

18 August 2025

Northland Planning & Development

Attention: Rochelle Jacobs

By Email: rochelle@northplanner.co.nz

Dear Rochelle

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WAITANGI LIMITED SUBMISSION TO FAR NORTH PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN

We are in receipt of the final recommended provisions by Waitangi Limited (**WEL**) in relation to the Far North Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) relating to appropriate resource management of the unique Waitangi Estate Treaty Grounds, including the Copthorne Hotel operated by Millennium & Copthorne Hotels New Zealand Limited (**MCK**). We have also reviewed the evidence presented on behalf of WEL to the Independent Hearings Panel dated 30 May 2025 and Council's section 42A hearing report.

This letter serves to confirm MCK's support for the proposed application of a new Special Purpose zone for the Waitangi Estate, which as noted incorporates MCK's Copthorne Bay of Islands site. Specifically, MCK supports WEL's alternative planning framework which in our opinion better reflects the national historic significance of the Estate and its unique characteristics and will enable ongoing and sustainable management of its values and resources in a more effective and efficient way than the PDP as notified.

The latter ascribed a Rural Production zone and a series of overlays, which in our view undermined the ability for the Estate to be sustainably managed. It is acknowledged that the PDP ascribed a Business – Mixed Use zone to the Copthorne Bay of Islands site, noting however that visitor accommodation at ground floor (and associated buildings exceeding 400m² GFA) within that zone requires a discretionary activity under the PDP provisions as notified.

MCK highlights that WEL has consulted with them and in so doing has established a rational and applicable planning framework for the ongoing use and reasonable development potential of the Copthorne Bay of Islands, without detriment to the site's surrounding natural and cultural environment.

MCK supports the permitted activity status for visitor accommodation in the Whakanga (Tourism) sub-zone and restricted discretionary status for associated buildings that exceed 400m² GFA or infringe standards. MCK supports the associated higher objectives and policies of the Special Purpose zone and sub-zones, as well as the rules, standards and assessment criteria.

In reviewing the section 42A hearing report, it is acknowledged there are some differences between Council's recommendation to the hearings panel and WEL's submission, with specifics outlined below. MCK supported WEL's provisions as they gave them flexibility for ongoing operations and a suitable pathway for consenting or permitting future development potential. Notwithstanding, MCK raises no fundamental objections to Council's variations, again as outlined below (rule references are taken from Appendix 3 to the section 42A hearing report):

- Council has undertaken a review of the proposed objectives and policies for the Special zone and their recommended policy framework differs nominally from WEL's framework. MCK continue to support the policy framework insofar as it "enables commercial activities ...that are compatible with [the Estate's] historic, natural and cultural values" (Policy WEZ-P2) and specifically as it "enable[s] the ongoing use and appropriate expansion, or redevelopment of established visitor accommodation and associated staff housing activities" (Policy WEZ-P5) within the Whakanga sub-zone.
- MCK supports the addition in Rule WEZ-R1 that identifies new buildings or structures are permitted activities where they accommodate a permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary activity.
- MCK continues to support Rule WEZ-R2 relating to permitted activity status for visitor accommodation, without restriction, in the Whakanga sub-zone.
- MCK supports revised Rule WEZ-R4 relating to Waitangi Commercial Activities in the identified sub-zones.
- MCK originally supported WEL's proposed Rule WEZ-R6 relating to impermeable surfaces. MCK understands the Council's position in relation to revised WEZ-R6 to align its approach with other urban zones: seeking at least 10% of the site be planted in grass, and ensuring disposal of stormwater on-site where a connection to Council's reticulated network is not possible, and in doing so, requiring an engineering or site suitability report to determine compliance. MCK previously considered, like WEL, that provision of a specialist report to determine permitted activity status was onerous. Notwithstanding, the commentary in the section 42A hearing report (paras 105-110) is recognised, and MCK accepts that future development will more than likely require engineering input and drainage reviews.
- MCK identified what it assumed was a potential typographical error in Rule WEZ-S2 relating to the Whakanga sub-zone – MCK considered bullet (a) should read 55 degrees at 2m above ground level at the northern boundary, as opposed to 33 degrees currently (which is usually prescribed for southern orientation boundaries) In reviewing the landscape report, it is understood to be a deliberate departure from the standard 2m plus 55 degree recession plane for northern boundaries, owing to the adjacent Te Pitowhenua sub-zone and perceived sensitivity. MCK continues to suggest the 2m plus 55 degree recession plane remains suitable, noting that bulk and dominance are also addressed

by the 3m yard and 10m maximum height standards proposed. MCK does not consider sufficient evidence on the 20 degree difference has been provided to support the approach.

- MCK supports the inclusion of the definition of Waitangi Commercial Activities for clarity in interpretation.
- MCK accepts the proposed changes to the Signs chapter, noting they continue to provide a clear consenting framework.

Acknowledging that MCK made no submission of its own on the PDP and recognising that MCK has no standing at the upcoming Hearing 15B, MCK considers it prudent to share its support of WEL's submission and would be pleased for you to table this for the Hearing Panel's consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'K' followed by a horizontal line and a small loop.

Kay Panther Knight

Director

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