

## Sarah Ramsay, Smooth Hill landfill evidence notes

20/5/22

I hope that my evidence was able to express to you the value our off-grid slice of forest has to us. That we value our native plants and bird life, live, play and conserve it on a daily basis.

So it is completely unimaginable that my 6 year old son who wakes at 7am and goes to bed at 7pm, will do so 7 days a week to the sound of a major industrial landfill operation next door. And we will hear it – we can clearly hear people talking on the Big Stone Road perimeter of the proposed landfill 1 kilometre away. When harvesting is happening, we hear the ‘beep beep’ of the forestry excavators when they are in operation 2km down Big Stone Road – but they don’t operate in the weekends.

The proposed concession by DCC to adjust the operating hours to 8.30pm – 6.00pm will make no difference whatsoever to these concerns. In the interests of our enjoyment of our home and recreational users, weekend and evening operation must not be allowed.

Not to mention the smell. On a good day it is completely still, I understand this is when the smell is most likely to affect us – on the best summers days, when there is no breeze to disperse it and we are outside in the garden.

For my family, of course we are the ultimate ‘not in my backyard’ Nimbys. But to be honest, if it were just that - my husband and I would have given up long ago and just sold up. Because we do feel like idiots, it is mortifying standing here feeling fully the naive and foolish people we were when we brought our property 11 years ago and didn’t get the right advice to investigate beyond the LIM report.

But this isn’t just a NIMBY campaign for us, it’s not just MY FAMILY’S backyard that’s at risk. It’s our school, our beach, our weekend exploration of the creek and our incredible community Clubs – it’s our community’s mana that is at threat.

I am so angry, so so angry, first at myself for being such a moron that we’ve found ourselves in this situation and secondly at the council, who’ve had every opportunity to manage their designation and planning better. They have no excuse.

And it’s this failure to properly manage their designation that points to their poor management track record – they had every opportunity to prevent our and neighbouring residential developments, by, at the bare minimum, including the designation on the LIM.

I am not an expert at anything remotely scientific, but I am considered to be an expert in management.

I know that good design and strategy, mean nothing in lieu of excellent planning and most importantly the capability to execute.

The DCC’s application and landfill management plan were incomplete – they’re being iterated throughout this process. The DCC have had this to prepare for for 30 years! Why wouldn’t we expect this poor management to continue throughout their operation of Smooth Hill.

The business of a landfill is significant. This one’s budget is \$50 million dollars. In Dunedin terms, that’s an incredible project.

So in the business of a landfill, surely good planning starts with siting - a site that, even if the chance is remote, has major risks to human life and catastrophic permanent impacts on a sensitive ecological and social environment, would not pass today's standards.

30 years ago there were no residential neighbours, the airport wasn't consulted and as a society we didn't have the environmental knowledge we now have.

The experts on all sides have said, there is a risk. They may disagree on the level of risk, but we all agree, if there is a fire or failure of the liner due to earthquake, failure to manage to the conditions or an extreme weather event - that it's got the potential to destroy a sensitive environment and community.

In the case of my family, immediate neighbours to the site, if there is a fire that coincides with a nor westerly we will literally not have time to escape.

Already you've heard from hundreds of neighbours and community members from Brighton, that if this landfill goes ahead they will avoid the creek, for fear of what may be in it. As far as I and my fellow parents / matua are concerned – the only safe option, is no risk.

Already you've had evidence from David Grant the Principal of our school that they will avoid our creek with our tamariki, for fear of what could be in it.

It's because of this fear that we ourselves as a community have fundraised over \$20k to pay experts and lawyers to represent us. Alex and I have personally taken out a mortgage against our house to fund it.

It was money well spent - David Ife, Andrew Rumsby and Kelvin Lloyd have all submitted compelling evidence to the contrary of the DCC – that there is risk to both the environment and human health, and it's significant.

As a community feel under siege, we don't trust the DCC, and they've done absolutely nothing to alleviate that fear - their total unwillingness to engage in meaningful consultation with our community is arrogant at best, outright bullying at worst.

Without trust we cannot be confident that the DCC will look after us. Without confidence we have doubt, and with doubt we have fear, and when we fear things we avoid them – and therein lies the problem.

If the landfill goes ahead, even with the 115 conditions imposed, if we do not trust the Council to operate it then the perceived risk will still have devastating consequences on our community.

Imagine a special community like Brighton, being destroyed, simply because we don't trust the water. Isn't that a basic human right, to trust that our creek and our beach is safe?

*Sarah Ramsay, 689 Big Stone Road, Brighton – 021 552 240*