

Proposed Waikato District Plan. Hearing 25: Points from Oral Submission from Stephen Roberts (#859) – Brief outline

- My name is Stephen Roberts and I have until recently owned and operated pharmacies within Ngaruawahia for 36 years.
- It's my experience that Ngaruawahia is a diverse community but fragile with areas of high need and few resources to ameliorate the impacts of societal change such as rapid urbanisation.
- I would like to see a pre-emptive systematic planned approach to the allocation and positioning of community reserves, natural corridors, green spaces, green corridors, and visual amenity areas.
- There are complex links between nature (landscape, flora & fauna) and mental health and wellbeing.
- I draw your attention to a New Scientist article published 24th March 2021 as background. : <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933270-800-green-spaces-arent-just-for-nature-they-boost-our-mental-health-too/#ixzz6rfeFNP93>
- Essentially greening spaces the right way can boost wellbeing, help redress social inequality and be a boon for the biodiversity we all depend on.
- Research has shown that having a view of nature from your home can confer positive effects and the closer the green space the bigger the effect.
- In addition essential Ecosystem services such as clean air and water, nutrient recycling, flood defence and pollination occur around healthy connected natural spaces such as gullies and hillocks.
- There is a slow realisation that it is not just about the amount of green space but the quality of the green space that must also be considered.
- The proposed district plan is looking at releasing land for housing development. If green spaces are to be allocated, then they need to be both strategically situated and of a quality which is more than just mowed lawn.
- From a strategic sense ridgelines and elevated areas offer the best option.
- This requires provisions within the district plan to ensure this happens using tools such as visual amenity areas which have proven effective in other districts e.g. The Port Hills Christchurch visual amenity areas.