to improve the Maitai Valley, mostly in its upper tributary valleys and upper catchments. This work includes weed removal, pest trapping, extensive plantings and plant upkeep. New funding from the Arbor Day Foundation has recently been announced. All good stuff. Kaka Valley is a large tributary valley. It is inconsistent that it be treated so differently from the rest. It is bad economics and policy to be enhancing one area of the valley while planning to desecrate another. The Oxford dictionary definition of desecrate is

*'verb * treat (a sacred place or thing) with violent disrespect and
spoil (something which is valued and respected)'.

The Maitai River is already over burdened with forestry run off, silting and existing storm water and it doesn't need additional construction run off or storm water from a major suburb on an existing flood plain. There will always be natural events that cannot be planned for. The Maitai River, Nelson Haven, Waimea Inlet and Tasman Bay are too precious **to risk**. They are our taonga.

Some of the applicant's material has failed to clearly demonstrate the position of the Maitai River and Dennes Hole and are misleading. The bill board at the end of Ralphine Way shows Dennes Hole but not the river upstream from it. This is possibly the only material most of the general public have seen when they've come up Ralphine Way for a nosey. The map Fig 17a Maitahi Bayview Structure Plan shows a tiny blue squiggle which I assume corresponds to the reference on their legend labelled Existing River. I know this area well and I can't work that one out! Both of these tell

you nothing about the most important aspect of the proposed suburb – the Maitai River. How many more are there?

Nelson Nature (a division of Nelson City Council) values food corridors and a suburb in Kaka Valley and it's hillsides would disrupt this mountains to the sea initiative. My pest trapping group works closely with Nelson Nature and our aim is to increase bird life in the Botanical Hill Reserve extending east to Dennes Hole by creating a safe place for birds overflowing from the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary. It borders the proposed new suburb in Kaka Valley. A suburb's worth of dogs and cats will negate our efforts.

There are too many unknowns. If the plan change goes ahead all future subdivision and building within Kaka Valley would be processed without notification to affected parties or the public despite critical aspects of the development NOT being specified or supported by technical information at this stage. This unfairly excludes people from being involved in decisions that may affect them in future.

This valley has a greater value **without** developing it. It's our value systems that are being considered here. If we can learn anything from what's happened in other countries and other NZ cities it's that our buffer systems and green belts are being eroded. How many other cities in the world are now desperately trying to clean up their waterways? History will judge us harshly if this goes ahead. It will not be reversible. We have the choice.

This is my third submission to NCC opposing the proposed development of Kaka Valley in the Maitai Valley. I am also one of the 10,000 NINBYs who signed the petition presented to NCC showing opposition to housing development in Kaka Valley. That petition now stands at over 13,000 signatures.

So far I have felt unheard, ignored and betrayed. What a burden – the fate of this valley hangs on my five minute presentation. What more can I say? What more can I do?

We should be treating the Maitai River as a person, fighting to give it legal personhood – think Whanganui River and Te Urewera. Not continuing with commercial greed trumping the needs of the environment and the community who value it. Now is our chance.

Justice Joe Williams said – *‘The difference between property rights in a river and the kinship with a river is that one entitles you to use it up, unless there’s a parliamentary law that says you can’t; the other imposes obligations because it’s your relation’.*

Today I ask that you listen to my concerns and reject the part of private plan change 28 that involves Kaka Valley.

Ko Maitai te awa

Ko Maitai te wharua

The Maitai is my river

The Maitai is my valley

Kia ora and thank you