

## STATEMENT OF LAY EVIDENCE BY ANNIKA DICKEY

### IN SUPPORT OF SUBMISSIONS BY OUR KERIKERI TRUST, VISION KERIKERI, CARBON NEUTRAL TRUST AND KAPIRO CONSERVATION TRUST

HEARING 15D - OCTOBER 2025

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#### Purpose

To present further rationale for our position taken:

1. Limiting Medium Density Residential Zone (MDRZ) development in Kerikeri to three storeys only where topography makes the height unobtrusive;
  2. Retaining a Mixed Use Zone in Kerikeri rather than adopting a Town Centre Zone;
  3. Considering a Town Centre Zone at Waipapa, where there is limited existing character to protect; and
  4. Implementing Design Protocols / Character Guidelines (masterplans) for Kerikeri and Waipapa.
  5. Confirming how Tier 3 status under the NPS-UD affects these zoning choices.
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#### 1. MDRZ – Why only three storeys and only where topography absorbs the height

##### Policy baseline.

National medium-density policy settings (NPS-UD / MDRS) were designed around three-storey height as the default form that communities are expected to accommodate “as of right.” That limit already reflects national expectations for medium density.

##### Local evidence.

Kerikeri’s housing demand and topography justify a conservative approach:

- From 2010–2025 only 4 % of growth occurred through infill; 36 % was greenfield; 59 % rural-lifestyle.
- Only 3 % of new dwellings were on < 300 m<sup>2</sup> sites (all social-housing stock).
- The average new-build cost was \$ 1.16 m, with just 31 % below \$ 1 m — clear evidence that the market is not seeking higher-rise apartments.

##### Visual and character context.

NZ landscape assessment practice encourages locating built form so it does not breach ridgelines or skylines, and using stepping, setbacks and context-sensitive design to reduce visual dominance. For example, the Auckland Unitary Plan’s Ridgeline Protection Overlay requires buildings ‘*not protrude above or dominate the identified ridgelines when viewed from a public place*’. In LVIA practice (such

as in Auckland consent cases citing Te Tangi a te Manu), visual effects are reduced through stepping, setting back upper levels, or aligning with landform to reduce perceived bulk.

### **Conclusion.**

A blanket 3-storey rule only where topography screens height balances growth with landscape protection, heritage values, and community expectations.

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## **2. Retain Mixed Use Zone – do not apply Town Centre Zone in Kerikeri**

### **Policy intent.**

FNDC's section 32 evaluation moved from the old *Commercial* zone to Mixed Use to explicitly encourage *residential above commercial* and a *fine-grained, village-scale main street*. The Mixed Use Zone is already the appropriate tool for Kerikeri's existing centre, allowing residential activity while protecting streetscape rhythm and scale.

### **Risk of Town Centre zoning.**

A Town Centre Zone would introduce higher allowable bulk, fewer transition controls, and parking-free development expectations — undermining the *village feel* that defines Kerikeri's character. It would also enable 4- to 6-storey development across the core, out of step with both community expectations and the demonstrated market appetite.

### **Local development pattern.**

Kerikeri has allowed for three-storey development for some time now, yet only one project has ever been built to the full three-storey height. This limited uptake indicates that market demand for high-rise formats is extremely low. The absence of further 3-storey proposals also reflects uncertainty and lack of clear direction for both developers and existing landlords. Without a masterplan articulating how the town centre is expected to evolve — where height is appropriate, how parking and access will function, and how design consistency will be ensured — the private sector has been reluctant to invest.

### **Demand and economic sustainability.**

Kerikeri's recent expansion has been fuelled largely by in-migration and lifestyle demand, rather than job-led growth. While this creates buoyancy in the housing market, from an economic resilience perspective, relying solely on lifestyle demand is not sustainable. It leaves the town exposed to construction cyclical downturns, and fluctuations in migration or tourism flows. A more balanced approach requires steady commercial activity, cultural vibrancy, and high-quality public realm investment.

### **Economic evidence.**

Local feasibility modelling demonstrates limited uptake of high-intensity formats, with viable development remaining concentrated in the low-rise segment. Projects exceeding three storeys are typically uneconomic in Kerikeri's current land and rental market conditions. Over-zoning in this context risks speculative land-value inflation and stalled delivery, as landowners hold sites for future profit rather than building.

### **Conclusion.**

The appropriate strategy is therefore to retain the Mixed Use Zone in Kerikeri's core, supported by character-based design protocols and a masterplan to provide the certainty investors need. This approach preserves Kerikeri's human scale and amenity while still enabling growth consistent with both market feasibility and community aspirations.

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## **3. Apply Town Centre Zone at Waipapa**

### **Context.**

Waipapa has no cohesive character fabric or historic main street, so it can absorb a purpose-built Town Centre form.

### **Spatial-plan direction.**

The Kerikeri–Waipapa Spatial Plan envisions Waipapa as a growth node with walkable blocks and employment uses — a Town Centre Zone can structure a new main street and integrate future public transport.

### **Economic feasibility.**

Evidence before the Hearings shows master-planned greenfield areas near Waipapa can deliver more affordable dwellings than small infill sites in Kerikeri, while supporting centre-based employment.

### **Conclusion.**

Town Centre zoning is appropriate at Waipapa, not Kerikeri.

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## **4. Need for Masterplans, Design Protocols, and Character Guidelines**

### **Purpose**

Kerikeri and Waipapa are both at a pivotal stage of transformation—from semi-rural service centres to evolving urban communities. To manage this shift successfully, both towns require Masterplans supported by Design Protocols and Character Guidelines that turn strategic planning objectives into tangible, place-based outcomes.

These tools ensure that growth occurs in a way that strengthens, rather than erodes, local identity and amenity.

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### **How a Spatial Plan differs**

The Kerikeri–Waipapa Spatial Plan already provides the *strategic direction* for where future growth should occur. A Spatial Plan operates at the township scale: it identifies broad land-use patterns, transport links, and infrastructure sequencing. It answers the “*where and why*” questions—where housing, business, and public space should be located, and why those locations make sense.

A Masterplan (or structure plan), by contrast, operates at the *neighbourhood or centre scale* and translates that strategy into “*how and what*.” It sets out the street network, block structure, building

heights, landscape design, viewshaft protection, and public-realm improvements that bring the Spatial Plan to life.

Design Protocols and Character Guidelines sit beneath the Masterplan, defining materials, façades, colours, signage, planting palettes, and other design details that reinforce a coherent identity.

In essence:

**Spatial Plan = Where and why**

**Masterplan = How and what**

**Design Protocols = Look and feel**

Together, these instruments ensure that strategic intent translates into on-the-ground, high-quality development that the community can recognise and support. We cannot emphasize enough how much we need these under urgency and before we proceed with any intensification or major change.

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### **Kerikeri: protecting a valued character while enabling growth**

Kerikeri's charm lies in its human scale, creative energy, and heritage landscape. Without clear design direction, incremental infill risks diluting that character and producing ad-hoc outcomes.

A Kerikeri Masterplan should therefore:

- Map height and bulk transitions from the Mixed Use Zone toward residential and heritage areas;
- Protect key viewshafts and ridgelines through height and planting controls;
- Establish a connected public-realm network linking the riverfront, the main street, and parking areas;
- Define materials, colour palettes, and signage guidelines that reflect Kerikeri's artisan and heritage identity; and
- Integrate sustainability and blue-green design principles across streets and developments.

These steps will preserve Kerikeri's "village feel" while allowing managed intensification consistent with its role as a creative, cultural, and tourism hub.

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### **Waipapa: creating a main street and coherent identity**

Waipapa currently lacks a defined centre but has significant potential to become a structured Town Centre.

A Waipapa Masterplan should:

- Identify a main-street spine and logical block pattern;
- Guide active frontages and public-space design;

- Integrate transport and stormwater infrastructure to enable growth; and
- Stage development to ensure that commercial and residential investment proceeds cohesively.

This will transform Waipapa from a dispersed service area into a recognisable, walkable centre with its own identity.

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### **Policy and professional alignment**

The NPS-UD (2020) requires “well-functioning urban environments” that provide a *sense of place and quality urban form*.

*Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines* (NZILA 2022) emphasises the importance of understanding how built form interacts with landform, vegetation, and cultural values.

Masterplans, Design Protocols, and Character Guidelines operationalise these principles locally, ensuring that zoning and infrastructure decisions deliver real design quality.

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### **Outcomes and benefits**

- Consistency: Aligns all development with a shared spatial and visual vision.
  - Certainty: Gives landowners and developers clear expectations and confidence to invest.
  - Amenity: Embeds public-realm improvements and cohesive character into every project.
  - Economic vitality: Strengthens town identity and supports sustainable, long-term investment.
  - Community trust: Ensures growth enhances rather than undermines what residents value most.
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### **Conclusion**

Masterplans, Design Protocols, and Character Guidelines are the practical instruments that make the Spatial Plan real.

They bridge the gap between strategic vision and on-the-ground development, ensuring that Kerikeri’s distinctive heritage and Waipapa’s emerging identity are both protected and enhanced as growth occurs.

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## 5. Tier 3 status and compliance with NPS-UD / MDRS

### Legal position.

Under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Tier 3 councils — which include Far North District — are not automatically required to apply MDRS.

### Implications for Kerikeri.

- As a Tier 3 urban environment, Kerikeri must still “give effect to” the objectives and policies of the NPS-UD — that is, plan for sufficient development capacity, enable intensification where appropriate, and remove unnecessary constraints.
- But it is not legally compelled to adopt the MDRS template or blanket three-storey permitted activity rights.
- Instead, it can tailor its planning provisions to local character, infrastructure limits, and community aspirations, so long as it demonstrates a reasonable pathway to meet housing and growth demand.

### Practical conclusion.

Kerikeri’s approach — limiting height to three storeys only where terrain absorbs it, retaining Mixed Use zoning, and embedding design protocols — fully aligns with the intent of the NPS-UD while remaining consistent with the flexibility granted to Tier 3 authorities.

This allows Council and the community to deliver intensification *strategically and contextually*, not mechanically.

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## 6. Summary of recommendations

Theme	Recommendation	Rationale
<b>MDRZ Height</b>	Limit to 3 storeys only where topography conceals bulk	Aligns with national “medium” standard; protects Kerikeri’s visual catchment
<b>Zoning – Kerikeri</b>	Retain Mixed Use Zone	Supports live-work format; protects heritage and amenity
<b>Zoning – Waipapa</b>	Apply Town Centre Zone	Builds a true service node; little character conflict
<b>Design Protocols</b>	Adopt binding Character Guidelines/Masterplans	Ensures cohesive growth and design quality
<b>NPS-UD / MDRS compliance</b>	Implement NPS-UD objectives proportionately; no automatic MDRS requirement	Tier 3 status provides discretion; focus on quality, not quantity

