



# Agenda

**Notice is hereby given of  
an Open Workshop**

**Tuesday 3 June 2025**

**9:30am**

**Council Chamber  
Waimate District Council  
125 Queen Street  
Waimate**

[www.waimatedc.govt.nz](http://www.waimatedc.govt.nz)

Order Of Business

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    1.1    Strategic Direction for the District Plan: Topic 2, Rural and Natural  
            Environments ..... 4

Open workshops are an informal forum for staff to bring information items or presentations to Council which, if undertaken at a Council meeting, could take a significant amount of time, and therefore restrict other business from being transacted.

No decisions or resolutions will be made.

Brief agendas will be prepared and will be available on Council's website:

<https://www.waimatedc.govt.nz/council/meetings/agendas-and-minutes> and brief notes will be taken.

There are no legal requirements relating to a quorum.

Standing Orders do not apply.

Members of the public are welcome to attend but do not have speaking rights.

## REPORTS

### 1 GENERAL BUSINESS

#### 1.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE DISTRICT PLAN: TOPIC 2, RURAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

**Author:** Alex Macdonald, Senior Planner

**Authoriser:** Gareth Oudemans, Acting Regulatory and Compliance Group Manager

**Attachments:** 1. Waimate's Future - Topic 2 Rural and Natural Environment [↓](#) 

#### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek initial Council feedback on Topic 2 'Rural and Natural Environments' which will become "Waimate's Future: Strategic Direction for the District Plan."

#### BACKGROUND

2. Council has previously<sup>1</sup> discussed the District Plan Review and received an update which indicated that early work on a plan review would be split into three workstreams. Workstream 1 is the development of strategic direction.
3. This paper continues Workstream 1 by seeking Council's feedback on Topic 2 'Rural and Natural Environments'.
4. The presentation to introduce and discuss this topic is attached.

#### OUTCOME

5. For staff to have direction from Council to inform ongoing planning work.

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<sup>1</sup> Workshop Paper 1 April 2025

# Waimate's Future – Strategic Direction for the District Plan


Topic 2: Rural and the Natural  
Environment





# Topics

- Topic 1 – Waimate Town and Settlements
- **Topic 2 – Rural and Natural Environments (Today!)**
- Topic 3 – Infrastructure, Hazards, Climate Change
- Topic 4 – People, Places, Heritage (TBC)



## What we need from you?

- Working with you – Identify ‘outcomes’ for one of the four major themes we will need to work through.
- Today, will look at rural values and issues.
- High level direction that lets us do more detailed work.
- These ‘outcomes’ eventually translate to how activities are managed in the District Plan.
- Long term view (50+ years ) as many of our decisions will still affect the town.
- We’ll spend more time on the activities that are more common.



## Recap Topic 1 – Urban and Settlements

- On housing – We heard:
  - Enable a range of different types of growth, so people can choose an area and environment that's right for them
  - Work to fairly recognise the relative costs of different development
- On commercial – We heard:
  - Consider different ways or places to enable a range of commercial and light industrial, while recognising the sensitivities and balance with these uses
- On settlements – We confirmed:
  - Enable a range of activities recognising what already happens
- Out of time on one issue (heavy industry). Cover in a wrap up!





## RMA Replacement Challenges

- Many rural values look likely to move to the 'Natural Environment Act'
- Detail still to come for what involvement district councils will have
- Regional spatial plans have a key role – ideally this gives us direction for that process, if not translated to a district plan directly



## Rural environments and 'values'

- Today, we will work through what outcome you want to achieve both in general and for specific values, including:
  - Highly Productive Land
  - Biodiversity
  - Landscape
- Some 'planning chat' because many words today have a specific meaning.

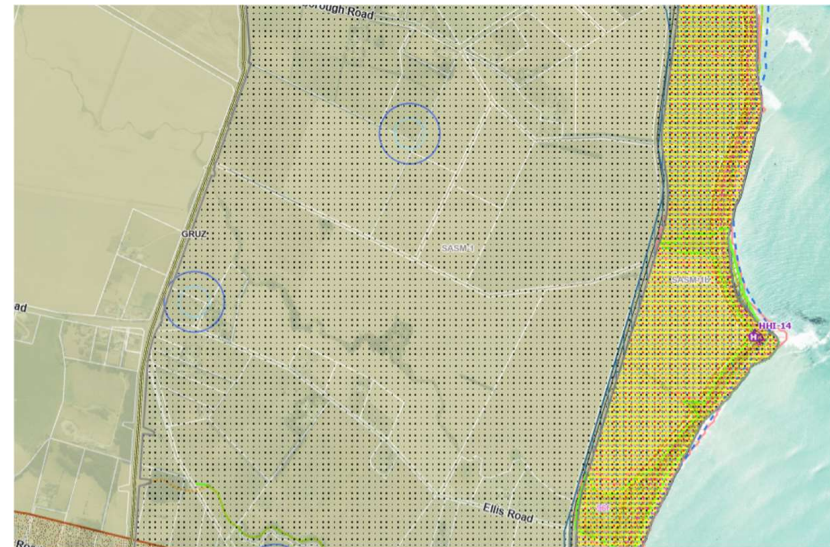
## What is a rural area?

- Six 'Urban' Zones, One Rural Zone.
- Our current rural zone does a lot of heavy lifting, enabling primary production\* while managing values\*
- Values usually expressed as 'overlays'\*, zone will manage just the 'rural' activities (e.g. structures, noise)



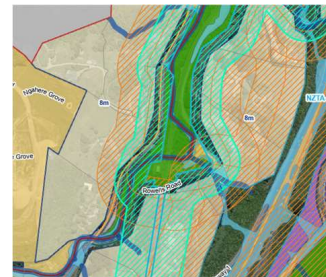
## What is a value (and overlay)?

- A value is something we care about!
- We therefore have rules (which limit an activity) and policy (to assess an application) to manage or protect the 'value' or some quality, e.g.
  - Landscape
  - Visual amenity
  - Biodiversity
  - Highly productive land
  - Margins of rivers
- These the main ones, but every 'value' gets its own (or multiple) overlays
- Other matters also get overlays



# RPS and National Direction

- Put aside specific requirements for the rest of this discussion
- Requirements to identify and manage most values come from the RPS and National Direction
- Our current approach – rules for everything, applying everywhere, becomes less certain and sustainable.
- High chance of ‘overlay soup’, which has the same outcome (rules everywhere)



## Rural Areas

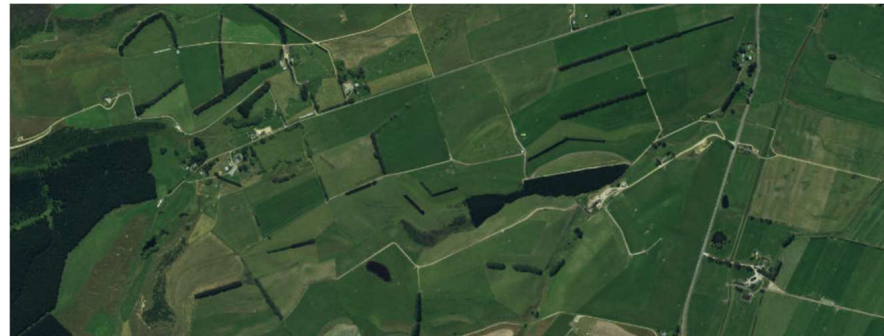
- If there aren't identified values, what are we managing?
- Direction to enable, but will still need to manage tensions (a new frost fan? Dairy pond next door?)
- Lifestyle development





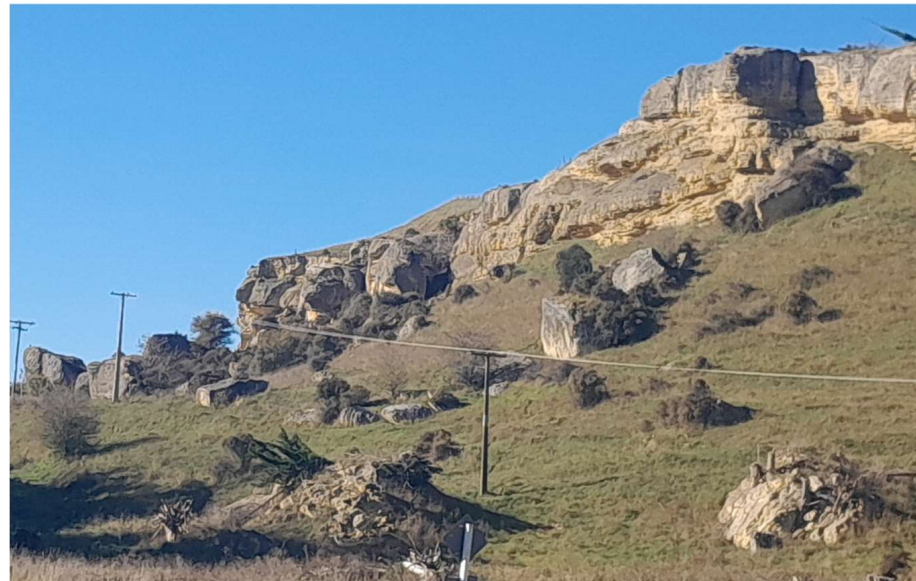
## Trade-offs and change in rural areas

- You all know better than me – Rural areas change!
- Land use flexibility important – lets farmers adapt, take new opportunities and manage changing markets
- Land use change is a cause of friction and challenges. Dairy, Horticulture, Forestry.



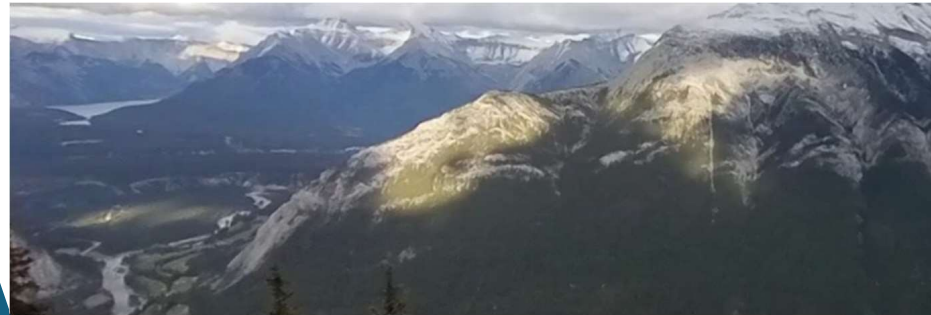
## Landscape and amenity

- Must identify and protect landscapes – notably Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFL)
- Must ‘protect’ ONFLs from ‘inappropriate subdivision use and development’
- Is this a value we care about?

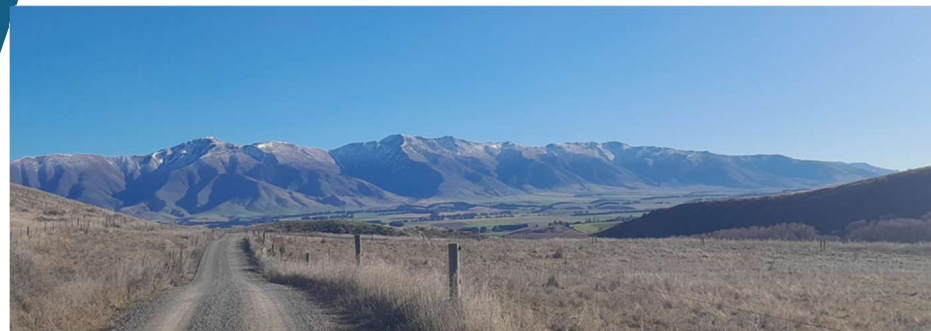




Protect the truly  
special, manage the  
important?

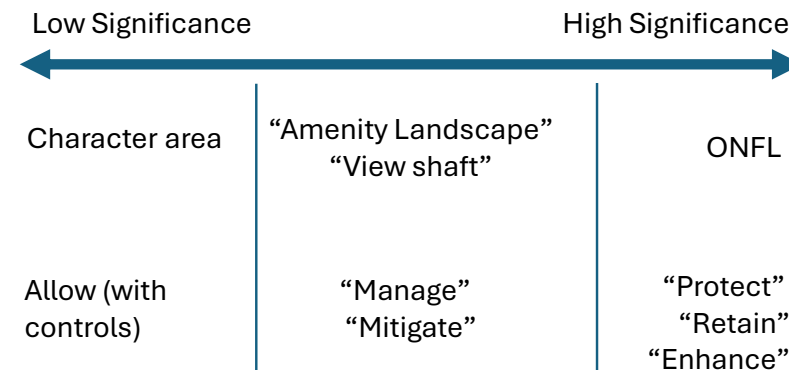


- Challenge – Describe what we're preserving in a way that:
  - 1 – Makes sense to a layperson
  - 2 - Isn't about an activity (because we don't know what activity will happen)
  - 3 – means the top and bottom photos will still look different, and their special qualities will be managed or preserved



## Landscape and amenity

- Key question: How much effort do we put in?
- This section covers ‘high’ significance values (outstanding natural landscapes and features)
- Also includes other identified protections – e.g. Visual amenity\* (a.k.a ‘Hill and High Country’) ref to other values.



## Trade-offs - Landscape

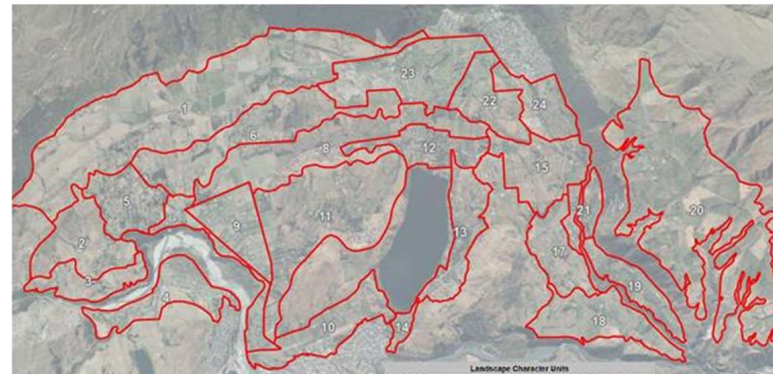
- Doing more means:
  - ‘Values’ are better protected, more clarity on what is and is not acceptable
  - More time, energy, money from council and the public
  - Higher regulatory burden
- Doing less means:
  - Greater chance of things that are ‘contrary’ to values going ahead.

### APPENDIX E - LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

#### BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

##### Siting

- Have regard to surrounding landforms when siting buildings and structures.
- Buildings should be located where they complement or enhance the landform.
- Landforms as backdrops to buildings have a unifying effect.
- Avoid skylines, ridgetops, promontories, important views and other prominent positions.



## Highly Productive Land

- Most of district east of Hunter Hills is LUC Class 1 and 2 –
- Potential removal of LUC3 unlikely to be significant for us
- Is this a value we care about?



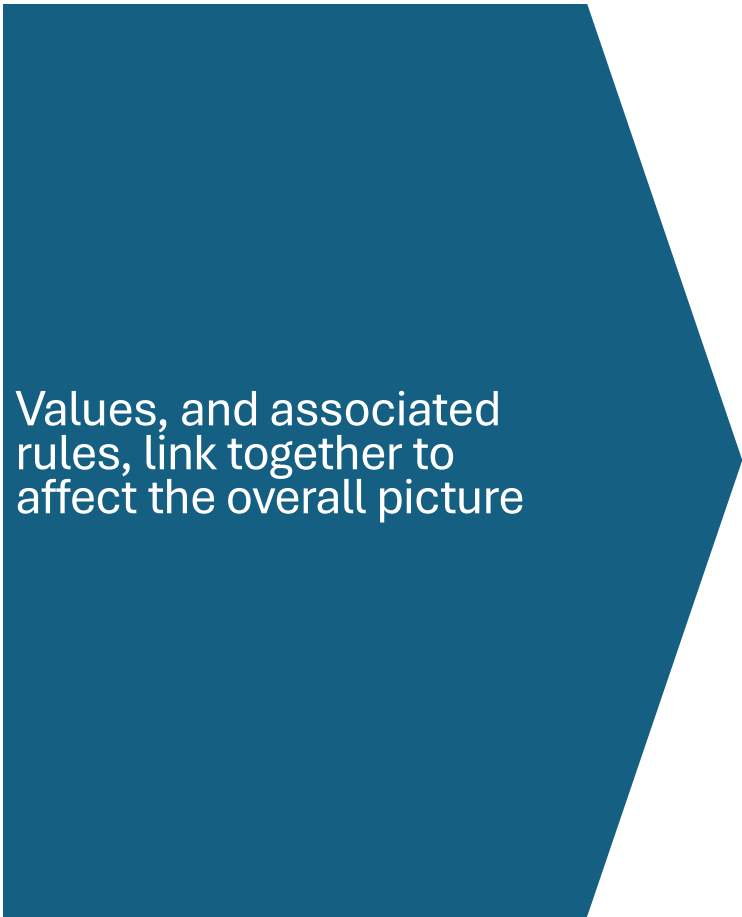
Key Issue – Managing  
subdivision and ‘other’  
activities.



# Biodiversity

- A tricky and technical topic, particularly in rules and regulation
- Two key issues:
  - How much effort do we put into identifying areas that might be important?
  - What do we want to achieve? What biodiversity outcome is important – a value question
- How do we fairly share the costs (and opportunity costs) of protection and benefits?





Values, and associated rules, link together to affect the overall picture

Hypothetical Scenario:

Assumptions

- Farmer A (currently dairy support) wants to intensify to horticulture, but there is insufficient N and P load available
- Farmer B (hill country sheep and beef) has no viable succession plan to keep the farm operating and wants to sell up. Options are either break up the farm into lifestyle blocks or plant a forest.
- Nutrients can be transferred between properties.

Considerations

A limit or restriction on Farmer B (e.g. landscape, HPL), could also restrict Farmer A.

If the activity doesn't go ahead, no chance to improve biodiversity?

Notes

Very simplified example!

Planning can't 'require' in this situation, only 'enable'.



## Wrap up

- What we've heard
- Feedback from you
- Next steps

Thank you!