

## Fiona Christeller - Verbal Submission to HCC PDP – 29 April 2026

Good afternoon Commissioners, Officers and fellow submitters.

*(added this afternoon – I now understand the confusion I had about the separation of hearings. Having asked to be heard; I was asked to attend today and I am very pleased that urban design matters are considered an overarching topic for the Proposed Plan. I would like to be heard again, at other relevant hearings, on the same topic.)*

I am Fiona Christeller and have lived in the Hutt Valey for most of my life; my granddaughters are now third generation students at Hutt Valley High School.

Until recently I ran an architectural practice with many projects around the Wellington region being schools and urban design work. Our vision statement was to work in the public realm, emphasizing that well designed places and spaces help stimulate communities.

Which is why I am here today, rabbiting on about how important good design is and, how we can ensure that the public is up front and centre in all planning decisions that are made.

I know you will have read my submission and the officer's report. You possibly consider that the recommendations are redundant. However, I'm here because the ideas in my submission are timeless – if not now, **then** into the future. My submission is about making our city a better place to live in by using the 5 basic design principles of: Planning; Placemaking; Public Spaces; Community and Sustainability.

I recommended keeping urban design assistance, both written and verbal, to all development, in order to achieve a positive urban environment. I also made recommendations to improve experiences for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of public space, at the same time as making traffic safer, by highlighting encroachment licences as a potential risk.

I know that the planning officer does not support my submission. Her report refers to background documents which I've studied and comment on:

- The local Government Act mentions roads and refers to safety during construction and has provisions to protect traffic but not specifically pedestrians or other users. There is no reference to urban design protection
- In the PDP there are objectives in area specific matters to cover character and the urban built environment: with which I agree. But, there are no rules to hold new developments to account. Lacking is a contextual objective linking on-site built environments to adjacent public land.
- In the PDP, rules for on-site planting are inadequate, the required 30% permeable surfaces will not be sufficient to mitigate current and future weather events which need planting and land formation to contain immediate stormwater run-off during peak rain.

I stated that having urban design initiatives will help this. Although I know that the proposed RMA Act changes repeal urban design initiatives, I have come here today to say that, into a **'better place future'**, they will be of tremendous advantage. Even if these documents and advice cannot be used to hold development to account, I ask that they remain as advisory documents. Particularly an urban design panel which works across the Wellington Region Councils, bringing joint counsel to designers, architects and clients. Hutt City is embarking on a multi-million development of both public and private land from High Street and across the river to the Melling railway land. **Make** this an exemplar of good and coordinated urban design – well designed and flexible buildings and integrated public spaces, all of which are beautiful , encourage visitors and grow the local economy. Thank you. [Fiona.christeller@gmail.com](mailto:Fiona.christeller@gmail.com) 029 472 3502