

Porirua's Proposed District Plan 2020

Submission on Porirua's Proposed District Plan

To - Environment and City Planning Team

Date received 19/11/2020

Submission Reference Number #53

Wishes to be heard? No

Is willing to present a joint case? No

Could gain an advantage in trade competition in making this submission? No

Directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission? Yes

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Submission points

Point 53.1

Support / Support in part / Oppose

Oppose

Section: SCHED7 - Significant Natural Areas

Sub-section: SCHED7 - Significant Natural Areas

Provision

SNA076 Eastern Whitby Kānuka Forest

Site Summary Seven small areas comprised of regenerating kānuka-māhoe-ngaio-tītoki-māpou-dominated tall scrub and forest, partly on escarpment above Pāuatahanui Stream, which provides important riparian cover. This site enhances connectivity between Pāuatahanui and Duck Creek catchments, and provides important habitat for indigenous bird, fish and reptile species, including the barking gecko (*Naultinus punctatus*; At Risk-Declining). Includes kānuka (presumably *Kunzea robusta*; Threatened-Nationally Vulnerable). Includes indigenous vegetation on Acutely Threatened land environments and an area protected by PCC covenants (1078, 1816, 2153).

Relevant values under Policy 23 of RPS Representativeness (RPS23A)

Rarity (RPS23B)

Ecological context (RPS23D)

Submission

We wish to make a submission to the proposed District Plan regarding the extent and rules pertaining to Significant Natural Areas (SNAs)

Our address is 8 Lodestar Lane and the SNA that impacts us is SNA076.

Our understanding of the process was that further feedback would be sought before the plan was to be operative. We have

received information from the council that assured us that we "will not need to get a resource consent every time you want to trim trees, remove pest species or undertake routine maintenance around your house". The same letter says that the council wished to "create policies in the District Plan that allow you to undertake reasonable maintenance and improvement on your property, whilst preserving landscapes and biodiversity for the district as a whole".

We believe that the introduction of the District Plan is a direct contradiction to these statements and has effectively removed our rights as a property owner to maintain and improve our property.

Under the current proposed District Plan we are not permitted to undertake "trimming, pruning or removal" unless "there is imminent threat to the safety of people or property" and further that "any removal is undertaken or supervised by a suitably qualified arboricultural expert"

We believe this has removed our rights as a property owner to protect, maintain and improve our property, and further, has added significant cost to owning our home. We estimate that having to use a qualified arborist will add \$2500 per annum in maintenance costs. This is the estimate for ongoing maintenance and would only cover the most urgent work. To do the entire SNA in one visit will likely cost over \$10,000. We submit that this is an unreasonable cost to impose on a home owner.

The fire risk of the SNA on our property is of concern and has been maintained by us to this point. It is something we can manage but this has now been taken away from us by the proposed District Plan and will force us to use the arborist to do work we can do. It may be worth noting that the NZ fire Service lists both Kanuka and Manuka as a "high flammability species" and they are not recommended for green breaks or safety zones. As the house itself is not within 3 m of the SNA we would not be able to remove anything and submit this is far too restrictive and potentially puts our home and person at significant and unnecessary risk. Our home is situated up slope and northeast of much of the SNA which means any fire will travel quickly uphill and with the prevailing winds.

The proposed District plan will also have an effect on our sun and views. We purchased our place with the belief we could maintain both and we are now in a position where we will gradually lose both. What affect will this have on the enjoyment and future value of our home?

The mapping of the SNA has been poorly done and is not clear as to what areas fall under the proposed District Plan. It was also completed several months before the District Plan was notified. What about any vegetation that was trimmed between the two dates? How does the council propose to police this? Does the SNA area consider vegetation that has the trunk outside the designated area but the foliage in it? As a home owner how are we to be confident that we are not cutting down/trimming protected vegetation and that trimming that occurred between the two dates mentioned will not be considered a violation?

Using the tools on PCC's website the area taken by the SNA is approximately 1154 m². That is approximately 50% of our total land. I submit that it is unreasonable to lose control of half our property to the SNA.

The introduction of the proposed plan has taken away the rights people believe they have and offered nothing in return. There is no talk of a rates rebate or financial compensation for any of the potential losses.

In summary, the reason we are having this conversation is because home owners like ourselves have been maintaining and protecting these areas for many years, in our case over ten. Protecting these areas through an SNA is only likely to garner frustration, distrust and potentially dishonesty. Home owners may take to underhand methods to get back the views and safety they rightly feel entitled to. I would rather see the continued 'voluntary compliance' of home owners where they can freely maintain these areas to protect those things they value.

We strongly object to SNA076 being on our property and ask that the SNA be removed from our property to allow us to continue to look after what we are already guardians to.

We would be happy to hold discussions with the PCC council if that would be helpful

Regards,

Brendon Norling & Donna Wright

8 Lodestar Lane.

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Relief sought

We ask that the SNA be removed from our property entirely to allow us as the current guardians of it to continue to maintain, protect and improve the area.