

Tena Koutou Katoa. Good Morning Everyone.

To the RMA Comissioners: Thank You.

My name is Libby Newton.

I'm speaking this morning because our Maitai Valley is such an amazing asset I feel strongly the need to maintain its peaceful uniqueness for the benefit of our generation and the generations for years to come.

There are so many reasons supporting the need to Save it from development. I'm going to speak to my passion for Health and Wellbeing from my own life's experiences

I came to Nelson on my 30th birthday and in all the years since I've used this valley often for walking and swimming, on my own, with friends, visitors, foreign students living with us, with my children as they grew up and now with my grandchildren.

In 2022, with hospitals stretched to bursting, and information abounding on the enormous benefits of the natural environment i believe we absolutely MUST save this precious green space so near to our city. It's our Park.

I began my working life as a Radiographer working in hospitals here and overseas. I then travelled extensively and I began to see how we were destroying our natural world with development. On returning home, marrying and becoming a mother my focus shifted to the "ambulance at the top of the hill rather than the bottom." I became interested in preventing illness. In other words, staying well.

The Maitai Valley has been a huge asset for me, and my family, for so much enjoyment and for staying well.

I'd like to share with You a few of the memories I treasure that I believe we must preserve for us all and those still to come....

1. My earliest memory of Nelson was going to Sunday hole with friends and their children, I didn't yet have children but I knew then that when I did I'd like them to bring them here.
2. And I did. Often. Regularly, after tea, my children and other children in the neighbourhood would pile into my mini, no seatbelts then, and head to Sunday hole. It was a fun, social and healthy end of the day for us all.
3. I fondly remember sitting at the water's edge at Dennes hole with a young granddaughter holding my ankles and happily kicking in the water while her younger sister sat in the shallow water in the safety of my legs.
4. During Lockdown I walked in the Valley every day at different times of the day and swam until we were asked not to. The autumn colours were beyond glorious, my wellbeing was maintained and enhanced on all levels.
5. This past summer our family has stayed in Nelson for the whole summer. Ive spent full days at Sunday hole with my grandchildren, them spending hour after hour on the rope swing, meeting friends and making new ones. Sometimes we only went home to pack more food and come back for the evening. We've also had enjoyable family picnics, 3 generations enjoying ourselves together. At one of these picnics a childhood friend of mine who moved to Nelson last year said as she watched the children swimming "Oh what I would have given for swimming holes like this when we were children."

6. On my own one of my favourite things to do in the summer and actually for a large part of the year is to walk over the Centre of New Zealand and the hill behind, dropping down to Dennes Hole for a swim before walking home through Branford Park. I've no doubt this fully supports my health and wellbeing.
  7. These are my personal delights yet I know I am one of many who value and stay happy and well enjoying the peace and beauty of the Maitai all year round. I see them every day and I Love it
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1. Over my years here I seen all the hills and valleys around Nelson gradually be covered in houses. When I arrived in Nelson children still swam under the Collingwood bridge. I've not seen this happen in years. If this development is approved and we lose our Beautiful Maitai Valley and swimming holes to traffic, noise, houses and pollution we lose it forever. And we lose SO much. My reading tells me the wellbeing of people declines when natural areas are developed, and ecosystems destroyed.
  2. For some years I lived with my family In Montreal Canada. The summer's there are as hot as the winters are cold. Because Montreal is an Island there are mile after mile of Lakeshore. I would stand and look at the water on a hot humid day and imagine all the picnickers enjoying themselves and the water. But No. The Lakeshore is built up, the water is too polluted. My children were in a swimming pool heaving with people. I don't think I swam at all in Montreal.
  3. We also lived in an apartment in Montreal. My children were 10 and 14 when we arrived. i found that living in a small space gave us more time to spend together as a family in parks, playgrounds, skating, toboggining and other activities. And I learnt there are real benefits to apartment living and I learnt the huge value of communal green spaces.
  4. Recently I saw a picture in a news article of the Meadows before and after. 150 houses. I thought of the Maitai Valley with 550-700 houses, and I thought. can we really, in 2022 do this? I Hope NOT.

I'm asking please to protect these green spaces, so close to our town, open to everyone, to walk, run, bike, play, swim, play sports, picnic and so valuable to the health and wellbeing of our community. I have no doubt in the long term we would lose much more than we would gain  
 I'm asking you Please to hear us and reject the Private Plan change 28.

Thank you