

**BEFORE THE TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL
HEARING COMMISSIONERS**

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER of Proposed Plan Change 47 (Māori Purpose Zone) –
Taupō District Plan

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF JADE TE AWHINA WIKAIRA

12 JUNE 2026

I, **JADE TE AWHINA WIKAIRA**, Planner, of Wellington, say:

KO WAI AU

1. Ko Tongariro te maunga, ko Taupō te moana, Ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa te iwi, ko Ngāti Te Rangiita te hapū, ko Waitetoko te Marae, ko Te Heuheu te tangata.
2. He uri hoki tēnei nō Te Whānau-a-Apanui me Ngāpuhi.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

3. I am the Managing Director at Wikaira Consulting Limited, a specialist environmental planning, policy, engagement and strategic advisory consultancy based in Wellington.
4. I hold a Bachelor of Planning from the University of Auckland and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Wellington.
5. I am also an accredited RMA Hearings Commissioner.
6. I have over 20 years of experience in resource management planning, policy development and strategic advisory services, gained through senior roles in local government, central government and private consultancy.
7. Although this is not an Environment Court proceeding, and I am not an independently engaged planning witness (being an uri of the submitters), I confirm that I have read the Environment Court Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it. I confirm that the opinions expressed in this statement are within my area of expertise except where I state that I have relied on the evidence of others. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I have expressed.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

8. I provide this planning evidence in support of the submissions on Proposed Plan Change 47 (Māori Purpose Zone) – Taupō District Plan (**PC47**) by Waitetoko Marae and the Wikaira Whānau, proponents of the application of PC47 to proposed MPS-5 and MPS-4 sites respectively.
9. The purpose of this evidence is to address:
 - (a) Waitetoko Marae PC47 engagement;
 - (b) Notification;

- (c) Section 42A Report matters; and
- (d) The relevance of the National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga 2026.

PC47 ENGAGEMENT

- 10. Based on my involvement in the development of PC47, Taupō District Council's consultation with Waitetoko Marae and Ngāti Te Rangiita was constructive, responsive and provided meaningful opportunities to discuss and refine the proposed Māori Purpose Zone provisions. Meetings occurred on 31 March 2025, 14 April 2025 and 5 May 2025.
- 11. In my view, the consultation undertaken was sufficient to enable the views and aspirations of Waitetoko Marae and the Wikaira Whānau to be considered in the development of PC47.

NOTIFICATION

- 12. Where Māori Purpose Zone activities do not meet the criteria for permitted activity status, PC47 proposes that applications under MPZ restricted discretionary applications will not be notified.
- 13. I endorse non-notification as a sensible approach to address likely low-impact infringements and reduce compliance costs for whānau on land for which historic impediments and associated contemporary effects have prevented effective use.¹ This approach is consistent with ODP provision TW-P4: 'Recognise the wider existing and historical constraints 1Zsa on the utilisation and development of Māori land.'

SPECIFIC MATTERS IN SECTION 42A REPORT

Submissions Accepted

- 14. I acknowledge that the section 42A Report accepted a range of matters raised in the Waitetoko Marae and the Wikaira Whānau submissions, including:
 - (a) Explicit provision for a broad range of activities that support Maori cultural needs, including hauora, social services, and educational facilities in MPZ-P1.
 - (b) The removal from of MPZ-R1(2) of the requirement for

¹ Historical impediments include customary tenure in the nineteenth century, public works, rating law and Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993. Contemporary effects include issues of governance, fragmentation and compliance with central and local government regulation.

businesses to be run by residents of a site.

- (c) The removal from MPZ-R2 of the consideration of the effects on the ability of the site to provide for traditional uses.
- (d) The inclusion of exceptions to MPZ-R3 S4 Maximum Building Height to enable culturally appropriate structures and those structures which will not have a less than minor effect to exceed the set building height.
- (e) A range of suggested amendments to the wording of PC47, to provide greater clarity of purpose to the proposed zone.

Relationship with Higher Order Policies

- 15. I acknowledge the 42A Report's response to submissions seeking additional reference to documents such as Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki, iwi environmental management plans, tikanga-based planning principles, Te Mana o te Wai, and other strategic or cultural planning frameworks relevant to the Taupō District in PC47.
- 16. As I interpret the Operative District Plan (**ODP**), those matters will need to be considerations during resource consent decision-making, where a consent is required, given their inclusion in ODP Section 6 – Matters of Strategic Direction.
- 17. A number of the objectives and policies in ODP Section 6.6 Tangata Whenua will be relevant to resource consent decision-making. I note in particular:

Objectives

- TW-01* The values, rights and interests of Taupō District mana whenua are recognised and protected.
- TW-03* Resource management planning and decision making reflects tikanga, mana whakahaere, kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, whakapapa, mātauranga Māori and te whanake.
- TW-04* Support development on Māori [land](#) that meet the needs of those landowners and respects the exercise of kaitiakitanga, self-determination and the relationship of tangata whenua with their [land](#), [water](#), significant [sites](#) and wāhi tapu.
- TW-05* Māori are supported to develop their ancestral lands for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

Policies

- TW-P1* Recognise and provide for the following matters in [land](#) use planning and decision making:
- The relationship of Māori/iwi/hapū and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, [water](#), [sites](#), wāhi tapu (sacred [sites](#)), and other taonga (treasures).
 - Mātauranga Māori, kaitiakitanga and tikanga Māori.
 - The unique role of mana whenua hapū as kaitiaki at place of nga taonga tuku iho.
 - The vision, objectives, values and desired outcomes in Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki.
- TW-P2* Provide for development on Māori land that enables tangata whenua:
- To exercise their mana whakahaere and kaitiakitanga consistent with their kawa, tikanga and mātauranga.
 - To fulfil cultural, economic and social aspirations, rights and interests of those owners.
 - Strengthens their relationships with [land](#), [water](#), significant [sites](#) and wāhi tapu.

18. I also acknowledge that the section 42A Report has accepted the Waitetoko Marae recommendation to amend part of the PC47 introductory wording to:

This zone is one way that the Plan recognises and provides for the relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.

19. The original text risked being interpreted as confining provision for the relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga to the Maori Purpose Zone, when this is required to be recognised across the entire Plan. The amendment helps to reinforce the relevance and application of other Plan objectives and policies in the consenting context.

MPZ – P6

20. MPZ - P6 states 'Recognise and provide for those activities in Māori Purpose Zones which will result in an enhancement of the natural environment including freshwater quality.'
21. The Waitetoko Marae submission opposed its inclusion, recording:

No other zones have this elevated expectation on the recognition and provision for proposed activities. The policy inadvertently places expectation on enhancement

of natural environment including freshwater, creating disproportionate burden on mana whenua whose land is subject to MPZ compared to other zones.

22. The submission was rejected by the section 42A Report. The report explains that the policy is designed to recognise the positive effects of any environmental enhancement that may have been undertaken by landowners on an MPS, and that it is a statutory mechanism to recognise positive land activities that result in a net environmental gain through the consent process.
23. I accept and agree with the positive intention of the policy. However, I consider the drafting of MPZ - P6 is unclear, and the risk identified in the submission point remains. I recommend a re-drafted policy as follows:

Recognise and provide for the positive effects of any activities in Māori Purpose Zones associated with a resulting enhancement of the natural environment including freshwater quality.

MPZ-R3 S1 and S5

Maximum combined coverage and setbacks for MPZ Rural

24. MPZ-R3 S1 imposes a maximum combined coverage standard of:
- (a) 15% of the total area of that MPS; or
 - (b) where a marae is present on a MPS 15% of that part of the MPS not covered by Marae buildings.
25. MPZ-R3 S5 imposes a setback of 15m from the MPS boundary.
26. The Waitetoko Marae and Wikaia Whānau submission sought that:
- (a) The maximum combined coverage on an MPZ Rural site should be increased from 15% to 40% of the total area of that MPS. No change was sought where a marae is present.
 - (b) The setback from the MPS boundary was reduced to 5m.
27. The section 42A Report rejected the submissions, noting:

Maximum combined coverage

- (a) The Council is required to manage the effects of the development.
- (b) 15% is considered enabling relative to rural zonings (which is

10% of the total allotment area in the General Rural and Rural Lifestyle Zone).

- (c) It provides for a suitable trigger whereby the effects of larger scale development can be considered through a non-notified resource consent process.

Maximum combined coverage

- (d) This setback is consistent with other zones within the Plan, and ensures that effects both internally and externally can be appropriately managed. The consent pathway is available for exceedances where appropriate.
28. I acknowledge that the standards act as triggers to a non-notified consenting pathway, which is not in and of itself an impediment to the development of Māori land.
29. Since the 26 May 2026 section 42A Report was issued, on 4 June 2026 the Government announced new National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga (**NES-P**), which will come into force on 2 July 2026.
30. The NES-P makes a papakāinga development² a permitted activity within district Māori purpose, residential or rural zones if:
- (a) the papakāinga development does not exceed 10 residential units per site on Māori ancestral land [site is defined on an allotment basis]; and
 - (b) any ancillary non-residential activity does not exceed 50% of the combined building floor area of residential units in the papakāinga development; and
 - (c) the papakāinga development complies with the building coverage and boundary setback standards set out in regulation 14 and satisfies the requirements of regulations 15 and 16.
31. The last criterion regarding compliance with the building coverage and boundary setback standards states:

14 Permitted activity: standards

The standards are as follows:

Building coverage

- (a) the building coverage for the site must—

² Defined as housing, ancillary non-residential activities, and Māori cultural activities on Māori ancestral land or post-settlement governance entity land that enables the owners to use their land and live in accordance with their culture, in perpetuity, and includes the following terms used in district or combined plans: Māori housing development; marae community; papakāinga scheduled sites.

- (i) be no more than 50% in a residential zone or a rural zone:
- (iii) comply with the district or combined plan in a Māori purpose zone:

Setback from boundaries

- (b) the papakāinga development (including any ancillary non-residential activity) must—
 - (i) be set back no less than 2 metres from the front, side, and rear boundaries of the site in a residential zone:
 - (ii) be set back no less than 5 metres from boundaries with neighbouring properties and 3 metres from the front boundary of the site in a rural zone:
 - (iii) comply with the site setback requirements in the district or combined plan in a Māori purpose zone.

32. I note that the effect of the NES-P is to now make building coverage and set-backs from boundaries in respect of 'papakāinga development' more restrictive in the proposed PC47 Māori purpose zone MPZ Rural Zone than if any proposed site retained its rural zoning. For completeness, I do acknowledge that PC47 proposes a cap of 15 dwellings per MPS,³ while the NES-P includes a cap of 10 residential units per site (allotment). However, the NES-P relates only to papakāinga residential units, whereas dwelling is not defined in the ODP and could refer to other buildings associated with the MPZ.
33. Due to low uptake, the only MPZ Rural site proposed is Waitetoko Marae. While no changes were proposed to MPZ-R3 S1 regarding maximum building coverage where a marae is present, a 5m setback was sought by Waitetoko Marae.
34. Reflecting on the opportunity to future proof the MPZ Rural provisions, it is my view that a bespoke papakāinga alternative could be proposed within the scope of the Waitetoko Marae submission that:
 - (a) Imposes a S1 papakāinga maximum building cover of up to 40% of the total area of that MPS (noting the 15 dwelling cap per MPS will also act as a constraint); and
 - (b) Imposes a S5 papakāinga minimum 5m building setback from MPS boundary.

³ I acknowledge the section 42A Report propose to amend MPZ-R3 S6 Number of Dwellings per MPS as follows: 'No more than 15 per MPS which have a nominal allotment less than 2 ha' in response to the submission of Mr Heremaia, which I support for the reasons outlined.

Jade Te Awhina Wikaira
12 June 2026