

Statement of Evidence – Full Document

before the Independent Hearings Panel

in the matter of Proposed private plan change RCP031 – 535 Mill Road, Ohoka

Phillipa Trumic

8 August 2023

Kia Ora

My name is Phillipa TRUMIC.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak to my submission; number 40.

I urge you to reject this proposal RCP31 IN ITS ENTIRETY.

Ohoka is a unique, historical village, and should be preserved; this proposal would destroy the rural character and AMENITY VALUES of Ohoka FOREVER.

I grew up in Ohoka/Fernside, in the 70's, I went to Rangiora High School, and I was Head Prefect in 1980 and I returned and taught Art there for six years.

I know North Canterbury, and Ohoka well.

I love the area so much that in 1997 my husband and I built a home at 800 Tram Road.

Our property overlooks farmland onto the proposed subdivision as shown in the attached **Photo 1**.

In my opinion, this proposed "Satellite Town" that the Rolleston group is proposing is irresponsible. I cannot think of a more unsuitable place in the entire North Canterbury district to build their super town.

I cannot believe that we are even here, this far in the process, discussing THIS project, for THIS piece of land.

The locals are wringing their hands. The old time farmers are slapping their foreheads in incredulity. Wrong build, wrong place. Not rocket science.

In my written submission I covered 5 points in relation to why I believe RCP31 should not proceed. These are:

1. Preservation of birdlife
2. Soil and flooding issues
3. Traffic problems
4. Night Sky preservation
5. Mental Health of the community

1. Preservation of birdlife

I specialise in the planting of trees and plants that are indigenous to the Canterbury region.

Over the past 25 years I have planted 5 acres at 800 Tram Road in New Zealand trees shrubs and plants (many rare and endangered.)

see **Photos 2 and 3**

It has now developed into a wonderful ecosystem and native flora and fauna have flourished. This, combined with the growth and development of native plantings in the Ohoka Bush on Whites road (see **Photos 4 and 5**), Ohoka Stream Walkway (see **Photos 6 and 7**) and Whites Road Reserve (see **Photos 8, 9 and 10**.)

This has meant that birdlife has increased dramatically in the years I have lived here. Bellbirds, waxeyes, pukeko, hawks, Little Owl, and fantails abound.

They now have pathways to cross the land, the birds need these visual landmarks to guide their transit between the mountains and the sea. We have worked closely with Tangata whenua and Trees for Canterbury to create this.

When we first built our house in Ohoka there were no bellbirds. Now we have a chorus of them. A Wood pigeon arrived for the first time last year to a property on Whites Road! This is so exciting for the community who have worked so hard for Ohoka to bring the bird life up from the Silverstream Reserve in Clarkville and into the Native bush areas of Ohoka.

To put an intensive town in the middle of these bush areas will destroy the habitats that have been delicately and carefully grown back by council and hard-working Ohoka individuals.

Partially protected Little Owls, Hawks, and Pūkekos are three bird species that will be directly affected by loss of habitat if RCP31 were to be approved.

These birds require open pasture and rural land to flourish. They will disappear if the land is taken from them.

Incidentally, Pūkeko live on wetlands. There are many pūkeko living and thriving in the swampy ground of Ohoka.... Especially on the farm where the Rolleston group are requesting the plan change RCP31. Not only will the Pūkeko and Hawks lose habitat if the farm is subdivided into urban house lots... they will lose their lives on the roads. The pūkeko will get squashed crossing the roads to get from one swamp to another. ..and the Hawks will get mown down by vehicles as they feed on the dead pūkeko. It will be a very sad sight. They will be casualties of the huge increase in traffic that will be an inevitable outcome of a development such as RCP31.

Furthermore, according to data from 2 sources, Southern Cross pet insurance, and Forest and Bird, on average there is 1 cat for every 2 households in NZ. With 850 new houses we are talking of an extra 425 cats roaming Ohoka. The likely impact on the birds, lizards and invertebrates I trust is obvious. The cats will wipe out the birdlife so painstakingly re-established.

We have Little Owl breeding at our place. They lay eggs in hollows on the ground under old logs. We have worked with Willowbank's South Island Wildlife Hospital and they have hatched an egg from our property, (causing great excitement on their social media pages, it was called, "Ohoka Egg," and was successfully hand reared. They called him, "Nightwing." (see **Photos 11 and 12**))

We've also released an Owl back into the wild on our property. It flew to the North fence-line and flew up and away towards where RCP31 development is proposed.

There are other conservation stories happening in Ohoka. These would come to a grinding halt. The years of construction to create a satellite town of this magnitude would disturb their habitat. Once the homes are built, the cats will finish the wildlife off.

2) Soil and Flooding

I am not a geologist, however:

The land that this proposed subdivision would sit on is swamp land. Wet lands. Prone to flooding. Underwater land. Not suitable for intensive housing.

Anyone who has history in Ohoka knows this.

There are currently flooding issues in Ohoka/Mandeville. The building of intensive housing will displace stormwater onto existing houses and roads that may be only just holding their own. The developer will be long gone and the Ohoka residents and council will be left with the problem.

It would be better to return this land to its pre-European days.

What if the Rolleston group turned the wetlands back to its original plant cover? With support from iwi, council, Ohoka and North Canterbury residents, this is something we could all get behind I'm sure. A "Zealandia" for Canterbury.

A wonderful carbon sink, and not contributing to traffic congestion onto the Northern arterial route. What a great way for Tim Carter to express his engagement with the area.

3) Traffic problems

In my teens, I rode my horses along Whites, Mill, Jackson's and Bradley's Road.

They are narrow country roads with wide grass verges, perfect for riding. To this day, children ride their ponies safely along these verges. The huge increase in traffic will make it totally unsafe for this rural activity to continue.

Tram road was built as a country road, not designed to carry the load of a satellite town to Christchurch. Higher numbers of crashes and deaths will be another outcome of the traffic increase.

On the intersection of Whites Road and Tram Road is the beautiful Whites Road Reserve, 25 years ago it was a gravel pit. Local residents started planting native trees and shrubs around the water filled basin to enhance the site as a public reserve. It is now designated as a wildlife breeding area. RCP31 will turn the intersection right next to the reserve into a high traffic area.

Finally on this point, the access to State Highway 1 is already heavily congested at peak times. This would of course increase.

4) Night Sky preservation

Part of the beauty of rural Ohoka village is the night time stargazing. A built-up town of the size proposed will light up the night sky and destroy any peace and tranquillity the Ohoka residents currently enjoy.

6) Mental Health of the community

As a former Lifeline Counsellor, I am fully aware of the impact an environment has on the wellbeing of a community.

I am extremely concerned about the mental health of many of the members of the Ohoka community should this proposal go ahead. Engaging with the process to date is already having an adverse impact on individuals who are engaged in this David and Goliath battle.

The heart of this rural community will be torn apart should RCP31 go ahead. Former connections will be lost for ever. The impact of having to endure years of construction on a scale as large as this will destroy peoples' peace and could trigger former mental health illnesses.

The people of Canterbury have had enough stress. Many of the Ohoka properties adjoining this proposed development site have faced substantial flooding over the years. Now we have this proposal directly threatening to ruin the beautiful Rural Community that is Ohoka. The developers are directly cashing in on the heart of a community, with no care or thought for the people.

Summary.

I've covered several topics that are particularly meaningful to me... I am one among 600 or so similar voices who have sent written submissions opposing this proposal.

These voices largely represent the people who live in Ohoka Village. Many are long time residents, and we share a common knowledge of Ohoka and its characteristics.

I would like to emphasize that I and many others in the village are not opposed to greater residential development in principle nor in North Canterbury. The issue is the geographical inappropriateness of RCP31.

The Rolleston group has spent a lot of time, energy and money progressing RCP31 including the funding of lawyers and experts to provide arguments and numbers in support of the proposal.

Ohoka village residents do not have equivalent resources. What we do have is historical local knowledge and understanding of the land, the water, and the degree of impact that increased housing to date has had on the surrounding infrastructure.

Carefully crafted expert opinions and legal arguments need to be taken in context of their funding source.

Deep practical knowledge of the area is held in the personal history of the people of the village. This knowledge, by way of the hundreds of written submissions, needs to be placed alongside, not behind the numbers, arguments and expert opinions provided by vested interests.

I chose to live and contribute in a meaningful way to a rural part of Canterbury.

I want to continue to be proud of it.

We have a duty of care to protect the people, environment, flora and fauna of Ohoka and its environs.

RCP31 goes against this in every way. We must protect our precious community and leave the land and its ecosystem better for our mokopuna and future generations.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Nga Mihi

Photo 1 – View north from 800 Tram road across farmland into RCP31

14 July 2022



Photo 2 and 3 - Our property at 800 Tram Road

14 July 2022

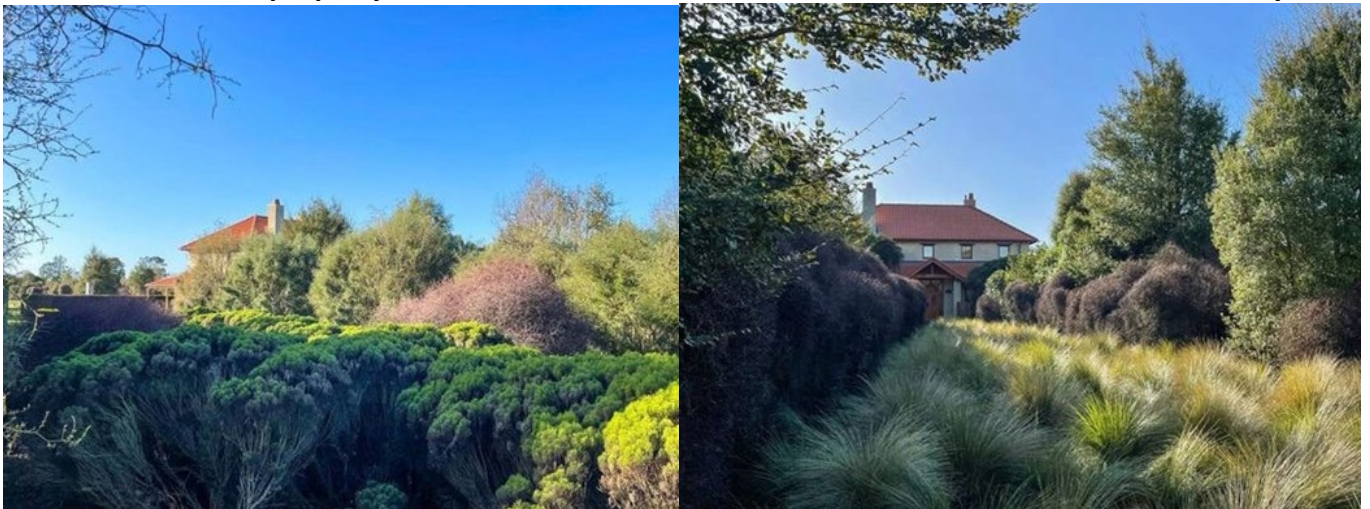




Photo 8 – Whites Road Reserve corner of Tram Road and Whites Road

4 August 2023



Photos 9 and 10 – Whites Road Reserve entrance on Whites Road

4 August 2023



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17 November 2022 · 🌐

Nightwing our little owl is growing rapidly and is now a week old. Its darker feathers are starting to appear and we are starting to slowly lower its incubator temperature. The toes on Nightwing's feet started to elongate around day 5. Our volunteer Jillian named Nightwing as she guessed the time closest to his hatch time and date.



Photo 12 – Little Owl released

27 October 2022

