

# Maitai Valley housing project to 'enhance' ecology

Charles Anderson

A proposal to transform part of the Kaka Valley into a 750-home development will not change the visual character of the Maitai Valley, says the project's planner. Last Friday, a syndicate of two companies submitted its plan to Nelson City Council for what is known as the Maitahi-Bayview development. The plan looks to change part of the 287ha Kaka Valley, which adjoins the Maitai Valley over to Atawhai, from rural to a mix of residential zoning on parts of the land.

Mark Lile, whom the owners of the development have enacted to lead the planning process, says the project will not only help alleviate residential supply issues in the city but will also help restore the ecological values of the area. The Kaka Valley was previously farmland.

He says that the project will see at least 100 homes built that are targeted at first home buyers, as well as enhance freshwater with 16ha of ecologically-enhanced esplanade reserve and 2km of stream restoration. There would also be 6km of walking and cycle trails built with 16ha added to the Centre of New Zealand reserve, which was previously private land.

"The key driver to that is the sensitivity to visual amenity because that is the backdrop to Nelson city."

Mark says the backlash to the project has been frustrating as it occurred without the full picture being known. He hopes that now some of that concern will be alleviated.



**The boundary mark of where the project would stretch to, related to Nelson city.**  
*Photo: Supplied.*

"Some people suggest this is going to pollute the Maitai or destroy the Maitai ... this is quite the opposite. We are doing something that going to be very beneficial for fresh water and ecological value."

Mark says most people don't know the Kaka Valley exists.

I'm not saying [the project] will be invisible but the essence of the Maitai Valley will not change from a visual perspective for those people travelling up and down it."

However, the Save the Maitai group which gathered steam and 11,000 signatures for a petition opposing the project says that it has no plans to drop its case.

It has even enlisted the help of some well-known Nelsonians to advocate against it,

including Olympic runner Rod Dixon, respected health advocate Annette Milligan and actor Mark Hadlow, who now lives in Nelson.

They all say they believe the project would ruin the Maitai and turn it into "just another suburb".

Mark hopes they will all read the plan in detail.

The plan now goes to council officers to check all is in order before being submitted to councillors to consider. It will then likely go to public consultation before being decided by a panel or a commissioner. There will also be an opportunity for an appeals process so Mark does not believe it will be a quick process.

"If we can get through most of that process by the end of the year we will be doing well."