

Statement of Evidence from Wellington City Council Environmental Reference Group Submitter 377

Presented 11:00am Wednesday May 1 2024 to the WCC District Plan Hearings Panel chaired by Commissioner Trevor Robinson.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the hearings panel. My name is Michelle Rush, I am the Co-Chair of the Wellington City Council Environmental Reference Group. (ERG) Our group comprises environmental professionals representing a range of ages, skills and backgrounds on environmental matters.

My background is in natural resource management. In the past I was involved as an advocate for the agriculture industry in statutory resource management, however that was more than a decade ago now, so I therefore consider myself a lay person when it comes to the legal and planning conventions of current day matters under the Resource Management Act.

ERG submitted on the following matters that relate to Stream 8:

- Natural Character (NATC)
- Natural Features and Landscapes (NFL)
- Public Access (PA)
- Coastal Environment (CE)

We have reviewed each of the officer's recommendations to the Panel in the s42A Report in light of our original submission, and reflected on the rationale given for the changes being put forward.

We have also reviewed the officer's recommendations in light of the now operative Strategic Directions of the District Plan, and in particular:

District Wide Matters - Strategic Direction - Natural Environment Chapter Objectives NE01 - NE06

District Wide Matters - Strategic Direction - Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change SRCC 01 - SRCC04

We wish to table our support for the following provisions because:

a) we believe they give effect, as relevant, to these Natural Environment and Sustainability, Resilience and Climate Change objectives; and

b) on considering the rationale in the s42A report and related documents we believe the retaining, as is, or amendments, as recommended by Officers, make sense for both the common-sense operation of the Plan and the achievement of the District Plan’s strategic objectives.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you in support of our submission.

Michelle Rush
 for:
 Wellington City Council Environmental Reference Group

Submission Details

WCC ERG Submitter 377 would like recorded our SUPPORT for the following:

- Notified district plan provisions for which Officers are recommending be retained as originally notified - marked “retain as notified”; and
- Amendments Officers have put forward in the s42A report - marked “Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024”

The decision sought of the Panel, for the relevant clause, is provided in the **right hand side column of this table.**

Chapter / Sub-part	Specific provision / matter	Initial Submission Position	Reason for original submission	Hearings Panel - Decisions requested / relief sought
Natural Character				
Objectives				

Chapter / Sub-part	Specific provision / matter	Initial Submission Position	Reason for original submission	Hearings Panel - Decisions requested / relief sought
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-O1	Support	Wellington's natural waterways are a valuable, and seriously compromised part of the city, and need considerable work to be restored both in terms of quality and amenity. The focus on maintaining and enhancing is particularly important in this objective.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-O3	Support	This objective helps redress the imbalance that has existed, compromising the ability of tangata whenua to exercise customary harvesting.	Retain as notified
Policies				
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-P1	Support	Wellington's natural waterways are a valuable, and seriously compromised part of the city. This policy recognises the need to protect the environment and public access whilst allowing for uses in riparian areas.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-P2	Support	Wellington's natural waterways are a valuable, and seriously compromised part of the city. This policy recognises the urgent need to restore these areas.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-P3	Support	This policy helps redress the imbalance that has existed, compromising the ability of tangata whenua to exercise customary harvesting.	Retain as notified
Rules				
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-R1	Support	This rule gives effect to the objectives and policies and is therefore supported.	Retain as notified
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-R2	Support	This rule encourages efforts to restore and enhance waterways, and is strongly supported.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-R3	Support	This rule helps redress the imbalance that has existed, compromising the ability of tangata whenua to exercise customary harvesting.	Retain as notified

Chapter / Sub-part	Specific provision / matter	Initial Submission Position	Reason for original submission	Hearings Panel - Decisions requested / relief sought
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-R4	Support	This rule is necessary for practical purposes in helping safeguard life and property.	Retain as notified
Te Ahurei o Ngā Hanga Māori Natural Character	NATC-R5	Support	This rule gives effect to the objectives and policies and is supported.	Retain as notified
Natural Features and Landscapes				
Objectives				
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-O1	Support	“Wellington, wild at heart” is what our unique capital city trades upon - and as the population grows, preserving and being able to enjoy our outstanding natural features and landscapes is of great importance. Research shows that access to natural areas, and ‘biophilic’ environments as keys to human health and well-being and of course being a critical part of protecting biodiversity. On this matter, Wellington as a city is playing a critical role in providing refuge for formerly at risk native birds, e.g. kaka, and with efforts such as the Halo Project	Retain as notified

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			and Predator Free initiatives being undertaken by thousands of Wellingtonians, it is important our city's district plan provides legal and policy support to this.	
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-O2	Support	“Wellington, wild at heart” is what our unique capital city trades upon - and as the population grows, preserving and being able to enjoy our outstanding natural features and landscapes is of great importance. Research shows that access to natural areas, and ‘biophilic’ environments as keys to human health and well-being and of course being a critical part of protecting biodiversity. On this matter, Wellington as a city is playing a critical role in providing refuge for formerly at risk native birds, e.g. kaka, and with efforts such as the Halo Project and Predator Free initiatives being undertaken by thousands of Wellingtonians, it is important our city's district plan provides legal and policy support to this.	Retain as notified
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-O3	Support	The green ridge tops of Wellington are a core part of its character, and a major contributor to maintaining a ‘biophilic’ environment - which research shows is a keys to human health and well-being and of course being a critical part of protecting biodiversity. On this matter, Wellington as a city is playing a critical role in providing refuge for formerly at risk native birds, e.g. kaka, and with efforts such as the Halo Project and	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

Chapter / Sub-part	Specific provision / matter	Initial Submission Position	Reason for original submission	Hearings Panel - Decisions requested / relief sought
			Predator Free initiatives being undertaken by thousands of Wellingtonians, it is important our city's district plan provides legal and policy support to this.	
Policies				
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P1	Support	This policy is helpful in that having a specific list provides certainty for owners and potential owners whose land falls within these areas.	Retain as notified
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P2	Support	This policy provides for necessary uses, e.g. masts, whilst seeking to mitigate adverse effects.	Retain as notified
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P3	Support	This policy provides for activities that can work within these areas in a manner that does not compromise their value.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P4	Support	This policy provides for activities that can work within these areas in a manner that does not compromise their value.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P5	Support	This policy provides for activities that can work within these areas in a manner that does not compromise their value.	Retain as notified
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P6	Support	This policy provides for activities that can work within these areas in a manner that does not compromise their value.	Retain as notified
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P8	Support	This policy sends an important signal that plantation forestry should not be located within these important landscapes.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-P9	Support	This policy recognises the positive value of restoration and enhancement of these areas.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Rules				
Ngā Hanga Māori me Ngā Nohopae Natural Features and Landscapes	NFL-R1	Support	This rule recognises the positive value of restoration and enhancement of these areas.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Public Access				
Objectives				
Te Uru Tūmatanui Public Access	PA-O1	Support	Safeguarding public access, whilst protecting environmental values is important to Wellington and a city that has a strong relationship to its natural environment.	Retain as notified

Chapter / Sub-part	Specific provision / matter	Initial Submission Position	Reason for original submission	Hearings Panel - Decisions requested / relief sought
Te Uru Tūmatanui Public Access	PA-O2	Support	Safeguarding public access, whilst protecting environmental values is important to Wellington and a city that has a strong relationship to its natural environment.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Policies				
Te Uru Tūmatanui Public Access	PA-P1	Support	Safeguarding public access, whilst protecting environmental values is important to Wellington and a city that has a strong relationship to its natural environment.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Te Uru Tūmatanui Public Access	PA-P2	Support	This policy sends an important signal about the need to take steps to at least maintain, and wherever possible enhance public access to the coast and water ways.	Retain as notified
Te Uru Tūmatanui Public Access	PA-P3	Support	This policy recognises that in some situations the natural environment needs protecting from access.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Coastal Environment				
Objectives				
Coastal Environment	CE-O1	Support with amendments	It is important to ensure that, in the midst of an ecological emergency, the default attitude towards environmental protection is one of restoration.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-O2 to CE-O9 (inclusive)	Support	These objectives will all benefit the coastal environment, and we particularly support O4 in giving effect to WCC's Te Tiriti obligations.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Policies				
Coastal Environment	CE-P1	Support		Retain as notified.
Coastal Environment	CE-P2	Amend	It is important to recognise the environmental significance of the coastal environment.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Coastal Environment	CE-P3	Support	Important to empower and allow the betterment of the coastal environment.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-P4	Support	Ensures WCC is acting in accordance with Te Tiriti obligations.	Retain as notified.
Coastal Environment	CE-P5	Support with amendments	We also recognise that the coastal environment is home to indigenous biodiversity and that should be provided for in the District Plan.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-P6	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-P7	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-P8	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Coastal Environment	CE-P9	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-P10 to - P26 (inclusive)	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Retain as notified.
Rules				
Coastal Environment	CE-R1 to CE-R3 (inclusive)	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Retain as notified.
Coastal Environment	CE-R4	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R5	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R6	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024

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Coastal Environment	CE-R7	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R8	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R9	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R10	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Retain as notified.
Coastal Environment	CE-R11	Amend	This amendment will better give effect to CE-P9.4.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R12	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R13	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer

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				Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R14	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024
Coastal Environment	CE-R15	Support	We believe these are logical and beneficial.	Support amendment in Council Officer Recommendation S42A report 27/03/2024