

**BEFORE AN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL  
IN CHRISTCHURCH**

**TE MAHERE Ā-ROHE I TŪTOHUA MŌ TE TĀONE O ŌTAUTAHI**

**UNDER** the Resource Management Act 1991 (the **RMA**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF** the hearing of submissions on Plan Change 14 (Housing and Business Choice) to the Christchurch District Plan

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**SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NICOLA HELEN  
WILLIAMS ON BEHALF OF CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL**

**URBAN DESIGN**

**COMMERCIAL CENTRES – CENTRAL CITY (EXCLUDING CCZ) AND  
SUBURBAN**

**Dated: 14 December 2023**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	1
WELL-FUNCTIONING URBAN ENVIRONMENT	2

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. My name is **Nicola Helen Williams**. I am employed as a Senior Urban Designer at the Christchurch City Council.
2. I have prepared this supplementary statement of evidence in response to requests by the Independent Hearings Panel (**IHP**) to provide a list of factors I had understood to contribute to a "*well-functioning urban environment*" (**WFUE**) when preparing my primary evidence and rebuttal evidence.
3. In summary, when preparing my primary and rebuttal evidence, further to the outcomes listed in Policy 1<sup>1</sup>, I considered the following as other factors that contribute to a WFUE:
  - (a) Respond positively to the lower sun altitude and microclimate;
  - (b) Support the vision and design principles of the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan (Te Mahere 'Maraka Ōtautahi');
  - (c) Realise that quality is an inseparable partner to density<sup>2</sup>.
4. This list acknowledges the range of urban scales that a WFUE relates to.

## INTRODUCTION

5. My name is **Nicola Helen Williams**. I am employed as a Senior Urban Designer at the Christchurch City Council.
6. I prepared a statement of primary evidence on behalf of Christchurch City Council (**Council**) dated 11 August 2023. My primary evidence provided an urban design discussion and my recommendations for:
  - (a) the Central City Mixed Use Zone (**CCMUZ**);
  - (b) the Central City Mixed Use Zone – South Frame (**CCMUZ(SF)**);
  - (c) the Mixed-Use Zone (Sydenham);
  - (d) the Large Town Centres of Riccarton, Papanui and Hornby;
  - (e) the Large Local Centres of Church Corner, Merivale and Sydenham.

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<sup>1</sup> [Well-functioning-urban-environments.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 51, Primary Evidence of Nicola Williams, dated 11 August 2023.

7. I have the qualifications and experience set out at paragraphs 30 to 35 of my primary evidence dated 11 August 2023.
8. I also provided a statement of rebuttal evidence dated 9 October 2023.
9. I repeat the confirmation given in my primary evidence that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023, and that my evidence has been prepared in compliance with that Code.

## **WELL-FUNCTIONING URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

10. The Panel have requested a list of factors understood to contribute to a “well-functioning urban environment” (**WFUE**) when I prepared my primary evidence and rebuttal evidence.
11. At paragraph 50 of my primary evidence, I refer to policy 1 of the NPS-UD which lists factors describing a WFUE. I understood policy 1 is not an exhaustive list of factors that contribute to a WFUE, and that guidance provided by the Ministry for the Environment on WFUE mentions that there are other factors that contribute to the outcomes that councils and other decision-makers may wish to consider alongside those of the NPS-UD, such as principles of urban design.<sup>3</sup>
12. In addition to considering policy 1 of the NPS-UD, when preparing my primary and rebuttal evidence, and as mentioned at paragraph 51 of my primary evidence, I recommended that the following additional factors be considered as part of a WFUE on matters of urban design:
  - (a) Respond positively to the lower sun altitude and microclimate;
  - (b) Support the vision and design principles of the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan (Te Mahere ‘Maraka Ōtautahi’);
  - (c) Realise that quality is an inseparable partner to density.
13. Below is an explanation of each of these recommended factors that I considered when providing my evidence:
  - (a) **Respond positively to the lower sun altitude and microclimate;**

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<sup>3</sup> [Well-functioning-urban-environments.pdf](#)

- (i) Responding to a place’s microclimate or local environmental factors is a fundamental part of a good design process.<sup>4 5</sup>
- (ii) At a basic response, this factor invites the planning, development and design community to inform decisions based on a place’s latitude (including sun angles), temperature, wind and specific geographic elements in combination to create pleasant streets, places and spaces.
- (iii) In 2005, the Urban Design Protocol identified seven qualities that could contribute to quality urban design – known as the 7 C’s. ‘Context’<sup>6</sup> is the first quality and includes reference to “...buildings and places that are adapted to local climatic conditions”. Developed latterly, the Te Aranga Design Principles<sup>7</sup> further supplement the 7 Cs with a process-related outcome for allowing Māori aspirations to be fulfilled.
- (iv) As a more comprehensive response, specific climate change challenges for each city should be acknowledged when considering a WFUE. For Ōtautahi Christchurch these are flooding and coastal inundation amongst other risks. Developing resilience to climate change through biodiversity and equitable tree coverage are key issues identified in the Christchurch City Council’s 2023 Urban Forest Plan<sup>8</sup>.
- (v) Whilst the specific qualities of a city’s microclimate and response to climate change will vary, the factors of microclimate and climate resilience in the definition of a WFUE can be applied nationally.

**(b) Support the vision and design principles of the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan (Te Mahere ‘Maraka Ōtautahi’);**

- (i) The Recovery Plan is a 20-year vision, investment and implementation strategy for Ōtautahi post the 2010/11 devastating earthquakes. It provides a comprehensive

<sup>4</sup> Ministry for the Environment’s 7 C’s (Urban design Protocol)

<sup>5</sup> Bentley, Ian et al, *Responsive Environments* (1985),

<sup>6</sup> [3 Key urban design qualities - The seven Cs | Ministry for the Environment](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Core Māori Values - Auckland Design Manual](#)

<sup>8</sup> [CUS5882-Urban-Forest-Plan-WEBJune2023.pdf \(ccc.govt.nz\)](#)

implementation strategy on page 135 onwards which indicates construction timeframes to 2031/32.

- (ii) The Share an Idea engagement process synthesises more than 100,000 community suggestions for the post-quake future of the city. The key changes below formed the aspirations for the Central City Recovery Plan (CCRP):

<i>Green city</i>	<i>Compact core</i>	<i>Accessible city</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revitalised Ōtakaro/Avon River corridor</li> <li>• New street trees, improved surface stormwater treatment and a new network of parks that encourage outdoor activities</li> <li>• A greener, more attractive central Christchurch, which includes measures against climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more compact central city core</li> <li>• Well-designed streetscapes, redeveloped civic buildings, ultra-fast broadband and free Wi-Fi</li> <li>• Car parking buildings and bus routes around the Core</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A city that is easy to get to and around for all age groups</li> <li>• Excellent walking and cycling paths and high-quality public transport</li> </ul>
<i>Stronger built identity</i>	<i>Live, work, play, learn and visit</i>	<i>Embrace cultural values</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lower-rise city with safe, sustainable buildings that look good and function well</li> <li>• Use of strong urban design principles</li> <li>• Strengthened heritage buildings that can be used for contemporary purposes</li> <li>• An urban building fabric that speaks to our sense of place, our identity, our shared cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality inner city housing</li> <li>• New metropolitan sporting facilities</li> <li>• A new central library</li> <li>• New public art and performing arts venues</li> <li>• Playgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A city for all people and cultures</li> <li>• Recognise Ngāi Tahu heritage and places of significance</li> <li>• A commitment to enhance an urban environment for future generations</li> <li>• Cultural revitalisation as a catalyst for urban regeneration and prosperity</li> </ul>

**Figure 1 – Aspirations / Ngā Awhero of the Central City Recovery Plan**<sup>9</sup>

- (iii) These aspirations remain highly relevant to residents, developers, businesses, transport and open space planners, as well as the design community, as they provide direct outcomes under each heading that the city seeks to achieve at a range of scales.
- (iv) Further to these aspirations above, page 31 of the Recovery Plan lists ten design principles for addressing the challenges and opportunities for the rebuild of the Central City. The spatial Blueprint Plan has been produced based on these design principles. The design principles represent the most recent and contextually responsive principles for the Central City over the next ten years (equating to 20-years since its development).

<sup>9</sup> <https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/The-Council/Plans-Strategies-Policies-Bylaws/Plans/central-city/christchurch-central-recovery-plan-march-2014.PDF>, Page 23.

- (v) Given the extensive level of community buy-in with these principles and aspirations, as well as cross-governmental agreement (CERA, CCC, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu), I therefore considered the design principles, or the aspirations to be key factors of a WFUE for Ōtautahi Christchurch.



**Figure 2 – Design Principles within the CCRP<sup>10</sup>**

- (vi) Lastly, whilst noting this is a locally specific factor for Ōtautahi, I also reference the latest Briefing to the Incoming Government, which on Page 5, cites the opportunity to “Put localism at the heart of the future by local government”<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/The-Council/Plans-Strategies-Policies-Bylaws/Plans/central-city/christchurch-central-recovery-plan-march-2014.PDF>, Page 31.

<sup>11</sup> [LGNZ-Briefing-to-the-Incoming-Government-2023.pdf](https://www.lgnz.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Briefing-to-the-Incoming-Government-2023.pdf)

**(c) Realise that quality is an inseparable partner to density<sup>12</sup>.**

- (i) As densities increase, so too should the level of onsite amenity. The NSW Guide for Apartments recommends a “*high level of amenity for residents and each apartment, resulting in density appropriate to the site and its context*”<sup>13</sup>.
- (ii) Paragraphs 50-56 of the Urban Design Forum (UDF) submission on the National and Built Environment Bill<sup>14</sup>, cites the case for quality and its partner with density (quantity). The following clauses specifically reference this intrinsic relationship:

*“As the urban environment intensifies, the quality of the built environment becomes more important. This particularly applies to the public realm; roads, streets and open spaces will need to work harder to accommodate more people and activities” [para 50].*

*“For the last thirty years, the built environment professionals have emphasised the importance of density and quality in the built environment. Density is now being given due prominence, but the equally important component of a quality built environment is not. We understand amenity has been removed due to its misappropriation by private interests and we are not suggesting quality as de-facto for amenity” [para 51]*

- (iii) The value of design quality has also been well documented since 2001 in the [former] Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment’s (CABE) ‘Value of Good Design’<sup>15</sup> and the Ministry for the Environment’s ‘Key Findings about the Value of Good design’ (2005)<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 51, Primary Evidence of Nicola Williams, dated 11 August 2023.

<sup>13</sup> [Apartment Design Guide \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/apartment-design-guide) – page 12, Principle 3: density

<sup>14</sup> [Microsoft Word - Final Rev 04 Feb 19 UDF Draft Submission -NBA- Bill \(urbandesignforum.org.nz\)](https://www.urbandesignforum.org.nz/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Final%20Rev%2004%20Feb%2019%20UDF%20Draft%20Submission%20-%20NBA%20-%20Bill%20(urbandesignforum.org.nz))

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-value-of-urban-design\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-value-of-urban-design_0.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/summary-of-the-value-of-urban-design-the-economic-environmental-and-social-benefits-of-urban-design/key-findings-about-the-value-of-urban-design/#:~:text=A%20study%20led%20by%20Carmona,value%20and%20better%20lifecycle%20value%22>.



- (iv) Other recent guidance and case studies relating to quality include the Urban Design Manual which explains the importance of good design quality<sup>17</sup>.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 14. In conclusion, the above three recommended additional factors that I consider contribute to a WFUE, seek to provide additional outcomes to be applied at a range of city, neighbourhood and site specific scales. They also assist in achieving density done well and understanding our microclimate and how to respond to future climate challenges.

**Nicola Williams**

14 December 2023

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<sup>17</sup> [Free Design Advice for Homes, Buildings & Neighbourhoods - Auckland Design Manual](#)