



Remember  
submissions  
close at 5pm,  
Friday 21  
October 2022

## Proposed District Plan submission form

Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

Feel free to add more pages to your submission to provide a fuller response.

Form 5: Submission on Proposed Far North District Plan

TO: Far North District Council

This is a submission on the Proposed District Plan for the Far North District.

### 1. Submitter details:

Full Name:	Kate Burdekin		
Company / Organisation Name: (if applicable)			
Contact person (if different):			
Full Postal Address:	288 Otaha Road, RD2, Kerikeri		
Phone contact:	Mobile: 021 110 1164	Home:	Work:
Email (please print):	kateburdekin@xtra.co.nz		
2. (Please select one of the two options below)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I <b>could not</b> gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission <input type="checkbox"/> I <b>could</b> gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission			
<i>If you could gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission, please complete point 3 below</i>			
3. <input type="checkbox"/> I <b>am</b> directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that: (A) Adversely affects the environment; and (B) Does not relate to trade competition or the effect of trade competition			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I <b>am not</b> directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that: (A) Adversely affects the environment; and (B) Does not relate to trade competition or the effect of trade competition			
<i>Note: if you are a person who could gain advantage in trade competition through the submission, your right to make a submission may be limited by clause 6(4) of Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991</i>			
<b>The specific provisions of the Plan that my submission relates to are:</b> <i>(please provide details including the reference number of the specific provision you are submitting on)</i>			
Refer to email dated 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2022			



Confirm your position:  Support  Support In-part  Oppose  
(please tick relevant box)

Refer to email dated 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

**My submission is:**

(Include details and reasons for your position)

Refer to email dated 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

**I seek the following decision from the Council:**

(Give precise details. If seeking amendments, how would you like to see the provision amended?)

Refer to email dated 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

S507.001

I wish to be heard in support of my submission  
 I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission

(Please tick relevant box)

If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing

Yes  No

Do you wish to present your submission via Microsoft Teams?

Yes  No

**Signature of submitter:**

(or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter)

Date: 21/10/22

(A signature is not required if you are making your submission by electronic means)

**Important information:**

1. The Council must receive this submission before the closing date and time for submissions (5pm 21 October 2022)

Kate Burdekin  
288 Otaha Road  
Kerikeri  
0295  
Email : kateburdekin@xtra.co.nz

For the attention of our new Mayor and Councillors,

Re : Far North District Council Long Term Plan

As I sit at my desk with my 8 year old Labrador Paige gentle snoring away lying on my feet, and our 18 year recently rescued cat Allie trying to sit on my keyboard, I wonder at the enormity of the task to respond to the FNDC's Long Term Plan.

I am guessing you will have received long technical responses from the professional submission writers employed by entities such as DOC, Forest & Bird, Kiwis for Kiwis etc. It still makes me wonder how government funded bodies can have such influence over local policies, kind of like central government having a seat at the table in local matters.

Therefore I will try to keep my submission brief. Rather than going into long winded specifics on the Long Term plan, I would like to give my overall view. I comment on the Long Term Plan from the perspective of a dog owner.

My husband & I have lived in the Far North for 20 years and run a local Kerikeri business. During that time we have owned 2 gorgeous Labradors and a couple of cats so are well versed with the challenges of owning companion animals in the Far North.

### **Animal Welfare**

The Far North has a variety of socio-economic groups which all present challenges in their needs from a council. In regards to dog ownership, we range from the older population with fluffy white dogs, spoilt family dogs that sleep on the couch, hard working farm dogs, enthusiastic hunting dogs and then to the life chained dogs with no shelter and barely any food. Rather than the council concentrating on creating rules for controlling where the well looked after dogs can or can't live and walk, it would be awesome if the council put its energy into helping improve the life of the neglected dogs in our community.

A few ideas include helping to fund our hard working animal rescue organisations, funding for de-sexing in poorer communities (as an on-going programme rather than just a one off 'Chip & Snip' publicity stunt), a doggie food bank, education on how to look after animals, assisting to provide shelter, flea & worming treatments, subsidized registration, help to provide fenced areas in gardens so dogs don't need to be on chains. I know this is a massive task but someone needs to take it on & who better than the Council? Be proactive rather than reactive.

## **Council dog shelters**

I have rolled my eyes at the debacle of the southern pound. So much money has been wasted and nothing actually achieved – apart from owning an incredibly expensive piece of land. A well run pound is required as a matter of urgency. One where animal welfare is paramount and public access to collect their animals when picked up, or to meet & greet potential dogs for adoption. Be open for public scrutiny about the pounds, not hiding behind poo ponds.

## **Name tags for dogs**

Has the council considered promoting dog owners getting tags on their dog's collars with their names & contact number? Perhaps a promotion on this when sending out the dog ownership reminders? Maybe this could be subsidized for people unable to afford the \$10 for a tag? If a dog goes missing then surely it is the best thing for the dog to be returned to its owner as soon as possible.

## **Dog fighting**

This is a problem in the Far North with dogs being stolen from people's properties. From hearsay I understand that there are several large dog fighting rings that target areas to steal dogs from. The AMO's travel around the district and hopefully hear a lot of what is going on in the area. There needs to be a concerted effort to shut these fighting rings down. Can the AMO's report to the police what they know? The council to put pressure on the police to work in closely with them? A confidential phone number the public can call to report information on dog fighting?

Something needs to be done. Not only for the sake of the poor animals involved in dog fighting, but the general community are scared. People no longer leave their dogs in the garden when they go out for fear of their dog being stolen. That sounds more like a dodgy 3<sup>rd</sup> World Country, not our wonderful New Zealand.

## **Banning dog ownership on subdivisions**

I am aware off the pressure on the Council from agencies like DOC & Forest & Bird to ban dog ownership in the Far North, especially on the East Coast to create a kiwi corridor. This has been going on for years through banning dog ownership on subdivided land.

The Far North is a rural community, and as such dog ownership is a major part of people's lives, either for work on farms or companionship. New Zealanders are a nation of dog lovers with over 64% of households owning a dog.

The Council are making it so difficult for people in the Far North to achieve their dream of owning a dog. There are so many properties now that have a no dog covenant on it, or by introducing SNAs on land and encouraging people to take out conservation covenants, meaning no companion animals can be kept, in return for reduced rates.

I personally know people who have had to buy land with a no dog covenant on it (despite not being in a kiwi populated area) as they had no other choice due to no other options available. This means that their children cannot visit unless they leave their dog behind – which they won't do as their dog is part of their family.

Other friends own a property with no dog covenants, and their children love coming to see us simply so they can spend time with our dog as they would dearly love one of their own but are unable to. Pretty sad to see.

I know of several people who relocated, with their business, to other areas of New Zealand as they found it too difficult to buy a property in the Far North whilst still being able to keep their dog. They were a real loss for the Far North.

Surely rather than an overall ban, put covenants in place allowing ownership of companion animals under certain conditions – fenced garden, animals to be kept inside at night (this also ensures their safety), no dogs to be chained and must be adequately cared for.

I do wonder if there are planners who are pushing their own personal agenda with this banning of dogs, as was the case with the policy writer of the original Dog Bylaw and Policy document. What controls are in place in the Council to ensure that a long term plan is for the good of the whole community rather than a small group's view? Where did this push to ban dogs in the Far North 1<sup>st</sup> start?

### **More dog off leash exercise walks**

If more of our dogs are to live in fenced areas in gardens, then the Council needs to provide more off leash dog exercise areas. If we are to encourage good dog ownership then we need to provide the community with the tools to help them. To keep dogs healthy they need to be exercised on a regular basis.

I am not talking about a fenced dog park which only works for a few dogs. The council needs to work on accessing more walking tracks where dogs, and people, can get out for long walks. Rolands Wood is amazing but this is looked after by a Trust not the Council. The track between Opuia & Paihia is a perfect example of how well it can work.

There are numerous DOC tracks that would be perfect dog walking tracks. There are many areas in New Zealand where DOC allow access to dogs – just seems in the too hard basket for the Far North DOC department. Can the Council liaise with DOC to identify tracks that could be opened up for dog walkers?

Does the Council have any tracks of land that could be utilised as dog walks?

It would require a proactive team in the Council to look into this but isn't this what the community have asked for by voting in a new mayor / council team? A new look at how things can be done.

## **Economic opportunities – dog tourism**

The dog industry in New Zealand is worth 1.8 billion dollars. Dog owners on holiday spend money. Let's get some of that money up here in the Far North.

Just look at how Taupo promotes itself as being a dog friendly destination. Look at the local BOI cafes that welcome dogs on a Sunday morning – they are packed. There are so many opportunities for the Far North – it just requires a change in attitude.

As an Air BnB host that welcomes dogs, we know how the Far North is viewed from a visiting dog owner – and it's not entirely positive. 80% of our guests bring dogs with them and we are nearly fully booked for the summer and have been super busy over the winter. Our guests are out & about all the time with their dogs, visiting cafes, buying gifts – spending their money. The vast majority of our guests are from Auckland as we are relatively close for them. We work hard on promoting the Bay of Islands as a dog friendly destination.

It would be awesome if the Council looked at dog tourism as a real opportunity as well – providing information on dog walks, places to visit with your dog, encouraging DOC to be more dog friendly, a web site for dog travellers in the Far North.

## **Kiwi conservation**

Let's talk about the elephant in the room. Kiwi birds.

There seems to be a misconception that you can either be a conservationist or a dog owner, but not both. This is so wrong. Many dog owners care for all animals / birds and love nature. Especially in the Far North where many of us have chosen to live in a rural community.

If you look at the statistics, there are very few kiwi deaths by dogs yet dogs are portrayed as the main killer of kiwis. There are so many kiwi deaths by being run over but little is being done to reduce traffic speed or warn drivers in high kiwi population areas.

The Council themselves are a major disruption of the kiwi population by allowing big subdivisions to happen, thus clearing the habitat where the kiwi's live. The oxymoron being that the houses on that subdivision will then have a no dog clause in order to protect the kiwis!

There needs to be a change in attitude towards dog owners and kiwi protection. Rather than simply banning dogs, get dog owners involved in protecting kiwis. Encourage people to fence their gardens so the kiwis can have their own habitat away from animals – and children/people. Get people to look out for kiwis whilst driving. Dog owners are out & about all the time walking their dogs so can keep an eye out for injured birds. Encourage dog owners to join rat & stoat trapping programs – currently put off as dogs are demonised as being a pest.

The council needs to look at its own attitude to encourage this change in mind set. The wording in the Long Term Plan refers to pets and pests in the same breath. Maybe a campaign with positive ideas how dogs & kiwi can live side by side.

You just need to look at how the Opito Bay community, many of whom are dog owners, get involved in kiwi conservation to see how this could work.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I didn't quite achieve my ambition of keeping it brief but I hope you take some of what I have said on board when considered the long term plan for this lovely area we call home.

It will take a brave Mayor & Councillors to make changes but it is possible. You have the energy and enthusiasm to take on the challenge.

I look forward to supporting you in the process of improving the lives of the dogs in the Far North.

With kind regards

Kate Burdekin