

**IN THE MATTER**

of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the  
Act)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER**

of the proposed Waikato District Plan (Stage  
1) – Hearing 21B - Landscapes

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**SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JOHN ANDREW RIDDELL FOR THE  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION IN RELATION TO  
HEARING 21B - LANDSCAPES**

**15 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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*Introduction*

1. My name is John Andrew Riddell. I have over 20 years experience as a planner.
2. This is a summary of the evidence in chief I prepared assessing the submissions and further submissions by the Director-General of Conservation on the landscape, natural feature and natural character provisions of the proposed Waikato District Plan (proposed Plan).

*Policy Guidance*

3. In section 3 of my evidence I set out the relevant policy guidance from the Act, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.
4. The relevant policy guidance flows from matters of national importance 6(a) with respect to natural character, and from 6(b) with respect to outstanding natural features and landscapes.<sup>1</sup>
5. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (**Coastal Policy Statement**), at policies 13 and 15, expands on the matters of national importance identified above for subdivision, use and development within the coastal environment. This includes an avoid adverse effects/avoid significant adverse effects regime.
6. Chapter 12 of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (**Regional Policy Statement**) contributes policy guidance with respect to natural character, natural features and landscapes outside the coastal environment.

*Natural character objective and policies*

7. In section 8 of my evidence I review the proposed Plan's natural character objectives and policies. I note that section 6(a) of the Act applies to the natural character of wetlands rivers and lakes and their margins even when these are located outside the coastal environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8 of the Resource Management Act are directly relevant to the Waikato River submissions discussed below.

8. At paragraph 8.9 of my evidence, I assess the natural character objective and policies and identify where amendments are necessary in order to give effect to the Coastal Policy Statement and from the Regional Policy Statement.
9. At pages 26 to 30 of my evidence I set out my recommended amendments to the natural character objectives and policies.

*Policy 3.5.3 and dune systems*

10. In section 9 I discuss a submission point relating to dunes being dynamic systems. Technical evidence on dune systems evidence from Mr La Cock supports this submission. I concur with the Hearing 21B report recommendation to accept the submission.

*Mapping Issues*

11. I address four mapping issues in my evidence.
12. Schedules for outstanding natural features and landscapes, section 4 of my evidence. I agree with the Hearing 21B report recommendation to reinstate these. This follows best practice. I note that further schedules should be included on outstanding and high natural character values, and for significant amenity landscapes.
13. Geopreservation sites, section 7 of my evidence. My opinion is that these should be included in the proposed Plan. I note that many other plans include such geologically important sites as outstanding natural features. I also note that section 6(b) uses the term 'outstanding natural features'. However, the proposed Plan only includes outstanding natural landscape features. Natural features can be outstanding for more reasons than just landscape values.
14. Waikato River and margins, section 6 of my evidence. This is in relation to a further submission supporting Waikato-Tainui in seeking that all of the Waikato River is identified as outstanding natural landscape and as an outstanding natural feature. In my opinion, sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8 of the Act, and the Waikato River Settlement Act 2010 provide strong support for special recognition in the proposed Plan for the Waikato River and its margins. This could be by identification as outstanding natural feature or landscape, or it could be by way of a specific overlay.

15. Natural character assessments, section 5 of my evidence. Waikato Regional Council seeks that a natural character assessment is undertaken for wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins. I consider that such an assessment is useful in recognising and providing for matter of national importance 6(a) of the Act, giving effect to policy 13 of the Coastal Policy Statement, and giving effect to policy 12.2 and method 12.2.1 of the Regional Policy Statement. I also note that the natural character policies in the proposed Plan apply to natural character of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins. There are two ways to gather information on the natural character characteristics and values – ad hoc with each relevant resource consent application, or by way of a district-wide survey of natural character. The latter has distinct advantages, including providing information to inform rules on activities within the margins of rivers and lakes, and as an information base for would-be applicants.

*Miscellaneous submission points*

16. There are several submissions or further submissions by the Director-General where I agree with the recommendations given in the Hearing 21B report:
- (a) excluding designated areas, section 10 of my evidence.
  - (b) permitted activities earthworks in outstanding value areas, section 11 of my evidence.
  - (c) coastal marine area boundary at Port Waikato, section 12 of my evidence.



Andrew Riddell

20 August 2020