

Summary of Evidence Statement for proposed Timaru District Plan

Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Natural Character and Natural Features and Landscapes Chapters and, the Open Space and Recreation Zones (OSRZ) Topic (Hearing D)

12 November 2024

1. Tēnā koutou katoa, ko Deidre Francis tōku ingoa, my name is Deidre Francis. I am appearing before the Hearings Panel today on behalf of the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury).
2. My qualifications and experience are set out in my evidence dated 25 October 2024.
3. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.
4. I would like to acknowledge all the work that Timaru District Council and landowners have done to identify and protect significant natural areas in this district. While the evidence presented on behalf of the Regional Council has raised issues concerning whether the proposed Plan provisions will sufficiently protect all significant areas of indigenous vegetation and all significant habitats of indigenous fauna, that is not intended to detract from the great work that has been done in this district.
5. My evidence provides the anchor for the main planning evidence supporting the Regional Council's submissions on the provisions of the proposed Plan being considered today. Dr Jean Jack's expert ecology evidence supports the evidence I have provided concerning SNAs and I have relied on her evidence for technical expertise to inform my opinions.
6. Ms Jolene Irvine provides evidence to address concerns raised in the s42A officer's report regarding when trees are deemed to be impacting the effective operation of the flood protection scheme within the Long-Tailed Bat Habitat Protection Area and the processes undertaken to ensure that bat roosting trees are protected. Her evidence is supported by evidence from Mr Michael Boschen who provides details of the practical approach taken to ensuring bat roosting trees are protected while also ensuring that trees do not cause issues for protection structures or access to these structures. Following the submission of evidence, further discussions occurred with the Department of Conservation and Ms White about the permitted activity rule proposed by Ms Irvine. Ms Irvine has included a revised permitted activity rule in her Summary of Evidence statement. This new wording has been agreed between the Department of Conservation and the Regional Council.
7. My evidence addressed the s42A reports of Mr Boyes and Ms White. No additional evidence was provided for the Open Space and Recreation provisions beyond support for Mr Boyes' recommendations.
8. I have supported a number of the recommendations made by Ms White, in paragraphs 31 – 34 and 40 of my evidence. At paragraph 39 of my evidence, I suggested an amendment to ECO-O1 to give greater consistency with Canterbury

Regional Council Policy Statement Objective 9.2.3 and to provide better alignment with the wording of section 6(c) Resource Management Act 1991. Ms White has supported my requested amendment in paragraph 10 (g) of her s42A summary statement.

9. The Regional Council originally submitted to amend the definition of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) used in the proposed Plan. Since that submission was made, the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) has been notified. I accept that the definition of SNAs within the proposed Plan is consistent with the NPSIB definition.
10. I am supportive of the new policy (ECO-PX) and the new rule (ECO-R1.4) recommended by Ms White, subject to issues raised in Dr Jack's evidence being addressed.
11. I am happy to answer any questions about my evidence.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa