



# BROOKFIELD

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

### Submission on Hutt City Council Draft District Plan

By Warwick Bell, Chair, Brookfield Board, 2 May 2025

The Brookfield Board and Scouts Aotearoa welcomes this chance to re-submit on the Proposed District Plan for the Hutt City.

We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

#### Introduction

Brookfield Outdoor Education Centre (Brookfield) is a property owned by The Scout Association of New Zealand (Scouts Aotearoa) situated at 562 Moores valley Road, Wainuiomata. It is a precious Scouting and community resource in providing a place for personal development in the outdoors. It is a place of considerable pleasure for ever increasing numbers of people, both young and older, who visit, stay and volunteer.

All people, especially youth, grow through the challenges offered in an outdoor environment where individual's skills, ability and attributes are developed. We provide the outdoor environment and facilities to enable this to happen.

Brookfield was established in 1958 following a bequest of 50 acres from the landowner, Mary Crowther, to Scouts. With the addition of a further 580 acres shortly afterwards (giving a total of 255 ha today) the property, is well situated being in a relatively remote wilderness area at the end of a Moores Valley, yet only 30mins drive from the centre of our capital city. From the upper contours of the property, it is possible to look across Wellington Harbour.

It is an officially gazetted Wildlife Refuge. In that regard it has a key ecological role to play in the region. Firstly, the section of the GWRC water catchment bordering Brookfield to the east is trapped at 50m centres as a mainland island. That will be incorporated into the sanctuary proposed for the water catchment area. Furthermore, the kiwi's released in the Remutaka Forest Park, are migrating northwards, with bird calls being recorded less than 1km from Brookfield.

Secondly Brookfield is on the important ecological flight path for birds between the Orongorongo / Wainuiomata River catchments, across Brookfield, down either side of Stokes Valley, across the Manor Park golf course to the western Hutt hills.

Finally, it is important for Brookfield to maintain being remote. In recent times the development of the upper end of Moores Valley (Crowther Rd and Brookfield Lane), has resulted in extensive

residential development. Presently such development is mainly restricted to the valley floor and can not be seen from Brookfield, so the privacy and remoteness is maintained. Ensuring that into the future is an important issue for Brookfield. The other key issue arising from increased neighbourhood intensification is the increase in rateable value and the financial impacts of that.

## Location

562 Moores Valley is presently zoned General Rural. Under the draft District Plan it is proposed as General Rural Zone. The boundaries are approximately plotted in red on the following Fig 1 taken from the draft planning map. The boundaries are:

- North – a landlocked block at the top (saddle to Whitemans Valley) of the valley which includes Brookfield (and which the Scouts would like to purchase);
- East – the GWRC water catchment.
- South – farm owned by the Puketapu family
- South West – presently Rural Residential; proposed rural lifestyle zone (already substantially developed on 4.5ha lots)
- West – farm owned by Bruce and Pam Adam.

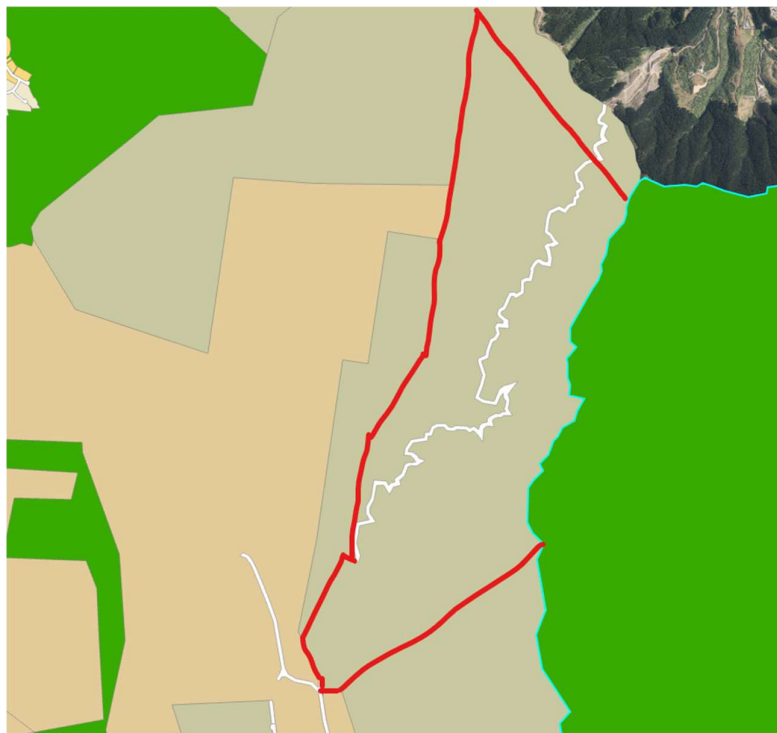


Fig 1 Brookfield Property (in red)

## Submission Summary

Brookfield wishes to make the following submission:

1. Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone, end of Moores Valley.

Brookfield continues to object to the application of the Rural Lifestyle Zone, as defined, to the area to the north of the end of Moores Valley Road.

2. Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone, minimum lot size one hectare.

Brookfield objects to the minimum lot size being reduced to one hectare for the Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone.

3. Outstanding Natural Features and Landscape overlays.

Brookfield objects to the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes being applied to our property.

4. Slope Overlay

Brookfield objects to the Slope Overlay being applied to our property.

5. Changing the Brookfield zoning designation.

That the Brookfield property be more appropriately zoned to recognise its unique nature as an Outdoor Education Centre, potentially as a special purpose zone.

We advise that we wish to provide a verbal submission in addition to this written submission.

## Submission Commentary

On the five items, we provide the following explanations.

### 1. Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone, end of Moores Valley.

Brookfield objects to the application of the Rural Lifestyle Zone to the land so designated at the end of Moores Valley Road. Unlike the other parts of rural Wainuiomata, the Rural Lifestyle Zone is proposed for both existing 4.5ha developed lots and large unoccupied parcels of land at the end of Moores Valley Road / Brookfield Lane. The latter properties are owned by Goh Realty, a real estate company. The application of the Rural Lifestyle Zone, whether the minimum lot size be one hectare or larger hectare sizes less than 4.5ha, has the potential to result in a large increase in intensification of the end of Moores Valley.

As noted by others being located at the end of the valley, this will have a large effect on the traffic and upon the stream.

Furthermore, this zone will border Brookfield in part (see the green arrow on Fig 2 of the topography provided) as well as reach to the top of the ridge above and west of the Adam farm (in pink). Any development on the ridge or coming down the east side of the ridge will overlook Brookfield and destroy the wilderness attributes of the property.

We submit that a restriction on any building or clearing of the property be imposed to the east of the contour 6m below the west side of the top of the ridge running approximately north-south to the west of the Adam Farm. See yellow dotted line in Fig 2 below.

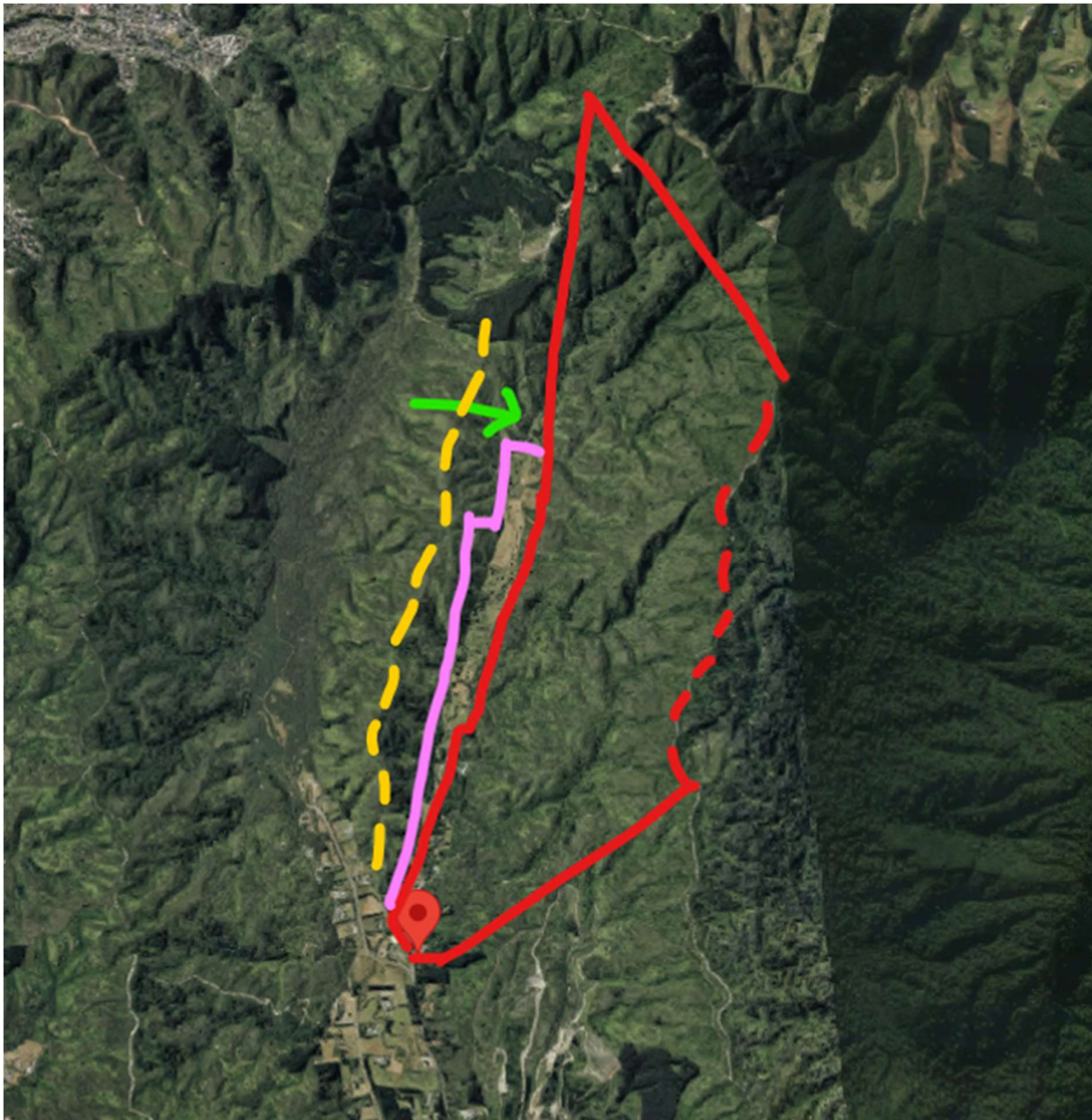


Fig 2.

## 2. Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone, minimum lot size 1 hectare

Brookfield objects to the minimum lot size being reduced to 1 hectare for the Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone, particularly in the areas at the top of Moores Valley on the following grounds:

- a. The application of the Proposed Rural Lifestyle Zone to the area in increasing the number of dwellings has the potential to conflict with the activities on the Scout property. The Scout property has been well established for many years before the more recent residential neighbouring properties. While we presently maintain cordial relations with current neighbours there have been instances where activities on our property such as the flying fox have been challenged by neighbours in regard to potential nuisance. Intensification could increase such issues and we wish to avoid that.
- b. Allowing subdivisions to be as small as one hectare undermines the rural character of the affected areas and reduces the wilderness impact of the environs. While we understand it was reduced under the present District Plan, previously Rural Residential had a 4.5ha minimum requirement. This was the requirement when the Brookfield Lane subdivision was established. We submit that a change from 4.5ha to 1 ha is a significant and detrimental move in enabling extensive urban development in a section of Moores Valley where a wilderness feel should be maintained. A one-hectare minimum is poses risks of air, sound and light pollution.
- c) Allowing subdivisions to be reduced to one hectare puts too much pressure on the roads, particularly Moores Valley Road. Already there is extensive traffic on Moores Valley Rd.
- d) A one hectare minimum is too small to ensure that neighbouring properties are not affected by the septic tanks. It also increases the risk to the waterway, particularly Wainuiomata-iti Stream (aka Wainuiomata Stream). In that regard the Crowther Stream which runs through the Brookfield property flows into the Wainuiomata-iti Stream and it is important to us that there is a good downstream flow.

## 3. Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

Brookfield objects to the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes being applied. It is our view is that these overlays are not appropriate. The application of the Outstanding Natural Features overlay over private land on our property is over land that is not visible to the built- up areas.

We also believe that the overlays will be overly burdensome on the management of our property.

More importantly we are already a designated Wildlife Reserve under the Wildlife Act and are careful custodians of our property. It Scouts ethos to look after the environment (they did start Conservation Week in NZ) and we do not believe that we should be directed in this way such that we no longer have full control over our property.

We support the Federated Farmers submission on this topic.

#### 4. Slope Overlay

Brookfield objects to the Slope Overlay being applied to our property. We have misunderstood the purpose of Slope Overlay but Brookfield by its very nature and purpose (and being a Wildlife Refuge) is not going to be subject to subdivision. We therefore believe the designation of slope overlay establishes an unnecessary constraint.

#### 5. Changing the Brookfield zoning designation

As we have submitted previously and requested discussion about, we request consideration that the Brookfield property be more appropriately zoned to recognise its unique nature as an Outdoor Education Centre.

In the time of the Wainuiomata Council before it was merged with Lower Hutt Council to form Hutt City, Brookfield and Camp Wainui (Boys Brigade Camp on Coast Road) had their own zoning which enabled both properties to develop in line with their purposes. That was lost with the first Hutt City District Plan.

We can presently accommodate around 140 persons and camp around another 800. At that scale the current and proposed General Rural Zone requirements are challenging to operate within. i.e. the limit of maximum 800sqm of floor area on the property is potentially a challenge if we wish to erect further facilities, especially when we have a 255-ha property. i.e if we wish to erect another 50sqm tramping hut or walking shelter. We have a 15m abseiling tower – that contravenes the height requirements of the zone.

As another example, regarding the commentary around Recreation in the General Rural Zone we do not fit. i.e. no buildings may be used in association with a recreation activity.

GRUZ-R7	Recreation
General Rural Zone	<p>1. Activity status: <b>Permitted</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. No motorised recreational activity shall be permitted except for the enjoyment of those residents on the <a href="#">site</a> and their visitors.</li> <li>b. No <a href="#">buildings</a> may be used for or in association with a <a href="#">recreation activity</a>; and</li> <li>c. Participation in the activity does not incur a fee, including any associated membership fee.</li> </ul>

In conclusion to this item there are Special Purpose Zones in the draft District Plan and that would be a potential zoning option.