Report to South Wairarapa District Council

Proposed Coastal Protection-Eco Reef

Mātakitaki a Kupe |Cape Palliser, South Wairarapa

RFI Revision December 2025

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

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Date: December 2025
File Ref: SWDC25004
Status: Revised FINAL Draft

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Contents

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Executive Summary

The Project

The South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) is proposing to construct Eco Reef coastal protection along the Cape Palliser coastline in four areas adjacent to Cape Palliser Road where the road Sites 1 and 2) and carparks and bridges (sites 3 and 4) have become increasingly vulnerable. The purpose of this work is to replace the previously consented boulder beaches (WAR090322) and will follow on from the Eco Reef trial sites at Turners Bay and Whatarangi/Buckley's Beach. Eco Reef has not been trialled at the Johnsons Hill sites (Te Kopi and Pinnacles).

The following priority sites are listed below–

1. Turners Bay (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)
2. Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)
3. Te Kopi - Johnsons Hill South (new site)
4. Pinnacles – Johnsons Hill North (new site)

Background

Cape Palliser Road is the only formed access to settlements, tourist attractions and sites of high cultural significance along the Cape Palliser coastline including the Pinnacles, Ngāwī, Turners Bay, Whatarangi and the Cape Palliser Lighthouse.

Cape Palliser Road is a Special Purpose Road (not a road of National Significance), and road maintenance is 100% funded by NZTA, however this is expected to reduce to 51% in 2027.

For many years the road has suffered coastal erosion and in some stretches of the coastline access has become very vulnerable. Coastal protection is a familiar sight along Cape Palliser Road. Materials include boulder revetments, gabion baskets, and the more recently established Eco Reef structure. A range of other materials (concrete blocks etc) have been installed in an ad hoc manner.

The boulder revetments have shown a high level of vulnerability and have increased maintenance costs. As a result, approval was given to trial the Eco Reef in two locations – Turners Bay and Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach.

The trial is completed and has been assessed by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). GWRC Senior Natural Hazards Analyst, Iain Dawe noted the following –

In summary, it's my opinion that Eco Reef are performing as intended and are not having undue adverse effect on the beach beyond that which might be expected for any hard structure and appear to be holding up well to the high energy conditions of the South Wairarapa Coast at this stage. Ongoing monitoring as per the Conditions of Consent, will be required to assess the ongoing effectiveness.

Based on the above comments the trial has been successful and the GWRC have indicated previously that if this were the case then a variation to the existing consented boulder beaches would be an appropriate way to enable continued use of the Eco Reef product.

It is understood that iwi and the community support and understand the need for coastal protection along this coastline.

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Purpose and Methodology

A landscape and visual effects assessment is required because the project is located within the coastal environment and because the intention is to change the material used for coastal protection from the consented boulders and geotextile, to Eco Reef.

This assessment has been prepared based on the guidance set out in Te Tangi a te Manu – NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2022).

Specifically, the Request for Information s.92(1) dated 20 October 2025 requested an assessment of

1. Effects on natural character values in accordance with page 217 of Te tangi a Te Manu
2. Nature and magnitude of landscape effects in keeping with the principles of Chapter 6 of Te Tangi a te Manu
3. Nature and degree of effects on landscape values in views from certain viewpoints e.g. affected properties, public viewpoints) in accordance with Chapter 6 of Te Tangi a Te Manu
4. As assessment of landscape values in the context of the relevant statutory provisions (Natural Resource Plan, Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version) etc) in accordance with para 6.16 and page 237 of Te Tangi a Te Manu.

Further consideration of matters 1 – 4 above have been incorporated into this revised landscape assessment alongside matters previously included in the assessment. In addition, the sites associated with Johnsons Hill (sites 3 and 4) have been refined and more detail provided.

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment Summary

Following is a summary of landscape effects

- Statutory Provisions Assessment

  The installation of Eco Reef as coastal protection is not considered to be inconsistent with the statutory provisions set out in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, Combined Wairarapa District Plan (Decisions Version), or the Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan. Refer Section 4.4.

- Natural Character Assessment

  Cape Palliser is a large coastal landscape with varying degrees of natural character along the coastline ranging from pristine to modified. Coastal processes are clearly evident. There is also evidence of human habitation – pastoral farming, coastal settlement and associated infrastructure. The four sites where the Eco Reef is proposed to be installed are locations where the natural character is modified by the road and associated infrastructure, and the installation of coastal protection. Refer Section 4.3.

- Landscape Character Assessment

  Cape Palliser is a well-recognised landscape because of its unique geological character and its location at the southernmost tip of the North Island, the dynamic and ever-changing coastal margin. The area has a sense of remoteness and wilderness because it has a relatively small permanent population coupled with unstated baches scattered along its length. The area is popular for tourism and recreational activities – fishing, walking, relaxing etc It is this combination that creates the unique landscape character of the area. Refer Section 4.5.

- Landscape Values Assessment

  A Special Amenity Landscape extends around the entire coast and is included in the Proposed Combined Wairarapa District Plan. This notation is based on the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy

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(refer 4.4.6) which provided an assessment of landscape values and resulted in ratings for different parts of the coast. The landscape values assessment undertaken as part of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy was based on an assessment of naturalness, memorability, coherence, distinctiveness, remoteness and wilderness. The areas which are the subject of this application were noted as having moderate low landscape quality although it must be acknowledged that the subject sites form a small part of a much broader landscape and contribute the values associated with the wider area. Refer Section 4.6.

- Visual Effects Assessment

  The proposed structure will have a low level of visibility. For the most part the structure sits below the road. The level of exposure from the coast will be influenced by the dynamic coastal processes. For sites 1 and 2 this will extend the existing and now familiar Eco Reef product. For sites 3 and 4 it will introduce a new visual element – hard landscape structure which will support the roading infrastructure. Refer Section 4.7.

Conclusion

The four sites where the Eco reef is proposed are now very vulnerable to coastal erosion. Eco Reef is a 'hard structure' and whilst from a landscape perspective there is a preference for 'natural' materials there are several mitigating factors which enable Eco Reef to be supported.

The Eco Reef is proposed to be located in a modified (rather than pristine) 'natural character area' and the impact is considered to be low on the 7 Point scale, other than the Pinnacles site where the impact is considered to be low/moderate because of the importance of the Pūtangirua Stream.

All sites are located in or adjacent to a Special Amenity Landscape (Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan – Decisions Version). The landscape values have been assessed and are articulated in SAL1. These values are not compromised by the introduction of Eco Reef.

Eco Reef in these locations is consistent with the Statutory provisions. It provides coastal protection in the most vulnerable areas of the Cape Palliser Road to ensure access is maintained to this highly values and important landscape and the communities that live in and visit the area.

There are not considered to adverse visual effects because the locations have been carefully selected to ensure these are minimised. For sites 1 and 2 Eco Reef is already a familiar element in the landscape albeit that it has a low level of visibility. For sites 3 and 4 Eco Reef is an unfamiliar product however roading infrastructure ((roads, bridges, signage etc) is clearly visible and it will be seen in conjunction with this and for most will be considered a necessary hard landscape element. The product has a small footprint, is low lying, is located in conjunction with other roading infrastructure and the extent of exposure is able to be managed after storm and coastal events.

This is a very large landscape and coastal protection (in a variety of forms) is necessary and familiar and the installation of Eco Reef is not considered to adversely affect the natural character, landscape character and values or visual characteristics for the reasons described in the report.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Sage Planning has been commissioned to undertake a landscape and visual effects assessment for South Wairarapa District Council, to accompany a resource consent application to Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) which is seeking approval to construct and maintain coastal protection in four key sections along the Cape Palliser Road where the road has become very vulnerable (sites 1 and 2) and where carparks and roading infrastructure (bridges) have become vulnerable (sites 3 and 4). Site locations are shown in ***Figure 2*** and detailed in ***Appendix A***.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to consider the landscape and visual effects of the proposed Eco Reef at the following four sites.

1. Turners Bay (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)
2. Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)
3. Te Kopi – Johnsons Hill south (new site)
4. Pinnacles - Johnsons Hill north (new site)

Landscape is a key consideration, and an assessment of effects is required because the structures will be located within the coastal environment and have the potential to have adverse landscape effects.

2 Methodology Statement

2.1 Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (NZILA – July 2022)[1]

This landscape assessment has been prepared considering the concepts and principles outlined in Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines and is based on the templates set out in Section 10 of those guidelines.

The methodology for this assessment uses the following approach –

2.1.1 Description of the Project

Scaled Location Plans are included in ***Appendix A.*** This section notes landscape matters that have been considered during the project development i.e. extent of each site, the height of the walls and likely exposure, how the walls will integrate into the surrounding area, and particularly the integration into existing landscape features including ephemeral and permanent streams. This section also outlines the existing coastal protection consents.

2.1.2 Site Context – Mātakitaki a Kupe|Cape Palliser

This provides a description of the overall landscape character - characteristics/attributes/qualities (physical, associative and perceptual) both tangible and intangible that make the landscape distinctive.

[1] Te Tangi a te Manu:Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Tuia Pito Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022

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2.1.3 Statutory Provisions Assessment

This section provides an assessment of the relevant statutory provisions including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan and the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (decisions version). This section also makes reference to preceding landscape documents which in this case includes the Wairarapa Landscape Study, the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy and the Landscape Assessment (Stephen Brown Environments) which accompanied WAR090322.

2.1.4 Natural Character Assessment

An assessment of natural character (biophysical attributes) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

2.1.5 Assessment of Landscape Character

This section assesses the biophysical, sensory/perception and associative attributes. This follows on from the discussion on landscape context.

2.1.6 Assessment of Landscape Values

This section considers why the landscape is valued. The landscape values focus on what it is about the landscape that makes it important, special and meaningful. The purpose of this is so that the effects of the proposal on the landscape can be understood.

2.1.7 Assessment of Visual Effects

For each of the four sites an assessment of the effects experienced in views has been undertaken. Included in this is the identification of a visual catchment and assessment from representative vantage points.

2.1.8 Summary and Conclusions

This section provides a summary of the findings of this assessment.

2.2 Fieldwork

The following field work has been completed as part of this assessment –

1. Site Visit/Walkover and Vantage Point Survey – 15 May 2025

   A site visit was conducted on 15 May 2025, where an analysis of existing site conditions, visual amenity and viewing audiences were identified for the purpose of this landscape and visual effects assessment (LVIA). This was completed with Russell Hooper Consulting, South Wairarapa District Council and Eco Reef.

   It was a clear and calm day, and it was noted that these conditions are not necessarily typical for Cape Palliser, which is more commonly known for its rugged coastal conditions.

2. Additional site visit – 4 December 2025

   The purpose of this visit was to test the findings of this assessment and in particular consider the landscape effects at sites 3 and 4. Through this process the extent of works has been refined at sites 3 and 4.

   On the day of the visit there was a strong southerly blowing, and the wild and rugged character of the area was highlighted. There were some minor changes to the coastal margin noted that the eroded road now has safety bollards at Whatarangi and the existing Eco Reef backfilled with boulders, along with slight changes to the height of exposure of the Eco Reef which is expected.

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2.3 Other Guidance and Considerations

South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) has a consent to install boulders revetments to protect Cape Palliser coastline from coastal erosion WAR090322. SWDC also have consent to undertake trials with the Eco Reef product which have been completed and are deemed by GWRC to be successful. The extent of the consented boulder walls in shown in the drawings in ***Appendix C.***

In addition to the granted consents and the technical reports that support them, this assessment also considers information in the monitoring reports for the Eco Reef trials.

Separate engagement with mana whenua has not been undertaken as part of the process of preparing this landscape assessment. SWDC have strong working relationship with mana whenua groups in the Cape Palliser area and have been engaging with them over an extended period of time in relation to cultural values throughout the area. It is expected that in line with standard practice Council will also seek their own input from Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa.

Photo simulations have not been prepared as part of this report, however the simulation and alignment/design drawings (***Appendix A)*** prepared by Eco Reef have been referred to and are understood to represent the proposed structures.

2.4 Site Specific Considerations

This assessment has been prepared considering the broad Cape Palliser landscape given all four sites sit within this landscape.

The sites where the Eco Reef is proposed are contained and in discrete sections of the area that is described as the Cape Palliser landscape. Specific differences are noted where appropriate and relevant.

3 The Project

3.1 Description of Project

3.1.1 Project locations and design details

The project is known as the 'Cape Palliser Coastal Protection Project'. The purpose of the Cape Palliser Coastal Protection Project is to manage and arrest erosion and protect the road within the areas identified in ***Figure 2.***

The project proposes construction and maintenance of Eco Reef coastal protection in four locations along the Cape Palliser coastline road with an estimated total length of 1282m where the road and associated infrastructure (carparks and bridges) have become very vulnerable to coastal erosion.

1. Turners Bay (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)

   Northwest section length – 113m; southwest section length - 460m; Total structure width 9.8m – uncovered width 4.9m; total structure height 6.5m and uncovered height is 3.5m;

2. Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)

   North section length 75m; South section length 35m; Total structure width 4.9m – uncovered width 2.1m; Total structure height 2.5m – uncovered height 1.5m;

3. Te Kopi – Johnsons Hill south (new site)

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North section length 103m; midsection length 95m; south section length 87m; Total structure width 4.9m – uncovered width 2.8m; Total structure height 3m – uncovered height 2m;

4. Pinnacles - Johnsons Hill north (new site)

   North-section length 164m; South section length 152m; Total structure width 6.3m – uncovered width 3.5m; Total structure height 4m – uncovered height 2.5m

It is acknowledged that from time to time the Eco Reef will be breached by the sea in much the same way as occurs in the areas where other coastal protection is placed.

Key elements of the design solutions include –

- Limiting the height of the wall to ensure that it sits below or at the height of the road
- Using existing excavated materials to back fill the structure supported by locally sourced river aggregates
- Using bespoke Eco Reef solutions to anchor the protection into the stream margins (refer ***Appendix A*** Render – Typical Terminating End)
- Ongoing management post weather event to ensure that exposure/visibility of the structure is kept to a minimum and integrity is retained
- Planting into the structure and at the fringes/ends where appropriate to enhance the landscape values (including ecology) of the sites
- Undertaking ongoing monitoring to ensure the effectiveness demonstrated on the trial sites is the case in the new locations

3.1.2 Existing Consents

SWDC already have consent (WAR090322) to install 'imported' boulder revetments along the coastline in accordance with the maps in ***Appendix C*** of this report. There have been several issues with the effectiveness and supply of material for the boulder revetments therefore SWDC are seeking a variation to their consent to enable Eco Reef to be installed as an alternative in specific locations. Consented Eco Reef trials have been undertaken at two of the proposed sites and are deemed to be successful.

SWDC also intends to proceed with the works in the granted consent WAR090322 which permits erosion protection works in the coastal marine area (CMA) along approximately 25km length of the Cape Palliser coastline road from the Hurupi Stream to the Cape Palliser lighthouse. This consent provides for the construction of boulder beaches and other maintenance work to protect cliff areas, gabion walls and road edges under the permits outlined in WAR090322. WAR090322 is a single consent which wrapped together multiple previous consents. The Eco Reef trial was also granted under this consent number with the reference WAR090322(37225).

3.1.3 Construction Methodology

The construction methodology[2] is described briefly below so that "temporary" landscape effects are understood.

Eco Reef is constructed using interlocking hexagonal concrete units. The structure is proposed to be installed on arc alignments to replicate the edge of the existing road and for sites 1 and 2 and will be an extension to the existing Eco Reef (trial site) alignments. Te Kopi – Johnsons Hill south and the Pinnacles - Johnsons Hill north are new sites and are shown in ***Appendix A.***

[2] https://ecoreef.co.nz/

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The blocks will be stacked and embedded to a design height, width and length largely in accordance with the drawings in ***Appendix A***.

The installation will involve the excavation of beach material down to the design foundation depth and stockpiling of material on site for reuse within the project. Once the foundation level has been constructed for the predetermined length, the Eco Reef units will be delivered to site on an 'as required' basis and will be off-loaded from the delivery truck into the final location within the wall. The excavated material together with locally sourced river aggregates will be used to fill and backfill the Eco Reef structure.

Installation of Eco Reef is a relatively quick process and for each site it is likely to be weeks not months for beginning to end however, there will be temporary landscape effects during the construction process including – excavation, stockpiling of excavated material, fill and Eco Reef units, and general construction effects such as storage of machinery and temporary fencing, signage etc

The temporary effects are not considered to warrant specific mitigation.

4 Landscape Assessment

4.1 Site Context - Mātakitaki-a-Kupe / Cape Palliser Landscape

Māori called the cape Mātakitaki-a-Kupe (the gazing of Kupe), after a great Pacific navigator, and Lieutenant James Cook named the cape and Palliser Bay in 1770, after his friend Sir Hugh Palliser.

All four sites are located on the western edge of the area more broadly described as Mātakitaki-a-Kupe / Cape Palliser landscape. For the purposes of this assessment the site context is described as the area where Cape Palliser Road enters the coastal zone near the Hurupi Stream to the area where the road terminates just prior to the Cape Palliser lighthouse. It must be acknowledged that the landscape associated with this stretch of coastline extends well beyond the lighthouse to Te Kakau Point and the Opouawae River mouth however this area is less accessible and quite some distance (many kilometres) from the proposed sites. The four sites are located on the western part of the Cape Palliser landscape between Turners Bay (Site 1) and Aorangi Crossing/Pūtangirua Pinnacles (Site 4)

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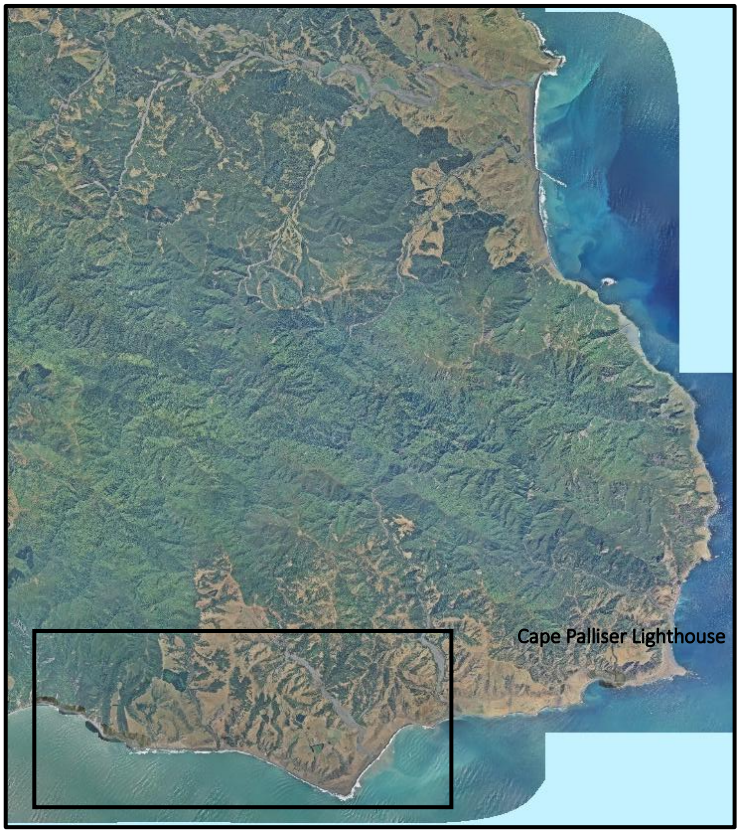

Figure 1 – Broader Cape Palliser landscape (Source: Wairarapa Combined District Plan maps)

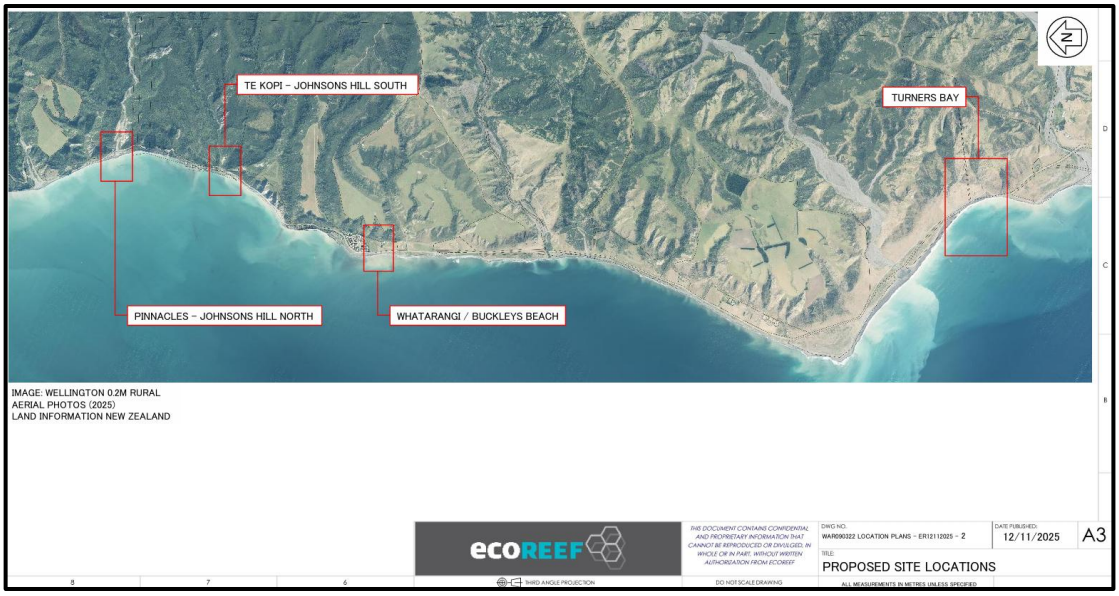

Figure 2 – Proposed Sites (Source: Eco Reef)

The Mātakitaki-a-Kupe|Cape Palliser landscape is located on the southernmost tip of New Zealand's North Island. It is characterised by the Cape Palliser Road which terminates just prior to the Cape Palliser Lighthouse. This coastal margin is the boundary between the southern tip of the North Island, Palliser Bay and the Cook Straight. This is a scenic drive with a sense of remote wilderness, despite being not far from the rural settlement of Martinborough, and Wellington City. For the most part the road clings to the coastal edge opening up views to Palliser Bay and beyond.

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Whilst this area is often described as remote and wild there is a heavy presence of pastoral farming on the lowlands between the ranges and the coast, and several clustered settlements and scattered dwellings and associated along the stretch of coastline.

The road is backdropped by the rugged coastal hills which extend from the Aorangi Range which is protected by the Department of Conservation via the Aorangi Forest Park (refer ***Figure 3*** below). Vegetation includes forests of beech, hīnau, mahoe and mataī, with shrublands of tauhinu, mānuka and kānuka at lower altitudes. There are small areas of subalpine shrubs on the peaks. The park is popular with trampers and hunters, and has populations of pigs, goats and deer.[3] There are a number of notable features along this coastline – the Cape Palliser Lighthouse – a prominent landmark, Putangirua Pinnacles (fluted column rocks "hoodoos" formed by the Putangirua Stream carving gullies into the soft gravel and the large boulders within the gravel have protected the underlying sediment leaving tall cone shaped pillars)[4], Kupe's sail a large tilt slab of sand stone with significant Māori oral histories. Ngāwī is a well-known fishing village characterised by the bulldozers and fishing boats which often line the foreshore.

The geological character of the coastline is a mix of rocky coves, shingle and black sandy beaches formed from the underlying volcanic rock. The force of the sea is evident along the coastline and the area is very exposed to weather coming from the south.

On a clear day there is visibility from some locations along Cape Palliser Road to the Kaikōura Range on the east coast of the South Island providing a sense of connection across the Straight.

This is a landscape with diverse geology, and ecological hot spots including the largest permanent breeding fur seal colony in the North Island.

Alongside Cape Palliser Road the cultural overlay includes the previously noted fishing village of Ngāwī, coastal settlements of Whatarangi, Mangtoetoe and Turners Bay, and the Cape Palliser Lighthouse with its distinctive red and white stripes and 250 steps.

The small settlements are combined with residential activity scattered along the coast giving the sense of sparsely populated 'low key' coastal environment contributing to wild and remote feelings.

[3] https://teara.govt.nz/en/wairarapa-places/page-10#:~:text=Rugged%20Palliser%20Bay%20stretches%20from,New%20Zealand%20and%20international%20guests.

[4] https://www.newzealand.com/nz/feature/putangirua-pinnacles-scenic-reserve/#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20120%2C000%20years,an%20amazing%20collection%20of%20hoodoos'.

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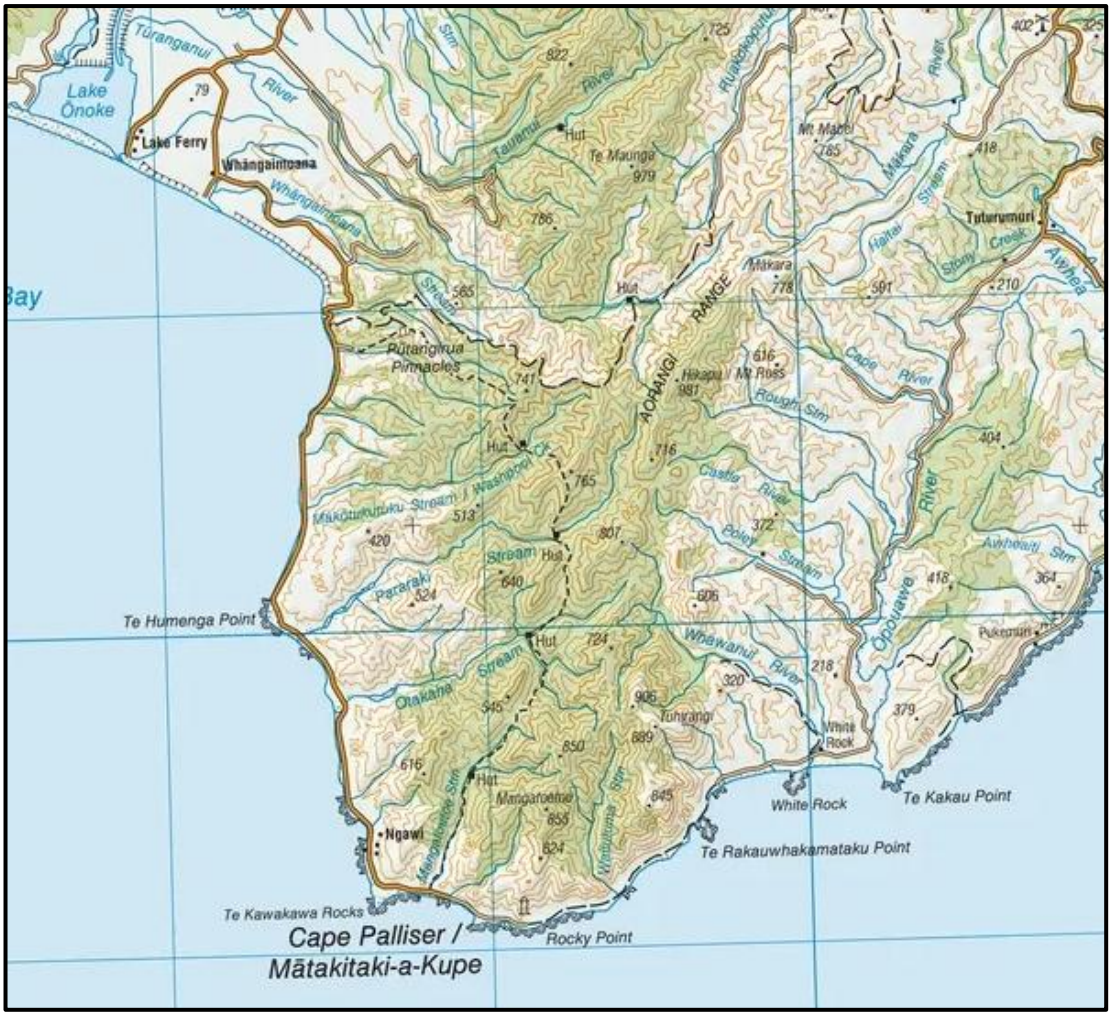

Figure 3 – Aorangi Range (Source: topomap.co.nz)

4.2 Site Descriptions

All four sites are located on the western edge of the Cape Palliser landscape with three sites to the north of Te Humenga Point away from areas where the natural character is less modified, and landscape character is more valued because of scenic aesthetic, dramatic coastal character. Turners Bay is located just to the south of Te Humenga Point and is also away from locations where the natural character, and landscape character reflect human intervention and have aesthetic and landscape characteristics which are valued because of this overlay.

4.2.1 Turners Bay (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)

In this location the road is immediately adjacent to the foreshore. The challenges with the stability of the boulder revetments are clear with rocks moving from their original location, and geotextile cloth becoming exposed. Eco Reef is located immediately adjacent to the seaward margin of the road and anchors the edge of the road. To the north of the road the impressive coastal landform is evident – rugged hills and alluvial plains, and the harshness of the environment is clear, and vegetation struggles in the windswept location. There is a small cluster of buildings associated with the pastoral landscape near the site. The foreshore is characterised by black sand. Coastal erosion is damaging the road where the Eco Reef has not been installed.

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4.2.2 Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach (extension east and west to the existing Eco Reef trial site)

This site is located just to the east of Whatarangi and as with site 1. above the road is very close to the coastal margin and as a result has become increasingly vulnerable. This site is not as open as Turners Bay; the bay is smaller and the stretch of road immediately adjacent to the foreshore shorter. Where there is no Eco Reef the road edge is crumbling onto the foreshore. The area is backdropped by coastal hills, and a small cluster of buildings sits to the north with their exit coming onto Cape Palliser Road opposite the Eco Reef trial site. As with site 1, the foreshore is characterised by black sand and rounded alluvial gravels. It is noted that there are sites of cultural significance to the west adjacent to Te Mahia Crescent.

4.2.3 Te Kopi - Johnsons Hill South (new site)

The character of this area is different from Turners Bay and Whatarangi but similar to the Pinnacles site.

Three sections of Eco Reef are proposed designed to enable the streams to exit to the ocean unimpeded. The road is partially separated from the road by informal carparks which as a result of erosion have escarpments to the beach. There is a cluster of baches both sides of the road (on the northern side). Like other sites the beach is black sand although boulders from previous beach stabilisation are now scattered across the area.

4.2.4 Pinnacles – Johnsons Hills North (new site)

As noted above this character of this area is similar to the Te Kopi site. Two sections of Eco Reef are proposed either side of the bridge across the Pūtangirua Stream. The road is slightly set back from the road and informal carparks separate the road from the coastal edge. There is a steep drop which marks the edge between the land and beach.

The view up the valley towards the Pinnacles is well recognised and sets the scene for the impressive landforms beyond.

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4.3 Natural Character Assessment

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS 2010) Policy 13 – Preservation of Natural Character (1) to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

Natural character is an area's distinctive combination of natural characteristics, including the degree of naturalness.[5]

The entire coastline exhibits the characteristics of a dynamic ever-changing coastal environment. The landform and coastal processes are clearly evident, and the vegetation and ecology significantly influenced by the coastal climate.

The Wairarapa Coastal Study (2020) provides a comprehensive assessment of the biotic, abiotic and experiential values of the Wairarapa coastline and including these areas which are the subject of this assessment. The sites fall within two areas which have been determined to have moderate natural character. Further discussion on this is included in 4.4.3.

Section 3.2 Site Context identifies key natural characteristics/biophysical elements and qualities of the broader landscape.

Within this landscape there are varying degrees of naturalness - modified to unmodified landscapes. Overall, the Cape Palliser landscape is considered to have a high natural character values because of the combination/relationship of the unique geological features and landscapes, the relationship the ocean, ecological uniqueness etc for the most part this broader landscape has a low level of modification and a high degree of naturalness. However, within this broader landscape there are areas where the degree of modification to the biophysical attributes is higher.

The Wairarapa Coastal Study (2020) provides a comprehensive assessment of the biotic, abiotic and experiential values of the Wairarapa coastline and including these areas which are the subject of this assessment. The sites fall within two areas which have been determined to have moderate natural character. Further discussion on this is included in 4.4.3.

For each of the four sites the natural character values are slightly different, and the introduction of the concrete Eco Reef product has limited impact on these values because of its small footprint – width, length and height and because it will play a key role in stabilising vulnerable areas of the coastal margin and protecting access to this special place.

Key attributes of the natural character ana assessment of the effects on natural character for each site is described below.

1. Whatarangi/Buckleys Beach

Key attributes-

- Dynamic coastal margin
- Black sandy beach
- The dominance of the ocean – the smell, views, the sounds
- The backdrop of Aorangi Forest Park vegetation and geology
- Narrow coastal plain between the hills and the coast

These natural attributes are modified by the road, the settlements and baches and the pastoral overlay. The erosion whilst part of a natural process has created artificial lines

[5] Para 9.04, Page 205, Te Tangi a Te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines

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because it is cutting into the road. This is also considered to compromise the natural character.

7 Point Scale Assessment – Low (modifed)

2. Turners Bay

Key attributes-

- Dynamic coastal margin
- Wide open black sandy beach
- The dominance of the ocean – the smell, views, the sounds
- The backdrop of Aorangi Forest Park vegetation and geology and the plains created by depositions of materials as the water has flowed to the ocean
- Ephemeral Streams – at each end of the site
- Wide open coastal plain

These natural attributes are modified by the road, the settlements and baches and the pastoral overlay and erosion protection. The erosion whilst part of a natural process has created artificial lines because it is cutting into the road. This is also considered to compromise the natural character.

7 Point Scale Assessment – Low (modified)

3. Johnsons Hill South - Te Kopi

Key attributes –

- Steep vegetated hill back drop
- Narrow coastal margin
- Dynamic interface between the streams and the coastal margin

These natural attributes are modified by the road, bridges and baches. The erosion whilst part of a natural process has created artificial lines because it is cutting into the road. This is also considered to compromise the natural character.

7 Point Scale Assessment - Low (modified)

4. Johnsons Hill North – Pinnacles

Key attributes –

- Dominance of the Pūtangirua Stream on the landscape form
- Exposed geology
- Steep vegetated hill backdrop
- Dynamic interface between the streams and the coastal margin

These natural attributes are modified by the road, stream crossings and baches. The erosion whilst part of a natural process has created artificial lines because it is cutting into the road. This is also considered to compromise the natural character. However, the backdrop to this location dynamic and a rich representation of the geological processes. It is unique in the context of this landscape.

7 Point Scale Assessment - moderate (modified)

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4.4 Summary relevant Statutory Provisions

4.4.1 General

The project is in the coastal environment.

There are several statutory documents that require the landscape matters in the coastal environment to be considered. For the purposes of this assessment specific consideration has been given to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010), the Combined Wairarapa District Plan (decisions version), and the Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan.

The provisions of these documents have been reviewed to help frame the landscape assessment. A comprehensive assessment of the planning provisions is undertaken in the planning assessment which accompanies the consent application.

Russell Hooper Consulting have assessed the application to vary the existing resource consent WAR090322 to be a discretionary activity under s127 RMA 1991. The variation only seeks to vary the type of material used for the activity. Boulders area already consented where the Eco Reef is proposed.

In addition to the above this assessment has considered the findings of the Wairarapa Landscape Study, the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy and the landscape assessment prepared for the Cape Palliser Road Coastal Protection Works by Stephen Brown Environments (April 2009).

4.4.2 NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010

The NZCPS contains 7 objectives and 29 policies. Objectives 2, 4 and 6 are the most relevant to this assessment. These objectives relate to preserving natural character, taking account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, maintaining and enhancing the public open space qualities and recreation opportunities, and enabling people to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety. A full copy of these objectives and the relevant policies (3, 6, 7, 13, 14 and 25) is included in ***Appendix C.***

The NZCPS objectives that are most relevant relate to:

- preserving the natural character,
- taking account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (this matter is considered separately outside of this report)
- maintaining and enhancing the public open space qualities and recreation opportunities,
- enabling people to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety

Installing the Eco Reef in the locations proposed is not considered to have an adverse effect on the natural character of the coastline. In these locations the coastline is already modified by the road, the rock revetments and the adjoining coastal activities. The sites are not located in the most sensitive parts of this coastline which are also included in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan via the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

The protection of the road will ensure that access is retained. Eco Reef facilitates direct access to the beach in areas where this is becoming increasingly difficult due to the erosion. Protection of access is critical to ensuring the social, economic and cultural well-being of the Cape Palliser communities.

4.4.3 Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version)

Significant Natural Areas/Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

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The sites which are the subject of this application are not identified as Significant Natural Areas (bright green), or Outstanding Natural Features and landscapes (hatched), in the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan.

Special Amenity Landscapes

All of the sites fall within the Special Amenity Landscape notation (dark grey along the coastal margin) – ***Figure 6.***

The description of the Wairarapa Coastline Special Amenity Landscape (SAL) is detailed in the ***Figure 7*** below. This describes landscape values under the headings of - natural science, sensory, shared/recognised

The relevant objectives and policies in relation to Special Amenity Landscapes are as follows;

NFL-O2 Special Amenity Landscapes

The identified Special Amenity Landscape within the Wairarapa are maintained and where practicable enhanced.

NFL-P5 Increasing Public Awareness

Increase public awareness of landscape values and their importance and encourage the community and landowners to support protection of the Wairarapas Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and support the maintenance and enhancement of Special Amenity Landscapes.

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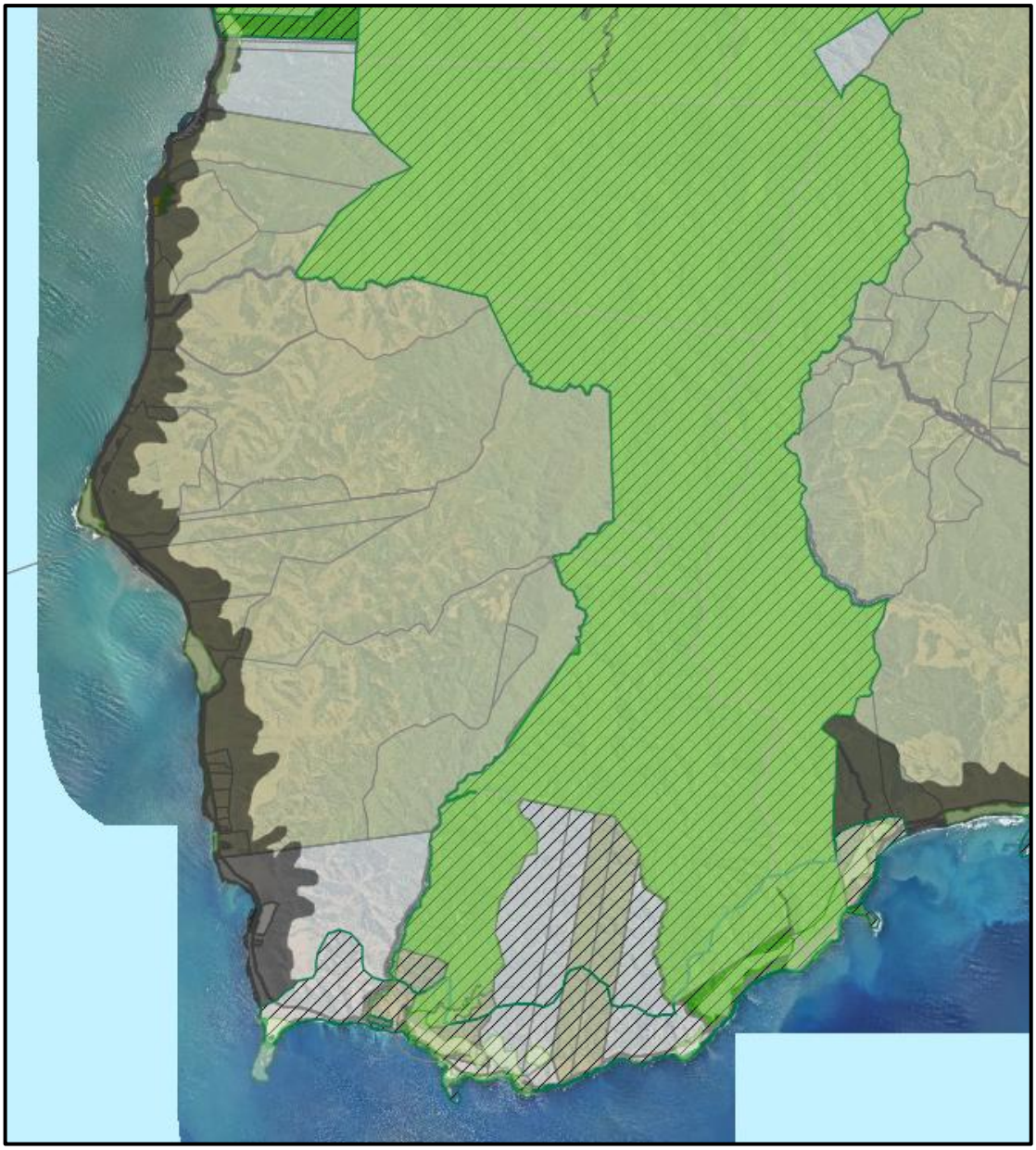

Figure 6 – *Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version) Zoning Map including Natural Environment Values (Outstanding Natural Features* ***hatch****, and Landscapes, and Special Amenity Landscapes* ***grey****)*

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South Wairarapa District

SAL Number	Description	Values		
		Natural Science	Sensory	Shared and recognised
SAL1	Wairarapa Coastline	High	High	High
		• Rich in geological features • Pockets of regenerating and remnant indigenous coastal vegetation • Natural coastal processes evident and still occurring	• Coastal landforms expressive of geomorphological processes • Open, expansive, isolated and largely undeveloped • Coastal imagery used widely to promote Wairarapa region.	• Highly valued by Tangata Whenua for historical settlement and food source • Valued recreational destination and range of activities

Figure 7 – *Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions version)- Wairarapa Coastline Special Amenity Landscape description*

The introduction of Eco Reef to the 4 sites described in this report will maintain and enhance the landscape character and values associated with Special Amenity Landscape (SAL1). Eco Reef does not compromise the identified natural science values, sensory values and will ensure that access is retained to this "destination" which will allow the range of recreational and other activities to continue along this stretch of coastline.

Coastal Environment

The Coastal Environment section of the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan includes Policy CE-P4 (***Figure 8***) which is relevant to this application.

There is a functional and operational need to install coastal protection in the areas identified in this resource consent application. The consented boulder and geotextile walls have proven to be problematic. The Eco Reef in all four locations is low lying, discrete, has a small scale and footprint. It is sited so that it responds to the landform wrapping around the coastal margin and stream exits and without interrupting coastal vistas. The Eco Reef both maintains and enhances access to the foreshore and beyond. Specifically, it provides for formed accessways within the structure down to the beach where appropriate and protects vehicle access. There is opportunity to enhance indigenous vegetation through planting which is proposed to be undertaken in conjunction with mana whenua. The purpose of the structures is to mitigate people and property from coastal hazards.

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CE-P4	Activities and subdivision within the *coastal environment*

Provide for subdivision, use, and development within the *coastal environment* only where there is a functional or operational need for the activity to be located in the coastal environment and ensure that:

Page 4 of 13 As of 8 October 2025

Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decision Version)
CE - Coastal Environment

a. the form, scale, and nature of the activity will not detract from the natural character of the *coastal environment* by:
   i. considering the landscape context and landform in the planning and design process, so that development responds to natural landforms, minimises *earthworks*, and incorporates the use of sympathetic materials;
   ii. minimising the landscape and visual effects of built form by careful siting of *buildings* and *structures*;
   iii. rehabilitating *earthworks* to ensure that they are well integrated with the surrounding landform;
   iv. minimising *modification of indigenous vegetation* and incorporating revegetation and planting of disturbed areas;
   v. maintaining and where appropriate restoring the abiotic, biotic, and experiential characteristics of natural character within the *coastal environment;*
   vi. maintaining and enhancing public access, customary access, and recreational use;
   vii. avoid adverse effects on threatened, at-risk, naturally rare, or significant communities of indigenous vegetation, habitats of indigenous fauna, or ecosystems;
   viii. avoid significant adverse effects, and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects on habitats of indigenous or migratory fauna, coastal ecosystems, and areas that predominantly comprise indigenous vegetation;
   ix. retaining and/or restoring and rehabilitating *indigenous* biodiversity, where practicable using coastal plant species sourced from the local ecological district;
   x. taking into account the outcomes of any consultation with and/or cultural advice provided by tangata whenua, including the extent to which the activity may compromise tangata whenua's relationship with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu, and other taonga, and/or tangata whenua's responsibilities as kaitiaki and mana whenua in the *coastal environment;*
   xi. ensuring that the location, design and scale of *structures, buildings*, and activities avoid or mitigate risks to people and property from coastal hazards and that the risk to other people, properties, and activities is reduced or not increased; and
   xii. ensuring that open coastal vistas are protected by discouraging built development between roads and the *Foreshore Protection Area* where such roads are in close proximity to the foreshore.

Figure 8 – *Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions version) – Coastal Environment CE – P4*

NOTE: *The RFI (dated 20 October) requests that the landscape assessment considers NATC – 01, NATC-P2 and P5. On reviewing these objectives and policies it is noted that this section relates to freshwater bodies and defers to the Coastal Environment (CE) section. CE – P4 has been assessed above (as requested by the RFI).*

4.4.4 Natural Resources Plan

The Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan (NRP) 29 July 2023 includes the following policies related to landscape matters and more particularly natural character (***Figure 9 and 10***).

In relation to P141 the assessment is as follows –

The installation of Eco Reef in the locations specified does not have adverse effects on the public open space values and visual amenity. Considerations are similar to those specified in the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version) assessment in 4.4.3 above.

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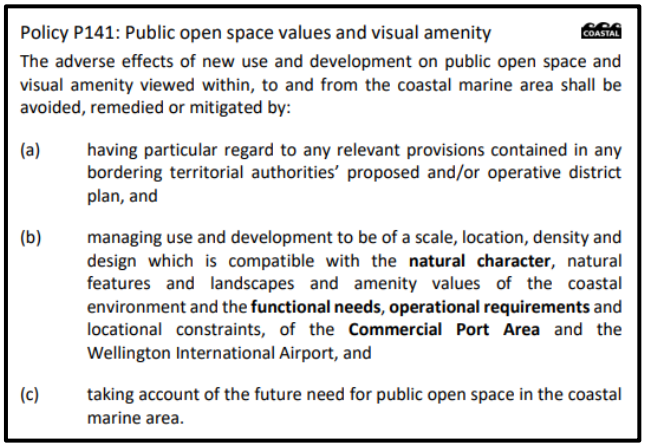
The Eco Reef product is low lying, small scale, and is proposed in areas where the natural character is modified either by the proximity of Cape Palliser Road and/or coastal protection works and the adjoining settlement patterns and activities (coastal and pastoral). The project does not compromise the need for public open space in the coastal marine area although it does facilitate public access to adjacent beach areas.



Policy P141: Public open space values and visual amenity

The adverse effects of new use and development on public open space and visual amenity viewed within, to and from the coastal marine area shall be avoided, remedied or mitigated by:

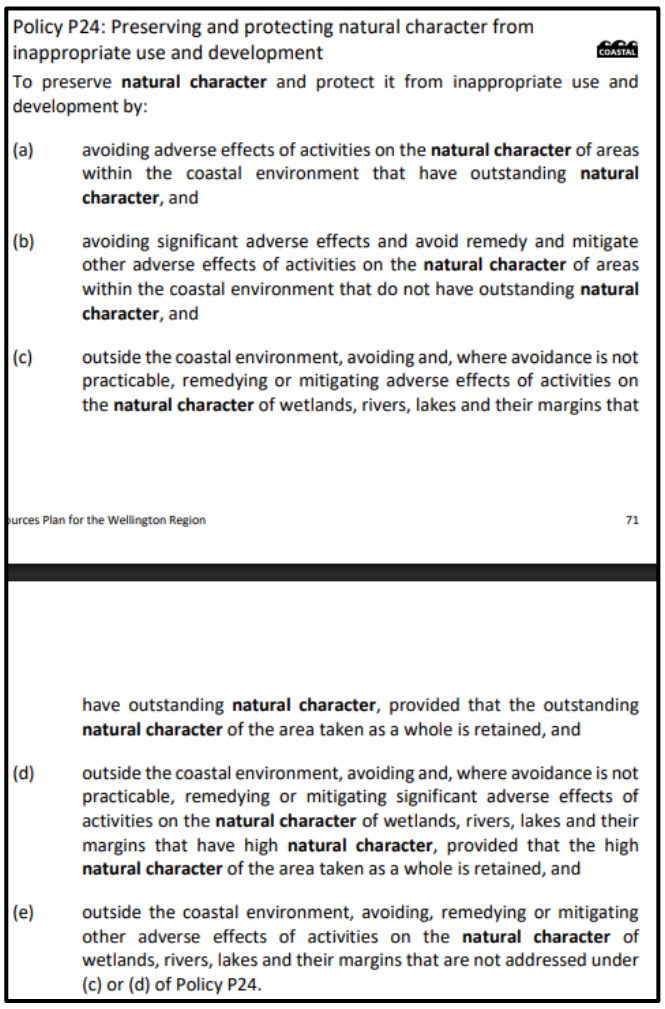
(a) having particular regard to any relevant provisions contained in any bordering territorial authorities' proposed and/or operative district plan, and

(b) managing use and development to be of a scale, location, density and design which is compatible with the **natural character**, natural features and landscapes and amenity values of the coastal environment and the **functional needs**, **operational requirements** and locational constraints, of the **Commercial Port Area** and the Wellington International Airport, and

(c) taking account of the future need for public open space in the coastal marine area.

Figure 9 – Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan P141

The proposed sites are not in areas noted or known to have outstanding natural. The small scale, low lying nature of the product which is located in areas which are already modified by coastal protection means that any potential adverse effects have been avoided.



Policy P24: Preserving and protecting natural character from inappropriate use and development

To preserve **natural character** and protect it from inappropriate use and development by:

(a) avoiding adverse effects of activities on the **natural character** of areas within the coastal environment that have outstanding **natural character**, and

(b) avoiding significant adverse effects and avoid remedy and mitigate other adverse effects of activities on the **natural character** of areas within the coastal environment that do not have outstanding **natural character**, and

(c) outside the coastal environment, avoiding and, where avoidance is not practicable, remedying or mitigating adverse effects of activities on the **natural character** of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins that

urces Plan for the Wellington Region 71

have outstanding **natural character**, provided that the outstanding **natural character** of the area taken as a whole is retained, and

(d) outside the coastal environment, avoiding and, where avoidance is not practicable, remedying or mitigating significant adverse effects of activities on the **natural character** of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins that have high **natural character**, provided that the high **natural character** of the area taken as a whole is retained, and

(e) outside the coastal environment, avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects of activities on the **natural character** of wetlands, rivers, lakes and their margins that are not addressed under (c) or (d) of Policy P24.

Figure 10 – Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan P24

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4.4.5 Background Landscape Studies

Wairarapa Landscape Study | Landscape Character Description (August 2010), Boffa Miskell

The Wairarapa Landscape Study was prepared to assist the development of planning measures to manage landscape change in the Wairarapa District. The Wairarapa Landscape Study was prepared to enable the implementation of the policies set out in the Wellington Regional Policy Statement as they related to landscape.

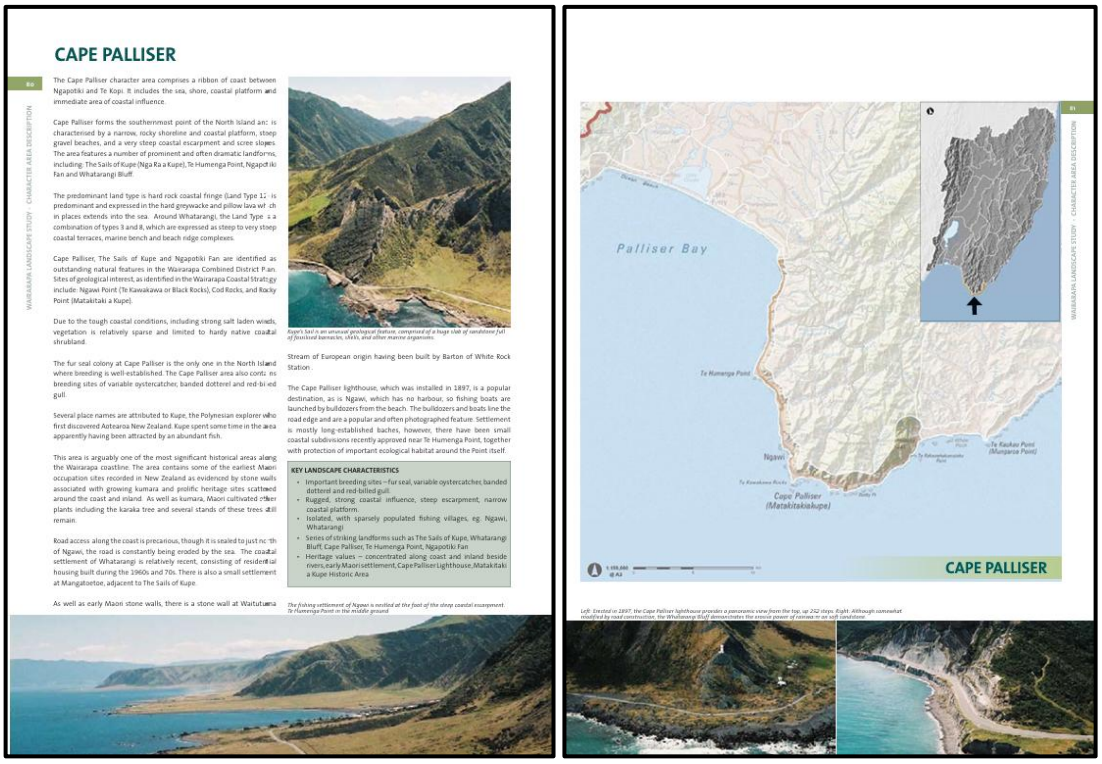

Figure 11 – *Page 80 and 81, Wairarapa Landscape Study, 2010*

On pages 80 and 81 of the study detail is provided in relation to the broadscale characteristics of the Cape Palliser landscape. This study includes further detail in the Appendices which support the findings and recommendations which have been incorporated into the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan. This assessment considers landscape character effects.

Figure 12 is a summary of the landscape characteristics from this document.

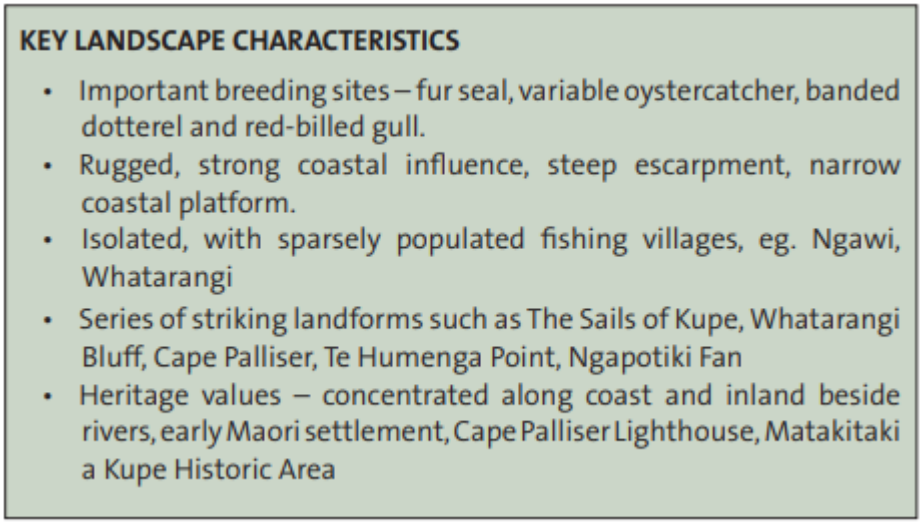

Figure 12 - *Wairarapa Landscape Study, 2010 – landscape character summary*

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Technical Report (no date), Boffa Miskell

This technical report carried out by Boffa Miskell identified 12 landscape character areas along the Wairarapa coastline within which 54 coastal landscape units were defined and assessed for natural character and landscape quality This was prepared jointly to provide input into Proposed Combined Wairarapa District Plan. This document was superseded by the Wairarapa Coastal Study – Natural Character of the Wairarapa Coastal Environment (Boffa Miskell, Oct 2020) which is discussed below.

This application takes in one landscape character area Whatarangi, and 3 coastal landscape units – W44, W45 and W46.

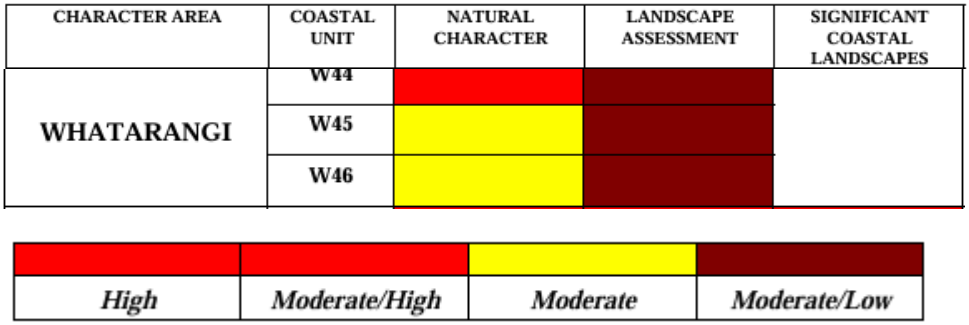

Figure 13 — *Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Technical Report*

Wairarapa Coastal Study – Natural Character of the Wairarapa Coastal Environment (Boffa Miskell, Oct 2020)

This assessment identifies the coastal environment of the Wairarapa and evaluates levels of natural character to give effect to the requirements in the Wellington Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) 2010. The study was jointly commissioned by South Wairarapa District Council, Carterton District Council, Masterton District Council, Tararua District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council.[6]

Section C of this document has resulted in the division of this area into six Coastal Marine areas and 12 Coastal Terrestrial Areas. The sites which are the subject of this report fall into the Coastal Terrestrial Areas discussed below. I***Coastal Terrestrial Area 9: Ngawi***

The Turners Bay site falls within this area

[6] Page 2 - Wairarapa Coastal Study – Natural Character of the Wairarapa Coastal Environment (Boffa Miskell, Oct 2020)

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SUMMARY OF NATURAL CHARACTER			
NATURAL CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES			
DEGREE OF NATURAL CHARACTER	ABIOTIC	BIOTIC	EXPERIENTIAL
VERY HIGH			
HIGH			
MODERATE TO HIGH	★		★
MODERATE			
MODERATE TO LOW		★	
LOW			
VERY LOW			
OVERALL NATURAL CHARACTER RATING		Moderate	

There are no components of at least high natural character identified within this Coastal Terrestrial Area.

Figure 13 – page 112 Summary of Natural Character

Coastal Terrestrial Area 10 – Whatarangi

Three of the sites – Te Kopi, the Pinnacles and Whatarangi sit within this area.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL CHARACTER			
NATURAL CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES			
DEGREE OF NATURAL CHARACTER	ABIOTIC	BIOTIC	EXPERIENTIAL
VERY HIGH			
HIGH			
MODERATE TO HIGH			
MODERATE	★		★
MODERATE TO LOW		★	
LOW			
VERY LOW			
OVERALL NATURAL CHARACTER RATING		Moderate	

Figure 14 – page 116 Summary of Natural Character

Landscape Assessment – Stephen Brown Environments

A landscape assessment was prepared by Stephen Brown Environments to provide input into the AEE for proposed coastal protection works along Cape Palliser Road, between the Hurupi Stream and the Cape Palliser Lighthouse.

The assessment was done based on priority works 1 - 3 being undertaken over 35 years identified in a study carried out by BECA.

The Brown assessment considers options one of which is the use of 'hard structures'. Eco Reef would be considered a 'hard structure' although the Stephen Brown assessment refers

specifically to the gabion baskets used south of Te Kopi. The Brown assessment notes the below.

"*These structures would be much more obviously 'man-made' and out of keeping with the remote coastal environment so apparent around Cape Palliser. According to the AEE, they would also cause 'beach squeeze' and would result in a lowering of the beach level due to the wave reflection. The visual impact of such structures is already clearly evident in the area south of Te Kopi where they have been installed adjacent to the road (refer Figure 2). They stand out clearly against the more recessive boulder beaches that have been constructed in the background and represent an even more obviously artificial means of trying to manage erosion. They are, effectively, a 'last resort' option in places where erosion has bought the shoreline extremely close to the road."*[7]

Eco Reef is proposed in these four locations because erosion has bought the shoreline extremely close to the road and has the potential to compromise bridges in the locations at Te Kopi and the Pinnacles.

4.5 Assessment of Landscape Character

Cape Palliser is a well-recognised landscape because of its unique geological character, the coastal plain which is backdropped by the coastal hills on one side and the ocean on the other. It is a very dynamic and ever-changing coastal margin and its location at the southern most tip of the North Island is unique. The area has a sense of remoteness and wilderness because it has a relatively small permanent population coupled with unstated baches scattered along its length. The area is popular for tourism and recreational activities – fishing, walking, relaxing etc

"This area is arguably one of the most significant historical areas along the Wairarapa coastline. The area contains some of the earliest Maori occupation sites recorded in New Zealand as evidenced by stone walls associated with growing kumara and prolific heritage sites scattered around the coast and inland. As well as kumara, Maori cultivated other plants including the karaka tree and several stands of these trees still remain."[8]

The installation of Eco Reef in the 4 locations proposed is not considered to compromise the landscape character. This is a large and varied coastline with a much-loved landscape character however the project will extent over short distances, located to minimise the footprint and visual impact, and is a structure which has the opportunity for planting to be integrated to enhance ecological outcomes.

The installation of Eco Reef is considered to be the most effective way to manage erosion and protect access in these very vulnerable stretches of road – facilitating access to this highly valued landscape.

4.6 Assessment of Landscape Values

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy provides an assessment landscape quality values using – naturalness, memorability, coherence, distinctiveness, remoteness and wildness as criteria. The three units to the north of Te Humenga Point, where three of the four sites which are the subject of this application are located, were deemed to be moderate/low landscape quality. The area around Ngawi was rated as 'moderate'. To the south of Te Humenga to White Rock were assessed as comprising a 'significant coastal landscape'.

[7] Page 7 – Cape Palliser Coastal Protection Works, Landscape Assessment, Stephen Brown Environments (April 2009)
[8] Page 80 , Wairarapa Landscape Study – Landscape Character Description (August 2010)

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The Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version) identifies most of this coastal stretch as a Special Amenity Landscape. ***Figure 7*** summarises the description of the Natural Science, Sensory and Shared and Recognised values for this area.

In relation to landscape values this assessment concurs with the findings of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy and those values which are listed in Schedule 8 of the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan (Decisions Version). The values assessment has identified geology, vegetation, coastal processes, the expressive nature of the landscape, geomorphological processes, tangata whenua and recreational associations.

Overall, this is a highly valued landscape – it is well recognised dynamic coastal environment with unique biophysical characteristics. It is sparsely populated which creates a sense of remote wilderness despite being close and relatively accessible for the populations of the rural Martinborough and Wellington. The area hosts a range of recreational activities – walking, fishing, relaxing and is of much significance to local mana whenua with many stories associated with this landscape.

Cape Palliser Road also provides access to well-known and recognised walks in the area including the Pinnacles. The road is valued because it is the primary link for most to this landscape.

The installation of Eco Reef in the four locations identified is not considered to compromise these values because of the small scale and footprint, the high vulnerability of the locations to coastal processes and noting that coastal protection is necessary to ensure that the area continues to be accessed.

The landscape character of this stretch of coastline is highly valued by those who live, work and visit the area. It has a raw beauty, heavily influenced by coastal processes and activities. The settlements are intrinsically linked to the environment and the people who live there now and who have lived there previously are deeply connected to the landscape.

This is a dynamic coastal environment which changes constantly. Coastal erosion is clear and demonstrates the fragile and vulnerable nature of access. Cape Palliser Road is the only access to this area, and the road is highly valued because it enables many people to experience this dynamic and special coastal landscape.

4.7 Assessment of Visual Effects

Visual effects are the effects on landscape values as experienced in views. They contribute to our understanding of landscape effects.

The Eco Reef in locations 1 and 2 will appear as extension to the existing Eco Reef structures. The top block will sit at a similar level to the road and extend largely along the road edge. It will reinforce the line of the road.

The installation of Eco Reef will introduce an additional “manufactured” line and materials to the coastal margin – reinforcing the existing road. Eco Reef will not be visually intrusive at any of the sites given its low-lying nature, and narrow footprint and the ability to integrate the structure into the landscape with vegetation.

Eco Reef is not a familiar at sites 3 and 4. However, as with sites 1 and 2 the visibility is limited and therefore the visual impact low despite introducing a ‘hard structure' into this landscape. The structure will be seen in conjunction with the other infrastructure associated with the cultural overlay – roads, bridges, signage, baches etc

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The degree of visibility from the beach will depend on the extent to which the wall is exposed by coastal processes. For the purposes of this assessment the extent of visibility is as per the drawings in ***Appendix A***.

4.7.1 Visual Catchment and Typical Viewing Audiences

The viewing audience for the project will include both locals and visitors who travel Cape Palliser Road.

The low-lying nature of the wall and the proposed location at the edge of the road and/or on the coastal margin means that the viewing audience for this project are as follows –

- Those using the beach areas/coastal margins adjacent to the walls for recreation
- Those travelling Cape Palliser Road
    - Regular recreation users
    - Locals living and/or working in the locality
    - Visitors/tourists

Locals will regularly pass by the subject sites and will be familiar with the landscape, coastal character, and acutely aware of the vulnerability of their access and the dynamic nature of this coastal environment.

For visitors to the area the experience will be temporary and for many they will be travelling and viewing the coastal landscape for the first (and possibly last) time.

There will likely be people who use the coastline for recreation activities such as fishing and boating and whilst they may travel to the location from outside of the area, they will be familiar with the character of the location.

There are some dwellings near the proposed Eco Reef structures. For sites 1 and 2 but they will not look directly at the walls. They are set back from the coastline however they will likely notice this change.

For sites 3 and 4 the walls will be visible for those using the carparks however they will have a low level of visibility for those travelling the road. They will be seen in the context of this large coastal landscape where views are dominated by the ocean.

The viewing audiences for this project are limited to views from public locations however there where there are dwellings in the vicinity these have been noted and the likely impact commented on.

4.7.2 Vantage Point Assessment

The site was viewed, and landscape effects of the proposal assessed, from two key public vantage points. The findings of this are detailed below -

Vantage Points 1 and 2 – Turners Bay

From this location extensions (east and west) to the Eco Reef will be visible. The existing Cape Palliser Road is a strong visual element, and the alignment of the wall will mirror this. The top block of the existing Eco Reef sits just below the road level and when you are travelling the road (in both directions) it is difficult to see. The wall is visible from the beach and as you walk the roadside, but it is not considered to be a dominant feature in this landscape.

The number of Eco Reef blocks visible will depend on the extent to which it is exposed by coastal processes.

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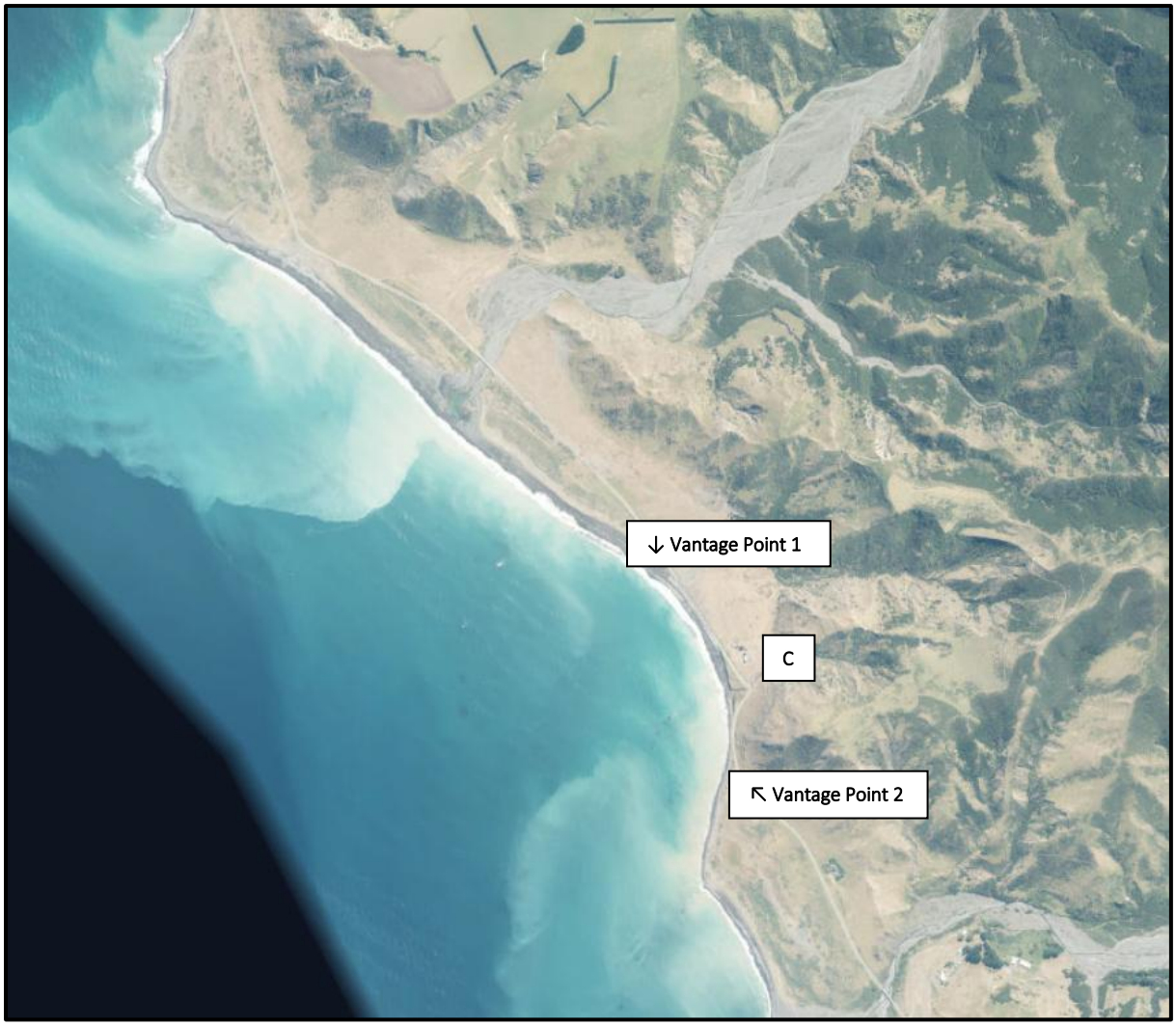

Figure 15 *– Turners Bay vantage point locations*

Vantage Point 1 *- Looking west along Turners Bay (May 2025)*

***Vantage Point 1** - Looking west along Turners Bay (Dec 2025)*

***Vantage Point 1** - Looking west along Turners Bay (Dec 2025)*

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Photograph 2 *– Looking west towards Turners Bay from the storage site (May 2025)*

Vantage Point 2 *– Looking west towards Turners Bay noting that Eco Reef can be identified in the distance along with the boulders (Dec 2025). It is less visible than the exposed geotextile.*

Vantage Points 3 and 4 - Whatarangi

In much the same way as Vantage Point 1 above, the extension to the existing Eco Reef will be visible but will appear as a natural extension to the existing wall. The existing wall sits slightly higher than the wall at Turners Bay and is slightly more visible, however it is not considered to dominate the visual character of this area. The extensions to the wall are proposed to sit at road level and will have a visual appearance similar to the wall at Turners Bay.This site is close to the coastal settlement of Whatarangi and as a result more people are likely to interact with and view it.

There are dwellings in the locality (A and B on Figure 14 below) but they will not directly view the wall because of the way they are orientated.

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Figure 16 *– Whatarangi vantage point locations*

Vantage Point 3 – *Looking east along Cape Palliser Road towards the site (Dec 2025)*

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Vantage Point 4 – *Looking west along Cape Palliser Road towards the site (Dec 2025)*

Dwelling A Refer on Figure 15 - *Orientated south/southeast away from the subject site (Dec 2025)*

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Whatarangi Dwelling/s B on Figure 14 – *Predominantly orientated west/southwest away from and above the subject site (Dec 2025)*

Photograph 3 *– Looking east towards Whatarangi along the Ecoreef trial site (May 2025)*

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Photograph 7 *– Drone Footage 10 May 2025, RP 12.4 – RP35.5, 22m above sea level, low tide approx. 0.5m below MSL (Source – Eco Reef)*

Vantage Points 5,6 and 7 – Te Kopi Johnsons Hill South

In this location there will be three stretches of wall where it wraps around the stream outlets and protects the carparks and the areas towards the bridge abutments.

For the most part this site will not be seen as you travel Cape Palliser Road through this area. This is an area of very dynamic landscape where the streams meet the ocean. From the beach and the carparks, the walls will be visible but as with other areas will be seen in conjunction with roading infrastructure.

This area has some interesting landscape forms which continue to change as erosion takes hold. The walls will appear as a strong visual line at the base of these forms and could be considered visually instrusive – refer vantage point 5.

A recently redeveloped Bach sits above the proposed walls on the western side – (refer C Figure 16) whilst orientated west/southwest this dwelling will obtain glimpses to the east over the walls. However, it is likely that wall will be considered a very necessary part of this landscape.

The intention is to rehabilitate this landscape with native planting in the areas between the proposed walls and the road/carparks

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Figure 17 *– Te Kopi / Johnsons Hill North vantage point locations*

Vantage Point 6 *– view west along the beach towards the end of the existing boulder protection. Bach C – RHS of photograph.*

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Vantage Point 6 *– View east towards the bach (C). The wall will be very visible from this location sitting around the base of the landform.*

Vantage Point 7 *– View across the carpark to the south. Bach C – RHS of view. The wall will be visible from this location around the base of the landform.*

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Vantage Point 7 *– View east along the road from the edge of the carpark. Whilst glimpses of the wall may be obtained as you drive this stretch of road it will not be a dominant visual element*

Vantage Point 8 – *Looking west along Cape Palliser Road towards Te Kopi. It will be possible to see the wall from this location but it will be seen in the context of the much broader landscape and will not be a dominant feature.*

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Photograph 4 *– Looking east towards Whatarangi Bluff*

Vantage Points 9,10 and 11 – The Pinnacles Johnsons Hill South

There are two stretches of wall in this location. The area is very vulnerable and the carparks and surrounding area are subject to ongoing maintenance to ensure stability and connectivity to the beach – Figure 18 below shows just how much this area has changed visually overtime.

Eco Reef will be visible in this location particularly in the areas closest to the bridge – however it will be seen alongside the bridge structure, carpark and road. This is a very dynamic area changing constantly as a result of the sea and the stream interacting. From more distant locations the Eco reef will be less visible.

As with the Te Kopi site the intention is to rehabilitate the land areas, once stabilised by the Eco Reef, with native planting. This will significantly enhance the visual and landscape characteristics of the area and integrate the hard structures so that they are not a visually dominant feature.

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Figure 18 *– The Pinnacles Johnsons Hill South vantage point locations*

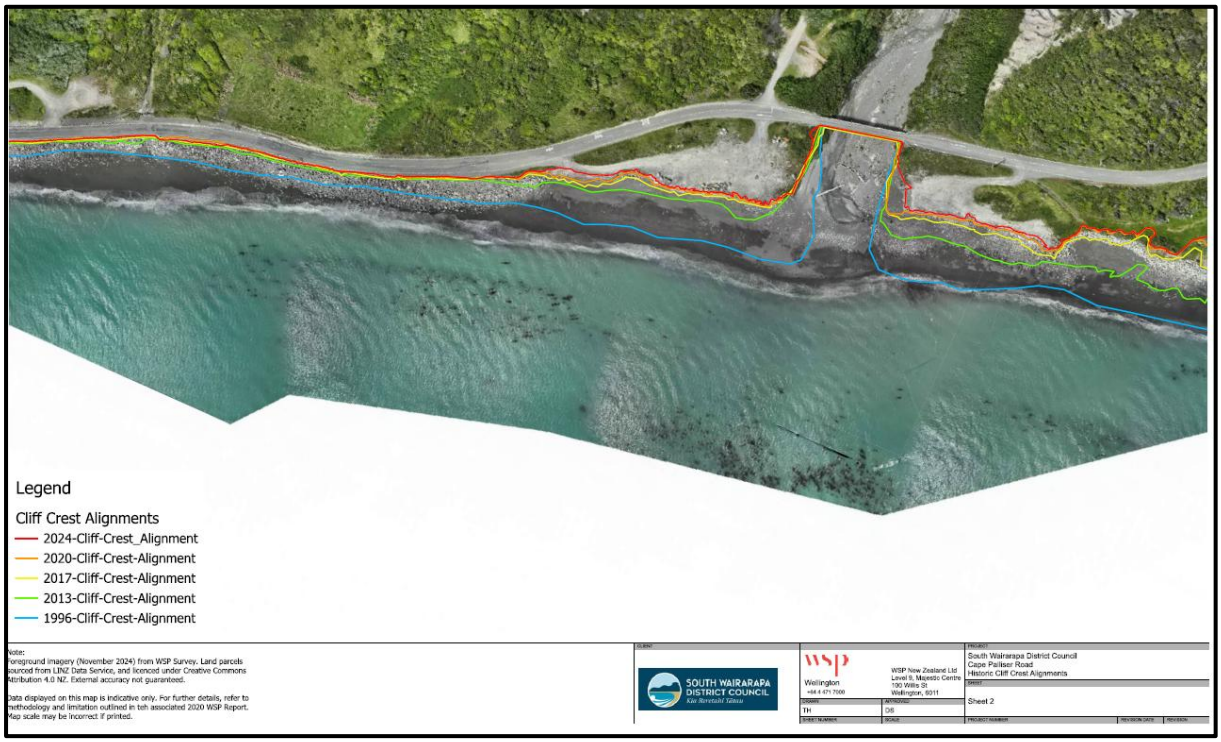

Figure 19 – *Shows the extent of erosion of time at the Pinnacles site (Source: SWDC)*

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Vantage Point 9 – *View west along the coastal margin from the carpark. Eco Reef to be located to the LHS of photo on coastal margin extending to boulders located in the centre of the photo*

Vantage Point 10 – *View up the Pūtangirua Stream Eco Reef to located on both sides of the bridge*

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Vantage Point 11– *Looking west along Cape Palliser Road towards the bridge and site*

4.8 Summary of Landscape Effects and Conclusions

Change to a landscape is not an effect in itself. An effect is whether the change impacts the landscape values i.e. changes the outcome for a landscape value.

The landscape effects of this project are both positive and negative.

Figure 5 below is a visual representation of the universal scale used to describe the magnitude of qualitative assessments.

Eco Reef on sites 1,2 and 3 are considered to have a 'low' landscape effect on the 7-point scale (page 150 – 151 NZILA Guidelines). Eco Reef on site 4 is considered to have a moderate landscape effect on the 7-point scale.

Figure 20 *– Universal scale to describe the magnitude of qualitative assessments (page 141 – Te Tangi o te Manu)*

Positive effects are primarily related to the proposed location of the walls which will be affirmation of the arc of the coastline that is currently under threat. The walls will protect access to this highly valued landscape and the activities that take place in it. It is not an arbitrary line that is proposed to be introduced into this environment, it is a line that mirrors and reinforces the arc of the coast. People value the access because it enables them to get to their destination but primarily because it enables them to experience this special coastline.

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This stretch of the coastline is important and valued particularly for those who visit regularly and live nearby.

Photographs 5 and 6 *– Demonstrate how coastal processes will influence the extent of exposure of the Eco Reef at the Whatarangi site (Source : Eco Reef)*

The construction period for the installation of the walls is short and there will be disruption and obvious changes through the construction period, but this is not a long-term landscape effect or impact.

The most significant change to the location is the introduction of the hexagonal building blocks. Hexagonal blocks are not a shape that is often seen in the natural environment. This visibility of the wall will depend on the extent to which the blocks are exposed by coastal processes.

Whilst this shape is now familiar in the trial site locations, it is different from the boulder revetments that are more familiar along the Cape Palliser coastline having been the primary mechanism used to arrest coastal erosion over the years.

Photographs 7 and 8 *– Examples of existing rock revetment*

This landscape is likely to be valued by some for its dynamic and slightly untamed unkempt character, and some might prefer rock revetments given they are a more natural material. It should be noted, however, that the rocks used for the revetment are not from the Cape Palliser environs and the geotextile cloth is continually exposed. The Eco reef will hold the coastline at a particular point, and this will be managed by ongoing renourishment.

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5 Mitigation

5.1 General

Several mitigation measures and mitigating factors are discussed below.

Many of the matters listed below are not mitigation measures required as part of this assessment. However, they are an acknowledgement that the Eco Reef has been designed to enable it to be responsive to the landscape characteristics of the coastal environment.

5.2 Alignment of the wall

Whilst the final alignment of the wall will be determined based on the technical requirements, the Eco Reef product is able to be installed in a manner which follows the natural line of the coast and is sympathetic to the coastal character. This is a mitigating factor.

5.3 Materials

The wall is made of concrete which is a familiar colour in this location which is within a gravel coastal zone. The hexagonal blocks are not a shape which would be naturally occurring; however, the concrete construction material which is grey and smooth assists with the integration.

5.4 Height, width and length of the structures

The extent of the structure is described fully earlier in this report. In summary the footprint (length, height and width) is contained. The wall is largely below ground, except when exposed by a weather or tidal event. The wall will sit at approximately the same height as the road at Whatarangi and Turners Bay. At Johnsons Hill – Te Kopi and the Pinnacles the the Eco Reef will sit below the road and hug the coastal margin adjacent to the stream outlets. Eco Reef, unlike the boulders, will not "spill" from the locations where it is installed.

5.5 Planting

Planting is proposed to anchor the wall and road into the environment and soften the outlook to the coast however establishing planting in this harsh environment is likely to be particularly challenging. Planting trials will be developed in conjunction with iwi. For the Te Kopi and Pinnacles site planting is recommended on the areas between the coast and the road.

Planting will improve the ecology and visual characteristics of the areas. Existing planting in the areas consists mainly of weeds – particularly gorse, so there is significant broader benefit in the rehabilitation planting.

5.6 Renourishment

Renourishment is proposed to mitigate any end-effects associated with potential outflanking of the structure over time, and to restore the foreshore after weather events, if required. This will reduce the visual and landscape effects of the wall because the structure itself will be less exposed and less visible. The ongoing renourishment, as required, will ensure that the wall continues to be anchored into the landscape.

6 Recommendations

At the Pinnacles and Te Kopi sites (Johnsons Hill north and south) planting is considered necessary to integrate the walls and enhance the overall landscape character of the area. It is therefore recommended that a consent condition which reflects this is included. Planting should also be trialled at the Whatarangi and Turners Bay sites acknowledging that in these sites the conditions will be very challenging.

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7 Conclusion

Overall, the installation of Eco Reef at sites 1 - 3 along Cape Palliser Road described in this report are considered to have landscape and visual effects that are "low" (less than minor) on the 7-point scale (page 150 – 151 NZILA Guidelines), other than the Pinnacles site where the impact is considered to be low/moderate because of the importance of the Pūtangirua Stream.

The walls are proposed to be located in discrete, but highly vulnerable locations. The small scale (height, width and length) of the Eco Reef projects will fit comfortably into this large and dynamic coastal landscape. The construction methodology and materials, location and arc of the wall also contribute to the low (sites 1,2, and 3), and low/moderate (site 4) conclusion.

For the most part the wall will have low visibility, and the viewing audience will be captured by the beauty of the landscape in the surrounding area.

The installation of the Eco Reef at the 4 locations is consistent, and not incongruous, with the statutory provisions which relate to the area.

Eco Reef is considered to have some positive effects. It will stabilise the road and ensure that access along this stretch of coastline is maintained. In addition, for Te Kopi and the Pinnacles sites particularly the proposed planting (once the area is stabilised) will make a positive contribution to the landscape – softening the walls and improving the ecology.

The natural character of this stretch of coastline has been assessed in detail over the years and most recently in the Wairarapa Coastal Study – Natural Character of the Wairarapa Coastal Environment (Boffa Miskell, 2020) which provided the detail for the Combined Wairarapa District Plan.

The natural character values of the Cape Palliser coastline vary from pristine to modified. All four sites site within areas that have an overall natural character rating of 'moderate' and all four sites are in locations which have been modified by the installation of the rock walls/revetments and are overlaid by Cape Palliser Road and the associated infrastructure.

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APPENDIX A – Proposal Drawings

APPENDIX B – Statutory Provisions

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The NZCPS contains 7 objectives and 29 policies. The following objectives are considered most relevant:

Objective 2 *To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect natural features and landscape values through:*

- *recognising the characteristics and qualities that contribute to natural character, natural features and landscape values and their location and distribution;*
- *identifying those areas where various forms of subdivision, use, and development would be inappropriate and protecting them from such activities; and*
- *encouraging restoration of the coastal environment.*

Objective 3 *To take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, recognise the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki and provide for tangata whenua involvement in management of the coastal environment by:*

- *recognising the ongoing and enduring relationship of tangata whenua over their lands, rohe and resources;*
- *promoting meaningful relationships and interactions between tangata whenua and persons exercising functions and powers under the Act;*
- *incorporating mātauranga Māori into sustainable management practices; and*
- *recognising and protecting characteristics of the coastal environment that are of special value to tangata whenua.*

Objective 4 *To maintain and enhance the public open space qualities and recreation opportunities of the coastal environment by:*

- *recognising that the coastal marine area is an extensive area of public space for the public to use and enjoy;*
- *maintaining and enhancing public walking access to and along the coastal marine area without charge, and where there are exceptional reasons that mean this is not practicable providing alternative linking access close to the coastal marine area; and*
- *recognising the potential for coastal processes, including those likely to be affected by climate change, to restrict access to the coastal environment and the need to ensure that public access is maintained even when the coastal marine area advances inland.*

Objective 6 *To enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety, through subdivision, use, and development, recognising that:*

- *the protection of the values of the coastal environment does not preclude use and development in appropriate places and forms, and within appropriate limits;*
- *some uses and developments which depend upon the use of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment are important to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities;*
- *functionally some uses and developments can only be located on the coast …;*
- *the coastal environment contains renewable energy resources of significant value; …*
- *the potential to protect, use, and develop natural and physical resources in the coastal marine area should not be compromised by activities on land; …*

- *historic heritage in the coastal environment is extensive but not fully known, and vulnerable to loss or damage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.*

The following policies (or parts thereof) are considered most relevant:

Policy 3 *Precautionary approach*

1. Adopt a precautionary approach towards proposed activities whose effects on the coastal environment are uncertain, unknown, or little understood, but potentially significantly adverse.

2. In particular, adopt a precautionary approach to use and management of coastal resources potentially vulnerable to effects from climate change…

Policy 6 *Activities in the coastal environment*

1. In relation to the coastal environment: …

b. consider the rate at which built development and the associated public infrastructure should be enabled to provide for the reasonably foreseeable needs of population growth without compromising the other values of the coastal environment;

c. encourage the consolidation of existing coastal settlements and urban areas where this will contribute to the avoidance or mitigation of sprawling or sporadic patterns of settlement and urban growth; …

h. consider how adverse visual impacts of development can be avoided in areas sensitive to such effects, such as headlands and prominent ridgelines, and as far as practicable and reasonable apply controls or conditions to avoid those effects;

i. set back development from the coastal marine area and other water bodies, where practicable and reasonable, to protect the natural character, open space, public access and amenity values of the coastal environment; …

Policy 7 *Strategic planning*

1. In preparing… plans:

a) consider where, how and when to provide for future residential, rural residential, settlement, urban development and other activities in the coastal environment at a… district level; and

b) identify areas of the coastal environment where particular activities and forms of subdivision, use, and development:

i) are inappropriate; and

ii) may be inappropriate without the consideration of effects through a resource consent application, notice of requirement for designation or Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act process; and provide protection from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development in these areas through objectives, policies and rules.

2. Identify in… plans, coastal processes, resources or values that are under threat or at significant risk from adverse cumulative effects. Include provisions in plans to manage these effects. Where practicable, in plans, set thresholds (including zones, standards or targets), or specify acceptable limits to change, to assist in determining when activities causing adverse cumulative effects are to be avoided.

Policy 13 *Preservation of natural character*

1. To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

a. avoid adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character; and

b. avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment; including by:

c. assessing the natural character of the coastal environment of the region or district, by mapping or otherwise identifying at least areas of high natural character; and

d. ensuring that … plans, identify areas where preserving natural character requires objectives, policies and rules, and include those provisions.

Policy 14 *Restoration of natural character*

Promote restoration or rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal environment, including by: …

b. providing policies, rules and other methods directed at restoration or rehabilitation in … plans; …

Policy 25 *Subdivision, use and development in areas of coastal hazard risk*

In areas potentially affected by coastal hazards over at least the next 100 years: …

a. avoid redevelopment, or change in land use, that would increase the risk of adverse effects from coastal hazards;

b. encourage redevelopment, or change in land use, where that would reduce the risk of adverse effects from coastal hazards, including managed retreat by relocation or removal of existing structures or their abandonment in extreme circumstances, and designing for relocatability or recoverability from hazard events;

c. encourage the location of infrastructure away from areas of hazard risk where practicable;

d. discourage hard protection structures and promote the use of alternatives to them, including natural defences; and

e. consider the potential effects of tsunami and how to avoid or mitigate them.

APPENDIX C – Boulder Consent WAR090322 Maps