

Draft Nelson Plan – Frequently asked questions

Natural character, features and landscapes

What does the coastal and natural character, features and landscapes refer to?

Two key pieces of legislation guide local authorities in their day-to-day management of the coastal and land environments. These are the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS).

The RMA identifies the following as matters of national importance:

- protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes;
- preserving the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes, rivers and their margins; and
- maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the Coastal Marine Area, lakes and rivers.

The NZCPS includes objectives and policies that detail the approach and criteria to be used in identifying and assessing what constitutes natural character and natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment.

The Nelson coastal environment includes the Coastal Marine Area (that is seaward of mean high water springs) and the land that is close to the coast and influenced by the sea (e.g. the Boulder Bank and Cape Soucis).

Natural Character is a statutory term under the RMA and concerns part of the landscape that is associated with the coastal environment, wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins. It combines both the marine and terrestrial components of the environment.

Within areas of natural character, there are often sites or features that are significant components of the wider landscape. They have been identified as having some particular importance such as a geological formation, an area of native vegetation, a stretch of coastline or a historic feature. These sites and features add depth and meaning to the landscape and contribute to landscape character.

Landscape values reflect the relative value of different landscapes or components of landscape held by society. A landscape may be valued for a wide variety of reasons. Such values may also change over time. Most commonly, an assessment of landscape value underpins the traditional approach to conserving and protecting the most highly valued landscapes.

What coastal natural character is proposed to be identified in the Draft Nelson Plan?

The Draft Nelson Plan proposes to identify three areas of **outstanding coastal natural character**:

- Cape Soucis/Raetihi;
- Whangamoā; and
- Delaware/Wakapuaka Inlet through to Boulder Bank/Te Taero a Kereopa – Te Tāhuna a Tama-i-ēa, inclusive of the coastal cliffs between the two.

What natural features and landscapes are proposed to be identified in the Draft Nelson Plan?

The Draft Nelson Plan proposes to identify five areas of **outstanding natural landscape and features**. These include both the marine and land components of the environment:

- Pepin Island/Mahipuku and Delaware / Wakapuaka Inlet;
- Cape Soucis/Raetihi and Whangamoia Inlet;
- Haulashore Island and Arrow (Fifeshire Rock/Te Urenui);
- Boulder Bank/Te Taero a Kereopa – Te Tāhuna a Tama-i-ea and Mackay Bluff; and
- The Bryant Range and Mineral Belt.

The Draft Plan also proposes to identify four **significant features and landscapes with special values**. These are areas which are not recognised as ‘outstanding’, but are valued by the community for their visual and aesthetic appeal:

- The hills making up the City backdrop and skyline, including the Barnicoat foothills above the Ngawhatu and Marsden Valleys, the Grampians, Sharland Hill, the Sugarloaf, Fringed Hill, Botanical Hill northwards through the Malvern Hills, and Kaka Hill;
- The Maitahi/Mahitahi/Maitai River Valley;
- Tahunanui Beach; and
- The Nelson Haven.

How were these areas identified?

Nelson City Council commissioned Boffa Miskell to assess and identify Nelson’s valued features, landscapes and coastal natural character. The assessment considered values such as how visible and vivid a landform or feature is, and how widely the community values and identifies itself with it. These assessments build on best practice methodology and involved extensive community engagement. The reports are available on the Council’s website

What are my options if I disagree with the mapping of these areas?

Council is confident that the identification and mapping of coastal natural character and natural features and landscapes used sound methodology. In some cases, owner and user knowledge may refine area boundaries. Decision from the courts may also effect the methodology, meaning outcomes may change. Please contact Council if you would like to discuss this.

What would it mean for my property?

If your property has been identified as containing or being part of, an area of proposed outstanding coastal natural character, outstanding natural features and landscape or other significant landscape values, this could place some constraints on what you may or may not be able to do with your property. For example activities concerning earthworks, vegetation clearance and the placement of new buildings may require a resource consent. An explanation of these potential rules is set out in the Key information sheet titled **Natural character, features and landscapes**.

Until the Draft Nelson Plan is publicly notified, the rules in the Nelson Resource Management Plan (NRMP) rules relating to the landscape overlay still apply.

Links to the Draft Nelson Plan

This ‘frequently asked questions’ sheet addresses a few of the key provisions in the Draft Nelson Plan. It should not be used as a definitive representation of content. To view actual Draft Nelson Plan content, please go to shape.nelson.govt.nz.