

Before the Hearing Commissioners
Appointed by the Far North District Council

Under	The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
In the matter of	The Far North Proposed District Plan
Hearing Topic	Hearing 11 - Energy Infrastructure and Transport

Right of Reply of Mathew Ross Collins (Transport)

8 May 2025

Introduction, qualifications and experience

- 1 My full name is Mathew Ross Collins. I prepared a report for the Far North District Council (Council) providing my expert opinion regarding submissions on the Transport Chapter of the Proposed District Plan (Proposed Plan), which was attached as Appendix 3 to the s42a report prepared by Ms Pearson.
- 2 My qualifications and experience are stated in Appendix 3 to the s42a report.

Expert Witness Code of Conduct

- 3 Although this is a Council hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and that I have complied with it when preparing this report. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. There are no conflicts of interest that would impede me from providing independent advice to the Hearings Panel.

Scope of my right of reply

- 4 My right of reply will address the following submitter evidence:
 - (a) Foodstuffs North Island Ltd (S363): Evidence of David Badham and Leo Hills
 - (b) Waipapa Pine Limited and Adrian Broughton Trust [Novated to Fletcher Building Limited (S384, FS374)]: Evidence of Christopher McPhee
 - (c) KiwiRail Limited (S416): Evidence of Catherine Heppelthwaite and Matthew Paetz
 - (d) Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora (S42): Evidence of Monique Fowler
 - (e) McDonald's Restaurants (NZ) (S385): Submitter Statement
 - (f) Fire and Emergency NZ (S512): Submitter Statement.

Foodstuffs North Island Ltd

- 5 I have reviewed the evidence of David Badham (Planning)¹ and Leo Hills (Transport)².

TRAN-R2 and TRAN-R9

¹ Dated 14 April 2025, limited to Sections 5 and 6

² Dated 14 April 2025

- 6 Mr Badham expresses concern that there is a confusing overlap between TRAN-R2 and TRAN-R9 and recommends amendments to both Rules.
- 7 I am generally comfortable with the amendments proposed by Mr Badham, as they relate to the scope of transport effects that should be considered for new or altered vehicle crossings onto the State Highway network. I will defer to Ms Pearson's expertise on the structure and activity status for TRAN-R2 and TRAN-R9.

TRAN-R5 and TRAN-Table 11

- 8 Mr Hills provides evidence seeking to increase the threshold of TRAN-R5 at which a Supermarket requires a Restricted Discretionary consent from 200m² to 750m² GFA.
- 9 Mr Hills recognises that Abley has used industry standard vehicle trip rates to set the 200m² threshold, which he does not dispute. However, his view is that the threshold for Supermarkets is too low as:
- (a) Many Supermarket trips are "pass-by" trips, which are already travelling on the network for other purposes (e.g. travelling from work to home)
 - (b) Small supermarkets can reduce traffic on the wider network, by serving local communities
 - (c) Small increases in floor area in existing supermarkets do not necessarily transfer to a proportional increase in vehicle movements.
 - (d) Other District Plans have higher thresholds for high trip generation rules relating to Supermarkets:
 - (i) Auckland Unitary Plan: 1,667m² GFA (noting this is for all types of retail)
 - (ii) Whangarei District Plan: which has a two-tier threshold of 750sqm and 1,500m² for Grocery stores.
- 10 I make the following reply to Mr Hills' evidence:
- (a) I agree that many supermarket trips are "pass-by". However, these trips can still generate effects on the transport network, particularly where vehicles divert from their original route to access the site, creating localised turning or congestion effects at site access points
 - (b) I agree that smaller supermarkets can reduce traffic on the wider network. While smaller supermarkets may reduce trip lengths and support mode shift, the resulting localised traffic effects remain relevant and are appropriately addressed through a consistent threshold approach.

- (c) I agree that increases in the GFA of existing activities do not always have a linear relationship to increases in vehicle movements per hour. However, in my view this is contextual to the type and location of the activity, and other surrounding activities, which is better considered through a resource consent process.
- (d) Using the industry standard trip rate of 17.9 veh/hr/100m² GFA for Supermarkets, the threshold of 750m² as proposed by Mr Hills could generate 134 veh/hr. This is more than three times the 40 veh/hr threshold adopted in TRAN-R5, indicating that a 750m² supermarket could result in substantial unassessed transport effects if permitted.
- (e) Regarding other District Plans:
 - (i) As noted by Mr Hills, the Auckland Unitary Plan has a single threshold for all Retail Activity. While Auckland's threshold applies to all retail activities, including lower-trip generators such as large-format retail, the Proposed Plan adopts a more targeted approach by applying thresholds to specific activities. Mr Hills has not disputed the Supermarket trip generation rate that Abley has used to inform the Proposed Plan thresholds.
 - (ii) Regarding the Whangarei District Plan, I understand that the 750m² and 1,500m² for Grocery stores were based on the number of parking spaces, rather than using trip generation rates. The notified Whangarei District Plan Transport Chapter set the thresholds using 50 car parks and 100 car parks³. However, following Environment Court appeals this was amended to a GFA threshold⁴. It is not clear what the basis is for these thresholds, although it may have resulted from back calculating the size of a Supermarket that would have 50 car parks.
 - (iii) I note that multiple District Plans around New Zealand use similar high trip generation thresholds for Supermarkets:
 - (A) Wellington District Plan (Appeals Version), which has a threshold of 200 light vehicle movements per day⁵
 - (B) Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan⁶, which has high trip generation thresholds of 250m² and 950m² for Supermarkets,

³ TRAN-R15 and TRAN-R16 respectively of the notified Whangarei District Plan Transport Chapter <https://www.wdc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/services/property/planning/plan-changes/pc-urban-and-services/1-notified-chapters/tra-transport.pdf>

⁴ ENV-2020-AKL-000132 and ENV-2020-AKL-000133 consent orders <https://www.wdc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/services/property/planning/plan-changes/pc-urban-and-services/16-appeals/appeals-consent-order-nzta.pdf>

⁵ Wellington District Plan (Appeals Version) TR-S1 <https://eplan.wellington.govt.nz/proposed/rules/0/206/0/7752/0/67>

⁶ Selwyn District Plan TRAN-TABLE2

- (C) Proposed Waimakariri District Plan, which has a threshold of 250 vehicle movements per day⁷ and uses a trip rate of 17.9 veh/hr/100m² GFA for Supermarkets⁸
 - (D) The Proposed Timaru District Plan, which has high trip generation thresholds of 200m² and 800m² for Supermarkets.
 - (f) The Operative Plan Permits a traffic intensity threshold of 200⁹ for retail activity (equating to 200m² GBA for supermarkets). The proposed 200m² GFA threshold for the Proposed Plan is consistent with this approach.
- 11 I therefore do not support the proposed increase to a 750m² threshold. I consider the 200m² threshold is appropriate for the following reasons:
- (a) TRAN-Table 11 is consistent with the maximum Permitted threshold of the Operative Plan for supermarket activities. I.e. both the Operative and Proposed Plans permit up to 200 vehicle movements per day.
 - (b) Is has been established using industry standard trip rates
 - (c) It aligns with other activities in TRAN-Table 11, i.e. all activities equate to 40 veh/hr and/or 200 veh/day
 - (d) The 40 veh/hr and/or 200 veh/day used to establish the thresholds of TRAN-Table 11 are comparable to a number of relatively new District Plans.
 - (e) The threshold of 750m² as proposed by Mr Hills could generate 134 veh/hr as a permitted activity, meaning potentially significant transport effects could go unaddressed.
- 12 Importantly, TRAN-R5 and the thresholds of TRAN-Table 11 are not a mechanism to enforce a “hard cap” to limit or constrain Supermarket activity. They merely require further consideration of the potential transport effects of the activity, and the scope of this assessment is typically guided by NZTA Research Report 422¹⁰ – a widely used reference for ITA scoping.
- 13 However, I note that the 200m² threshold represents a midpoint between thresholds based on daily (155m²) and hourly (223m²) trip generation. On that basis, I would be

⁷ Proposed Waimakariri District Plan TRAN-R20
<https://waimakariri.isoplan.co.nz/draft/rules/0/186/0/0/0/229>

⁸ TRAN-R20 references NZTA Research Report 453, which contains vehicle trip rates used to set the thresholds for the Far North Proposed District Plan

⁹ Appendix 3A to the Operative Plan identifies that Supermarkets have a traffic intensity factor of 100 per 100m² GBA and Rule 15.1.6A identifies a maximum Permitted traffic intensity threshold of 200, which equates to 200m² GBA for Supermarkets.

¹⁰ NZTA RR422 Integrated Transport Assessment Guidelines, available online at <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/research/reports/422/docs/422.pdf>

comfortable with a minor adjustment to increase the permitted threshold for supermarkets to 225m².

Health NZ

- 14 I have reviewed the evidence of Helen Hamilton (Planning)¹¹ and Monique Fowler (Corporate)¹².

TRAN-R5

- 15 Ms Fowler's position is that Health Care Services do not generate new travel demand in the same way as commercial activities. She considers that travel to health care facilities is a response to existing needs — not discretionary or promotional in nature — and therefore the presence or scale of the facility does not meaningfully influence demand.
- 16 Ms Fowler notes that decisions around sites, facilities, and services must balance operational and capital expenditure. Paraphrasing her evidence, she considers that additional consenting costs, such as those associated with preparing an Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA), reduce the funding available for the direct provision of health care services.
- 17 Ms Fowler questions whether Council would, in practice, require Health NZ to either reduce health service design capacity or fund road network upgrades if an ITA identified adverse transport effects. She suggests that doing so could compromise the ability to provide essential health services.
- 18 I do not support the exclusion of Health Care Services from TRAN-R5. My reasons are as follows:
- (a) Healthcare services do generate transport movements — from staff, patients, visitors, deliveries, and emergency services — which can affect the safe and efficient operation of the transport network.
 - (b) These effects are relevant considerations in the planning and design of health facilities. They can inform decisions around site selection, scale and distribution of facilities (centralised versus decentralised), site design (e.g. access, parking and circulation), provision for alternative transport modes, and potential effects on road corridors.
 - (c) Health NZ has not engaged a transport expert to support the relief sought. For me to consider supporting the requested relief I would need confidence that an assessment of an “envelope” of effects had been conducted to identify any

¹¹ Dated 14 April 2025, limited to Sections 5 and 6

¹² Dated 14 April 2025

infrastructure needed to support future development. If not identified and addressed at the planning stage, transport effects may go unmitigated, with direct consequences for Health NZ funding and operations, such as increased road trauma and compromised emergency vehicle response times.

- (d) While I acknowledge that in some cases, transport infrastructure costs could be shared across Health NZ, Council, NZTA, and central government, this does not remove the need to identify and manage effects on the transport network. All activities, including those led by government agencies, should be subject to a level of scrutiny proportionate to their potential effects.

- 19 I note that a similar matter was raised by the Northland District Health Board in submissions on the Whangārei Urban and Services Plan Changes¹³, where an exemption from trip generation thresholds was also sought. Through expert caucusing, in which I participated on behalf of NZTA, it was agreed that bespoke District Plan trip generation provisions would apply to the Whangārei Hospital¹⁴. These were informed by an Integrated Transport Assessment.
- 20 I am sympathetic to the funding constraints faced by Health NZ and acknowledge that consenting costs represent a real trade-off against service delivery. However, in my view, all organisations — whether public or private — should appropriately manage their effects on the transport network to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the transport network for all road users. For these reasons, I do not support Ms Fowler’s position and strongly recommend that Health NZ activities are not excluded from TRAN-R5.

Waipapa Pine Limited and Adrian Broughton Trust [Novated to Fletcher Building Limited]

- 21 I have reviewed the evidence of Andrew McPhee (Planning)¹⁵.

TRAN-R5 and TRAN-R9

- 22 Mr McPhee seeks to exclude activities that have vehicle access to the State Highway or Limited Access Roads and that have previously had approval from NZTA, from TRAN-R5 and TRAN-R9.

¹³ Northland District Health Board submission point 206.26, summary of submissions available online at <https://www.wdc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/v/2/documents/services/property/planning/plan-changes/pc-urban-and-services/6-submission-info/urban-and-services-summary-of-submissions.pdf>

¹⁴ Refer to page 15 and 16 of Council’s Right of Reply, Robert Burgoyne, dated 31 January 2020, <https://www.wdc.govt.nz/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/services/property/planning/plan-changes/pc-urban-and-services/14-right-of-reply/urban-and-services-plan-changes-right-of-reply-part-8-services.pdf>

¹⁵ Dated 14 April 2025

23 I disagree with Mr McPhee. My view, expressed in my Report attached to the s42a report¹⁶, remains unchanged and is summarised below:

- (a) NZTA supports the inclusion of Standards relating to private access to the State Highway Network in District Plans (refer to NZTA Statement of Evidence¹⁷)
- (b) Vehicle access onto a State Highway needs to be considered in conjunction with any land use activity that is generating the need for access. Without a Rule relating to vehicle crossings onto the State Highway, resource consent could be granted for an activity without considering the safety and efficiency effects on the State Highway.
- (c) There are many District Plans that include Standards relating to private access to the State Highway Network.

New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi (NZTA)

24 I have reviewed the evidence of Bruce Hawkins (Planning)¹⁸.

25 Mr Hawkins considers that the s42a report satisfactorily addresses concerns raised by NZTA in submissions and further submissions. Mr Hawkins' evidence also supports the s42a conclusion to retain State Highway access related considerations within the Transport Chapter.

26 I confirm that Mr Hawkins and I are aligned on this matter.

KiwiRail Holdings Limited

27 I have reviewed the evidence of Catherine Heppelthwaite (Planning)¹⁹ and Matthew Paetz (Corporate)²⁰.

28 Ms Heppelthwaite and Mr Paetz support the s42a recommendations other than seeking to delete TRAN-SX Note, which I have reproduced below:

- (a) *Note: This Standard applies at rail level crossings with Stop or Give Way signs, it does not apply to crossings controlled by barrier arms.*

29 Mr Paetz considers that TRAN-SX should apply to rail level crossings that are controlled by barrier arms, as he considered it is important that sightlines are protected, and he provides the example of the potential event of barrier arm failure.

¹⁶ s42 Report Appendix 3, Section 2.4

¹⁷ Tabled Statement of Evidence of Bruce Hawkins, Section 5, dated 14 April 2025

¹⁸ Dated 14 April 2025

¹⁹ Dated 14 April 2025, paragraph 6.1(a) – (g) only

²⁰ Dated 14 April 2025, Section 3 only

30 I accept Mr Paetz evidence and support the deletion of the TRAN-SX Note.

McDonald's Restaurants (NZ)

31 I have reviewed the Tabled evidence of David Badham (Planning)²¹.

TRAN-R2 and TRAN-R9

32 Mr Badham seeks to amend TRAN-R9 to be a Restricted Discretionary overall, rather than Discretionary. While his evidence does not include markups of his requested changes, I assume that these would be consistent with his evidence on behalf of Foodstuffs North Island Ltd.

33 I am generally comfortable with the amendments proposed by Mr Badham in his evidence for Foodstuffs North Island Ltd, as they relate to the scope of transport effects that should be considered for new or altered vehicle crossings onto the State Highway network. I will defer to Ms Pearson's expertise on the structure and activity status for TRAN-R2 and TRAN-R9.

TRAN-R5 and TRAN-Table 11

34 Mr Badham expresses concern that TRAN-Table 11 includes both defined and undefined terms. I consider this to be a Planning matter rather than a Transport Planning or Engineering matter and therefore defer to Ms Pearson's expertise.

35 Mr Badham also expresses concern that the approach to setting the thresholds in TRAN-Table 11 is "blunt" and that the NZTA trip generation surveys that were used to inform the thresholds "does not necessarily need to be the only consideration". However, Mr Badham does not state what other considerations he considers are relevant.

36 I have outlined the approach to setting the thresholds of TRAN-Table 11 in Section 2.4 of my Report, attached as Appendix 3 to Ms Pearson's s42a report. In summary, I disagree with Mr Badham because:

- (a) TRAN-Table 11 is consistent with the maximum Permitted threshold of the Operative Plan for drive-through, restaurant and cafe activities. I.e. both the Operative and Proposed Plans permit up to 200 vehicle movements per day.
- (b) The TRAN-Table 11 threshold for drive-through, restaurant and cafe activities have been established using industry standard trip rates
- (c) The TRAN-Table 11 threshold for drive-through, restaurant and cafe activities align with other activities in TRAN-Table 11, i.e. all activities equate to 40 veh/hr and/or 200 veh/day

²¹ Dated 14 April 2025, paragraph 6.1(a) – (g) only

- (d) The 40 veh/hr and/or 200 veh/day used to establish the thresholds of TRAN-Table 11 are not dissimilar from some thresholds of the Whangarei District Plan (noting outliers as discussed in Paragraph 10(e)(ii) above), and all thresholds of the Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan and the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan

Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ)

- 37 I have reviewed the Tabled evidence of Graeme Roberts (Planning)²².

TRAN-R2 and TRAN-Table 9

- 38 Mr Roberts seeks to amend TRAN-R2 and TRAN-Table 11 to reference SNZ PAS 4509:2008, particularly aspects relating to FENZ vehicle access to properties, which recommends that vehicle accessways have:
- (a) a minimum 4m carriageway width
 - (b) a minimum 4m height clearance and
 - (c) a maximum gradient of 16%.
- 39 SNZ PAS 4509:2008 is not cited in the New Zealand Building Code and therefore is not a mandatory standard. However, it is commonly used as a non-binding technical guideline to demonstrate compliance, particularly through alternative solutions in areas without ready access to reticulated firefighting water supply.
- 40 During his presentation to the Panel, Mitchell Brown (Corporate) explained how FENZ take a pragmatic approach to the application of SNZ PAS 4509:2008, and that deviation from the FENZ vehicle access guidance, provided in Mr Robert's evidence, is not always adhered to where constraints, such as topography, make compliance challenging.
- 41 As I understand it, neither the NZ Building Code nor FENZ anticipates strict adherence to SNZ PAS 4509:2008 in all situations. Furthermore, not all accessways within the District need to provide for FENZ appliance access.
- 42 TRAN-Table 9 adequately provides adequate width for FENZ access as the minimum legal width of an accessway is 4m, and the minimum carriageway width is 3m. The maximum legal width of a heavy vehicle is 2.55m, therefore the dimensions of TRAN-Table 9 provide sufficient width for FENZ heavy vehicle access, albeit the heavy vehicle may overrun the carriageway at tight turns.
- 43 SNZ PAS 4509:2008 Section 6.1 states that the height clearance along accessways must exceed 4m. However, as I note above, not all accessways within the District need to provide for FENZ appliance access, and I consider it unlikely that a site that did require

²² Dated 14 April 2025, paragraph 6.1(a) – (g) only

FENZ access would seek to have structures obstructing the accessway. I understand that Ms Pearson will comment on non structural obstructions such as vegetation and cables.

44 In terms of accessway gradient, TRAN-Table 9 permits gradients up to 22%. This is similar to other District Plans:

(a) Whangarei District Plan, which permits gradients up to 22.2%²³

(b) Auckland Unitary Plan, which permits gradients up to 25% for one residential rear site and up to 20% for other residential sites²⁴.

45 As explained by Mr Brown, FENZ take a pragmatic approach to the application of this gradient. Paraphrasing Mr Brown's verbal evidence at the hearing, *"If trucks can get up the accessway during construction of the house, our appliances will be able to get up the accessway"*.

46 I am therefore concerned that linking SNZ PAS 4509:2008 to a permitted activity will be overly onerous for accessways that do not require FENZ appliance access.

47 However, I acknowledge that it may be helpful for the District Plan to signal to plan users that SNZ PAS 4509:2008 provides guidance on FENZ vehicle access. Should the Hearing Panel consider it beneficial to include a reference to SNZ PAS 4509:2008 in the Transport Chapter, I suggest this is done as a "note", as Ms Pearson has done in Appendix 1.1 to her s42a Report.

48 I note that this approach is consistent with the Auckland Council appointed Hearing Panel decision on Plan Change 79 to the Auckland Unitary Plan (at which Mr Roberts provided evidence on behalf of FENZ)²⁵.

TRAN-S1

49 Mr Roberts seeks to amend TRAN-S1 to include consideration of emergency response access within the assessment criteria. I support Mr Robert's request.

²³ Table TRA 9A and 9B <https://eplan.wdc.govt.nz/plan/?chapter=transport#tra-appendix-2d-performance-standards-for-shared-private-access>

²⁴ Table E27.6.4.4.1 <https://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/images/Auckland%20Unitary%20Plan%20Operative/Chapter%20E%20Auckland-wide/4.%20Infrastructure/E27%20Transport.pdf>

²⁵ Auckland Council PC79 Decision, <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/UnitaryPlanDocuments/pc-79-decision.pdf>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mat Collins', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mat Collins

08 May 2025