

15 May 2026

Hon Nicola Grigg
Minister for the Environment
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C/o email: Rebecca.Partridge@mfe.govt.nz
Copy to: Alison.McLaughlin@mfe.govt.nz

Dear Minister Grigg

Clause 10A Exemption Request for Far North District Plan Review under Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

Further to our recent correspondence with Allison McLaughlin, Far North District Council (Council) seeks an exemption under clause 10A of Schedule 1 to the Resource Management Act 1991 from the requirement in clause 10(1) to publicly notify decisions on submissions on the Proposed Far North District Plan (PDP) by 27 May 2026.

On 17 September 2024, Minister Simmonds approved our request for an extension of time under clause 10A, Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), allowing Council to make decisions on submissions by 27 May 2026.

Council has made significant progress in its plan-making process, having held 20 hearings between May 2024 and December 2025 involving:

- consideration of 605 submissions (with over 8,725 individual submission points) and 589 further submissions (with 26,088 further submission points)
- 40 days and 320 hours of hearings, covering 20+ topics, 800+ briefs of evidence, 55 Section 42A reports and 26 written reply reports by Council officers

Full information on the hearings process is available at: pdp.fndc.govt.nz

Following the completion of hearings, the Hearing Panel has been preparing and releasing its recommendations across a wide range of topics. Given the significance of the proposed decisions and their long-term implications for the Far North district, Council considers it appropriate and necessary to provide elected members with sufficient opportunity to now workshop and understand the recommended decisions prior to formal decision-making.

Council requests that the timeframe for notification of decisions on submissions be extended to **30 June 2026**.

The request arises due to:

- the scale and complexity of the PDP review process, including the significant volume of submissions and further submissions received;
- the breadth of issues traversed through the hearing process;
- consideration of national direction changes (December 2025);
- integration of plan variation 1 provisions into the decisions version of the PDP;
- a significant number of mapping changes in response to submissions;
- the volume of the Hearing Panel's recommendations requiring consideration; and
- the need to provide elected members with sufficient opportunity to workshop and understand the recommended decisions prior to formal decision-making.

Council has determined that additional time is required to:

- complete the finalisation and circulation of hearing panel recommendations and supporting material;

- undertake workshops with councillors to ensure elected members are adequately informed on the recommended decisions and associated implications;
- complete internal quality assurance processes (in particular the decisions' version of the eplan); and
- enable formal consideration of the recommendations through Council's governance processes.

In addition, the availability of Council meeting dates within the adopted governance calendar has constrained Council's ability to schedule an earlier decision-making meeting while maintaining appropriate governance and reporting processes.

An extraordinary Council meeting has therefore been scheduled for 11 June 2026 for Council to consider and make decisions on submissions, following workshops on the recommended decisions on 13 and 26 May, and 4 June 2026. Subject to Council adopting the Hearing Panel's recommendations, Council intends to publicly notify its decisions on submissions by **30 June 2026**.

In making this request, Council has considered the interests of persons and parties who may be affected by this extension of time, the interests of the community in terms of an adequate assessment of the PDP, and the duty under Section 21 of the RMA to avoid unreasonable delay, as set out in clause 10A of Schedule 1. The requested extension is relatively short and will not prejudice submitters or unduly delay the overall plan review process. Rather, the additional time will support high-quality plan-making, effective plan integration, and robust, informed decision-making for a comprehensive district plan review that will guide growth, development, environmental management, and infrastructure planning across the district for several years, including the transitional period during Resource Management Reform. The risks of not having the appropriate timeframe in place to make decisions on submissions include increased pressure on existing resources and higher appeal risks with higher costs to ratepayers.

Council considers that the delay of 5 weeks is unavoidable and that granting the exemption is appropriate in the circumstances and consistent with the purpose of Schedule 1 of the RMA, including ensuring an efficient and effective process while maintaining the integrity and quality of decision-making.

Accordingly, Council respectfully requests an exemption extending the deadline under clause 10(1) for notification of decisions on submissions to **30 June 2026**.

If you would like further information or would like to discuss these matters, please feel free to contact me directly.

Nāku noa, nā



Kate Ivicheva
Group Manager – Planning and Policy
Far North District Council