BEFORE THE PROPOSED FAR NORTH DISTRICT PLAN HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER THE	Resource Management Act 1991
IN THE MATTER OF	of a hearing into submissions on the Proposed Far North District Plan – Hearing 15B (Special Purpose Zones)

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL IAN FARROW (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)

ENGAGED BY THE MOTUKIEKIE OWNERS (SUBMITTER 32)

Dated 7 July 2025

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Introduction

1. My name is Mike Farrow.

2. I am a landscape architect and the principal of Littoralis Landscape Architecture, operating out of Whangarei.

3. I prepared a primary statement of evidence dated 12 May 2025 in relation to Submission 032 to the Proposed Far North District Plan. Attached to that primary statement was a volume of Attachments and a copy of a Broad Assessment of Landscape, Natural Character and Visual Effects that I authored. My brief, primary qualifications and experience are stated in that evidence, along with a commitment to adhere to the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses prepared by the Environment Court in 2023. That undertaking applies equally to this evidence. I also prepared a supplementary statement dated 15 May, covering an omission from the Building Design Guidelines.

4. This second supplementary statement has been prepared to address the potential ecological effects related to the proposed Building Areas that are central to the proposed zoning provisions.

5. The Bachelor of Science mentioned in my primary statement of evidence includes advanced papers in terrestrial ecology and biogeography. A significant portion of my work as a landscape architect involves describing the indigenous vegetation of natural landscapes in some detail. I am also frequently involved in specifying and documenting landscape and ecological restoration works utilising native vegetation. I have also been involved in establishing and overseeing nurseries devoted to growing indigenous vegetation for restoration projects. This experience - spanning in excess of 35 years and coupled with my academic training - provides a suitable basis upon which to provide evidence upon the ecology of the Building Areas Building Areas shown on the Motukiekie Development/Precinct Plan included as Appendix 1 to this evidence.

6. One of those areas is devoted to the existing lodge and a consented caretaker's residence (being noted as Building Area 1). The remaining 3 identified areas of 25m x 50m dimensions are situated in locations where the terrain lends itself to building construction with limited earthworks requirements and with limited indigenous vegetation cover. Two of those three areas are positioned in areas that are presently quite modified from a natural state. The other is in a more intact condition, but still distinct from the most natural and unmodified parts of Motukiekie. These building areas are identified on the appended Motukiekie Development Plan.

7. The purpose of this statement is to describe the vegetative and habitat characteristics of each of the additional proposed Building Areas (being Areas 2, 3 and 4), along with an area proposed for a possible extension to an existing solar array, and to provide

commentary on the potential adverse ecological effects of modifying those Areas to accommodate future dwellings.

PNAP reporting

8. A copy of the Protected Natural Areas Programme reporting on Motukiekie under the "*Natural areas of Whangaruru Ecological District - Reconnaissance Survey Report for the Protected Natural Areas Programme*"(2005) is found in Appendix Two. It records Motukiekie as having a complete cover of "kanuka coastal forest on hillslope". The vegetation description records kanuka forest being dominant and frequent presence of *Eucalyptus* and *Pinus* spp. Mamaku, kowhai, houpara, ti kouka and kauri rickers are mentioned, but the Norfolk Island pine, *Acacia*, and oak that are found on Motukiekie go unmentioned. Similarly, there is no reference to the pohutukawa that fringe part of the island and are a common component of the developing forested areas or the kiekie (*Freycinetia banksia*) that the island takes its name from. The small area of remnant exotic grassland on the northeastern portion of the island is also unrecorded.

9. Identified significant flora are as set out in the following table:

Genus and species	**Maori and common name**	**description**	**habitat**
Lobelia physaloides syn. *Colensoa physaloides*	koru colensoa	Rather rare soft herb with clusters of purple tubular flowers. Leaves large, soft with finely teethed margin.	Coastal and lowland forest. Often stream sides and damp sites in half-shade
Calystegia marginata	small flowered white bindweed	Perennial vine with soft climbing rhizomes. Small white flowers and very shiny, dark green leaves in delta shape typical of genus.	Primarily coastal. Prefers open shrublands, rough pasture or bracken dominated sites, usually on coastal headlands
Scandia rosiflora	koheriki	Semi-erect to sprawling woody shrub. Aromatic. Clusters of white flowers. Paired leaves finely or deeply serrated	Coastal to subalpine. Usually on cliff faces, clay banks or amongst boulders, river gorges. Rarely in scrub.
Psilotum nudum	skeleton fork fern whisk fern	Rhizomes short to long creeping, usually clumped. Branches twiggy and prominently ribbed. Distinctive noduled root system.	Epiphytic or terrestrial. Coastal forest, rock piles and cliff faces.

Information source: New Zealand Plant Conservation Network website

10. The habitat favoured by the first three of these species is inconsistent with the proposed Building Areas, but the solar array expansion area has the potential to support the

Calystegia. The characteristics of Building Area 4 could possibly allow for *Psilotum* to be present.

Field inspection

11. Having first researched the above information, a detailed field inspection of Building Areas 2-4 and the proposed solar array expansion area (see Appendix 1) was undertaken during favourable weather on 13 May 2025. The following commentary summarises the findings of that scrutiny:

Building Area Two

12. This area is considerably modified, consisting largely of mown grass or worn track and a number of small buildings. Clusters of Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria hetrophylla*) occupy a sizeable footprint, underplanted with native amenity planting.

Photograph 1: The northern part of Building Area 2, showing worn ground, trunks of large Norfolk Island pines and moderately sized pohutukawa to left and in the background.

13. The pohutukawa seen in the images above would be protected under the guidelines proposed by the zoning provisions advanced by the Owners. The exotic Norfolk Island pine are likely to be removed as part of any development of this Building Area.

14. Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*), kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*), kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), and taupata (Coprosma robusta) are the prevailing species naturally occupying the fringe of the current clearing. A mix of planted indigenous shrubs have been installed

on some of the islands and margins associated with the clearing. There is no identified presence of any of the Significant Flora species mentioned above.

15. The nearby solar array and area identified for potential expansion of that facility are dominated by dry exotic grass species, interspersed with small seedlings of mingimingi. (*Cyathodes fasciculata*), manuka and kanuka. None of the Significant Flora species are established in this location either.

Photograph 2: Looking south along part of Area 2, showing worn ground, trunks of large Norfolk Island pines and moderately sized pohutukawa to both sides and in background, beyond an area of mown grass.

Building Area 3

16. This Building Area was selected to utilise a large, established area of mown grass in the midst of the island. It has seen long use as a very sheltered family picnic and recreation place. The fringe of quite diverse native amenity planting best seen in Photograph 4 below is reflective of that purpose. A wider frame of naturally occurring manuka, kanuka and pohutukawa, supporting a limited and characteristic understorey defines the interface.

17. The plantings, whilst offering pleasing amenity, are an “introduced” element in the ecology of this site, whilst the species that have naturally colonised the perimeter (over a period of 3-4 decades) don’t include any of the Significant Flora or other species of note. There are no particularly large trees that might offer heightened habitat for native lizards or bats (if these were to be present).

Photograph 3: A view southeast along that portion of Area 3, with mix of kanuka, invasive *Acacia sp*. and moderately sized pohutukawa to left and in the background, beyond an area of mown grass.

Photograph 4: The northern end of Area Three, where a planted fringe that includes young kauri, ti kouka, koromiko and puriri are set against naturally occurring kanuka, Norfolk Island pine and a solitary young *Acacia*.

Building Area 4

18. This final Building Area is distinct from the other two addressed by this report in being in a less developed state. Whilst difficult to convey the vegetation composition of this

wooded area through photographs, the image below provides a reasonably representative view.

19. The canopy is consistent with much of the balance of the island with its composition primarily of kanuka and scattered pohutukawa of moderate age (which would be conserved under the proposed Building Guidelines that would apply). A few large English oak (*Quercus robur*) punctuate the otherwise indigenous canopy and it is likely that these would be prioritised to be felled to make way for a future building.

20. Once again, there is no indication of any of the Significant Flora species or others of heightened note.

21. As an area that current has a consistent vegetated canopy, this Building Area carries the potential for "edge effects" to accompany the creation of a clearing, where elevated light levels and exposure to wind can compromise the mantle of remaining vegetation. A reasonable abundance of native subcanopy species, combined with a considerable source of colonising seed can be expected to rapidly seal a cleared edge to limit such potential effects.

Photograph 5: Looking north across Building Area 4 and showing a moderately developed understorey beneath a prevailing canopy of kanuka.

Conclusions

22. As the preceding commentaries illustrate, none of the three proposed new building areas carry heightened ecological values and all are compromised by past development or the exotic planting efforts of earlier owners. The same observation applies to the proposed solar array expansion area.

23. Species of Significant Flora that have been identified as present on Motukiekie are absent from the three areas and there are not characteristics that suggest that lizards, birds or bats (if present) would favour these areas over the more intact vegetation associations that prevail over much of the balance of the island.

24. Recommended Principles and related Building Guidelines contain measures to minimise impacts upon indigenous vegetation during development and ongoing management, with a view to conserving the ecological and natural characteristics of Motukiekie. Accordingly, any ecological effects arising from future building and development of Building Areas 2-4 that complies with the proposed Building Guidelines are assessed as being very limited and less than minor.

25. The fact that each of the identified Building Areas occupies a small part of Motukiekie that exist in a compromised state reflects a motive to *avoid* adverse effects, including ecological effects, through the planning of the proposal.

Mike Farrow

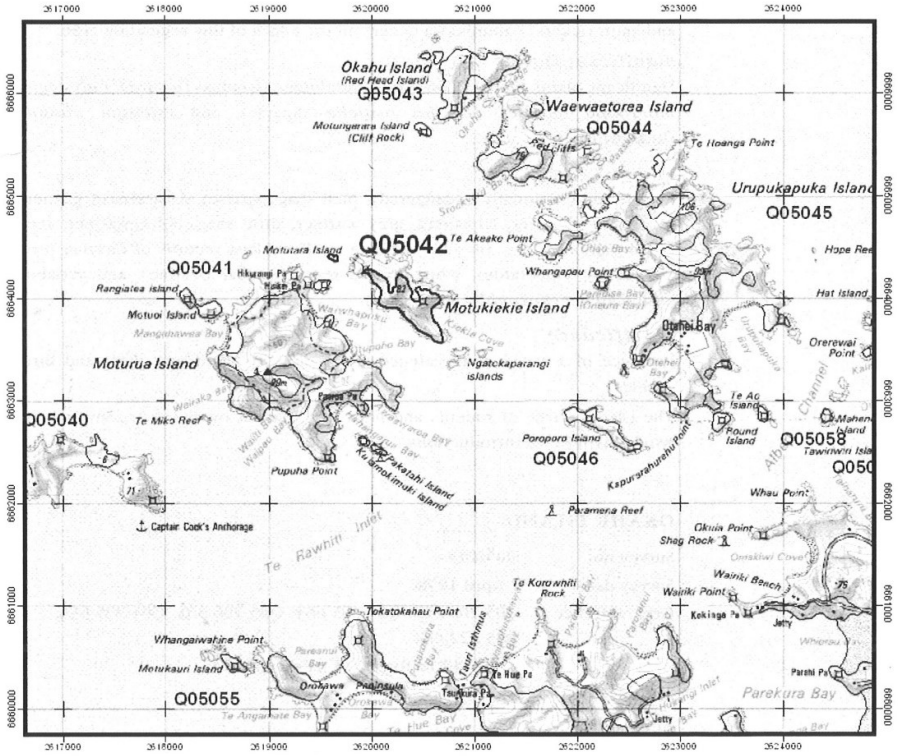
Landscape architect
Dated: 7 July 2025

Appendix 1: Motukiekie Development / Precinct Plan

Appendix 2: Site Description – *Natural Areas of Whangaruru Ecological District*

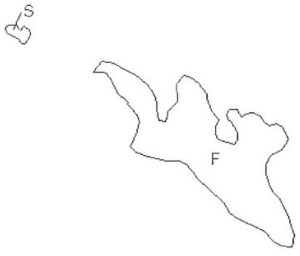
MOTUKIEKIE ISLAND

Survey no.	Q05/042
Survey date	7 April 1998
Grid reference	Q05 203 639, Q05 196 643
Area	20.5 ha (20 ha forest; 0.5 ha shrubland)
Altitude	0–82 m asl



Motukiekie Island Q05/042

Each grid is 1000m x 1000m
and = 100 ha
S = shrubland
F = forest
W = wetland
E = estuarine
D = duneland



Ecological unit

(a) Kanuka coastal forest on hillslope

Landform/geology

Cliffed island of Waipapa Terrane greywacke with sandy pocket beaches.

Vegetation

(a) Kanuka coastal forest dominates Motukiekie Island. *Eucalyptus* sp. and *Pinus* sp. are frequent, with occasional mamaku, kowhai, houpara, ti kouka, and kauri rickers. Pohutukawa occurs on the edges of this vegetation type.

Significant flora

Significant plants include *Colensoa physaloides* (Gradual Decline), *Calystegia marginata* (Sparse), *Scandia rosifolia* (Sparse), and *Psilotum nudum* (Regionally Significant).

Fauna

Reef heron (Nationally Endangered), pied shag (Sparse), Australasian gannet, Australasian harrier, NI fantail, grey warbler, little shag, NZ kingfisher, red-billed gull, silvereye, tui and welcome swallow. Past records of Caspian tern (Nationally Vulnerable), white-fronted tern (Gradual Decline), and variable oystercatcher (Regionally Significant).

Significance

Presence of a range of threatened and regionally significant plant and bird species.

The island is free of rodents and most of it has an overhead canopy, which would favour bird introductions.

OKAHU ISLAND

Survey no.	Q05/043
Survey date	7 April 1998
Grid reference	Q05 208 660, Q05 205 663, Q05 206 663, Q05 205 656, Q05 222 641
Area	27 ha (12 ha forest, 15 ha shrubland)
Altitude	0 - 71 m asl

Ecological unit

(a) Kowharawhara-hangehange coastal association on hillslope
(b) Harakeke-kowharawhara-pohutukawa coastal association on hillslope
(c) Kanuka-pohutukawa coastal forest on hillslope
(d) Kikuyu grassland on hillslope
(e) Kanuka-harakeke coastal association on hillslope
(f) Pohutukawa coastal forest on steep hillslope

Landform/geology

Cliffed island of Waipapa Terrane greywacke with Holocene beach, dune and colluvial sediments in pocket embayments.

Vegetation

(a) This association is common in a small area on the southern tip of the island. Harakeke and *Coprosma* sp. are frequent. Pohutukawa is present on the edges and *Hebe* sp. and cutty grass are also occasional.