

# Memorandum

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Attention: The Marlborough Environment Plan Hearings Panel  
 Company: c/o Marlborough District Council  
 Date: 9 May 2018  
 From: James Bentley  
 Message Ref: Topic 5: Natural Character and Landscape – Response to Minute 19  
 Project No: C16091A

## **Marlborough Environment Plan – Response to Minute 19 concerning extent of natural character mapping in Port Gore and Crail Bay**

Minute 19 confirms that the Panel request that I undertake a desk top review of the mapped natural character extent of the following locations:

1. The head of Port Gore surrounding the Marchant property, and
2. The northern Crail Bay ridge area separating Crail Bay from the main Pelorus Sound in the vicinity of the Hemphill property

The memorandum outlines the result of that desk-top study.

### **Port Gore and Marchant Property**

Within the notified MEP, much of the terrestrial lower slopes at the central and western ends of Inner Port Gore were illustrated as holding high levels of natural character, with virtually all of the upper slopes and ridge being identified as holding very high levels of natural character. Further, much of the very high areas of natural character were also found to hold outstanding natural character values. Typically, the lower slopes have been affected by modification over the years (and have thus ranked lower in natural character than the more established upper slopes), however much of this mid and lower slope has now actively regenerated into native bush. The lower parts of the slopes still retain the most modification, in the form of an access track, a power line, some small houses and an airstrip.

Mr. Marchant in his submission to the MEP requested a review of this mapped area and I agreed to this in my Closing Statement issued at the end of the week commencing 26 February 2018<sup>1</sup>. In that response, I mentioned that a greater level of refinement could occur to the mapped areas at the head of Port Gore.

**Figure 1** attached to this memorandum outlines the recommended changes of mapped natural character following this review. The review solely looked at the land within Inner Port Gore. The extent of regeneration of the indigenous bush to the mid slopes and part of the lower slopes appears seamless and is difficult to differentiate. Based on this, and after a careful review, I consider that the extent of very high and outstanding natural character be extended to include much of the mid slopes and parts of the lower slopes where modification is not apparent. The remaining areas where modification is apparent is to remain as high.

<sup>1</sup> Page 6 of my Closing Statement

## **Crail Bay and Hemphill Property**

Within the notified MEP, much of the terrestrial eastern-facing slopes of Crail Bay were illustrated as holding high levels of natural character. This mapping was predominantly based on the extent of indigenous regeneration in the area and recognising the general lack of apparent modification associated with this hillside. This high rating recognised that this vegetation is relatively advanced in terms of its regenerative growth, having historically been cut-over and cleared for farming uses. Now much of this area is retired from farming and indigenous regrowth is recolonising this hillside.

However, there are modifications still apparent, in the form of commercial forestry, areas of scrub, tracks and buildings. These areas have typically been 'removed' from the original high natural character overlay, however, some further refinement could occur to the parts of the northern part of this hillside.

Mr. Hemphill in his submission to the MEP queried the extent of the overlay in relation to his property at the northern end of this east-facing hillside. In my Closing Statement issued at the end of the week commencing 26 February 2018<sup>2</sup>, I agreed to undertake a review of this area, particularly to remove the areas of high natural character from existing pine plantations.

**Figure 2** attached to this memorandum outlines the recommended changes of mapped natural character following this review. The review solely looked at the land within Mr. Hemphill's property. Where areas of pine plantation extended into areas of high natural character, these were removed. Based on this, I consider that the extent of high natural character be reduced in this area as mapped on **Figure 2**.

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<sup>2</sup> Page 7 of my Closing Statement



