

MEMBER ADVISORY

HAURAKI DISTRICT PLAN



HAURAKI-COROMANDEL

21 October 2010

Federated Farmers submission

Federated Farmers lodged a submission to the proposed Hauraki District Plan on 19 October 2010. Federated Farmers made many recommendations as to how the Council can improve the District Plan.

We want to see a District Plan that is practical and realistic, so farmers can continue working and contributing to the Hauraki District. Often normal farming activities can be inadvertently captured by rules, which can result in farmers and councils having to go through costly and unnecessary resource consents.

Here is a SNAPSHOT of what was in Federated Farmers submission:

Number of houses on a property

Federated Farmers supported a rule which allows for two dwellings on properties over 40ha in the Rural Zone. Many farms have a second dwelling as accommodation for employees, or retired parents.

Federated Farmers then requested that another tier be added to the rule that allows for three houses on properties that are over 100ha. For dairy herds that are larger than average and where two employees need to be housed as well as the land owner, then three dwellings will be needed. Otherwise only two dwellings are permitted regardless if the farm is 40ha, or 400ha.

Landscape Protection Areas

Federated Farmers opposed Landscape Protection Areas when these are mapped over the top of farmland. Landscape Protection Areas have been classified as needing extra rules over and above the normal zones to protect scenic qualities.

The Resource Management Act directs efforts towards protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes, rather than to landscapes that have derived their scenic values from human activities.

Federated Farmers considers that Landscape Protection Area mapping should be removed from areas that have rural zoning. Otherwise, any new buildings (including houses) or additions to existing buildings in a Landscape Protection Area will need a resource consent. Federated Farmers thinks that the same rules should apply through-out the rural zone, rather than having a different set of rules which are more stringent for rural areas that happen to be in a Landscape Protection Area.

Significant Natural Areas

Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) are sites that the Hauraki District Council has identified as being native vegetation and habitat for native species with a high level of importance and quality.



For an SNA regime to work, Federated Farmers considers that it is vital that only areas of true significance are identified so that normal farming activities do not become unreasonably captured by SNA rules.

Federated Farmers requested that a new rule be included that allows grazing of livestock to continue within SNAs. For example, remnant Kahikatea or Manuka stands in pasture under which livestock are currently grazed should continue to be grazed. Otherwise this practice could run the risk of needing a resource consent.

Firewood from a Significant Natural Area

Federated Farmers supported a rule that allows up to 5m³ of manuka/kanuka firewood to be taken from an SNA of local or regional ranking

Federated Farmers had been concerned that the Council was informing people earlier in the year that they could rely on Section 10 of the RMA (existing use rights) for firewood collection in SNAs. Section 10 places the burden of proof onto resource users, and Federated Farmers was concerned that it would be difficult for farmers to provide evidence of their existing use right. In our mind if an activity was deemed acceptable under existing use rights, it should be given a permitted activity status in the District Plan.

The Council heeded this concern and made the taking of firewood from an SNA permitted.

Rural Contracting

Federated Farmers was concerned that a rule requiring Rural Contracting Depots to get a resource consent would capture normal situations where farmers help out the neighbours when harvesting or ploughing.

There was no definition as to how big or small a Rural Contracting business would be before triggering the need for a resource consent. Situations where people are predominantly farming but supplement that operation with some agricultural contracting work should not need to get a consent.

Stand-off and Feed Pads

A rule requiring Animal Feedlots to get a resource consent could accidentally capture stand-off pads and feed pads, as these are practices that involve a standing area for intensively feeding animals. Farming practices such as stand-off pads and feed-pads are becoming more popular as a way of reducing the adverse environmental effects of livestock trampling pasture during wet conditions, and to reduce supplementary feed losses.

Federated Farmers asked that stand off and feed pads be exempt from needing a resource consent. Otherwise farmers are caught in the middle with the Regional Council promoting pads as being good for the environment, but the District Council requiring a resource consent.

Where to now?

The Council will be summarising all the submissions, and later releasing them to the public. A date for Further Submissions to be lodged will then be set.

The complete Federated Farmers submission is available on the submission database at www.fedfarm.org.nz

FEDERATED FARMERS CONTACTS:

Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions:

John Sanford
Hauraki-Coromandel Provincial President
Phone: 07 869 0080
Fax: 07 869 0081
Email: jsanford@xtra.co.nz

Rhea Dasent
Federated Farmers Regional Policy Advisor
Phone: 0800 327 646
Email: rdasent@fedfarm.org.nz

