

NOVEMBER 9TH, 2023

BEFORE THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL APPOINTED
PLAN CHANGE 14 INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

Cindy Robinson – Chair

David McMahon - Deputy Chair

Karen Coutts

Alan Matheson

Ian Munro

STATEMENT BY ROBERT BROUGHTON IN SUPPORT OF HIS SUBMISSION #851

Riccarton resident for 50 years, 43 years in Rata Street raising a family there and contributing to the Christchurch community through coaching and substantial administration of junior football. I also promoted mathematics through the Canterbury Mathematical and New Zealand Mathematics Associations, together with a role on the then National Curriculum Committee for Mathematics (unfortunately replaced by the NZQA).

I was an academic at the University of Canterbury from 1967 until my retirement in 2012. I lectured in applied mathematics specialising in computational applied/numerical mathematics including modelling.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I appreciate it and hope I can add something extra to the presentation from my neighbour Tony Simons on behalf of the Riccarton Bush-Kilmarnock Resident's Association representing the increasing number of angry residents.

I hope my submission #851 has led to worthwhile information relevant to the issue.

I also submitted support for a number of other submissions notably that of Alan Ogle where I added pertinent comments in support. I also supported the new 2023 Christchurch International Airport Noise Contour.

I am not going to go through all my extensively researched information which is in my submission and in the RBKA submission.

However, I am not just dismayed by the significant additional changes recommended by council experts since submissions closed in May, but angry as to why.

I quote from the Council publication Newsline regarding the report on the Bromley Wastewater debacle.

Newsline 27 October 23 on the Review into the wastewater treatment plant debacle

“As a Council, we recognise our obligations to ensure **the wellbeing** of our residents.

“We are sorry. We want to learn the lessons from this response and work with the communities to ensure their voices are heard and contribute to Council decision-making in a meaningful way in the future.”

This is a Council with a 40+% rating (previously after the earthquake it was 70+%)

Now they have repeated the mistakes in dumping, out of left field, 8/9/10 storeys on unsuspecting communities without due process and consultation.

The stress imposed on the populace by the planners in complete disregard for the wellbeing and mental health of residents is in stark contrast to the statements made in the Review. **Clearly the message has not been learnt.**

To quote my neighbour, “We have also struggled to understand all this and how it relates to the requirements of the RMA alongside the rather hastily drafted Amendment Act and our operative District Plan”.

Further, given its significance this process has been unfair and rushed.

As ordinary people we haven't had the time or resources to contribute equitably alongside a few large submitters, including shopping mall owners and Kainga Ora (Government funded) who will have spent millions¹ advancing their own interests by the time this is all over. We can't even find experts since they are all seemingly conflicted and we don't have funds for expensive legal teams.

We also find it hard to believe that the CCC did not have to take note of the Natural and Built Environment Bill despite its relevance to the RBKRA area.

BALANCED URBAN INTENSIFICATION

Let me also state that I am not against intensification per se but am against unbridled, excessive and unnecessary densification. My area has already been densified far in excess of the density described in the current plan for Residential Suburban Zoning. There is a diverse collection of dwellings but recent development is at least 2 storeys.

¹ Kāinga Ora has spent \$800,000 hiring lawyers, planners and architects to influence the outcome of the Wellington District Plan - <https://wellington.scoop.co.nz/?p=153778>. (According to Q&A KO received 10000 complaints and dealt with 2.)

The title of a recent event in Christchurch was **“Reaching a happy medium in urban housing”**

The accompanying picture does NOT show the kind of draconian development proposed by CCC planners such as Kirk Lightbody. There are no 8/9/10 storey developments he proposes for urban housing.

Indeed, what is shown is the type of development, only modern versions, that my grandmothers and relatives lived in in south London. These were terraced apartment blocks with a sub-basement, topped by 2 floors of decent sized rooms with good setbacks from the foot path and steps to the first floor. They also had back gardens. Everyone rented in those days. Now they are highly sought after in the 21st century. Commercial areas nearby, good public transport around the area and into London itself. I would suggest **“happy medium in urban housing”**.



The image is a promotional poster for an event. On the left, a green speech bubble contains the title "Reaching a happy medium in urban housing" in white text. Below the title, it lists the date "Tuesday 17 October" and time "6 – 7.30pm". Further down, it says "In person: Tūranga, Level 1: TSB Space" and "Free event". A play button icon is positioned between the title and the date. To the right of the text is a photograph of a modern, multi-story residential building with a paved walkway and people walking. Below the photo are logos for "ORA" and "Christchurch City Council". At the bottom center is the "Christchurch CONVERSATIONS" logo, and at the bottom right is the "TE PŪTAHI CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE & CITY MAKING" logo.

This is a far cry from high rise. I grew up in a council house, terraced housing – 2 up 2 down, on a very large council estate in Bromley, North Kent. We all had gardens and plenty of space to play in. The primary school was a short 200 m down the road, there were local shops a few minutes away and Bromley town centre was a 30-minute walk or a bus ride away. A 30-minute bike ride to the local grammar school or catch a bus. It was **safe** to walk round the area, play in the local park.

Upon my return on various occasions, I witnessed the effect of replacing local communities of such housing with blocks of apartments (exemplified in TV series in the UK) – concrete blocks with no outdoor space giving rise to anti-social not to mention criminal behaviour. Same could be said of many parts of the UK and certainly in Rotterdam and the northern outskirts of Paris. Where I lived is no longer a safe environment.

In the TVNZ documentary “Revisiting Poverty in New Zealand” a smiling then Minister Woods looks on as families take over new social housing. Great they have housing, however the man with a lot of experience standing next to Woods makes the comments that “the complete lack of space for the children will lead to social problems”.

These absurd unwarranted proposals for 8/9/10 storey blocks will do the same and destroy urban communities. By all means imbed social housing, continue the current densification with a diversity of dwellings but why is this hidebound attempt to destroy “happy urban” communities being proposed?

On top of that we have, as MP Duncan Webb stated, “poor legislation” whereby no off-street parking is required. Our streets are already becoming parking lots. This is the same Dr Web who once **urged tighter house-building rules to protect neighbourhoods**.

All in all, no wonder the people of Christchurch rounded on the Labour MPs given what they are faced with. Pity more weren't upset, as it was existing majorities were slashed to pieces.

GREEN CITY

These plans will result in cutting down mature trees to build blocks of shoebox sized apartments, none of which anyone can really afford or simply aren't value for money, leading to more cars (you have to go places), more traffic more pollution and less of the one thing we actually need, oxygen.

The current naïve plan to replace mature trees by saplings is laughable and completely contradicts the notion of Christchurch being a green city.

Slow grow: Christchurch's urban forest will take decades to form Will Harvie05:00, Feb 10 2023“An ambitious proposal to cloak one-fifth of Christchurch in trees by 2070 recommends doubling the proportion of tree-lined streets and tripling tree numbers along the city's rivers and streams.

That's the gist of the council's draft [Urban Forest Plan](#), which was released for [public consultation](#) last week. The document is 32 pages of ideas on how to grow the Garden City's "tree canopy" – defined as trees 3.5m and higher and measured by an aerial surveys And here's the thing: It will be hard and take decades to achieve even modest improvements.”

The planning staff appear to be at odds with CCC objectives”.

Time running out to save Christchurch's trees from housing intensification

Tina Law05:00, Mar 05 2022

Climate change is with us whether we like it or not and the continual reduction of our green canopy will not serve us well when we start getting the extreme heat that has afflicted the planet to date.

We need to become a sponge city (Singapore) for excessive rainfall, and have a green canopy to lower ground level heat.

(Urban greening initiatives such as planting street trees, rainwater gardens and de-paving can help mitigate the impacts of urban heating due to the climate crisis and urban expansion, according to a study that has found cities have been warming by 0.5C a decade on average)

One of the delights of living with trees around is the bird life. Being close to Riccarton Bush brings native pigeons, fan tails, wax eyes apart from a range of finches, black birds, thrushes and even a grey warbler. This is why the residents love the area and do not want to see it emasculated.

Ōtautahi Climate Resilience Strategy- Eleven years on from when we adopted our first Climate Smart Strategy, climate change is now a mainstream conversation. We've listened to the science and heard the voices of young people and our community, wanting urgent and meaningful action on climate change.

So apparently one hand doesn't know what the other is doing. Contradictory policies.

MATAI STREET WEST cycleway. Why on earth would anyone propose 8/9/10 storeyed buildings for this street. Has Mr Lightbody been to visit anywhere outside his office especially as he recently joined the CCC from a life on the North Island. This has probably the best cycleway in Christchurch frequented by cyclists, scooter riders, walkers,

joggers. An access way to the CBD and University with schools and heritage buildings all the way. It is in the flight path for aircraft so why have tall buildings. Anybody observing the recent low flying AirBus380 circling in gale force winds in order to make a landing would wonder why tall buildings are proposed. That is apart from a wind tunnel effect for prevailing east-west winds that are getting stronger as observed recently.

Have the planners who want to create wind tunnels on east-west roads such as Riccarton Road, Blenheim Road etc realised the consequences.

CHRISTCHURCH/CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKE PRONE

The black map from the 1800s kindly edited by the CCC shows Riccarton as a swamp. Not really surprising since the area contains the last remaining area of ancient swamp and bush. In modern times the area is prone to flooding because it is still riddled with waterways and springs. There are several running springs in Rata Street for example. Much of Riccarton ground is peat.

The Tonkin and Taylor report on the geotechnical situation for Christchurch shows just how unstable the ground is. Riccarton is TC2/TC3.

According to technically able friends many buildings in Christchurch constantly run pumps to remove water. I know this happens on the UC campus. Just as the large quake in Mexico City highlighted the effects of liquefaction Christchurch is now also well aware of this issue.

The troubles with the new Metro sports centre stem from the nature of the ground. As I found out in conversations with people with local ground knowledge piles can be driven and seemingly hit a solid compacted strata but one more hit and the pile disappears into the liquefied strata underneath.

Christchurch has suffered many shakes such as that of 1888, the Inangahua 1968, through a variety of sized shakes until 2010/2011.

See Historic Earthquakes file.

Recent research has indicated the following: The 2022 revision of the NSHM estimates the likelihood of future earthquake shaking hazard to have increased throughout most of the country, ranging from almost no change to more than doubling in some areas.

On average, results have increased by 50 percent or more from previous modelling, highlighting the need to boost national resilience strategies and readiness

The Alpine Fault is due to go within a revised time frame of 30 years.

See the TV1 video.

The result of 2010/2011 is given below.

Chapter 3

Post-earthquake Demolition in Christchurch, New Zealand:

A Case-Study Towards Incorporating Environmental Impacts in Demolition Decisions

R. E. Gonzalez, M. T. Stephens, C. Toma, K. J. Elwood, and D. Dowdell

Abstract The 2010/2011 Canterbury Earthquake Sequence resulted in severe loss and disruption in Christchurch, New Zealand due to liquefaction and damage from

strong shaking. **Following the earthquake, over 60% of concrete buildings with 3 + stories in the Christchurch CBD were demolished**, resulting in a wide spread displacement of people and business, an excess of \$NZD 40 billion in losses, and significant environmental impacts from the demolition.

Even apartment blocks in central Christchurch engineered to high structural standards had to come down.

Why would anyone trust the builders of high rise. The documentary sums it up.

A LIVING HELL: APARTMENT DISASTERS

People whose lives have been wrecked by their 'lifetime investments' being leaky and structurally unsound 'lemons'! In some cases these are people who have moved to NZ from untenable situations in their home countries; have worked hard to find employment and settle their families somewhere 'safe' and become contributing members of NZ society. In other cases these apartments were investments for people approaching retirement; a way to support themselves in old age. For others, NZ residents making their first home purchase. Yet another group being the high-end purchaser who discovers their million-dollar apartments are practically worthless.

Given all this and the fact that highly intensified living has not fared well under Covid. Given the research on effects on wellbeing and mental health as described in my submission of high rise living, just why are we not sticking to the policy many Christchurch people thought we had of a **low rise city**.

WALKING DISTANCES

Then there are the ridiculous walking distances. Melbourne had 400m around a Key Activity Centre. Hong Kong used 300m around an MTR station (from the CEO of MTR). Are people really expected to walk 800m each way to go shopping. The distance should be from a central point anyway not the outer boundary.

I have walked many kilometres in my life in cities and countryside all over the world. But I didn't try carrying my weekly shopping or my DIY materials.

POPULATION

As a numerical mathematician I am fully aware of the risks involved in extrapolating beyond known data. So, when a planner says that the planners are looking 130 years ahead, I wonder what planet they are on. Maybe 2050. But did we really know 2010/2011 was going to happen and the population going down. Did we know pestilence in the form of a pandemic would strike. Did people predict that a Kansas farm lad would join the US army in 1917 and promptly start an avian flu epidemic purportedly to have killed 100 million.

The notion we won't be struck by events that kill people and cause damage and that we should have confidence in long range population forecasts is basically dodgy to say the least.

Just what are our young planners planning for? A mass influx of people from countries that can't control their populations?

A senior planner, Sarah Oliver, appears to be at odds with the draconian, undemocratic proposals of Mr Lightbody who presumably has an algorithm that allows numbers in and produces numbers out without any inputs such as social impacts, geographical features, geophysical issues, the effects on communities. For an example of the latter, does anyone making decisions think people count. That consultation is just a nuisance and is a box ticking exercise. The people are swamped with requests to complete surveys which participants rapidly become disillusioned with because the answers are proscribed to fit someone's agenda. What notice is taken of those people who bring their families into a community because it is a great place to live having been given a zoning just a few years earlier after an extensive and exhausting process that was upheld by an IHP. A decision that clearly piqued planners at the time since their KAC

theory for Riccarton, designed by drawing circles in an office, was overturned by the Councillors and upheld by an IHP. Surely people have a case for fair treatment. This is certainly not apparent in the sudden change of tactics by the CCC planners.

Do communities want the “wilding pine” effect whereby one 9 storey building is built and suddenly more follow and takeover the area ruining a thriving community.

Ms Oliver has been around Christchurch for a long time and clearly has a sense of what a sensible policy should be. The Blackburn Management report supports the notion that Christchurch has ample housing. It is common knowledge that many developments stand empty having been purchased by overseas buyers or are AirB&B investments. Hardly assisting in the housing crisis.

In the process destroying urban communities.

SUPPORT

I also strongly support the new Airport Contour which has been peer reviewed by international experts and not challenged by locals seeking monetary gain. Why has this suddenly been shunted off to ECAN?

On a parting note, please protect at least some of our character areas. In particular the area of the RBKA from the Kauri Cluster east to the railway line encompassing heritage and historic sites should be left with its existing Residential Suburban zoning. There is plenty of vacant land in Riccarton for happy urban housing.

Finally with a new Government isn't it time for a pause.

Thank you