

# Te Tai o Poutini Plan Introductory Planning Statement Coastal Environment



**Te Tai o Poutini**  
P L A N

*A combined district plan for the West Coast*

## Introduction to the Coastal Environment Topic

1. Tēnā koutou. My name is Lois Margaret Easton. I have been the principal planner during the period of development of Te Tai o Poutini Plan. I have been the lead planner for the coastal environment topic. My credentials are outlined in the relevant s42A reports and I will not repeat these here.
2. This topic is one of the topics within Te Tai o Poutini Plan where this matter was not well addressed in the operative plans. None of the operative plans identify the extent of the coastal environment and the inland extent of the coastal environment is also not mapped in the West Coast Regional Coastal Plan.
3. In 2013 the three district councils, jointly with the West Coast Regional Council commissioned Stephen Brown to do a landscape assessment for the West Coast with part of this study brief being to define the inland extent of the coastal environment, and identify areas of High and Outstanding Coastal Natural Character. Where the areas of High and Outstanding Coastal Natural Character fell within the coastal marine area, the West Coast Regional Council included these areas within its now withdrawn, 2016 Proposed Regional Coastal Plan however this now withdrawn proposed Plan only included provisions for seaward of mean high water springs, and no steps were made to further address the landward component.
4. As for the other 2013 landscape work, the extent of the coastal environment, and the areas of high and outstanding natural character within the coastal environment were identified in a pdf small scale document and the West Coast Regional Council GIS team digitised them.
5. In 2021, when the Te Tai o Poutini Plan was being developed, a limited review was undertaken by Stephen Brown of some key locations for the high and outstanding natural character identifications and the updated information was included in the notified Plan. However when the draft went for consultation it became evident that there were further areas in need of review and Stephen Brown was commissioned to do a West Coast wide reassessment.
6. Because there had been no previous review of any part of the extent of the coastal environment by Mr Brown, he was also asked to do a comprehensive review of the extent of the coastal environment on the West Coast. Due to timing issues, this reassessment was not available until September 2022. However the maps were still pdfs, and it was only in the last few months that these have been able to be digitised.
7. Stephen Brown was not available to assist with the s42A report, and Bridget Gilbert, a landscape architect with considerable visual assessment experience, was engaged instead. Ms Gilbert travelled to the West Coast to reassess the areas of high and outstanding natural character that were subject of submissions and has also reviewed the digitised maps and has recommended amendments to these. She has prepared a brief of evidence about her review and recommendations which is attached to my s42A report and will be available at 1.40pm today to present this information and answer questions from the commissioners.
8. A key matter for consideration in relation to the coastal environment is the extent to which the identification in TTPP affects the three main coastal settlements of Hokitika, Greymouth and Westport. The proposed Plan rules were drafted in such a way that they did not apply to these areas, but it has created some confusion showing these areas within the coastal environment on the planning, and some unintended consequences on other parts of the Plan, such as the subdivision provisions. It is my recommendation, and with the agreeance of Ms Gilbert, that in order to reduce this confusion, and also respond to specific submissions on this matter, that these three main settlements not be shown within the mapped coastal environment. This is consistent with the common approach taken for other urban areas in other parts of New Zealand.
9. Another area of confusion and overlap is with the natural hazards topic and specifically natural hazard mitigation structures provided for within Natural Hazards Rule NH- R4. Natural hazard mitigation structures under Rules CE – R5, CE – R6, CE – R9, CE – R12, CE – R17 and CE -R19 where they occur in areas of High or Outstanding Coastal Natural Character. In a similar way the Landscape and Natural Features chapter regulates these structures in areas of Outstanding Landscape and Natural Features, and the Natural Character of Waterbodies Chapter regulates these structures within riparian margins.
10. Outside of these scheduled areas natural hazard mitigation structures are regulated in the coastal environment chapter under Rule CE – R4.

11. In practice this will typically be rural locations and small settlements such as Punakaiki main village area, Omau/Cape Foulwind, Granity, Hector, Ngakawau, Little Wanganui and Karamea in Buller District, Rapahoe in Grey and Bruce Bay, Haast Beach, Okuru, Neil's Beach, Hannah's Clearing and Jackson Bay in Westland where the Natural Hazard provisions apply. These are all areas with significant coastal erosion issues and there are some existing public and private coastal hazard mitigation structures located in all these areas. However because the extent of the coastal environment is in some locations very wide, this rule could capture other types of natural hazard mitigation structures, particularly those which are further inland and constructed with the intent of managing land instability issues. Granity, Little Wanganui and many parts of the Coast Road between Greymouth and Barrytown and around Punakaiki are all locations subject to risk of land instability and so works to address this, including protection of the coast road are affected by this rule.
12. The Department of Conservation has submitted on both sets of rules (NH – R4 and CE – R4) in opposition, seeking greater restrictions and there is not complete alignment of recommendations across the two s42A reports. The s42A authors for the natural hazards topic and I propose to prepare an agreed position on the two rules and the Department of Conservation submission as part of a joint right of reply on this matter following the hearing.
13. In terms of the provisions within the Coastal Environment Chapter, these principally relate to earthworks and structures. The major focus of management is the areas of high or outstanding natural character, but there are also some provisions which aim to protect the natural character and biodiversity values of the wider coastal environment – principally relating to the height and bulk of buildings.
14. In terms of vegetation clearance within the coastal environment the rules around this can be found in the Ecosystems and Biodiversity (ECO) Chapter. The provisions are much more restrictive where this clearance is within the coastal environment, compared with other parts of the West Coast. In that regard, therefore the policies in the Coastal Environment chapter would be likely to be considered alongside the ECO Chapter policy in the assessment of any resource consent for such vegetation clearance.
15. I now turn to the written evidence provided ahead of this hearing.
16. The West Coast Regional Council and Birchfield Coal Mines have provided written evidence in relation to the mapping of areas of High and Outstanding Natural Character in relation to some specific property locations. I have referred this information to Ms Gilbert for comment.
17. Submission of CE Coates / Nikau Deer Farm (S415.010). In the s42A report analysis I was unclear on the exact area of concern for this submitter. A map has been provided in their tabled evidence. I have compared the area affected in the notified Plan and what has been recommended in the updated mapping which does propose a minor amendment and reduction of area covered. This would exclude the humped and hollowed land but retain the OCNC on the bush area, which is also scheduled as an SNA in the Plan. On this basis I now support the submission in part.

**Notified Plan - OCNC**



**Recommended Amendment overlaid over Notified Plan**



**Outstanding Coastal Natural Character and High Coastal Natural Character (Notified)**



High Natural Character



Outstanding Natural Character

**Outstanding and High Natural Character Areas (2024 Revision)**



High Natural Character



Outstanding Natural Character

18. At this point there are no other specific matters where I would alter my recommendations in relation to the s42A report.

19. Thank you