

Submission from Waka Kotahi on Variation 1: Housing Intensification (Medium Density Residential Standards) by Waimakariri District Council in response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021

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This is a submission on Waimakariri District Council's (**Council**) Variation 1: Housing Identification (Medium Density Residential Standards) to the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan to implement the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (**NPS-UD**) and the Medium Density Residential Standards (**MDRS**) under the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 (**HSAA**).

Waka Kotahi wishes to be heard in support of this submission.

If others make a similar submission, Waka Kotahi may consider submitting a joint case.

Waka Kotahi cannot gain a trade advantage through this submission.

Waka Kotahi role and responsibilities

Waka Kotahi is a Crown Entity established by Section 93 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (**LTMA**). The objective of Waka Kotahi is to undertake its functions in a way that contributes to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest. Waka Kotahi roles and responsibilities include:

- Managing the state highway system, including planning, funding, designing, supervising, constructing, maintaining and operating the system.
- Managing funding of the land transport system, including auditing the performance of organisations receiving land transport funding.
- Managing regulatory requirements for transport on land and incidents involving transport on land.
- Issuing guidelines for and monitoring the development of regional land transport plans.

Waka Kotahi interest in this proposal stems from its role as:

- A transport investor to maximise effective, efficient and strategic returns for New Zealand.
- A planner of the land transport network to integrate an effective and resilient network for customers.
- Provider of access to and use of the land transport system to shape smart efficient, safe and responsible transport choices.

- The manager of the state highway system and its responsibility to deliver efficient, safe and responsible highway solutions for customers.

Government Policy Statement on Land Transport

Waka Kotahi also has a role in giving effect to the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS). The GPS is required under the LTMA and outlines the Government's strategy to guide land transport investment over the next 10 years. The four strategic priorities of the GPS 2021 are safety, better travel options, climate change and improving freight connections. A key theme of the GPS is integrating land use, transport planning and delivery. Land use planning has a significant impact on transport policy, infrastructure and services provision, and vice versa. Once development has happened, it has a long-term impact on transport. Changes in land use can affect the demand for travel, creating both pressures and opportunities for investment in transport infrastructure and services, or for demand management. For these reasons, Waka Kotahi seeks full utilisation of the tools available to Council to enable development in the most accessible urban areas.

Waka Kotahi View on the Proposal

Waka Kotahi supports the intent and content of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD). This Policy Statement recognises the national significance of having well-functioning urban environments that enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being and for their health and safety. The NPS-UD has a strong focus on ensuring that increased densities are provided in the most accessible parts of urban areas, where communities are able to access jobs, services and recreation by active and public transport modes.

Waka Kotahi also supports the requirements of the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021. It seeks the full implementation of these requirements, including the introduction of the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) and related provisions in eligible zones. These standards should only be modified to accommodate qualifying matters and should be modified only to the extent required to accommodate these matters. Qualifying matters should be supported by a strong evidence base to ensure a robust application.

Waimakariri District Council is a Tier 1 authority and Waka Kotahi provided initial feedback in respect of this variation. Waka Kotahi was **generally supportive** of the proposed changes and provisions put forward by the Council.

Waka Kotahi view on specific topics are set out in the following paragraphs.

The Application of 'Walkable Catchment' & Application of Commensurate Densities

Policy 3 of the NPS sets out various requirements in respect of providing for increased densities and heights in central city locations, and walkable catchments from existing and planned rapid transit stops. It also directs councils to amend other residential zones to enable building heights and densities of urban form commensurate with the level of commercial activity and community services in those zones.

Waimakariri District does not have any City Centre or Metropolitan Centre Zones due to the smaller size of townships within the district. Rather, the district has Neighbourhood Centre, Local Centre and Town Centre Zones and as a result is not proposing any provisions that would enable a minimum of 6 storey developments at any location. Rather, the Council proposes to provide for 4–6 storeys (6 storeys if residential development is included as part of a mixed-use development) within the Town Centre Zone, 3 storeys within the Local Centre Zone and 2 storeys within the Neighbourhood Centre Zone, as these are commensurate with the commercial and community activities that occur at these locations. These height limits reflect the current smaller scale of the townships: Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend (including Ravenswood) and Pegasus to which the MDRS provisions apply. While the Council has raised the height standards with the centre zones so that they are commensurate with the 11m height limit in the MDRS, the Council has also stated that they consider a walkable catchment to be those areas within 800m of a centre zone. However, there is no intermediate height allowance or change in zoning proposed, surrounding those town, local or neighbourhood centre zones. In Waimakariri, the Proposed District Plan should enable a greater intensity of development within walking distance of a town centre in particular, as currently it is proposed to drop from a 6-storey limit (if mixed use development is proposed), to a

3-storey limit within the Medium Density Residential Zone. Waka Kotahi suggests that there is potential for an increased height limit to be included immediately surrounding a town centre zone, to better provide for denser residential development within a walkable catchment, for example, at least 4 storeys. This could be stepped down as the walking catchment extends further out from the town centre.

Proposed Objectives and Policies

Through this variation the Council has proposed several changes to the objectives and policies in the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan in relation to the General Residential Zone, Medium Density Residential Zone, Strategic Directions and Subdivision chapters. Waka Kotahi consider that the proposed amendments appropriately provide for up-zoning and in particular, the insertion of a new policy (proposed RESZ-P15) which addresses the application of the Medium Density Residential Standards across all relevant residential zones will appropriately provide for the realisation of up-zoning in the district. Waka Kotahi have reviewed the relevant proposed objectives and policies and consider that they appropriately provide for the character of the development anticipated in the zone, as opposed to retaining the existing character of a residential zone.

Strategic and Arterial Roads

The Council proposes to retain a 6m setback for new buildings on sites bordering a strategic or arterial road (state highways) and not to adopt the 1.5m setback from the front boundary. No additional reasoning has been provided or undertaken as part of Variation 1 and rather, the evidence from the s.32 Residential Chapter report prepared as part of the Proposed District Plan has been relied upon. However, there is no substantial evidence base on why this setback is more appropriate than the required 1.5m standard. As such, Waka Kotahi seeks further evidence on why a larger setback is considered a qualifying matter. The Council has referenced Appendix 4B of the Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency's Planning Policy Manual (2007) and stated that a 6m setback is based on nationally accepted standards. However, the Planning Policy Manual (2007) is under review and Waka Kotahi does not have an accepted setback, rather, requires any sensitive activity located within 100m of the state highway to be designed and constructed to achieve adequate noise standards. Further discussion on managing potential effects of reverse sensitivity is included in the paragraph below.

Reverse Sensitivity (Noise and Vibration)

Under the Proposed District Plan, Council have confirmed that the provisions to address reverse sensitivity would apply (NOISE-R16). No additional changes are proposed as part of this variation, such that if the changes requested by Waka Kotahi through the Proposed District Plan submission are accepted, there will be adequate provisions to protect those people living within proximity to the state highway from the potential adverse effects of noise. Through the Proposed District Plan submission period, Waka Kotahi requested the 80m effects area be increased to 100m, where sensitive activities are required to be adequately designed and constructed to the relevant noise standards. Waka Kotahi consider that if the noise standards requested through the Proposed District Plan submission are accepted then there will be appropriate standards in place to manage the potential health effects on any residents in proximity of the state highway and located within a residential area proposed to be up zoned.

North-East Development Area and South-West Development Area Rezoning (Rangiora)

The variation seeks to rezone the North-East and South-West Development Areas in Rangiora to the Medium Density Residential Zone. These two areas have previously been identified in the Proposed District Plan for future residential development (Rural Lifestyle Zone) and have existing Outline Development Plans (ODPs). No changes are proposed to the ODPs. Through the Proposed District Plan submission period, Waka Kotahi requested that further consideration be given to increasing the area zoned Medium Density Residential. Variation 1 has provided for this density such that Waka Kotahi consider that their request through the Proposed District Plan submission process has been met. There are adequate ODPs in place such that transportation requirements including cycle/shared path connections are appropriately provided for.

Financial Contributions

The HSAA sets out that financial contribution provisions may be included or changed as part of the Intensification Planning Instrument (IPI) process (s.77t). Waimakariri District Council proposes to introduce a financial contributions chapter through a second variation to the Proposed District Plan – Variation 2: Financial Contributions. Waka Kotahi supports the use of financial contributions as a financial tool to contribute towards public realm improvement projects, and seeks that consideration be given to initiatives and/or infrastructure that supports mode shift.

Waka Kotahi thanks Waimakariri District Council for the opportunity to make a submission on Variation 1: Housing Intensification (Medium Density Residential Standards) to the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan. To discuss this submission, please contact Gemma Kean (gemma.kean@nzta.govt.nz).



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