PORPS NFL TOPIC: Chris Horne Speaking Notes

1. The issue raised in my evidence on the NFL topic is equivalent to that addressed at the HCV hearing I attended for the Telecommunication Companies, in that the policy framework applying to sensitive natural and built environments needs to acknowledge that the effects of infrastructure in these environments is managed via Policy EIT-INF-P13. Policy EIT-INF-P13 has an alternative effects management hierarchy for infrastructure in sensitive environments. As I have previously set out, I do not consider infrastructure should have a 'free pass' to locate in sensitive environments, but there needs to be a workable policy framework that enables infrastructure to locate in outstanding natural features and landscapes where there is a functional or operational need to do so.

2. As outlined in my evidence, I support the approach recommended in the Council's supplementary evidence to have a link back to Policy EIT-INF-P13 in proposed Policy NFL-P2 which seeks to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes via a strong avoid adverse effects framework. I also recommend a similar cross-reference to Policy EIT-INF-P13 in Policy NFL-P3, which addresses the maintenance of highly valued natural features and landscapes.

3. The caveat to this is the same as outlined in my earlier evidence for the EIT and HCV chapters and discussed at the EIT hearing with the Commissioners, being that there are issues with notified EIT-INF-P13 and/or the definition of Regionally Significant Infrastructure, that if not addressed, would require direct amendments to policy provisions in other chapters including the NFL chapter to suitably provide for infrastructure in these environments. In my view it is preferable to resolve this within the EIT chapter to simplify the policy framework for infrastructure in sensitive environments.

4. I also noted during my appearance on the EIT chapter, in a follow up to a question from the earlier HCV hearing in regard to new and upgrading of infrastructure, that Policy EIT-INF-P13 could be broadened to address both new and upgrading of infrastructure, to ensure that the same management framework applies to both. Otherwise, this effectively leaves a policy gap where new infrastructure has a more workable framework in sensitive natural and built environments that upgrades. I continue to support this position.