




PROPOSED FAR NORTH DISTRICT PLAN

MINUTE 22 OF THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

Soil Expert Conferencing on the Horticulture Precinct

1. Following the hearing of evidence for Hearing 9 – Rural, Horticulture and Horticulture Processing it was apparent that several submitters consider that the Horticulture Precinct has included more land than they consider is justified. As signaled in the Officer’s Right of Reply for Hearing 9, the spatial extent of the Horticulture Precinct is a matter that will be heard as part of Hearing 15C – Rezoning General – Rural and Urban. We understand that Council hearing report for Hearing 15C will consider the spatial extent of the Horticulture Precinct as a whole, rather than only focus on land parcels where a rezoning from Horticulture Zone to another type of zone was requested.
2. The Hearing Panel want to ensure that they, and the Council reporting planner (for both Hearing 9 and Hearing 15C), have the most robust information available on the soils aspect prior to the drafting of the section 42A report, as opposed to following the evidence exchange timetable and debating areas of contention at the hearing. The Far North District Council has engaged soil expert Dr Reece Hill to provide a review of the initial LUC mapping that informed the spatial extent of the Horticulture Zone as notified, as well as consider other available soils data to inform Ms Pearson’s recommendations for the Horticulture Precinct.
3. Council has recommended soil expert caucusing prior to drafting the section 42A report for Hearing 15C to allow any soil experts engaged by submitters to work collaboratively with Dr Hill on determining where the highest quality soils are located within the Horticulture Precinct. The anticipated outputs from this caucusing are:
 - a) The preparation of a map that identifies land that the soil experts agree should/should be included in the spatial extent of the Horticulture Precinct, as well as identifying any areas of land where the soil experts cannot form a consensus (if any).
 - b) A joint witness statement explaining the methodology used to prepare the map, the data relied upon and the reasons for any disagreements between the experts (if any).
4. The outcome of this caucusing will inform the reporting planner’s recommendations on the spatial extent of the Horticulture Precinct, which will be considered as one factor among other relevant factors such as existing fragmentation patterns, the need to manage reverse sensitivity effects in the face of growth pressures and the need to identify defensible geographic boundaries for the Horticulture Precinct.
5. The Hearing Panel agrees with this approach and now directs expert conferencing as follows:

- a) Any submitters proposing to provide evidence on soils as part of their request to remove land from the Horticulture Precinct should indicate their willingness to put forward a soil expert by Wednesday 30 April 2025.
 - b) This will then be followed by expert caucusing in June between any soil experts engaged by submitters and Council's soil expert Dr Hill.
6. If you have any questions regarding this Minute, please contact the Hearings Administrator Alicia-Kate (AK) Taihia - Submissions & Hearings Administrator District Plan: alicia-kate.taihia@fndc.govt.nz or (09)4015247.



Robert Scott
Hearings Panel Chairperson
16 April 2025