

# Landowners scrutinise Save the Maitai petition signatures

Cherie Sivignon 07:12, May 05 2021



SUPPLIED

An aerial photograph of Nelson with the Maitahi-Bayview development site marked by a dotted white line at the top of the image.

Landowners behind a proposal to build about 750 homes on a greenfield site near central Nelson say just one-quarter of the signatures on a petition opposing residential development in the area came from Nelsonians.

A syndicate of two companies is behind the venture, known as the Maitahi-Bayview development – Maitai Development Co General Partner Ltd and Bayview Nelson Ltd. The proposed development is earmarked for a 287ha site about 3km from the Nelson CBD, stretching from Atawhai over the hills and down through Kākā Valley, which is linked to Maitai Valley.

On April 16, the syndicate lodged a private plan change request with Nelson City Council. If approved, the plan change will pave the way for the development by changing the zoning of key sections of the land.

Several months earlier, in July 2020, news broke that a group had formed called Save the Maitai, whose members were concerned about development on the Kākā Valley section of the earmarked site.



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Save the Maitai spokesman Dr Aaron Stallard says the while the locations of people who signed online are unreliable, possibly as many as 8000 petition signatories live in Nelson.

Four months later, on November 12, a petition was delivered to the council with the signatures of more than 9600 people opposing residential development in the area. The petition remains open.

Save the Maitai spokesman Dr Aaron Stallard on Tuesday said the total now stood at 11,469 signatures.

Claims from some supporters of the Save the Maitai group – including Stallard – have been made that most of the signatures came from Nelson people.

However, a team of landowner representatives who inspected the petition that was presented to the council said three-quarters of the 9636 signatories came from outside of Nelson, including 2785 from overseas. Nelsonians numbered 2399.

“So, in short, 7237 are not NCC ratepayers with 2785 of those not even living in NZ,” the landowners said.

There was also a question around what people were signing “as we did not submit our application until 16 April”.



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Nelson MP Rachel Boyack says it's important that if people are putting statements out around the views of Nelsonians, "they should be accurate".

Nelson MP Rachel Boyack said she was not surprised "a significant number" of people from outside Nelson had signed the petition.

"I was surprised at the scale of it, and disappointed," Boyack said. "It's important that if people are putting statements out around the views of Nelsonians, they should be accurate."

Her comments come after Stallard, in a February 26 post on the Save the Maitai Facebook page, quotes Boyack as saying that many of those who signed the petition live outside of Nelson.

"Save the Maitai response: The vast majority of the signatories are from Nelson," Stallard's post says.

When Stuff this week questioned Stallard about that post, he said his response to Boyack's comment "was based on data from the hard copy petition (I didn't have data from the online petition at that time)". That data from the hard copy petition indicated 80 per cent plus of the signatures were from people in Nelson, he said.

Stallard provided Stuff with Save the Maitai's latest petition figures, which he said now included a total of 11,469 signatures – 8189 on Change.org and 3280 hard copy.





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Developers Andrew Spittal and Hemi Toia at the site of the proposed Maitahi-Bayview development near central Nelson.

A breakdown of the hard copy signatures “based on an analysis of a random sample of 560 signatures”, showed 80 per cent of the signatories came from the NCC area, 11 per cent from the Tasman District Council area and 9 per cent from elsewhere – mainly Auckland and Christchurch.

“The locations of people who signed the Change.org petition are unreliable,” Stallard said. “For example, people in our core team living in Nelson are listed by Change.org as being from Christchurch, Auckland, or Rotorua. The localities are automatically generated by the petition website, and likely reflect the locations of internet service providers, or Change.org having erroneous location information.”

About 1000 of the online signatures had no location assigned, he said.

“The fact remains that around 11,500 people have objected to the [proposed Maitahi-Bayview] subdivision and many thousands of those live in Nelson, possibly as many as 8000,” Stallard said.

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<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/latest/125027737/landowners-scrutinise-save-the-maitai-petition-signatures>