

BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
IN THE MATTER of the Far North Proposed District Plan - Hearing 15D:
Rezoning Kerikeri-Waipapa

**STATEMENT OF REBUTTAL EVIDENCE OF DENNIS SIDNEY CORBETT ON
BEHALF OF KIWI FRESH ORANGE COMPANY LIMITED**

CORPORATE – COMMUNITY LIAISON AND KERIKERI-WAIPAPA MARKET

24 September 2025

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WYNN WILLIAMS

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Dennis Sidney Corbett.
- 2 For the past five years, I have been engaged by Kiwi Fresh Orange Company Limited (**KFO**) as a community liaison and project representative. My role has been to engage with members of the local community, community groups, and mana whenua, to gather their feedback on KFO's development proposal and submission on the Proposed Far North District Plan (**PDP or Proposed Plan**).

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 3 I confirm I have the experience set out at paragraphs 4 - 5 of my statement of evidence dated 16 June 2025 (**June statement**).

NGĀTI RĒHIA

- 4 In my June statement, I summarised my engagement with Ngāti Rēhia, explaining how KFO has received overwhelming support from Ngāti Rēhia and how this relationship will continue through the land development.
- 5 Since submitting my June statement, I have received a letter of support from Ngāti Rēhia. I attach this to my evidence as **Appendix A**.
- 6 I most recently met with Whati Rameka, an Executive Trustee of Ngāti Rēhia, on 22 September 2025. He was not aware of the PDP-R scenario and shared Ngāti Rēhia concerns over pivoting to more intensification to meet future growth.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE PDP-R SCENARIO

- 7 Talking to people in the community since receiving the Council's evidence, they have been genuinely surprised about where the PDP-R scenario has come from. I have talked to numerous locals, all of whom were surprised by the PDP-R scenario.
- 8 I have also consulted community groups, including Carbon Neutral NZ Trust (Kerikeri Branch), Our Kerikeri, Vision Kerikeri, Our Kerikeri Community Charitable Trust and Kapiro Conservation Trust. I met with a representative of these groups on 19 September 2025. They all expressed their concern over the suddenness of the PDP-R scenario and its misalignment with what the Kerikeri-Waipapa community actually wants: affordability, open space, and walkways. I understand that they will voice their concerns through their submissions.

- 9 The Council's PDP-R scenario is out of step with the type of urban development that the people of Kerikeri want. To provide a general example of the community's opposition to infill density, I enclose an article by Radio New Zealand as **Appendix B**. Community concerns about density and a lack of open space resulted in a housing complex on Clark Road being shrunk from three storeys to two.

DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNSELLORS

- 10 On Wednesday 24 September, I met with Steve McNally (counsellor) to discuss the PDP-R scenario and understand his views on it. To my surprise, he told me that he was unaware of the proposal but would speak to other counsellors about their knowledge of it.
- 11 I heard back from Steve McNally later in the day that the counsellors he spoke to had not seen the PDP-R scenario.
- 12 Given the District Plan is a public document that dictates the future of growth for Kerikeri, and by its own terms the PDP-R Scenario has the potential to make "transformative"¹ change to the existing character of the township, I find it surprising that elected members of the Council are unaware of it.

IS THE PDP-R SCENARIO REALISTIC BASED ON HISTORIC PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEMAND FOR HOUSING IN KERIKERI?

- 13 In my opinion, the PDP-R scenario is not realistic based on historic patterns of development and demand for housing in Kerikeri.
- 14 Locals live and play here for the lifestyle on offer, green spaces and stand-alone housing with room for a trailer and or boat, not infill type housing (especially not the multi-level inner city living offers). Those moving here are attracted by the lifestyle on offer: open space, nature, culture and history, water activities, walking tracks and the village-type atmosphere. If there were a demand for higher-density infill, it would already be on offer.
- 15 As I addressed in my June statement, the market demographic is made up of young families, retirees, and lifestyle living. Their preferences can be summarised below:

¹ Appendix 3 - Officers Recommended Amendments to Medium Density Residential Zone Chapter as sought by Kāinga Ora, Overview.
<https://www.fndc.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/46229/bbb8b3d53edd742659ec09a947c5e9644410ced7.pdf>

Market	Preference	Price-range
Younger people	Affordable, stand-alone housing on 600m ² to 1000m ² that is located reasonably close to amenities and recreational activities on flat land.	\$600k - \$800k
Retirees	Smaller lot housing of 600m ² to 800m ² of stand-alone housing or duplexes that are located close to amenities such as healthcare, shops and recreational facilities.	\$800k - \$1.2m
Lifestyle living	Larger lots of 2000m ² to 6000m ² .	\$1m - \$1.4m

- 16 Prospective buyers do not come for city-type living in a lifestyle area. Prospective buyers come for the lifestyle – the nature, culture and history of the area. None of these three main categories are looking for apartment or terrace housing. There is simply no demand for it.
- 17 The lot sizes and location under the PDP-R scenario do not reflect either the semi-rural nature and lifestyle appeal of the area or the three types of housing that Kerikeri-Waipapa needs to cater for.
- 18 Buyers in the market are well informed about the different housing options available and their associated costs. In my experience, for people to consider housing that does not match their preferences, there would need to be a significant reduction in price. Only then would buyers be willing to compromise on what they want in a home.
- 19 Consequently, unless infill development can deliver homes at a noticeably lower price than other available options that meet buyers' preferences, there is likely to be little or no demand for such infill housing. Buyers in Kerikeri place significant value on features that are typically only available through greenfield, rural-lifestyle, or rear-lot subdivisions. As a result, infill housing would need to offer a much stronger value proposition to attract interest.
- 20 I leave the detailed comparison of the costs of infill and greenfield development in Kerikeri to Adam Thompson. However, I note as an example of a smaller greenfield subdivision the GJ Gardner development off Kerikeri Rd, south of Kerikeri. This development provides a useful reference point for understanding the costs and outcomes associated with greenfield projects in the area.

- 21 This development, which I referred to as Te Uru Lane development in my evidence in chief, provided for approximately 30 lots between 300m² and 600m². The lots are being marketed as house and land packages (\$700k to \$1.2m) or bare land (\$300k to \$400k).
- 22 In my discussions with local real estate professionals and community members, it is clear that the market in Kerikeri continues to favour stand-alone homes on larger lots, as offered in greenfield subdivisions. I met with the management and staff of a respected real estate company, REAL Property Kerikeri Ltd, on 18 September. They were unaware of what is now being proposed, and their reaction was one of disbelief. They shared their concerns with me that the three significant groups driving demand in the local property market (young families, retirees, and lifestyle buyers) will not have their needs met by dense housing and apartment living. A letter from one of the owners is attached as **Appendix C**.

Interest from developers

- 23 In my professional experience, there has been little to no interest from developers wanting to build apartments or terrace housing in Kerikeri. They are aware that the local Kerikeri market and those wanting to move to Kerikeri are interested in stand-alone housing on 600m² to 6000m². Developers taking a risk on development, particularly if they are partly financing the cost of development on early sales, need to be sure that there is a market for their product.
- 24 The biggest demand is for stand-alone housing on 600m² to 1000m² that is close to amenities and recreational activities in the \$600k - \$800k range. No one in the market has shown any interest in apartment or terrace housing, and when asked, the response is “no, thank you”.
- 25 Existing houses like those that would be enabled by the PDP-R scenario are social or community housing and have (for example) been enabled by Kainga Ora or Habitat for Humanity. This type of housing is good for the community in that it provides affordable housing for a range of different people. However, it is community-driven housing that is the exception rather than the rule. There is no market-driven housing development of this nature that I am aware of.
- 26 I have read a draft of Adam Thompson’s evidence, and his analysis of new dwellings built in Kerikeri (infill/redevelopment, greenfield, rural lifestyle) aligns with my knowledge of the local environment and market. There are not a lot of large sections in the town centre where infill development (where there might be some demand for), like back-lot subdivisions, would be feasible.

CONCLUSION

- 27 Both Ngāti Rēhia and community groups support and prefer KFO's greenfield development. KFO's development will boost the local economy significantly.
- 28 The proposed zoning and development ticks all of the boxes for the market demographics. KFO's proposal also comes with a hotel offering 150-200 permanent employment opportunities, a supermarket offering another 150 jobs (plus many more during the staged development), and countless opportunities for building contractors and related trades.
- 29 On the other hand, market demand for the PDP-R scenario is non-existent. It is simply not what current homeowners and prospective buyers want.

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Dennis Corbett

24 September 2025

APPENDIX A - NGĀTI RĒHIA LETTER OF SUPPORT

16 June 2025

Tuatahi ake rā, e mihi ana ki ngā mate huhua, kua huri tuara mai nei rātou ki a tātou, haere koutou, haere mai haere.

Ka hoki mai kia tātou ngā kanohi ora mutunga, me mihi ka tika.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa.

RE: TAUTOKO FOR SCENARIO F – WAIPAPA KERIKERI SPATIAL PLAN

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia Trust is pleased to confirm our support for Option F as proposed for the Waipapa-Kerikeri spatial plan. We will support and respect how the elected members ultimately make their decision but seek the inclusion of scenario F as a hybrid scenario to D, E.

We have also participated in the hearings and presented in support of Option F being included.

There are substantial benefits to be realised for our community and hapu in employment, social, housing and commercial developments from Option F.

Ngāti Rēhia are ahi kaa for Waipapa-Kerikeri and in recognition of our connections formed the hāpu roopu Tē Pātukurea. Whilst our roopu put forward a hybrid of Scenarios D and E we are also submitting that scenario F be added to the mix.

Mauri ora,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Whati Rameka'.

Whati Rameka
Executive Trustee

APPENDIX B – RADIO NEW ZEALAND ARTICLE

[NEW ZEALAND \(/NEWS/NATIONAL\)](#) / [HOUSING \(/TAGS/HOUSING\)](#)

Kāinga Ora downscales social housing plans in Kerikeri

9:47 pm on 6 September 2023

Peter de Graaf ([/authors/peter-de-graaf](#)), Northland reporter

✉ peter.degraaf@rnz.co.nz (<mailto:peter.degraaf@rnz.co.nz>?
subject=K%C4%81inga%20Ora%20downscales%20social%20housing%20plans%20in%20Kerikeri)



Kāinga Ora's original plans for a three-storey public housing complex on Clark Rd in Kerikeri (pictured) have been dropped in favour of scaled-down two-storey apartments and terraced housing. Photo: Supplied / Kāinga Ora

Government agency Kāinga Ora has scaled back its plans for social housing in central Kerikeri following community concerns about density and lack of open space.

A housing complex on Clark Road, already under construction, has been shrunk from three storeys to two, and 14 homes to be built next door will now be spread over two properties instead of one.

Kāinga Ora's Northland director, Jeff Murray, said public feedback about density and a lack of outdoor space in the original plans prompted site developer Gemscott to buy an extra property and redesign the complex.

The 14 apartment-style and terraced homes would now be built on adjoining sections at 5-7 Clark Road, and include a children's play area and more on-site parking.

A resource consent application was lodged with the Far North District Council this week.

Work had started already on another development at neighbouring 3 Clark Road, which had been scaled back from 12 homes over three storeys to eight homes on two levels.

Murray said there was an urgent need for more public and affordable housing in the Far North.

"We've listened to the feedback we've received from the community. We're only providing homes that are two-storey. These will be two- and three-bedroom homes with a park that will be an internal space available to all the people that live there. We've also provided car parking on site."

Community group Our Kerikeri, which led the charge to persuade Kāinga Ora to modify its plans, welcomed the design changes.

The group also organised a public meeting in May that drew more than 800 people, a record for Kerikeri.

Trustee Vince Buxton said he was pleased Kāinga Ora had taken some of the community feedback on board, and would now provide green space for families and safer vehicle access for the complex.

The drop in height from three storeys to two meant the homes were less likely to stand out from surrounding buildings, which also lowered the risk of stigmatising the people moving in.

The group still believed the location was "not ideal" because it could limit expansion of the town's commercial area, and would reduce active street frontages on what was likely to become a main route in future.

"But we are pleased Gemscott is working with us, and others, on the visual design of the streetscapes," he said.

Work has started on an eight-unit social housing complex at 3 Clark Rd in Kerikeri. Photo: Peter de Graaf

Buxton hoped better planning in future would ensure Kerikeri got the housing it needed, in the right places and with a good mix of transport to schools and workplaces.



Locals spoken to by RNZ on Kerikeri's main street expressed a range of views about Kāinga Ora's plans. All agreed more social housing was needed but some were concerned about the location, the loss of scarce commercially zoned land, or the effect on long-standing plans to build a ring road around the town centre connecting Homestead Road and Clark Road.

Others however supported the proposal, saying the living situation of many Kerikeri residents was untenable and the town was desperately short of affordable housing.

Kāinga Ora was planning a series of drop-in information sessions during October and November at a pop-up office at 115 Kerikeri Road, another property it planned to develop.

The housing agency currently owned four sites in central Kerikeri.

3 Clark Road: A modified plan was granted resource consent in June 2023. Site works were underway for eight two-bedroom units over two storeys, instead of the original plan of 12 homes in buildings of up to three storeys. The homes were due to be completed by late 2024

5-7 Clark Road: Originally just 5 Clark Road, but development firm Gemscott bought the neighbouring property following community concerns about density and lack of outdoor space for residents. A resource consent application has been lodged. If approved, it will consist of 14 two-level terrace and apartment-style homes, each with two or three bedrooms

4 King Street: Plans for public housing withdrawn

115 Kerikeri Road: Design options for the almost 4000 square metre property, between the SPCA shop and Kerikeri Retirement Village, were still being explored

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APPENDIX C – LETTER FROM REAL PROPERTY KERIKERI LTD

Subject: Housing Demand and Development Considerations in Kerikeri

Dear Dennis,

Our team recently met to review the current housing demand in Kerikeri and to discuss what we believe are the key factors needed to support healthy, sustainable growth in our region.

Over the past few decades, Kerikeri has grown from a small rural town into a vibrant and diverse community. It has become a place where young people can complete their education, learn a trade, meet a partner, and raise a family—all within the same community. For this to continue, we must ensure that housing remains accessible to the next generation. There is currently a high demand for homes in the \$600,000 to \$800,000 price range, which aligns with what many first-home buyers and young families can realistically afford. However, there is a critical shortage of supply in this bracket. If this gap is not addressed, it will significantly slow Kerikeri's growth, limit opportunities for local families, and risk forcing the next generation to leave the area in search of affordable housing elsewhere.

Kerikeri is a unique town, shaped by generations of settlers from many different parts of the world. This rich heritage has contributed to the character, values, and community spirit we see today. These values—such as connection to land, family, and quality of life—must be central to any future development planning. In our view, greenfield development is the only realistic pathway forward if we are to meet current and future housing demands while protecting the character and liveability of Kerikeri.

In addition to young families, there are two other significant groups driving demand in the local property market:

1. **Retirees** – Particularly those relocating from the Auckland region. This group typically seeks new, low-maintenance homes on flat sections between 600m² and 800m². Proximity to essential amenities—such as shops, healthcare, and recreational facilities—is a key consideration for this demographic.
2. **Lifestyle Buyers** – Also often relocating from urban centres like Auckland, lifestyle buyers are seeking larger blocks ranging from 3,000m² to 10,000m². Their goal is to build substantial family homes with space for sheds, gardens, and sometimes hobby farming. These buyers are not looking for high-density or urban-style housing but rather open space and a strong connection to the natural environment.

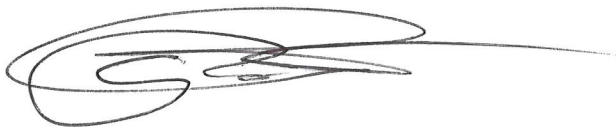
It is also worth noting that, at present, there is very little demand in Kerikeri for apartment living. This may change in the future, but current buyer preferences continue to reflect the semi-rural nature and lifestyle appeal of the area.

In summary, Kerikeri's continued growth should reflect the values and needs of the community. We need to plan for developments that:

- Offer affordable housing for young families,
- Provide suitable retirement options,
- Cater to lifestyle block demand, and
- Preserve the town's character and connection to open green space.

We appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing these insights, and we hope this perspective can help inform planning and development discussions for the future of Kerikeri.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven De Ruiter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven De Ruiter