

**BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONER  
FOR SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER**

the Resource Management  
Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

Private Plan Change Request  
79 (PC79)

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**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF HUGH ANTHONY NICHOLSON  
ON BEHALF OF SELWYN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2023**

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## **1. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

- 1.1 My name is Hugh Anthony Nicholson. I have prepared a Statement of Evidence for the Selwyn District Council with respect to Plan Change 79 to the Operative Selwyn District Plan. My qualifications and experience are set out in that statement.
- 1.2 I request that where necessary the Commissioner relies on my opinions as set out in my written statements, any joint witness statements (of which there are none with regard to this plan change request), and my verbal evidence given at the hearing. I do not agree with the statements Ms Lauenstein has made on my behalf in her summary of evidence.

## **2. CHANGES TO THE ODP**

- 2.1 I note that the applicant has made a number of changes to the proposed ODP in response to the Section 42A report. In particular I support:
- (a) The redesign of the central linear park to provide a more functional space which includes indicative stormwater treatment areas and neighbourhood reserves, and a road along one side to provide passive surveillance;
  - (b) A more comprehensive and connected network of primary and secondary roads, pedestrian and cycling paths and green links has been provided;
  - (c) The commercial area has been moved south, off the land where the owners have submitted in opposition to PC79, and opposite the carpark for Kakahu Park with a safe pedestrian / cycle crossing point on Birch's Road. Proposed secondary roads and green links would give access to the commercial area for PC79 residents;
  - (d) The street edges along Hamptons and Birchs Roads are identified for urban upgrades including pedestrian and cycle facilities;
  - (e) The boundaries with rural neighbours have a landscaped strip to reduce the potential for reverse sensitivity;
  - (f) The potential integration and expression of Maori cultural values.

- 2.2 There are two outstanding matters with regard to the ODP. Firstly I consider that there should be a second pedestrian /cycle crossing facility included at the northern end of the site across Hamptons Road.
- 2.3 Secondly I note that there are two landowners within the PC79 site who have submitted in opposition to the plan change. For clarity I have prepared a drawing showing the proposed ODP with the two properties removed to give some idea of the impact if they do not develop their properties (see Figure 1). While I agree that the ODP could be redesigned around these missing lots, I consider that it would be a less than ideal outcome.

### 3. URBAN FORM

- 3.1 With regard to the definition of an urban environment in the NPS-UD Ms Lauenstein suggests, *“For Prebbleton specifically, this means there is an expectation to accommodate a population of at least 10,000 residents through primarily medium density residential zoning (MDRZ)”*<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.2 Whilst the current population of Prebbleton is approximately 4,500 people (2018 census), the Inner Plains townships in Selwyn function as a single complex housing and employment market. As such the NPS-UD definition of urban environments is considered to apply to the Inner Plains townships including Prebbleton. My understanding is that while the population of the combined Inner Plains townships exceeds 10,000, there is no expectation that each individual township will have a population of 10,000.
- 3.3 Ms Lauenstein presents a growth scenario based on *“my own urban analysis of the compact urban form of Prebbleton”*<sup>2</sup>. She goes on to say *“In collaboration with my colleague Mr. Compton-Moen, I have studied all the 'moving parts' and developed a growth map based on the existing and projected growth pattern under this updated planning framework”*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 33, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 35, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 37, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design

- 3.4 While this growth map is not without merit, it has no standing in terms current statutory or Council planning processes. It is one possible outcome of future growth in Prebbleton, but there are a number of other options which should be investigated, and may take precedence, including the retaining the township's current urban form.
- 3.5 In particular I note that PCs68 and 72 are largely undeveloped, and that there are a number of areas within the current urban form of Prebbleton that are also being investigated for residential use (see Figure 2). If further capacity is needed beyond these areas I do not agree with Ms Lauenstein that the areas to the north, east and west of Prebbleton should be discounted without further investigation of the relative costs and benefits.
- 3.6 Ms Lauenstein discounts the rezoning of rural lifestyle blocks saying they *"would not be able to facilitate 15hh/ha development"*<sup>4</sup>. While I agree that the outcomes of rezoning rural lifestyle blocks may be of a lesser density and lower amenity, I consider that it may still be an appropriate strategy that provides additional capacity without encroaching on productive farmland.
- 3.7 Figure 2 compares the current urban form of Prebbleton with the growth map prepared by Ms Lauenstein and Mr Compton-Moen. The current urban form includes four enclaves of rural land either wholly or partly surrounded by residential land, or within the urban growth boundary. These are being considered as part of Variation 1 to the Proposed SDP.
- 3.8 What is evident from Figure 2 is that PC79 is a residential outlier from the existing urban form that has limited adjacency with the wider township. It is only when it is considered with the rezoning of the neighbouring pieces of land that a more coherent urban form emerges. In my opinion PC79 when considered within the scope of the plan change does not contribute to a compact urban form for Prebbleton.

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 20, PC79 Summary of Evidence Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design



- 3.9 Ms Lauenstein states that “*Mr Nicholson sees Prebbleton as a monocentric town*”<sup>5</sup>. I note that my opinion is based on the definition of the ‘*Township Network*’ in the Proposed SDP<sup>6</sup> which defines Rolleston and Lincoln as *district centres* and Prebbleton as a *service township* along with West Melton, Leeston and Darfield. The definition goes on to say “*The township network provides the framework for managing the scale, function and character of each township within the whole district*”. My observation is that Rolleston and Lincoln are polycentric towns whereas the service townships have single commercial centres.
- 3.10 In my opinion the evolution of Prebbleton from a service township with a single village centre to a larger polycentric town should be part of a more considered growth strategy and spatial plan rather than happening through ad hoc private plan changes.

#### 4. KAKAHA PARK

- 4.1 With regard to Kakaha Park, Ms Lauenstein considers that the park “*demonstrates a change to the area and in particular to Birchs Road and Leadleys Road from a rural area outside of Prebbleton to an urban area situated within the boundaries of Prebbleton township*”<sup>7</sup>. She goes on to say “*this idea of transitioning into rural with an urban park may on paper look like a solution but this is not the case here. The nature of a recreational park such as Kakaha Park requires active edges and passive surveillance from urban areas*”<sup>8</sup>.
- 4.2 I agree that passive surveillance is an important factor in urban parks, however, I consider that there are a number of open spaces in small towns that function effectively and safely in rural environments with a low number of residential neighbours. In particular I am familiar with Little River Domain, Osborne Park in Doyleston, and Ohoka Domain which have limited passive surveillance but a high degree of ownership from the local community.

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<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 17, PC79 Summary of Evidence Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design

<sup>6</sup> <https://eplan.selwyn.govt.nz/review/rules/0/498/0/30838/0/138>

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 59, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 62, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design

- 4.3 Kakaha Park has a wider function providing recreational opportunities for the surrounding district, and in my opinion it is a legitimate approach to use the park as a 'defensible urban edge' on the southern boundary of Prebbleton.

## 5. CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 5.1 Ms Lauenstein describes the Little River Rail Trail as "*a safe cycle link to Christchurch offering an alternative commuting mode*"<sup>9</sup>. While the Rail trail runs down the opposite side of Birchs Road I note that the separated cycle path disappears and is replaced with painted on-road cycle lanes along Birchs Road between Trices and Springs Roads, and along Springs Road between Trices and Blakes Roads. The painted on-road cycle lanes are adjacent to parking lanes on two busy arterial roads and do not provide an attractive or high amenity cycle route from PC79 into or through Prebbleton.
- 5.2 In my opinion the connectivity of PC79 with the existing Prebbleton township remains at a *low-moderate* level of connectivity. This reflects that while the internal connectivity is good, PC79 has limited adjacency with the existing township, and the external connections are primarily reliant on Birchs Road.
- 5.3 In my opinion the accessibility of PC79 has improved to a *low-moderate* level. This reflects inclusion of pedestrian / cycle facilities around the edge of the site, and the further resolution of the commercial centre on Birchs Road. I note that PC79 has poor walkability to the town centre, and the quality of the cycle trail along parts of Birchs and Springs Roads has low amenity. Most employment, retail and higher educational opportunities require travel into Christchurch.



**Hugh Nicholson**

02<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

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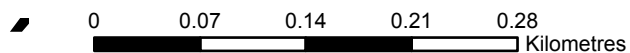
<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 71, PC79 Statement of Evidence of Nicole Lauenstein, Urban Design



# Figure 1: Birchs Road ODP without properties submitting in opposition

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