



## **PROPOSED FAR NORTH DISTRICT PLAN**

### **MINUTE 40 OF THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL**

#### **NATIONAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS**

1. On 6 November 2025 the Hearing Panel concluded its final scheduled hearing (Hearing 17 – Sweep-up and Miscellaneous) and on Monday 15 December 2025 we received the final right of reply reports from the Council officers. With the exception of minor questions of clarification, the hearings and evidence component of the district plan hearing process has concluded and the panel have commenced its final deliberations and the writing of recommendation reports ahead of our agreed deadline of 31 March 2026 to enable the Council to deliver its final decisions by the end of May 2026.
2. However, on 18 December 2025, the New Zealand Government announced that ten new or amended national direction instruments under the Resource Management Act 1991 will come into effect on 15 January 2026. These instruments are:

#### New national policy statements and national environmental standards

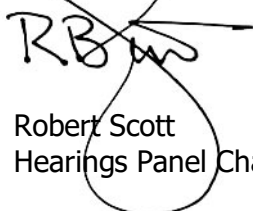
- a. Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Detached Minor Residential Units) Regulations 2025;
- b. National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025;
- c. National Policy Statement for Infrastructure 2025.

#### Amended national direction instruments

- a. National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land Amendment 2025;
- b. New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement Amendment 2025;
- c. National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity Amendment 2025;
- d. National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management Amendment 2025;
- e. Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Amendment Regulations 2025;
- f. National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation Amendment 2025;
- g. National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Amendment 2025.

3. Given that the evidence and hearing component of the process has effectively concluded, we seek planning and/or legal advice from Council on the following:
- a. Do the recently notified national instruments have legal effect?
  - b. If they do have legal effect what are the obligations of the hearing panel to implement the amendments through their recommendations?
  - c. If the amendments are implemented through the Hearing Panel recommendations, how would that affect the evaluation of the submissions already presented in evidence at the hearings?
  - d. What is a fair and appropriate process to address the matters in a.-c. above?
  - e. In responding to the above, please provide comment on the implications of any responses to Council's ability to meet its statutory timeframe of 26 May 2026 approved by the Minister, and the duty to avoid unreasonable delay.

If you have any questions regarding this Minute, please contact the Hearings Administrator Alicia-Kate (AK) Taihia - Submissions & Hearings Administrator District Plan: [alicia-kate.taihia@fndc.govt.nz](mailto:alicia-kate.taihia@fndc.govt.nz) or (09) 4015247.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Scott', with a large circular flourish underneath.

Robert Scott  
Hearings Panel Chairperson

6 January 2026