



APPENDIX 5: LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

TE HAKAPUPU PLEASANT RIVER CATCHMENT

DECEMBER 2024



LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The concept of 'landscape' forms a foundation through which Nature-based Solution (NbS) interventions in Te Hākapupu Pleasant River catchment have been considered within this feasibility study.

Current professional best practice landscape guidance (Te Tangi a Te Manu, NZILA, 2022) sets out the following understanding of landscape in terms of the nature of relationships between people and place conceptualised as three overlapping dimensions:

- **Physical:** the physical environment—its collective natural and built components and processes
- **Perceptual:** how we perceive and experience places
- **Associative:** the meanings and values we associate with places

This guidance also notes that character and value are different but interdependent and that all landscapes have character and value.¹ Identifying each landscape's values is fundamental to its management.

VISUAL AMENITY

Visual matters are integral to landscape. As set out in Te Tangi a Te Manu, the concept of landscape is relevant to both the quality of the environment and amenity values. Terms such as 'visual amenity' and 'rural amenity', refer to landscape values that contribute to amenity values.

It is also noted that sections 7(c) and 7(f) of the RMA refer to maintenance and enhancement, providing for positive effects including restoration and rehabilitation.²

NATURAL CHARACTER

Natural character is the term used to describe the degree of naturalness in an area, and includes the natural elements, patterns, processes, and experiential qualities attributes of an environment. The natural character of the coastal environment, and freshwater bodies and their margins, is comprised of a number of key attributes which include:

- **Abiotic systems:** physical processes, geomorphology, topography, landform, and water quantity/quality
- **Biotic systems:** species, communities, habitats, and ecological processes

Experiential attributes - the ways in which people, including tangata whenua, experience the natural elements, patterns, and processes.

The degree of natural character present in an area is commonly described on a continuum. Areas of very high natural character are due to the lack of human induced modification. In other areas, there may be little natural character remaining due to extensive human modification.

¹ Ibid, para 5.28

² Ibid, paras 5.56-5.58

POLICY FRAMEWORK

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

The assessment of landscape, natural character and visual effects addresses the following relevant Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) matters:

- **Section 6(a):** Preserving the natural character of wetlands, streams, rivers, and their margins
- **Section 6(b):** Protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes
- **Section 7(c):** Maintain and enhance amenity values
- **Section 7(f):** Maintain and enhance the quality of the environment

OTAGO REGIONAL PLANS

The Te Hikapupu Pleasant River catchment is subject to provisions in the following Plans:

- Partially Operative Otago RPS 2019
- Proposed Regional Policy Statement 2021
- Regional Plan: Water for Otago

Provisions most relevant to landscape matters are summarised below.

- **Partially Operative Otago RPS 2019**
Objective 3.1 of the Partially Operative Otago RPS (PORPS) relates to recognising, maintaining, or enhancing where degraded, the values of natural resources.

The values (including intrinsic values) of ecosystems and natural resources are recognised and maintained or enhanced where degraded.

This is supported by the following relevant landscape-related policies:

Policy 3.1.11 Natural features, landscapes, and seascapes

Recognise the values of natural features, landscapes and seascapes are derived from the biophysical, sensory and associative attributes in Schedule 3.

Schedule 3 provides a list of criteria for the identification of natural features, landscapes and seascapes based on the dimensions recommended in Te Tangi a Te Manu:

1. Biophysical attributes

- a. Natural science factors, including geological, topographical, ecological and dynamic components*
- b. The presence of water including in seas, lakes, rivers and streams*
- c. Vegetation (native and exotic)*

2. Sensory attributes a. Legibility or expressiveness—how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes

- b. Aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness*
- c. Transient values including presence of wildlife or other values at certain times of the day or year*
- d. Wild or scenic values*

3. Associative attributes

- a. Whether the values are shared and recognised
- b. Cultural and spiritual values for Kāi Tahu, identified by working, as far as practicable, in accordance with tikanga Māori; including their expression as cultural landscapes and features
- c. Historical and heritage associations

Policy 3.1.12 Natural character in the coastal environment

Recognise the values of natural character in the coastal environment are derived from one or more

of the following attributes:

- a) Natural elements, processes and patterns;
- b) Biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;
- c) Natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, estuaries, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;
- d) The natural movement of water and sediment;
- e) The natural darkness of the night sky;
- f) Places or areas that are wild or scenic;
- g) A range of natural character from pristine to modified;
- h) Experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.

Objective 3.2 relates to the identification of significant and highly valued resources and their protection or enhancement where degraded. Policies 3.2.3 and 3.2.5 relates to identifying outstanding natural features landscapes (RMA Section 6b) and highly valued natural features and landscapes.

The Hapapupu catchment is not identified as part of any outstanding natural feature or landscape however Te Hapapupu Pleasant River estuary wetland complex is identified as a Regionally Significant Wetland in the Regional Water Plan (summarised below).

The PORPS has been developed to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFW) requirements. PORPS policy 3.1.1 requires freshwater to be managed to “maintain or enhance as far as practicable”, amenity and landscape values of rivers and wetlands among other matters.

PROPOSED REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT 2021

Objective CE–O2 relates to maintaining or enhancing highly valued natural features and landscapes areas of the coastal environment.

Objective CE–O3 relates to protecting areas of natural character, natural features, landscapes and seascapes within the coastal environment and encouraging restoration is encouraged where the values of these areas have been compromised.

Objective NFL–O1 of the Proposed Regional Policy Statement (Proposed RPS 21) relates to the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes and maintenance and enhancement of highly valued natural features and landscapes, including promoting restoration where those areas or values have been reduced or lost.

REGIONAL PLAN: WATER FOR OTAGO

Work is currently underway to prepare a new Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) for the Otago region however, at the time of writing, this plan has yet to be notified.

There are a number of key provisions relevant to this assessment that relate to the preservation of the natural character of waterbodies and their margins and protection from inappropriate use and development (RMA Section 6.a). These include protecting their natural character, maintaining, or enhancing their amenity values, having particular regard to features such as natural flow characteristics, water colour and clarity, aesthetic values, and recreational opportunities among others.

Policy 8.7.1 directs the promotion of the creation, retention, and enhancement of appropriate riparian vegetation.

DISTRICT PLANS

Te Hikapupu Pleasant River catchment is mostly within the Waitaki District Plan, apart from an area to the south of the estuary and part of Mt Watkin which are within the Dunedin 2nd Generation District Plan.

Within the Waitaki District, the catchment is largely within the rural zone, with some inland areas within the 'rural scenic' zone. Catchment areas within the Dunedin District Plan are also largely within the rural zone, except for a small rural residential area to the south of the estuary. The six volcanic peaks within the catchment are identified as Significant Natural Features in the Waitaki District Plan.

Te Hikapupu Pleasant River estuary wetland complex is identified as a Significant Natural Feature and an Area of Significant Nature Conservation Value under the Waitaki District Plan. The estuary wetland complex contains a range of values, including habitat for threatened species and mahika kai species, recreational opportunities, and landscape aesthetic qualities. Additionally, mana whenua values are associated with the estuary wetland complex.