



# DRAFT REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

May 2016

## Chapter 7

### Landscape

*Kainga whenua kanohi*

## **I.7 Significant Resource Management Issues: Landscape**

### **Issue 7.1 Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscape values have not been confirmed.**

Whakatū Nelson is home to certain natural landscapes and features that are conspicuous, eminent and remarkable in local terms and are held in high regard by residents and visitors alike. Initial work has indicated that the following natural landscapes and/or features within Whakatū Nelson are outstanding:

- The impressive mountain landscape represented by the Bryant Range and Mineral Belt
- The iconic Haulashore Island and Arrow (Fifeshire) Rock, defining in a memorable way the southern and seaward approaches into Nelson City
- The striking Boulder Bank (Te Taero a Kereopa – Te Tahuna a Tama-i-ea) and Mackay Bluff
- The remarkable and impressive sequence of coastal landforms represented by Pepin Island and Delaware Inlet
- The wild and relatively remote landscapes of Cape Soucis and Whangamoa Inlet

Additionally, initial work has indicated that Whakatū Nelson hosts outstanding coastal natural character values associated with:

- The remote, unmodified and dramatic aspects of Cape Soucis
- The ecologically rich, largely unmodified Whangamoa River Mouth, Estuary and Whangamoa Rocks to Julia's Rescue (near the base of the Delaware sand spit)
- The sequence of largely unmodified coastal landforms represented by Delaware Bay, Horoirangi Marine Reserve and coastal waters off the Boulder Bank (Te Taero a Kereopa – Te Tahuna a Tama-i-ea).

Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscape values remain to be confirmed through wider consultation with the community.

### **Issue 7.2 Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscapes, features and coastal natural character could be compromised by inappropriate subdivision, use or development.**

As indicated in Issue 7.1, Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscape values are likely to reside in northern and eastern areas, and

also offshore in the vicinity of the City. They are generally not subject to significant development pressure and to some extent are protected by their very remoteness and inaccessibility. In some cases, they may have been significantly modified over many years through, for example, conversion to pasture, the planting of small woodlots and shelter belts and other characteristics of a farmed landscape. Overall these changes may not have diminished their status as outstanding landscapes. Some portions are held in public ownership and may be subject to existing protection mechanisms (such as being part of the conservation estate) or may be highly valued by their private owners.

Nevertheless, there is some risk that in certain situations their natural qualities, particularly in the coastal environment, could be compromised by subdivision for housing, or other forms of use or development, such as mineral extraction, utilities, or coastal protection works. Outstanding coastal natural character may be compromised by such land-based activities and offshore development including reclamation and other structures. While the likelihood of such development in areas of outstanding landscape or coastal natural character may not be high, the consequences would be significant.

**Issue 7.3      Whakatū Nelson’s outstanding natural landscapes, features and coastal natural character could be compromised by the incursion of pests and weeds and other unintended changes.**

The natural qualities of Whakatū Nelson’s outstanding natural landscapes may be compromised incrementally and over time as a result of weed spread including wilding pine and gorse, and grazing by feral animals such as goats. Coastal erosion, particularly where rates are exacerbated by sea level rise, and coupled with measures to mitigate it, could compromise the natural character of the coastline.

**Issue 7.4      The largely undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that form the immediate backdrop to Nelson City and that are valued by the community for the contribution they make to the City’s setting could be compromised by inappropriate subdivision, earthworks or the siting and design of buildings and utilities or other forms of development.**

Not all slopes and ridgelines in the vicinity of the City are valued in the same way. The Port Hills Ridge and some slopes and hilltops close to Enner Glynn, Stoke, Brooklands, Dodson Valley, Marybank and Todds Valley north now form part of the City’s urban fabric or have further development potential. As their names attest, such streets as Clairmont Heights, Somerset Terrace, Panorama Drive, Highview Drive, Cape View,

Seawatch Way, Bayview Road, Springlea Heights, Sunnybank Rise and Skylark Rise are valued most for the views they command.

However, other largely undeveloped seaward and Nelson City facing slopes and ridgelines in the vicinity of the City make an important contribution to its setting. They include the Barnicoat foothills above the Ngawhatu and Marsden Valleys, the Grampians, Sharland Hill, the Sugarloaf, Fringed Hill, Botanical Hill and Kaka Hill.

While these slopes and ridgelines may not be 'outstanding', they are undoubtedly valued by the community for their visual and aesthetic amenity. They retain this value whether they are clothed in pasture, scrub or exotic or indigenous forest. Dynamic, albeit temporary, change may be a feature of such areas particularly where the rotation cycle associated with plantation forestry is concerned. The community's acceptance of the visual impacts associated with such change can be stretched in the period immediately following harvesting.

Overall, what sets these areas apart are their relatively undeveloped, open qualities. To some extent they may be protected by their limited developmental potential or by virtue of their being held in public ownership. However, in some cases those qualities could be compromised by insensitive development of a more permanent nature, for instance the siting and design of buildings or utilities on the skyline, and the earthworks associated with building platforms, access roads and driveways.

## **R.7 Resource Management Responses: Landscape**

### **Objectives**

- Objective 7.1 Confirm Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscapes, features and coastal natural character.**
- Objective 7.2 Protect Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscapes and features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and unintended, avoidable change.**
- Objective 7.3 Preserve Whakatū Nelson's outstanding coastal natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and unintended, avoidable change.**
- Objective 7.4 Maintain and enhance the contribution that the values attributed to important, identified, and largely undeveloped slopes and ridgelines make to Nelson City's setting.**

## **Policies**

**Policy 7.1      Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscapes and features will be preliminarily identified using the following criteria:**

- **Biophysical values**
- **Sensory / aesthetic values**
- **Associative values**

### **Explanation**

As indicated in Issue 7.1, preliminary work has been done to identify potential outstanding natural landscapes and features. This evaluation now needs to be tested with further input from the community, iwi and stakeholders (including potentially affected landowners) before the values are confirmed and appropriate measures can be included in Whakamahere Whakatū.

**Policy 7.2      Whakatū Nelson's outstanding coastal natural character will be preliminarily identified against the following attributes:**

- **Abiotic values**
- **Biotic values**
- **Experiential values**

### **Explanation**

As indicated in Issue 7.1, preliminary work has been done to identify potential outstanding coastal natural character. This evaluation now needs to be tested with further input from the community, iwi and stakeholders (including potentially affected landowners) before the values are confirmed and appropriate measures can be included in Whakamahere Whakatū.

**Policy 7.3      The Council will:**

- **manage subdivision land uses and forms of development that would otherwise have a significant impact on the outstanding values of these areas**
- **provide for the continuance of compatible activities that reflect the current use of these outstanding areas, such as farming, cultural use, environmental restoration, low impact recreational activity and associated occupation, subject to suitable controls relating to design**

### **Explanation**

The preservation and protection of outstanding natural landscape values can only be achieved through the avoidance of development that would compromise those values. This necessitates controls on land uses, subdivision, earthworks and siting of structures, and controls on occupation and use (for, example, aquaculture) in the coastal marine area.

On the other hand, evaluations of the 'naturalness' of outstanding natural landscape features do acknowledge that a significant degree of modification may have already taken place due to human intervention. A farmed landscape or one that is extensively used for low impact recreation may still be identified as outstanding. In this context, associated development such as farm houses, barns, fences, tracks and access roads are appropriate and do need to be specifically provided for.

In addition, the cultural use of landscapes by tangata whenua Iwi need to be provided for. Finally, activities associated with efforts to restore the environment such as fencing, baiting and weed control can generate their own environmental effects. As the benefits are likely to outweigh any adverse effects, environmental restoration should be appropriately provided for in areas that are outstanding in landscape terms.

**Policy 7.4      The Council will support the efforts public and private landowners make in restoring areas featuring outstanding natural landscapes and features and outstanding coastal natural character, particularly by controlling pest animal and plant incursions.**

### **Explanation**

Forms of environmental restoration such as pest control have benefits beyond the biophysical; they can address the impacts that incursions such as wilding pines and goat grazing can have on outstanding natural landscape values.

The Council can also actively support pest control efforts by assisting public and private landowners with advice, funding and the like.

The impacts of coastal erosion (potentially accelerated by sea level rise) on outstanding coastal natural character are not something that the Council can practically address. However, the Council can address the effect that responses to erosion, such as protection works, can have on that character. Policy 7.3 addresses these impacts directly.

**Policy 7.5      The largely undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that make an important contribution to Nelson City's setting will be preliminarily identified using the following criteria:**

- **The extent to which they are visible from Nelson's town centre, main arterial routes and the coastal edge**
- **Their natural and physical qualities and characteristics**
- **Their sensory and aesthetic value**
- **Their cultural and recreational attributes**

**Explanation**

As the explanation for Issue I.1.4 suggests, not all slopes and ridgelines in the vicinity of Nelson City need to be protected from future development. As indicated in the Social and Economic Wellbeing chapter, Nelson City's future growth needs to be accommodated through a combination of intensification and provision for greenfield development on the periphery, with some developable sites occupying slopes and ridgelines. Further to this, there may be only some slopes and ridgelines that the community considers should be protected from future expansion. In identifying those features, the Council will take into account the current urban form as well as opportunities for future growth.

**Policy 7.6      The Council will maintain and enhance the valued qualities of largely undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that make an important contribution to Nelson City's setting.**

**Explanation**

In comparison with outstanding natural landscapes, where the Council is obliged to avoid the adverse effects of inappropriate development and therefore controls on land use, subdivision and the siting of structures is required, the mitigation of the effects of such activities may be feasible where slopes and ridgelines valued for their amenity are concerned. For this reason, performance standards for earthworks and structures are the preferred approach. Consent requirements and assessment criteria will apply in situations where performance standards cannot be complied with. Outside current and future urban growth areas, underlying rural or conservation zoning will still generally and appropriately control land uses by specifying consent status.

Land purchase presents an opportunity for the community (rather than private owners) to contribute to the cost of retaining and improving landscapes that it values. Retirement through purchase can entail

enhancement through the restoration of indigenous vegetation, and the provision of low impact public access and recreational opportunities.

As 'conservation reserves', the Maitai and Roding Water Reserves are managed primarily for their biodiversity, landscape and historic values, and the recreational opportunities they provide. They are partly located within the lower parts of the Bryant Range, which is itself identified as a potentially outstanding natural landscape. Other parts of that range come within the care of the Department of Conservation. Atmore, Tantragee, Grampians, Highview and Bolwell Reserves are all held in Council ownership as 'landscape reserves' in order to protect the landscape and visual amenity values of these key parts of the City backdrop.

Through its Parks and Reserves Asset Management Plan, the Council has identified additional priority landscape areas needing protection, some of which may be able to be secured through purchase. Purchase options are of course subject to owner willingness to sell and budget constraints. Nevertheless, this remains a valid means of protection and enhancement.

## Methods

Regulatory methods	Who	Policy link
<b>Nelson Plan</b>		
Controls intended (in concert with the underlying zoning) to protect and preserve outstanding natural landscape values by specifying consent status, performance standards, consent requirements and assessment criteria.	Council	Policy 7.1 Policy 7.2 Policy 7.3
Pursue a large property plan approach with interested landowners to identify development opportunities, values and constraints in a coordinated manner.	Council	Policy 7.3
Controls (in concert with the underlying zoning) intended to maintain the contribution important, identified, undeveloped slopes and ridgelines make to the City's setting by specifying performance standards, consent requirements and assessment criteria.	Council	Policy 7.5 Policy 7.6
<b>Other Statutory Policies, Standards and Plans</b>		
Once finalised, the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry is expected to address adverse environmental effects (including visual impacts) associated with wildling spread, earthworks, quarrying and harvesting.		Policy 7.3 Policy 7.6



Non-regulatory methods	Who	Policy link
<b>Funding and assistance</b>		
Support landowner efforts at pest control in areas regarded as outstanding in natural landscape terms through the auspices of such initiatives as Nelson Nature, a flagship non-regulatory biodiversity programme.	Council	Policy 7.4
Provide advice to prospective consent applicants in terms of the steps they can take to mitigate the effects of development proposals on recognised landscape values.	Council	Policy 7.3 Policy 7.6
Consider the purchase of properties that contribute to the City's setting in landscape terms and that offer potential in terms of enhancement, restoration and low-impact recreational opportunities.	Council	Policy 7.6
<b>Advocacy and education</b>		
Continue to promote Nelson as a fantastic place to live, work and play with reference to its landscape attributes.	Council	Policy 7.1 Policy 7.2 Policy 7.5

## Anticipated environmental results

Anticipated Environmental Result	Link to policy	Indicator	Data Source
<b>Whakatū Nelson's outstanding natural landscape values are confirmed, protected, preserved and, where feasible, enhanced.</b>	Policy 7.1 Policy 7.2	The identification in the Nelson Plan of outstanding natural landscape values.	Provisions of the Nelson Plan
	Policy 7.3	No significant impacts on outstanding natural landscape values through the granting of resource consent applications subject to Nelson Plan provisions.	Monitored through an independent review of consent outcomes in landscape terms
	Policy 7.4	Specific examples of the enhancement of outstanding natural landscape values through Council support of landowner pest control initiatives.	Nelson Nature records
<b>The values associated with largely undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that make an important contribution to Nelson City's setting are identified, maintained and, where feasible, enhanced.</b>	Policy 7.5	The identification in the Nelson Plan of undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that make an important contribution to Nelson City's setting.	Provisions of the Nelson Plan
	Policy 7.6	No significant impacts on the valued qualities of undeveloped slopes and ridgelines that make an important contribution to Nelson City's setting, through the granting of resource consent applications subject to Nelson Plan provisions.	Monitored through an independent review of consent outcomes in landscape terms
	Policy 7.6	Specific examples of the enhancement of amenity landscape values through the Council purchase and retirement of selected properties.	Review of Parks and Reserves Asset Management Plan goals

## Principal reasons

The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and the protection of both that character and outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development are

matters of national importance under the RMA, with further direction provided in the NZCPS with respect to avoiding significant adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment. Through surveys and initial feedback on the potential direction of Whakamahere Whakatū, the community has indicated support for the identification and protection of outstanding landscape values.

The community has also indicated strong support for the maintenance of natural landscapes and a preference for avoiding housing development on important, largely undeveloped hillsides around Nelson City, while seeing other semi-developed hillsides as appropriate areas for accommodating the City's growth. In seeking to identify and distinguish between those areas that can accommodate urban growth and those for which landscape values need to be maintained and enhanced, the Council must strike the overall balance demanded by section 5 of the RMA.

The anticipated National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry may provide a national benchmark for landscape effects assessment.