

21 October 2025

Independent Hearings Panel
Far North Proposed District Plan
Far North District Council
Private Bag 752
Kaikohe 0440

By email to: alicia-kate.taihia@fndc.govt.nz

Dear Commissioners,

Far North Proposed District Plan – Hearing 17 (General / Miscellaneous / Sweep Up)

KiwiRail Holdings Limited (**KiwiRail**) is the State-Owned Enterprise responsible for the management and operation of the national railway network. This includes managing railway infrastructure and land, as well as rail freight and passenger services within New Zealand. KiwiRail is also the Requiring Authority for land designated "Railway Purposes" in district plans throughout New Zealand.

KiwiRail made a submission on the Far North District Council's Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) on 23 October 2024.

Transport Infrastructure, Regionally Significant Infrastructure, and Operational Need

KiwiRail supported the retention of the definitions for "Transport Infrastructure", "Regionally Significant Infrastructure", and "Operational Need" as notified. KiwiRail supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation these submissions be accepted.¹

Maintenance and Repair

KiwiRail sought the inclusion of a new definition for "Maintenance and Repair" to clarify activities required to sustain the operation or functioning of existing infrastructure. The Reporting Officer rejected KiwiRail's submission on the basis that the definition is unnecessary.² KiwiRail accepts the Reporting Officer's recommendation and will not pursue this relief further.

Reverse Sensitivity

KiwiRail, alongside other submitters (New Zealand Pork Industry Board, Horticulture NZ, Transpower New Zealand Limited, and RNZ), sought the inclusion of a new definition for "Reverse Sensitivity".

The Reporting Officer did not accept this submission, as the term is defined in higher-level planning documents, including the Regional Policy Statement.³ The Officer considered the definition well-established and sufficient for interpreting and applying reverse sensitivity within the district plan framework.

¹ Far North District Council Proposed District Plan – Section 42A Officer's Report Hearing Stream 17 – General / Miscellaneous / Sweep Up: dated 7 October 2025 at [101].

² As above at [171].

³ Far North District Council Proposed District Plan – Section 42A Officer's Report Hearing Stream 17 – General / Miscellaneous / Sweep Up: dated 7 October 2025 at [290] and [292].



KiwiRail disagrees with the Reporting Officer. There are many different definitions of reverse sensitivity contained in plans throughout New Zealand. While the Regional Policy Statement includes a definition, the term reverse sensitivity is referenced in a number of PDP provisions and it is important that a plan user can easily access a definition in the PDP. This will:

- assist users of the PDP;
- promote the overall efficiency and consistent administration of the PDP; and
- assist in supporting the protection of critical infrastructure, such as the railway, from reverse sensitivity effects.

KiwiRail continues to seek following definition of reverse sensitivity be included in the PDP:

Reverse sensitivity means the potential for the development, upgrading, operation and maintenance of an existing lawfully established activity to be compromised, constrained or curtailed by the more recent establishment or alteration of another activity which may be sensitive to the actual, potential or perceived environmental effects generated by the existing activity.

Noise Sensitive Activity

KiwiRail supported (in part) the definition as notified but sought the explicit inclusion of other relevant noise-sensitive activities ("residential or living activity, including activity in visitor accommodation or retirement accommodation, including boarding houses, residential visitor accommodation and papakāinga;" "hospitals", and "congregation within places of worship" and "marae").

The Reporting Officer considered further clarification of the definition was not necessary for most activity types – they were already defined in the PDP, and therefore in the Officer's view, the Plan provides sufficient guidance for interpreting what constitutes noise-sensitive activity.⁴

KiwiRail accepts the Reporting Officer's recommendation and will not pursue this relief further.

At this stage, KiwiRail does not wish to be heard at the hearing for Hearing Stream 17, and respectfully requests this letter is tabled as a record of KiwiRail's position. I am available to answer any questions from the Hearings Panel either in writing or via videoconference if required.

Yours faithfully,



Michelle Grinlinton-Hancock

RMA Team Leader

KiwiRail Holdings Limited

⁴ As above at [219].