

**From:** Paul Blaschke <paul.blaschke@xtra.co.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 5 March 2013 3:15 p.m.  
**To:** Chloe Smith  
**Subject:** Proposed Plan Change 26, Shaftesbury Grove, Stokes Valley: Comments on Submissions

Dear Chloe

As requested I have read and reviewed the ecological content of comments of the further submissions received on Proposed Plan Change (PPC) 26, together with your summary of submissions. I consider you have summarised and discussed the issues raised in the submissions comprehensively. Further brief comments on the ecological issues raised follow.

1. As noted, many of the submissions address ecological issues, and express concern at the loss of natural reserve, native bush, and associated birds and other wildlife if subdivision follows approval of the PPC. Several submissions mention recent sightings of morepork, as well as other mentions made of tui and hawk. I have no doubt that sightings of these species took place, and my report noted that "The Eastern Hutt hills are known to generally provide good habitat for a range of bird species".
2. I note, however, that several submissions note the presence of pukatea forest at the site. It is likely that these submitters were referring to the mention made of pukatea forest in the listing for SNR #50. I do not know the exact location of forest with puketea within the quite large area of SNR 50 (nor indeed whether forest with puketea still exists as it is likely that the SNR description was written more than 20 years ago and to my knowledge has not been updated since). However, I am fairly confident that pukatea is not present on or in the vicinity of the PPC land, nor did I observe puketea in my observations of podocarp-broadleaf forest at the base of the Eastern Hutt hills in the vicinity of Pomare Railway Station. The nearest occurrence of pukatea that I am aware of is in restricted "semi-swamp" habitats within Taita Scientific Reserve.
3. Two of the original submissions, those made by Phil Angus (DPC26/2), and Caroline Ammundsen for the Greater Wellington Regional Council (DPC26/3), are among the most detailed of all submissions (including further submissions) referring to ecological issues. Therefore I had the opportunity to address many of the general and specific concerns of submitters in my report. Comments below address some additional points raised in further submissions DPC26F1-DPCF26-29.
4. A couple of submissions mention fire risk from new residential lots. The nature of surrounding vegetation is obviously a factor in fire risk. I consider that new residential lots arising from the PPC would not generally be at any greater fire risk than surrounding vegetation areas. They would probably be at higher fire risk than existing properties on the western side of Shaftesbury Grove, for fires originating in the bush areas. I note that the fire risk on the Hutt hills is generally lower now than it was in former decades, because of the growth of more fire-resistant native vegetation from pioneering gorse-dominated scrub. I think that new residential lots arising from the DPC would generally be at no greater risk than existing lots in Aldersgate Grove, which is also closer to the Eastern Hutt Road and any fires rising from the Hutt Valley and the Eastern Hutt Road.
5. Several submissions, in particular DPC26F20 (points from this submission were also copied by other submitters), raise issues to do with stormwater and sewage infrastructure. Submission DPC26F20 raises concerns about the piping of stormwater into the small streams I describe in my report. This is a valid concern, as it is correct that residential lots are likely to result in greater stormwater flows into these streams, and it is likely also that these flows would contain contaminants such as car wash chemical and garden pesticides.
6. My initial reaction to this point is that I would anticipate that these waterways could handle increased stormwater flows and contained contaminants up to a certain point, without

significant adverse impacts. I consider there are standard engineering design methods available to absorb flows of the likely magnitude to be encountered, avoiding adverse scouring effects etc on the stream banks. It is also possible to install diversion devices that divert initial "first flush" (more contaminated) runoff into the ground rather than into waterways.

7. Some of these streams are ephemeral (not flowing year-round) so when at some times of the year additional flow (and associated contaminants) in them is absorbed into the stream bed. If there is residential development in an area like this it is preferable, where possible, to absorb stormwaters and contaminants into natural ground surfaces and waterways rather than pipe them all to directly into the Hutt River and ultimately into Wellington Harbour.
8. However, I have not undertaken detailed analysis of the stormwater flows expected from residential development and this is outside my field of expertise. **I recommend** that conditions of consent, if granted, include a requirement that at the time of application for future subdivision, an appropriately detailed analysis of expected stormwater flows and methods of managing such flows be undertaken, taking account of the final number of lots created.
9. In summary, I consider that, as discussed in my previous report, the original proposal gave rise to a potential for significant adverse effects. Submitters have identified many of these potential effects. However, the notified PPC has recognised these effects by reducing the proposed PPC area to "Option 1" of those options proposed. Furthermore my recommended mitigation measures would reduce any ecological effects, including cumulative effects, to no more than minor. In particular, the Council's intent (Planner's Report p29) to "grant formal reserve status to the remaining area within the wider property", would be particularly important, by addressing submitter's concerns about possible future development, allowing future public access to the areas of high ecological value, and preventing future cumulative effects on at least this part of the SNR. **I recommend** that this intent be reflected in conditions of consent if the PPC is granted.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like further clarification or comment.

Yours sincerely

Paul Blaschke

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