

UPDATED FUTURE PROOF STRATEGY

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE JORDYN LANDERS FOR HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND (HORTNZ)

8 December 2021

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Jordyn Landers. I am an Environmental Policy Advisor at Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ). In this role I am involved with regional and district planning processes in regions where fruit and vegetables are grown commercially. I have been in this role since August 2019.
2. HortNZ is the industry good body for the horticulture sector, representing growers who pay levies on fruit and vegetables sold, as set out in the Commodity Levies (Vegetables and Fruit) Order 2013.
3. I am joined today by Vance Hodgson (planner) and Reece Hill (soil scientist).
4. HortNZ lodged a submission on the 'Updated Future Proof Strategy'. We also subsequent to lodging our submission provided a soils memo, in support of our submission, for pre-circulation.
5. I will briefly touch on the following points of our submission:
 - Overview of horticulture in the sub-region
 - HortNZ's interests and the importance of highly productive land
 - Key changes sought in HortNZ's submission.

HORTICULTURE IN THE SUB-REGION

6. As outlined in HortNZ's submission – there are significant areas of horticulture located within the area covered by the sub-

region of the Updated Future Proof Strategy. Particularly near the northern boundary of the Waikato District with Auckland, an area of vegetable growing referred to as the 'Pukekohe Hub', which is nationally significant in terms of domestic food supply.

7. Aside from vegetables, a range of fruit crops are also grown in the sub-region and there are pockets of high-class soils that could be suitable for horticulture in the future.

HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND'S INTEREST AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE LAND

8. HortNZ's submission speaks to key overarching themes: future proofing food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Retaining highly productive land for food production is critical to both of these outcomes.
9. Horticulture's key interest is ensuring that the values of highly productive land are suitably provided and accounted for in the Updated Future Proof Strategy.
10. The values of highly productive land are well canvassed:
 - (a) A National Policy Statement under the Resource Management Act for Highly Productive Land was consulted on in 2019 and expected in the new year. The discussion document released in 2019 stated: *"The ongoing urban expansion onto highly productive land may have wide-ranging and intergenerational impacts on rural communities and economies that are based around primary production"*
 - (b) A 2021 article quotes: *'Today in New Zealand, it is widely recognised that highly productive land (Land Use Capability (LUC) classes 1–3), characterised as*

*versatile for growing a range of crops, is a scarce and finite resource.'*¹

- (c) The Select Committee's Inquiry on the Natural and Built Environments Bill (exposure draft) recommended an environmental outcome for well-functioning urban and rural areas to include 'the preservation of highly productive land for food production'.²

11. We know that highly productive land is under pressure from land use development:

- (a) A 2021 report found that in the Auckland and Waikato regions, the rate of expansion of the urban area onto LUC 1–3 land was at least double the rate of expansion on LUC 4–7 land. In the Waikato, between 2002 to 2019, there was an additional 1773 hectares of urban area on LUC1-3 land (a 21% increase), whereas there was a 896 hectare increase on LUC 4-7 land (a 20% increase).³

12. It is not just the loss of land that has an impact, but also urban development can result in fragmentation, reverse sensitivity conflicts and increase land prices – all of which can drive land use change to urban.

13. A recently released paper exploring whether New Zealand produces enough servings and diversity of vegetables to

¹ Fiona Curran-Courmane, Sam Carrick, Michelle G. Barnes, Anne-Gaelle Ausseil, John J. Drewry, Isaac A. Bain, Nancy E. Golubiewski, Haydon S. Jones, James Barringer & Lance Morell (2021) Cumulative effects of fragmentation and development on highly productive land in New Zealand, New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research, DOI: 10.1080/00288233.2021.1918185

² https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/SCR_116599/0935c4f14c63608e55c528b75167a69daee92254

³ Fiona Curran-Courmane, Sam Carrick, Michelle G. Barnes, Anne-Gaelle Ausseil, John J. Drewry, Isaac A. Bain, Nancy E. Golubiewski, Haydon S. Jones, James Barringer & Lance Morell (2021) Cumulative effects of fragmentation and development on highly productive land in New Zealand, New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research, DOI: 10.1080/00288233.2021.1918185

meet dietary recommendations of 5 diverse servings/day, found that New Zealand does not produce enough legumes (peas and beans) or dark-green leafy vegetables (silverbeet and spinach). The paper noted:

*"Encroaching urbanization and continuous rural fragmentation of the best food-producing land, particularly in locations that have traditionally grown outdoor vegetables in NZ, can also make it problematic to expand, or de-intensify this rural land use activity."*⁴

14. The expansion of urban areas/urban development should be focused away from the most versatile land. At a growth strategy level, it is important to set a direction that provides for this.

OVERVIEW OF OUR SUBMISSION

15. There are two key aspects in HortNZ's submission:
 - (a) Seeking greater reflection of highly productive land and the value of highly productive land.
 - (b) Concern is that the direction for protecting LUC 2 and 3 (identified as 'Waahi Toiora') is very ambiguous, and separated out from the protection direction for LUC 1 as 'Waahi Toituu'.
16. With regard to the later, HortNZ's submission is that LUC 2/3 is equally as productive and utilized for horticulture. The GIS analysis provided as part of our submission showed that of the total area of short rotation crop land located on LUC1-3, over three quarters was located on LUC2 and 3 land.
17. The memo provided by Reece Hill explains the value of these soils and the development of the 'high class soil' definition included in the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.

⁴ Curran-Cournane, F.; Rush, E. Feeding the New Zealand Family of Five Million, 5+ a Day of Vegetables? Earth 2021, 2, 797–808. <https://doi.org/10.3390/earth2040047>

Horticulture and crop production relies on the availability of high class soils for production, the soils for which span LUC classes 1, 2 and 3.

18. LUC 1 (as Waahi Toituu) has a 'directing development away from direction' which is reflected in the growth management directions, whereas LUC2 and 3 (as Waahi Toiora') has a direction of taking care, areas that ' may be suitable for urban development subject to successful mitigation' (which is not reflected as consistently throughout the document) – as summarised in Appendix A.
19. HortNZ would like to see the protection of LUC 1-3 (with some exclusions, as it is defined in the Waikato RPS definition) soils collectively, and urban development directed away from these areas.

Jordyn Landers

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APPENDIX A: Summary of description of Waahi Toituu and Waahi Toiora in Updated Future Proof Strategy

Waahi Toituu (Includes LUC 1)	Guiding Principle 3.1 is “Protect waahi toituu (places with enduring presence) from development in perpetuity, and only allow development on waahi toiora (places sensitive to development) with greatest care.” – Section A ‘directing development away from’ – Section B ‘Development in the Future Proof sub-region will be managed to ensure it is directed away from waahi toituu areas’ – Future Proof Growth management approach in Section B Reflected in growth management directives: • Identifying and planning future growth areas to ensure that they avoid waahi toituu areas. • Protecting existing waahi toituu areas from urban development.
Waahi Toiora (includes LUC 2 and 3)	Guiding Principle 3.1 is “Protect waahi toituu (places with enduring presence) from development in perpetuity, and only allow development on waahi toiora (places sensitive to development) with greatest care.” – Section A ‘... limiting development in (places where development should only occur with great care)’ – Section B, pg.40 ‘... areas which are sensitive to development have been identified as waahi toiora. These are areas which have constraints which mean that growth in such areas must be undertaken with the greatest of care.’ – Section B, pg. 43 In the Appendix definition of Waahi Toitora, described as – “Areas that may be suitable for urban development subject to successful mitigation of remedying of notable matters that should be signalled at the strategic planning level, ... ”