
Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of of submissions by the New Zealand Transport Agency on the
Taupō District Plan Change 47 – Māori Purpose Zone

**Statement of Evidence of Luke Braithwaite for NZ Transport Agency Waka
Kotahi – Planning**

12 June 2026

1 Qualifications and experience

- 1.1 My full name is Luke Thomas Braithwaite. I am a Senior Planner with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) where I have been employed since July 2020.
- 1.2 I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Planning (with a Specialisation in Terrestrial Environments) from the University of Waikato and a Graduate Diploma in Property Valuation from Lincoln University. I am an intermediate member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have ten years planning experience within both the public and private sector.
- 1.3 My key responsibilities at NZTA include assessing land use development applications, consenting lead for capital works projects, networks operation contract and transport alliance work, and working with local councils on district plan reviews and plan changes.
- 1.4 In relation to the Taupō District Plan Change 47 – Māori Purpose Zone, I am project managing the NZTA response to the plan change; this includes providing evidence on the management of road noise on sensitive land uses from the state highway network and vehicle movements onto the state highway.
- 1.5 I have authority to give evidence on behalf of NZTA.

2 Code of conduct

- 2.1 While I acknowledge that I am an employee of NZTA, I have read and am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the current Environment Court Practice Note (2023). I have complied with it in the preparation of this statement of evidence. I also confirm that the matters addressed in this statement are within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

3 Scope of evidence

- 3.1 My evidence addresses the following:
 - a Managing road noise on sensitive land uses from the state highway network (State Highway 1) in the Māori Purpose Zone through the inclusion of the Māori Purpose Zone in chapter 12.6 Noise – rule Noise R8.
 - b The inclusion of a limit on equivalent vehicle movements where access is to a state highway.

- 3.2 This evidence is limited to those matters within my expertise and those matters within the scope of the submission lodged.
- 3.3 Where NZTA has accepted the recommendation of the Section 42A (s42A) report, including matters not addressed in detail in the evidence, these points have been included within Table 1 appended to this evidence.

4 Summary of evidence

- 4.1 I have reviewed the s42A report for the Māori Purpose Zone and agree with the recommendations in the report. My evidence focusses on my support for the s42A recommendations due to their significance to the operations of NZTA. In summary:
- a) I support the recommendations in the s42A report in regard to changes sought by NZTA seeking that the Māori Purpose Zone should be included in chapter 12.6 Noise – rule Noise R8 to ensure that the ‘Noise Control Boundary Overlay – Sensitive Activities’ part of this rule applies to activities in the Māori Purpose Zone.
 - b) I support the recommendations in the s42A report in regard to changes sought by NZTA to chapter 7.3 Transport – rule TRAN-R5 the limit for equivalent vehicle movements where access is to a state highway.

5 Managing road noise on sensitive land uses from the state highway network.

- 5.1 NZTA lodged submission points which relate to the Māori Purpose Zone seeking that this zoning should be included in 12.6 Noise – Noise R8 to ensure that the ‘Noise Control Boundary Overlay – Sensitive Activities’ applies so that this protects sensitive activities from road traffic noise alongside state highways. NZTA considers that noise generated (in this case) by state highway traffic can adversely affect the health, safety and wellbeing of people and communities, which is a position supported by the World Health Organisation¹ and NZTA Research Report 656². As such, I consider that the amendment to 12.6 Noise – Noise R8 as identified on Page 157 of the s42A Report should be accepted.

¹ World Health Organisation, Guidelines for community noise, 1999; World Health Organisation, Burden of disease from environmental noise, 2011.

² Humpheson D. and Wareing R., 2019. Evidential basis for community response to land transport noise, Waka Kotahi Research Report 656. <https://nzta.govt.nz/resources/research/reports/656/>

5.2 **Statutory direction and responsibilities for managing road traffic noise**

5.3 The functions of NZTA are set out in s95 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) and include requirements to:

- a) Contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest; and
- b) Manage the state highway system, including planning, funding, design, supervision, construction, and maintenance and operations, in accordance with the LTMA and the Government Roading Powers Act 1989.

5.4 The LTMA requires that in meeting its statutory objectives and undertaking its functions, NZTA “must exhibit a sense of social and environmental responsibility”. NZTA takes those social and environmental responsibilities seriously. Transport noise can cause a range of impacts on people and communities including annoyance and interference with daytime activities such as work, study and domestic living. Other effects include potential sleep disturbance and long-term health impacts such as increased stress and hypertension.

5.5 **What is the role of NZTA in managing road traffic noise?**

5.6 NZTA recognises that constructing, operating and maintaining state highways can impose adverse effects on communities and the environment, and takes all practicable steps to manage noise and emissions, and other adverse effects.

5.7 On new and altered state highways, NZTA routinely uses low-noise road surfaces; wider designations (where land use permits) and noise barriers to reduce noise levels. The construction of the Eastern Taupō Arterial Route provides an example of this approach in the Taupō context (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Bunding Approach – State Highway 1 Eastern Taupō Arterial Route (State Highway 1).

5.8 In cases where there is unavoidable high noise exposure, NZTA will acoustically treat existing individual buildings as part of new or altered (in some instances) state highway projects.

- 5.9 Because existing state highways, like State Highway 1, 5, 30, 32, 41, 46, 47, were designed and constructed to the relevant standards at the time, there are often limited practicable opportunities³ to further mitigate adverse road-traffic noise effects on sensitive receivers. On these “older” style state highways, NZTA adopts good practice measures to manage road surface noise rather than undertaking substantial (capital works) noise mitigation. In some cases, resurfacing treatments will be undertaken as part of maintenance works (typically in built up urban areas only where there are more existing sensitive activities).
- 5.10 For maintenance works on these state highways, NZTA adopts good practice environmental management processes. This includes using noise management plans to determine the controls necessary to minimise any adverse effects on human health.
- 5.11 **The role of councils and landowners/developers in managing the effects of road traffic noise from the state highway**
- 5.12 For new and altered noise sensitive land use activities establishing near existing or planned state highways, I consider that the responsibility lies with councils to include appropriate land-use controls in district plans, and on landowners to implement them.
- 5.13 In my opinion, the most appropriate way to mitigate traffic noise effects from the state highway on sensitive uses is through the inclusion of the Māori Purpose Zone in chapter 12.6 Noise – rule Noise R8.
- 5.14 **The approach for managing road traffic noise effects from state highways**
- 5.15 The approach for managing road traffic noise effects from state highways seeks to manage the adverse effects of road traffic noise from state highways in the Taupō Māori Purpose Zone by:
- a) Mapping the noise contours along the state highway network to identify specifically the areas that traffic noise effects will require acoustic treatment;
 - b) Establishing noise standards for noise sensitive land uses within the noise contours which address indoor and outdoor noise.
- 5.16 Compliance with these rules would need to be demonstrated (where relevant) by either:

³ Typically, older state highways do not have wider designations to allow for buffer areas or other mitigation like noise bunds.

- a) submitting an acoustic report undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced person to Council demonstrating compliance; or,
 - b) Ensuring the building is setback 50m from the state highway carriageway and is designed so that a noise barrier blocks line of sight from all doors and windows of the noise sensitive activities to the state highway road surface.
- 5.17 Given the position outlined above, I consider that the amendment to 12.6 Noise – Noise R8 as identified on Page 157 of the s42A Report should be accepted.

6 Equivalent Vehicle Movements and Vehicle Access onto State Highways

- 6.1 NZTA made a submission (OS4.5) in support in part, seeking an amendment to rule TRAN-R5 identifying a limit to the number of permitted equivalent vehicle movements per day of 100 equivalent vehicle movements (evm) per day for accesses reliant on a state highway.
- 6.2 Roads with the highest movement functions such as state highways should be afforded the lowest trip generation thresholds to maintain their function. The 100evm threshold is a broadly adopted threshold for state highways in district plans and provides for many land uses to be undertaken onsite where access is directly to a state highway, whilst limiting the effects from land use on the state highway. Per the s42A report this amendment is considered appropriate and consistent with other sections of the plan.
- 6.3 As such, I consider that the amendment to 7.3 Transport – TRAN-R5 to include the Māori Purpose Zone, as identified on Page 156 of the s42A Report, should be accepted.

7 Summary

- 7.1 I request that the Hearing Panel:
- a) Accept the recommendations of the Section 42A Report as these relate to the NZTA submission on the Māori Purpose Zone.

These amendments will enable NZTA to meet its obligations under Section 95 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

Luke Thomas Braithwaite

12 June 2026

Table 1: NZTA position on the Reporting Officer's recommendations, including matters not addressed in detail in the preceding evidence.

Submission Point	NZTA Submission	Officer's Recommendation	NZTA Response
Plan Change 47 – Māori Purpose Zone			
OS4.1	MPZ-R1 NZTA supports permitting activities in the Māori Purpose Zone subject to specified standards but emphasises the need to address road safety and human health.	Accept in Part TRAN R4 and R5 are already able to be considered within MPZ through the application of matter (2)d and TRAN-R1 - PER - Activities.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.
OS4.2	12 General District Wide Matters > 12.6 Noise, NOISE-R9 NZTA requests that the Noise Control Boundaries Overlay for Sensitive Activities be extended to include the Māori Purpose Zone (MPZ)	Accept Submitted rule is consistent with overlay and rule in RLZ and GRUZ which was inserted through Plan Change 42 in 2025. Rule NOISE-R8 is recommended to be revised to include reference to MPZ-Rural. Refer to Key Issue 3.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.

Submission Point	NZTA Submission	Officer's Recommendation	NZTA Response
OS4.3	12 General District Wide Matters NZTA requests the inclusion of the Māori Purpose Zone (MPZ) within the Noise Control Boundary Overlay for sensitive activities, either through amendments to the existing noise chapter or specific MPZ rules.	Accept Submitted rule is consistent with overlay and rule in RLZ and GRUZ which was inserted through Plan Change 42 in 2025. Rule NOISE-R8 is recommended to be revised to include reference to MPZ-Rural. Refer to Key Issue 3.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.
OS4.4	Standards > MPZ-R3 S6 NZTA supports permitted activities in the Māori Purpose Zone but seeks a limit of eight dwellings where the site fronts a state highway, aligning with a 100 vehicle movements per day threshold.	Reject It is more appropriate to control this effect via the vehicle movement standard rather than dwelling limit as well as a vehicle movement standard.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.

Submission Point	NZTA Submission	Officer's Recommendation	NZTA Response
OS4.5	7 Energy, Infrastructure and Transport > 7.3 Transport, TRAN-R5 NZTA supports Permitted Activities in the Māori Purpose Zone but requests vehicle movement limits based on their Integrated Transport Assessment requirements. Waka Kotahi proposes maximum daily vehicle movements of 200 for MPZ Rural, 150 for MPZ Urban, and 100 where access is to a state highway.	Accept This is appropriate and consistent with other sections of the Plan including GRUZ and papakainga. Refer to Key Issue 3.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.
OS4.6	District Wide Matters – Subdivision > SUB- R12 NZTA supports the proposed matters of discretion but emphasizes the need to consider road safety for subdivisions fronting state highways. They request that such sites be assessed under TRAN R4 to ensure safe and efficient site access.	Reject This matter is not required as the standard has already been inserted as a rule.	Support NZTA supports the Reporting Officer's recommendation.