

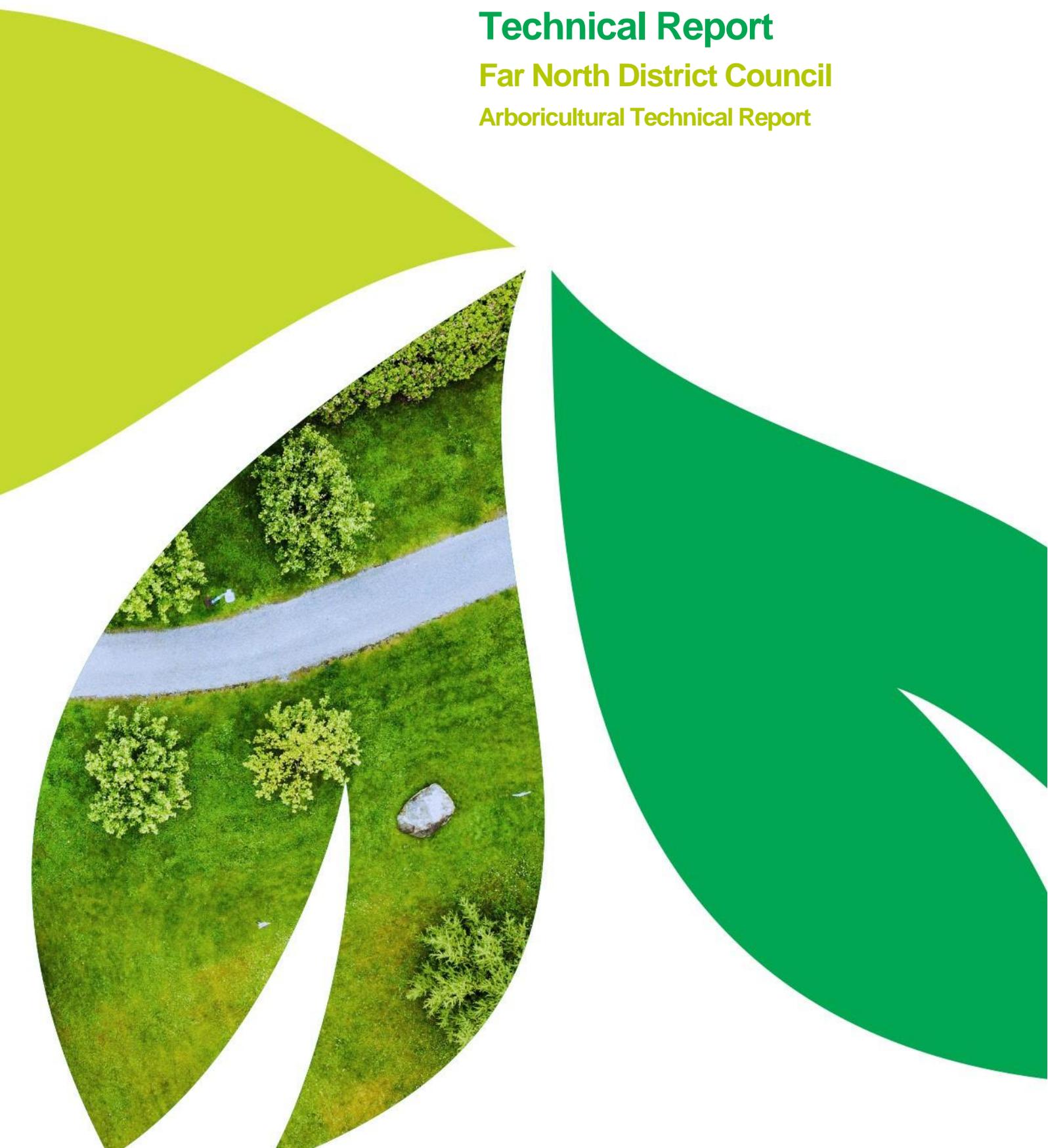


Creating Green Space  
Sustainability

## Technical Report

Far North District Council

Arboricultural Technical Report





# Technical Report – Arboriculture

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## Summary of Report

Arborlab has been engaged by the Far North District Council (FNDC) to provide arboricultural advice in relation to the Plan Change in relation to Notable Trees.

The scope of Arborlab’s initial engagement included the reassessment of existing notable trees and identifying additional trees growing within the road reserve or in reserves for assessment and possible inclusion in the District Plan.

The notable trees were evaluated using the Standard Tree Assessment Method (STEM). STEM is a logical method for establishing the intrinsic quality of trees. It is generally considered the most robust and widely accepted method for assessing trees throughout the arboriculture industry.

The STEM methodology requires an assessment of each tree or group of trees against set criteria, each criterion is awarded a point’s score out of 30, these can be represented as a percentage of the optimal score 30 points equalling 100%. The applicable scoring and associated percentages are shown below and relate to the description in each criterion.

Points	3	9	15	21	27	30
Percentage	10%	30%	50%	70%	90%	100%

The criteria are broken up and calculated into the following groups: Condition Evaluation (Form, Occurrence, Vigour/Vitality, Function, Age), Amenity Evaluation (Stature, Visibility, Proximity, Role, Climate) and Notable Evaluation (Stature, Historic, Scientific). The Notable Evaluation required researched and documented confirmation from a specialist on the age, association and commemoration components to support a claim in these categories.



The threshold STEM score for inclusion is 130 points.

Following notification of the Plan Change, a several submissions were lodged seeking relief in respect of notable trees. The following report sets out the arboricultural response to these submissions.

The report has been separated into topics relating to the relief sought in the submission. A few submissions seek the same relief. These submissions have been addressed together under the relevant topic.

Generally, where the nomination for a new notable tree in the Plan Change has been disputed in a submission on arboricultural grounds, Arborlab has reviewed the submission and visited the tree site and undertaken a follow up visual evaluation. Where submissions have proposed that new trees be included, which were not included in the initial assessment tranche, Arborlab has visited the tree and undertaken a visual inspection of those trees.

This report does not address submissions seeking amendments to the rule framework for notable trees.

About the author

My name is Jonathan Redfern-Hardisty. I am employed by Arborlab Consultancy Services Limited as the principal arboricultural consultant. I have a Diploma in Arboriculture (Level 6) from WINTEC and have qualifications in tree risk systems, VALID, Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA), and Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ).

I have been actively engaged in the arboricultural industry for 30 years, including ten years as a contracting arborist, 20 years as a consulting arborist. I have previously been seconded to Auckland Council Parks Department, where I had experience in assessing resource consent applications on behalf of Auckland Council and assisted Hamilton City Council with the recent Plan Change 9. I have undertaken several risk and health assessments for local authorities, private residential and corporations throughout New Zealand and have had a wealth of experience in all aspects of arboricultural consultancy.

**Index of submissions**

**1. Submissions seeking the removal of trees from Notable Trees Schedule ..... 4**

**Relief supported .....4**

    1.1. David Truscott: S476.001 .....4

**2. Submissions proposing new trees be included in Notable Tree Schedule..... 5**

    2.1. Rowena Ralls: S80.001 .....5

    2.2. James Frater: S154.001 .....6

    2.3. James Frater: S175.001 .....8

    2.4. Pacific Eco-logic – S451.022 and S442.166 .....11

    2.5. Ahipara Takiwā – S576.001 and S579.001 and Haami Piripi ONZM – S580.001 .....11

**Appendix A Maps ..... 14**



## 1. Submissions seeking the removal of trees from Notable Trees Schedule

### Relief supported

1.1. David Truscott: S476.001

#### Summary of submission

Core rot has meant large branches have fallen including onto Clendon Esplanade. Apart from the danger the tree has a significant shading effect and in its current form its spread prejudices the sites development potential. Extra accommodation is needed to secure the financial viability of the scheduled Masonic Hotel.

#### Relief/Decision Sought

Delete tree number 137 from schedule 1 Notable Trees.

#### Arborist Response

- i. The 2020 assessment of the tree provided a STEM score of 150, and it was nominated to be included into Appendix 1D. The tree is growing adjacent to two large, mature Norfolk Island Pine trees within the rear yard of the Masonic Hotel. The two N. Island Pines are also nominated to be included into Appendix 1D and are not subject to the submission.
- ii. A site meeting and reassessment of the tree was conducted on 5 February 2025, Mr Truscott was in attendance.
- iii. Without prejudice, Mr Truscott expressed that he has no intention of removing the tree, however, he has experienced branch failure and has engaged arborists to remove the debris and reduce branches to minimise further failure. He intends to construct a secondary building within the rear yard of the site, and since the tree's canopy covers most of the usable rear yard, the building will be somewhat within the tree's dripline. The construction works will also be within the rootzone of the tree. A particular concern was that if the tree was to become Notable, there will be associated costs for to obtain consents required for the maintenance that is may be carried out.
- iv. At the time of the 2025 reassessment, the tree was assessed to be of good health. The southern canopy was uneven through branch loss. I am unable to say if this was through branch failure or pruning, or a combination of the two. Several wounds from branch pruning were noted. A few of the older wounds are 'flush' cuts made against the parent stem. A flush cut is poor practice and not used in modern arboriculture as the tree cannot compartmentalise these areas, and decay forming pathogens can gain entry at these points. Several poorly formed branch unions were noted in the upper canopy. Canopy exposure through branch loss can cause new wind dynamics and loading that can adversely affect these unions. A large cavity is at the base of the tree and could adversely affect its structure. Epicormic sprouts are developing throughout the canopy, which can indicate the tree is under stress, however in my opinion, in this case, it is part of a natural cycle.
- v. The tree is a large structure with high visibility, and the STEM score of 150 is reflects its stature. Further assessment should be undertaken whether there are historical



attributes to the tree. Currently the rear yard is void of structure and human targets are infrequent. The occupation numbers could change once/if the Hotel is opened to patronage. It is reasonable to say that with no current structures and infrequent targets the loss of branches will have low consequences within the target zone. If the construction of the building were to go ahead, protection of the root system would be required through construction and consideration of the risk taken to account – both of which are not insurmountable. To get a better understanding of how the cavity and whether decay is affecting the main stems, further investigation is required, such as the use of a tomography test. This can provide an internal review of the wood properties, however, given the decay location a clear test may be problematic and/or the readings may not be useable or reliable.

- vi. A discussion point is that Mr Truscott is concerned with having to apply for consent to undertake maintenance on the tree. It is my understanding that there will be permitted standards allowing for minimal pruning; generally, branches up to a certain size (typically 50mm-100mm) can be removed under permitted activities. The question is, is it reasonable to expect to apply for consent annually to undertake likely maintenance require for this tree, which could shed regular branches?
- vii. Based on characteristics used for STEM, the tree is worthy of inclusion to the Notable tree list, however in my opinion, there is enough arboricultural matters, such as the branch failures, the potential for further branch failures, the cavity at the base of the tree and the potential ongoing maintenance required to maintain the tree in a safe manner, to remove the tree from Appendix 1D.

## 2. Submissions proposing new trees be included in Notable Tree Schedule

### 2.1. Rowena Ralls: S80.001

#### **Summary of submission**

Grandmother to the Skudder family (Mary (May) Adeline Skudder of Skudder's Beach, Kerikeri) planted the Totara Tree on Arbor Day, 1917. The tree is now approximately 105 years old. The tree was planted outside what was the local schoolhouse at the time and which is now the Kerikeri Playcentre at 32 Landing Road. The Skudder's have a history dating back 137 years and are well known in the area. The tree is of significant historical value, due to the Skudder family being pioneers in the area. The tree is registered with the NZ Notable Tree Register and can be viewed at this link:

<https://register.notabletrees.org.nz/tree/view/1787>.

The tree has been given a STEM score of 147 points and looks to be in a very healthy condition as I recently visited the area in late September this year.

#### **Relief/Decision Sought**

Insert a notable (Totara) tree at 26 Landing Road, Kerikeri to the Notable Tree schedule.

#### **Arborist Response**

- i. An assessment of the tree was undertaken on the 5 February 2025. The tree was



assessed to be of good health and fair structure, with approximate dimensions of eight metres in height, 16 metre canopy spread and a girth of 4.4m. The tree produces a STEM score of 157, however, this does not include probable historical values, which would need to be completed by a specialist.

- ii. Overall, the tree is of good condition and exceeds the 130 STEM threshold through arboricultural attributes and is likely to score higher if the historical values are added. It is assessed that the tree has the attributes for long viability and is a good candidate to be included into the Notable tree schedule.



Figure 1: Totara tree at 32 Landing Road



Figure 2: Totara tree at 32 Landing Road

2.2. James Frater: S154.001

**Summary of submission**

It is said that the French explorer and merchant Marion du Fresne and some of his crews were killed under this tree, during the visit of the French ships Mascarin and Marquis de Castries to the Bay of Islands in

1772. (Ref. L G Kelly, Marion du Fresne at the Bay of Islands 1951, and Dame Anne Salmond, Between Worlds 1994). It is now 250 years since the French visit.

**Relief/Decision Sought**

Insert new notable tree (Pohutukawa) situated in Te Hue Cove (otherwise known as Assassination Cove). The tree is situated at the shore-ward end of an old wharf and beneath

an Historic Places Plaque erected in 1972 on the 200th anniversary of the event. The tree would be located on Lot 17, DP 41892, Tauri Bay Road Russell 0272 (a public accessway).

### Arborist Response

- i. An assessment of the tree was undertaken on the 5 February 2025. The tree was assessed to be of fair health and fair structure, with approximate dimensions of eight metres in height, 18 metre canopy spread and a girth of 6.5m (two stems measured). The tree produces a STEM score of 174, however, this does not include probable historical values, which would need to be completed by a specialist.
- ii. Overall, the tree is of good condition and exceeds the 130 STEM threshold through arboricultural attributes and is likely to score higher if the historical values are added. It is assessed that the tree has the attributes for long viability and is a good candidate to be included into the Notable tree schedule.



*Figure 3: Pohutukawa*

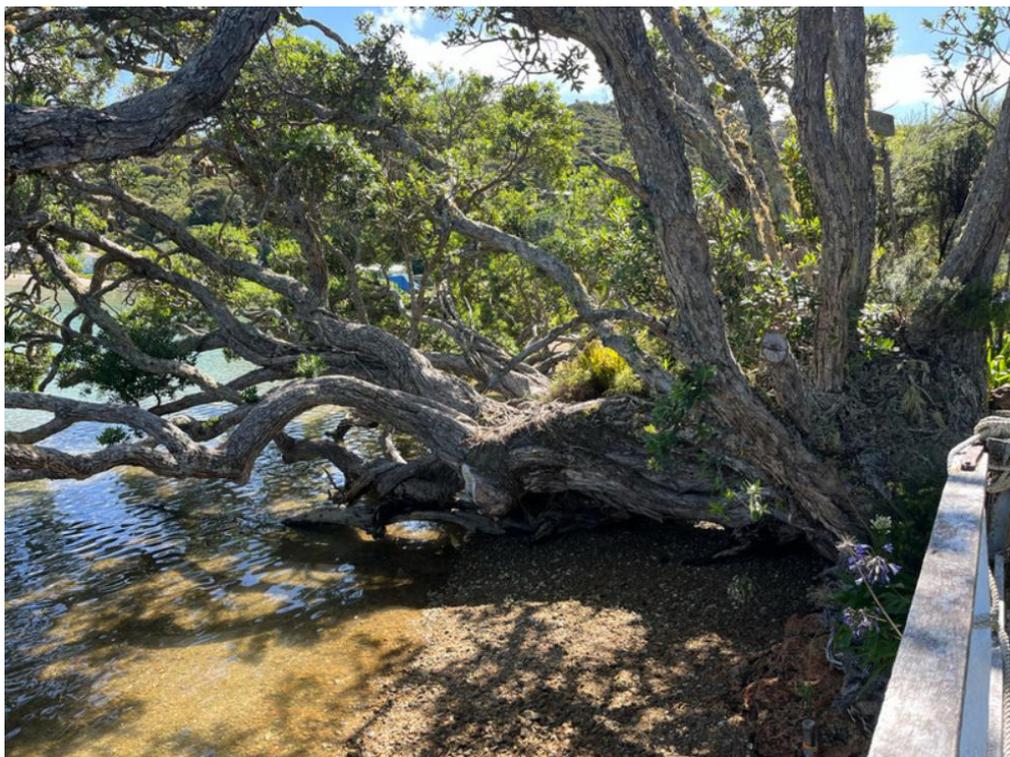


Figure 4: Pohutukawa

2.3. James Frater: S175.001

**Summary of submission**

These are two large Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros Excelsa*) growing together on the foreshore near a small watercourse about 100 metres from the Northern end of the beach. These trees could be several hundred (800?) years old. I have not seen many, if any, Pohutukawa larger than these.

**Relief/Decision Sought**

Insert two new (Pohutukawa) notable trees, on the foreshore, near a small watercourse about 100m from the northern end of the beach at Opunga Cove to the Notable Tree schedule (Opunga Bay Road 0184, DP 133112, Valuation number 00413-23000).

**Arborist Response**

- i. An assessment of the tree was undertaken on the 5 February 2025. Two pōhutukawa are growing adjacent to each other, separated by a shallow water course. Both trees have been assessed to be of good health and fair structure. The larger trees have approximate dimensions of 10 metres in height, 60 metre canopy spread and a girth of 11m. The small tree is 10m in height, a 40m canopy spread and a 6.5m girth. The larger tree produces a STEM score of 192 and the small tree a STEM score of 180. These scores do not include probable historical values, which would need to be completed by a specialist.
- ii. Overall, the trees are of good condition and exceeds the 130 STEM threshold through arboricultural attributes. The larger tree's trunk was measured as a single stem, however, it develops multiple stems at approximately 1.5m, which are likely to

compressed into the single stem form at the height measured. Both trees are highly likely to be more than 100 years old and likely to be some of the oldest regionally. There are two trees growing in proximity, however, there is potential that the smaller pōhutukawa is a stem that overtime has become independent. The canopies combine to create a wide spreading stature. The trees are likely to score higher if the historical values are added. Both trees are good candidates to be included into the Notable tree schedule and should be considered individually.



*Figure 5: Trunk of larger pōhutukawa at Opunga Cove*



*Figure 6: Canopy of larger pōhutukawa at Pohutukawa at Opunga Cove*



*Figure 7: Canopy of smaller pōhutukawa at Pohutukawa at Opunga Cove*



#### 2.4. Pacific Eco-logic – S451.022 and S442.166

Please note, for purposes of this report, two submissions from the same submitter, with duplicate summaries, have been combined in this section.

##### **Summary of submission**

Schedule 1 - Schedule of notable trees is incomplete, as many notable indigenous trees and groups of trees have been excluded. The Far North has many notable pōhutukawa outside of existing forests that are vulnerable to human disturbance (including clearance for views), possums and myrtle rust. This Schedule protects some invasive alien pest plant specimens, which is inappropriate.

##### **Relief/Decision Sought**

Delete all pest plants from Schedule 1 - Schedule of notable trees so that they can be progressively removed as seed sources being distributed far and wide by birds and wind. Insert additional notable pōhutukawa in the Bay of Islands and elsewhere, including many fringing the water margins and contributing to its natural character. Insert tall matai and kauri on the north shore of the Waikare Inlet.

##### **Arborist Response**

- i. There are two or more existing notable trees listed in Appendix 1D that meet the criteria for pest plants in accordance with either the National Pest Plant Accord or the Northern Regional Council pest control. They are listed in Appendix 1D as
  - Tree/site 18 – Camphor laurel and Sycamore. 250 Te AhuAhu Road, Waimate North
  - Tree/Site 71 – Phoenix palms. Kingston House, Hone Heke Road, Kerikeri. Pest plants are listed.
- ii. A Camphor laurel tree (Object Id 17) growing within Keirikeri reserve is nominated to be included into the notable tree list. The tree was nominated primarily due to its stature and was assessed on 19/01/2021, no further assessment has been undertaken. Its initial STEM score was 144, however, a re-evaluation of STEM with the pest plant attributes has dropped the final STEM score to 120, which is below the 130 score threshold, therefore, the tree has been removed from consideration.

#### 2.5. Ahipara Takiwā – S576.001 and S579.001 and Haami Piripi ONZM – S580.001

Please note, for purposes of this report, the two submissions from the same submitter and one from a single submitter, have been combined in this section as they relate to the same tree.

##### **Summary of submission** (Ahipara Takiwā – S576.001 and S579.001)

The submitter states that in November 2017, the Council asked Far North residents to nominate exceptional trees they thought deserving of special protection under its Schedule of Notable Trees. Unfortunately, the inclusion of the pōhutukawa tree at Moringai, 233 Foreshore Road, Ahipara was overlooked due to the lack of resourcing to complete this work. The tree was protected by the consent notice issued by FNDC in 2003, but, upon review at



the Environment Court Hearing (2005), the protection was not upheld, and a replacement consent notice was issued it should be noted that the Environment Court did not undertake a full hearing but instead worked with the various parties involved in the appeal namely Melville Holding Ltd (the applicant), the then-named Historic Places Trust (Heritage Trust) and FNDC. Several submissions from Iwi asked for the tree to be protected and the Council's hearing report included full protection of the tree in perpetuity. The original decision also protected the tree as lot 1 was a reserve. Following an appeal, Lot 1 was no longer included in the reserve and the tree was not protected other than by private covenant. The tree has been recognized as significant from Iwi and there has been submissions asking for protection.

**Relief/Decision Sought (Ahipara Takiwā – S576.001 and S579.001)**

Amend Schedule 1 - Schedule of notable trees to include the pōhutukawa tree at Moringai, at 233 Foreshore Road, Ahipara to be protected (inferred).

**Summary of submission (Haami Piripi ONZM – S580.001)**

The submitter contends that the pōhutukawa tree located at Morangai (an ancient site of Māori occupation) at Ahipara, requires protection as it is of cultural significance and has a rich provenance within local history.

**Relief/Decision Sought (Haami Piripi ONZM – S580.001)**

Amend Schedule 1 - Schedule of notable trees to include the pōhutukawa tree at Morangai, Ahipara, to be protected.

**Arborist Response**

- i. An assessment of the tree was undertaken on the 13 February 2025. The tree has been assessed to be of fair health and poor structure, with approximate dimensions of nine metres in height, 12 metre canopy spread and a girth of 3.4m. The tree produces a STEM score of 150, however, this does not include probable historical values, which would need to be completed by a specialist.
- ii. As outlined in the submissions, the tree has significant value to Iwi. A side of the tree's canopy had been removed for the development of the land, which has resulted in an asymmetrical crown bias solely to the west of centre. The crown has regenerated and is vigorous and healthy.
- iii. Overall, the tree exceeds the 130 STEM threshold through arboricultural qualities and is likely to score higher if the historical values are added. It is assessed that the tree has the attributes for long viability and is a good candidate to be included into the Notable tree schedule.



Figure 8: Pohutukawa at 233 Foreshore Road, Ahipara



Figure 9: Pohutukawa at 233 Foreshore Road, Ahipara



Figure 10: Pohutukawa at 233 Foreshore Road, Ahipara



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## Appendix A Maps

