

Rural Zones

Ngā Rohe Tuawhenua



What are the Rural zone chapters about?

The Rural zones in the Proposed Far North District Plan – Decisions Version manage how land is used and developed across the district's rural areas. They provide for farming, horticulture and other primary production activities, while enabling rural living and managing reverse sensitivity between production activities and more sensitive activities.

The PDP-DV includes the following Rural zones:

- **Rural Production zone (RPROZ)** – areas primarily used for farming, horticulture, forestry and other primary production activities, where protecting land for long-term rural production is the priority.
- **Rural Lifestyle zone (RLZ)** – areas that provide for low-density rural living, where people can live in a rural environment while still enabling small-scale primary production.
- **Rural Residential zone (RRZ)** – areas close to towns and settlements that provide for rural-style living at higher densities than the RLZ, while retaining some rural character.
- **Settlement zone (RSZ)** – rural towns and village areas that provide for a mix of housing, small-scale business, community activities and services that support local rural communities.
- **Horticulture Precinct** – a place-based precinct in the Kerikeri–Waipapa area that sits over the underlying rural zone to prioritise horticultural production and manage reverse sensitivity effects.

What does the Proposed District Plan – Decisions Version (PDP-DV) do?

The PDP-DV

- Prioritises primary production activities (including farming, horticulture and forestry) in areas best suited for those uses.
- Directs rural lifestyle and rural residential development to specific zones, rather than allowing it to occur across all rural land.
- Manages reverse sensitivity effects, where activities like housing could constrain rural production activities.
- Sets clearer and more consistent rules for land use, buildings, and subdivision across rural areas.
- Aligns rural zoning and provisions with national planning standards and national direction, including the Resource Management Act.

What's changed from the Operative District Plan (ODP)?

Compared with the ODP, the PDP-DV introduces a much more structured approach to managing the rural environment.

Key changes include:

- A clear separation of rural roles, with different zones used for rural production, rural lifestyle living, rural residential development, and settlements.
- Less reliance on permissive subdivision across the rural environment, reducing the fragmentation of productive rural land.
- Stronger direction to protect land for rural production, rather than allowing ad-hoc rural residential development.
- New zone-specific rules that provide greater certainty about what activities are expected and appropriate in each rural zone.

Overall, the PDP-DV shifts away from a broadly permissive rural framework toward a more planned and targeted approach to rural growth and development.

Following submissions and Independent Hearings Panel recommendations, several refinements have been made to the rural provisions:

- Confirmation and refinement of the distinct roles of each rural zone, particularly the RPROZ, RLZ and RRZ. Including if it is within the Horticulture precinct.
- Retention of larger minimum lot sizes in the Rural Production zone to support ongoing rural production and avoid further land fragmentation.
- Clarification of how subdivision, land use and building rules interact across the different rural zones.
- Refinements to rules to better manage reverse sensitivity effects and align with plan-wide provisions.
- Confirmation that rural residential and lifestyle development is best directed to the RLZ, RRZ and RSZ, rather than spread throughout productive rural land.
- Development of the horticultural precinct.

These changes improve clarity, consistency and workability while maintaining the overall intent of the PDP-DV.

When do I need a Resource Consent?

A resource consent is required if your activity or building does not meet the permitted activity standards in the PDP-DV.

Rural Production zone (RPROZ)

A resource consent is required if you:

- Propose activities that are not related to primary production, such as commercial, industrial, or large-scale tourism activities.
- Exceed limits for residential development, including the number of dwellings or scale of development.
- Do not meet building standards such as height, setbacks, or site coverage.
- Introduce activities that could conflict with farming, forestry, or horticulture activities.

Rural Lifestyle zone (RLZ)

A resource consent is required if you:

- Propose higher intensity residential or business activities than anticipated in the zone.
- Establish commercial, industrial, or urban-type activities.
- Do not meet standards for home business, visitor accommodation, or education activities.
- Do not meet building or site standards.

Settlement zone (RSZ)

A resource consent is required if you:

- Exceed limits for commercial, retail, or community activities.
- Do not meet building or site standards, including height, setbacks, or landscaping.
- Propose activities that are larger scale or not anticipated for a rural settlement.

Horticulture Precinct

A resource consent is required if you:

- Propose activities that are not directly related to horticulture or farming, or do not have a functional need to be in the precinct.
- Add additional dwellings or increase the intensity of development beyond what is provided for.
- Do not meet precinct or underlying zone standards.
- Introduce activities that could conflict with horticultural operations, including reverse sensitivity effects.

Rural Residential zone (RRZ)

A resource consent is required if you:

- Do not comply with building standards, including height, setbacks, and site coverage.
- Propose non-residential activities beyond what is anticipated in the zone.
- Introduce activities that affect rural residential character or amenity.

Across all rural zones

A resource consent is required if your proposal:

- Does not meet permitted activity standards.
- Is more intensive than what the zone provides for
- Could create conflicts with rural production activities.
- Could adversely affect rural character, amenity, or neighbouring activities.

What do I need to know before developing or subdividing?

Before starting a project in a rural area, it is important to:

- Check which rural zone applies to your land and understand the role of that zone.
- Confirm whether your proposed activity is permitted or requires resource consent.
- Be aware that subdivision and housing opportunities are more limited in the Rural Production zone than under the ODP.
- Consider potential effects on neighbouring rural production activities, including noise, odour, spray drift and traffic.
- Seek pre-application advice from Council for complex proposals or where subdivision or building is proposed.