

### 3 Natural features and landscapes

#### 3.1 Introduction

The topography of the district includes the Waikato basin, lowland peat areas, lakes and hill country. The district has an exposed cliff coastline for much of its west coast. The coastal cliffs, and the cones of Karioi and Pirongia dominate the southern landscape, while the Hakarimata, Taupiri and Hapuakohe ranges run through the district from the south-west to the north-east. Protection of these large features retains the underlying landforms and natural features that make up the district.

Outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified in [Schedule 3A](#) and on the District Plan map as Landscape Policy Areas. The plan identifies and manages outstanding natural features and landscapes, and also addresses effects of subdivision and development on general landscape values throughout the district.

#### 3.1.1 Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River

The Vision and Strategy is Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato [s9(3)] and is intended by Parliament to be the primary direction-setting document for the Waikato River and activities within its catchment [s5(1)].

This district plan reflects the new era of co-management between Waikato District Council and iwi. The Settlement Act requires that a district plan shall give effect to the Vision and Strategy.

The Vision and Strategy responds to four fundamental issues:

- The degradation of the Waikato River and the ability of Waikato River iwi to exercise kaitiakitanga or conduct their tikanga and kawa;
- The relationships and aspirations of communities with the Waikato River;
- The cumulative effects of physical intervention, land use and subsurface hydrological changes on the natural processes of the Waikato River;
- The time and commitment required to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.

#### Vision for the Waikato River

The Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River is contained in Schedule 2 of the Settlement Act. Clauses (1) and (2) of the Vision state:

1. Tooku awa koiora me oona pikonga he kura tangihia o te maataamuri. The river of life, each curve more beautiful than the last.
2. Our vision is for a future where a healthy Waikato River sustains abundant life and prosperous communities who, in turn, are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, and all it embraces, for generations to come.

#### Strategy for the Waikato River

In order to achieve the Vision for the Waikato River, the following strategies are to be followed:

- (a) Ensure that the highest level of recognition is given to the restoration and protection of the Waikato River.

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- (b) Establish what the current health status of the Waikato River is by utilising maatauranga Maori and latest available scientific methods.
- (c) Develop targets for improving the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River by utilising maatauranga Maori and latest available scientific methods.
- (d) Develop and implement a programme of action to achieve the targets for improving the health and well-being of the Waikato River.
- (e) Develop and share local, national and international expertise, including indigenous expertise, on rivers and activities within their catchments that may be applied to the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.
- (f) Recognise and protect Waahi tapu and sites of significance to Waikato-Tainui and other Waikato River iwi (where they do decide) to promote their cultural, spiritual and historic relationship with the Waikato River.
- (g) Recognise and protect appropriate sites associated with the Waikato River that are of significance to the Waikato regional community.
- (h) Actively promote and foster public knowledge and understanding of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River among all sectors of the Waikato community.
- (i) Encourage and foster a "whole of river" approach to the restoration and protection of the Waikato River, including the development, recognition and promotion of best practice methods for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.
- (j) Establish new, and enhance existing, relationships between Waikato-Tainui, other Waikato River iwi (where they so decide) and stakeholders with an interest in advancing restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.
- (k) Ensure that cumulative adverse effects on the Waikato River of activities are appropriately managed in statutory planning documents at the time of their review.
- (l) Ensure appropriate public access to the Waikato River while protecting and enhancing health and well-being of the Waikato River.

While implementation of a number of these strategies is the direct responsibility of the Waikato Regional Council whose jurisdiction falls within the Waikato River catchment, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that their District Plans give effect to Regional Policy Statements. Council discharges this statutory duty through a combination of District Plan objectives, policies and methods, its collaborative relationship with Waikato Regional Council concerning issues that affect the Waikato River, and the legally binding obligations set out in the Joint Management Agreement signed with Waikato-Tainui on 23 March 2010.

3.2 Issue - Outstanding Features and Landscapes

Outstanding natural features and landscapes can be irreversibly changed or degraded by subdivision, land use, development, roads, tracks and extractive industry.

| OBJECTIVE  | POLICIES   |
|--|--|
| <p>3.2.1<br/>Outstanding natural features and landscapes are recognised and protected.</p> | <p>3.2.2<br/>Outstanding natural features and landscapes, identified in <a href="#">Schedule 3A</a> and on the planning maps as Landscape Policy Areas, should be recognised and protected from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</p> <p>3.2.3<br/>Cultural and spiritual relationships of Maaori with outstanding natural features and landscapes should be recognised and provided for in the course of subdivision, use and development.</p> <p>3.2.4<br/>Subdivision, use, and development (including roads and tracks) should avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes (including ridgelines within those landscapes).</p> <p>3.2.5<br/>Deleted</p> <p>3.2.6<br/>Views of outstanding natural features and landscapes from public places should be protected from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</p> |

3.3 Reasons and Explanations

**3.3A Issue - Health and Wellbeing of the Waikato River**

Land use and development activities can adversely affect the ability of the Waikato River to sustainably support the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspirations of Waikato-Tainui and the community.

**3.3A.1 Objectives**

The following Objectives are informed by the Vision for the Waikato River which is contained within Schedule 2 of the Settlement Act.

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| OBJECTIVES |
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- (a) the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River;
- (b) the restoration and protection of the relationships of Waikato-Tainui with the Waikato River, including their economic, social, cultural, and spiritual relationships;
- (c) the restoration and protection of the relationships of Waikato River iwi according to their tikanga and kawa with the Waikato River, including their economic, social, cultural, and spiritual relationships;
- (d) the restoration and protection of the relationships of the Waikato Region's communities with the Waikato River, including their economic, social, cultural, and spiritual relationships;
- (e) the integrated, holistic, and co-ordinated approach to management of the natural, physical, cultural, and historic resources of the Waikato River;
- (f) the adoption of a precautionary approach towards decisions that may result in significant adverse effects on the Waikato River and, in particular, those effects that threaten serious or irreversible damage to the Waikato River;
- (g) the recognition and avoidance of adverse cumulative effects, and potential cumulative effects, of activities undertaken both on the Waikato River and within the catchment on the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River;
- (h) the recognition that the Waikato River is degraded and should not be required to absorb further degradation as a result of human activities;
- (i) the protection and enhancement of significant sites, fisheries, flora, and fauna;
- (j) the recognition that the strategic importance of the Waikato River to New Zealand's social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing requires the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River;
- (k) the restoration of water quality within the Waikato River so that it is safe for people to swim in and take food from over its entire length;
- (l) the promotion of improved access to the Waikato River to better enable sporting, recreational, and cultural opportunities;
- (m) the application to the above of both maatauranga Maori and the latest available scientific methods.

These 3.3.A.1 Objectives are supported by other District Plan Objectives and Policies.

### **3.3A.2 Health and Wellbeing of the Waikato River**

The relationship of Waikato-Tainui with the Waikato River cannot be underestimated as it lies at the heart of their identity as well being a major influence on their spiritual, cultural, historic and physical wellbeing. To Waikato-Tainui, the Waikato River is their Tuupuna Awa, an ancestor.

The Waikato River Claim was filed in the Waitangi Tribunal by Sir Robert Mahuta on 16 March 1987 on behalf of Waikato-Tainui, the Tainui Trust Board and Ngaa Marae Toopu but was excluded from the 1995 Raupatu Land Settlement for future negotiation.

The 2009 Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Waikato-Tainui acknowledges the deterioration of the health of the Waikato River while the Crown had authority over the river. The

Deed of Settlement has an overarching purpose of restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations. This District Plan aims to restore the River's health in conjunction with other agencies. The Settlement Act gave effect to the 2009 Deed of Settlement in respect of the raupatu claims of Waikato-Tainui over the Waikato River.

### **3.3A.3 Definition of Waikato River and its catchment area**

- (i) The body of water known as the Waikato River flowing continuously or intermittently from the Huka Falls to the mouth of the Waikato River shown as located within the areas marked "A" and "B" on SO plan 409144, and
- (ii) All tributaries, streams and watercourses flowing into the part of the Waikato River described in subparagraph (i), to the extent to which they are within the areas marked "A" and "B" on SO plan 409144, and
- (iii) Lakes and wetlands within the areas marked "A" and "B" on SO plan 409144, and
- (iv) The beds and banks of the water bodies described in subparagraphs (i) to (iii).

Note: For the avoidance of doubt, this definition is an excerpt from the Settlement Act and the area contained within SO plan 409144 is administered by a number of territorial authorities. Waikato District Council only administers that part of SO plan 409144 that is within Waikato District.

### **3.3.1 Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes**

Waikato District contains a number of outstanding natural features, including volcanic cones, ranges, coastal cliffs, dunes, limestone bluffs, lakes, river basins and valleys and their associated soils. These features determine the shape and form of the land, and are the natural, as opposed to human, components of the landscape character of the district. Earthworks, extractive industries, vegetation clearance, buildings, structures and infrastructure associated with subdivision, use and development can have a major impact on outstanding natural features and landscapes. These areas are identified in [Schedule 3A](#) and on the planning maps as Landscape Policy Areas. The objective seeks to recognise and protect outstanding natural features and landscapes, consistent with section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act.

### **3.3.2 Landscape Policy Areas**

Outstanding natural features and landscapes are shown on the planning maps as Landscape Policy Areas. They have been delineated based on interpretation of the Waikato Landscape Study (1992, revised 2003 and 2006) by Boffa Miskell Ltd. The study describes the visual qualities and sensitivities of 31 separate landscape units within the district. See [Schedule 3A](#). Additional landscape policy areas may be considered and added to the schedule by plan change, after consultation with key stakeholders.

### **3.3.3 Maaori Significance**

Particular landforms have cultural and traditional significance to Maaori. The policy seeks to recognise and provide for the relationship of Maaori with these features (under section 6(e) of the Resource Management Act). The main method will be to protect landforms from destruction or significant modification during subdivision and development.

### **3.3.4 Roads, Tracks and Ridgelines**

This policy addresses specific issues for landscape protection and ensures that effects on ridgelines within Landscape Policy Areas are assessed. Ridgelines can be especially sensitive to development such as roads, and tracks and building, because the effects can be highly visible.

**3.3.5 Deleted**

**3.3.6 Views**

Views of outstanding natural features and landscapes, particularly from public places, make a contribution to the overall setting and context of a place.

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### 3.4 Issue - Landscape and Visual Amenity Values

Poorly designed and located subdivision, use and development can have adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity values.

| OBJECTIVE   | POLICY  |
|---|---|
| <p>3.4.1<br/>Landscapes and visual amenity values, as viewed from public places, are retained and enhanced.</p> | <p>3.4.2<br/>Natural features and landscapes, including locally distinctive landforms and prominent ridgelines, and general visual amenity values should be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, in particular by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) avoiding or mitigating adverse effects on natural features such as indigenous vegetation, lakes, rivers and mountains</li> <li>(b) ensuring that the visual effects of buildings can be absorbed without significant adverse effects on the landscape</li> <li>(c) locating buildings and development so as to integrate them with the surrounding landscape and backdrops, to avoid dominating the landscape</li> <li>(d) designing subdivision so that potential development, including building platforms, fences and vehicle accesses, are located sympathetically in the landscape</li> <li>(e) avoiding, remedying or mitigating as soon as practicable, the adverse visual effects of earthworks and vegetation clearance, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retaining vegetation, and</li> <li>• restoring natural contours and replanting with appropriate species, and</li> <li>• limiting the area of soil exposed by earthworks and the length of time it is exposed, and</li> <li>• locating and constructing roads, tracks and vehicle accesses to minimise their visual impacts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(f) avoiding or mitigating the adverse effects on visual amenity from noxious, dangerous, offensive or objectionable materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(fa) considering the effects of activities on the relationship of Maaori with their ancestral lands and waahi tapu.</li> <li>(fb) avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects in accordance with the landscape and visual amenity values of the zone in which the activity is located.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(g) locating national grid transmission lines in ways that avoid or</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>minimise adverse effects on visual amenity.</p> <p>3.4.3<br/>Rural land uses, including productive rural activities, should predominate in the Rural and Coastal Zones.</p> <p>3.4.4<br/>Rural landscapes and amenity values should be maintained by avoiding cumulative adverse effects of subdivision use, and development.</p> |
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### 3.5 Reasons and Explanations

#### 3.5.1 Landscape and Visual Amenity

The objective seeks to retain and enhance landscape and visual amenity values viewed from public places. The policy applies to landscape and visual amenity values throughout the district, including to outstanding landscapes and features shown on the planning maps. As described in the Boffa Miskell Waikato Landscape Study (1992, revised 2003 and 2006) every part of the district has some landscape and visual amenity value, and some valued natural features. The attributes and relative importance of these vary from place to place. The design and management of subdivision, use and development needs to respond to the visual amenity requirements of the locality, consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values required under section 7(c) of the Resource Management Act. The objectives of retention and enhancement of landscape values may not necessarily both be attained by the same development or in the same place. In addition, the policy recognises that the landscape characteristics and amenity values of the zone in which any activity is located must be taken into account when seeking to avoid adverse effects. Adverse visual effects of signs and development on old pa sites are of particular concern to Tangata Whenua.

##### 3.5.1A Ridgelines

Prominent ridgelines that have been identified as having particular landscape and amenity value due to their visibility from public places have been identified as Ridgeline Policy Areas on the planning maps. This is consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values under section 7(c) of the Resource Management Act. Effects on other ridgelines should not be ignored. Ridgelines which have been identified as outstanding natural landscapes or features in terms of section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act are located within a Landscape Policy Area. Identification of a ridgeline as a Ridgeline Policy Area assists the maintenance and enhancement of landscape and amenity values of that ridgeline through additional rules relating to earthworks, formation of tracks and accesses, and height of buildings in relation to the ridgeline.

The objective and policy aim to ensure that amenity values are not compromised by inappropriate building and activities on locally distinctive landforms and ridgelines. Buildings and other developments that are silhouetted against the sky or a distant landform can detract from amenity values, both by visual discordance and through the effect of dominating the landscape. Often, these effects can be avoided by siting the building or development down the slope to ensure that the hill provides the backdrop, or mitigated by methods such as using natural screening and appropriate choice of building form and finish.

For renewable energy developments, particular regard shall be had to the benefits to be derived from the development and use of renewable energy as required by section 7(j) when considering whether the proposed development is appropriate in the context of the potential impacts on the landscape and amenity values of all ridgelines, including ridgelines within the Ridgeline Policy Area.

### **3.5.2 Buildings**

The siting, bulk and location of buildings needs to be sympathetic to the landscape to ensure that they do not have an obtrusive effect. Provision of visible open space is particularly important in rural areas, where extensive open space is a defining aspect of the landscape, while industrial zones are characterised by buildings and are working environments. Buildings and development may appear more dominating in a landscape, the closer they are together and to the viewing point. Setbacks from roads, and backdrops of land, not sky, help to merge buildings into their surroundings. Other factors that affect the obtrusiveness of a building include apparent height, size, form, colour, and materials. The Boffa Miskell study assessed the absorption capacity of landscapes in the district.

### **3.5.3 Subdivision**

Subdivision design often determines the location of eventual building platforms, driveways, roads, fence lines and earthworks. Adverse impacts on landscape values that result from subdivision design are extremely difficult to rectify later.

### **3.5.4 Earthworks and Vegetation Clearance**

Earthworks and vegetation clearance that are not promptly reinstated can impact on visual amenity values, by disrupting natural ground contours and landscape patterns and by secondary effects such as erosion and sedimentation. Where contours will not be reinstated, such as in cuttings or fill for roads, the policies call for a design that reshapes the land to resemble natural contours where possible, minimises batter faces and revegetates those that remain.

### **3.5.5 Roads, Tracks and Accesses**

Roads, tracks and driveways can be visually obtrusive. Choosing a route that avoids conspicuous hillsides and minimises cut and fill batter faces can help to conceal them. Multiple parallel driveways also have high visual impact that can be avoided by shared accesses on unobtrusive alignments.

### **3.5.6 Rehabilitation**

Roads, tracks and driveways can be visually obtrusive. Choosing a route that avoids conspicuous hillsides and minimises cut and fill batter faces can help to conceal them. Multiple parallel driveways also have high visual impact that can be avoided by shared accesses on unobtrusive alignments.

### **3.5.7 Offensive Material**

This policy deals with storage of things that detract from the visual amenity of an area. Examples include derelict cars and car parts. Screening and locating out of sight of public places can address the visual impacts of these materials. Recycling and removal are preferred options. (Compare section 17(3) of the Resource Management Act.)

### **3.5.8 Relationship of Maaori**

In accordance with section 6(e) of the Resource Management Act 1991, this policy recognises and provides for the relationship of Maaori with those natural features and landforms that are significant to them.

### **3.5.9 Rural Landscapes**

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Rural landscapes provide important amenity values to the community, not only in remote areas but also in close proximity to urban centres. Rural landscapes in many parts of the district are large and expansive. In other areas, they are small and localised. Both scales of landscape have significant values. Larger, highly visible landscape units may be vulnerable to changes that occur through subdivision, use and development where prominent land forms are affected. Smaller landscapes in valleys and coastal areas are also vulnerable to these kinds of changes.

Land fragmentation and development can have a significant impact on the rural landscape, particularly over time as the cumulative effects of more intensive non-rural development becomes evident. It is important to control the overall level of subdivision in rural areas and to regulate the size of allotments being created to protect rural landscapes. In particular, it is important to ensure that, in any given rural area, rural land uses continue to predominate because these land uses are fundamental to providing the rural landscape. Rural land uses, which may or may not be productive rural activities in economic terms, require allotments that are large enough to support them. The creation of new allotments too small to support rural land uses, such as livestock grazing and horticulture can detract from rural landscapes and visual amenity values, and need to be appropriately regulated in the Rural and Coastal zones. Development that is predominantly residential in nature and which has little or no rural land use component is provided for in the Country Living zone and to a limited degree in the Rural Zone.

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### 3.6 Issue - Natural Character

Inappropriate subdivision, use and development can adversely affect the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins.

| OBJECTIVE   | POLICY   |
|---|--|
| <p>3.6.1<br/>The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins is preserved.</p> | <p>3.6.2<br/>Subdivision, use and development should be of a density, scale, intensity and location that preserves the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins and should retain or enhance the relevant components of that character, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) geology, landform, indigenous vegetation and wildlife, and</li> <li>(b) natural processes, elements and patterns, and</li> <li>(c) intrinsic values of ecosystems, and</li> <li>(d) restoration potential, including potential vegetation cover, and</li> <li>(e) aesthetic, visual, cultural and heritage values attached to places and features including the cultural and spiritual relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands, and</li> <li>(f) unique or typical characteristics, and</li> <li>(g) the scale and context of modifications, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ratio of open space to areas covered by buildings and other development</li> <li>• land use</li> <li>• open space areas in pasture, trees, crops or indigenous vegetation</li> <li>• water quality and flows</li> <li>• views of natural features, the coast, indigenous vegetation and water bodies.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>3.6.2A<br/>Subdivision, use or development in the coastal environment should be located in areas where the natural character has already been compromised, and should not be sprawling or sporadic.</p> <p>3.6.2B<br/>The unique natural character of the Whaanga Coast should be specially recognised and protected including characteristics of special spiritual, historical or cultural significance to Maori identified in accordance with Tikanga Maori, and significant places or areas of historic or cultural significance.</p> |

### 3.7 Reasons and Explanations

#### 3.7.1 Natural Character

The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins needs has to be assessed by reference to a range of natural, social and cultural values. The objective and policy address section 6(a) of the Resource Management Act. Natural character does not exist only in unmodified or pristine environments. Arguably there are no pristine environments left in the district. Natural character is found throughout the district in environments that are highly modified or unnatural. To identify and assess these areas requires consideration of the matters stated in the policy.

Geology, landform, indigenous vegetation and wildlife: these are primary components of natural character. The extent to which these are readily identifiable at a location will provide the most immediate indication of issues in relation to natural character.

Natural processes, elements and patterns: the viable functioning of natural processes and systems is essential to the survival of many species and habitats. These processes may not be readily visible.

Intrinsic values of ecosystems: while these are expressly referred to in section 7 of the Resource Management Act, they also provide a valid indicator of the existence of natural character.

Restoration potential, including potential vegetation cover: restoration potential may be assessed by reference to natural science and ecosystems (including the potential for ecological succession), or by the potential for human intervention by way of land management, planting or pest management.

Aesthetic, visual, cultural and heritage values attached to places and features: these are all aspects of the human dimension in identifying natural character. Tangata whenua considerations and values are included. Differences of opinion about natural character often arise from differences about what is aesthetically pleasing or picturesque. In this context, "aesthetics has a tendency to highlight some aspects of nature, and to downplay and overlook others." (Swaffield, 1996) The other considerations referred to in the policy are included to balance this tendency.

Unique or typical characteristics: these considerations are not in themselves decisive of the existence or value of natural character. The fact that a place provides a typical example of an aspect of natural character may be a reason to retain it.

The scale and context of modifications: this includes consideration of the modification proposed by a development and past modifications. Where earthworks proceed, they should ensure that the land is left with a shape that appears natural in its context.

#### 3.7.1A Coastal Environment

Preference is given to subdivision, use and development in coastal areas that have already been compromised, rather than in areas with more natural character. Sprawling and sporadic development on the coast is also discouraged. This reflects the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Refer also to the Natural Character section above.

**3.7.1B Whaanga Coast**

The coast south of Raglan between Calvert Rd and Papanui Point (Whaanga Coast Policy Area) is identified and protected as a landscape with scenic, recreational and cultural significance, important to the district, as referred to in New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 3.1.2. It is under intensive development pressure because of easy accessibility.

### 3.8 Methods of Implementation

#### 3.8.1 Regulatory Methods

- (a) Identify outstanding natural features and landscapes, including representative geological examples on the planning maps as Landscape Policy Area.
- (b) Rules that control vegetation clearance, earthworks, location and visual effects of buildings and plantation forestry in outstanding natural features and landscapes, around the coast and water bodies.
- (c) Rules that control earthworks and formation of tracks on identified prominent ridgelines.
- (d) Esplanade reserves and other development setbacks created adjacent to the coast and significant water bodies.
- (e) Subdivision rules that provide incentives for protecting areas by covenant.
- (f) Rules that protect notable trees.
  - (fa) Rules that control exotic forestry, extractive industries, commercial and industrial activities, wind energy facilities and landfills in the Whaanga Coast Policy Area.
  - (fb) Rules that control development in a Coastal Zone to specifically address the effects of development in the coastal environment.
  - (g) Heritage orders as provided for in Part 8 of the Act.

#### 3.8.2 Deleted

#### 3.8.3 Council Works and Services

- (a) Minimise land disturbance associated with council activities.

#### 3.8.4 Information, Education and Advocacy

- (a) Support the promotion of voluntary protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes through protective covenants.
- (b) Support and promote appropriate voluntary codes of practice and guidelines relating to land disturbance.

### 3.9 Reasons for Methods

#### **3.9.1 Regulatory Methods**

Regulatory methods are necessary to protect natural character and the outstanding natural features and landscapes. Esplanade reserves ensure public ownership of the margins of water bodies and the coast, thus allowing the Council greater control over the activities that can occur in those areas. Subdivision incentives for protecting significant landforms and natural features encourage landowners to protect these. The Coastal Zone is a method to give effect to the requirements of section 6 of the Resource Management Act and coastal policy statements.

#### **3.9.2 Deleted**

#### **3.9.3 Council Works and Services**

It is important that the Council sets a good example by avoiding outstanding or locally distinctive landforms and natural features when undertaking land disturbance associated with activities such as roads and tracks

#### **3.9.4 Information, Education and Advocacy**

Awareness of the importance of natural features and the impact that land disturbance has on them could reduce the likelihood of important features being damaged or destroyed

3.10 Anticipated Environmental Results

| ISSUES   | ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS   |
|--|---|
| <p>3.10.1<br/>Outstanding landforms,<br/>features and landscapes<br/>Landscape and visual<br/>amenity values<br/>Natural character</p> | <p>(a) Protection and enhancement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outstanding natural features and landscapes, including ridgelines</li> <li>• cultural and traditional relationships of Maaori with particular landforms.</li> </ul> <p>(b) Avoidance or mitigation of effects of development that will result in irreversibly changing or destroying landforms and natural features especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significant ridgelines</li> <li>• the coastal environment</li> <li>• representative geological examples and</li> <li>• locally significant natural features.</li> </ul> <p>(c) Retention of notable trees.</p> <p>(ca) Maintenance of a predominance of rural land uses, including productive rural activities, in the Rural and Coastal Zones.</p> <p>(cb) Maintenance of rural landscapes and amenity values.</p> <p>(d) Preservation of natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, including distinctive aspects of localities.</p> |

Schedule 3A Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

**3A.1 Mapping**

The land comprising outstanding natural features and landscapes is shown on the planning maps as Landscape Policy Areas. Features and landscapes are subject to the same rules.

**3A.2 Outstanding Landscapes and Features**

Whangamarino Wetland, Hakarimata Range, Taupiri Range, Kokako Hills, Te Hoe, Mt Karioi, Papanui Point, Matakotako Area, Bridal Veil Falls, Mt Pirongia, Horea-Rangitoto Pt, Potaki Pt (Aotea Harbour north head), Waikato River, Lake Waikare, Lake Whangape.

**3A.3 Criteria for Outstanding Landscapes**

The Waikato Landscape Study (1992, revised 2003 and 2006) by Boffa Miskell Ltd describes the visual qualities and sensitivities of 31 separate landscape units within the district. Within each unit a ranking was ascribed for visual quality, from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Each unit was also ascribed a ranking for visual absorption capability, i.e. the ability for the landscape to absorb change or development. These were ascribed from 1 (low) to 5 (high). The landscape units that scored high for visual quality and low for visual absorption capacity were then considered for "outstanding" status against criteria developed in case law. The above landscapes met the criteria.

**3A.4 Criteria for Outstanding Natural Features**

This plan recognises outstanding natural features following wide criteria, including scientific, historic, archaeological, scenic, recreational, social and cultural factors. Documentation includes the Waikato Landscape Study and its revisions referred to above. As with the outstanding landscapes, features were considered for outstanding status against criteria developed in case law.