

Chapter 7: Landscape

Draft Marlborough Regional Policy Statement

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Introduction

Our landscapes provide us with a Marlborough identity and are an integral part of the Marlborough environment. Landscapes are distinct spatial areas influenced by location specific processes within the environment. These processes can be natural processes or can be human-induced processes (such as land use change). Natural features within the landscape can also help define a landscape. The resulting landscape characteristics are expressed visually, but can also be valued for their ecological significance or for intrinsic reasons (e.g., by providing a sense of place).

The RMA identifies the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development as a matter of national importance (Section 6(b)). Those landscapes that do not meet the threshold of being outstanding may still make a contribution to the visual appreciation or the amenity values of Marlborough. The RMA seeks to maintain and enhance these landscapes with visual amenity value (Section 7(c)). For the purposes of this chapter, landscapes that are identified for Section 6(b) or 7(c) reasons are referred to as “significant landscapes”.

An extensive reassessment of Marlborough’s landscapes was undertaken in 2009. The subsequent report, “Marlborough Landscape Study 2009”, identified Marlborough’s outstanding natural features and landscapes as well as Marlborough’s visual amenity landscapes. (The landscapes identified in the report as ‘visual amenity landscapes’ have been termed ‘landscapes with high amenity value’ in the RPS/Resource Management Plan).

There are five broad landscape areas in Marlborough: the Richmond Range and associated mountain ranges, the Wairau and Awatere River Valleys, the mountainous interior, the Marlborough Sounds and the remainder of the coastal environment.

Richmond Ranges

These mountains enjoy a wetter climate than their counterparts to the south. As a consequence, and due to the steep landform, the slopes and valleys are predominantly covered in indigenous forest. Although plantation forestry and intensive pastoral farming are evident within the valleys and on some of the lower slopes, especially along north bank of the Wairau River, the majority of the land is managed by the Department of Conservation. There are also a number of European and Maori historic and cultural elements associated within this landscape, particularly within the eastern coastal margin, from Rarangi in the south to Oyster Bay in the north.

Wairau and Awatere River Valleys

These river valleys are characterised by their broad, low lying outwash plains confined to the Wairau River plain, the Awatere River Valley. These plains are bounded by the characteristic rolling hills of Southern Marlborough. This vastly modified landscape contains urban developments, pasture, forestry, horticulture and vineyards.

Mountainous Interior

The mountainous interior south of the Wairau River is an extensive, largely inaccessible tract of land comprising rugged hills and mountains reaching 2,800 metres above sea level in some places. This landscape is largely bare although remnant indigenous vegetation exists in alpine areas and in many of the river gorges. Some of the land is used for extensive pastoral farming. Due to the vegetation clearance, its biophysical aspects are somewhat diminished, however its bold landform characterised by underlying geology and geomorphology and natural erosion processes is typical of high country areas.

The Marlborough Sounds

The Marlborough Sounds display a unique combination of landforms formed by drowned river valleys and resulting in a highly fractured coastline with numerous offshore islands. Shaped largely by physical and climatic influences, the Marlborough Sounds include very steep to moderately steep dissected coastal hills and a mix of vegetated and cleared mountain slopes. Some parts of

Chapter 7: Landscape

the Marlborough Sounds are modified through agricultural, forestry, residential land uses and aquaculture activities in the coastal marine area. There are also significant Maori and European historic and cultural elements that contribute to this landscape.

The East Coast

From Rarangi in the north to Willawa Point on the Kaikoura Coast, the east coast of Marlborough provides a variety of landforms. In the north, the coastal environment comprises a sequence of dunes and swales moving inland, although these features have been modified by agricultural and residential activities. There are two significant river mouths, the Wairau River and Awatere River and two significant saline lagoons, Vernon Lagoons and Lake Grassmere. Salt is harvested from Lake Grassmere. The remainder of the coastline is rugged and relatively inaccessible. From Cape Campbell south, this coastline is characterised by dramatic limestone features.

The presence of water, in terms of lakes, rivers, wetlands or the sea, makes a significant contribution to the overall landscape. Therefore any reference to landscape within this RPS/Resource Management Plan includes reference to these water environments.

It is important to recognise that there is significant diversity in landscape within the broad areas identified above. This diversity is partly a response to variation in geological and ecological processes. Human activity has also had a considerable effect on our landscape over time, while current land use continues to influence the landscape character of Marlborough. Because the underlying human and natural processes are subject to change and evolution, landscapes are dynamic systems.

Issue 7A – Resource use and changes in resource use can result in the modification or loss of values that contribute to outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value.

The use and development of natural and physical resources has always played an important role in sustaining Marlborough communities. The landscape within which this resource use occurs also makes a significant contribution in this regard. For Marlborough's tangata whenua iwi in Marlborough, particular features within the landscape are taonga. The wider community enjoys and values the landscapes that exist within the Marlborough Sounds, Richmond Ranges, in the Wairau and Awatere River valleys and in the mountainous interior. Our landscapes collectively make a significant contribution to our wellbeing and assist to provide us with a Marlborough identity.

The use and development of natural and physical resources changes the landscape. This could be in the form of the introduction of built form where there is currently none or where it is introduced into prominent locations; the introduction of colour that contrasts to colours in the existing landscape; the introduction or removal of vegetation that affects pattern and texture within the landscape. Landscape change can occur at a range of scales and timeframes be it site specific or broad scale, immediate or incremental and potentially cumulative.

Not all change in the landscape will result in a loss of landscape values. In fact, some changes have enhanced landscape values. An example is the indigenous revegetation in the Marlborough Sounds. Other landscapes are a direct result of resource use. For example, the conversion of pastoral land to viticulture in the river valleys has created a landscape of structure, seasonal colour contrast and colour contrast with surrounding landscape. These examples demonstrate the dynamic nature of our landscape.

Although our landscape is dynamic and will continue to change in response to future resource use, there are landscapes that the community values more than others. The importance of these significant landscapes, and the contribution they make to community wellbeing, is recognised by the RMA. The value placed on our significant landscapes means that they are often more sensitive to change.

Issues can arise where the effects of resource use, especially the subdivision, use and development of land, result in the loss or degradation of the values that are fundamental or integral to a landscape being considered significant. As the community gains economic wellbeing from the productive use of natural

and physical resources, it can be challenging to balance this against the need to retain the values that contribute to our significant landscapes. Judgements are therefore required to determine appropriate development within our significant landscapes.

Objective 7.1 – Identify Marlborough’s outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value.

Identification of the nature and extent of outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value allows the application of appropriate management mechanisms. The identification process is a complex task given the dynamic nature of Marlborough’s landscapes, the diverse range of values that contribute to Marlborough’s landscape character and the variation in the sensitivity of these values to change. In addition, our perception of landscape varies widely depending on our own culture and life experience. In this context, it is very important to identify those values that make particular landscapes significant.

Policy 7.1.1 – When assessing the values of Marlborough’s landscapes the following criteria will be used:

- (a) Biophysical values, including geological and ecological elements;**
- (b) Sensory values, including aesthetics, natural beauty and visual perception; and**
- (c) Associative values, including cultural and historic values, and landscapes that are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place.**

Landscape is the expression of natural processes and human activity in and on the land. Landscape is also a function of how people perceive the results of this interaction. This means that multiple values contribute to landscape. Those considered relevant in a Marlborough context are identified in (a) to (c) of the policy. Landscapes may have one or more of these values. The criteria are derived from national and international landscape assessment criteria. **More detail on what constitutes the values in (a) to (c) and on how the values are assessed is included within the report “Marlborough Landscape Study 2009”.** The Council will use these values as the basis of any assessment of landscape.

Policy 7.1.2 – Assessment of the values in Policy 7.1.1 will determine:

- (a) Whether a landscape is identified as an outstanding natural feature or landscape in terms of section 6(b) of the RMA,**
- (b) Whether the landscape has high amenity value in terms of section 7(c) of the RMA; or**
- (c) Whether landscape values are not significant.**

Once an assessment of a landscape has been undertaken in terms of the values identified in Policy 7.1.1, a determination will be made as to whether the landscape values are so significant that the landscape is to be considered outstanding in the context of Section 6(b) of the RMA. If a landscape is considered to exhibit exceptional or very high biophysical, sensory and/or associative values, then it will be identified as an outstanding natural landscape. Outstanding natural features can also be included within this assessment.

There are also landscapes in Marlborough where, although the values are not as significant as those for an outstanding natural feature or landscape, these landscapes can still make a significant contribution to the appreciation and quality of our environment. A range of sensory values can contribute to the amenity of these landscapes, including scenic beauty, coastal character, dramatic or attractive natural features within the landscape, and the openness or naturalness of the landscape. Where these sensory values are collectively considered to be high, then the landscape can be categorised as a landscape with high amenity value.

Controls will apply to both of these landscapes as set out in subsequent policy whereas landscapes not identified as having significant value will not be subject to management for landscape outcomes.

Policy 7.1.3 – Landscapes that meet the criteria to be identified as an outstanding natural feature or landscapes or landscapes with high amenity value, where those values are more sensitive to change:

- (a) Are specifically identified on the resource management plan maps; and
- (b) The specific values associated with the identified landscapes are set out in **Schedule xx**.

The landscapes that are identified as significant, i.e. those that are either an outstanding natural feature or landscape or have high amenity value, will be identified (and mapped) in the RPS/Resource Management Plan. (For those landscapes identified as having high amenity value, it is only those landscapes that are more sensitive to change that have been mapped.) This makes it clear to resource users where Marlborough's significant landscapes are located. Additionally, the values that make these landscapes significant are described in **Schedule xx**. These values can be had regard to when resource consent applications are made and decided upon including the extent to which they may be affected by a particular use or development.

Policy 7.1.4 – Define the boundaries of outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value using the following methods:

- (a) Land typing;
- (b) Contour line;
- (c) Contained landscape features;
- (d) Visual catchment; and
- (e) Land use.

The identification of outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value requires the extent of the significant landscapes to be identified. This policy identifies the methods that will be used to establish the boundaries, as follows:

- Land typing: Uses a change in landform to establish a boundary at and following the edge of the landform.
- Contour line: Uses a specific contour line(s) to establish a boundary.
- Contained landscape feature: Uses an enclosed area of land around a landscape feature, such as an island.
- Visual catchment: Uses ridgelines and spurs to establish a boundary.
- Land use: Uses a change in land use to establish a boundary.

The method to be used will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the values that contribute to the landscape and how they are expressed in the landscape.

Policy 7.1.5 – Refine the boundaries of outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value in response to:

- (a) Landscape change over time; or
- (b) More detailed assessment of landscape values.

Although it is intended to identify Marlborough's outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value, landscape is also dynamic and is constantly changing. The pace of change may be fast, as a result of land use change or as a result of a catastrophic event (e.g., earthquake), or may occur at a slow pace as a result of natural processes (e.g., indigenous revegetation). Where landscape change occurs over time or where there is a more detailed assessment of landscape values at a particular site, it may be necessary to refine the boundaries of the identified outstanding natural features and landscapes and landscapes with high amenity value. (Any changes to the

boundaries of these identified landscapes will have to pass through the First Schedule process of the RMA).

Methods of Implementation

The methods listed below are to be implemented by the Council unless otherwise specified.

7.M.1 Identifying Marlborough's outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value

An extensive reassessment of Marlborough's landscapes was undertaken in 2009. The subsequent report, "Marlborough Landscape Study 2009", identifies Marlborough's outstanding natural features and landscapes as well as Marlborough's landscapes with visual amenity value (now referred to as landscapes with high amenity value). After consultation with landowners, resource users and the community, the landscapes that meet national and international criteria for significance have been mapped in the RPS/Resource Management Plan. Schedule x of the RPS/Resource Management Plan also identifies the values (as listed in Policy 7.1.1) that make each landscape significant.

7.M.2 Information

The Council has made available background information on Marlborough's diverse landscape character and the results of any evaluation of landscape significance (following consultation with relevant landowners). This will be a useful reference document generally, but can also be used by resource consent applicants to assist any assessment of adverse effects on landscape values.

Objective 7.2 – Protect outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and maintain and enhance landscapes with high amenity value.

Section 6(b) of the RMA requires the Council to protect outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and Section 7(c) of the RMA requires the Council to have particular regard to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values. This objective reflects these statutory obligations. It also recognises the significant contribution that landscape makes to community wellbeing. Protecting the biophysical, sensory and associative values that contribute to our significant landscapes means that we, and visitors to Marlborough, can continue to appreciate this important part of Marlborough's identity, character and environment.

It is important to acknowledge that the landscape management mechanisms that stem from this objective are not intended to be prohibitive with respect to changes in resource use. Sustainable management of landscape does not anticipate that there is no landscape change. The focus is on determining what is appropriate resource use and development in relation to the values that make the landscape significant.

Policy 7.2.1 – Control activities that have the potential to degrade the values that contribute to outstanding natural features and landscapes, by requiring activities and structures to be subject to a comprehensive assessment of effects on landscape values through the resource consent process.

One of ways in which the Council is to fulfil its statutory obligations with respect to landscape is to control inappropriate subdivision, use and development through regional and district rules. Because some of Marlborough's natural features and landscapes have been identified as having outstanding value, it is important that activities in these areas are assessed through the resource consent process to determine whether the activity will have an adverse effect on landscape values. The activities to be controlled vary between each outstanding natural feature and landscape because the values that contribute to the significant landscape, and the sensitivity of these values to change, will differ from place to place. For example, the threats to landscape values in the coastal environment could be different to those in the mountainous interior. Schedule X of the RPS/Resource Management Plan identifies the values that

Chapter 7: Landscape

make each outstanding natural feature and landscape significant. The RPS/Resource Management Plan will also contain the regional and district rules.

Policy 7.2.2 – Control activities that have the potential to degrade the amenity values that contribute to the Wairau Dry Hills Landscape by:

- (a) Setting permitted activity performance standards, which are consistent with the existing landscape values and which will require greater assessment where proposed activities and structures exceed those standards; and**
- (b) Requiring resource consent for commercial forestry activities.**

The Wairau Dry Hills Landscape is more sensitive to change than other landscapes with high amenity value. The Wairau Dry Hills form the visual backdrop to Blenheim and the Wairau Plain, and provide an attractive contrast to the valley floor. (The specific values that are present within this landscape are set out in **Schedule xx** of the RPS/Resource Management Plan.) While most landscapes identified as having high amenity value have a non-regulatory approach as the means of maintaining and enhancing landscape value, for the Wairau Dry Hills Landscape, a regulatory approach is considered more appropriate in order to fulfil statutory obligations under Section 7(c) of the RMA. Only one activity has been considered to have a need to be assessed through the resource consent process and this is commercial forestry. This is because this activity could have a significant adverse effect on the landscape values of this area. The use of performance standards for permitted activities is considered appropriate for other activities in order to manage effects on landscape values as resource use and development is to be generally expected within this landscape.

Policy 7.2.3 – Control activities that have the potential to degrade the values that contribute to the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape:

- (a) By requiring activities and structures to be subject to a comprehensive assessment of effects on landscape values through the **resource consent process** for areas within this landscape that are identified as an outstanding natural feature or landscape;**
- (b) Using a non-regulatory approach as the means of maintaining and enhancing landscape values in areas of this landscape zoned as Coastal Living; and**
- (c) For areas not otherwise covered by (a) or (b) within the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape by:**
 - (i) Setting performance standards/conditions, which are consistent with the existing landscape values and which will require greater assessment where proposed activities and structures exceed those standards; and**
 - (ii) Requiring resource consent for commercial forestry activities.**

Similar to the Wairau Dry Hills Landscape, the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape is more sensitive to change than other landscapes with high amenity value. The Marlborough Sounds is an iconic and unique landscape, with considerable scenic beauty. While some parts of the Sounds have more significant values than others, in its entirety the Sounds has considerable landscape value. It is for this reason that the whole of the Sounds has been included within a 'Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape'. **Schedule X** of the RPS/Resource Management Plan identifies the values that make each landscape within the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape significant.

Because the Marlborough Sounds is subject to development pressure for a range of subdivision, use and development it is appropriate to control these activities through a range of means. The difference in controls reflects the distinction in importance between outstanding natural features and landscapes and landscapes with high amenity value that have been identified in accordance with Sections 6 and 7 of the RMA. Therefore the matters set out in (a) to (c) acknowledge the differences in the overall Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape.

For the areas identified as have outstanding landscape value there is a resource consent requirement through which the adverse effect on the values identified in **Schedule x** can be assessed. For areas that are zoned Coastal Living, there has already been a degree of modification to landscape values and in these areas a non-regulatory approach is considered appropriate to manage further landscape impacts. The remaining areas within the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape have a management approach which includes performance standards for permitted activities and conditions on consent for controlled activities as it is expected that there will be some resource use within these areas. The one exception is that there is a discretionary activity resource consent requirement for commercial forestry to ensure that this activity can be assessed for its impact on the landscape values identified in **Schedule xx**.

Policy 7.2.4 - Recognise that some outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value will fall within areas that are a product of extensive pastoral farming.

Some landscapes, especially south of the Wairau River, are a product of past and present extensive pastoral farming. In this situation, the continuation of such pastoral farming is not anticipated to threaten the biophysical, sensory or associative values that contribute to landscape significance. This will be reflected in the status of regional and district rules that apply in identified outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value in rural areas. Existing land uses within these areas will also have existing use rights under Section 10 of the RMA.

Policy 7.2.5 – Where resource consent is required to undertake an activity within an outstanding natural feature and landscape, or a landscape with high amenity value, regard will be had to the potential adverse effects of the proposal on the values that contribute to the landscape.

Where it is proposed that an activity will take place in an outstanding natural feature and landscape, or a landscape with high amenity value, it is appropriate that an assessment of the impact of the proposal on these significant landscapes is carried out. To undertake the assessment, regard must be had to the values that contribute to the outstanding natural feature and landscape, or a landscape with high amenity value, identified in **Schedule X** of the RPS/Resource Management Plan. The level of assessment should reflect the scale of the proposed activity and the potential adverse effects on the values that contribute to the landscape.

Policy 7.2.6 – Avoid adverse effects on the values that contribute to outstanding natural features and landscapes in the first instance. Where the adverse effects are unable to be avoided, and the activity is not proposed to take place in the coastal environment, ensure that the adverse effects are remedied.

Where resource consent is required to undertake a particular activity in an outstanding natural feature or landscape, this policy provides a clear preference for avoiding adverse effects on the biophysical, sensory or associative values within the landscape. This does not necessarily mean that there can be no new resource use within outstanding natural features or landscapes. The use or development of natural and physical resources may be able to be undertaken in a way that the quality and significance of the values is not diminished. Alternatively, adverse effects may be able to be remedied through careful planning or remedial works. Policy 7.2.9 provides further guidance in this regard. The option of remedying adverse effects on landscape values does not apply to activities occurring within the coastal environment as Policy 15 of the NZCPS requires that such adverse effects be avoided.

Policy 7.2.7 – Where the following activities are proposed to take place in an outstanding natural feature or landscape, other than an outstanding natural feature or landscape in the coastal environment, then any adverse effects on the values of the outstanding natural feature or landscape can be mitigated provided the overall qualities and integrity of the wider outstanding natural feature or landscape are retained:

- (a) **Activities involved with the development and operation of regionally significant infrastructure;**
- (b) **Activities that enhance passive recreational opportunities for the public where these are of a smaller scale; and**
- (c) **Activities involved in the development and operation of renewable electricity generation schemes within Marlborough where the method of generation is reversible.**

Chapter 7: Landscape

This policy relaxes the direction provided by Policy 7.2.6 for outstanding natural features and landscapes in limited circumstances. These circumstances are described in (a) to (c) and reflect the considerable benefits that the listed activities provide to the social and economic wellbeing, health and safety of our community.

Regionally significant infrastructure is essential to allowing our communities to function on a day-by-day basis. This infrastructure may need to be expanded in the future and that expansion may need to occur in outstanding natural features and landscapes. In respect of (b), many outstanding natural features and landscapes are already able to be accessed for passive recreational purposes and the RMA seeks to maintain and enhance these amenity values. Enhancement may take the form of new tracks or huts in the landscape, but would be of a small scale. The RPS/Resource Management Plan seeks to maximise the use of the Marlborough's renewable energy and encourages the use and development of renewable electricity resources. This is recognised in (c) of the policy. However, (c) does not apply where the structures associated with the generation cannot be realistically removed from the environment with minimal trace. This is because any landscape effects in these circumstances are permanent.

The policy does not allow the activities in (a) to (c) to occur without consideration of the impact that they may have on outstanding natural features and landscapes. Any adverse effects on the biophysical, sensory or associative values within the landscape must still be mitigated to the extent that is possible. As adverse effects can occur at various scales, there should also be consideration of the impacts of the proposed activity on the overall qualities and integrity of the wider outstanding natural feature or landscape. The policy requires that the overall quality and integrity of the landscape should be retained.

This policy does not apply to activities occurring in the coastal environment as Policy 15 of the NZCPS requires that adverse effects of activities on outstanding natural feature or landscape be avoided.

Policy 7.2.8 – Encourage landowners and resource users to consider landscape qualities in the use or development of natural and physical resources in landscapes with high amenity value.

The primary means of maintaining and enhancing landscapes with high amenity value is through non-regulatory methods. This recognises that generally speaking these landscapes are usually located in remote areas or in areas where the sensory values are not under any critical threat. These landscapes are usually more modified than outstanding natural landscapes. This policy does not apply to the Wairau Dry Hills and Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscapes. For this reason, these two landscape areas are specifically included in Policies 7.2.2, 7.2.3 and 7.2.9.

Policy 7.2.9 - Protect the values of outstanding natural features and landscapes, and the high amenity values of the Wairau Dry Hills and the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscapes by:

(a) In respect of structures:

- (i) Avoiding visual intrusion on skylines, particularly when viewed from public places;**
- (ii) Avoiding new dwellings in close proximity to the foreshore;**
- (iii) Using reflectivity levels and building materials that complement the colours in the surrounding landscape;**
- (iv) Limiting the scale, height and placement of structures to minimise intrusion of built form into the landscape;**
- (v) Recognising that existing structures may contribute to the landscape character of an area and additional structures may complement this contribution;**
- (vi) Making use of existing vegetation as a background and utilising new vegetation as a screen to reduce the visual impact of built form on the surrounding landscape, providing that the vegetation used is also in keeping with the surrounding landscape character;**
- (vii) Encouraging utilities to be co-located wherever possible;**

(b) In respect of land disturbance, including tracks and roads:

- (i) Avoiding extensive land disturbance activity that creates a long term change in the visual appearance of the landscape, particularly when viewed from public places;**
- (ii) Encouraging tracks and roads to locate adjacent to slopes, or at the edge of landforms or vegetation patterns, and to follow natural contour lines in order to minimise the amount of land disturbance required;**
- (iii) Minimising the extent of any cuts or side castings where land disturbance is to take place on a slope;**
- (iv) Encouraging the revegetation of cuts or side castings by seeding or planting.**

(c) In respect of vegetation planting:

- (i) Avoiding the planting of new areas of exotic forestry in areas of outstanding natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment of the Marlborough Sounds;**
- (ii) Encourage plantations of exotic trees to be planted in a form which complements the natural landform.**

(iii) Recognise the potential for wilding pine spread.

The sensory values of outstanding natural features and landscapes are vulnerable to change brought about by resource use. The introduction of new structures, tracks and roads into the landscape, and the planting of new vegetation, all have the ability to affect our visual perception and appreciation of the landscape. This policy sets out how the visual integrity of the landscapes can be maintained in response to changes in resource use. The subdivision of land can act as a pre-cursor to such changes so it is also appropriate to have regard to this policy when considering subdivision consent applications.

The matters in (a) to (c) guide how visual intrusion into significant landscapes can be avoided, remedied or mitigated. These mostly relate to undertaking land use activities in ways that limit the visual intrusion into the landscape. These actions can be implemented through standards on permitted activity rules and the consideration of resource consent applications **or through prohibited activity rules**. Policy 7.2.1 provides guidance on how these controls will be applied to outstanding natural features and landscapes and for landscapes with high amenity value, the guidance is provided through Policies 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.

This policy cannot apply to existing land use activities that have been lawfully established due to existing use rights under Section 10 of the RMA.

Policy 7.2.10 – When considering resource consent applications for activities in close proximity to outstanding natural features and landscapes, regard may be had to the matters in Policy 7.2.9.

The extent of outstanding natural features and landscapes are mapped in the RPS/Resource Management Plan. Establishing a boundary at which point values no longer contribute to landscape significance is difficult. This means it may be appropriate to assess the impacts on landscape values for activities outside of, but in close proximity to, an identified outstanding natural feature or landscape. Application of this policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the proposal and its proximity to the outstanding natural feature or landscape.

Policy 7.2.11 – Ensure consistent assessment of adverse effects on significant landscapes by providing guidance on assessment methodology.

Where resource consent is required to undertake an activity in an outstanding natural feature or landscape, or a landscape with high amenity value, an assessment of adverse effects on significant landscapes will have to be undertaken as part of the application. Given that perceptions of landscape differ between individuals, there is the potential for inconsistent assessment to occur. The Council relies on the information provided with the application to make a decision on applications, so variation in the assessment of adverse effects on landscape creates the potential for inconsistent decision making. For this reason, guidance on appropriate assessment methodology will be provided.

Policy 7.2.12 – Reduce the impact of wilding pines on the landscape by:

- (a) Supporting initiatives to control existing wilding trees and limit their further spread; and**
- (b) Controlling the planting of commercial wood species that are prone to wilding pine spread.**

The ability of pine trees to spread from commercial plantations, soil conservation plantings, rural shelterbelts and isolated plantings is well documented in Marlborough. As pines spread, they alter the landscape due to their visual dominance and colour contrast. In addition where forests have been harvested but not replanted there is the potential for rapid growth of wilding seedlings, creating further and unmanaged sources of wilding pine spread. Many in the community believe that these landscape changes are unacceptable and have initiated control programmes in an effort to reduce the presence of wilding pines in the landscape and limit their spread to other areas. These efforts are to be supported as a means of effective landscape protection. Additionally, there are certain species of tree grown for commercial wood production that are more prone to wilding pine spread, for example Douglas fir. Controls on planting certain species will assist to reduce the risk of wilding pine spread and therefore reduce impacts on landscape values.

Policy 7.2.13 – Liaise with the Department of Conservation regarding any landscape issues on land identified as outstanding natural features and landscapes and administered by the Department.

A significant proportion of outstanding natural features and landscapes occur over Crown land administered by the Department of Conservation. There are fewer threats to biophysical, sensory and associative values in these landscapes in comparison to those areas with outstanding natural features and landscapes over privately owned land. This is because Crown land is managed for conservation purposes and is not likely to attract development. That is not to say that there are not potential threats. For example, applications can be made to operate concessions within areas administered by the Department and vegetation change can occur as a result of pest plant incursions (including wilding pines, broom and gorse). The Council will liaise with the Department on an ongoing basis in order to discuss landscape issues as they arise, and to develop and implement appropriate management responses.

Methods of Implementation

The methods listed below are to be implemented by the Council unless otherwise specified.

7.M.3 District and Regional Rules

*As necessary, apply district or regional rules to activities that have the potential to threaten identified values that contribute to the landscape character of outstanding natural features and landscapes. Rules may also be required to maintain and enhance the Wairau Dry Hills Landscape and the Marlborough Sounds Coastal Landscape. The status of activities will depend on the severity of the threat and range from permitted activity standards through to **prohibited activities**. Activities to be regulated include:*

- *Subdivision;*
- *Erection and placement of structures, especially location, scale, density and appearance;*
- *Land disturbance;*
- *Indigenous vegetation removal; and*
- *The planting of certain species of exotic tree.*

7.M.4 Guidelines

The Council will provide guidelines to assist landowners and resource users to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse visual effects of development on landscape values. A priority for development will be guidelines for forest harvest activities and guidelines for new structures. These guidelines are intended to encourage landowners and resource users to consider landscape qualities when using or developing natural and physical resources. This may result in improved recognition of the landscape within which the resource use or development is proposed to occur and therefore improved (harvest or structure) design from a landscape perspective.. In this way, the guidelines will assist with the implementation of the regulatory methods and are complimentary to these methods.

Advocate to rural industry groups that they, locally or nationally, prepare and/or adopt, guidelines aimed at avoiding the landscape effects of their activities where these occur in outstanding natural features and landscapes, or landscapes with high amenity value.

7.M.5 Incentives

Consider providing rates relief where landscape protection is formalised by way of covenant or similar methods of protection.

Consider providing funding to wilding pine control programmes and other community initiated control programmes for undesirable plants and animals.

7.M.6 Investigation

Undertake research into alternative forestry and land use options available to pine forest owners in the Marlborough Sounds. The investigations should include how best to manage the transition from pine plantations to these alternatives in a manner that minimises landscape effects, especially effects caused by wilding pines.

7.M.7 Information

*Make available background information on Marlborough's diverse landscape character, including through **Schedule xx** which identifies the values of Marlborough's significant landscapes.*

Provide forest owners in the Marlborough Sounds with information on alternative forestry options and alternative land uses so that they can make informed decisions regarding succession planning leading up to, and upon, the harvesting of existing pine forests.

Provide the community with information on effective control practices for wilding pines.

7.M.8 Liaison

Liaise with the Department of Conservation on an ongoing basis in order to identify landscape issues on land administered by the Department, and to develop and implement appropriate management responses.

7.M.9 Advocacy

Advocate for increased guidance to be provided at a national level for assessing the adverse effects of resource use and development on landscape values.

Anticipated Environmental Results and Monitoring Effectiveness

The following table identifies the anticipated environmental results of the landscape provisions of the RPS/Resource Management Plan. The anticipated environmental results are 10 year targets from the date that the RPS/Resource Management Plan becomes operative, unless otherwise specified. For each

Chapter 7: Landscape

anticipated environmental result, there are a series of indicators that will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the landscape provisions.

Anticipated Environmental Result	Monitoring Effectiveness
<p>7.AER.1</p> <p>Marlborough's outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with visual amenity value, are protected from degradation.</p>	<p>Outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value, are included within the RPS/Resource Management Plan. This will include the identification of values that make each landscape significant and mapping of the extent of the significant landscapes.</p> <p>The awareness of Marlborough's outstanding natural features and landscapes, and landscapes with high amenity value, increases, as measured by public perception survey.</p> <p>The biophysical, sensory and associative values that contribute to the significance of particular landscapes are maintained (or enhanced), as measured by reassessment of Marlborough's landscape.</p> <p>Only appropriate development is allowed to occur in outstanding natural features and landscapes, as measured by reassessment of Marlborough's landscape.</p> <p>The area of land vegetated by wilding pines in the Marlborough Sounds decreases.</p>

