

## RURAL ZONES

FNDC Proposed District Plan Hearing 9 December 2024

Statement by Vision Kerikeri, Carbon Neutral Trust and Kapiro Conservation Trust

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Our statement covers the following topics:

- Artificial crop protection structures and crop support structures
- Horticulture zone, land fragmentation, residential sprawl and related issues

### ARTIFICIAL CROP PROTECTION STRUCTURES AND CROP SUPPORT STRUCTURES

#### Summary of submission by VKK, CNT, KCT and others

on artificial crop protection structures, cloth/fabric fences, and crop support structures

#### We support -

- ❖ 3m setback from boundaries and 6m height limit stated in notified PDP.

We seek additional rule/standard for structures erected near the boundary of a road, other public land or residential property -

- ❖ 5m height restriction;
- ❖ Require suitable trees or tall hedging/vegetation to be planted between the structure and boundary to provide landscaping screen and maintain visual amenity;
- ❖ Cloth or fabric must be black or very dark colour (not green or white);
- ❖ Breaches must be 'noncomplying' (not discretionary, not restricted discretionary); all affected persons must be given an opportunity to comment.

Supporting submission points -

Lane FS88.3; Collison FS277.32; Our Kerikeri Trust S338.051, S338.052, S338.065, S338.029, S338.056; Vision Kerikeri S522.022, FS569.1025, FS569.1039, FS569.1846, FS570.1863, FS569.1859, FS570.2098, FS570.990, FS569.1834, FS570.2095, FS570.1877, FS569.1006, FS569.1847; Kapiro Association S427.060, S427.063, S427.066, S449.047, S427.023, S427.041; Carbon Neutral Trust S529.200, S529.211, S529.208, S529.214, S529.034; Kapiro Conservation Trust S449.035, S449.060, S449.048, S449.052, FS566.1761, FS566.1003, FS566.2112, FS566.1004, FS566.2109, FS566.2115, FS566.1938, FS566.984

#### We support parts of s42 officer recommendations, but also seek amendments –

Text of S42 recommendation RPROZ-RX, HZ-RX and RLZ-RX marked with our amendments:

#### “Artificial crop protection structures and crop support structures

Activity status: Permitted

#### PER-1

The establishment of a new, or expansion or replacement of an existing, artificial crop protection structure or crop support structure where:

1. The height of the structure does not exceed 6m above ground level;
2. The structure is set back at least 3m from all site boundaries; and
3. Dark green or black material is used on any vertical faces within 30m of a site boundary except that a different colour may be use if written approval of the owners ... or the road controlling authority (in the case of a road) is obtained and provided to the Council.

### **PER-2**

Where the structure is located within 30m of the boundary of a road, other public land or residential property:

1. The height of the structure does not exceed 5m above ground level; and
2. Suitable trees or tall hedging/vegetation are planted between the exterior face of the structure and site boundary to screen the structure and maintain visual amenity. The living screen will be appropriately maintained.

### **PER-32**

The new, or expansion of an existing, artificial crop protection structure or crop support structure complies with standards:

S2: Height in relation to boundary

**Activity status where compliance with PER-1 not achieved:**

Restricted discretionary non-complying.

We recognise that crop protection structures (and shelterbelt trees) perform necessary functions in orchard areas and contribute to economic wellbeing. We are not seeking to ban artificial structures; we only seek appropriate mitigation measures, particularly in cases where structures are highly visible from roads, other public land or residential properties.

### **RMA - maintenance and enhancement of amenity values**

- RMA interpretation of *environment* includes: ‘*amenity values*’, and also ‘*aesthetic conditions*’ which affect people, communities, natural or physical resources, etc. (s2).
- RMA s2 interpretation of ‘*amenity values*’:  
*‘those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes’*
- RMA s7(c): ‘*shall have particular regard to... the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values*’
- RMA schedule 4 (s7) matters that must be assessed include –  
*“(a) any effect on those in the neighbourhood and, where relevant, the wider community...  
(b) any physical effect on the locality, including any landscape and visual effects”*

### **Visual dominance**

When visible from roads and residential properties, artificial crop protection structures visually dominant, destroying visual amenity and rural character in that location. See Figure 1 photo examples.

### **Need to mitigate visual amenity effects**

- The PDP specifies 3m setback and 6m height limit, similar to the Operative DP (Rule 8.6.5.1.4, permitted).
- However, the ODP rule has been grossly insufficient in maintaining visual amenity.
- PDP contains no restrictions on the horizontal length or total area of artificial crop protection structures.
- Their visual impact is huge – like constructing huge industrial-scale warehouses on a roadside without providing any landscaping or hedges to screen the structure.
- White or green cloth has greater visual dominance than black cloth. White cloth is extremely bright and the most visually dominant colour. Green cloth is not acceptable because it often looks a lurid colour (vivid bright green) when sunlight catches it at certain angles.

Fig. 1. Examples of visual dominance of artificial crop protection structures



**Fig. 2. Problems with graffiti and microplastic particles – artificial crop protection structures**



Artificial structures normally use plastic cloth, such as HDPE polyethylene – the plastic cloth degrades over time, releasing microplastic into the environment

- The cloth attracts graffiti. It looks extremely tatty when it gets torn and degrades over time
- The PDP gives no consideration to the cumulative effects when multiple artificial structures proliferate in a locality.

**We therefore seek –**

- ❖ 3m setback from boundary.
- ❖ Netting or fabric must be black or extremely dark colour. We have compared colours of the structures; black is less dominant than other colours.
- ❖ Landscaping/screening with trees or tall hedges is essential when erected next to roads, other public land or residential properties. It requires sufficient setback from the boundary for trees/screening

**Example of trees planted by a commercial orchard to hide crop protection structure**

Young trees were planted between the boundary and the crop protection structure, with the intention that the trees will grow and eventually hide the structure



**Need for 3m setback from boundary**

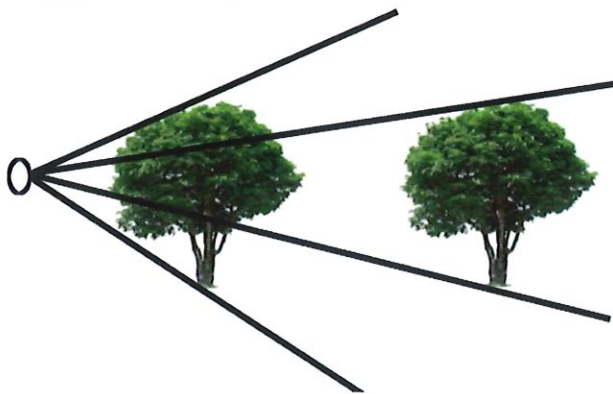
We oppose Horticulture NZ submission which seeks only 1m setback from boundary because -

- 1m will be 66% more permissive than the existing 3m setback rule in Operative DP.
- 3m setback will have less visual impact than 1m setback. The difference is quantifiable, for reasons explained below.
- 3m setback will also allow space to plant a screen of trees/vegetation between the structure and the boundary of roads, other public land or residential properties.

**Distance makes the height of objects appear shorter**

Light normally travels in straight lines between an object and the human eye. The size of an object appears to decrease as it gets further away from the eye, because the angle between the top and bottom of an object decreases – see example below (angle of sight)

Imagine two trees or two structures seen from a human eye. Both trees (or structures) are the same height, but the tree that is further away appears to be smaller



The reduction in visual height of the object can be calculated by simple geometry (because light normally travels in straight lines from the object to the eye).

As an example, Fig.3 (below) illustrates the visual height of a crop protection structure on the boundary vs. the same structure set back 3m from the boundary.

### **Need to mitigate other environmental effects**

Issues:

- Scientific studies have found that a normal artificial crop protection structure (with single layer of cloth) reduces spray drift and fine dust particles **significantly less** than a shelterbelt of living trees – see details in Box 1 (below).
- When spraying occurs near *spray-sensitive areas*, the Regional Plan requires larger buffer distances for orchards that use artificial cloth structures. However, those special buffers don't apply to road reserves because roads are not regarded as *sensitive areas*. So the special buffers don't apply to people walking along berms next to artificial structures (such as dog walkers and students walking to school buses) or people cycling past the orchard.
- The cloth on crop protection structures is typically made of plastic (eg. polyethylene HDPE). The plastic cloth degrades over time, scattering microplastics into the environment around the orchard, and this may include stormwater channels or local waterways.

**We seek rules/standards to mitigate these environmental effects –**

- ❖ Where artificial structures are erected next to roads, other public land or residential properties, a screen of suitable trees/hedges must be planted between the structure and boundary. This will help to trap particles (e.g. sprays, fine dust and microplastics), and reduce the risk of pollution travelling beyond the orchard boundary.

### **Non-complying status**

Existing ODP rule specifying 3m setback is a permitted activity. FNDC has issued consent for zero setback in some locations, but ODP provisions relating to amenity values are very permissive. A number of affected persons were not allowed to comment, despite being adversely affected.

**We therefore seek –**

- ❖ Non-compliance status for the rule/standard relating to artificial crop protection structures and crop support structures, and the opportunity for all affected persons to comment.
- ❖ The cumulative effects of artificial crop protection structures must be taken into account.

**Fig.3 Example: Effect of 3m setback - visual impact of a structure at the boundary v. same structure set back 3m from the boundary**

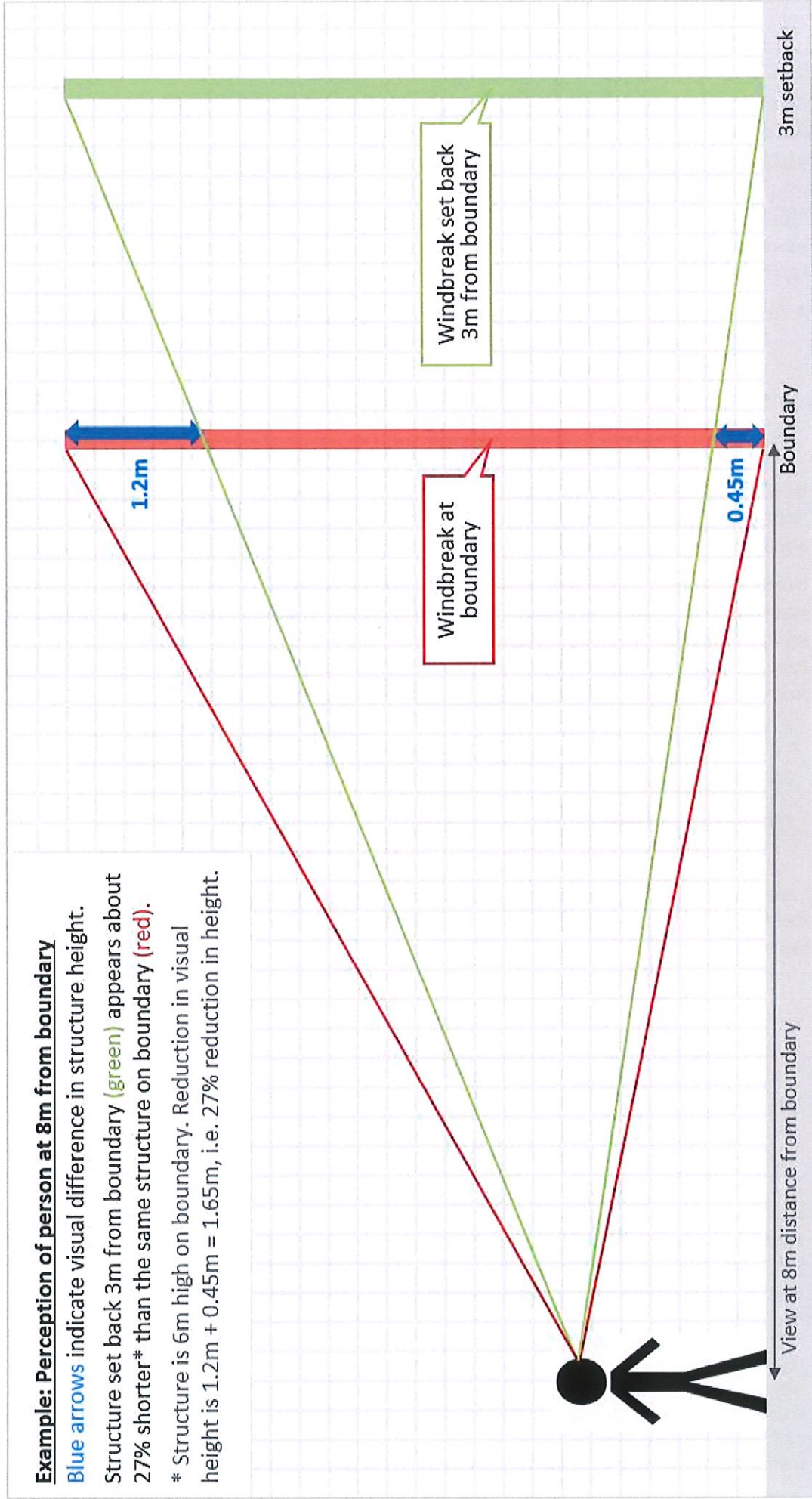
This example shows the view of a person standing 8m distance from the orchard boundary (e.g. person in nearby traffic lane) and looking at a 6m-high crop protection structure on the boundary (red). If the same 6m-high structure is setback 3m from the boundary (green), it will appear about 27% shorter.

**Example: Perception of person at 8m from boundary**

Blue arrows indicate visual difference in structure height.

Structure set back 3m from boundary (green) appears about 27% shorter\* than the same structure on boundary (red).

\* Structure is 6m high on boundary. Reduction in visual height is  $1.2\text{m} + 0.45\text{m} = 1.65\text{m}$ , i.e. 27% reduction in height.



**Box 1. Studies on artificial crop protection structures v. shelterbelt of living trees**

**Re: amount of drift and fine particles that pass through**

Scientific studies have compared the effectiveness of artificial cloth structures in reducing the risk of spray drift and particles (such as fine dust) moving beyond the orchard boundary.

Studies found that shelterbelts of evergreen trees with fine leaves (eg. needles) are significantly more effective at reducing drift compared with artificial crop protection structures with a single layer of cloth<sup>1</sup> typically used in the Far North.

A Zespri briefing paper<sup>2</sup> on *Orchard Shelter and Spray Drift Prevention* concluded that –

- Typical artificial windbreak material (single layer of cloth) captures some spray drift, but they allow too much spray to pass through ...
- Shelter provided by living trees is much more effective than a typical single layer cloth structure.
- Needle-like leaves are more effective at capturing droplets than broad leaves.

New Zealand Standard NZS 8409:2021 for the management of agrichemicals<sup>3</sup> also concludes that ‘Natural (live) shelter is much more effective than vertical artificial shelter’ and ‘Shelter species is also important, as needle-like leaves are more effective at capturing droplets than broad leaves...’

Northland Regional Plan operative rules on agrichemicals aim to reduce risks to the environment (section C.6.5).<sup>4</sup> The Plan requires much greater buffer distances when an orchard lacks ‘effective shelter’ (table below provides examples).

Regional Plan definition of ‘Effective shelter’ specifies that it *must have foliage that is continuous from top to bottom*<sup>5</sup>. This means specific types of evergreen trees.

	Ground-based:	
	Boom spraying	Airblast spraying
With ‘effective shelter’	2 metres	10 metres
Without effective shelter	10 metres	30 metres

Several major horticultural producers in Kerikeri (eg. Craigmore, T&G) decided to plant conifer trees as orchard shelters instead of erecting artificial crop protection structures in Kapiro Road, for example.

<sup>1</sup> Manktelow & Praat (2022) Rating natural shelter for spray drift risk reduction. Report to Zespri and EPA. [https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/FileAPI/hsno-ar/APP203974/APP203974\\_20231110\\_Comments-on-EPA-reports-Zespri-Appendix-8-Rating-natural-shelter-for-spray-drift-reduction-D-Manktelow\\_Redacted-Received-May-2023.pdf](https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/FileAPI/hsno-ar/APP203974/APP203974_20231110_Comments-on-EPA-reports-Zespri-Appendix-8-Rating-natural-shelter-for-spray-drift-reduction-D-Manktelow_Redacted-Received-May-2023.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Zespri briefing paper NK55, *Orchard Shelter and Spray Drift Prevention*, July 2021, <https://www.nzkgi.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Shelter-and-spray-drift-prevention-.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> NZS 8409:2021, section B7.3, <https://www.standards.govt.nz/shop/nzs-84092021>

<sup>4</sup> Proposed Northland Regional Plan, Feb 2024, <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/about-us/council-projects/new-regional-plan/>

<sup>5</sup> Definitions in Proposed Northland Regional Plan, Feb 2024, Section B, p.14.



## HORTICULTURE ZONE and OTHER RURAL ZONES

### Summary of submissions by VKK, CNT, KCT and others on horticulture zone and other rural zones

#### Our submissions on horticulture zone stated that -

- We support PDP provisions that will prevent further land fragmentation, sprawling development, and loss of productive agricultural/horticultural land. We support the creation of horticulture zones to protect the productive land and irrigation assets in the district.
- As noted in the draft DP, the council has a responsibility under the RMA and Regional Policy Statement to protect highly versatile soils and prevent land fragmentation and sterilisation, including from reverse sensitivity.
- We consider that further residential development on productive land should be avoided.
- Existing irrigation infrastructure is an extremely valuable asset that needs to be protected.

#### Our submissions stressed the need to avoid urban/residential sprawl in rural zones –

- Future urban/residential development needs to be compact.
- Sprawling residential growth and sporadic patterns of development brings many negative effects – it generates longer driving distances for basic services, climate emissions, fragments rural land, reduces the area of productive land, and undermines the character and amenity values of rural areas and coastal areas.
- Ribbon development in rural areas is also an undesirable form of development that needs to be strictly controlled by zoning rules.
- Our submissions sought strong policies/rules that will avoid urban/residential sprawl in rural areas.

Submitters include: Our Kerikeri Trust; Vision Kerikeri; Kapiro Association; Carbon Neutral Trust; Kapiro Conservation Trust

#### We seek -

- Horticulture Zone chapter to be retained as notified with the amendments recommended by s42 reporting officer, except for the clause on crop protection structures discussed above.
- We emphasise our support for s42 amendments that support LUC 4 land, the life-supporting capacity of soils, and avoidance of further land fragmentation. We support the recommended increase in lot sizes (supported by NRC s359.015 and others).
- However, the Horticulture chapter needs additional text to protect the existing irrigation infrastructure assets.

### Reasons for retaining the PDP Horticulture zone chapter

#### National Planning Standards guidance

National Planning Standards guidance on specific zones and the Zone Framework Standard<sup>6</sup> (see Box 2 below) specifies that:

- Special, non-standard rural zones can be applied to '*areas with special environmental characteristics ... that are particularly supportive of primary production activities*' - such as soil type, sunlight hours and other climatic factors, etc.
- For example, Hastings District Council has a 'rural plains zone' to support viticulture production because this activity is particularly well-suited to the type of soils in the zone.

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Standards Guidance for 12. District Spatial Layers Standard and 8. Zone Framework Standard, <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/guidance-for-the-district-spatial-layers-standard-and-zone-framework-standard/>

- Whakatane district plan has a 'rural foothills zone' for areas with special characteristics.
- National Planning Standards guidance states that –  
*'These zones are not tied to specific Land use Classifications (LUCs) and can apply to areas with elite, prime, high class, or versatile soils, because different primary production activities are suited to different environmental characteristics'* (refer Box 2)

#### Box 2. Statements in National Planning Standards guidance on specific zones

### Guidance on specific zones

Guidance is set out below on four of the zones set out in the Zone Framework Standard as these zones have generated a higher level of queries in submissions and subsequently on how they are intended to operate.

The 'Rural production zone' was included in the Zone Framework Standard following feedback from rural-based councils and the Rural Sector Group<sup>1</sup> that some councils use more than one general rural zone to manage the productive capability of the land resource. For example, the Hastings and Whakatāne district plans use 'rural plains' and 'rural foothills' zones, and the Auckland Unitary Plan and the Gisborne Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan use a 'rural production zone' as well as general or mixed rural zones.

Zones of this type have been applied to areas with environmental characteristics (such as soil type, sunlight hours and other climatic factors) that are particularly supportive of primary production activities. Provisions of these zones seek to avoid loss or degradation of these environmental characteristics to other uses such as countryside residential urban development. Subdivision and land fragmentation are closely managed to avoid urban encroachment onto this land, and have stricter standards than more general rural zones, particularly on non-production activities.

These zones are not tied to specific Land Use Classifications (LUCs) and can apply to areas with elite, prime, high class, or versatile soils, because different primary production activities are suited to different environmental characteristics. For example, Hastings District Council's 'rural plains zone' encourages viticulture as this activity is particularly well suited to the type of soils within the zone. Gisborne District Council's 'rural production zone' seeks to manage land use on the horticulturally productive soils of the Poverty Bay flats through subdivision and land-use rules that differ from those that apply in other rural zones.

#### **RMA: sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources**

- RMA Purpose (s5) includes –
  - 'sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources... to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations'
  - 'safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of... soil...'
- Good productive soil and land is a strictly finite resource – essential for future food supplies, for future generations and for economic wellbeing
- LUC 1 & 2 comprise less than 2.3% of the land in this District; and much of LUC 1&2 has already been lost to development, as noted in FNDC submission to MPI.<sup>7</sup>
- LUC 1, 2 & 3 (combined total) comprises only 8.87% of the land in the District.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> FNDC submission to MPI on proposed NPS for highly productive land, October 2019, [https://www.mpi.govt.nz/assets/dmstemp/HPL\\_submissions/2-3-21/E145-Far-North-DC-Attachment\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/assets/dmstemp/HPL_submissions/2-3-21/E145-Far-North-DC-Attachment_Redacted.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> FNDC submission to MPI on proposed NPS for highly productive land, October 2019.

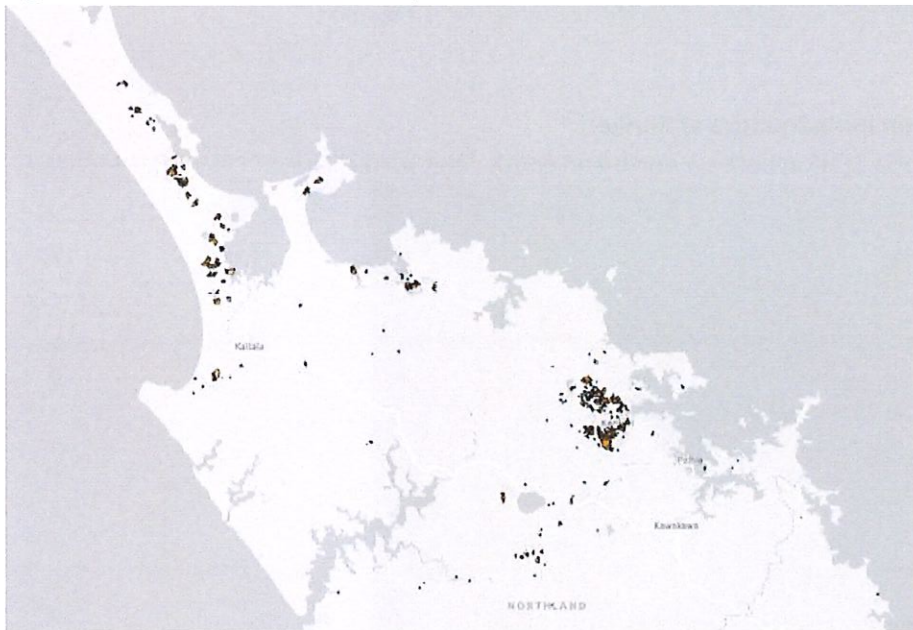
- It makes absolutely no sense to limit the PDP's protection of productive land to **only 8.8% of land in the District**. Future generations and population growth will require a substantially greater area of land for producing food in future, and the PDP should recognise this.
- This means we must also protect other productive areas, and particularly LUC 4, where ever it makes sense to do so.
- LUC 4 can be highly productive when combined with irrigation (KW spatial plan background documents).

**Economic wellbeing and benefits to the community:**

Infometrics report for FNDC (June 2022) states that 'Kerikeri-Waipapa's greatest comparative advantage is in horticulture, and further comparative advantage in horticultural support services such as shops selling horticultural equipment, packhouses, and administration (eg. accountants). 'Maintaining and growing the horticulture industry is important to maintaining Kerikeri-Waipapa's prosperity' (Infometrics, 2022).

Fig.4 shows the main areas of horticulture are concentrated around Kerikeri, in the proposed Horticulture Zone. These are irrigated areas on higher quality land.

**Fig.4 Location of horticultural crops in the Far North**



Source: Horticulture NZ submission on Far North proposed district plan, Oct 2022, p.4.

The main horticultural areas marked in Fig.4 (above) mainly coincide with the irrigated areas shown in Fig.5 map of irrigated areas in the Far North (below). This demonstrates the importance of the existing irrigation infrastructure.

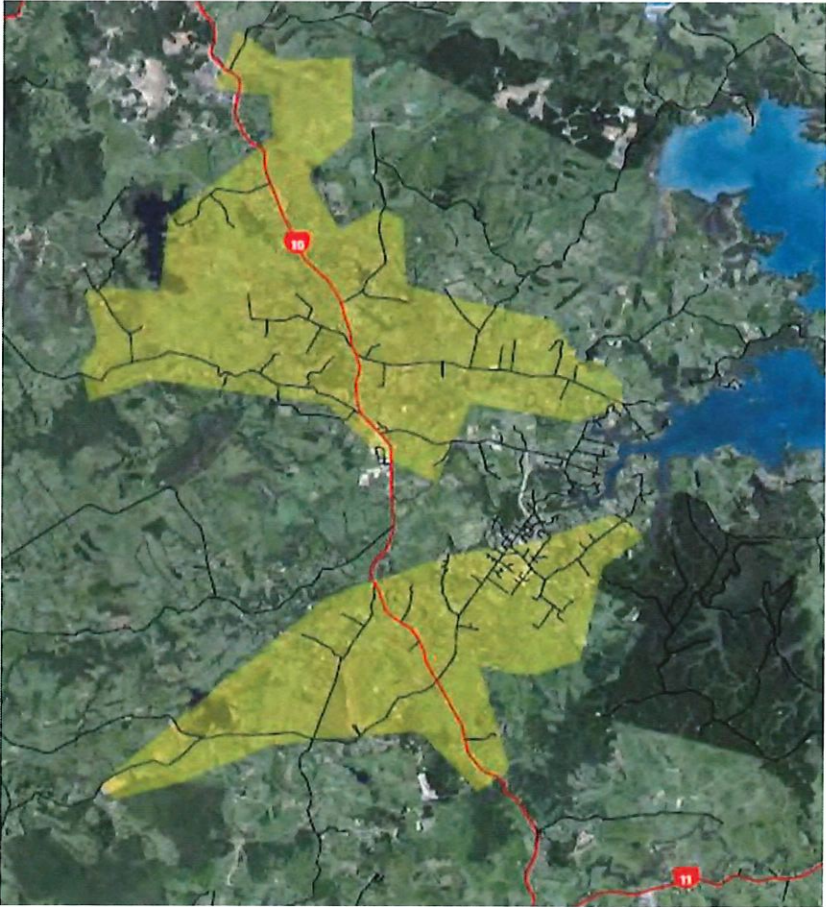
**Fig.5 MfE map of irrigated areas in Far North (blue dots)**



Source: MfE mapping

**Fig.6 Location of irrigation infrastructure at Kerikeri**

Yellow indicates extent of irrigation area on north and south sides of Kerikeri



Source: NRC report

### High-value irrigation infrastructure in Horticultural zone

Kerikeri benefits from large irrigation infrastructure assets - networks of underground pipelines supplying irrigation water to major horticultural areas on the north and south sides of Kerikeri – shown in Fig.6. (above).

The Horticulture zone will protect the existing major irrigation infrastructure asset (large networks of underground pipelines) on the north and south sides of Kerikeri:

- Govt contributed \$23m towards construction around 1980 [FNDC data].
- Very valuable economic asset; contributes to local economy, jobs, economic development.
- Increasing investments in horticulture in Kerikeri surrounds - since 2018 one company invested in 80 ha orchards and postharvest facilities (\$40m + \$18m upgrade); Craigmere conversions [FNDC data]
- Māori horticulture nationwide: \$220m output; 300% growth since 2006; area & jobs rapidly increasing [Berl 2020]
- Other regions are making strenuous efforts to raise funding to build similar assets.
- Irrigation will be increasingly important for resilience and future food production in Far North (NIWA indicates increased drought)

The cost of building a similar irrigation scheme today would be prohibitive. It makes good sense to protect this highly valuable asset which contributes to economic wellbeing.

It would make no sense to destroy this valuable infrastructure by allowing further land fragmentation and encroaching urban/residential development.

### Reverse sensitivity issues

Horticulture NZ has reported that reverse sensitivity issues are becoming an increasing problem for the horticulture sector as more people move into productive areas and do not have realistic expectations about activities that can occur because of primary production –

#### **3.5 Reverse Sensitivity**

Reverse sensitivity issues are becoming an increasing problem for the horticulture sector as more people move into productive areas who do not have realistic expectations with regards to the activities that can occur because of primary production. Horticulture tends to be particularly susceptible to reverse sensitivity effects due to the location of highly productive land often being located near urban centres and/or the land they operate on being subject to demand for urban development.

Source: HortNZ submission on Far North proposed district plan, Oct 2022, p.8, [Far-North-Proposed-District-Plan-Submission.pdf \(hortnz.co.nz\)](#)

**Examples of reverse sensitivity** issues affecting established activities:

- Concerns and complaints about noise, such as noisy machinery, shelterbelt trimming machinery (this can be very loud), workers' radios or music, loud noise from bird scarers.
- Dust or spraying of various products; concerns about spray drift or runoff
- Workers vehicles and orchard machinery parked on roadsides or blocking traffic on rural roads.

Concerns and complaints can lead to subsequent constraints on established productive activities. For example, reverse sensitivity associated with development pressures was identified by a local growers' community as one of the key challenges resulting from urban rezoning and rural fragmentation in Pukekohe.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> MfE report on highly productive land, 2022, p.30.

MfE has noted cases (in Far North and Central Otago) where there was no actual adverse effect caused to the residents (and all consents and other approvals had been obtained correctly, nevertheless the perceived adverse effect and subsequent complaints from neighbours did restrict the operation, or even force the closure of rural production activities in some cases.

### **Importance of avoiding further land fragmentation**

Our submissions noted that –

- Future urban/residential development needs to be compact.
- Sprawling residential growth and sporadic patterns of development brings many negative effects – it generates longer driving distances for basic services, climate emissions, fragments rural land, reduces the area of productive land, and undermines the character and amenity values of rural areas and coastal areas.
- Ribbon development in rural areas is also an undesirable form of development that needs to be strictly controlled by zoning rules.
- Our submissions sought strong policies/rules that will avoid urban/residential sprawl in rural areas.

A number of academic studies have analysed issues posed by land fragmentation of productive land, particularly for the creation of lifestyle blocks. They have identified land fragmentation as one of the greatest issues facing the future viability of productive areas.

Examples:

- Andrew & Dymond (2013) Expansion of lifestyle blocks and urban areas onto high-class land: an update for planning and policy, Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand, Vol. 43, No. 3, 128\_140, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2012.736392>
- Curran-Cournane et al (2021) Cumulative effects of fragmentation and development on highly productive land in NZ. NZ J Agricultural Research vol 66, no1, 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00288233.2021.1918185>
- Curran-Cournane et al (2018) The odds appear stacked against versatile land. NZ J Agricultural Research vol 61, No 3, 315-326, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00288233.2018.1430590>

FNDC submission to MPI on the proposed NPS-HPL in 2019 also refers to problems associated with land fragmentation.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most important roles of the PDP is to avoid further land fragmentation resulting in the loss of productive land and associated supporting infrastructure and services.

### **Lot sizes**

We strongly oppose other submissions that seek to reduce lot sizes in the Horticulture zone and Rural Production zone.

The Rural Lifestyle lot size should not be less than 1 or 2 ha (discretionary), because smaller plots would cease to meet the intended function of that zone, leading to unintended urban-style residential sprawl in rural areas.

The 32 report on Rural Environment noted correctly states that the Operative DP has had a permissive subdivision framework which has resulted in land fragmentation, loss of productive land, reverse sensitivity issues and uncoordinated urban development –

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<sup>10</sup> FNDC, [https://www.mpi.govt.nz/assets/dmstemp/HPL\\_submissions/2-3-21/E145.-Far-North-DC-Attachment\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/assets/dmstemp/HPL_submissions/2-3-21/E145.-Far-North-DC-Attachment_Redacted.pdf)

*“The approach in the Operative District Plan (ODP) has been to enable a wide range of primary and non-primary production activities [in rural areas] and ... a permissive subdivision framework. This has resulted in land fragmentation, loss of highly productive land, reverse sensitivity issues and uncoordinated urban development.” (s32 report, p.3)*

Reducing the notified PDP lot sizes in the Rural Production and Horticulture zones (as proposed by some submitters) would be an entirely negative step –

- It would make the PDP approach significantly more permissive, becoming more like the permissive ODP.
- It would perpetuate major problems that resulted from the permissive ODP, namely: further land fragmentation, loss of productive land, reverse sensitivity and uncoordinated urban/residential development.

Lot size is a major mechanism by which the PDP can prevent further land fragmentation and loss of productive land that future generations need.

### **Justifications for new subdivision framework specified in s32 report**

#### **Rural Production zone:**

The s32 report specified various ways in which the notified PDP Rural Production zone needs to differ from the permissive ODP approach.

The s32 report specified that the PDP Rural Production zone will have -

- *“A subdivision framework focussed on preventing further fragmentation of land to ensure it is available for primary production activities for current and future generations. This requires the minimum lot size in Rural Production zone to increase to 40 ha as a controlled activity and 8ha as discretionary activity. This replaces the permissive framework that allowed rural lifestyle and rural residential sized lots, ranging in size from 2,000m<sup>2</sup> to 4ha, anywhere within the rural environment.”*
- *“Residential intensity rules to align with the new subdivision framework, as opposed to the ODP approach of providing for housing down to the scale of 1 dwelling per 2ha” in Rural Production zone.*
- *“A policy framework that requires subdivision and land use to avoid effects that are incompatible with the purpose, character, and amenity of the zone, avoid activities that do not have a functional need to be in the zone or result in the loss of highly productive land **and avoid fragmentation of land into parcel sizes that are no longer able to support farming activities.**”*

The notified PDP Objectives for the Rural Production zone remain important, and would be undermined if the lot sizes are reduced –

**‘RPROZ-O3: ‘Land use and subdivision in the rural Production zone:**

- a. protects highly productive land from sterilisation and enables it to be used for more productive forms of primary production;*
- b. protects primary production activities from reverse sensitivity effects that may constrain their effective and efficient operation;*
- c. does not compromise the use of land for farming activities, particularly on highly productive land;...’*

