

INTRODUCTION

Part 1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Part One outlines the context within which the District Plan has been prepared. The legislative background to the Plan is introduced in sections 1.1 - 1.3 and the geographical, demographic and economic features of the Tararua District are summarised in section 1.4.

1.1 Background to the Resource Management Act

1.1.1 BEFORE THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

Prior to 1991, New Zealand's environmental laws were characterised by numerous uncoordinated statutes which had been enacted over the years to deal with the many different aspects of the natural and built environment. There were many different approaches and procedures in place for the management of various natural and physical resources (land, water, air, soils, minerals and the built environment) and responsibilities were equally fragmented. Recognition of the need for a more integrated approach to resource management was a significant factor behind the development of the Resource Management Act 1991.

1.1.2 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

In recent years, there has also been increasing international concern about global environmental issues. The conclusion from the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 1992, was for action from Governments worldwide to move towards sustainable development of the earth's resources by the 21st century. The concept of "sustainable development" means development that meets present day needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The New Zealand Government was a signatory to "Agenda 21", thereby accepting the concept of global sustainable management. This concept had already been accepted as a central tenet of the Resource Management Act 1991.

1.1.3 THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 ("the Act") has resulted in the consolidation of New Zealand's environmental laws and provides a framework for the management of our natural resources in an integrated manner. It assigns resource management responsibilities and functions to central and local government, and duties and restrictions upon us all.

1.1.4 AN EMPHASIS ON NATURAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The Act recognises that the natural environment operates within a social, economic, cultural and political context and that these are matters to be taken into consideration. They remain secondary, however, to the primary purpose of the Act which is the "sustainable management of natural and physical resources" (section 5 of the Act).

1.1.5 AN "EFFECTS-BASED" APPROACH TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The introduction of the Resource Management Act has seen a philosophical shift from controlling activities to controlling the adverse "effects" of activities. This means that "market forces" and "individual choice" may generally play a larger role in the location of activities, provided that their effects are not incompatible with the environmental outcomes sought for the area concerned.

1.2 Purpose of District Plan

Section 73 of the Act requires that a District Plan must be prepared for each district. The District Plan provides the framework for managing the use, development and protection of the land resources of the District, and its rules have the effect of regulations in law. Water and air resources are amongst the responsibilities of Regional Councils. There are a few exceptions to this general rule. For example controlling the effects of activities on the surface of water is a function of the District Council. Similarly, the Regional Council is responsible for activities on land in some instances, as well as soil conservation and discharges to land that may affect water quality.

The District Plan sets out the significant resource management issues of the Tararua District and explains the objectives, policies and methods that the Council has adopted to achieve the sustainable management of the District's natural and physical resources.

The District Plan is not the only means of achieving the sustainable management of resources. Desired environmental outcomes may also be achieved by such measures as:

- the provision of information and education;
- the provision of works or services by the Council or other public authority (for example, refer to the Council's Annual Plan and corporate plan);
- financial incentives and disincentives (such as rates);
- negotiation;
- legal and economic instruments; or
- taking no action

In preparing the District Plan, the Council has considered these alternative methods and has only adopted District Plan rules where these are necessary to achieve the purpose of the Act and are the most appropriate means of exercising the function.

1.3 The Relationship between the Tararua District Plan and other Policy Statements and Plans

The District Plan does not stand on its own as an isolated Plan for resource management. The Act requires that the District Plan must not be inconsistent with any national policy statement, New Zealand coastal policy statement, or water conservation order. It must also not be inconsistent with any regional policy statement or regional plan in respect of any matter of regional significance or for which the regional council has primary responsibility under Part IV of the Act. Other plans, planning documents and regulations (although not all in existence at the present time) have the potential to influence and affect the district plan (refer Figure One). It is possible that changes could be required in the future having regard to:

- National policy statements on matters of national significance.
- National environmental standards (regulations).
- New Zealand Coastal Policy statements.
- Water Conservation Orders.
- Regional Policy statements and regional plans including regional coastal plans.
- District Plans for adjacent areas.
- Planning documents recognised by the iwi authority affected by the District Plan.
- Regulations relating to the conservation or management of taiapure or fisheries.
- Management Plans and strategies prepared under other legislation.

1.3.1 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

Under the Act, Central Government is responsible for preparing national policy statements on matters considered to be of national importance. The "New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement" (NZCPS) is a national policy statement which has been prepared by the Minister of Conservation (gazetted on 5 May 1994). It is the only mandatory national policy statement required under the Resource Management Act 1991. Section 56 of the Act states that the purpose of the NZCPS is *"to state policies in order to achieve the purpose of this Act in relation to the coastal environment of New Zealand"*. The District Plan must not be inconsistent with the NZCPS. At the time of notification of this Plan, no other national policy statements have been prepared.

1.3.2 REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS AND PLANS

Under the Act, Regional Councils are required to prepare a Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for their region. The purpose of a RPS is to provide an overview of the significant resource management issues of the Region, and to achieve the integrated management of natural and physical resources between district and regional councils. Most of the Tararua District lies within the Manawatu-Wanganui Region and, therefore, the objectives, policies and methods of the Proposed Regional Policy Statement (as changed by decisions on submissions, May 1995) is applicable. In the south east of the District, a small area of land (south of the Owahanga River) lies within the Wellington Region and, in this area, the objectives, rules, and methods of the Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region is applicable. The RPS for each region is a key document in the framework for resource management, and provides policy guidance for the content and scope of the Tararua District Plan.

In addition to Regional Policy Statements, Regional Councils are required to prepare a Regional Coastal Plan and may prepare other Regional Plans relating to any of their functions under the Act.

Regional Plans provide detailed provisions relating to specific issues. They are necessary where there are resource use conflicts, a high demand for the use of a resource, or for any other significant resource issues.

Regional plans may be "region wide", e.g. a regional air quality plan, or they may relate to a specific geographical area or resource, e.g. the Manawatu Catchment Water Quality Plan.

1.3.3 CORPORATE PLAN, ANNUAL PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT

Under the Local Government Act 1974 Local Authorities must demonstrate that they are efficient, accountable and responsive. Part XIIA of the Local Government Act requires local authorities to produce Annual Plans outlining specific objectives and policies for each year. Each Annual Plan must also include a forecast of activities for the following two years, outlining:

- the intended significant policies and objectives;
- the nature and scope of the significant activities to be undertaken;
- the performance targets and other measures by which performance may be measured in relation to the objectives;
- indicative costs and sources of funds for each significant activity.

The reason for preparing an Annual Plan is to keep the public informed and involved in the activities that the Council undertakes.

The Tararua District Council also prepares a Corporate Plan. This is not a "statutory" document in that there is no legislative requirement that it be prepared. The Corporate Plan sets out the Mission Statement and Corporate Goals of the Council. It includes policies that affect all the functions and activities of the Council. The matters that may be included in the Annual/Corporate Plan are very broad and relate to all the activities of the District Council. In contrast, the District Plan is limited in terms of its scope to the matters set out in the Resource Management Act 1991.

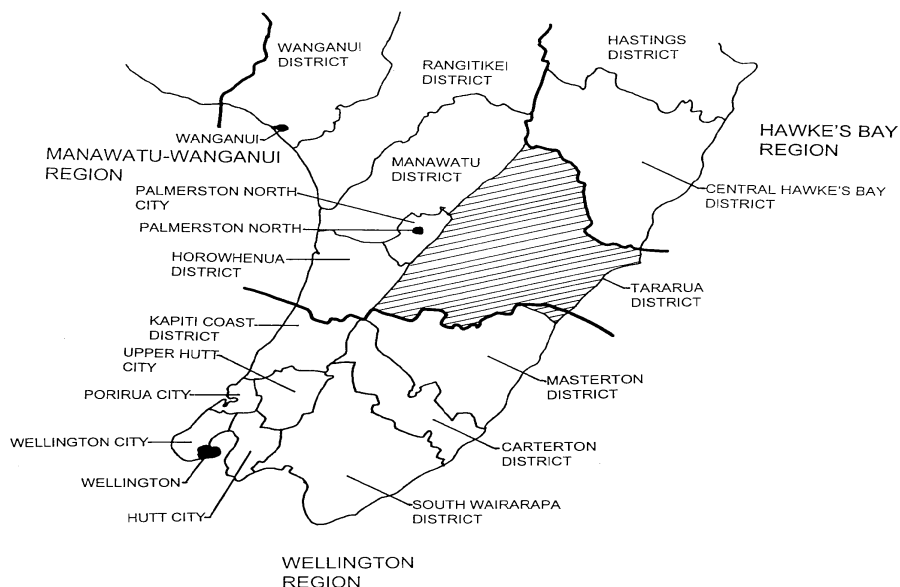
The District Plan is not a "stand alone" document. Mechanisms proposed in the District Plan to achieve resource management objectives and policies that require District Council resources or commitment to take certain actions, may need to be given effect to through the Annual Plan. The Annual Plan is the mechanism through which the Councils overall goals and objectives (c.f. environmental goals and objectives) are achieved.

1.4 Introduction to the Tararua District

1.4.1 LOCATION

The Tararua District is bounded to the north by the Central Hawkes Bay District, to the south by Masterton District and, on the western side of the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, by Manawatu District, Palmerston North City and Horowhenua District. It covers an area of approximately 436,500 hectares (refer Figure One below).

Figure One: Location Map showing the Tararua District



1.4.2 LAND RESOURCES

The Tararua District is dominated by landscapes which have developed from tectonic (earth movement) and fluvial (river) activity. Significant landscape features within the District include mountain ranges and hill country, interspersed with alluvial plains and fans, and river terraces. Refer to Figure 2 (overleaf) for a diagram of the main geographical features of the Tararua District.

To the west, the District is bordered by the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, separated from each other by the Manawatu Gorge. These ranges form part of New Zealand's axial mountain ranges, which run in a south-west to north-west direction.

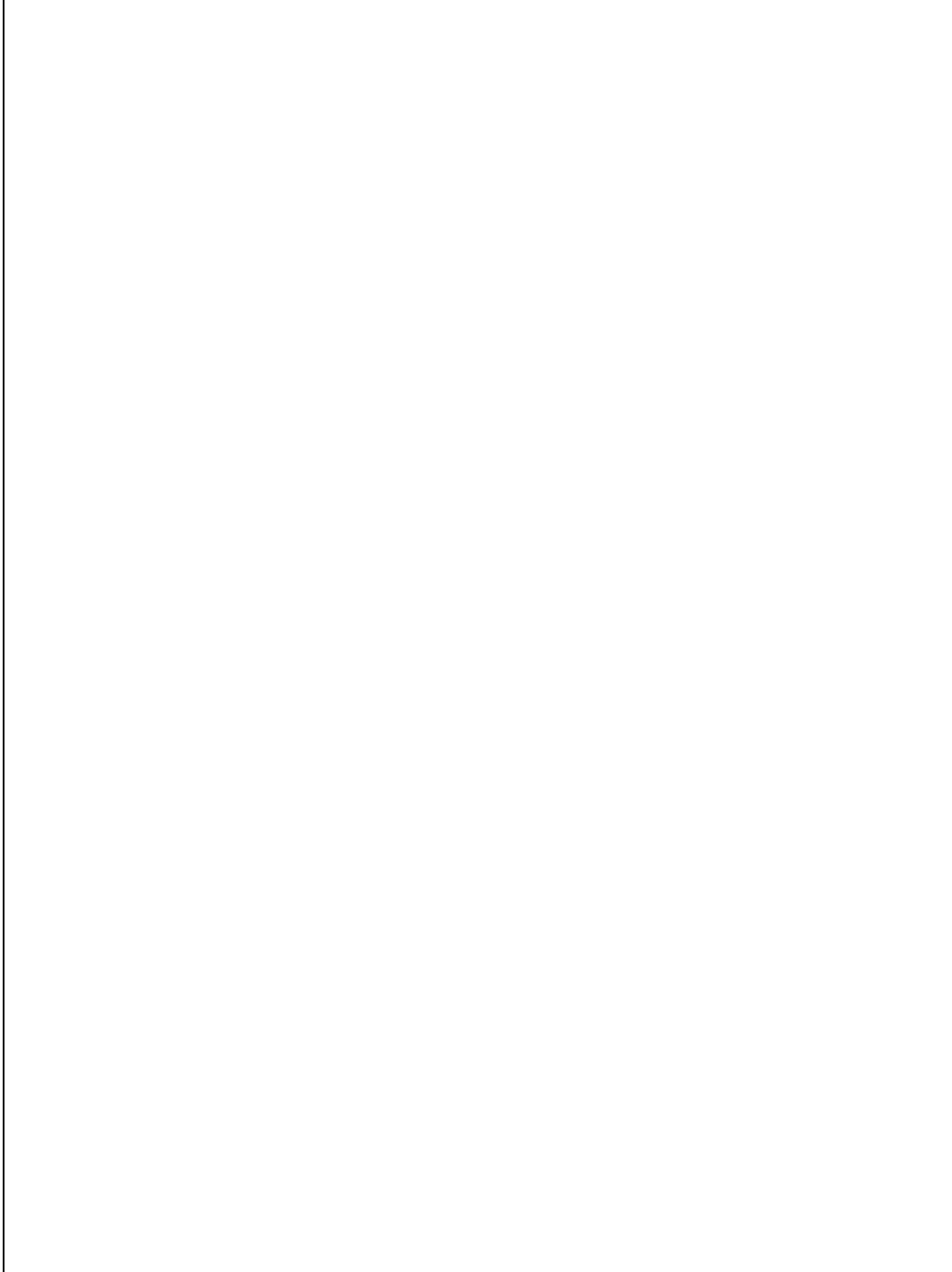
Immediately east of the Ranges lies a fertile alluvial plain, which has developed over the years from deposits from the Mangatainoka, Mangahao, Tiraumea and Manawatu Rivers and their tributaries. This alluvial plain forms a 'corridor' of high quality land intensively used for farming and horticulture. The District's main urban settlements are located within this vicinity. This corridor spans the entire length of the District, from Eketahuna in the south, to Norsewood in the north.

To the east of this corridor the landscape comprises rolling to steep hill country, further dissected by tectonic movement. The Puketoi Range runs parallel to the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, creating a physical barrier between the coastal environment and the remainder of the District. The District is bordered on the east by the Pacific Ocean.

A wide range of soil types exist within the District, which are generally suited to pastoral farming. As at 30 June 1992, there was a total of 1560 farms within the Tararua District covering an area of 396,827 hectares (Department of Statistics 1992). Exotic forest plantations covered an area of 3,664 hectares, as at 1 April 1991 (Ministry of Forestry, 1992). Relatively small remnants of indigenous vegetation also exist throughout the District, in addition to that found within the Ruahine and Tararua Forest Parks.

Within this geographical setting are a number of different landscapes. There are large tracts of sparsely settled, extensive grazing land, usually in hill country areas. In these areas, the original vegetation has been highly modified from a forest landscape of high biodiversity to open grassland populated almost entirely by exotic species. This type of landscape is dominant in the eastern part of the district where vast tracts of land are managed as stations. Portions of the District's landscape remain natural, with very little evidence of human activity. Examples of this landscape within the Tararua District include the Tararua and Ruahine Forest Parks.

Figure Two: Diagram of Major Geographical Features in the Tararua District



1.4.3 WATER RESOURCES

Unique within New Zealand is the Manawatu Catchment, the headwaters of which are located within the Tararua District. The headwaters originate on the eastern side of the Ruahine Ranges northwest of Dannevirke. Tributaries to the Manawatu River, prior to it entering the Manawatu Gorge, include the:

- Tiraumea River and Makuri River;
- Makakahi River and Mangatainoka River; and
- Mangahao River.

The Manawatu River leaves the Tararua District through the Gorge and then flows through the Manawatu and Horowhenua Districts. The river mouth is located at Foxton. The entire catchment covers an area of 594,400 hectares. The upper catchment, i.e. the catchment area east of the Gorge, within the Tararua District, comprises 323,100 hectares.

The Manawatu River is unique as it flows through the axial ranges to the west coast.

Other significant river catchments located within the Tararua District are those associated with the Akitio and Owahanga Rivers. These catchments drain the land area east of the Puketoi Ranges, and reach the east coast at the settlements of Akitio and Owahanga. Tributaries of these rivers include:

- Mangatiti Stream;
- Pongaroa River;
- Waihi Stream;
- Mangaone Stream;
- Rakaupuhi Stream.

A significant feature of the rivers of the Manawatu Catchment is the trout fishery within the Mangatainoka and Makuri Rivers.

The Pacific Ocean forms the eastern boundary of the Tararua District.

1.4.4 POPULATION

The Tararua District, at the time of the 1996 Census, had a “usually resident” population of 19,068 (Source: Department of Statistics, 1997). While the District as a whole experienced a decline in population of just over 4% during the period between 1991 and 1996, the decline in population in the main urban centres varied from 4.6 to 11.2%. Table One shows the populations of the four main towns in the District and the percentage change in population between 1991 and 1996.

Urban Centre	1986	1991	1996	Population change between 1991 and 1996 as a %
Dannevirke	5883	5766	5511	4.6 loss
Woodville	1610	1651	1567	5.4 loss
Pahiatua	2868	2907	2721	6.8 loss
Eketahuna	654	714	642	11.2 loss

Within the Tararua District the population is relatively evenly spread over different age groups. This indicates that a full range of amenities and facilities need to be provided throughout the District.

The projected resident population for the year 2016, using 1991 figures as a base, show a further population loss to the District of 2.0% (Department of Statistics, 1991).

The Tararua District has a proud Scandinavian heritage. Scandinavian immigrants arrived at the port of Napier, and moved south into the area that is now the Tararua District, from 1872 onwards. The Scandinavian settlers had been encouraged to migrate to New Zealand under the Public Works and Immigration Act 1870 to clear the bush to enable the land to be farmed, and roads and railways to be built. The Scandinavian settlers earned a reputation for being extremely hard working and they cleared the “seventy mile bush” starting at Norsewood in the north of the District, and (just south of) Eketahuna in the south of the District, and working towards the middle. The town of Norsewood was formed in September 1872 by Norse settlers, and the town of Dannevirke was formed in October 1872 by Danish settlers. In return for their work, the settlers were given title to blocks of land generally varying from 20 to 40 acres. The settlers worked on the land and in the sawmills that flourished throughout the District at the time and until the early 1900’s. Many of the inhabitants of the District today are descendants of those pioneering Scandinavian settlers.

1.4.5 SERVICING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The road network within the Tararua District is a particularly important physical resource. Parallel to the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges is State Highway 2, which travels from the Wellington Region in the South to the Hawkes Bay Region in the northeast. Woodville, in the middle of this transportation corridor, has an important function as a transport node. Links are made at Woodville between State Highway 2 and State Highway 3, which leads to the west of the Ranges through the Manawatu Gorge. Within the District there is 115.73 kilometres of sealed state highway. State Highway 2 accounts for 106.63 kilometres, and State Highway 3 for 9.10 kilometres of this total. Woodville is also the junction of the Wairarapa to Hawkes Bay railway line, and the Palmerston North to Woodville railway line.

Tararua District Council is responsible for the development and maintenance of all roads except state highways. Funding for a proportion of the costs associated with constructing and maintaining district roads is available from Transit New Zealand. The balance is raised through rates. Table Two shows the length of both sealed and unsealed roads in the District.

Table Two: District Roads						
Community Board		Sealed		Unsealed		Total
Dannevirke Community Board	Dannevirke Ward	136.13	40.34	19.13	0.09	195.69
	Akitio Ward	151.56	4.09	279.67	0.44	435.76
	Norsewood Ward	187.51	7.26	126.02	0.30	321.09
Total Dannevirke Community Board		475.20	51.69	424.82	0.83	953.34
Woodville Ward and Community Board		187.51	17.88	31.58	0.00	236.97
Pahiatua Ward and Community Board		199.77	26.51	152.06	0.00	378.34
Eketahuna Ward and Community Board		149.18	15.59	214.91	0.24	379.92
TOTAL		1011.66	111.67	823.37	1.07	1947.77

Reticulated water and sewerage services are provided in Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Woodville, Eketahuna, Pongaroa and Norsewood. A reticulated water supply is provided in Akitio, and a sewerage system in Ormondville.

Various utility networks are also located within, and serve the community of, the Tararua District. These network utilities include gas and electricity transmission and distribution networks, and communication and transport networks, amongst others. They play an important role in the efficient functioning and well-being of the District.

1.4.6 ECONOMIC BASE

The Tararua District is essentially a rural district with the economy based largely on primary production. Agriculture, in particular large sheep and beef farms, is the predominant land use. In the eastern rolling to steep hill country, wool, sheep meat and beef production are the main sources of income. Land uses in the area immediately east of the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges includes dairy farming and horticultural units. In addition, forestry is rapidly becoming recognised as a viable land use with 3664 hectares currently planted (Ministry of Forestry, 1992). Forestry planting is expected to increase significantly in the district with forestry viewed by some as a more sustainable land use in some areas than pastoral farming.

The four main towns of Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketahuna, as well as smaller rural settlements in the District have an important role as service centres for the surrounding rural hinterland. In addition to this traditional role it is recognised that the towns also service other categories of economic activity such as tourism and industry.

The Tararua District has a number of tourist attractions such as the Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre and the Ruahine and Tararua State Forest Parks. Tourism currently makes a relatively small contribution to the District's economy, however, it has the potential to make a greater contribution as activities and attractions in the district are explored further.

Small scale industries, such as cottage industries and home occupations, are also common within the District. There are also a number of larger industries, predominantly agricultural-based, which provide valuable employment opportunities.

The last decade has seen major restructuring of the New Zealand economy both in the public and private sectors, as well as deflated agricultural commodity prices. The changes have had a significant effect on the Tararua District especially with reduced expenditure by rural sector primary producers. The Government's policies have been particularly felt in rural areas which have suffered as a result of closures and withdrawal of services. The benefits associated with the more recent economic recovery have been slow to reach rural communities.

There are however indications of a positive turn around in the Tararua District economy. The issuing of more subdivisions and building consents in the last two years indicates increased activity. Recent Valuation New Zealand figures indicate that the value of most properties within the Tararua District is increasing. Some of the largest increases in value have been recorded on dairy farms, reflecting the high demand for land suitable for dairying.