



SECTION 32 REPORT

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

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1 Executive Summary

Outstanding Natural Features are those natural landforms and geological features that are of international or national importance, such as Mount Taranaki. It is important to protect the values of these features and landscapes for continued enjoyment and appreciation by the community. In particular, ethical stewardship is important to ensure the cultural, spiritual and historical significance of these features and landscapes to iwi is maintained and enhanced.

The Operative District Plan schedules outstanding natural features and landscapes and into two separate categories: Outstanding Natural Features, and Outstanding Natural Landscapes. It also identifies 'regionally significant natural landscapes'. There are no rules specifically relating to outstanding natural features or landscapes or regionally significant landscapes. The key methods of protection are:

- Identifying these features and landscapes on planning maps.
- Using assessment criteria to consider the visual impact of development on the features and landscapes ("the adverse effects on outstanding or regionally significant landscapes"), when resource consent is required under other rules in the District Plan.

The Operative District Plan approach is not efficient or effective as it does not give effect to the higher order policy direction. Specifically, the lack of rules to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes (and a reliance on assessment criteria) is not best-practice and may result in adverse effects on the environment, and loss of the important values of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes. Further, an assessment/review of the natural features and landscapes identified in the Operative District Plan was required to maintain consistency with best-practice and recent landscape studies prepared for the District.

The key resource management issue for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes is that inappropriate subdivision, use and development within or in proximity to outstanding natural features and landscapes may result in the degradation of their values, and adversely impact on peoples use, enjoyment and appreciation of them.

The key changes introduced for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are:

- A standalone chapter with objectives, policies and rules for Natural Features and Landscapes.
- A revised schedule of outstanding features and landscapes using best-practice criteria for identification and protection. Removal of regionally significant landscapes that do not meet the criteria to be 'outstanding' and are protected by other means (e.g. the coastal environment).
- Policies and rules that allow certain activities as permitted where they are generally appropriate, such as for existing land uses, conservation, natural hazard mitigation or customary purposes, where activities are not expected to have adverse effects on the values of the outstanding natural features or landscapes.

The Proposed Plan will better manage activities that may be inappropriate within certain outstanding natural features and landscapes.

2 Introduction and Purpose

This report contains a summary section 32 evaluation of the objectives, policies and methods relating to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes in the Proposed New Plymouth District Plan. It is important to read this report in conjunction with the section 32 overview report which contains further information and evaluation about the overall approach and direction of the District Plan review and Proposed District Plan.

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are prominent features and landscapes which make a valuable contribution to local amenity and add a sense of character and identity to places and areas of the District. Protecting these landscapes and features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance under Section 6(b) of the RMA and will ensure continuity between generations, and is important to the legacy which is left for future generations.

This report sets out the statutory and policy context, the key resource management issues, specific consultation and approach to evaluation on this topic to decide on the proposed provisions. The report also includes a review of the existing plan provisions and an evaluation of alternative methods to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act (RMA) in relation to the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes topic.

3 Statutory and Policy Context

3.1 Resource Management Act

Section 31 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) sets out the functions of territorial authorities. The key function of a district council is the integrated management of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of the district. "*Natural and physical resources*" includes natural landforms, buildings and structures.

Section 6 of the RMA specifically requires that the Council recognise and provide for matters of national importance. The Section 6 matters of national importance relevant to the proposed provisions are:

- (b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.*
- (c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.*
- (e) The relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.*

Section 7 of the RMA requires the Council to have particular regard to the following matters:

- (a) Kaitiakitanga*
- (aa) The ethic of stewardship*
- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values*
- (d) Intrinsic values of ecosystems*
- (f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment*
- (g) Any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources*

All of the above matters are relevant for the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. In particular, Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes have cultural, spiritual and historical significance to iwi and kaitiakitanga and the ethic of stewardship is relevant to ensure that these links are maintained. The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and the quality of the environment is important to ensure that features and landscapes are maintained and enhanced.

Section 8 of the RMA requires the Council to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). Tangata whenua, through iwi authorities have been consulted as part of the review process. This feedback has informed the s32 evaluation, and the obligation to make informed decisions based on that consultation is noted. Furthermore, the identification of the outstanding natural features and landscapes has been informed through this engagement with the iwi authorities.

3.2 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Under section 75(3)(b) of the RMA, the District Plan must give effect to any New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS). The NZCPS recognises that many natural features and natural landscapes are located within the coastal environment and they are at risk from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Policy 15 (Natural features and natural landscapes) is of particular relevance:

To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- (a) Avoid adverse effects of activities on outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment; and*
- (b) Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment; including by:*
 - (i) natural science factors, including geological, topographical, ecological and dynamic components;*
 - (ii) the presence of water including in seas, lakes, rivers and streams;*
 - (iii) legibility or expressiveness – how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes;*
 - (iv) aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness;*
 - (v) vegetation (native and exotic);*
 - (vi) transient values, including presence of wildlife or other values at certain times of the day or year;*
 - (vii) whether the values are shared and recognised;*
 - (viii) cultural and spiritual values for tangata whenua, identified by working, as far as practicable, in accordance with tikanga Māori; including their expression as cultural landscapes and features;*
 - (ix) historical and heritage associations; and*
 - (x) wild or scenic values;*

- (d) Ensuring that regional policy statements, and plans, map or otherwise identify areas where the protection of natural features and natural landscapes requires objectives, policies and rules; and*
- (e) Including the objectives, policies and rules required by (d) in plans.*

3.3 National Planning Standards

Released in April 2019, the purpose of the National Planning Standards (planning standards) is to improve consistency in plan and policy statement structure, format and content.

The standards were introduced as part of the 2017 amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Their development is enabled by sections 58B–58J of the RMA. They support implementation of other national direction such as national policy statements and help people to comply with the procedural principles of the RMA.

As discussed in the Overview Report, the Proposed District Plan will give effect to the planning standards. The District Plan Structure Standard and the District Wide Matters Standard direct that the provisions for outstanding natural features and landscapes shall be contained within the 'Natural Features and Landscapes' chapter. The proposed provisions also use the standardised definitions of earthworks and subdivision.

3.4 Regional Policy Statement

Under Section 75(3)(c) of the RMA, the District Plan must give effect to the Regional Policy Statement. The Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (RPS) recognises that there are outstanding natural features and landscapes, which may be at risk from inappropriate subdivision, use and development activities. Section 10.1 of the RPS is titled "*Protecting our Outstanding and Important Natural Features and Landscapes*". The relevant Issues, Objective, Policies and Methods of Implementation are as follows:

Section 10.1 *Protecting our outstanding and important natural features and landscapes*

Issue 1: Protecting our outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

Issue 2: The appropriate management of other natural features and landscape of value to the region.

Objective 1: To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of value to the region.

Policy 1 – Nationally and regionally outstanding natural features: Outstanding natural features and landscapes are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, including protection of:

- (a) The special scenic, recreational, scientific and Māori cultural and spiritual values associated with Mount Taranaki;*
- (b) The volcanic landforms and features of regional significance on the Taranaki ring plain;*
- (c) The special scenic, recreational and scientific values associated with the coastal environment and coastal features of regional significance;*

- (d) The natural character and natural features and landscapes of regional significance associated with Taranaki's rivers and lakes and their margins;*
- (e) The rural features and landscapes of regional significance, including the scenic and landscape qualities of the raised marine terraces of South Taranaki and inland Taranaki hill country; and*
- (f) Landscape features associated with areas of indigenous vegetation that are of regional significance.*

Policy 2 – Other natural areas, features or landscapes of value: Recognition shall be given to the appropriate management of other natural areas, features or landscapes not covered by Policy 1 above, but still of value to the region for one or more of the following reasons:

- (a) The maintenance of water quality and quantity;*
- (b) Soil conservation;*
- (c) The avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards;*
- (d) Natural character amenity and heritage values and scientific and educational significance;*
- (e) Geological and geomorphological, botanical, wildlife and fishery values;*
- (f) Biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems;*
- (g) 'Sinks' or 'pools' for greenhouse gases; and*
- (h) Cultural features of significance to tangata whenua.*

Policy 3 – Appropriate subdivision, use and development: The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:

- (a) The value, importance or significance of the natural feature or landscape at the local, regional or national level;*
- (b) The degree and significance of actual or potential adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes or other important natural features and landscapes, including cumulative effects, and the efficacy of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate such effects;*
- (c) The benefits to be derived from the use and development at the local, regional and national level;*
- (d) The extent to which the subdivision, use or development recognises or provides for the relationship of tangata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga;*
- (e) The need for use or development to occur in the particular location;*
- (f) The sensitivity or vulnerability of a natural feature or landscape to change, and its capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the values of the feature or landscape;*
- (g) The degree of existing modification of the natural feature or landscape from its natural character;*
- (h) The degree to which financial contributions associated with any subdivision, use and development can be used to offset actual or potential adverse effects arising from those activities.*

Territorial authorities may wish to consider the following methods:

- *Method of Implementation 8: Include in district plans and on resource consents, provisions or conditions promoting the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes.*
- *Method of Implementation 9: Have particular regard to the values of other natural areas, features or landscapes of value but not considered to be outstanding, when managing the use, development and protection of resources.*
- *Method of Implementation 10: Identify through public consultation and other processes, the region's outstanding or important natural and cultural features and landscapes.*

3.5 Proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki

A proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki was publicly notified in March 2018 for consultation. This document seeks to promote a unified approach towards maintaining, promoting, developing and protecting the natural and physical resources of freshwater, land and coastal environments for economic, social, cultural and recreational purposes, for future generations.

This Plan has effect over the coastal marine area of the Taranaki region and the coastal environment. This includes up to mean high water springs, except in relation to river mouths, where a wider area is included. Therefore, this Plan will cover many of the proposed Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes including the coastal extent from Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point and the coastal marine area of Paritutu, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae.

There are a number of objectives and policies that are relevant to the outstanding natural features and landscapes topic in the Proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki. Of particular relevance is objective 7 which seeks to ensure that *"The natural features and landscapes of the coastal environment are protected from inappropriate use and development"*.

The relevant policies contained within the Proposed Plan¹ include the following:

Policy 1: Coastal management areas

Manage the coastal marine area in a way that recognises that some areas have values, characteristics or uses that are more vulnerable or sensitive to the effects of some activities, or that have different management needs than other areas. In managing the use, development and protection of resources under the Plan, recognition will be given to the following coastal management areas (identified in Schedule 1) and their distinguishing values, characteristics and uses:

- (a) Outstanding Value: Coastal areas of outstanding value (identified in Schedule 2) that characteristically:*
- (i) are areas of outstanding natural character and/or outstanding natural features or landscapes;*
 - (ii) contain values and attributes that are exceptional, including in relation to landforms, land cover, biodiversity, cultural and heritage associations, and visual qualities identified in Schedule 2 (refer corresponding Policy 7);*

¹ Not the track recommended track change version of the Proposed Regional Coastal Plan.

- (iii) contain marine areas with legal protection, including Parininihi Marine Reserve, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area and Tapuae Marine Reserve (identified in Schedule 1); and
- (iv) are iconic to the region's identity and sense of place.

Policy 8: Areas of outstanding value

Protect the visual quality and the physical, ecological and cultural integrity of coastal areas of outstanding value identified in Schedule 1 from inappropriate use and development by:

- (a) *Avoiding adverse effects of activities on the values and characteristics identified in Schedule 2 that contribute to areas:*
 - (xi) *having outstanding natural character; and/or*
 - (xii) *being outstanding natural features and landscape;*
- (b) *Within or adjoining coastal management area – Outstanding Value; and*
- (c) *Maintaining significant seascapes and visual corridors associated with outstanding natural features and landscapes, including views from within the landscapes or features, and views of the landscapes and features.*

Policy 9: Natural character and natural features and landscapes

Protect all other areas of the coastal environment not identified in Schedule 2 [Coastal areas of outstanding value] by:

- (d) *Avoiding significant adverse effects, and avoiding, remedying and mitigating other adverse effects on natural character and natural features and landscapes by having regard to the extent to which the activity:*
 - (i) *contributes to the enhancement or restoration of natural character;*
 - (ii) *is compatible with the existing level of modification to the environment, including by having particular regard to Policy 1;*
 - (iii) *is appropriate for the context of the area within the surrounding landscape, its representativeness and ability to accommodate change;*
 - (iv) *is of an appropriate form, scale and design to be sympathetic to the existing landforms, features and vegetation (excluding high visibility markers required for safety or conservation purposes) or is of a temporary nature and any adverse effects are of a short duration and are reversible;*
 - (v) *maintains the integrity of significant areas of indigenous vegetation;*
 - (vi) *maintains the integrity of historic heritage;*
 - (vii) *maintains physical, visual (including seascapes) and experiential attributes that significantly contribute to the scenic, wild or other aesthetic values of the area; and*
 - (viii) *alters the integrity of landforms and features, or disrupts the natural processes and ecosystems.*

The direction contained within the Proposed Regional Coastal Plan, in relation to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, has been taken into account in the evaluation below.

3.6 Iwi Environmental Management Plans

For the purposes of the District Plan Review, Iwi Environmental Management Plans must be taken into account under Section 74 (2A) of the RMA. The following Iwi Management Plans are relevant:

- 3.6.1 Taiao, Taiora: An Iwi Environmental Management Plan for the Taranaki Iwi Rohe (2018) (lodged with Council) contains a number of objectives and policies that are relevant to the outstanding natural features and landscapes topic, mostly related to Taranaki mouna (Sections 11.8.2 and 11.8.3), cover the following matters/seek the following outcomes:
- Protection, care and restoration of the mouri of Taranaki Mouna
 - Recognition of the environmental and cultural values of the Taranaki Mouna
 - Engagement with Taranaki iwi regarding the management of the Mouna and are active kaitiaki
 - Active protection and respect of the mouna with the community
- 3.6.2 Tai Whenua, Tai Tangata, Tai Ao - Te Atiawa Iwi Environmental Management Plan (2019) (in draft, not yet lodged with Council) contains a number of objectives and policies within Tai Whenua, Tai Tangata, Tai Ao that are relevant to the outstanding natural features and landscapes topic, again which are primarily related to the Taranaki maunga, are (objective 1.1, and policies 1.1-1.3, 1.5, 1.8-1.10 and 1.13), which cover the following matters:
- Work with DOC and our whanaunga iwi of Taranaki to protect the cultural and spiritual relationship between Te Atiawa and Taranaki Maunga.
 - Recognition that only mana whenua can identify the impact of activities on their relationship with Taranaki Maunga.
 - Require that central government agencies, regional council and district councils engage Te Kotahitanga and Ngā Hapū o Te Atiawa as affected parties on any applications made under the Conservation Act 1987 which affect Taranaki Maunga.
 - Support Te Atiawa in the development and use of mātauranga Māori monitoring techniques.
- 3.6.3 Maniapoto Iwi Management Plan (Ko Tā Maniapoto Mahere Taiao) (2016) (under revision, not yet lodged with Council), which includes an objective and policy to protect and enhance significant cultural, spiritual, natural and ecological landscapes, features and locations within the Maniapoto rohe (objective 19.3.2 and policy 19.3.2.1). The relevant "actions" under policy 19.3.2.1 include:
- The protection of significant landscapes from destructive activities such as vegetation clearance and earthworks, and
 - The appropriate protection of significant landscapes, features, locations and associated view shafts from development or any other adverse effects on their character or amenity values.
- 3.6.4 Ngāti Mutunga Iwi Environmental Management Plan (2014 update) (under revision, not yet lodged with Council) includes a Cultural Landscapes & Wāhi Tapu section that seeks to ensure the protection and safety of wāhi tapu within Ngāti Mutunga boundaries and to establish clear procedures with Council and other organisations to acknowledge the iwi's status and allows them to be involved in any decision-making in respect of the sites. The Plan includes provisions requiring engagement with Ngāti

Mutunga on all applications that may affect sites and collaboration of all relevant parties to protect and manage the sites and ensure that any artefacts are treated and protected in a culturally appropriate way.

The direction contained in these Iwi Environmental Management Plans, in relation to outstanding natural features and landscapes, has been taken into account in the evaluation below.

3.7 Other Legislation, Guidance and Policy Documents

3.7.1 New Plymouth District Strategic Framework:

The vision for the New Plymouth Strategic Framework is Building a Lifestyle capital (He Whakatutu Haupū Rawa Hei Ahua Noho). This will be achieved by: Putting people first (Aroha ki te Tangata), Caring for our place (Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua) and Supporting a prosperous community (Awhi mai, Wahi atu, tatou katoa).

3.7.2 The New Plymouth District Blueprint

The New Plymouth District Blueprint was first adopted in June 2015. It is a 30-year spatial plan that provides eight key directions for Council. The Industry key direction to “Strengthen and manage the rural economy, industry, the port and the airport” is particularly relevant to the Major Facility Zone.

The key direction acknowledges the nationally significant oil and gas sector and their importance for on-going economic growth. The need for a pragmatic, solutions-focused District Plan and regulatory framework is also emphasised.

3.7.3 Regional Economic Development

Tapuae Roa: Make Way for Taranaki - Taranaki Regional Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

Tapuae Roa is a culmination of work undertaken by the Taranaki district councils and regional council in partnership with Ngā Iwi o Taranaki. The strategy is designed to feed into their respective Long Term Plans, influence private sector investment decision-making and contribute to the future activities and investment decisions of Ngā Iwi o Taranaki. Specific “enablers” targeted for acceleration in the document that are relevant to the Major Facility zone topic include:

- Major hard infrastructure: infrastructure that provides access – sea port, airport, roads and broadband.
- Major sector supports: sector-related infrastructure that supports growth – science, research, and technology, plus accessibility and connectivity.
- Energy futures: including new forms of energy (clean energy) and the production of value-add energy derivatives. The industry capability to underpin these priorities already resides in the energy sector.

3.7.4 Statutory Acknowledgements

Four iwi with rohe in the New Plymouth District have settled their Treaty of Waitangi claims with deeds of settlement signed between the Iwi and the Crown (Taranaki Iwi in 2015, Ngāti Tama in 2007, Te Atiawa in 2012, Ngāti Mutunga in 2005 and

Ngāruahine in 2016). As part of the deed of settlement are statutory acknowledgements. These statutory acknowledgements are to be included as appendices in the District Plan.

The purposes of statutory acknowledgements are:

- To require consent authorities, the Environment Court, and Heritage New Zealand to have regard to the statutory acknowledgements in its decision-making;
- To require relevant consent authorities to forward summaries of resource consent applications for activities within, adjacent to, or impacting directly on relevant statutory areas to the governance entity;
- To enable the governance entity and any member of the Iwi to cite the statutory acknowledgements as evidence of the association of the Iwi with the relevant statutory area.

The statutory acknowledgements for the particular cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional association of the iwi within Taranaki include the identified outstanding natural features and landscapes. For example, Taranaki iwi statutory acknowledgment areas includes Mount Taranaki and the Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges, and Paritutu, Ngā Motu (Sugar Loaf Islands) and Tapuae. These statutory acknowledgements have been taken into account in the evaluation below, particularly in considering the extent to which the outstanding natural features and landscapes are valued by tangata whenua and/or have historical associations.

3.7.5 Other Legislation

Other legislation and regulations that are relevant to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes have been considered in preparing the Proposed Plan. These are primarily the Conservation Act 1987, the National Parks Act 1980, Marine Reserves Act 1971 and the Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area Act 1991:

- Mount Taranaki and the Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges are located within the boundaries of the Egmont National Park. It is understood that these areas are administered by DOC under the National Parks Act 1980 and the Conservation Act 1987.
- The National Parks Act 1980 aims to preserve national parks in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit use and enjoyment of the public. This Act sets out the principles for preserving the national parks and the functions and management of the parks. Each National Park has a Management Plan which sets out the issues, objectives and policies for the preservation, use and management of the park.
- Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area Act 1991 and Conservation Act 1987: Paritutu, Ngā Motu (Sugar Loaf Islands) and Tapuae are within the Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area and the Tapuae Marine Reserve. The Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area are held under the Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area Act 1991. The purpose of this Act is to ensure that the scenery, natural features, and ecosystems of the Protected Area are preserved due to their distinctive quality, beauty, typicality, or uniqueness are conserved. Section 7 of the Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area Act 1991 deems the Protected Area to be a conservation area under the Conservation Act 1987.
- Marine Reserves Act 1971: The Tapuae Marine Reserve borders the Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area. The Tapuae Marine Reserve is

held under the Marine Reserves Act 1971. Section 3(1) of the Marine Reserves Act 1971 states it “shall have effect for the purpose of preserving, as marine reserves for the scientific study of marine life, areas of New Zealand that contain underwater scenery, natural features, or marine life, of such distinctive quality, or so typical, or beautiful, or unique, that their continued preservation is in the national interest”. Each Marine Reserve has a Conservation Management Plan to establish objectives for the management of the marine reserve.

- The following documents prepared by the Department of Conservation (DOC), in accordance with the Conservation Act 1987 seek to establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources within the Taranaki region:
 - Ngā Motu/Sugarloaf Islands Conservation Management Plan
 - Egmont National Park Management Plan 2001 – 2011

3.7.6 Other Guidance Documents

- Environment Guide – Best Practice Planning guidance on ONFLs (www.environmentguide.org.nz).
- New Plymouth District Council Blueprint adopted by NPDC in 2015, which is a 30-year vision which directs New Plymouth District Council activities towards achieving the vision and outcomes developed through the ‘Shaping our Future Together’ community engagement process.

4 Context, Research and Trends

4.1 Operative District Plan Approach

4.1.1 Context

The Operative District Plan identifies outstanding natural features and landscapes and schedules them into two separate categories, Outstanding Natural Features, and Outstanding Natural Landscapes. It also identifies ‘regionally significant landscapes’ (discussed further below).

4.1.2 Plan Changes

No Plan Changes relating to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscape matters have been prepared during the life of the Operative District Plan.

4.1.3 Operative District Plan Provisions

Outstanding Natural Features

Outstanding Natural Features are defined in the Operative District Plan as those natural landforms and geological features that are of international or national importance. The Outstanding Natural Features are contained in Appendix 14 to the Operative District Plan.

Issue 17 “*Degradation of Outstanding Natural Features*” of the Operative District Plan is the key provision relating to Outstanding Natural Features. This issue is addressed by an objective and policy, methods of implementation, reasons and anticipated environmental results. The key Operative District Plan methods used to protect and enhance outstanding natural features (as per Objective 17 and Policy 17.1) are:

- Develop criteria to determine whether a natural feature is outstanding, and identify Outstanding Natural Features using this criterion.
- Policy 17.1 is considered during resource consent applications for activities in the identified ONF areas, which seeks that subdivision, use and development *"should not result in adverse effects on, and should enhance, where practicable, the geological and landform values of outstanding natural features"*.
- There are no specific rules relating to Outstanding Natural Features. If a proposed subdivision or development triggers resource consent under another rule, then the Council uses assessment criteria, the above policy and matters over which control is reserved to consider the impact of the activity on the ONF. For example, subdivision on the Katikara Formation aeolian tephra sections and, where appropriate, the Council applies conditions on resource consents.
- Use of a suitably qualified person to assess resource consent applications which may adversely affect Outstanding Natural Features.
- The Council's consideration of:
 - The use of heritage order procedures when an Outstanding Natural Feature will otherwise be lost; and
 - Acquisition of land to protect Outstanding Natural Features.

There are no rules specifically relating to Outstanding Natural Features. However, there are a number of assessment criteria in various sections of the Operative District Plan which are similar to as follows *"protection and management of natural features"* or *"the effect of the subdivision on the protection and management of natural features"*. These assessment criteria are considered where a proposed subdivision or development triggers resource consent under another rule in the Operative District Plan.

Outstanding and Regionally Significant Natural Landscapes

Identified Natural Landscapes are separated into two categories: outstanding landscapes, and regionally significant landscapes. Issue 15 states *"The potential adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development on outstanding landscapes and regionally significant landscapes"*. This issue is addressed by an objective, policy, methods for implementation, reasons, and anticipated environmental results. Within this section, the following outstanding landscapes have been identified (and are also identified on the planning maps):

- Mount Taranaki/Egmont
- The Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges

The following regionally significant landscapes have been identified (and are also identified on the planning maps) in the Operative District Plan:

- Coastal terrace between Mohakatino and White Cliffs
- White Cliffs and associated conservation forest
- Sugar Loaf Islands and Paritutu
- Eight River mouths as follows:
 - Mohakatino
 - Tongaporutu
 - Mimi
 - Urenui

- Onaero
- Waiongana
- Tapuae
- Hangatahua (Stony)

The key Operative District Plan methods used to protect and enhance outstanding landscapes (as per policy 15.1) are:

- Identify Outstanding Landscapes on the planning maps.
- Use of assessment criteria to consider visual impact of development on Outstanding Landscapes for all relevant resource consent applications, and where appropriate impose conditions on resource consents.
- Public notification of resource consents applications that may have an adverse visual impact on Outstanding Landscapes.
- Non-regulatory methods such as liaison with relevant agencies and advocacy to protect the landscape values.

The key Operative District Plan methods used to ensure that subdivision, use and development does not result in adverse visual effects on, and should enhance, where practicable, regionally significant landscapes as per policy 15.2), are:

- Identify regionally significant landscapes on the planning maps.
- Use assessment criteria to consider the visual impact of all development, located within and outside regionally significant landscapes on those landscapes and, where appropriate, impose conditions on resource consents.

There are no rules specifically relating to Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes or Regionally Significant Landscapes. However, there are a number of assessment criteria in various sections of the Operative District Plan which are similar to as follows "*the adverse effects on outstanding or regionally significant landscapes*". These assessment criteria are considered and applied where a proposed subdivision or development triggers resource consent under another rule in the Operative District Plan.

4.2 Other Methods

The other methods outside the District Plan that are used to protect Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development are:

Outstanding Natural Features:

To ensure the landform and geological values of the Outstanding Natural Features are recognised, provided for and enhanced, where possible; Information, education and consultation including:

- Promote community awareness about the values or, threats to and protection of Outstanding Natural Features.
- Consultation with the landowners about the protection of Outstanding Natural Features on their property.
- Liaise with:

- The Department of Conservation when the management plans for Egmont National Park, White Cliffs Conservation Area and the Sugar Loaf Islands (Ngā Motu) Marine Protected Area are reviewed.
- Council when the management plan for Paritutu/Centennial Park is reviewed.
- The appropriate road controlling authority.

Outstanding Landscapes and Regionally Significant Landscapes

- Liaise with Taranaki Regional Council and the Department of Conservation regarding resource consent applications that may have an adverse visual impact on Outstanding Landscapes.
- Liaise with the Department of Conservation when the management plan for Egmont National Park is reviewed, to ensure the landscape values of this area are recognised, provided for and enhanced, where practicable.
- Advocate and negotiate with network utility operators to encourage co-siting of public works and network utilities, undergrounding of electricity lines, appropriate signage of existing and proposed rest areas on state highways which have views to Outstanding Landscapes.

4.3 State of the Environment

As demonstrated above, the New Plymouth District has a number of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, which are highly valued by the community.

The current District Plan contains a schedule at Appendix 14 which outlines six Outstanding Natural Features. In addition, the current District Plan identifies two Outstanding Natural Landscapes which are listed in the Plan and identified on the planning maps. Eleven Regionally Significant Landscapes are also identified. It is noted that some of the Outstanding Natural Features are also either an Outstanding Natural Landscape or a Regionally Significant Landscape. The Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Regionally Significant Landscapes are generally located in rural areas of the District, apart from Paritutu, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae which are located adjacent to the New Plymouth City urban area (and port).

The threats to the identified outstanding natural features and landscapes vary depending on the specific values of the feature or landscape. For example, the key threat to Mt Taranaki, Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges is damage from visitors, such as excessive use of existing tracks causing erosion and visual impacts from new visitor facilities. Also, development has occurred on the lower slopes to the mountain outside the National Park boundaries (connecting to the ring plain), with an increasing number and scattered pattern of buildings at the bush line. This outcome was due to the generally permissive rural subdivision rules prior to the implementation of Plan Change 27: Changes to Subdivision and Land Use Provisions relating to maintaining Rural Character (2012) (discussed in Section 4 of the Subdivision Section 32 Report)).

The key threats to the outstanding natural features and landscapes within the Coastal Environment (including Sugar Loaf Islands and Paritutu, Tongaporutu stacks) is coastal erosion and erosion from use by visitors. For Parinihinihi the potential for modifications to intact indigenous coastal forest from visitors is also a threat.

Throughout the life of the Operative District Plan, the identified values of these identified natural features and landscapes have generally been protected and maintained, and they are largely unmodified or damaged, primarily due to limited pressures and/or protection through other legislation or mechanisms, or because human activity is minimal associated with low key recreation use.

A review of the values and attributes of these natural features and landscapes (against the criteria in NFL-P1) was undertaken as part of the District Plan Review, and is discussed further in Section 7.5.

4.3.1 Resource Consent Trends/Data

As there are no rules for Outstanding Natural Features and landscapes it is difficult to determine the extent of resource consent applications that are received in relation to them. Occasionally if a resource consent application is received in relation to another rule, the relevant assessment criteria and/or objectives and policies are considered, and associated conditions of consent applied to manage potential effects on the values of those natural features and landscapes as well as amenity and rural character (where relevant).

One example where Outstanding Natural Landscape objectives and policies were considered (from 2012) was a subdivision (colloquially known as the McKie Paddocks subdivision), which was a large non-complying rural subdivision in Oakura. The reporting officer recommended the application be declined due to a number of rural character matters, and also the effect the subdivision would have on the Kaitake Ranges Outstanding Natural Landscape. Evidence was provided by the applicant and NPDC in relation to the effect the subdivision would have on the Outstanding Natural Landscape. The subdivision application was approved by Independent Commissioner and no specific conditions of consent were imposed to protect the ONL. However, conditions on managing rural character did ensure the ONL was protected to a degree via conditions around the height of dwellings, number of dwellings, required landscaping and the extent and scale of retaining structures.

4.4 Effectiveness of the Operative District Plan Approach

Whilst the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes mentioned above have maintained their natural science factors, aesthetic values, transient and other values that make them 'outstanding natural features and landscapes', the primary reason for this outcome is due to the limited development pressure in/surrounding them, and their protection through other mechanisms such as the Conservation Act 1987 or the National Parks Act 1980.

Any works within Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes could be inappropriate and/or result in adverse effects on the environment, and loss of their important values. In evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the Operative District Plan approach, the following issues have been identified:

Issue	Comment	Response
Issue 1: No specific rules to protect outstanding natural landscapes.	There are no rules to manage activities in Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, and a reliance on assessment criteria and objectives and policies. This is a	Introduction of rules to manage activities within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (where the feature or

Issue	Comment	Response
	very permissive approach which does not give effect to the NZCPS and other higher order documents, or provide certainty of achieving the purpose of the RMA (Section 6(b)). It is not best-practice considering the approach taken in other second-generation District Plans.	landscape is not already protected by other mechanisms).
Issue 2: The Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes Schedules in the Operative District Plan may be out of date and need to be reviewed in accordance with recent, best-practice criteria	<p>The Features and Landscapes Schedules do not reflect best practice, recent research and assessments and give effect to higher order documents. This includes the latest Landscape Studies prepared for New Plymouth district.</p> <p>The schedule also includes Regionally Significant Landscapes, which are not considered to be "Outstanding".</p> <p>The extent of some of the features and landscapes is not indicated on planning maps, thus it is difficult for plan users to understand their extent.</p>	<p>Review of the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes Schedule.</p> <p>Accurate mapping of all Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.</p>

4.5 Effectiveness of Other Methods

The methods described in Section 4.2 are primarily non-regulatory methods such as liaison with other government agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Taranaki Regional Council, raising community awareness of the values of natural features and landscapes, and advocacy and negotiation with applicants (network utility operators) regarding to protect the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes. To some extent, these methods are effective, but they are reliant on available resources and the willingness of applicants to engage and appreciate the values of natural features and landscapes. On their own (without regulatory support) these approaches do not have certainty and there are risks that the values of natural features and landscapes can be adversely affected.

5 Consultation

5.1 General Consultation

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of this District Plan Review process with key stakeholders and the local community. Refer to the General Overview Section 32 Report for details on the methods that were used to carry out that consultation. Feedback from consultation relevant to the natural features and landscapes topic is summarised below.

Individual community members and stakeholders provided feedback on the natural features and landscapes section of the Draft District Plan (2016) as well as the Draft

Digital District Plan (2018). These comments were considered in the evaluation of Draft Plan provisions and changes made to the provisions in response:

Draft District Plan (2016) feedback

- Request from a community member for protection of the Waiwhakaiho River, particularly its mouth and the foreshore reserve nearby. In response, the river was not identified as 'outstanding' and will be protected as a significant waterbody and through the coastal environment provisions.
- Federated Farmers:
 - Sought clarification on whether farmland is captured within ONFLs, and if included would seek a permitted activity provision rather than reliance on existing use rights to protect productive land within these areas.
 - Supported the rules summary which makes it clear that only removal of indigenous (rather than all) vegetation will be non-complying in ONFLs.
- Heritage NZ sought amendments to ONL-O1 to identify the values that make the identified natural features and landscapes outstanding, which were incorporated into the amended policy framework.
- Powerco requested an amendment to include a definition for 'functional need' in the policy framework or separate provision for infrastructure, and sought the phrase 'in close proximity to' be deleted from the policies or else the areas should be clearly defined. Some of these changes were incorporated into the provisions to provide greater certainty and clarity.
- The North Taranaki Branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society considered the section to be appropriate and suggested inclusion of particular activities in Outstanding Natural Landscapes as prohibited in the rules such as land farming and petroleum exploration. Rules for land farming and petroleum exploration were not incorporated into the rules, and would likely be captured as discretionary activities under the rules for earthworks and/or structures.

Draft Digital District Plan (2018) Feedback

- Federated Farmers supported the wording of the objective, particularly the word "inappropriate". They also sought explicit rules which ensures that the maintenance of farm tracks and farming activities are a permitted activity. The rules were amended to provide for these types of activities as permitted activities.
- Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) commented that the policies and rules do not protect the values associated with ONFLs within the coastal environment from all adverse effects regardless of the purpose of the activity. As such the policies were amended to better reflect the intent of the NZCPS.
- TRC also commented that there is a lack of information available on the values associated with each ONFL. In response a schedule was added to the plan which provides a description and summary of the values for each ONFL.
- Petroleum Exploration and Production Association of New Zealand (PEPANZ) commented that the use of the terms 'avoid' in the plan should be considered in relation to King Salmon case law which gave the term "avoid" a strict meaning, akin to a prohibition. As such the revised policy framework has been carefully considered in this context and aligned with the direction of the NZCPS.
- Powerco requested more recognition of existing network utilities within outstanding natural features and landscapes to provide for their ongoing operation, maintenance and upgrading requirements. In particular, the addition

of “operational, technical and locational need” to ONL-P5. Incorporating these terms into the Natural Features and Landscapes framework is not considered appropriate as the objectives and policies in the Network Utilities chapter recognise the functional and operational needs of network utilities.

- Comments from a local consultant planner emphasised the rural nature of the ONFLs, particularly Hangatahua (Stony) River, and noted that some activities associated with rural activities (such as digging pits, storage areas or ponds), or erection of farm buildings should be provided for as a permitted activity. The rules have been amended to provide greater flexibility for rural activities.
- The local consultant planner also provided feedback on the subdivision provisions noting that the intent was unclear, and the discretionary status was overly restrictive. The rule was amended to remove the 20 ha balance area requirement but discretionary activity status was retained, to enable a case-by-case assessment of the size and scale of allotments to manage potential for further fragmentation of the landscapes.

5.2 Consultation with Iwi Authorities

Ngā Kaitiaki provided feedback on the Draft District Plan (2016) Outstanding Natural features and Landscapes section. The comments from Ngā Kaitiaki on the Draft Plan are summarised below:

- Clarification and understanding of the criteria used to identify the Outstanding Natural Landscapes in policy ONL-P1.
- Policy sought to recognise tangata whenua have relationships with some landscapes, features and areas. An additional landscape that is of cultural significance to tangata whenua was identified - Ratapihipihi/Barrett’s Lagoon area.
- One objective is proposed and given the range of different reasons these landscapes are considered to be outstanding, it is suggested that more specific and directive objectives in relation to these landscapes is required.
- Specific provisions regarding the impact of subdivision, use and development in proximity to ONL is considered necessary.
- Further information around the values of each outstanding natural landscape identified.
- Seek a policy regarding specific activities not appropriate adjoining an Outstanding Natural Landscape i.e. oil and gas exploration.
- Seek additional wording in policy ONL-P2 to provide specific tools to acknowledge, protect and maintain cultural values within Outstanding Natural Landscapes.
- Policy ONL-P3 suggests that public access is appropriate, and this is not always the case. A more targeted policy direction is suggested.
- Policy ONL-P4(d) is a broad statement which is not considered to meet the Part 2 RMA requirements. The policy as drafted requires an application to have regard to items (a) – (d). The Plan must recognise and provide for matters of national importance.

The feedback from Ngā Kaitiaki was considered during re-drafting of the objectives and policies, and consequential amendments to the provisions were made where necessary. The response is summarised as follows:

- Policy 1 was updated to use the criteria in line with Taranaki RPS criteria and recent case law, including criteria determined in the Wakatipu series of environment court decisions, which includes 'value to tangata whenua'.
- *Customary activities (as per abovementioned definition) is a specifically listed permitted activity with an associated definition.*
- *Clearance of vegetation for the gathering of plants in accordance with Māori customs and values is a permitted activity, provided it is the minimum clearance necessary to provide for the associated activity (NFL-R12).*
- *Customary activities (as per abovementioned definition) is a specifically listed permitted activity (NFL-R1).*
- *Clearance of vegetation for the gathering of plants in accordance with Māori customs and values is a permitted activity, provided it is the minimum clearance necessary to provide for the associated activity (NFL-R12).*
- *Further information around the values of each outstanding natural landscape identified in a schedule appended to the plan.*
- *No change to the policies relating to petroleum exploration and production were made as these activities would be a Discretionary activity under the Energy provisions (it is only permitted in the Major Facility Zone), and the general objectives and policies for the outstanding natural features and landscapes would be considered.*
- *Public access has been removed from the ONFL policy framework, to recognise that it may not be appropriate in all circumstances to allow public access within an ONFL (for example if there are sites of significance to tangata whenua that should be protected from people walking in close proximity).*
- *Cumulative effects are part of the 'meaning of effect' in s3 RMA so will be considered in any resource consent application where it is necessary to consider cumulative effects (including under NFL-P2).*
- *NFL-P7 promotes the use of Mātauranga Māori (knowledge) and provides practical opportunities for tangata whenua to exercise their role as kaitiaki in the management and protection of natural features and landscapes.*

6 Key Resource Management Issues

The key resource management issue for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes is that:

- Inappropriate subdivision, use and development within or in proximity to outstanding natural features and landscapes may result in the degradation of their values, and adversely impact on peoples use, enjoyment and appreciation of them.

7 Proposed District Plan Provisions (Objectives, Policies and Methods/Rules)

The proposed provisions are set out in the 'Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes' Section of the Proposed New Plymouth District Plan. These provisions should be referred to in conjunction with this evaluation report.

7.1 Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives 1-3 in relation to historic and cultural matters, strategic objectives 4 – 7 in relation to natural environment matters, and strategic objectives 8 - 12 in relation to tangata whenua matters are also relevant to the outstanding natural features and landscapes provisions.

In summary, the proposed provisions comprise:

- The identification, recognition and scheduling of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.
- The introduction of a 'Natural Features and Landscapes' Section to the District Plan.

7.2 Objective and policies

- Identify and scheduling 'Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes' in accordance with criteria set out in NFL-P1.
- Protect natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment from inappropriate activities by:
 - In relation to outstanding natural features or landscapes:
 - : Avoiding adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics.
 - In relation to other natural features or landscapes:
 - : Avoiding significant adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics; and
 - : Avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics.
- Allow certain activities or existing land uses within ONFLs, where the special values and characteristics of the ONFLs are not adversely affected.
- Manage building activities, earthworks, indigenous vegetation clearance and subdivision as these activities have the potential to adversely affect the characteristics, qualities and/or values of ONFLs.
- Ensure that activities maintain the values or characteristics of ONFLs, considering:
 - Landscape values;
 - Degree of effects;
 - Potential effects on cultural and historic elements, geological features and matters of cultural and spiritual value to tangata whenua;
 - The purpose of the activity;
 - Benefits at the local, regional or national level;
 - Degree of modification; and
 - The extent the activity recognises and provides for the relationship of tangata whenua with their ancestral lands, water, site, waahi tapu and other taonga.
- Require that activities minimise any adverse visual effects on ONFLs by:
 - Ensuring scale, design and materials are appropriate;
 - Landform integration;
 - Limiting prominence; and
 - Restoring/reinstating earthworks.
- Promote the use of mātauranga Māori (knowledge) and practical opportunities for tangata whenua to exercise their role as kaitiaki of ONFLs.

- Promote the use, restoration and enhancement of ONFLs.

The following outstanding natural landscapes are protected by other legislation including the Conservation Act 1987, the National Parks Act 1980, the Marine Reserves Act 1971 and Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area Act 1991, and as such there are no District Plan rules that apply to them:

- Mount Taranaki and the Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges, which are located within the Egmont National Park boundaries.
- Paritutu, Ngā Motu (Sugar Loaf Islands) and Tapuae are located within the Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area and the Tapuae Marine Reserve.

7.3 Rules

The following rules apply within the outstanding natural features and landscapes: Hangatahua (Stony) River or Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, which allow, as a permitted activity:

- Customary activities
- Conservation activities
- Natural hazard mitigation activities
- Maintenance and repair of structures, network utilities, fence lines and tracks.
- Earthworks for natural hazard mitigation activities or maintenance of fence lines or tracks.
- Demolition or removal of a structure.
- Relocation of a structure (if it is removed or relocated to an area outside the outstanding natural feature or landscape).
- Erection of a structure associated with certain activities (e.g. fence, stock water reticulation, natural hazard mitigation, conservation, network utility, farming activities or accessory buildings, subject to standards).
- Earthworks subject to standards for maximum cut height or fill depth and volume.
- Clearance of exotic vegetation
- Clearance of indigenous vegetation, where it is necessary for certain activities and it is the minimum necessary to provide for the associated activity.

The following activities are managed as a Discretionary activity within Hangatahua (Stony) River or Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point:

- Erection of a building or structure not otherwise provided for, subject to standards for maximum height and gross floor area
- Additions to buildings
- Subdivision of land

7.4 Other methods

Methods outside the plan will continue to be used to achieve the objectives are:

- Reliance on protection and management mechanisms under other legislation (such as management plans under the National Parks Act and Conservation Act) particularly for Mount Taranaki/Kaitake/Pouakai Mountain Ranges/Egmont National Park and Paritutu, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae.
- Information, education and consultation including:

- Promote community awareness about the values or, threats to and protection of Natural Features and Landscapes;
- Consultation with the landowners about the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes on their property;
- Liaison with:
 - : The Department of Conservation when the management plans for Egmont National Park, White Cliffs Conservation Area and the Sugar Loaf Islands (Ngā Motu) Marine Protected Area are reviewed;
 - : Council when the management plan for Paritutu/Centennial Park is reviewed; and
 - : The appropriate road controlling authority.

7.5 Proposed Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes Schedule

The efficient and effective implementation of the proposed provisions relies on natural features and landscapes being identified in the Proposed Plan. This identification requires a robust process so that the schedule adequately reflects the significance of the district's natural features and landscapes and covers the wide range of values associated with them. The criteria used to identify outstanding natural features and landscapes, in accordance with best-practice and recent case law, is as set out in Policy NFL-P1:

- Natural science factors such as rarity, geology and topographic variability;
- Aesthetic values, including memorability and naturalness;
- Expressiveness or legibility, such as how obviously the landscape demonstrates the formative processes leading to it;
- Transient values, including the occasional presence of wildlife or other values at certain times of the day or year;
- Whether the values are shared and recognised;
- Value to tangata whenua; and
- Historical associations.

A review of the Natural Features and Landscapes in the Operative Plan was undertaken to determine whether those identified in the Operative Plan are worthy of protection in the Proposed District Plan, given the statutory and policy context and above criteria.

A number of landscape reviews were relied on, primarily the Regional Landscape Study of the Taranaki Coastal Environment: Review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, prepared by Taranaki Regional Council dated November 2015. This Regional Landscape Study is primarily focussed on the coastal environment therefore other related assessments that were also reviewed included:

- New Plymouth District Plan Review – Coastal Policy Area prepared by Richard Bain, dated February 2016.
- New Plymouth District Council Rural Review prepared by Mary Buckland, dated June 2010.
- Review of the New Plymouth District Landscape Assessment prepared by LA4 Landscape Architects Ltd, dated September 2006.
- New Plymouth District Landscape Assessment prepared by LA4 Landscape Architects, dated June 1995.

This review concluded that the majority of the existing Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes in the Operative District Plan should be retained in the Proposed District Plan. These features and/or landscapes continue to exhibit the values which make them 'outstanding' as per the criteria identified in NFL-P1, and in accordance with the statutory and policy context identified above.

For the purposes of identifying the areas, each area is not identified as being either a landscape or a feature given that they are afforded the same significance and level of protection, and the difference being only a matter of scale, which is consistent with the approach taken in the Regional Landscape Study of the Taranaki Coastal Environment: Review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, prepared by Taranaki Regional Council dated November 2015.

The following table outlines the proposed Outstanding Natural Features and/or Landscapes, and the reasons for their inclusion:

Name	Description/Reasons	Comments extracted from:
Mount Taranaki and Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount Taranaki is unique distinctive landform which dominates the region through the height and slope of its volcanic cone, and the extent of its indigenous vegetation. • The Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges are characterised by the dramatic volcanic peaks, almost solid indigenous forest cover and lack of development. • Special scenic, recreational, scientific and Māori cultural and spiritual values associated with Mount Taranaki. 	Operative New Plymouth District Plan
Hangatahua (Stony) River;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geological and landform values including boulder lined, braided river form; largest and most prominent river carrying water from Mount Taranaki to the sea. • Ecological and scientific significance including high native fish diversity; threatened and regionally distinctive native species; clear, clean waters with strong biotic associations. • Aesthetic and scenic values including the configuration of a large boulder lined braided river and crystal clear water; and the high natural form of the river with limited modification. • Recreational values particularly for angling and swimming, and tramping and walking along margins. • Significant to tangata whenua. The river and surrounding area contained a number of pā and kāinga, including tauranga waka and pūkāwa (reefs). 	Regional Landscape Study of the Taranaki Coastal Environment: Review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, prepared by Taranaki Regional Council dated November 2015.
Coastal extent from Waihi Stream to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geological and landform values including uplifted marine terraces; Mohakatino Estuary sandspit and swamp; Mohakatino sea stacks, arches and caves; Tongaporutu stacks and cliffs, and 	Regional Landscape Study of the Taranaki Coastal Environment: Review of the Regional

<p>Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi.</p>	<p>Miocene sedimentary structures; White Cliffs coastal cliffs; Pariokariwa Point shore platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological and scientific significance including indigenous coastal forest; threatened, at risk and regionally distinctive native plant and animal species; Parininihi Marine Reserve; various fish, mammal and seabird feeding, breeding and resting areas; diverse range of marine species. • Part of a larger indigenous forest feature, the coastal margins contain one of the best remaining examples of primary coastal hardwood and podocarp-hardwood forests on the west coast of the North Island. The forest provides core habitat for many threatened species and contains a large number of regionally significant species. • Visual and scenic characteristics, particularly the visual prominence of the marine terrace and associated coastal stacks, arches and caves; the visually striking and iconic coastal White Cliffs; high level of naturalness within areas of the Mohakatino and Tongaporutu estuaries. • Recreational values, particularly for swimming, diving, fishing and walking. • Significant to tangata whenua. The area contains a number of pā and kāinga, including a rich fishing ground which is now mostly contained inside the Parininihi Marine Reserve. • Historical values associated with the Tongaporutu River baches, SS Alexandra shipwreck, various recognised former pā sites and a redoubt. 	<p>Coastal Plan for Taranaki, prepared by Taranaki Regional Council dated November 2015.</p>
<p>Paritutu, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geological and landform values including Sugar Loaf Islands, Paritutu and taranakite type locality; and diverse subtidal features. • Ecological and scientific significance including threatened, at risk and regionally distinctive native plant and animal species; Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area and Tapuae Marine Reserve; marine mammal and seabird feeding, breeding and resting areas; diverse range of marine species. • Aesthetic and scenic values including visually striking Paritutu and Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands. • Recreational values particularly for walking, swimming, diving, fishing and kayaking. • Significant to tangata whenua. The area is of huge cultural, spiritual and historical significance to Te Atiawa and Taranaki Iwi with the islands now considered wāhi tapu or places of reverence. The area was also recently returned to both iwi as part of the Treaty settlement agreements. • Historical importance including refuge and pā sites, and petroglyphs. 	<p>Regional Landscape Study of the Taranaki Coastal Environment: Review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, prepared by Taranaki Regional Council dated November 2015</p>

No new Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes were identified for inclusion in the Proposed District Plan (which were not already identified in the Operative District Plan). In feedback from Ngā Kaitiaki they sought the addition of Ratapihipihi/Barrett's Lagoon as an Outstanding Natural Landscape due to the cultural values of this area. Further discussions were held with Ngā Kaitiaki on this matter. Ratapihipihi/Barrett's Lagoon is part of Barrett Domain which is managed by a Management Plan and zoned open space in the Proposed District Plan.

Changes from the Operative District Plan schedule are summarised as follows:

- The removal of Katikara Formation Aeolian tephra sections from the schedule. Limited information is available to determine the location and/or extent of these sections. Further, they have not been identified as "outstanding", 'natural' or located in any of the landscape assessments or the Regional Policy Statement identified above.
- The "Tongaporutu Coast Miocene fossil sequence" and the "White cliffs coastal cliffs" have now been combined and are both part of the proposed outstanding natural feature and landscape "Coastal extent from Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parinihinihi".
- 'Regionally significant' landscapes and features identified in the Operative District Plan are not considered an 'outstanding natural feature or landscape' for the following reasons:
 - Section 6(b) of the RMA only directs the protection on 'outstanding' natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (rather than regionally significant landscapes).
 - The RPS (policy 2) directs that 'recognition shall be given to appropriate management of other natural areas, features or landscapes' rather than providing direction on their specific identification and/or protection from activities.
 - All of the regionally significant landscapes that were identified in the Operative Plan are now within the Coastal Environment and their values will be protected or preserved through those provisions.
 - Other proposed changes to the District Plan through the review, including strengthening the policy direction and rules for rural subdivision will also go some way to appropriately manage these 'other natural areas, features or landscapes' without a need for them to be specifically identified on the planning maps.

8 Approach to Evaluation

Section 32(1)(a) of the RMA requires that this report contain a level of detail that corresponds with the scale and significance of the environmental, economic, social and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

This section of the RMA requires that:

- New proposals must be examined for their appropriateness in achieving the purpose of the RMA.
- The benefits and costs, and risks of new policies and rules on the community, the economy and the environment need to be clearly identified and assessed;

- All advice received from iwi authorities and the response to the advice needs to be summarised; and
- The analysis must be documented, so stakeholders and decision makers can understand the rationale for policy choices.

8.1 Evaluation of Scale and Significance

	Minor	Low	Medium	High
Degree of change from the Operative Plan		✓		
Effects on matters of national importance			✓	
Scale of effects – geographically (local, district wide, regional, national).		✓		
Scale of effects on people (how many will be affected – single landowners, multiple landowners, neighbourhoods, the public generally, future generations?).		✓		
Scale of effects on those with specific interests, e.g., Tangata Whenua		✓		
Degree of policy risk – does it involve effects that have been considered implicitly or explicitly by higher order documents? Does it involve effects addressed by other standards/commonly accepted best practice?		✓		
Likelihood of increased costs or restrictions on individuals, communities or businesses.		✓		

8.2 Explanation Summary

In summary:

- The degree of change from the Operative District Plan is not significant, considering:
 - Rules relating to the outstanding natural features and landscapes (specifically Hangatahua (Stony) River and Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi) have been introduced. The Reserves Act 1977, Conservation Act 1987 and the National Parks Act 1980 will continue to be relied on for the protection of Mount Taranaki and the Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges, as well as the Paritutu and Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae.
 - The new rules that have been introduced which require resource consent target specific activities which are either considered to be potentially inappropriate or pose a threat to the values of the natural features and landscapes, and other activities that are generally appropriate are provided for as permitted activities.
- The outstanding natural features and landscapes in the New Plymouth district have been reviewed. Some have been removed from the schedule, and “regionally significant landscapes” are no longer featured for the reasons discussed in Section 7.5. The following are retained for protection as outstanding natural features and landscapes:

- Mount Taranaki and Kaitake and Pouakai mountain ranges;
 - Hangatahua (Stony) River;
 - Coastal extent from Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi; and
 - Paritutu, Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands and Tapuae.
- The higher order documents given effect to include the RMA, the NZCPS and the Taranaki Regional Policy Statement. In particular, s6 of the RMA and policy 15 of the NZCPS seek to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development. The proposed outstanding natural features and landscapes provisions give effect to these higher order documents and therefore the degree of policy risk is low.
 - The geographical scale of effects is limited to areas that are identified as outstanding natural features and landscapes, which are generally scattered across the district in rural locations, or areas that are in close proximity to these areas.
 - The identification procedures and proposed provisions (which are discussed in detail above) are aligned with commonly accepted best practice, and consistent with approaches in other second-generation District Plans that have been produced around New Zealand.
 - The scale of effects on people and special interest groups are low. Tangata Whenua have been involved with the plan review and are likely to be further involved in resource consent applications affecting outstanding natural features and landscapes that are valued by tangata whenua and historical associations.
 - Approximately 21 private properties contain land within the Hangatahua (Stony) River outstanding natural feature or landscape, and very six private properties within the Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi outstanding natural feature or landscape. Activities on this land will be subject to the proposed rules for buildings, structures, earthworks, vegetation clearance and subdivision.

Overall, it is considered that the scale and significance of the proposal is low. The level of detail in this report corresponds with the scale and significance of the environmental, economic and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the outstanding natural features and landscapes provisions.

9 Evaluation of Objectives

Existing Objective(s)	Appropriateness to achieve the purpose of the Act
<p><i>Objective 15</i> <i>To protect and enhance outstanding landscapes and regionally significant landscapes within the district.</i></p> <p><i>Objective 17</i> <i>To protect and enhance outstanding natural features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</i></p>	<p>The current objectives are generally considered appropriate in terms of consistency with the Council’s position and the statutory and policy context.</p> <p>However, the separation of the Outstanding Natural Features objective and the Outstanding Natural Landscapes objective does not reflect a consistent approach to the protection of both Features and Landscapes as a matter of national importance under s6(b) of the RMA. Further, Regionally Significant Landscapes is not a term used in the RMA or NZCPS. Further, Objective 15 does not state what outstanding landscapes should be protected from (i.e. inappropriate subdivision, use and development).</p> <p>There is also an issue or inconsistency with higher order documents because the existing Objective 15 refers to “outstanding landscapes” and not “Outstanding <u>Natural</u> Landscapes” as they are now referred to.</p>

Proposed Objective(s)	Appropriateness to achieve the purpose of the Act
<p><i>Objective NFL-01</i></p> <p><i>Outstanding natural features and landscapes are retained, and protected from inappropriate activities.</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources by managing the use, development and protection of physical resources in a way which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being. Under Section 6(b) of the RMA, the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance that Council must recognise and provide for.</p> <p>The proposed objective gives specific recognition to the principles/overarching goal of recognising the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes and protecting them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The objective directly responds to the identified resource management issue and provides plan users and decision makers with certainty as to the expected outcomes. The proposed objective is aligned and consistent with higher order direction, and is considered reasonable and achievable as it is consistent with best-practice and with districts similar to New Plymouth.</p>
Evaluation of Alternative Options	Appropriateness to achieve the purpose of the Act
<p>Do not define expectations for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes</p>	<p>This option would hinder decision makers when assessing resource consent applications, as they would have little guidance on what outcomes are expected. It would also fail to properly recognise the landscape, amenity, historical or cultural (including tangata whenua, and regional identity) values that outstanding natural features and landscapes can contribute to an area, including sense of place and community identity.</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>The proposed objective will achieve the purpose of the RMA as it is a clear statement of intent that recognises the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes and protecting them from inappropriate activities. It provides certainty as to the outcomes that are appropriate under the District Plan provisions and is aligned with best-practice throughout New Zealand.</p>	

10 Evaluation of Options to Achieve the Objectives

Options to achieve the District Plan objectives relating to contaminated land	Benefits	Costs	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Risks of acting/not acting
<p>Option A: Proposed approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective and policies for the identification, retention and protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Identify and schedule outstanding natural features and landscapes within the District Plan. Allowing certain activities as permitted where they are generally appropriate, such as for existing land uses, conservation, natural hazard mitigation or customary purposes, where activities are not expected to have adverse effects on the values of the ONFLs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified, protected and maintained for present and future generations, adding to community identity, sense of place and enhancing the amenity of the district for residents and visitors. Activities that contribute to the values and attributes of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are provided for. Customary activities support cultural and social wellbeing and maintenance of the relationship of Māori with these resources. They also provide practical opportunities for tangata whenua to exercise their role as kaitiaki in Outstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring Discretionary activity consent for buildings, structures, and subdivision of land, vegetation clearance or earthworks may result in higher costs (including time and uncertainty) for landowners and ratepayers involved in obtaining resource consents. Restrictions on outstanding natural features and landscapes may impact on property values or development potential of sites and associated efficient use of land which could affect the future re-sale of these sites. When resource consents are applied for under the provisions there is an expectation that tangata whenua should be involved and this may result in resourcing pressures on tangata whenua and/or increase costs and/or time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is effective and efficient as it protects outstanding natural features and landscapes (which are not already protected through other legislation) from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The approach is practical and pragmatic (“fit for purpose”) as it applies measurable and enforceable standards relating to activities which pose a threat to the values of ONFLs. The activities requiring resource consent would be limited to those that are considered potentially “inappropriate” and decision-makers could make an informed decision based on detailed policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of acting on these provisions is low because the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes identified in the Proposed Plan have been carried over from the Operative District Plan and are supported by various landscape assessments. The proposal is giving effect to higher order documents and the Council also considers the protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are important to the community. Not acting may mean that the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes are degraded. Overall, it is considered that there is sufficient

Options to achieve the District Plan objectives relating to contaminated land	Benefits	Costs	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Risks of acting/not acting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing activities that may be inappropriate within certain outstanding natural features and landscapes. <p>Managing certain activities within Hangatahua (Stony) River or Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erection of a building or structure not otherwise provided for, subject to standards for maximum height and gross floor area; Additions to buildings; Subdivision of land; and Clearance of vegetation. 	<p>Natural Features and Landscapes and utilise Mātauranga Māori (knowledge) to inform their management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation activities can maintain and enhance the values of these areas, such as for pest and weed control. The size and scale of activities is managed to manage potential adverse effects on or degradation of the values of ONFLs. Reduced duplication with other statutory protection mechanisms (e.g. National Parks Act 1980, Conservation Act 1987) resulting in lower costs and less administrative processes. 	<p>and uncertainty to applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short-term there may be increased costs for plan users and landowners to understand and comply with the proposed plan. 	<p>guidance, and on the effects on the values of the particular feature or landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rules reflect best practice and provide clarity to plan users about when resource consent would be required. This approach is not considered to be overly restrictive or onerous for landowners. This approach addresses current issues, by providing a balance between protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes and provision for appropriate activities. 	<p>information to act, and that risks of acting outweigh those of not acting.</p>
<p>Option B: Status Quo Regulatory Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective and policies for the protection and enhancement of outstanding landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features are identified, adding to community identity and sense of place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes may be compromised or degraded due to an absence of rules to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is permissive, which has potential to result in incremental damage or modification to Outstanding Natural 	<p>The risk of acting on these status quo provisions is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding Landscapes and Outstanding

Options to achieve the District Plan objectives relating to contaminated land	Benefits	Costs	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Risks of acting/not acting
<p>(Objective 15) and outstanding natural features (Objective 17).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of Outstanding Natural Features on District Plan Schedule (Appendix 14); Outstanding Natural Landscapes (and Regionally Significant Landscapes) identified on the planning maps. No specific rules relating to Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features. Various assessment criteria throughout the plan to consider the adverse effects on outstanding or regionally significant landscapes when resource consent is required for other reasons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan users and landowners are familiar with current provisions, resulting in reduced costs in understanding and complying with the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes sections of the plan. No rules relating specifically to Outstanding Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features which gives some flexibility for the subdivision, use and development in these areas. In addition, has lower compliance costs for landowners. Enables efficient use of land and increased development potential. Reduced duplication with other statutory protection mechanisms (e.g. Reserves Act 1977, National Parks Act 1980) resulting in lower costs and less 	<p>manage inappropriate activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approach is inconsistent with best-practice and the higher-order statutory context and policy direction. 	<p>Features and Landscapes, particularly if the pressures and threats increase over the life of the plan. This may not achieve the proposed objective of protecting Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therefore, this option is not considered to be the most efficient, effective or appropriate option to achieve the objective. 	<p>Natural Features will not be adequately protected as rules are not currently in place to protect them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current policy framework lacks detail and specific direction on appropriate or inappropriate activities and the accompanying schedules are outdated. It is considered that the risk of acting on these provisions outweighs the risk of not acting. There is sufficient information to act.

Options to achieve the District Plan objectives relating to contaminated land	Benefits	Costs	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Risks of acting/not acting
	administrative processes.			
<p>Option C: Rely on methods Outside the District Plan</p> <p>Rely on other statutory protection mechanisms and non-regulatory methods such as education, information, advice and financial assistance (e.g. grants) to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public awareness of the importance of protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes is increased through education programmes. Increased economic and development opportunities and flexibility for landowners as they are not subject to restrictions to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes from subdivision, use and development. No duplication with other statutory protection mechanisms (e.g. Reserves Act 1977, National Parks Act 1980). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No regulatory controls place the onus on landowners to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes for the public good. Potential degradation of outstanding natural features and landscapes and community identity, sense of place, amenity values and quality of the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rules could enable inappropriate activities, subdivision and development to occur, which could damage outstanding natural features and landscapes without any constraints. This approach when applied to private land has no certainty and has the potential to result in significant adverse effects. A lack of rules and reliance on public awareness and education only, is not certain and therefore not considered effective to achieve the objective of retaining and protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of acting on this approach means that Council may not be carrying out its duty/requirements under the RMA and the NZCPS, and it has potential to result in the damage to outstanding natural features and landscapes throughout the District. It is considered that there is sufficient information not to act on these provisions.
<p>Option D: All activities within identified Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are listed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified, protected and maintained for present and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duplication with other statutory protection mechanisms (e.g. Reserves Act 1977, National Parks Act 1980) resulting in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach is effective as it protects outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of acting on this approach is that there could be increased costs for landowners as most

Options to achieve the District Plan objectives relating to contaminated land	Benefits	Costs	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Risks of acting/not acting
<p>as Discretionary Activities</p> <p>The protection mechanisms would be restrictive and all activities, large or small would require resource consent to enable an assessment on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>generations, adding to community identity, sense of place and enhancing the amenity of the district for residents and visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of certainty that the above outcome would be achieved. • Discretionary activity provides a degree of flexibility in that each proposal would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, including positive and adverse effects. 	<p>higher compliance and administrative costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unduly restricts activities that contribute to the values and attributes of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (i.e. customary and conservation activities). In turn, could result in less or lower level of cultural and social wellbeing. • Time, costs and uncertainty with obtaining resource consent for all activities. 	<p>subdivision, use and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, it would be inefficient and not a pragmatic approach as all activities would require resource consent and would not provide for the efficient use of land. 	<p>activities will require resource consent.</p>
<p>Quantification</p> <p>Section 32(2)(b) requires that if practicable the benefits and costs of a proposal are quantified.</p> <p>Approximately 21 private properties contain land within the Hangatahua (Stony) River outstanding natural feature or landscape (covering an area of 44.7ha) and very six private properties within the Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi outstanding natural feature or landscape (covering an area of 14.7 ha). A large majority of land within outstanding natural features and landscapes is in public ownership. Activities within Hangatahua (Stony) River and Waihi Stream to Pariokariwa Point, including Parininihi will be subject to the proposed rules for buildings, structures, earthworks, vegetation clearance and subdivision.</p> <p>Given the assessment of the scale and significance of the proposed changes above it is considered that quantifying costs and benefits would add significant time and cost to the s32 evaluation processes. The evaluation in this report identifies where there may be additional cost(s), however the exact quantification of the benefits and costs discussed was not considered necessary, beneficial or practicable.</p>				

Summary

The above table has demonstrated that a combination of Option A and Option C, are the most appropriate method for identifying, recognising and protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes in the District. The existing regulatory approach would not effectively achieve the objective of recognising and protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes as the current provisions do not provide any rules, only a policy framework. Therefore, a revised approach as set out in Option A, Option C and Section 6 is proposed.

11 Summary

This evaluation has been undertaken in accordance with Section 32 of the Act in order to identify the need, benefits and costs and the appropriateness of the proposal having regard to its effectiveness and efficiency relative to other means in achieving the purpose of the RMA. The evaluation demonstrates that this proposal is the most appropriate option as:

- The objective and policies provide for the identification, retention and protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes, including specific detail, direction and certainty on appropriate and inappropriate activities in relation to outstanding natural features and landscapes. The policy framework also provides specific recognition of cultural values and tangata whenua's association and Mātauranga Māori (knowledge) with outstanding natural features and landscapes.
- The revised Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes Schedule provides a comprehensive list of the District's Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes which is in accordance with criteria for identification that is consistent with the RMA and NZCPS recent case law and best-practice.
- Permitted activity rules allow for activities that are considered to be generally appropriate and unlikely to generate adverse effects or degrade the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes.
- Activities that may be inappropriate or degrade Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes are appropriately managed through the resource consent process. These include building activities that do not meet the size and height restrictions, subdivision or clearance of indigenous vegetation.
- Non-regulatory methods such as information provision, consultation with landowners, liaison with DOC and others, will continue to be used in conjunction with the proposed provisions to achieve the proposed objectives.

Overall, it is considered that the set of proposed provisions is the most appropriate given that the benefits outweigh the costs, and there are considerable efficiencies to be gained from adopting the proposed provisions. The risks of acting are also clearly identifiable and limited in their extent.