

Hobbiton public submission 9 April 2019

I have come here today to make a submission because it is important that you as our council know what the daily effects of Hobbiton are on us as residents of Buckland Road and wider community. I don't enjoy public speaking but I have had to push myself outside of my comfort zone in order to get the message across to you on behalf of my children, my husband, our neighbours and the wider Matamata community.

Being a small community we are unwittingly intertwined on so many levels. The occurrence of injury and/or death within our community have far reaching effects and statistically the chances of the prementioned occurring is so infinitely high with the increase of traffic flow generated by having Hobbiton as a destination in our district. On a daily basis we witness near misses or are involved in near misses. My son has encountered 5 near misses in the last 8 months – one of which occurred yesterday at the intersection of Hopkins Road and State highway 29. He had collected my daughter from school and a tourist van almost t-boned into the side of his vehicle. If it had not been for his quick response I hate to think what I would be doing today instead of appearing here in front of you. I myself have encountered numerous incidents, the number of which I have lost count. I am also conscious of the fact that many families in Matamata have sons, daughters, mothers and fathers that work at Hobbiton and are daily exposed to the risks on the roads. I no longer feel confident to allow my daughter to use the school bus due to the increase risks on our roads leading to and from our residence. And as we now go into autumn and winter, there are a whole new set of challenges that face drivers on our roads. A daunting thought when faced with the lack of experience that the large majority of the foreign drivers have to our conditions.

I have grave concerns around the application in regard to the increase of after hour events. The increase of after hour events will directly result in an increased number of people driving on an unfamiliar road in the evening and possibly an increased number of people driving under the influence of alcohol which to my knowledge, the policing of which, has not been addressed in the application. It must also be taken into consideration that most residents on the road are farmers and have to get up very early and the after-hour events result in a huge increase in noise that cause sleep interruption, which then directly affects the health and safety of members in our community. As was pointed out to me at our last road meeting by the planner for Hobbiton, Buckland Road

is a public road and as such I am unable to object to the use of the road “by” the public. I brought it to the attention of the gentleman that that might be the case – but that if it were not for Hobbiton hosting after hour events there would be no need for an increased volume of people to be driving up the road in the first place and therefore, no resulting traffic noise after hours.

Don’t get me wrong – I don’t want to deny anyone the right to make a living but I do want you to take the following into consideration and I am aware that some of these points fall under the jurisdiction of NZ Transport but do need to be addressed:

1. How do you plan to improve Buckland road so that it can cope with the number of vehicles travelling on it on a daily basis and especially taking into consideration that a large number of people driving on this road are not used to coping with the challenge of driving in New Zealand conditions and New Zealand roads?
2. Will the intersection at Hopkins Road/State Highway 27 and Puketutu Rd be redesigned to reduce the occurrence of so many accidents – a number of which have been fatal?
3. There needs to be a reduced speed limit on puketutu road from both directions up to the intersection of buckland road. Road users often approach the intersection at high speed and fail to negotiate the turn on to Buckland road appropriately. I personally approach the intersection very carefully and account for this fact but not everyone is aware of the hazardous nature of this intersection.
4. A reduced speed on Buckland Road should be considered to accommodate for the fact that a very high volume of people driving on the road are unfamiliar with the road and the challenges it presents.
5. When the road was widened and resurfaced the result was that we were no longer able to mow our road frontages. The only way that this can be addressed is by the contracting of a suitable contractor on a biannual basis to address the problem. The important part of this implication is to note that the absence of mowing of the road verges results in reduced visibility for those exiting the properties and also reduced visibility for drivers on the road affecting their awareness of vehicles entering the traffic flow. Not all land owners are in a position to carry this extra cost and thus the result is evident.
6. How do you as council propose our police, fire service and ambulance services are meant to cope with the increased volume of incidents they

have to attend in our community with the increase in volume of people, which then, resultantly draws the availability of these services away from the wider community?

7. How do you as our council propose to fund the upgrading of our amenities to cope with the increased volume of people using our facilities?
8. Who do you see absorbing all the costs for the upgrades that are required on so many levels? Should not the direct benefactor of the generated income be held liable for these necessary expenditures or a tariff placed on the visitors to Hobbiton to fund required upgrades of roads and facilities?
9. With the change of the status of the road to that of a collector road – I still have concerns as to whether this then enables council/nz transport to further widen the road and thus allow a further increase in volume of traffic?
10. I would strongly oppose the increase of daily visitors numbers to 3500 a day as our infrastructure is already buckling under current numbers.

These are all points and questions that need to be addressed. I do know that there are many that would liked to have had their say with regard to many points of concern that have arisen from the inception and consequent growth of Hobbiton as a destination. Many possibly felt a little intimidated by the sheer size and volume of the application that had to be read and was not written in lay terms. I appeal to you to please give all of our submissions due consideration and not to adopt an indifference to the concerns that have been raised purely because it may seem that too many points need addressing. This is about making sure that Hobbiton can continue to be a profitable business but not at the cost of the wider community and their ability to continue with their businesses and their private lives on a daily basis and without the increased risks that we currently face daily.

Thank you.

Glenda O'Sullivan