

4.4 LANDSCAPE AND LANDFORM

4.4.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To recognise and protect the ridgeline and hilltop landscapes which characterise the Outer Green Belt.
2. To recognise and protect the indigenous forest and scrubland landscapes which are also part of the Outer Green Belt and will become an increasingly important element as the vision is pursued.
3. To achieve a sustainable balance between the maintenance and enjoyment of open ridgeline and hilltop landscapes, and the ecological restoration objectives for the Outer Green Belt.

4.4.2 POLICIES

4.4.2.1 Protection of ridgetop and hilltop values

- a) *The Council will (so far as possible) protect the ridgetop and hilltop landscapes of the Outer Green Belt, using all appropriate means, including Reserves Act classification.*
- b) *In areas where reserve classification is not possible or appropriate, the policies of this Plan will be used and reflected in other management plans for these areas.*
- c) *This Plan will be used in support of other Wellington City Council policy and in the application of the District Plan to protect ridgetop and hilltop values.*
- d) *Ridgetop and hilltop landscapes are a blend of open and forested areas. Parts of the main ridgeline which are presently in open pasture will mostly be retained in this condition. Priority areas for the regeneration of native bush will be gullies and the lower eastern slopes (refer Policy 4.4.2.2)*

Explanation

The definition and description of ridgetop and hilltop landscapes of the Outer Green Belt is that which is contained in *Wellington's Ridgetops and Hilltops*, Boffa Miskell, 2001, supplemented with additional information in this Plan.

4.4.2.2 Defining areas to remain open and clear

- a) *Area plans describe those parts of the ridgetop and hilltop areas owned by the Council which will be kept in an open grassed condition, and those which will have a cover of native vegetation restored. Management decisions will reflect this pattern. More detailed patterns may result from landscape plans for particular areas.*
- b) *Areas to be kept open and clear will generally be those which are already maintained as economically useful farmland. In some areas there is room below these areas for ecological restoration and the creation of a significant band of vegetation.*

4.4.2.3 Use of grazing as a management tool for open areas

- a) *Grazing will continue to be used as a management tool for the maintenance of specified open areas.*
- b) *Grazing should not unduly affect recreation access, and grazing agreements will not allow closure during lambing/calving or the erection of structures which unduly restrict recreational movement.*
- c) *The grazing of cattle should only be in areas where their presence will not create a significant impact on the landscape, the ecosystem, tracks and recreational access or heritage values.*
- d) *Formal agreements for grazing will be in the form of a licence, with a term not exceeding five years.*

4.4.2.4 Plantation forestry

- a) *Existing plantations, pine shelter belts and lone pines within existing or future reserves will be removed over time to reduce their impact on the landscape and ecosystems, unless there are compelling reasons to warrant their retention (for example recreational, heritage or slope stability considerations).*
- b) *Where plantation forestry is needed as a management tool (for example at the landfill or for amenity purposes), it will be confined to slopes with a suitable gradient, below ridgelines and away from riparian areas.*

Explanation

Mature pine forests can be highly valued for recreation because of their open character. The sites of former dwellings is often indicated by small clusters of mature macrocarpa. However, many lone pines, and pine plantings have little value and look incongruous in an otherwise natural bush landscape.