

Evidence presented at Hearing 3 July 2019  
by Juliet Walker

My name is Juliet Walker, I live with my family on state highway 6 ( Kawarau Gorge Rd ).

I grew up in Auckland on a 1/4 acre section with animals, fruit trees and wide open spaces. I hoped to provide the same lifestyle in later years as a parent but as the population constantly increased along with housing, rates and traffic congestion at ridiculous levels not to mention the nighttime noise of car alarms, house alarms, sirens and rubbish trucks we realised our health and wellbeing was under attack.

We decided to tour around the South Island in 2015 for a new place to call home.

We found ourselves in Cromwell, loved the heritage precinct, schools, sports facilities, shops and services in town. We also found Highlands and while wondering around outside we got talking to a man called Steve who casually asked if our then 8 year old would like to sit in his Lamborghini. It was clear to us that they catered to families and motorsport enthusiasts. We found a property where no one could build behind us or in front, it had fruit trees and wide open spaces for animals, just what we wanted, so within a few months we sold up and moved down here, 2km from Highlands and 5km from town. Cromwell has a big heart and a great community feel, neighbours look after each other, business owners know our names and having a plentiful supply of the finest cherries, berries, stone fruit, vegetables and wine from the wonderful orchards and vineyards that surround us, is something we do not take for granted. The growers are clearly passionate about what they do and we support them.

When I found out about the proposed subdivision at River Terraces the first words that came to mind were "greed and stupidity". I lodged my submission opposing it within hours of finding out about it. Everything about it is wrong. Wrong location, wrong scale, wrong neighbours, wrong town. If 900 homes were built there and each homeowner only had one vehicle, with half driving to town each day and half commuting to Queenstown for example, our highways would become congested during peak hour, more so than they are already, not to mention pollution and noise. That would be at least 450 additional vehicles in the morning and again at night every day of the working week. The weekends would not go unaffected if the town was to " double in size overnight ". These extra vehicles driving right past our property is something that would have many negative implications to us and our neighbours, one of the most obvious is our health. We are already experiencing a noticeable increase in traffic flow over the last 3 1/2 years due to the gradual increase in small housing estates built in the town. The thought of several hundred more is absurd and cruel. Then there is the busy tourist season with rental cars and motorhomes somehow squeezing themselves into the already clogged up highway with only a handful of passing lanes between here and Queenstown. During winter we experience thick fog, making driving through the gorge challenging. The beautiful highway becoming a path of road rage and carnage putting our emergency services under pressure. On the Winton Property developers website it states that River Terraces are located just 45 mins to Queenstown and 35 mins to Wanaka. I think that if the developers plan to double the size of Cromwell then its not rocket science to realise the time to get to these destinations would also double.

The increased traffic that River Terraces would create in our township is another matter.

The residents of Cromwell enjoy being able to drive into town and find free unlimited parking right outside the shop they wish to go into and picking children up from school is effortless. Residents in Queenstown and Wanaka where Winton Partners have already built have lost that privilege. They have to deal with metered parking, parking wardens, traffic lights and rates increases. These are just some of the many permanent negative affects the proposed subdivision would have on our beautiful town.

I also wonder what consideration has been given to our two supermarkets with their carparks already at capacity, and how residents living on Ripponvale rd, Pearson rd and Cemetery rd just to name a few, are ment to make a left or right hand turn out onto the highway without incident. Cromwell does not want or need traffic lights or any of the other negatives I have already mentioned.

We have been told that the River Terrace subdivision will "double the size of Cromwell in one hit if approved" and Mr Goldsmith told commissioners that "the project was the only solution to the districts housing crisis", but as residents, we can tell you there is no housing crisis in Cromwell therefore we do not need your solution.

Mr Goldsmith also stated that Mr Meehan had spent time speaking to local landowners about building up to 2000 houses, what I ask, is, are we talking about 2000 homes or 900, who those landowners were, how many and what was their reaction. We know some of the residents living around the proposed River Terraces site but none of them have been spoken to by Mr Meehan. How the developers think this is a great idea is beyond comprehension. They expect the new residents to live with noise issues, limited sunlight and a commute time twice as long as what was advertised and they expect the current residents to accept clogged up roads, queues at the supermarket and school gate, higher rates, traffic lights, pay and display parking, sirens day and night, all because of one mans quest for personal gain. You are basically trying to give us something we dont need in a place that dosnt suit, leaving a trail of distruction behind for us as ratepayers to inherit. Cromwell is beautiful and unique because of the residents who live here and love to call it home and we will fight against the greed and stupidity of outsiders who havnt done their homework properly.

Highlands is a unique asset to Cromwell with visitors coming from all over the world to enjoy, and bringing the tourist dollar with them. We are lucky to have something no one else has right on our doorstep. We have enjoyed family easter egg hunts, Christmas picnics and love to smell the leather upholstery when the classic cars lineup at Highlands. Speedway is also an asset to our community, it provides alot of enjoyment and family entertainment with people coming from far and wide, the dates etched in my husbands head so he dosnt forget one. These are just two of the many reasons visitors flock to Cromwell to enjoy what we have on offer and their continued success and future should not be compromised because of a large scale housing development built en masse right in the middle of it.

I, for one have had enough sleepless nights over plan change 13 recently, so I think it is fair to say it has already had an effect on our health and wellbeing. As a family we know from previous experience that being forced to live cheek by jowl does nobody any favours. Waking up to the sound of neighbours flushing their toilet is a common gift property developers give residents, and not being able to open windows on a sunny day or hang washing on the line because it is "spray day" is an inconvenience for people on both sides of the fence. Like I said in the beginning " greed and stupidity". When I think about plan change 13, I dont know whether to laugh or cry. How many valid reasons do we have to give for this plan change to be rejected. Maybe Mr Developer would like to live in one of these homes, breathe the artificial air, on a sunny day with the windows shut, smoke wafting through the washing on the line on "burn day" and perhaps a neighbour with his stereo turned up really loud to drown out the noise from speedway, what a treat that would be.

The actions of this property developer reminds me of playtime in the sandpit at primary school, a group of childern happily playing, buliding houses and roads, then along comes one kid and plonks his creation right in the middle because he thinks his is better, thus it all ending in tears and one big messed up sandpit.

So on behalf of all those who oppose it. I ask that you decline plan change 13.

Thank you.