

Submission Numbers 282 & 287

We are representing both of these properties. We have lived at one for over 30 years.

Extent of SNA's on these properties

We appreciate that the boundaries of the proposed SNA on both properties have been adjusted as per the Statement of Evidence of Hamish Dean.

We support these boundary changes as they recognise the existing gardens, grassed areas, fruit trees and structures and alleviate many of the concerns we raised in our submissions.

Both properties each have large areas of land which would still be included in the SNA.

We appreciate that Council (as in HCC) has been added to what is now 20.2.3b in Chapter 20 Natural Environments "Encourage communication between landowners, Department of Conservation, iwi, Council and other organisations that can assist in the management, protection and restoration of Significant Natural Areas."

We oppose public paths, walkways and cycleways being put through SNA's for the following reasons

- the potential disruption to fauna and flora by the building and maintaining of public walkways and cycleways
- larger old and dead trees can be a danger to the public though they are ideal bat roosting places.
- the possible increase of dumped litter and larger rubbish in and around SNA's through increased public access. It is bad enough now with litter and bottles around streets in the neighbourhood after rugby matches and other litter from school children walking home from school. Public access through SNAs could create major problems.
- potential antisocial behaviour in and through SNA's
- the negative impact of increased lighting in and around SNA's particularly on bats and Ruru (Morepork). Having lived at our property for over thirty years we have noted the amount of light shed on our property and the gully area by each upgrade of the lighting at Waikato Stadium.

Dr Hannah Mueller's Statement of Evidence (14 April 2023 on pages 8 & 9) mentions these kind of issues, which we have highlighted in bold type.

32. While enabling public access into gully systems and SNAs is beneficial to allow for restoration and enjoyment by the public, **installation of infrastructure also has a risk of disturbing and fragmenting the ecosystem.**

It is my view that the installation of small structures and small unlit pathways for the purpose of restoration are not at risk of compromising ecosystem function.

33. However, **larger infrastructure such as public walkways, park benches and cycleways have more potential to create adverse effects through lighting requirements.**

34. There is also a **potential conflict between safe use of these features, and the presence of mature trees and vegetation that may need to be removed now or in future for safety purposes if there is public access.**

This could compromise ecosystem function and habitat through the removal of potential bat roost trees that are already of limited availability in the city, and that often are mature, damaged or dead trees that have the highest risk in terms of public safety.

35. **To avoid this risk, in my opinion these infrastructure features enabling public access may not be appropriate in many situations in fSNAs and should be carefully managed in corridor/indigenous fauna habitat SNAs (cSNAs) to avoid further habitat loss and fragmentation.**

If however, Public paths, walkways and cycleways do go ahead in SNA's,

we still maintain that

- private property should not be crossed
- distinction should be made between public land and private land (fencing) or that the walkway be adequately fenced
- they should be securely fenced at any point they border private property, in consultation with the property owner.
- they would need to be closed at night for public safety due to lighting restrictions
- a plan would need to be put in place to manage rubbish and potential antisocial behaviour