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Gisborne District Council – Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti Submission on National Direction – Package 1: Infrastructure and development

Gisborne District Council (Council) thanks the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) for the opportunity to provide feedback on *Package 1: Infrastructure and Development*. Our submission draws on the expertise of Council staff, the perspectives of elected representatives, and the lived realities of our communities across Te Tairāwhiti.

We support the Government's goal of improving consistency and efficiency in infrastructure and housing delivery. These outcomes are essential to meet future needs and build climate resilience. However, we are concerned that some of the proposed changes may not work in practice, especially for regions with limited infrastructure, significant hazard risk, and unique land tenure patterns.

We are aware of, and support submissions made by mana whenua in our region on this Package.

This submission includes:

- An overview of Council and Te Tairāwhiti.
- General feedback on the overall package.
- Comments on each national direction instrument.
- Our responses to the Ministry's online questions (attached as Appendix 1).
- Detailed responses to proposed provisions (attached as Appendix 2).

We welcome further engagement and collaboration to help shape a planning system that delivers meaningful, enduring outcomes for all New Zealanders, starting with the communities that need it most.

Nāku Noa nā,

Nedine Thatcher Swann
Chief Executive

Executive summary

We **strongly support** the intent of this work to streamline planning processes, enable infrastructure delivery, and support Māori-led development. However, we believe **targeted changes** are needed to ensure these proposals work for regions like Te Tairāwhiti.

The proposed amendments are a step forward, but must be adjusted to be practical, fair and future-focused. We urge the Government to ensure the final framework is flexible enough to work in diverse contexts and robust enough to protect long-term outcomes to support the prosperity of future generations.

We strongly support:

- National direction that enables papakāinga, Māori-led housing and community development.
- Stronger emphasis on resilience, both in infrastructure and renewable energy generation.
- Policies that recognise Māori rights, settlement arrangements and regional governance frameworks.
- Faster and more certain delivery of critical infrastructure.
- Improved clarity and consistency across planning instruments.

However, we recommend the following key changes across the package:

- **Enable practical hazard management:** Councils must retain the ability to manage development in hazard-prone areas and address legacy risk, with national direction aligned to other key instruments like the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM).
- **Retain local discretion:** Councils must be able to protect sensitive sites, manage hazard risks, and apply community-led solutions.
- **Clarify definitions and expectations:** Terms like “particular environment”, “functional need”, and “cost-effective” require clear definitions to avoid judgment-based interpretations by individuals and unintended consequences.
- **Respect funding realities and resourcing needs:** Small councils need tools for costs recovery and funding support to implement new monitoring and compliance roles. Ratepayers are currently subsidising these activities, additional requirements without appropriate funding recovery tools will contribute to rate increase.
- **Support equitable development outcomes:** Frameworks must work across urban, rural, Māori land, and remote contexts, not just urban or reticulated sites.

We are committed to working with central government to ensure national direction delivers positive, practical outcomes for all communities, particularly for those most exposed to environmental risk and infrastructure inequities. We welcome further dialogue on how these proposals can be support a resilient, fair, and future-focused planning system for Aotearoa.

1. Overview of Gisborne District Council and Te Tairāwhiti

- 1.1. Gisborne District Council (Council) is the unitary authority for Te Tairāwhiti, a geographically diverse region spanning 8,265km². Approximately 28% of the land is whenua Māori, reflecting strong cultural and historical ties to the region. Te Tairāwhiti also encompasses around 270 kilometres of coastline with a mix of remote, rural, and urban settlements. The region's economy is primarily based on horticulture, agriculture, fishing and forestry, sectors that depend on reliable infrastructure and climate resilience.
- 1.2. Māori represent 56% of the population in Te Tairāwhiti – the highest proportion of any region in Aotearoa. We have four treaty settlements in our rohe (Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Iwi and Hapū of Te Rohe o Te Wairoa, and Rongowhakaata), with other mana whenua including Te Whānau a Apanui, Te Whānau a Kai, Ngā Ariki Kaipūtahi, and Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki currently in negotiation. There are also approximately 69 hapū located throughout Te Tairāwhiti.
- 1.3. The region faces significant infrastructure challenges, compounded by coastal exposure, remote settlement patterns, and vulnerability to natural hazards. Recently the impacts of Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle resulted in extensive damage to roading, power, water and telecommunications networks. A recent report to Council states that Council spent \$65 million on emergency road repairs in 2023¹. As the population continues to grow, pressure on infrastructure and housing has increased.
- 1.4. The challenges and opportunities in our region are complex and interconnected. To ensure community wellbeing and economic development, national direction must support integrated, locally responsive planning. For further context, please see:
 - [Council 3-year plan](#)
 - [Tairāwhiti Regional Land Transport Plan](#)
 - [Tairāwhiti 2050 Spatial Plan](#)
- 1.5. The challenges and opportunities in Te Tairāwhiti are complex and interconnected. We face growing infrastructure deficits, a need to enable housing and economic development, particularly for Māori land, and increasing exposure to climate and natural hazard risks. These issues make it critical that national direction supports locally responsive, integrated, and well-resourced planning. Council's ability to provide for future growth, community wellbeing, and climate resilience hinges on a planning system that is adaptable to our unique geography, communities, and values.

¹ Report 25-168, [COUNCIL - 26 June 2025](#)

2. General feedback on Package 1: Infrastructure and development

- 2.1. We acknowledge the intent of Package 1 is to enable more coordinated infrastructure and development outcomes. However, we emphasise the importance of ensuring that economic development is balanced alongside long-term community aspirations for our region's environment and a clear commitment to Treaty obligations.

Balance between enablement and sustainable environments for future generations

- 2.2. Council supports a more streamlined framework for housing and infrastructure delivery. However, we are concerned that the proposed package may tip the balance too far towards enablement at the expense of important local environmental outcomes that our communities are also passionate about.
- 2.3. Enabling development must not come at the expense of long-term environmental resilience. Expanding permitted activity status, especially across NES instruments, risks undermining regional planning objectives for sustainability, climate adaptation, and hazard avoidance within a local context.

Clarity and consistency across instruments

- 2.4. The overall package would benefit from greater clarity and consistency between instruments. Terminology, definitions, and standards require alignment to reduce confusion and implementation challenges. These inconsistencies create a risk of misinterpretation, delays, and public confusion. Inconsistencies and a lack of clarity contribute to higher consenting costs.
- 2.5. Clear precedence needs to be determined where competing priorities exist between national direction instruments. For example, there is overlap between the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards (NPS-NH) and the NZCPS for the management of tsunami, coastal erosion and coastal inundation. A lack of clarity hinders cost-effective and efficient processes, and achieving the intended environmental and economic outcomes.

Respecting local context and values

- 2.6. Te Tairāwhiti is a region of high natural hazard exposure and significant cultural and environmental values. Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle highlighted infrastructure fragility and inequities faced by communities that were left isolated without essential services for extended periods.
- 2.7. We understand the need for national consistency, but national direction must retain flexibility for regional plans to address local risks and aspirations. Development must remain responsive to wāhi tapu, Māori land ownership patterns, existing hazard overlays, and the unique aspirations of hapū and communities.
- 2.8. In Te Tairāwhiti, infrastructure planning and development intersects with iwi rights and statutory mechanisms, including the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019. This Act recognises the mana of Ngāti Porou hapū over their marine and coastal areas. It establishes legal protections and mechanisms for engagement on activities affecting these rohe moana. National direction must recognise such statutory arrangements, ensuring that infrastructure and renewable energy proposals do not undermine the rights affirmed through settlement and statutory recognition processes. Early engagement with iwi authorities, especially where infrastructure may affect recognised customary marine areas, is essential to upholding Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.

Resourcing and implementation

- 2.9. Several proposals place increasing demands on councils to monitor permitted activities, assess compliance and manage cumulative effects. Current tools do not enable councils to recover the costs of monitoring permitted activities or responding to cumulative effects effectively. Without appropriate funding or tools, implementation will be challenging, particularly for councils with a small rating base such as Gisborne District Council. Ratepayers in regions like ours already face significant affordability pressures, and the costs of expanded monitoring and compliance cannot be absorbed through general rates.
- 2.10. A more enabling framework must be matched with flexible cost-recovery mechanisms. For example, councils need the ability to charge targeted compliance levies for permitted activities where appropriate. We suggest MfE to explore or expand the scope of the proposed flexible and financing system² to include a nationally consistent compliance levy or funding model to support councils. We support the proposed Clause 10 of the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill in recovering costs for monitoring and compliance functions on permitted activities.

Support for papakāinga and Māori-led development

- 2.11. We strongly support the broadening of papakāinga development rights beyond Māori freehold land. This reflects the realities of Māori land ownership and supports tino rangatiratanga. This aligns with our regional priorities to support housing supply, uphold Te Tiriti, and enable whānau to return to and live on their whenua.
- 2.12. However, clarity is required around definitions, consenting pathways, and how councils are expected to verify eligibility or monitor permitted activities.

Renewable energy resilience and rural equity

- 2.13. Increasing local renewable generation, storage, and capacity is central to our energy resilience as a region. We support national direction that removes unnecessary barriers and provides certainty for renewable energy investment. However, enablement must be equitable. Rural communities should not bear disproportionate costs or be excluded from decision-making, and Māori landowners must be supported to participate. Renewable development should not come at the expense of environmental or cultural values.

² Proposed flexible funding and financing system's current scope is only for supporting urban growth. ([Going for Housing Growth: New and improved infrastructure funding and financing tools | Beehive.govt.nz](#))

3. Feedback on Package 1 instruments

National Policy Statement for Infrastructure

- 3.1. Council **supports** the direction of the NPS-I to elevate the importance of infrastructure in the planning system. The infrastructure network in Te Tairāwhiti has encountered numerous issues due to higher than anticipated population growth, and the compounding impacts of several severe weather events in recent years – notably Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle.

Key points of concern:

- 3.2. It is unclear how the NPS-I is intended to be balanced with the NPS-FM. We are concerned that restricting councils' ability to reassess environmental effects at consenting would undermine the integrated management of catchments and miss opportunities to address long-standing ecological impacts. Furthermore, the proposed definition of stormwater networks, particularly where it includes urban streams and overland flow paths, raises concerns about the interaction with the NPS-FM.
- 3.3. The requirement to provide for the functional or operational need of infrastructure in a "particular environment" needs further clarification. Ambiguity around the true scope of what this includes may inadvertently result in infrastructure being located in areas subject to natural hazards, or in significant environmental or cultural areas.
- 3.4. The NPS-I currently lacks recognition of the full scope of infrastructure, including its role in flood management. The definition for 'green infrastructure' should be aligned with the definition in the National Planning Standards. A corresponding policy should be included to support the development of green infrastructure. This will encompass the full breadth of this term and ensure consistency across other instruments.
- 3.5. Flood protection infrastructure needs greater recognition. This is currently only addressed in the proposed NPS-I by green infrastructure that provides flood management services. Flood protection infrastructure should be given more weight for the protection of high-value and vulnerable private and public assets, including Crown assets. The risk of flood hazard will be exacerbated in the future from climate change, making investing in flood protection now important for our future resilience.
- 3.6. Funding models, such as NZTA's co-investment approach, has an influence on infrastructure outcomes. NZTA typically funds "like-for-like" replacements and often prioritises high-volume corridors in other regions over remote networks such as in Te Tairāwhiti. Similarly, the rebuilding of like-for-like infrastructure following a natural hazard or severe weather event is not recognised. This, along with funding inequity should be recognised within the NPS-I.
- 3.7. The objective and Policy 6 introduce a requirement to consider "value for money" and "cost-effectiveness" in infrastructure decision-making. We are concerned this could be used to justify undermining environmental protections or limit meaningful engagement where budget constraints are cited.
- 3.8. It is unclear whether the term 'defence' includes Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) infrastructure.

Relief sought:

We recommend the following to achieve practical outcomes:

- Provide clear guidance on how the NPS-I will be balanced with the NPS-FM to avoid conflicting policy outcomes at the regional and catchment level.
- Provide a definition for the term 'particular environment' and the extent to which this applies.

- Implement the National Planning Standards definition of 'green infrastructure' and include a corresponding policy.
- Include and prioritise flood protection infrastructure within the scope of this instrument to ensure the protection of other infrastructure assets and community safety.
- Recognise funding constraints in remote regions and encourage alignment of funding mechanisms with resilience priorities.
- Provide a definition for the term 'defence' to assist with application and interpretation.
- Clarify how to assess "cost effectiveness" during planning and consenting and how this is balanced against environmental, cultural, and community wellbeing considerations.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation

- 3.9. Council **supports** the direction of the NPS-REG to enable and streamline renewable electricity generation. As a region not connected directly to the national grid, we rely heavily on localised energy infrastructure. As weather events become more frequent and severe, ensuring a resilient, reliable and equitable energy system is one of our region's highest infrastructure priorities.
- 3.10. We **strongly support** small-scale, community-led and Māori-led energy projects that improve local resilience and create opportunities for mana whenua to exercise tino rangatiratanga.
- Key points of concern:**
- 3.11. The policy intent remains unclear whether the direction promotes self-sufficiency or risks further isolating already vulnerable communities. We ask MfE to **clarify** how the NPS-REG intends to support integration, affordability, and energy equity.
- 3.12. We are concerned that if the consenting thresholds are lowered or if functional and operational needs are given greater weight, it will be more difficult for councils to decline proposals that have significant impacts on sensitive environments.

Relief sought:

In principle, we **support** the proposal to amend the NPS-REG with the following **amendments**:

- Recognise the importance of local context and discretion in planning.
- Provide councils with tools to manage environmental effects, including the ability to protect sensitive sites.
- Clarify whether the NPS-REG will unintentionally isolate remote communities from connecting to the national grid.

National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission and National Environmental Standard for Electricity Transmission Activities

- 3.13. Council **supports** the intent of the proposed amendments to the NPS-ET and NES-ETA. Te Tairāwhiti faces ongoing challenges around energy security and reliability. The entire region is reliant on a single transmission line from Tuai, which failed during Cyclone Gabrielle, leaving many communities without power. In this context, improving the resilience and reach of the electricity network is a critical priority.
- 3.14. We **strongly support** the new policy direction to provide for Māori interests in electricity infrastructure. Transmission corridors in Te Tairāwhiti often intersect with wāhi tapu and ancestral land, and partnership with iwi and hapū is essential to delivering culturally appropriate outcomes.
- 3.15. We **support** the amendment to expand the scope to include distribution businesses.

- 3.16. Council also **supports** expanding EV charging infrastructure in rural areas to improve long-term resilience.

Key points of concern:

- 3.17. As mentioned in the NPS-I, the term 'particular environment' is not defined and may allow electricity infrastructure to be located in sensitive areas.
- 3.18. Similarly, a policy that enables electricity distribution businesses to select a 'preferred route' for new infrastructure may reduce local discretion and create tensions where preferred routes intersect with sensitive areas. National direction must allow councils to assess environmental constraints, protect cultural values, and work with mana whenua to shape appropriate outcomes.
- 3.19. We note that an investment in EV charging infrastructure relies on reliable electricity supply to these locations, which must be planned for from the outset.

Relief sought:

We **support** the direction of the NPS-ET and NES-ETA, with the following **amendments**:

- Retain local discretion in sensitive areas, particularly when electricity distribution businesses identify a 'preferred route'; and
- Clarify the term 'particular environment' in the context of the NPS-ET and NES-ETA.

National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities

- 3.20. Council **supports** the intent of the proposed amendments to the NES-TF. Many areas of Te Tairāwhiti are remote and receive limited connectivity. Improving digital connectivity is important for our region's resilience, access to services, and economic development.

- 3.21. We **support** providing greater clarity around what is permitted and enabling improved telecommunications coverage, particularly in rural and isolated areas of Te Tairāwhiti.

Key points of concern:

- 3.22. We note potential costs associated with reduced local discretion, particularly regarding visual and amenity effects in sensitive landscapes.
- 3.23. The NES-TF may also limit councils' ability to engage with iwi and communities on infrastructure proposals that affect sensitive areas.

Relief sought:

We **support** the direction of the NES-TF with the following **amendments**:

- Simplify permitted standards by adopting a maximum total height for telecommunication structures, possibly zone-dependent, rather than separating pole and antenna heights.
- Provide clarification on the requirements for a 50m setback from residential buildings.
- Maintain a balanced approach that improves connectivity while retaining local input where appropriate.
- Ensure councils have the ability to carry out meaningful engagement with iwi and communities on infrastructure proposals that affect sensitive areas.

National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units)

- 3.24. Council **supports** the intent of the proposed NES-Granny Flats to increase housing options and support whānau living close together. This aligns well with the aspirations of our community and strategic direction.

Key points of concern:

- 3.25. Permitting granny flats as of right on reticulated properties will put additional pressure on infrastructure already operating at or beyond capacity. Permitting further dwellings in these areas, without appropriate checks, risks network failure, environmental harm and human health issues.
- 3.26. Similarly, permitting granny flats on unreticulated properties poses significant challenges for our region. A two-bedroom 70m² unit can place substantial additional load on on-site wastewater systems when connecting to an existing system. Robust provisions are needed to ensure applicants can demonstrate that either a separate system will service the unit, or the existing system has sufficient capacity. Furthermore, provisions are needed to ensure units comply with servicing standards and relevant overlays, such as flood protection minimum floor heights.
- 3.27. Councils face significant compliance challenges with permitted activities. In our experience, property owners frequently see a "permitted activity" status and often proceed with construction without verifying that all conditions are met. This can result in non-compliant developments that are difficult to retrospectively enforce. These risks are compounded when cumulative effects of multiple minor activities are not accounted for. For example, there were several cases of non-compliance of required standards under the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery Legislation Act 2023 (SWERLA) in Te Tairāwhiti. Additional dwellings were constructed without meeting specific requirements set out under the Act due to the permitted activity status.
- 3.28. The proposal has no maximum building coverage in rural zones which risks ad hoc intensification, infrastructure constraints, and loss of rural character. This conflicts with the overall purpose of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL), though we note that the changes to the NPS-HPL aligns with the government's intent to enable housing development³.
- 3.29. The proposal limits councils' ability to manage amenity outcomes. There are already concerns around privacy, proximity, and sunlight access in our region. Allowing district plans to adopt more lenient standards for minor residential units may exacerbate these issues.
- 3.30. Council's ability to regulate outdoor space, glazing, and built form remains important. While the Building Act 2004 addresses daylight and window requirements, local oversight is still needed to ensure developments integrate well with neighbouring properties and maintain neighbourhood character.
- 3.31. The proposed NES-GF conflicts with some building consent exemption provisions. If these frameworks are not integrated, it will create conflicting advice and confusion for applicants.
- 3.32. The proposed NES-GF does not consider natural hazard overlays. Under the RMA, councils have limited tools to manage existing risk—existing use rights make proactive risk reduction nearly impossible. Enabling intensification in hazard-prone areas undermines resilience and increases risk to people and property. This conflicts with **s106 RMA** which allows councils to refuse a subdivision application in hazard-prone areas. Permitting minor residential units risks bypassing this safeguard. This also conflicts with

³ Removal of LUC 3 land from classified as Highly Productive Land. ([package-2-primary-sector-discussion-document.pdf](#))

s104(iv) which allows councils to refuse a subdivision application if in coastal hazard-prone areas.

Relief sought:

We **support** the intent of the proposed NES-GF with the following **recommendations**:

- Minor residential units should require a consent unless the applicant can demonstrate through the PIM application that the existing network can safely accommodate the increased load. Alternatively, the applicant can provide proof that a compliant separate system will be installed.
- Provide clear provisions that confirm that all granny flats must comply with servicing and overlay requirements before proceeding with permitted activities.
- Require rural zones to be subject to a maximum site coverage or minimum lot size.
- Allow councils to retain local discretion for individual outdoor space, glazing, privacy and sunlight access.
- Align the NES-GF with the complementary building consent exemption provisions and provide clear guidance to assist applicants to understand the building consent process.
- Align the NES-GF with s104(iv) and s106 to ensure councils can restrict development where natural hazard risks cannot be appropriately mitigated.

National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga

- 3.33. Council **supports** the overall intent of the proposed NES–Papakāinga. In a region with a high Māori population and large percentage of whenua Māori, this instrument is highly relevant and strongly aligned with our region’s aspirations for whānau wellbeing, housing security, and whenua-based development.
- 3.34. We **strongly support** the proposed NES–P’s recognition of a wider range of land types beyond Māori Freehold Land, which will improve access to development opportunities across our rohe.
- 3.35. We also **support** the NES–P’s inclusion of a wider range of non-residential uses, such as small-scale commercial, visitor accommodation, health and recreational facilities, as permitted activities when associated with papakāinga.
- 3.36. We note that most housing activities are currently permitted in our Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP). **Appendix 2** of this letter expands and provides more information on which activities are currently permitted for NES-P and our TRMP.

Key points of concern:

- 3.37. While we support the expanded scope of land types, terms such as General Land owned by Māori need greater clarity. There is uncertainty around how these definitions apply in practice and how eligibility is to be confirmed. Without guidance, councils will need to develop internal processes for verifying land eligibility through the building consent and planning stages. This risks inconsistent application and is less cost-effective and efficient.
- 3.38. It is unclear why Treaty Settlement Land should require resource consent for housing when Māori Ancestral Land does not, given that both serve similar purposes and hold comparable cultural significance.
- 3.39. The NES-P does not adequately provide for infrastructure considerations to ensure functional papakāinga development. Similarly, there are no design standards in the proposed NES-P to address papakāinga developments in coastal environments and outstanding landscapes.

- 3.40. It is unclear how councils are expected to fulfil reporting requirements to track or monitor papakāinga developments that proceed as permitted activities. Without a permitted activity notice or similar mechanism, it will be difficult for councils to meet this requirement.

Relief sought:

We recommend the following **amendments**:

- Provide clear national guidance on how to determine eligibility for terms proposed in the NES-P and what constitutes sufficient proof to ensure national consistency.
- Extend the NES-P provisions to general title land owned by iwi or hapū entities for social housing purposes to support urban and reticulated papakāinga development.
- Include detailed infrastructure considerations (e.g. stormwater, vehicle access, sightlines, and manoeuvring space) to ensure consistency with other planning requirements and support site functionality.
- Require clear design standards in coastal environments and outstanding landscapes, with a permitted notice approach.
- Provide further clarification on what councils are expected to fulfil reporting requirements to track or monitor papakāinga development.
- Include Treaty Settlement Land in permanent housing thresholds.

National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards

- 3.41. Council **supports** the intent of the proposed NPS-NH. We recognise it as a positive first step toward establishing a more consistent, risk-based framework across Aotearoa.
- 3.42. We **support** the principle of managing risk proportionately to the hazard, using best available information, and applying a clear and nationally consistent framework.
- 3.43. Council also **supports** the proposal to identify specific hazard types at the national level, while still enabling regional policy variation to manage locally relevant hazards where appropriate.

Key areas of concern:

- 3.44. Most of our region's population lives in Gisborne City, where critical infrastructure is concentrated, which is exposed to multiple natural hazards. Additionally, the three dominant land uses in our region are horticulture, agriculture, and forestry, most of which occur across hazard-prone landscapes and critical infrastructure. To exclude infrastructure and primary production from the scope of the NPS-NH removes guidance that is needed to manage the risks in areas like Gisborne City where it is most concentrated and pressing.
- 3.45. The NPS-NH applies only to new development, leaving a critical gap in how councils manage existing uses and legacy development already located in high-risk areas. While the National Adaptation Plan may provide future guidance, councils currently have no effective tools under the RMA to reduce existing risk. Existing use rights make proactive risk reduction nearly impossible. This is a critical policy and legal gap.
- 3.46. The proposed NPS-NH focuses on seven hazard types, which are highly relevant to Te Tairāwhiti. However, there are other hazards which will become exacerbated with climate change. An example is drought, a natural hazard not included in the proposed list, but highly relevant with major impacts on water security in our region. Package 3 submission on water security provides further information that provides further explanation.

- 3.47. We **support** the minimum 100-year climate change planning horizon. However, there is no guidance on which climate scenarios councils should be using for hazard assessments. This is already an area of debate with developers that contributes to a less cost-effective and efficient system. A minimum nationally consistent scenario would support good adaptation outcomes, where outcomes have been determined through tangata whenua and community engagements.
- 3.48. The risk matrix defines “significant risk” as including medium risk levels, which may unintentionally restrict development in areas subject to very low-probability but high-consequence events (e.g. Hikurangi subduction zone tsunami).
- 3.49. While Council **supports** the expectation to use best available information, we caution that many councils, particularly smaller ones, lack the natural hazard data, technical capability and resourcing to implement the NPS-NH effectively.
- 3.50. The NZCPS uses different terminology (e.g. “high risk”) and uses a precautionary stance in coastal environments. There should be alignment in terminology used in both NPS-NH and NZCPS for consistency in application.

Relief sought:

Council **supports** the intent of the NPS–NH and **recommends** the following:

- Include infrastructure and primary production in the scope of the NPS-NH. This should also include clear alignment across the NPS-NH, NPS-I and NPS-HPL, and set a precedence where provisions conflict, if needed.
- Provide councils with practical tools to address the policy gap and manage existing risk in a lawful and equitable way.
- Expand the scope of hazards to include coastal storm surge, volcanic activity, geothermal hazards, wildfire, drought, and chronic heat stress.
- The NPS-NH should be accompanied by guidance on which climate projections, scenarios, and methods should be used to assess hazard risk.
- Provide clearer guidance on appropriate mitigation for low-probability/high-impact events (e.g. evacuation planning), and a stronger alignment with best practice climate risk assessment and scenario.
- Provide support with central government funding and technical guidance, while allowing flexibility for councils to apply a precautionary approach where data is limited or uncertain. We also recommend that MfE set clear roles and responsibilities for councils and applicants in generating or verifying hazard information.
- The NPS–NH should be closely aligned with the NZCPS. Clear guidance is needed to ensure consistency across instruments and prevent legal ambiguity.

Closing summary

Council welcomes national direction that supports infrastructure delivery, housing, and community resilience. However, to be effective in Te Tairāwhiti and other regions with unique challenges, this direction must be flexible, locally responsive, and grounded in enduring environmental and Treaty obligations.

Across all instruments, we emphasise the following key points:

- **Local flexibility is essential:** National direction must allow councils to apply local provisions where they are more enabling, reflect community aspirations, or address specific risks, particularly in hazard-prone or culturally sensitive areas.
- **Environmental and cultural protections must not be eroded:** Enablement must not come at the cost of long-term environmental resilience, mana whenua relationships,

or Treaty settlement obligations. Infrastructure development must integrate with climate adaptation goals and uphold the rights of iwi and hapū under statutory mechanisms.

- **Infrastructure equity and resourcing:** Small councils face significant constraints in funding, staffing, and monitoring capacity. National direction should be accompanied by tools for cost recovery, resourcing support, and practical implementation guidance.
- **Clarify key terms and policy tests:** Terms like “particular environment,” “cost-effective,” and “functional need” must be clearly defined to avoid unintended consequences like impacting human health or cost spent to rectify said consequences, especially in natural hazard management and siting critical infrastructure.
- **Support for Māori-led development:** We support the intent of proposals like the NES–Papakainga to enable Māori housing. However, the frameworks must be workable, align with other national legislations and existing local rules, and avoid creating new compliance or monitoring burdens for both councils and Māori landowners.
- **Hazard resilience is non-negotiable:** Any national direction must preserve councils' ability to manage risk and decline development in hazard-prone areas where risks cannot be appropriately mitigated, particularly in light of increasing climate impacts. Natural hazard risks on existing development must be addressed in the interim until Phase 3 RM Reforms is fully operative.

We remain committed to working with central government to ensure these reforms deliver cost-effective and efficient, practical, resilient, and community-focused outcomes. We welcome continued dialogue on how best to implement these directions in a way that works for Te Tairāwhiti and Aotearoa.

APPENDIX 1: RESPONSES TO PACKAGE 1 QUESTIONS

NPS for Infrastructure
1. Is the scope of the proposed NPS-I adequate?
<p>Yes, with changes</p> <p>The definition of 'green' infrastructure should be expanded by adopting the definition used in the National Planning Standards.</p> <p>Further clarification is sought on the inclusion of 'defence' within the scope of the NPS-I, and whether this includes CDEM infrastructure. If CDEM infrastructure is not included within the definition of defence, then we recommend for this to be included.</p>
2. Do you agree with the definition of 'infrastructure', 'infrastructure activities' and 'infrastructure supporting activities' in the NPS-I?
Yes
3. Does the proposed objective reflect the outcomes sought for infrastructure?
<p>Yes, with changes</p> <p>Infrastructure development should also be resilient to climate hazards and be integrated with the surrounding environment where practicable.</p>
4. Does the proposed policy adequately reflect the benefits that infrastructure provides?
<p>Yes, with changes</p> <p>The benefits that green infrastructure can provide are not currently recognised in the NPS-I. As mentioned above, we recommend adopting the definition of green infrastructure from the National Planning Standards.</p>
5. Does the proposed policy sufficiently provide for the operational and functional needs for infrastructure to be located in particular environments?
<p>Yes, with changes</p> <p>The requirement to provide for the functional or operational need of infrastructure in a "particular environment" needs further clarification. Ambiguity around the true scope of what this include may inadvertently result in infrastructure being located in areas subject to natural hazards, or in significant environmental or cultural areas.</p>
6. Do you support the proposed requirement for decision-makers to have regard to spatial plans and strategic plans for infrastructure?
Yes
7. Would the proposed policy help improve the efficient and timely delivery of infrastructure?
<p>Unsure</p> <p>This policy requires consideration/adoption of 'internationally, nationally and regionally accepted standards and methods".</p> <p>In order to align with the NPS-FM, this policy clause should include: 'freshwater objectives and attribute states set in accordance with the NPS-FM'.</p>
8. Does the proposed policy adequately provide for the consideration of Māori interests in infrastructure?
Yes
9. Do the proposed policies sufficiently provide nationally consistent direction on assessing and managing the adverse effects of infrastructure?
<p>No</p> <p>It is unclear how the NPS-I is intended to be balanced with the NPS-FM. We are concerned that restricting councils' ability to reassess environmental effects at consenting would undermine the integrated management of catchments and miss opportunities to address long-standing ecological impacts. Furthermore, the proposed definition of stormwater</p>

networks, particularly where it includes urban streams and overland flow paths, raises concerns about the interaction with the NPS-FM.

This policy requires consideration/adoption of 'internationally, nationally and regionally accepted standards and methods'.

In order to align with the NPS-FM, this policy clause should include: 'freshwater objectives and attribute states set in accordance with the NPS-FM'.

10. Do the proposed policies sufficiently provide for the interface between infrastructure and other activities including sensitive activities?

Unsure

These policies require adverse effects to be:

- 'avoided where practicable, remedied where practicable, or mitigated where practicable'.

Policies such as these are very subjective and provide little guidance as to the intended outcome – other than restating part of s5(2) of the RMA with the addition of the term 'where practicable'.

For example, this limited guidance does not assist in resolving circumstances where, despite adverse effects being avoided/remedied/mitigated to the extent practicable, the development or operation of infrastructure may still be in conflict with outcomes sought through the NPS-FM. This may include:

- not meeting freshwater objectives and attribute states that have been established in accordance with communities and tangata whenua under the NPS-FM; or
- not meeting national bottom lines or not maintaining water quality – which is potentially the case for new urban development.

Greater clarity of the intended outcome would be beneficial. If the intent of these policies is to state that provided the adverse effects of the development and operation of infrastructure have been avoided/remedied/mitigated to the extent practicable then the residual effects are to be deemed acceptable then this should be clear. However, a more nuanced approach may be appropriate.

One option could be to direct a structured assessment process, similar to the effects management hierarchy of the NPS-FM – with further guidance as to what happens where more than minor residual adverse effects remain. For example:

- Are more than minor adverse effects considered acceptable and does this apply to all types of infrastructure or just significant/essential public infrastructure with a functional or operational need to be in that location?
- Alternatively, should residual adverse effects be required to be offset or compensated (as is currently the case under the NPS-FM effects management hierarchy)? This again raises the question as to whether a requirement to offset/compensate adverse effects would apply to all types of infrastructure – regardless of its significance, function or the extent of the benefits it provides.

Part 2.2 NPS for Renewable Electricity Generation

11. Do you support the proposed amendments to the objective of the NPS-REG?

Yes

12. Are the additional benefits of renewable electricity generation helpful considerations for decision-makers?

Unsure

The wording of the additional benefits is a bit strange, and I can't see them being helpful for decision-makers.

13. Does the proposed policy sufficiently provide for the operational and functional need of renewable electricity generation to be located in particular environments?

Yes, with changes

Further clarification is sought to provide a definition of "particular environments". Does this include areas identified under section 6 of the RMA?
14. Do the proposed new and amended policies adequately provide for existing renewable electricity generation to continue to operate?
Yes
16. Do you support the proposed policy to enable renewable electricity generation development in areas not protected by section 6 of the RMA, or covered by other national direction?
Unsure
Part 2.3 NPS on Electricity Transmission
17. Do you support the inclusion of electricity distribution within the scope of the NPS-EN?
Yes
21. Do you support the proposed objective?
Yes We support the inclusion of recognising emissions reductions targets and the need to ensure energy resilience and security.
22. Will the proposed policy improve the consideration of the benefits of electricity networks in decision-making?
Yes
23. Does the proposed policy sufficiently provide for the operational and functional needs for electricity networks to be located in particular environments?
Yes, with changes We note that the term 'particular environment' is not defined. We have concerns that this policy will allow electricity networks to locate in sensitive environments if this term is not defined.
24. Do you support Transpower and electricity distribution businesses selecting the preferred route or sites for development of electricity networks?
No Local discretion needs to be maintained. Community aspirations should be considered when selecting a preferred route otherwise this may create tensions where these routes intersect with sensitive areas. National direction must allow councils to assess environmental constraints, protect cultural values, and work with mana whenua to shape appropriate outcomes.
26. Does the proposed policy adequately provide for the consideration of Māori interests in electricity networks?
Yes
27. Do you support the proposed policy to enable development of electricity networks in areas not protected by section 6 of the RMA, or covered by other national direction?
Unsure
Part 2.5 NES for Telecommunication Facilities
51. Do the proposed provisions sufficiently enable the roll-out or upgrade of telecommunication facilities to meet the connectivity needs of New Zealanders?
Yes

52. Which option for proposed amendments to permitted activity standards for telecommunication facilities do you support?	
a. Which options do you support:	
Maximum pole heights	I don't support either option
53. Do the proposed provisions appropriately manage any adverse effects (such as environmental, visual or cultural effects)?	
No	
Part 3.1 NES for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units)	
57. Are the proposed provisions in the NES-GF the best way to make it easier to build granny flats (minor residential units) in the resource management system?	
Yes, with changes <p>At the moment the proposal permits two bedrooms in a 70 square meter building. The connecting of a granny flat to an existing system will accelerate bed failure and then environmental damage and undue health risks to the property owners.</p> <p>Proposed change</p> <p>Granny flats should be a controlled activity with conditions imposed that require the applicant to demonstrate that the existing system can manage the additional load. Alternatively, the applicant can demonstrate that an additional system will be installed that can service the additional dwelling.</p>	
58. Do you support the proposed permitted activity standards for minor residential units?	
One minor residential unit per site in common ownership with the principal residential unit on the same site	Yes
50% maximum building coverage in residential zones, mixed use zones and Māori purpose zones (with no maximum coverage in rural zones)	No
Minimum front and side boundary setbacks of 2 metres in residential zones	Yes
Minimum front boundary setbacks of 10 metres, and side and rear boundaries of 5 metres, in rural zones	Yes
2-metre setbacks from the principal residential unit	Yes
Explanation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural zones should also have a maximum site coverage or a minimum lot size. • The 2 metre setbacks from the principle residential unit is a Building Act fire safety provision and should be retained. 	
59. Do you support district plans being able to have more lenient standards for minor residential units?	
No <p>This is already an issue in our region.</p>	
60. Should the proposed NES-GF align, where appropriate, with the complementary building consent exemption proposal?	
Yes <p>If it doesn't there are going to be a dichotomy of advice streams that will leave people wishing to use this provision confused.</p>	

61. Do you support the proposed list of matters that local authorities may not regulate in relation to minor residential units?	
Individual outdoor space	No
Glazing, privacy or sunlight access	No
Parking and access	No
62. Do you support existing district plan rules applying when one or more of the proposed permitted activity standards are not met?	
Yes	
Part 3.2 NES for Papakāinga	
64. Do you support the proposal to permit papakāinga (subject to various conditions) on the types of land described above?	
Yes	
While we support the expanded scope of land types, terms such as General Land owned by Māori need greater clarity. There is uncertainty around how these definitions apply in practice and how eligibility is to be confirmed. Without guidance, councils will need to develop internal processes for verifying land eligibility through the building consent and planning stages.	
65. What additional non-residential activities to support papakāinga should be enabled through the NES-P?	
We support the NES-P's list of non-residential activities associated with papakāinga.	
68. Should local authorities have restricted discretion over papakāinga on Treaty settlement land (ie, should local authorities only be able to make decisions based on the matters specified in the proposed rule)?	
No	
It is unclear why Treaty Settlement Land should require resource consent for housing when Māori Ancestral Land does not, given that both serve similar purposes and hold comparable cultural significance.	
Part 3.3 NPS for Natural Hazards	
71. Should the proposed NPS-NH apply to the seven hazards identified and allow local authorities to manage other natural hazard risks?	
Unsure	
The specified hazards are the most relevant to the Tairāwhiti region, and it makes sense that we should be including them in hazard and risk assessments. However, this may not be the case for all regions. It could be more beneficial to allow regional councils to identify appropriate hazards based on a high-level regional risk analysis.	
We recommend including all relevant hazards. The National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards (NPS-NH) must cover volcanic, geothermal, wildfire, and chronic hazards like drought and heat. Their exclusion creates blind spots in national risk management	
72. Should the NPS-NH apply to all new subdivision, land use and development, and not to infrastructure and primary production?	
No	
Infrastructure and primary production should be included.	
The development of infrastructure in high-risk areas could be extremely costly for ongoing maintenance and costs would fall to central and local government. While we acknowledge that infrastructure, particularly linear infrastructure may require a more nuanced approach, we believe that a consistent risk assessment and consideration of risk reduction mechanisms in a proportionate way would be beneficial to reducing hazard risk overall.	

The three dominant land uses in our region are horticulture, agriculture, and forestry, most of which occur across hazard-prone landscapes. To exclude primary production from the scope of the NPS-NH removes guidance that is needed to manage risk where it is most concentrated and pressing.

We **recommend** including infrastructure and primary production in this NPS and aligning this with the proposed NPS-I and NPS-HPL where practicable.

73. Would the proposed NPS-NH improve natural hazard risk management in New Zealand?

Yes, with changes

We consider the NPS-NH a step in the right direction in providing a consistent framework for natural hazard risk management.

The proposed NPS still leaves room for significant inconsistency across councils when managing natural hazard risk themselves, especially due to disparities in resources and information available for different councils.

The NPS-NH needs more clarity in relation to roles, data use, and policy overlaps. Proportionality must be about risk, not financial returns. Councils need clearer rules on using and requiring data, and the NPS-NH must integrate cleanly with other national policies like the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS), the NES-P and the NES-GF.

74. Do you support the proposed policy to direct minimum components that a risk assessment must consider but allow local authorities to take a more comprehensive risk assessment process if they so wish?

Yes, with changes

A methodology for undertaking risk assessments under the NPS is required. While the risk matrix table and definitions for consequence and likelihood are useful, there is information missing around a framework to determine what scenarios are required, especially when we are considering climate change to inform the risk assessment. Adding a methodology as part of the NPS will ensure a higher degree of consistency in risk assessments across the country. It must include direction about the types of scenarios/degrees warming and timeframes and how they should be used in different contexts.

We also note the following in relation to climate change:

- The proposed NPS-NH does not set out how to assess the likelihood of hazards that will be impacted by climate change (particularly flooding, coastal inundation and coastal erosion).
- The NPS recommends considering climate change out to 100 years, however, it does not provide guidance or direction on what climate change scenario should be used to ensure consistency.
- It is unclear how the risk out to 100 years should be considered. It is not clear if risk assessments should consider current day risk and then risk out to 100 years.
- The NPS does not provide the tools to determine the level of reliance on the multiplicity of central government guidance. The guidance documents depend on the hazard and nature of work – e.g. guidance related the National Adaptation Plan (2022), MfE's Coastal Hazards and Climate Change Guidance (2024).
- The proposed risk matrix method is inconsistent with best practice for climate change adaptation, including what is set out in MfE's Coastal Hazards and Climate Change Guidance (2024). The risk matrix provided here is a very traditional natural hazard risk matrix, and when we are considering climate change, the likelihood of an event both now and into the future is an ever-evolving probability. MfE's guidance to local government on climate change risk assessment suggests identifying the exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity across two timeframes and multiple scenarios differing significantly from the approach recommended here.

There should be a link between this NPS-NH and the current national guidance on climate change adaptation; specifically, how to assess the potential impacts of hazards exacerbated by climate change on proposed new developments.

76. Do you support the placement of very high, high, medium and low on the matrix?

Yes, with changes

The current set up for the risk classification (significant risk definition and the risk matrix) may result in consenting authorities unnecessarily restricting development. For example, the inclusion of "Very Rare" events (<0.02%), particularly when anything with a consequence level of Major or Catastrophic (classed as medium risk, and therefore as significant risk) is potentially problematic for very rare, potentially catastrophic events for which no practical mitigation is possible (such as mitigation for large scale tsunami events).

Based on this, it could include large tsunami events along the Hikurangi subduction zone, which would have catastrophic consequences for the entire Te Tairāwhiti coastline. Realistically, it wouldn't be feasible to mitigate the effects of that event down to a low enough level to encourage safe development, thus making development impossible in large areas of Gisborne and the East Coast.

If the intention is to retain the current ranges, **we recommend** clarifying which mitigation strategies would be considered acceptable for low-probability-high-impact hazards – e.g. consider whether evacuation planning could be considered effective and sufficient to mitigate that risk. More generally, we need adequate guidance around suitable mitigation measures to ensure national consistency, especially when discussing the less frequent highly catastrophic events. This does not mean, however, that we support an increase in exposure to these risks; we understand the risk to be very high and that it must be balanced against the uncertainty of the timing of an event. We support an intentional and balanced approach.

77. Do you support the definition of significant risk from natural hazards being defined as very high, high, medium risk, as depicted in the matrix?

Unsure

The definition of significant risk being very high, high or medium risk is generally aligned to the draft methodology we developed (Natural Hazard Risk Assessment Criteria and Methodology for the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan Regional Policy Statement).

However, as noted in the previous question, this definition of significant risk could have major impacts on development potential, and the mitigation options for managing low probability/high impact events needs to be clarified.

78. Should the risks of natural hazards to new subdivision, land use and development be managed proportionately to the level of natural hazard risk?

Yes

We note that drafting should make this explicit. Management should be proportional to the risk for land use. As drafted, it could be possible for people to argue that a proportionality test needs to include potential returns from investment.

79. How will the proposed proportionate management approach make a difference in terms of existing practice?

In consenting, it will provide justification for requiring natural hazard risk assessment from consent applicants – e.g. for developments proposed on a flood plain, and thresholds to require risks to be mitigated or avoided.

80. Should the proposed NPS-NH direct local authorities to use the best available information in planning and resource consent decision-making?

Yes

However, we **recommend** amending P4 to provide for instances where information is not available or inadequate and require an applicant to undertake investigations to develop new information necessary to inform a consent, i.e. where the adverse effects of the proposal are significant or unknown.

81. What challenges, if any, would this approach generate?

The natural hazard information that Council currently hold is variable across the region and across the different hazard types. While we have a programme of work underway to improve hazard information, these assessments are expensive and can take time. We need to take a staggered approach to updating our information. So, while we support this provision to avoid decision paralysis, we should acknowledge that the best available information may not be adequate, and we should allow for a precautionary approach.

We **recommend** that where information is unclear or there is uncertainty in determining an appropriate risk level, then a conservative approach should be undertaken to determine the risk level. This could be achieved by adding wording to P6 that allows for the use of a precautionary approach.

82. What additional support or guidance is needed to implement the proposed NPS-NH?

We **recommend** the government ensures local government has access to sufficient funds to invest in improving hazards data. We also recommend further guidance to ensure hazard data is consistent nationally. This should include central government direction on climate change hazards to determine what projections and timeframes are required (as noted in response to Question 74).

83. Should the NZCPS prevail over the proposed NPS-NH?

Yes

The NZCPS takes a more precautionary approach than the proposed NPS-NH, which is appropriate for coastal hazard areas.

NZCPS uses High risk whereas NPS-NH refers to Significant risk. Further clarity is needed in the NZCPS on the definition of High risk and how it relates to the significant risk definition in NPS-NH (NB: We acknowledge that the term 'significant risk' comes from the RMA)

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED FEEDBACK TO PROPOSED PROVISIONS

National Environmental Standard for Papakāinga		
Relates to which content	Specifically relates to	Comments
Definitions	D1	We support the inclusion of more than just Māori Freehold Land. Planners will need to be aware of this when providing advice.
Definitions	D7	We recommend this definition to include “as stated in the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act” as it is currently unclear what this includes.
Definitions	D1, D15, D23	Councils will need to establish an in-house process for how someone goes about proving the land meets one of these definitions, particularly the building consent process.
Zones for Māori purposes	D26	Council supports zoning tools that reduce consenting barriers for Māori housing, including papakāinga in urban settings. The proposed Māori Purpose Zone could help enable whānau and hapū housing by allowing up to 10 houses as a permitted activity, with a lower threshold for consents beyond that. We see value in exploring how this zoning could apply to appropriate urban areas in Te Tairāwhiti to better reflect local demand and aspirations for Māori housing. We recommend that national direction provides flexibility for councils to adopt Māori Purpose Zones through urban plans changes, in partnership with mana whenua and iwi authorities.
Permitted activities	PA1	Council's operative Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP) allows up to 10 dwellings. This definition will now allow the inclusion of other land (not just Māori Freehold Land) defined in D1 which we support.
Permitted activities	PA2	<p>We support PA2 which will permit several new activities such as commercial (up to 100m² where associated with papakāinga), visitor accommodation, health facilities and sports recreation which are not currently covered by our papakāinga rules.</p> <p>Further clarification is sought on the scope of 'commercial activities', particularly whether home</p>

		occupations are included in this definition.
Permitted activities	PAS3	Council already permits this in our operative TRMP.
Permitted activities	PAS1	Council notes that the proposed site coverage limits under the NES-P could create unintended inconsistencies between Māori freehold land (where no site coverage applies) and other Māori land types included in the NES. Rather than applying a uniform site coverage control, we recommend considering a maximum impervious surface rules, which would better manage environmental impacts like stormwater runoff while allowing flexibility in papakāinga design and layout.
Permitted activities	PAS2	Council notes that this is more permissive than Councils operative rules, so the NES-P will prevail.
Permitted activities	PAS3	We recommend MfE include a built infrastructure rules bullet point as there is more than just accessways that need to be considered (e.g. sightlines, vehicle crossings, accessway surfacing, manoeuvring). We note there is also no mention of stormwater, only wastewater and water supply.
Monitoring of permitted activities	MO1	We have concerns about the practicalities and purpose requiring councils to monitor permitted papakāinga activities under the NES–Papakāinga. Unlike consented activities, permitted activities do not trigger formal applications or notices, making tracking administratively burdensome and potentially invasive for applicants. We recommend clarifying the intent of MO1 and avoiding monitoring requirements that would create unnecessary red tape for both councils and Māori landowners. Monitoring should focus on activities that require resource consent or permitted activity notices, where applicable.
Restricted Discretionary rules	RD3	We are concerned that the NES–Papakāinga permits up to 10 dwellings on Māori ancestral land but requires resource consent for all housing on Treaty settlement land. Treaty settlement land often serves

		the same purpose for iwi and hapū as ancestral land. This inconsistency imposes unnecessary barriers to Māori housing and seems at odds with the objective of enabling papakāinga development. We recommend that Treaty settlement land be treated consistently with Māori ancestral land, allowing up to 10 dwellings as a permitted activity.
Restricted Discretionary rules	RD7	Council supports retaining flexibility for councils to apply more enabling local provisions where appropriate. Our plan allows papakāinga to exceed 10 dwellings, provided infrastructure, servicing, and other requirements are met (a more permissive approach than the NES–P). We recommend that MfE confirm that where a district plan is more enabling, local provisions prevail. We also note that natural hazard rules will continue to apply regardless of dwelling numbers.
Notification requirements	N1	We support the limits on notification for papakāinga consents. However, we seek further clarification about notification for activities that are beyond a restricted discretionary status. There remains a risk that proposals exceeding RD thresholds could be subject to full public notification, creating barriers for Māori housing development. We recommend national direction clarify the notification expectations for all activity statuses to ensure the policy intent of reducing barriers is maintained.
Leniency of rules	R1	GDC strongly supports Rule R1, which allows councils to apply the most enabling rule — whether from the NES–Papakāinga or local district plan. This ensures we can retain our more permissive local rules where appropriate, while also applying the NES provisions to new activities such as commercial, educational, or recreational development on Māori land beyond Māori freehold land. This flexibility is critical to achieving both local and national objectives for Māori housing and development.