

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANELS APPOINTED TO HEAR AND MAKE  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUBMISSIONS AND FURTHER SUBMISSIONS ON PROPOSED CHANGE 1  
TO THE REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE WELLINGTON REGION**

**UNDER** Schedule 1 of the Resource Management  
Act 1991 (the Act)

**IN THE MATTER OF** Hearing Submissions and Further  
Submissions on Proposed Change 1 to the  
Regional Policy Statement for the  
Wellington Region

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**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
IAIN NICHOLAS DAWE  
ON BEHALF OF WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL  
HEARING STREAM [3] - [NATURAL HAZARDS]  
28 AUGUST 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

1 My name is Dr Iain Dawe and I am the co-author of the s.42a report and rebuttal evidence pertaining to the following natural hazard topics:

- Introduction and Issues;
- Objectives CC.6;
- Policies CC.16 and CC.17;
- Policy 52;
- Method 22, and;
- Other matters related to requests for new provisions.

2 My opening statement will concentrate on providing a brief summary of the main issues raised in the right of reply evidence and the changes I recommend to the natural hazard provisions as a result of this evidence.

### Objective CC.6

3 There was some discussion in the submission process and right of reply about referencing resource management planning in Objective CC.6, and requests that this be removed. However, I argue that adapting to climate change requires a holistic approach that involves a number of different mechanisms and instruments, including resource management planning and it is important that this remains in the Objective in order to provide some legal strength to adaptation processes addressed in Policy CC.16. Furthermore, it links to a number of other climate change and related policies some of which require a regional and district plan response including, Policy CC.4, CC.14, CC.15 and Policies FW.5 and 55.

### Policy CC.16

4 There were a number of original submissions requesting the recognition of the importance of food production and water security as it relates to climate resilience in particular. I agree this is important and recommended amendments to the introduction and Issues to accommodate this and clarify the links to climate change policies that address climate change adaptation and resilience in the natural hazard provisions. This satisfied most the relief sought but some right of reply evidence requested these linkages

be further strengthened, through Policies CC.16 and Method 22. To address this, I have recommended some changes to Policy CC.16 to highlight these connections and draw plan users attention to relevant policies in the RPS that are specifically focussed on rural climate and water resilience CC.15 and FW.8. In addition, I recommend some amendments to Policy CC.15 to specifically include rural water resilience and food security and a new clause to Method CC.8 to identify and assist catchment and water user groups in the development of adaptation plans.

- 5 There were also some concerns raised in the submissions and right of reply evidence that clause (c) in CC.16 appears to require a regulatory response despite the fact that it is a non-regulatory policy and as such that it be deleted from the Policy. However, I argue that while the Policy does reference regulatory processes it does not require councils to undertake a plan change or initiate a regulatory response in the process of adaptation planning. Rather, it recognises that in some circumstances there may need to be a regulatory response for the successful implementation of a climate change adaptation plan, such as managed retreat, and therefore it is important that this reference remains in the Policy.

#### Policy 52

- 6 There was a request to delete reference to 'Te Rito o te Harakeke' in Policy 52 and replace it with taonga species. In the drafting of RPS Change 1 there were discussions with mana whenua between the use of this term or 'Te Mana o te Taiao'. The terms were also being used in early exposure drafts of the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB), and there was some preference to have a national planning document on which to draw upon to provide guidance for its application. AT the time this wasn't settled and I had a preference to draw upon a concept that was already in the RPS, that is the concept of 'Te Rito o te Harakeke'. There will be a further review of the use of these terms in relation to the integration of Te Ao Māori in the RPS, but at this stage I recommend keeping this wording as it recognised within the plan. In my opinion reference to indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems captures taonga species, so I recommended no further change.
- 7 I do support a wording change in Policy 52 for it to be more inclusive of the recognition of sites of significance to mana whenua that may not be listed in plan documents for a range of reasons including the fact that knowledge of those sites may be taonga knowledge and held expressly by iwi and hapu.

## Other matters

- 8 There were some requests in the further evidence to include new provisions. In particular, a new objective specifically focussed on resilient infrastructure with two supporting Policies to undertake a programme of investigation to understand the vulnerability of infrastructure in the region and include it in resilience and adaptation planning. In my rebuttal evidence, I argue that the relief sought for infrastructure to be addressed by these new provisions is already provided for in the suite of natural hazard and related climate change provisions including Objective CC.6 and Policy CC.16 and Objectives 19 and 21, and Policies 29, 51 and 52. Expressly, these provisions recognise the importance of infrastructure; direct that research is undertaken to understand the risks we face from natural hazards and climate change; and that adaptation planning is undertaken to increase the resilience of our communities, businesses, property, and infrastructure to the long-term impacts that we are facing from natural hazards, sea level rise and climate change.
- 9 Finally, there was also a request for a new policy that directs that Te Ao Māori is integrated across climate change mitigation and adaptation activities and that the use and benefits of mātauranga māori is applied in a comprehensive way in natural hazard management. I understand the intent behind such a policy but argue in my rebuttal evidence that the Change 1 amendments have been developed and written in such a way to achieve this recognition across the natural hazard and climate change adaptation provisions. In particular, Te Ao Māori, mātauranga māori and working with mana whenua/tangata whenua on natural hazard and climate change adaptation is explicitly included in Objective 20, Policies CC.16, CC.17, 52 and Method 22 and that this new policy wouldn't add anything further to the RPS. The provisions are written and designed to be inter-connected and used holistically and it is my experience that this is the case in their application. It is my expectation that this integration will occur in the implementation of these new policies and amendments to existing policies.