

# Wairarapa Combined District Plan

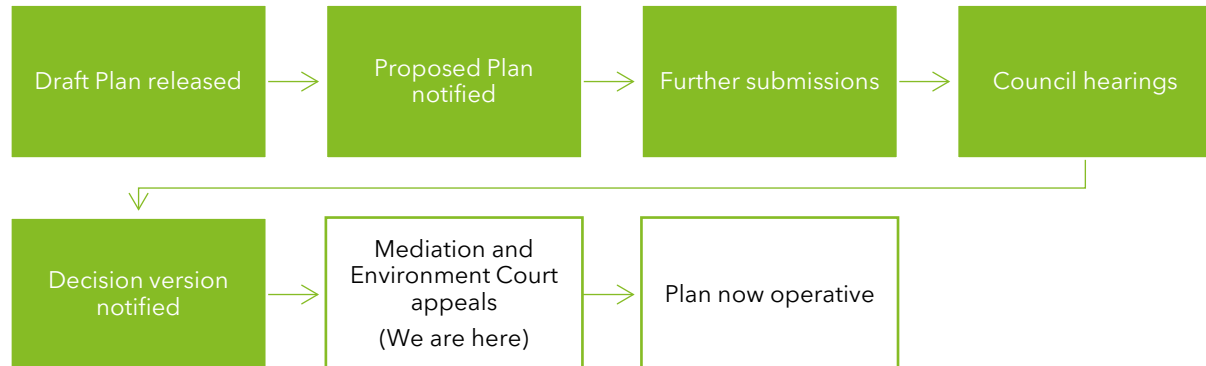
## Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils | November 2025

### What is the Wairarapa Combined District Plan?

Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils have a joint district plan, prepared under the Resource Management Act, to manage the effects of land uses on the environment and other activities. District plans need to be updated every ten years, and the Wairarapa Combined District Plan is undergoing that process now.

HortNZ submitted at both the draft and proposed plan stages. After further submissions where we commented on other parties' points, we spoke at council hearings to make the case for our most important asks. The councils have now made their decisions based on the evidence presented at hearings. We are now at the stage when parties can appeal decisions. All of the provisions that are not appealed will become operative, meaning those will now be the rules for activities in the Wairarapa districts.

Always get the advice of a qualified planner if you have questions about specifics of the plan or whether you need a resource consent.



### A supportive plan for horticulture

Generally, the plan is enabling for horticulture. In particular, the objectives, policies and rules are set up to avoid planning decisions that could cause reverse sensitivity effects in the General Rural Zone. Reverse sensitivity effects are when new neighbours move into the rural environment with unrealistic expectations for noise, smells, traffic movements, etc, causing them to complain about normal productive activities.

The plan also recognises the importance of protecting highly productive land and soils that are not defined as "highly productive" but have the potential to support high value production like orcharding and viticulture.

## HortNZ appeal

HortNZ has appealed just one provision in the plan which could cause problems for growers. In our original submission, HortNZ supported retaining rules which make rural produce retail a permitted activity (no resource consent required) with some standards for floor area, building height, etc.

At the hearings, one party sought significant changes to this rule in the General Rural Zone (GRUZ-R11). In response, the council officer amended the rule to state that rural produce retail is only permitted if “There is no sale of food or beverages to the general public for consumption on the site.” Otherwise, rural produce retail would become a discretionary activity, meaning that the council could approve or decline a consent application based on their own judgement and with any conditions they thought were necessary.

In HortNZ’s view, the consumption of food or beverages on the site of rural produce retail is an entirely appropriate and anticipated activity in the General Rural Zone that supports horticultural activities. HortNZ is seeking that this new condition be removed from the rule. After filing our appeal with the Environment Court, the next step will likely be mediation to resolve this concern.

The decisions version is copied below. HortNZ is seeking that condition (e) be removed.

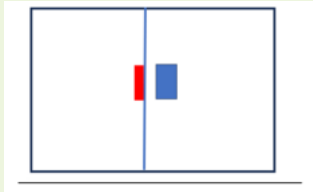
GRUZ-R11	<i>Rural produce retail</i>
	<p>1. Activity status: <b>Permitted</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compliance is achieved with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. GRUZ-S1;</li> <li>ii. GRUZ-S2;</li> <li>iii. GRUZ-S3; and</li> <li>iv. GRUZ-S6;</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. There is no more than one <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> used for the <i>rural produce retail</i> activity per <i>site</i>;</li> <li>c. The <i>gross floor area</i> of any <i>building</i> or <i>structure</i> used for the <i>rural produce retail</i> activity is no more than 40m<sup>2</sup>; and</li> <li>d. The activity does not use direct vehicle access to a State Highway.</li> <li>e. There is no sale of food or beverages to the general public for consumption on the site.</li> </ul>
	<p>2. Activity status: <b>Discretionary</b></p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Compliance is not achieved with GRUZ-R11(1).</li> </ul>

## HortNZ wins in decision version

HortNZ's submission and evidence at hearings resulted in many amendments to the proposed plan that are better for growers than the original version. These changes are summarised below.

Notified Provision	Summary of HortNZ's submission	Summary of decision
<b>Highly productive land</b>		
UFD-O2 Urban Growth	HortNZ sought that this objective recognise that urban growth shouldn't compromise the productive capacity of the rural environment.	This objective now states that urban growth should be planned in a way that protects the productive capacity of rural land.
<b>Reverse sensitivity</b>		
GRUZ-R7 Residential Visitor Accommodation	HortNZ sought that short-term visitors' accommodation should have to comply with a setback standard to mitigate reverse sensitivity effects on primary production.	A 10 m setback was required in the decisions version.
<b>Horticulture definitions</b>		
Definition of seasonal workers accommodation	HortNZ sought that the definition include workers for post-harvest facilities.	This change was made in the decisions version.
Definition of horticulture or horticultural activities	HortNZ did not specifically seek a definition of horticulture or horticultural activities, but we think its introduction is helpful.	This definition was added in the decisions version.
Definition of frost fan	HortNZ supported the introduction of a new definition for 'frost fan'.	This definition was added in the decisions version.
<b>Artificial crop protection structures</b>		
GRUZ-S2 Maximum height in relation to boundary	HortNZ sought that artificial crop protection structures be exempted from the requirements for a maximum height related	This exemption was included in the decision version.

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	to boundary of 3m height at the boundary with a 45° recession plane on all side and rear boundaries.	
GRUZ-S3 Minimum setbacks	HortNZ sought that artificial crop protection structures be exempted from boundary setbacks with specific conditions.	<p>HortNZ's suggested amendments were all taken in the decision version.</p> <p>The standard now states that artificial crop protection structures are exempted from the general setbacks where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dark green or black cloth is used for all vertical faces located within 30m of the boundary of the site and</li> <li>2. Where they are located adjacent to an internal boundary where there is an existing lawfully established residential unit located on an adjacent site and within 12m of the boundary. In this circumstance a minimum 5m setback shall apply to that portion of the Artificial Crop Protection Structure that is parallel to the face of the neighbouring residential unit and a maximum height of 6m.</li> </ol> <p>Advice note: To clarify the application of GRUZ-S3(6) the below diagram shows the applicant site on the left, and the neighbouring property is to the right of the blue internal boundary line. The blue rectangle is the neighbouring residential unit, set less than 12m off the internal boundary. The red area</p>

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		<p>on the left is the area subject to the 5m setback - there is no setback required along the balance of the shared boundary</p> 
<b>Seasonal Workers Accommodation</b>		
<p>GRUZ-R4 Seasonal worker accommodation</p>	<p>HortNZ opposed the Council's proposal to require resource consent for more than 1 seasonal workers' accommodation building per site rather than determining the need for consent based on cumulative floor area. HortNZ also opposed that the Council was going to require consent based on whether the workers' accommodation was on highly productive land.</p>	<p>HortNZ's amendments were taken in the decision-version, making seasonal workers accommodation buildings with a cumulative floor area up to 150m<sup>2</sup> a permitted activity, including on highly productive land.</p>
<b>Audible Bird Scaring Devices</b>		
<p>NOISE-S2 Maximum noise levels for specified activities</p>	<p>The original drafting said that bird scaring devices could only be used between sunrise and sunset. HortNZ sought that this be expanded to include the ½ hour before sunrise and ½ hour after sunset.</p>	<p>The decision version permits the use of bird scaring devices ½ hour before sunrise and ½ hour after sunset.</p>
<b>Biosecurity</b>		
<p>NATC-P6 Modification of vegetation in</p>	<p>HortNZ sought allowance for the removal of vegetation for biosecurity purposes where it is</p>	<p>HortNZ's amendments were taken in the decision version, so the</p>

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proximity to Significant Waterbodies	otherwise restricted within 25m of Significant Waterbodies.	policy now states, with HortNZ's amendment emphasised,  "Allow modification of vegetation within 25m of Significant Waterbodies where it involves pest plant species, <b><u>disposal of infected material for biosecurity purposes, treatment of areas to manage incursions of unwanted organisms</u></b> or is associated with primary production..."
NATC-R2 Modification of vegetation and associated earthworks within 25m of a Significant Waterbody	HortNZ sought a permitted activity for the modification of vegetation and earthworks for biosecurity purposes within 25m of Significant Waterbodies.	HortNZ's amendments were taken in the decision version, so this is now a permitted activity.
NFL-R1 Earthworks, modification of indigenous vegetation, or buildings and structures (including construction, additions, and alterations) within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes	HortNZ sought a permitted activity for earthworks and modification of vegetation within Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes for biosecurity purposes.	HortNZ's amendments were taken in the decision version, so this is now a permitted activity.
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
ECO-P3 Identify areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna	HortNZ supported a Federated Farmers submission point seeking that landowners should be involved in the process of identifying significant indigenous vegetation and	This amendment was made in the decision version.

Notified Provision	Summary of HortNZ's submission	Summary of decision
	habitats of indigenous fauna on their properties.	

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Wairarapa Combined District Plan review website](#)
- Keep an eye [on HortNZ's website](#)
- HortNZ contact - Emily Levenson, Environmental Policy Advisor, [emily.levenson@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:emily.levenson@hortnz.co.nz) or 027 305 4423