

**BEFORE A HEARINGS PANEL
APPOINTED BY NELSON CITY COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of Private Plan Change 28 – Maitahi Bayview

**AND IN THE MATTER of Clause 21 of the First Schedule of the Resource
Management Act 1991**

**EVIDENCE OF SOPHIE WEENINK FOR SAVE THE MAITAI INC
YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON THE VALUE OF THE MAITAI VALLEY
DATED 11 JULY 2022**

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Sophie Weenik. I am 16 years old. I cannot stand by and not speak up for the Maitai Valley and river.
2. I have not read all of the applicant's evidence but I have looked at the most recent Structure Plan in Mr Milne's evidence, and the indicative masterplan provided with the applicant's rebuttal evidence, so that I understand in a general sense what type of development is proposed.

EVIDENCE

3. As a young person I cannot stress enough how alarming PPC28 is. Although we cannot have more of us speaking here today, from the many different young people I have talked to about their favourite parts of Nelson, the Maitai Valley and river are so loved. Close and accessible, peaceful and barely developed. Confirming PPC28 and putting in place plan provisions that would enable urban development in this area would be taking all this away.
4. I am extremely concerned that I will be amongst the last generation to enjoy the open spaces, peace and tranquility and beautiful natural landscapes of the Maitai Valley if the construction of many hundreds of houses goes ahead. I am deeply concerned about the impacts on the Maitai Valley and river. While more housing is needed there are other options available in our area as identified in Council meetings and documents, such as the proposed Bishopdale housing.
5. I am the child of a single parent and of course we want affordable housing for us and others, but not this option which will see one of the true highlights of our city lost.
6. These houses being developed will not help with our housing crisis in New Zealand. I understand the cost will be up to 7 figures, resulting in even more demand for more sustainable and lower priced housing.
7. To follow up from that point even if these houses were to be developed, for those affected by the housing crisis, the Maitai Valley is not an area where we need 550 - 1000+ houses. Due to the valley's natural environment, there would be a lot of air

pollution causing health risks to those at the bottom of the valley, the proposed area for the “cheaper houses”.

8. The urban development that PPC28 would enable would affect that valley’s natural environment. The Maitai Valley is known for its tranquillity and is a safe haven for people and animals. I have visited the valley since I was a small child and it has always been a space for myself and others to enjoy summer swims, winter walks, watch the autumn leaves fall, watch spring flowers bloom and much more throughout the seasons. It is always beautiful and it is why I became a nature lover and an environmental activist.
9. Opening this natural environment to urban development would mean these values and experiences are taken away. An overload of people and cars in what has always been a quiet and protected area.
10. Air pollution will damage the health of future generations. As a child I loved growing up and being able to walk or cycle down into the valley and instantly being able to breathe in the fresh air. I was an active kid constantly doing cross country races in the Maitai Valley, it was such a safe area as kids were able to expand the races over the roads, along the river and up the sides of the hills.
11. When I was younger, my Mother moved me back to New Zealand from England, in contrast the places where I would have been brought up were dull, grey, grim and bleak with barely any natural spaces left.
12. My Mother moved me to Nelson because she knew that spaces like the Maitai were so close to town yet so rural, bringing me up in an environment where I could appreciate everything around me and yet keep me so safe.
13. To add to this as a child I used to be able to swim in the Maitai river - one of my many highlights of my childhood, but over the last 10 years the swimming spots I used to swim in downstream have now become unswimmable due to algae produced from various reasons in such a rapid time. We are lucky to still have spaces like the Black hole, Sunday hole and Denney's hole which are swimmable. I am concerned that PPC28 will mean that these places are no longer going to be pleasant and safe to swim in, due to an influx of people and water or air pollution

from stormwater, traffic, and construction. Nelson's youth does not want to lose these iconic Nelson swimming holes.

14. You already cannot stop the rubbish which is abundant on the sides of the Maitai river every day from the existing population. I know this from all my litter clean ups. I can already guarantee that with the added population our special Maitai river will never recover. From the river to the sea. As my 7 year old friend says, Papatuanuku is crying.
15. As the decision makers on PPC28 I ask you to preserve this beautiful space. STM has had to protest to be in meetings, fundraise money for potential court cases and collect thousands of signatures for petitions, from many living in Nelson to many who have lived in Nelson who truly believe in protecting the Maitai.
16. There are other options for residential development; this is not the only option on the table.
17. In summary, I imagine the Maitai Valley to be a space where I can see future generations come together and thrive in a natural environment so close to our urban areas, we do NOT need to ruin this tranquil space for more urban development that can be developed in other spaces. We have a housing crisis and from my own volunteering work with those most vulnerable and homeless in our community at Giving Aroha and those affected by poverty I can tell you that these houses are NOT for them. I can also tell you even for those who are middle class these houses are not for them either. Air pollution will travel down to schools such as St Josephs and Nelson Central school, affecting all the children and all the houses in that space. As a young person I am concerned that this risk to our environment and health is not being taken seriously enough. Please stand with us on this and make the right decision for the future of generations to come, the future for our natural environment, and the future for Nelson.

Sophie Weenink

11 July 2022