

**IN THE ENVIRONMENT COURT
CHRISTCHURCH REGISTRY**

ENV

Under the Resource Management Act 1991
In the matter of appeals under clause 14(1) of the First Schedule to the Act

Between

**FEDERATED FARMERS OF NEW ZEALAND (INC) MACKENZIE
BRANCH**
ENV-CHC-2009-000193

**HIGH COUNTY ROSEHIP ORCHARDS LIMITED AND
MACKENZIE LIFESTYLE LIMITED**
ENV-2009-CHC-000175

MOUNT GERALD STATION LIMITED
ENV-2009-CHC-000181

MACKENZIE PROPERTIES LIMITED
ENV-2009-CHC-000183

**MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED AND GENESIS ENERGY
LIMITED**
ENV-2009-CHC-000184

THE WOLDS STATION LIMITED
ENV-2009-CHC-000187

FOUNTAINBLUE LIMITED & OTHERS
ENV-2009-CHC-000190

R, R AND S PRESTON AND RHOBOROUGH DOWNS LIMITED
ENV-2009-CHC-191

HALDON STATION
ENV-2009-CHC- 000192

Appellants

And **MACKENZIE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Respondent

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ANDREW CRAIG ON BEHALF OF
MT GERALD STATION**

19 August 2016

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Andrew William Craig.
- 2 I hold the position of Director of *Andrew Craig Landscape Architecture Limited*. I have been in this position since 2009.
- 3 I have been practising landscape architecture since 1987. For 5 years until mid-2009 I was employed by Peter Rough Landscape Architects Ltd. Before that I was employed by the Christchurch City Council for 13 years, working in the area of environmental policy and planning. Prior to that I worked for a short time with the Department of Conservation. Most of my work since graduation and to date has involved landscape assessment and the development of landscape policy.
- 4 I hold a Bachelors of Arts degree (Canterbury University) and a post graduate diploma in landscape architecture (Lincoln University).
- 5 I have been engaged by The Wolds Station Limited to provide evidence on certain aspects of the Mackenzie District Council's post-consultation version of Plan Change 13 to the Mackenzie District Plan (PC13).
- 6 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I have complied with it in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it in presenting evidence at the hearing. The evidence that I give is within my area of expertise except where I state that my evidence is given in reliance on another person's evidence. I have considered all material facts know to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express in this evidence.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 7 My evidence addresses the proposed 'Scenic Grasslands Area' (SGA) overlay applied to certain areas within the Mackenzie Basin Sub-zone Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL). In particular I focus on the SGA within Wolds Station (the Wolds) – specifically site GA11.¹ The location and extent of this in relation to Wolds I show on my **Graphic Attachment Map 1**, [sheet 1].

¹ In his 'Scenic Grasslands' [2016] report Mr Densem notes that GA12 lies within the Wolds and Maryburn – it is entirely within Maryburn..

- 8 There are two key matters I address; which are:
- a) Grassland management and its implications for GA11.
 - b) The extent of the GA11 overlay as it applies to the Wolds.
- 9 In addition, I also include some comments arising out of the proposed changes to the definition of a 'farm building' which seeks to exclude *"residential units and accommodation used predominantly for people engaged in farming activity and their families"*. In my evidence I discuss the implication of that on landscape character and amenity.
- 10 In preparing my evidence I have read:
- a) *Intensification and Outstanding Natural Landscape: Landscape Management of the Mackenzie Basin in Light of the Court Decisions* (version 12 prepared by Mr Graham Densem, November 2015 (updated));
 - b) *Scenic Grasslands* (Mr Graham Densem, May 2016).
 - c) Decision No. [2011] NZEnvC 387 (first interim decision)
 - d) Plan Change 13 Section 293 Package – Section 32 Report (Mackenzie District Council 27 May 2016)
 - e) Attachment A – Proposed Amendments to Plan Change 13 (Mackenzie District Council)
 - f) Brief of Evidence of G Densem dated 15 July 2016.
 - g) Brief of Evidence of M Harding dated 15 July 2016
- 11 I am also aware of subsequent Environment Court decisions arising from RMA s293.
- 12 I visited the Wolds on July 31 2016 where I familiarised myself with the location and extent of proposed GA11. On that visit I discussed grassland management techniques with Mr John Murray, whose advice I rely on in this regard.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 13 That 'scenic' equates with what is visible and so the location and extent of GA11 should correspond with this regarding views from State Highway 8 (SH8). It is evident that the views of GA11 are much less than its proposed extent and as a result it should be narrowed.
- 14 That maintenance of GA11 qualities requires continuation of current grassland management regimes which include over-sowing and top-dressing. The proposed non-complying activity status for this should be amended to permitted activity.
- 15 In addition to the above, that the part of rule 15A.3.2 that makes pastoral intensification within tussock grasslands within 1km of certain roads, including State Highway 8, should be deleted.
- 16 That there will be no significant landscape or visual effect arising from the inclusion of residential units and accommodation where such activity falls within the definition of 'farm building.'

LANDSCAPE ISSUES

- 17 The landscape issues I address arise from the relief sought by the Wolds Station Limited. As mentioned, these involve the two matters of grasslands management and the extent of the proposed SGA.

Regarding grassland management, the relief sought concerns proposed Policy 3B7 – *Views from State Highways and Tourist Roads*, which states:

(c) To avoid clearance, cultivation or oversowing of Scenic Viewing Areas and Scenic Grasslands, including tussock grasslands, adjacent to and within the foreground of views from State Highways and the tourist roads;

- 18 Rule 15A.3.2 sets out to achieve policy 3B7 (c) where in certain areas pastoral intensification is considered a non-complying activity. Rule 15A.3.2 states:

Pastoral Intensification (refer definitions) in the Mackenzie Basin Subzone within a Site of Natural Significance identified on the Planning Maps and scheduled in Appendix I, Scenic Viewing Areas, Scenic Grasslands or Lakeside Protection Areas identified on the Planning

~~Maps or in Appendix V (Areas of Landscape Management) or tussock grasslands within 1km of State Highway 8, Haldon Road, Godley Peaks Road or Lilybank Road.~~

- 19 The concern here is that the grassland the District seeks to protect is the product of past and present management regimes. For the SGA within the Wolds these have involved top-dressing and over-sowing.
- 20 The second matter regarding SGA extent concerns its visibility from State Highway 8 (SH8). As I will demonstrate, views of the SGA from the highway are variable depending on the presence or otherwise of intervening landform.
- 21 Thirdly, this rule also seeks to make pastoral intensification within tussock grasslands within 1km of State Highway 8 a non complying activity. These tussock grasslands have not been mapped by the Council and I understand this is additional to the SGAs that have. The same issue regarding visibility from the highway arises with respect to these tussock grassland areas.

GRASSLANDS MANAGEMENT

- 22 Under this heading I consider the effect of farming practices on grassland and what might happen in its absence. Regarding the latter, I will describe the role and effects of grassland in plant succession.
- 23 My aim is to determine what the best means is of managing and maintaining the scenic grassland in the desired condition. Of relevance in this regard is the proposed District Plan's definition of '*pastoral intensification*', which states:

Pastoral intensification within the Mackenzie Basin Subzone means, cultivation, irrigation, topdressing and oversowing and/or direct drilling.²

The reason why it is relevant is the direct bearing it has on how grasslands are managed with a view to achieving the outcomes desired for the SGA, where pastoral intensification is a non-complying activity.

Current grassland management

² Mackenzie District Plan Section 3: Definitions

- 24 As set out in Mr Murray's evidence, past and present grassland management, including those within the proposed SGA, comprise the following two practices;
- a) Over-sowing involving the application of clover and exotic grass seed, which occurs every five to ten years.
 - b) Top-dressing involving the application of fertiliser every two to three years in addition to some parts that have been direct drilled.
- 25 I understand that these areas are not currently cultivated such as that involving tilling, ploughing and alike. Nor are they irrigated.
- 26 No 'green' or winter crops, such as lucerne or brassicas, are grown within GA11. Vegetative land cover to date is entirely grassland interspersed with woody shrubs and herbaceous vegetation.
- 27 My observation is that the existing grassland comprises a mix of exotic species and indigenous short tussocks. The noxious weed '*hieracium*' is common - see **Graphic Attachment Photographs 1 & 2** [sheet 2] where its presence degrades grassland. Woody plant species are also present such as indigenous *matagouri* and broom. Exotic wilding pine, exotic broom and rosehip are evident also.
- 28 As set out in Mr Murray's evidence, woody plant species such as wilding pine, is largely removed through grazing within the over-sown areas.
- 29 I am also advised that over-sowing and top-dressing helps control the establishment and spread of hieracium [Miller & Espie: see also '*Plantwise Knowledge Bank*'].
- 30 Regarding landscape effects, maintenance of the grassland in this way results in greater homogeneity and therefore visual coherence. Consequently with regard to the control of exotic weed species, a remedial effect is achieved.

31 Grazing is also necessary to the maintenance of grassland. I note the Mr Densem makes a similar observation³ where regarding dryland farming regimes, he states:

Extensive dryland grazing at low stocking rates, that maintains the tussock / browntop cover of the Basin. This may include oversown but uncultivated grasslands that may be predominantly exotic Browntop, that remain generally brown through the year.

32 So too does Mr Harding.⁴ In this regard he states:

Grazing can help maintain plant communities and can be used to manage components of those communities. Grazing can prevent recovery or re-establishment of taller species and thereby prevent a short tussock grassland, for example, regenerating to a tall tussock grassland or shrubland plant community. Grazing can hinder the establishment of undesirable woody species, such as wilding conifers.

He does however qualify his view where he observes that grazing can be difficult to manage where the aim is to achieve particular plant communities.

33 I will discuss this in more detail later regarding plant succession. I understand that SGA overlays do not preclude grazing. Poor pasture and the prevalence of woody vegetation will however discourage grazing.

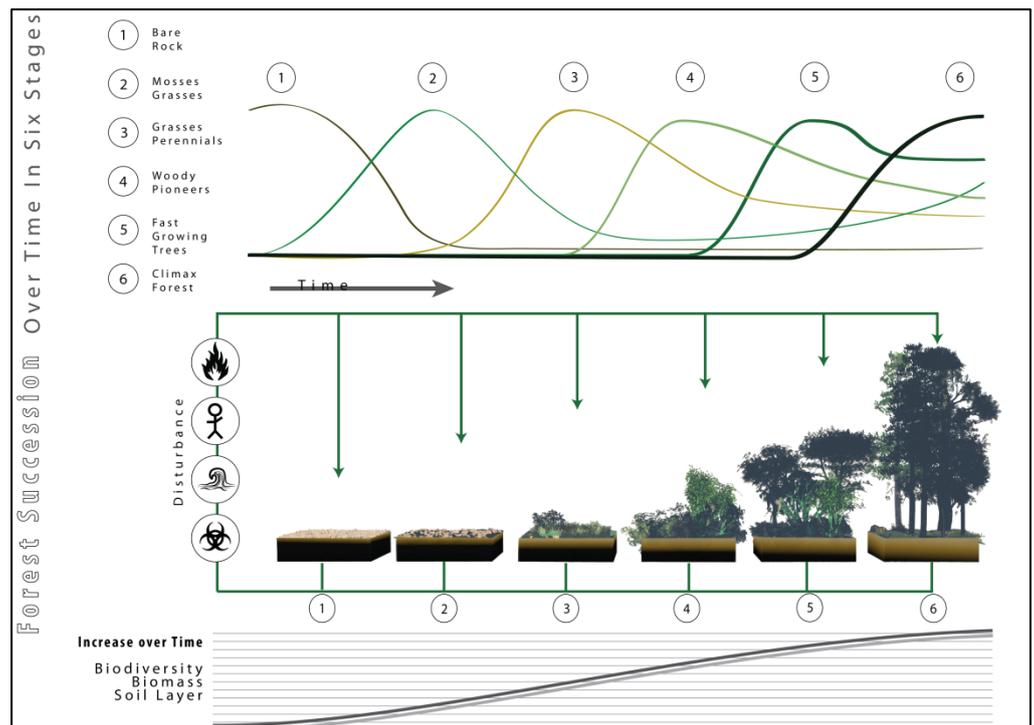
34 Overall, the combination of over-sowing, top-dressing, weed control and grazing results in maintenance of the grassland in its present form. That is, the very qualities that the proposed SGA overlay seeks to achieve results from the current grassland management regime. I say this with regard to achieving the desired landscape outcomes for the SGA, rather than commenting on this from an ecological point of view. The non-complying activity arising from proposed Rule 15A.3.2 assertively discourages top-dressing and over-sowing. The possible landscape consequences of this I discuss next.

³ Densem, G. EIC paragraph 53.4

⁴ Harding, M. EIC paragraph 50

The effects of restricting grassland management practices

35 Grasslands are not static environments. In nature they are transitional usually occupying the early phase of plant succession. This is where vegetation passes through a series of phases eventually culminating in a climax regime – see **Figure 1** illustration. Typically, but not always, the climax vegetation will comprise trees. As intimated, the phases reached are subject to variables such as climate, soil, water, grazing, catastrophe and human intervention. Succession can involve both indigenous and exotic plant species.



Source: Wikipedia – Ecological succession

Figure 1 *Illustration showing the process of plant succession. The Wolds grasslands (and throughout the Mackenzie Basin) occupy phases 1-3 in the above illustration. Phase 4 – the presence of woody pioneers – is also evident, but generally kept at bay by current grassland management.*

36 The process of succession is evident in the Mackenzie Basin, including at the Wolds. Further, it is evident that succession phases leapfrog transitioning from grassland straight to climax wilding pine. This is very common in the Mackenzie Basin – so much so that District Plan acknowledges this as a specific issue to be addressed. Rule 3.5.1 sets out to prohibit the planting

and establishment of certain wilding conifer source species. Further, the explanation and reasons to *Policy 3B14 – Wilding Trees* state:

The spread of wilding trees from plantations and from self-sown trees within the Mackenzie Basin has accelerated over time. This has significantly impacted the outstanding natural landscape character of the Basin by reducing the sense of openness and vastness and displacing indigenous vegetation including tussock grasslands.

Graphic Attachment Photograph 3 (sheet 3) shows this occurring in the SH8 berm alongside the Wolds. Within the Wolds it is evident the spread of wilding pine is effectively controlled.

37 It is apparent however, that other woody species do establish within the Wolds SGA such as broom and sweet briar. Mr Murray advises that these species are removed from time to time. Consequently the process of succession is controlled and curtailed. Regarding management of the Wolds I note that the Court in its first interim decision made the following observation:

‘This is one of a number of well managed properties in the Mackenzie Basin’⁵

38 In grasslands succession is usually arrested through grazing or cropping (hay for example). Periodic burning also arrests succession, although this is not practiced at the Wolds. As mentioned, within the Wolds grazing and selected grassland improvement via weed control, top-dressing and over-sowing keeps succession at bay.

39 In the absence of these techniques succession will occur eventually resulting in degradation and ultimately loss of the grassland. I understand that grazing is allowed within the SGA, but it is evident that this alone will not fully arrest succession – see **Graphic Attachment Photograph 4** (sheet 4). In this photograph it is evident that woody vegetation, mostly matagouri, is supplanting the grassland.

40 Other woody species, including wilding pine, may also establish should it not be actively removed. I understand there is no statutory requirement to remove such species.

⁵ [2011] NZEnvC387 at paragraph 410

- 41 It is also apparent that succession is reversed in some places where the grassland is denuded due to the presence of hieracium – see again **Graphic Attachment Photographs 1 & 2.**

Summary

- 42 It is clear that in order to maintain the grassland in the condition desired by the District Plan requires active management. Regarding this, the explanation and reasons to Policy 3.B7 state:

Sustainable management of natural and physical resources will not be maintained unless the protection of the District's natural resources, including the visual and landscape qualities of those resources can be assured. This is because the quality of life and development within the District is, in part, dependent on the quality of the visual and landscape character within which it operates.

The key consideration here is assurance that desired visual and landscape qualities are maintained.

- 43 As described, maintenance involving the land subject to the proposed SGA at the Wolds comprises weed removal and grazing facilitated by top-dressing and over-sowing. Without such management it is also evident that the grassland will likely succumb to natural succession, or otherwise regarding the denuding effects arising from the presence of hieracium and rabbits.

- 44 So to deliver assurance that the proposed SGA will be maintained, it is my opinion that continuation of management techniques is necessary. As part of this, it appears that over-sowing and top-dressing is required. This principle is recognised in the explanation and reasons to *Policy 3B13 – Pastoral Intensification* where it states:

Continued pastoral use and extensive runs generally sustain the valued landscapes of the Mackenzie Basin.

- 45 As defined in the District Plan, pastoral intensification includes a relatively wide range of activity. Some of this includes physical features such as irrigation. Also included is cultivation and drilling, both of which involve mechanical methods resulting in soil disturbance. Over-sowing and top-dressing are fundamentally superficial avoiding both soil disturbance and physical structures. Consequently, top-dressing and oversowing are

comparatively benign activities. In this regard I note that in his evidence⁶ Mr Harding implicitly acknowledges this difference where he states: ‘Years of pastoral use, the effects of introduced species (notably rabbits, hawkweed and conifers) and pastoral intensification (notably cultivation and irrigation)⁷ have altered and reduced the extent of indigenous vegetation in the Mackenzie Basin.’ He also makes the point⁸ that over-sowing and top-dressing may cause degradation to indigenous vegetation. I understand the latter to include the full range of plant types from herbs, cushion plants, grasses to woody shrub species.

- 46 Regarding the relief sought, I therefore recommend that Policy 3B7 and Rule 15A.3.2 is amended as follows:

3B7 – Views from State Highways and Tourist Roads, which states:

(c) To avoid unacceptable adverse effects of clearance, and mechanical cultivation or over-sowing of Scenic Viewing Areas and Scenic Grasslands, ~~including tussock grasslands~~, adjacent to and within the foreground of views from State Highways and the tourist roads;

Rule 15A.3.2

Pastoral Intensification (refer definitions) in the Mackenzie Basin Subzone within a Site of Natural Significance identified on the Planning Maps and scheduled in Appendix I, and with the exception of over-sowing and top-dressing within Scenic Viewing Areas, Scenic Grasslands or Lakeside Protection Areas identified on the Planning Maps or in Appendix V (Areas of Landscape Management or tussock grasslands within 1km of State Highway 8, Haldon Road, Godley Peaks Road or Lilybank Road.

- 47 I address the deletion of the last part of this rule relating to tussock grasslands within 1km of State Highway 8 later in my evidence.

⁶ Harding, M. EIC paragraph 13

⁷ My underline

⁸ Op.cit paragraph 44

THE EXTENT OF SCENIC GRASSLANDS AT THE WOLDS

48 The second relief sought is to reduce the extent of the SGA on the basis that not all of it is visible from SH8. Visual extent is relevant as it underpins what is meant by the word 'scenic'.

What does 'scenic' mean?

49 The online Oxford English Dictionary defines scenic:

'Providing or relating to views or impressive or beautiful natural scenery.'

The Merriam – Webster online dictionary defines it as:

'having, providing, or relating to a pleasing or beautiful view of natural scenery (such as mountains, hills valleys, etc).'

50 Its etymological origin is from the Greek 'skēnikos' meaning 'of the stage' and in this sense it has and still does have theatrical application.

51 Both definitions incorporate the qualitative prerequisites of 'natural' and 'beauty'. These constitute character or quality of the scene - what the definitions refer to as the 'view'. The online OED defines view:

'A sight or prospect, typically of attractive natural scenery, that can be taken in the eye from a particular place.'

52 It is clear that 'scenic' involves visual appreciation of a scene. It is not the same as landscape appreciation which arises from what we know of a landscape irrespective of visibility.

53 Further, it is my opinion that farming activity including pastoral intensification viewed from roads is not an entirely unexpected activity. Travellers through the Mackenzie Basin will be aware that they are moving through a largely working farm environment. Consequently, with regard to these associative effects, the presence of farming activity is not contrary to expectations based on what is seen.

54 On this basis it is my opinion that the extent of any proposed SGA should therefore correspond with what can be seen from SH8 or other tourist roads⁹. Regarding this, Mr Densem concludes¹⁰ that:

*'I support the strong controls on the SG as a method for identifying and maintaining areas of significant open grassland character seen from the road.'*¹¹

55 In his report Mr Densem also makes the point that views take into account those which are elevated in buses and taller vehicles¹². With this in mind the photographs I took, including those in my graphic attachment, are 2.5 metres above the road. This elevation more or less equates to the eye level of bus passengers.

Scenic Grasslands Extent

56 Mr Densem also discusses the width of scenic grasslands¹³. Here he concludes that they extend a maximum distance of 500 metres from the road. I agree with his principle that 500 metres is, more or less, the transition point between 'foreground' and 'distant' views.

57 I note the width of proposed G11 ranges from 750 to 1200 metres – well in excess of Mr Densem's recommended 500 metres. I show the 500 metre boundary on **Graphic Attachment Map 2** (sheet 5) and **Photograph 5**. Mr Densem does make the point however, that the boundary could extend beyond 500 metres if a boundary is manifest on the ground. I assume he means an obvious transition between grassland and, for example, rock outcrops, hill sides, shelterbelts or a significant water course.

58 Regarding the westward extent of GA11– away from SH8 - Mr Densem makes the following observation:

⁹ Mackenzie District Plan - Policy 3B7 – Views from State Highways and Tourist Roads

¹⁰ Densem, G. EIC paragraph 50

¹¹ My underline

¹² Densem, G. *Plan Change 13: Scenic Grasslands*. May 2016. Paragraph 46

¹³ Op. cit. Paragraphs 4 - 5

The western boundary for GA11 is drawn an arbitrary 1 kilometre from SH8, that distance to include the width of SV12.¹⁴

59 There is no indication that this boundary corresponds with existing boundaries. The justification appears to be that the grassland extent gives ‘...a good sense of the underlying moraine landforms.’¹⁵ The moraine landforms, comprising remnant moraines and outwash plains, do exist. Their visible appreciation from the highway appears to more or less correspond with the extent of SV12.

60 My observation is that the hummocky moraines do in fact obscure views from the highway. This is a point that Mr Densem also makes where he observes that;

‘Views of an area of flats west of SH8 are often masked by hummocks close to the road but frequent small views to the grasslands here are obtained when passing on SH8, particularly on buses and taller vehicles.’¹⁶

61 In fact, most of the GA11 site is obscured by these foreground moraine land form features. The exception is at the south end of GA11, and to some extent the northern end. I show the extent of this on **Graphic Attachment Map 3** (sheet 5). From the map and my site evaluation the distance of the moraine feature from SH8 ranges from close to zero metres at the mid-point to over 260 metres at the southern end of GA11 and around 500 metres at the northern end.

62 In **Graphic Attachment photographs 6 – 14** I show views of GA11 from various vantage points along SH8, including in places the truncating effect of the moraine features and consequent varying visibility – also see reciprocal **Graphic Attachment photograph 16** view from within GA11 at its western boundary. Based on my observation, it is my opinion the extent of GA11 from SH8 need not go beyond the skyline of the moraine, which as stated more or less corresponds with the extent of SV12. Where the moraine is absent to the south and north of GA11 and views are more extensive - see **Graphic Attachment photographs 1,2,5,9,13, 14** - the greatest extent need not exceed 500 metres.

¹⁴ Op. cit. Paragraph 48

¹⁵ Op. cit. Paragraph 47

¹⁶ Op. cit. Paragraph 46. He reiterates this point in his EIC – paragraph 46 concerning the discussion of GA11 and 12.

63 A further reason for confining the SGA to 500 metres is that the combination of perspective and foreshortening effects diminish apparent extent. This is the principle where relative to the observer, assuming the terrain is more or less flat and at the same elevation, visible ground diminishes over distance. I show this effect in the **Figure 2** diagram. Consequently the law of diminishing returns applies where the visual benefits of the grassland extent lessen exponentially over distance. Or to put it another way, there is no great benefit or gain of adding significant distance beyond, in this case, 500 metres. The cost to the landholder however, remains constant.

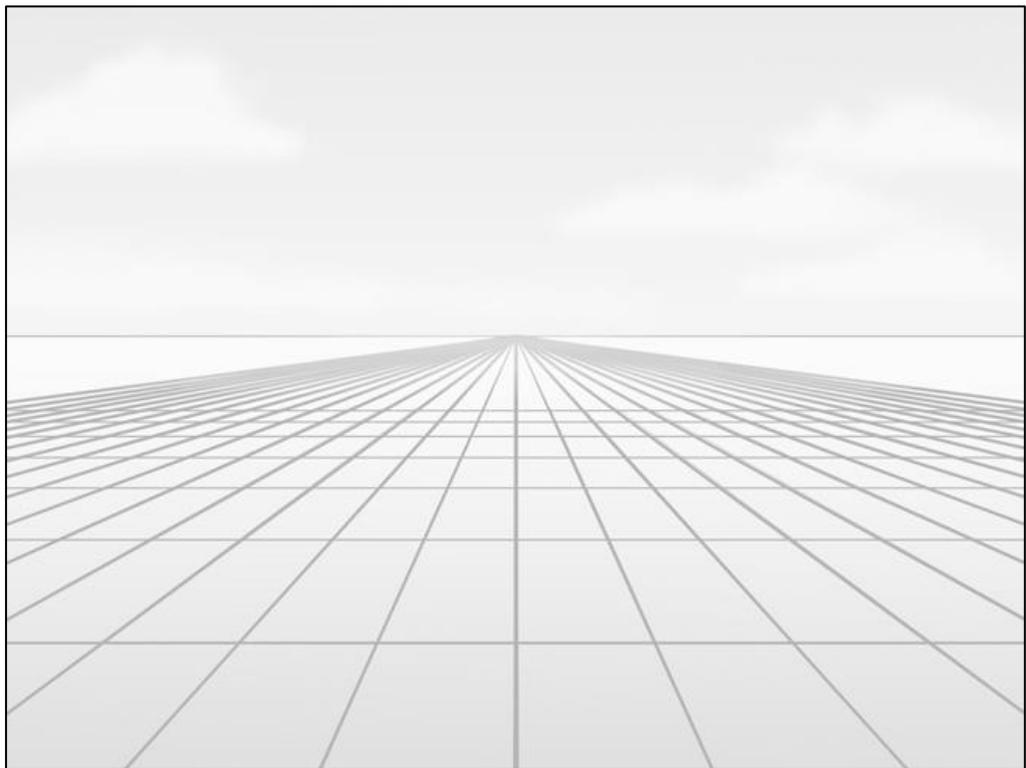


Figure 2 *This diagram illustrates the combined effects of foreshortening and perspective. In plan view the horizontal and vertical lines would appear equally spaced. But as the diagram shows, the space between the lines diminishes with distance. This effect occurs in GA11 for those parts where the terrain is generally flat and of similar elevation to the viewer. The effect is also shown on **Graphic Attachment Photograph 5** (sheet 6).*

64 The reason is that in order to fulfil its scenic purpose, the grassland extent need only encompass what is visible from the highway up to a maximum distance of 500 metres. Any further would constitute landscape rather than visual or scenic protection beyond the immediate foreground as viewed from SH8. As mentioned, this would more or less correspond with the extent of

Scenic Viewing Area 12. Like the scenic grasslands, its purpose also concerns foreground views, and yet its extent is much narrower.

- 65 On that basis, I therefore conclude that proposed GA11 need only correspond with the extent of SV12.

TUSSOCK GRASSLAND AREAS

- 66 In addition to those areas within a SGA Rule 15A.3.2 also proposes to make pastoral intensification of tussock grasslands within 1km of State Highway 8 a non-complying activity. I understand the purpose of the rule is to assist in achieving Objective 3B via *Policy 3B7 – Views from State Highways and Tourist Roads*. The objective sets out to protect those various characteristics (and values) which contribute to the ONL. Among these are tussock grasslands. I am not entirely clear what the distinction is between ‘tussock grasslands’ and ‘scenic grasslands’ given the rule and policy 3B7 it seeks to achieve concerns views within 1 kilometre of SH8, Haldon, Godley Peaks and Lilybank Roads.

- 67 Given that, and for the reasons set out above, I consider that with regard to the Wolds, 1km is excessive due to the fact that much of that area would not be visible from State Highway 8 and the law of diminishing returns applies.

- 68 Nor do I see a need for this part of the rule, given the protection which is already proposed for Scenic Grassland Areas and Scenic Viewing Areas.

FARM BUILDINGS

- 69 As mentioned, it is proposed to remove from the definition of ‘Farm Buildings’ *‘residential units and accommodation used predominantly for people engaged in farming activity and their families’* where the activity is controlled and outside the farm base areas, non-complying.

- 70 The relief sought is for reinstatement under the definition of ‘Farm Buildings’ of the above cited provision so that it is a permitted activity within the farm base area.

- 71 It is clear from the plan provisions¹⁷ there is a preference for buildings and other more intense farm activity to be located within the farm base areas. I

¹⁷ MDP Objective 3B, Policies 3B1, 3B2, 3B3,

understand that the principle is that physical features such as buildings and allied activity is clustered as are their effects, and that as a result the expansive open rural landscape of the Mackenzie Basin is maintained. This outcome is encompassed in the *Explanation and Reasons to Policy 3B3* in particular, where they state:

The developed nodes associated with pastoral runs are small points of civilization, far outweighed in area by the natural landscape. Thus the sense of extensive areas of highly natural landscape is maintained in the traditional Mackenzie land use pattern. Retaining much of this traditional pattern is possible by requiring buildings to be located within existing Farm Base Areas unless they are required to be sited elsewhere to facilitate farming.

Farm buildings are an expected element in the Mackenzie Basin landscape. Traditionally they have been loosely grouped and located in sheltered situations so that generally they do not appear obtrusive or incongruous in the landscape. Ideally new farm buildings will be located within the existing Farm Base Areas so as to keep most of the Basin free from buildings.

72 So in these terms it is my opinion that with regard to effects, residential units as farm buildings within the farm base areas will uphold the desired outcome. Their presence is not contrary to expectations by either the relevant objectives or policies and nor by the general public. Indeed, Objective 3B¹⁸ (3)(c) anticipates such an outcome where it seeks ‘to enable rural residential subdivision, cluster housing and farm buildings around existing homesteads (where they are outside hazard areas).

73 Regarding the effect of building bulk and location, there is little to distinguish a residential unit from other farm buildings. While I accept that a residence will exhibit certain design features that denote its function, in terms of its place and occupation within a farm base area it will simply read as ‘another’ building. In any case, the design and appearance of all farm buildings is subject to Policy 3B2(2) which seeks to avoid or mitigate adverse effects by;

Enabling farm buildings in Farm Base Areas and in areas of low visual vulnerability subject to bulk and location standards and

¹⁸ *Activities in the Mackenzie Basin’s outstanding natural landscape*

protection of environmental values and elsewhere managing them in respect of location and external appearance size, separation and avoidance of sensitive environments;

- 74 These policy provisions is further advanced by those subject to Policy 3B3 concerning the character of development in Farm Base Areas. So overall, the District Plan exerts considerable control of the effects of farm buildings, including residential units, within Farm Base Areas.
- 75 Additionally, the relationship of residences with accessory buildings – implement sheds, barns, workshops and such like – is functionally linked; and this is something people will generally understand to be a normal association.
- 76 The same applies regarding the notion of domestication. As the above cited Explanation and Reasons describe, the farm base areas are ‘...*small points of civilisation*...’ The presence of residences in my opinion would not contravene that outcome, and indeed contributes positively to it. And in terms of associative effects, residences would not be out of keeping with peoples’ expectations of what might reasonably be expected to occur within the setting of farm base areas.
- 77 Regarding built development outside Farm Base Areas, if residential buildings associated with farming are classified as farm buildings then the status will be restricted discretionary. Policy 3B2 would require such buildings to be managed in respect of location and external appearance, size, separation and avoidance of sensitive environments. There is also a preference for built development to occur in less sensitive landscape areas as outlined in Policy 3B1¹⁹. Additionally, Policy 3A5²⁰ encourages the use of design guidelines (Appendix K) to ensure buildings blend in with their setting.
- 78 I have been involved in the resource consent applications for dwellings within the ONL outside of Farm Base Areas, all of which have been granted consent. The key point is that it is possible to locate dwellings outside of Farm Base Areas in such a way that desired landscape outcomes are maintained. I consider that the provisions relating to farm buildings are sufficient to achieve appropriate outcomes for farm related dwellings.

¹⁹ Policy 3B4(3)

²⁰ *In Harmony With The Landscape*

79 I note however that the final part of the explanation to Policy 3B2 states that “individual farm buildings outside of Farm Base Areas are generally inappropriate” and goes on to recognise that these buildings will require resource consent with different considerations taken into account depending on the landscape sensitivity of the area. I consider this part of the explanation which refers to farm buildings being inappropriate should be deleted. The provisions will ensure that the relevant landscape considerations are taken into account before a farm building is approved. This part of the explanation fails to recognise that farm buildings are an anticipated part of the rural landscape, and are consistent with farming activity.

80 If the part of the definition of a “farm building” which refers to residential units is not reinstated, then I consider that Policy 3B2(4) which seeks to strongly discourage non-farm buildings²¹ elsewhere in the Mackenzie Basin outside of Farm Base Areas needs to take into account the possibility that individual residential units used by those working on the farm can occur in such a way where potential adverse effects on the ONL can be appropriately managed with a view to maintaining desired landscape outcomes.

CONCLUSION

81 Regarding the location, extent and nature of proposed GA11, and tussock grasslands generally, I believe there are two key factors to consider. The first rests on the question of how the SGA is to be maintained. And the second concerns location and extent based on the premise that this is determined by what is reasonably visible.

82 Concerning maintenance, it is evident that the grassland sought to be protected is the product of past and present farming practices.

83 In order to maintain the outcome desired by the Council therefore requires periodic top-dressing and over-sowing in addition to weed control and continued grazing. In this regard Mr Densem makes the following observation:

‘... Some oversown but uncultivated areas may be seasonally green but these, where the character of long dry grass prevails, are held to

²¹ These being individual dwellings intended for use by those working on the farm or their families.

be in keeping with the 'scenic' element of the Court's intention, and may be included within Scenic Grassland areas.²²

- 84 That is, SGA / tussock grassland maintenance, and indeed survival, requires active management. It is my understanding that for this to occur requires input from land holders at their expense.
- 85 Location and extent are, in my opinion, determined by what is reasonably visible from, in this case, SH8. As demonstrated, the term 'scenic' concerns what is visible with the qualifiers that it is beautiful and natural. While I am not convinced that scenery needs to be natural, the key matter here rests on what scene can be seen. As I have demonstrated, visible grasslands from SH8 while taking into account the elevated views of bus travellers are much less than that proposed for GA11. Consequently the extent of GA11 need only correspond with its visibility up to a maximum distance of 500 metres. In this case, it is my opinion that this would correspond with SV12 plus a short section located at the northern end of GA11 where it adjoins SH8.
- 86 Concerning residences within farm base areas, it is my opinion that their presence is entirely appropriate. The public would certainly expect them in such settings whose character and amenity is informed by the existing environment. The effects of activity within, including residences, are therefore concentrated, clustered and contained rather than dispersed. Consequently there is no unexpected adverse effect on the ONL landscape beyond arising from the presence of dwellings in association with other farm buildings and accessory activity.

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²² Densem, G. *Scenic Grasslands* (May 2016) Paragraph 8

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