

Submission to the Nelson Long Term Plan: 2015-2025

27 April 2015

From: Friends of the Maitai

Prepared by: Tom Kennedy and other members of the Hub (steering committee)

Submission:

- The plan should include reference to Project Maitai/Mahitahi and its continuation and importance in maintaining and improving a major public asset; i.e. Maitai/Mahitahi River.
- The plan should reflect the commitment to making the Maitai/Mahitahi swimmable and safe and a healthy environment for the natural freshwater aquatic wild life it must support.
- The funding level for Project Maitai/Mahitahi should be no less than what was originally allocated.

Introduction:

Friends of the Maitai is a group of citizens that came together about two years ago to encourage action over the state of the Maitai River, in particular high levels of cyano bacteria and associated risks to public health.

Since then we have formed a number of interest groups and have been active in riparian planting, SOE monitoring, fish surveys (including Inanga), media releases, creation of a web site, education programs, collaboration with Nelson City Council and Project Maitai/ Mahitahi, and collaboration with forestry companies . We are a member of the Nelson Biodiversity Forum.

We have a monthly Hub meeting where representatives from each interest group meet to discuss policy, strategy and action.

Background discussion:

- We would firstly like to acknowledge the Councils initiative in launching Project Maitai/Mahitahi and support the continuation of initiatives in engaging citizens in educated consultation and involvement.
- We find the process used with Council's Consultation Document for Nelson's LTP 2015-25 unclear. It is written as though it is a complete long term plan, and therefore should include all important items, but we have also been told by Council officers that it isn't trying to include existing major commitments (because they are business as usual), just changes. This is confusing, and may result in important existing commitments being removed from the LTP as a result of misunderstanding. We have chosen to assume that Project Maitai/Mahitahi needs to be restated. We believe that this would be better way to create a complete and clear LTP.
- The LTP does make reference to Nelson Nature (Biodiversity Management Programme initiated by Council) in terms of its Environmental responsibilities. However there is no specific reference to Project Maitai/Mahitahi or the Maitai River in this document, hence

our concern that it should be highlighted similar to the Gondola and Brook Waimarama Sanctuary projects.

- Over the past 20 years there have been many reports , scientific research papers, commissioned studies and documentation of the impact of human activities on our streams and rivers but we are still seeing the gradual decline in the health of these ecosystems.
- Nelson is fortunate in having the Cawthron Institute to take on specific studies relating to the Maitai River and Dam. Because the Dam and forestry activities have dominated middle catchment land use over the past 30 years there has been significant changes in the health of the river during this time. A number of excellent reports highlight these issues.
- Friends of the Maitai acknowledge Councils initiatives to date in addressing the issues and would like to support further action in transferring the aims and goals in LTP and Nelson Nature to specific conditions for compliance in Consents issued for Dam operations and Forestry activities.

References:

1. *The impact of the Maitai Dam on river health relative to other catchment pressures: A Review.* Cawthron Institute , Report No. 2371 August 2013.
2. *Review of forestry impacts upon sediment yield and aquatic ecosystems.* NIWA Client Report-043 May 2004