

# 5.0 Landscape

## 5.1 Introduction

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Section 6(b) of the Act requires that provision be made in the Plan for *“the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.”*

The Marlborough Regional Policy Statement develops this further in Policy 8.1.3 *“avoid, remedy or mitigate the damage of identified outstanding landscape features arising from the effects of excavation, disturbance of vegetation, or erection of structures.”*

In addition, the dynamic landscapes and seascapes of the coastal environment are among the most important components of natural character and amenity values in the Sounds, both requiring provision for their preservation [sections 6(a) and 7(c) of the Act]. Many areas with outstanding landscape values are also areas of high natural character. The visual and scenic qualities of coastal landscapes and seascapes also contribute to amenity, recreational, and tourism values and thereby enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the community.

The Marlborough Sounds has landscapes which are unique in New Zealand and are valued for their semi-wilderness aspects, scenic beauty, recreational capability and their social, economic and cultural utility. This chapter of the Plan establishes objectives, policies and methods to achieve the protection of these valued landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

### 5.1.1 Identification of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

In its entirety, the landscape of the Marlborough Sounds Plan area has outstanding visual values. It displays a broad range of types of visual landscapes and features which are often of greater value for their collective contribution than for their individual value. The location of the Sounds at the top of the South Island with the role as a sea corridor and gateway to the South Island ensures a high public profile as a travel route.

Some of the visual features of the Sounds which contribute significantly to its outstanding character are:

- The curving coastline with a range of tidal estuaries and sandy and rocky beaches;
- Island landforms set with a skyline backdrop;
- Highly weathered coastal cliffs;
- Rolling ridgelines along the skyline;
- A complex mosaic of vegetation patterns which gives rise to a range of textures and colours in the landscape; and
- Uninterrupted sequence from hilltop to seafloor.

Within the overall landscape of the Marlborough Sounds there are some parts which can be described as individually outstanding such as coastal cliffs including those facing Cook Strait and on D'Urville Island, the Rangitoto Islands, French Pass Channel and the coastal forests and waters of Tennyson Inlet. Other outstanding features and landscape components can be identified and, where they occur, are generally:

- Headlands;
- Spurs and steep hillsides;
- Skylines;
- Significant hills and landform peaks;
- Water;
- Shorelines and small coves;
- Indigenous forests;
- Mudflats and tidal estuaries;
- Flat valley floors; and
- Cliff faces.

Areas of outstanding landscape value are indicated on the planning maps in Volume Three. This material is intended to provide a guide to assist those involved in resource consent applications to assess adverse effects on outstanding landscape criteria and values.

## 5.2 Issue

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### **The adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use or development on outstanding natural features and landscapes.**

The natural and physical resources of the Sounds offer vast opportunities for a range of uses and development activities. Some of these are highly compatible with the underlying landscape and seascape character. Others have potential to compromise the integrity of that character. The landscape of the Sounds has been host to over 150 years of farming, feral grazing, fire, forestry, fishing and coastal settlement. The Sounds landscape overall is therefore highly modified and is constantly changing with the cycles of land use patterns.

Within the overall issue stated above it is important to attempt to define the types of subdivision, use and development which would be 'inappropriate' and could adversely affect landscape values. In respect of both the areas of outstanding landscape identified and any other area valued for landscape or visual reasons, inappropriate subdivision, use and development may include:

### 5.2.1 Structures on Land

In the coastal environment in particular, buildings and other structures that have the potential to intrude and compromise the natural quality of the landscape. In some landscape contexts the siting, bulk and design and contrasting colours of buildings can be inappropriate. Network utilities and associated buildings (towers, masts, transmission dishes and lines) where located on hilltops can have significantly detrimental effects on the visual values of important skylines.

### 5.2.2 Structures on Water

Similarly the siting, bulk and design of structures and equipment located on the surface of water can interrupt the consistency of seascape values and detract from the natural seascape character of a bay or wider area.

### 5.2.3 Land Disturbance

Roads and tracks can be highly visible within the landscape where they cut across the faces of hills or where their construction requires substantial earthworks and landform change. Sensitive design and construction can minimise some of these adverse effects but in other visually prominent situations it may be that the visual effects are unable to be mitigated and the alignment is simply inappropriate.

Similarly the earthworks associated with creating building platforms can be highly visible within the landscape. In some situations vegetation rehabilitation can mitigate or remedy the effect over time. In others the highly prominent location of the site may mean that no amount of subsequent mitigation would reduce the significance of the adverse landscape effect.

Mining can have significant detrimental effects on visual landscape values where open cast methods are used.

### 5.2.4 Change of Vegetation Cover

Changes in land use practices and crops grown can have significant visual effects. The change from pastoral farming to production pine forestry has been significant throughout the Sounds and the hinterland. It is part of the cycle of change within the working landscape of the area and is not necessarily a detrimental change wherever it occurs. In the context of some landscapes and features, though, the removal of significant indigenous cover and replanting with exotic species could have a detrimental effect on the landscape. Some changes in vegetation can enhance the landscape values of an area.

### 5.2.5 Subdivision

The visual effects of human settlement are the intrusion of structures and land disturbance mentioned above. The act of subdivision of land is instrumental in determining where new building development and roading is to be located. Although the legal process of subdivision itself does not cause direct visual effects, the activities and patterns of development which follow it can be significant (new boundary fencing, new land management practices, new buildings, roads and jetties).

## 5.3 Objectives and Policies

Objective 1	Management of the visual quality of the Sounds and protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
Policy 1.1	Avoid, remedy and mitigate adverse effects of subdivision, use and development, including activities and structures, on the visual quality of outstanding natural features and landscapes, identified according to criteria in Appendix One.

Policy 1.2	Ensure that any long-term adverse effects on landscape from land disturbance and earthworks are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
Policy 1.3	Within identified outstanding natural features and landscapes, ensure that any land disturbance or earthworks undertaken, incorporate measures to mitigate any short-term adverse effects or enhance landscape quality in the long-term.
Policy 1.4	Require activities involving vegetation clearance to incorporate measures to mitigate any significantly adverse visual landscape effects by appropriate rehabilitation, including revegetation.
Policy 1.5	Ensure that all proposed new allotments are capable of providing a building platform for future buildings which is located in such a way that potential adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes can be avoided, remedied or mitigated.
Policy 1.6	Encourage retention of areas or stands of indigenous vegetation where they contribute significantly to landscape character and quality.

*The objective, and the policies to achieve landscape protection, are included in the Plan primarily because the Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement require, as a matter of national importance, the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

*The Marlborough Regional Policy Statement also indicates the need for the Plan to address the protection of visual or landscape values.*

*The objective and policies are intended to apply specifically to those areas identified as having outstanding landscape value (refer to Volume Three - Maps). However, the policies also apply in the general to all other areas, particularly when an application for a moderate or large-scale activity is being assessed. That is, when some type of visual or landscape assessment is necessary in order to ensure that any adverse visual effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

## **5.4 Methods of Implementation**

Area Identification	Areas of outstanding landscape value have been identified in accordance with specific criteria (refer to Volume One - Appendix One). These are indicated on the planning maps (Volume Three).
Rules	Landscape values underpin the construction of rules and the zoning pattern adopted for the Plan.
Assessment Criteria	Landscape impact has been included as a matter for assessment on a number of Discretionary Activities where visual or landscape effects are likely. Such assessments will be required to take into account the values identified and shown on the planning maps.

Guidelines	The Council will develop landscape guidelines in accordance with the policies outlined in this chapter. Such guidelines will provide subdividers, land users and building applicants with information on suitable siting, design and use of colour for buildings and structures.
Education	The Council will provide landowners in areas identified as being of outstanding landscape importance with information on the values attributed to their land.
Covenants	The Council will encourage the use of voluntary open space or conservation covenants, or other agreements as a means of protecting an area of landscape value.
Subdivision	The Council may impose conditions of consent for subdivision, where appropriate, requiring landscape covenants be registered on the land title or the vesting of certain land as reserve in order to protect landscape values.
Land Acquisition	The Council will consider acquiring a site with outstanding landscape values where land purchase is the only means available for protection of the values.
Incentives	<p>The provision of incentives to promote the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes which has been shown to meet the criteria in Appendix One.</p> <p>Incentives will be investigated further and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiving resource consent application fees;</li> <li>• Waiving development contributions where property development incorporates the protection of an identified outstanding natural feature or landscape; and</li> <li>• Through the annual planning process, consider granting reductions in rating for properties where outstanding natural features and landscapes are protected through either rules in the Plan or by an open space or conservation covenant.</li> </ul>

*The methods provide a general framework for the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. It is important to note that it is not outright protection which is sought by the objective, policies and methods above, but rather protection from inappropriate subdivision, use or development.*

*There are numerous means available to moderate landscape impact. For example, a structure on land, such as a residential dwelling or a transmission mast can have a lesser visual effect if it is appropriately located on the site, the shape and size is moderate and reflects the surrounds, and the external finish is non-reflective and incorporates neutral colours. A number of the areas identified as having outstanding landscape value are in public ownership, generally administered by the Department of Conservation. Such areas are unlikely to face many visual or landscape threats.*

## 5.5 Anticipated Environmental Results

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Implementation of the policies and methods relating to landscape will result in:

- Large areas of the Sounds area dominated by the interplay between deep, clear waters and indigenous vegetation rising from shore to ridgeline; and
- Minimum intrusion into the landscape by inappropriate land and water-based activities and their structures.