

## **The History for Hearing Panel - Hearing 17**

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Haruru  
Northland 0204

5th November 2025

Kia ora Hearing Panel,

My name is Victoria Yorke, and I appear as a co-owner of Lot 1 DP 53506, Haruru Falls. Thank you for the opportunity to present the history of our land and the difficulties we have faced — which are directly relevant to the Panel’s consideration of the proposed zoning and overlays.

### **Purpose of noting history**

This statement outlines the background of our property, the zoning history as it unfolded, and the significant financial and procedural impacts that have resulted from decisions made without consultation with us as landowners.

### **Short Chronology**

- April 2000 (Proposed Plan): The property was shown as General Residential in the proposed district plan maps available at that time.
- 2003 (Purchase): Whilst living abroad, we purchased Lot 1 DP 53506 as a residential lot, relying on the zoning shown in the 2000 Proposed Plan.
- 2003 (Revised Plan): Between purchase and settlement, and without our knowledge or consultation, the land was rezoned to General Coastal in the revised plan of 2003.
- 2004 - 2008: After discovering this rezone, we engaged a planner and opened discussions with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the FNDC about a potential management plan. In July 2008, our planner advised that there were now no “as-of-right” controlled subdivisions, and that the next available category required a minimum of 40 ha — effectively ruling out development. We were advised that, had we applied immediately after the zoning change, we “might have had a fighting chance,” but that pursuing it then would have been a poor use of money.
- 2011-2013 Draft Regional Policy Statement, Proposed Regional Council consulting/submissions etc - no notification

- 2013 - 2016 Environment court appeals - No submission made from us, as no notification from NRC received (apparently a letter was sent on the 5th October, 2012, to an old address in London, but we did not receive this).
- 2017 (Return to NZ): Upon returning to New Zealand, we sought new advice and were told to wait for the new Proposed District Plan (PDP) to be notified before making a submission — which we did.
- July 2025 PDP Outcome: Our submission has thus far been rejected, and the PDP now zones the property Rural Production with a High Natural Character (HNC) overlay covering the entire site.
- Professional Costs and Rates paid: Since purchase in 2003, engagement with planners, and other experts plus Rates paid on this property, have cost us more than \$200,000

### **Issues We Ask the Panel to Note**

#### **1. Lack of Consultation & Procedural Fairness:**

The change from General Residential (in 2000) to General Coastal (2003), and now to Rural Production with HNC, occurred without consultation with us as the landowners. These shifts have profoundly affected our ability to use and plan for the property.

#### **2. Reliance and Timing:**

We acted in good faith, based on the zoning information available at purchase and professional advice at each step. Our decisions — including holding off applications while overseas — were made responsibly and reasonably in context.

#### **3. Significant Financial Impact:**

We have invested around \$100,000 in professional fees and a further \$100,000 in rates, with virtually no return or development pathway.

#### **4. Outstanding Information Requests:**

We have lodged OIA requests with DOC, the Far North Regional Council, and the Far North District Council seeking all documentation, mapping data, advice, and consultation records that informed the zoning and overlays applied to Lot 1 DP 53506 — particularly relating to:

- a. The Transitional Plan (circa 1995);
- b. The Operative District Plan (2003 / 2009); and
- c. The Proposed District Plan (PDP).

These records are crucial to understanding how the zoning has evolved and whether it has been applied fairly and consistently.

5. Agency Responsibility:

If DOC or other agencies have influenced the overlays or environmental classifications applied to this land, then we question why no contribution, compensation, or offer to acquire the property has ever been made — despite the effective private use restrictions now in place.

**What We Ask of the Panel**

- That the Panel recognise the sequence of events and reliance outlined above when evaluating the appropriateness of the current PDP zoning and HNC overlay;
- That the Panel obtain and consider the relevant background documents and mapping criteria used by FNDC, the Regional Council, and DOC in assigning the current zoning and overlays; and
- That the Panel give due weight to the financial, procedural, and fairness implications faced by us as the affected landowners.

We have acted in good faith throughout, while paying full rates and bearing significant costs under ever-tightening restrictions. We respectfully request that this context be considered when the Panel reviews the zoning applied to Lot 1 DP 53506.

We will provide the OIA documents as soon as they are received, and are happy to supply copies of invoices, correspondence, and expert reports if the Panel wishes.