

Your Comment on the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)			
First name	Marie and Liam		
Last name	Dolby		
Postal address			
Home phone / Mobile phone		Work phone	
Email (a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you)			

2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
☒	I can receive emails and my email address is correct	☐	I cannot receive emails and my postal address is correct

Please provide your comments below, include additional pages as needed.

1. Introduction

My husband and I are the owners and occupiers of [REDACTED], Ōhoka. We purchased our family home in 2024 after carefully considering where we wanted to raise our two young daughters.

We deliberately chose Ōhoka because it is a small rural village with a strong sense of community, a slower pace of life, and a character that is increasingly difficult to find elsewhere in Canterbury. We were attracted to the close-knit nature of the community, the well-supported community hall, the popular Friday Market, and the Domain and boardwalk reserve which local residents generously volunteer their time and resources to maintain each month.

A particularly important factor in our decision was the opportunity for our daughters to attend Ōhoka School and experience a genuine country-school environment during their formative years. We value the rural lifestyle, open spaces, dark skies, low traffic volumes, and the ability to know our neighbours personally. The absence of urban infrastructure such as footpaths, streetlights, supermarkets, retail centres, and intensive development is not a disadvantage to us. It is precisely why we chose to live here.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose the proposed Ōhoka Residential Subdivision.

2. Flooding

Flooding in Ōhoka is not a theoretical risk. It is a well-known and long-standing local issue, and existing residents should not be asked to accept additional uncertainty or risk.

One of the greatest concerns we have with this proposal is flooding and stormwater management.

Residents of Ōhoka understand that flooding here does not require a once-in-a-generation weather event. It often results from several days of steady rainfall. This reality has been observed and experienced by local residents over many years and forms part of the community's understanding of the area.

The land proposed for development has long been associated with water, wetlands, springs and groundwater-related issues. We are concerned that replacing large areas of rural land with extensive housing, roads, hard surfaces, and associated infrastructure will inevitably alter the way water moves through the area.

While the applicant presents modelling and technical reports, the practical reality for existing residents is that if those assumptions are wrong, it is our properties, our homes and our families who bear the consequences.

We are particularly concerned that once development occurs, any adverse flooding effects cannot easily be reversed. If water levels increase, groundwater behaves differently than predicted, or stormwater systems do not perform as expected, the impacts will be experienced by existing residents long after the developer has completed construction.

Given the history of flooding concerns associated with this site and the concerns previously raised during earlier planning processes, we ask the Panel to apply a precautionary approach and place significant weight on the potential adverse flooding impacts of this proposal.

3. Rural Character & Amenity

This proposal would fundamentally change the character of Ōhoka from a rural village into an urban settlement.

This is the issue that concerns us most.

Ōhoka is not a township. It is a rural village. The distinction matters.

Our daily experience of living in Ōhoka is defined by open space, low-density housing, quiet roads, dark skies, and a community where people know one another by name. We do not have the infrastructure or services that are typically associated with urban areas. We have no supermarket, no dairy, no retail centre,

no shopping precinct, no early childhood education centre, no public transport network, we don't have any 50km/h speed limits.

Our community is centred around local facilities such as the school, domain, community hall, Friday Market and the sole local service station and workshop. These facilities support the village character that we deliberately sought when purchasing our home.

The absence of extensive footpaths, streetlights and urban development is not something that requires fixing. It is a reflection of the rural character of the area.

The proposed subdivision would introduce hundreds of new dwellings and fundamentally alter the scale and nature of Ōhoka. It would transform the village into something entirely different from the place that currently exists.

The resulting increase in traffic, suburban development, lighting, noise, activity and population would permanently change the character of the community we chose to join. Once that character is lost, it cannot be restored.

We consider this to be a significant adverse effect that cannot be adequately mitigated through planting, setbacks, landscaping or consent conditions.

4. Infrastructure

Ōhoka does not currently possess the infrastructure required to support development of this scale.

The existing infrastructure within Ōhoka reflects its status as a rural village rather than an urban growth area.

The roads, services and community facilities were not designed to support a development of the size currently proposed.

Many local roads lack formed footpaths and street lighting. There is very limited local commercial infrastructure. Basic services that exist in larger townships simply do not exist in Ōhoka because they have never been needed.

Approving this development would require substantial infrastructure investment and long-term maintenance obligations. We are concerned that the costs of these requirements will ultimately fall on ratepayers.

In contrast, Waimakariri District already has established growth areas identified within planning documents where infrastructure either already exists or has been planned and budgeted for. Growth in those locations can be accommodated far more efficiently and with significantly less cost and disruption.

It makes little sense to create an entirely new urban-scale settlement in a location that lacks the infrastructure required to support it when suitable alternatives already exist elsewhere in the district.

5. Insurability Risk

Any increase in flooding or perceived flooding risk may negatively affect insurance affordability and property values.

Like many homeowners, we are increasingly aware of the role that flooding and natural hazard assessments play in insurance decisions.

Any increase in actual or perceived flood risk arising from this development has the potential to affect the affordability and availability of insurance for existing residents.

Our family home is our most significant financial asset. We are concerned that decisions made today could increase future insurance costs, reduce property values, or create uncertainty for homeowners who had no role in creating the risk.

These potential costs would be borne by existing residents while delivering little or no direct benefit to our family.

We therefore ask the Panel to carefully consider the long-term implications this proposal may have for insurability and property values in the surrounding area.

6. Absence of Net Economic Benefits

Additional housing can be provided elsewhere in the district with fewer adverse effects and lower infrastructure costs.

We do not accept that the claimed benefits of this proposal outweigh its adverse effects.

Waimakariri District already provides for substantial residential growth in established townships and urban areas. Those locations have been planned for growth through appropriate democratic processes and already possess much of the infrastructure necessary to support additional residents.

The housing that may be delivered through this proposal can be provided elsewhere in the district without fundamentally altering the character of a rural village or requiring significant new infrastructure investment.

We are concerned that the economic benefits promoted by the applicant focus on gross benefits rather than the real costs associated with servicing, maintaining and supporting such a development.

From our perspective, there is no demonstrated need for a subdivision of this scale in Ōhoka specifically when other more appropriate growth areas already exist.

7. Anything Else

A significant concern for us is the democratic process surrounding this proposal.

The development has previously been opposed through local planning processes, and concerns have been raised by both the Waimakariri District Council and independent decision-makers. Many of the issues identified previously remain unresolved.

As local residents, we feel that proceeding with a development that would permanently and fundamentally change the nature of our community despite longstanding local opposition is deeply disappointing.

We made the decision to invest in Ōhoka because of what it is today. We accept that communities evolve over time, but this proposal goes far beyond ordinary growth. It would materially transform the character, scale and identity of the village.

We believe that existing residents should not bear the costs and risks of such a transformation when there are alternative locations within the district already planned for growth.

8. Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, we respectfully ask the Expert Panel to decline the Ōhoka Residential Subdivision application.

The proposal would fundamentally alter the rural character of Ōhoka, place additional pressure on infrastructure, create uncertainty regarding flooding and insurability, and impose significant adverse effects on existing residents and future generations. The claimed benefits do not justify the permanent loss of the unique rural community that exists today.

We purchased our home in Ōhoka because of the special qualities of this village. We want our daughters to grow up in the community we chose, not in a large suburban development that bears little resemblance to the Ōhoka we know and value.

How to Submit This Form

Your comments must be received by the Fast-track Team by 12 October 2026. Email is the preferred method — you can attach this completed form as a PDF or Word document.

Email (preferred): substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz — put “Ōhoka Residential Subdivision” in the subject line.

Post: Ōhoka Residential Subdivision Fast-track Application, Environmental Protection Authority, Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140.

In person: Stewart Dawson's Corner, 366 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011.