Visual Assessment Best Practice Methodologies [VBPM]
LASC 698 Research Placement Report

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Research Placement Introduction

This report was completed for the NZILA in partial fulfillment of the MLA Research Placement paper at Lincoln University.

NZILA acted as the host for the research placement over a four week period in November 2006. Academic supervision was provided by the University.

Research Topic

Visual assessment best practice methodologies (VBPM) carried out by Landscape Architects in proposal assessment associated with resource consent applications in the coastal environment.

Proposal: discrete private or publicly funded development (e.g. subdivision) requiring resource consent.

Coastal environment: areas impacted upon by the RMA s6a) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Objective

To develop a description of core objective and subjective best practice steps/checkpoints in the visual assessment process associated with resource consent applications in the coastal environment.

Rationale

An assessment of visual (and landscape) effects is mandated by the RMA 91, Schedule 4 in the Assessment of Effects on the Environment (AEE) required as part of a resource consent application. Resource consent applications in the coastal environment are further influenced by sections of the RMA91 (in particular 6a) and 6b)) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Current visual assessment methodologies are the subject of discourse within the profession. Methodologies are variable, make significant use of subjective criteria, and are often; presented at the Environment Court, contested by public submissions and the object of media attention. Research that focuses on current assessment practice using key professional informants may present the best opportunity to observe VBPM and the issues that surround it within the broader context of assessment.

Methodology

The research process:

- A literature review of current NZ and international VBPM guidelines.
- A desk study analysis of documented examples VBPM provided by a small number of key professional informants.
- Key professional informant interviews.

Professional informants in Christchurch were asked to critique the research proposal and the draft interview questions.

Professional informants in Hawkes Bay, Hamilton, Auckland and Whangarei were asked to provide examples of VBPM resource consent documentation for a coastal development in which visual assessment formed a significant component. These assessment examples were analysed to generate a flow diagram of common VBPM steps, associated anonymous examples and appendices of VBPM criteria and terminology.

In the interview the key professional informants were asked to:

- Summarise and evaluate their VBPM.
- Describe its significance and development within their wider assessment process.
- Nominate the key issues and potential research and professional development initiatives related to VBPM.

Professional Informant Interview Questions

1. What are the key steps used by your office in project VBPM associated with a resource consent application in a coastal environment?
2. In what steps are objective (quantifiable) and subjective (qualifiable) criteria used and how important are these in the overall process?
3. How does the use of visibility and simulation digital technology contribute to your VBPM?
4. How important and separate is the visual component in the overall resource consent assessment process?
5. What theories are these VBPM steps based on? For example:
    - Landscape theories related to
        - aesthetics
        - concept of landscape
        - landscape assessment
6. What other factors or processes drive the development or modification of these steps in your office? For example:
    - International VBPM
    - Consultation
        - Community values
        - Iwi values.
    - Statute and Council considerations
        - The NZ Coastal Policy
        - Sections of the RMA
        - Regional Council coastal plans, policy and coastal environment management strategies.
        - Regional Council and/or District Council plans
        - Outcomes and case law from EC hearings
        - The context of the resource consent application (building versus wind farm etc.)
7. What does your office consider to be the most important VBPM issues that would warrant further research or professional development?

NZILA Report

The assessment documentation examples and responses to the interviews were analysed to generate:

- A flow diagram of common VBPM checkpoints
- Assessment examples
- Assessment criteria and definitions
- A summary of the interview question responses

Abbreviations used

VBPM	Visual Assessment Best Practice Methodologies
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
NZCPS	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
ONF/L	Outstanding natural features and landscapes
NC	Natural Character
RC	Regional Council
RP	Regional Plan
RPS	Regional Policy Statement
DC	District Council
DP	District Plan
EC	Environment Court

Report Summary

This report is divided into 4 sections. It summarises the analysis of assessment documentation and interview responses provided by key professional informants in 10 Landscape Architect firms in Hawkes Bay, Hamilton, Auckland and Whangarei.

The VBPM Flow Chart, Assessment Examples, Assessment Criteria and Definitions and Interview Responses presented here are intended to facilitate the development of NZILA approved VBPM .

Section 1: VBPM Flow chart

The VBPM flow chart presented in this section details a possible process and a series of assessment checkpoints in a visual [and landscape] effects assessment associated with a resource consent application.

Varying order and inclusion of check points as detailed in Section 2 of this report indicate the use of context specific assessment methodologies that have a common core.

The VBPM Flow Chart assumes best practice methodologies are evident i.e. that they can be generated through the combined analysis of resource consent assessment documentation provided by the professional informants and responses to the first interview question. Further research, consultation and clarification may contribute to the validity of this assumption.

Section 2: Assessment Examples

Assessment documentation provided by the professional informants was used in this section to generate anonymous examples of visual [and landscape] effects assessment process detailing the key steps:

- Purpose and assessment methodology used including: criteria and key terms used, assumptions, limitations and rationale.
- Relative objectivity (defined at the beginning of the Section)
- Secondary sources
- Presentation technique

Analysis of the assessment examples indicates the use of a context specific assessment process which is based on a core of objective criteria and common assessment checkpoints.

Section 3: Assessment Criteria and Definitions

Examples of landscape and visual assessment criteria and definitions identified in the professional informant assessment documentation were summarized in this section of the report. The order [of headings] reflects a possible process of landscape and visual effects assessment

The development of a greater level of common key assessment criteria and definitions was indicated as a priority by most professional informants.

Section 4: Professional Informant Interviews

This section summarises the professional informant interview responses and where appropriate indicates frequency of response. Further issues and opportunities discussed relating to the broader contexts of assessment, design and the profession, are also highlighted.

Valuable professional development and research initiatives may be generated as a result of clarification of issues and opportunities raised in this section and establishment of their level of importance within the profession.

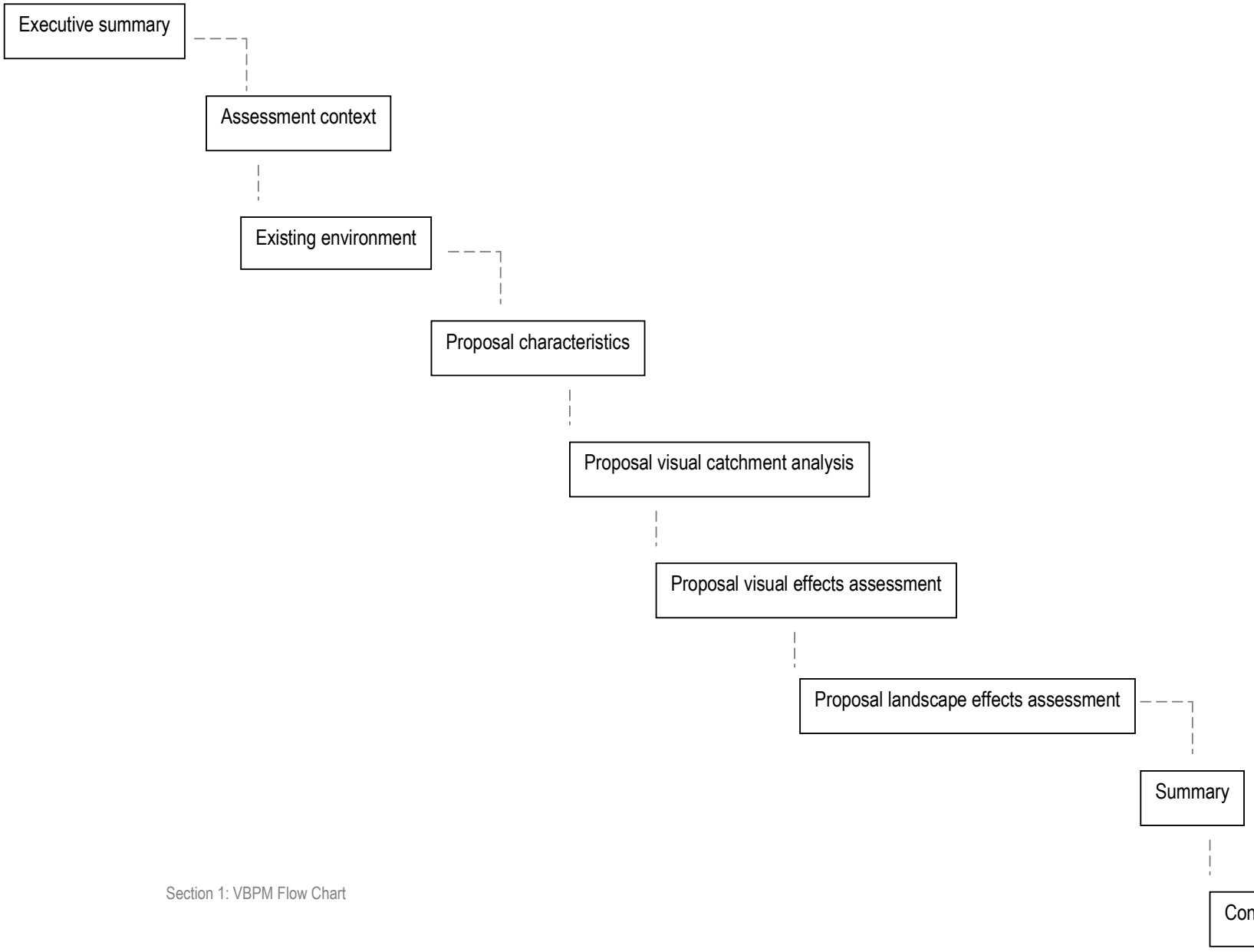
Section 1: VBPM Flow Chart

The VBPM Flow Chart was generated on the assumption of evident best practice methodologies i.e. VBPM may be generated through the analysis of resource consent assessment documentation provided by the professional informants and responses to the first interview question (see Introduction and Section 4: Professional Informant Interviews).

The VBPM Flow Chart highlights the visual effects assessment process within the wider context of a landscape and visual effects assessment related to a resource consent application.

Detailed analysis of landscape effects assessment methodologies were beyond the scope of this research placement. This reflects the pragmatic considerations of a four week placement.

The text boxes in the Flow Chart are deliberately not numbered i.e. the assessment process may not 'flow' in the direction indicated. The chart reflects a possible process and a series of check points [described in the subsequent pages]. The absence of particular check points in the assessment examples included in this report (Section 2) and in any specific assessment process indicates the use of professional judgement in their application/inclusion.


Executive summary
Assessment context
Existing environment
Proposal characteristics
Proposal visual catchment analysis
Proposal visual effects assessment
Proposal landscape effects assessment
Summary
Conclusions

Executive summary

- ♦ Summary of assessment findings

Assessment context

- ♦ Scope and purpose of assessment including client details, application history, prior assessor involvement and details of the proposal application e.g. subdivision and land use consent, (assumed) discretionary activity in ## Zone within the ## District.
- ♦ Other proposal specific assessment documentation forming part of this application e.g. a proposal site ecology assessment.
- ♦ Secondary sources used i.e. additional proposal specific documentation including past landscape and visual assessments and non proposal specific documents e.g. Regional landscape assessment documentation.
- ♦ Summary of methodology used including rationale, limitations, key terms, secondary sources/references-other assessments, reports etc.

Existing environment

- ♦ Regional/district biophysical and cultural elements, characteristics, character, and landscape and visual values/importance/significance.
- ♦ Proposal site biophysical and cultural elements, characteristics, character, and landscape and visual values/importance/significance.
- ♦ Relevant statue/planning context: national, regional, district issues, objectives, policy statements, status, zoning provisions, rules, management plans, structure plans, design guidelines, case law etc including….
- ♦ Evaluation of area/proposal site key biophysical and cultural sustainability issues/opportunities and foreseeable/planned landscape and visual change.

Proposal characteristics

- ♦ Location, formal qualities (size, colour, scale etc.).
- ♦ Identification of components of the proposal that may contribute to effects over time.
- ♦ Design iteration process [if appropriate] (including strategies used or that could be used to create positive and avoid adverse effects and address statute and planning context including area/site key sustainability issues and opportunities).
- ♦ Public consultation process used (direct/indirect methods) and summary of findings/impact on proposal design process.

Proposal visual catchment analysis

- ♦ Methodology description, criteria used rationale, assumptions, limitations, secondary sources, and key term definitions.
- ♦ Proposal visibility/visual catchment identification and description.
- ♦ Key view point and/or critical zone of visual influence identification/selection
  i.e. where there is potential for effects that are 'less than minor' (positive or negative).
- ♦ Viewing audience identification/selection and description (types, numbers, location).

Proposal visual effects assessment

- ♦ Methodology description, criteria used, rationale, assumptions, limitations, secondary sources, and key term definitions.
- ♦ Visual change description from key viewpoints/critical zone of visual influence resulting from the proposal.
- ♦ Proposal region/district/area/site sensitivity identification (including influence of DP/RP permitted foreseeable change) and evaluation of ability to absorb visual change resulting from the proposal.
- ♦ Viewing audience/s sensitivity identification (including influence of DP/RP permitted foreseeable change) and evaluation of ability to absorb visual change resulting from the proposal.
- ♦ Evaluation of visual effects (type: positive, neutral, adverse and level: less than minor, minor, moderate, significant) of the proposal from each key view point and/or the critical zone of visual influence over time (during construction, year 1, 5, 15 for example).
- ♦ Further adverse visual effect avoidance, remediation and mitigation recommendations and an evaluation of their visual effects.
- ♦ Proposal visual effects statute/planning context compliance including...
- ♦ Evaluation of proposals visual effects contribution to area/site key sustainability biophysical and or cultural issues/opportunities.
- ♦ An overall evaluation of the proposals visual effects on the existing site/region character, values/importance/significance and compliance.

Proposal landscape effects assessment

- An in-depth analysis of landscape effects assessment is beyond the brief of this research project.
- The assessment context, existing environment and the proposal characteristics 'steps' contribute to both processes.
- Other commonalities in process can be observed e.g. landscape effects statute and planning context compliance including proposal landscape effects contribution to area/site sustainability issues/opportunities.
- Analysis and evaluation of landscape effects may contribute to the visual effects assessment process and vice versa e.g. in the selection of critical viewpoints.
- Landscape effects analysis and evaluation will similarly conclude with;
- An overall evaluation of the proposals landscape effects on the site/district/regions character, values/significance/importance and compliance.

Summary

- Summation of the proposals overall landscape and visual effects.
- Summation of the proposals statutory and planning compliance.

Conclusion

- Statement of support or otherwise for the application.

Section 2: Assessment Examples

Professional informants in Hawkes Bay, Hamilton, Auckland and Whangarei were asked to provide an example of assessment documentation related to a resource consent application in the coastal environment.

All respondents emphasised that VBPM are carried out as part of a combined landscape and visual effects assessment (as required under Schedule 4 of the RMA) for activities requiring resource consent. Other assessment documentation (for example; transport, roading, noise and ecological reports) may also be associated with the resource consent application.

Each assessment document has been analysed and summarised describing the key steps:

- Purpose and the assessment methodology used including: criteria and key terms used, assumptions, limitations and rationale or theoretical underpinnings.
- Relative objectivity (see below)
- Presentation
- Secondary sources that were used.

For the purpose of analysis it was assumed that:

- Objective criteria will generate an assessment (using words, graphics and numbers) that is relatively independent of assessor influence/perception and generically applied. For example, an assessment of the proposals visual characteristics will generate the same assessment when using undisputedly relevant formal criteria; size, colour, location etc.
- Objective/subjective criteria will also generate an assessment (using words, graphics, and numbers) that is relatively independent of assessor influence/perception. However, it can be recognised that other criteria may have [justifiably] been applied. For example, in determining visual sensitivity of a particular viewpoint the proposals degree of contrast with its surroundings may or may not be used to assign a greater level of sensitivity.
- Subjective criteria will generate an assessment (using words, graphics and numbers) that is dependent on assessor influence/perception i.e. where other criteria could have been applied and the resultant assessment varies markedly with the assessor. For example in the assessment of viewpoint sensitivity the formal characteristics of the proposal are evaluated by one assessor to be in significant contrast with the surroundings and by another to be in moderate contrast.

The examples included in this section vary in terms of decision making body lodgement (EC, RC, DC), client (developer/s, Regional or District Council, members of the public) and assessor position (support for or against resource consent).

Apartment resource consent- EC hearing evidence for developer		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of the assessment –description of site and proposal features. -analysis of visual effects of the proposal in the visual catchment with respect to the viewing audience. -analysis of the visual implications of the proposal. -review of the proposal DP compliance. -extent of site visits.	**Objective** The Brief.	
	Previous proposal specific assessment- same author- assessment of the 'landscape' implications of the proposal.	Descriptive text.
2. Proposal setting -description of the wider and immediate biophysical and cultural characteristics of the area in the vicinity of the proposal site including DP zoning. -identification of differing 'segments' with differing "" characteristics within the wider proposal area.	**Objective** -description of existing characteristics in proposal area. **Objective/subjective** -selection of proposal area characteristics. **Subjective** -evaluation of current characteristics e.g. 'appeal' of components, the importance of existing components e.g. acting "as a defining edge or 'frame' rather than the central focus of attention in its own right.".	
	DP.	Descriptive text, photographs showing proposal area characteristics.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
3. Proposal description -proposal characteristics including design modifications made post DC hearing. -evaluation of potential visual effects of apartment buildings (with reference to avoiding; dominance, intrusion, buildings of commercial or institutional character). -rationale for rejecting apartment footprint and profile that would have complied with DP. -description of effects of proposals proposed landscape treatment plan.	**Objective** -description of the proposal characteristics and alternatives considered. -description of proposed landscape treatment plan. **Subjective** **-**evaluation of extent of visual intrusion and dominance of chosen apartment footprint and profile. -evaluation of the likely success of the proposed landscape treatment -evaluation of the effects of the proposals proposed landscape treatment plan on the visual effects of the buildings e.g. will "help soften and 'de-scale' the apartment buildings" "enhancing the internal aesthetics of the site" rather than ameliorating or mitigating the apartment effects.	
	Past proposal specific assessment documentation- same author. Additional proposal specific documentation – proposal drawings.	Descriptive text, landscape treatment plan.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Proposal impact -description and criteria of adverse impacts (discontinuity with existing environment and DP provisions including those permitted in foreseeable future). -identification of DP assessment issues/criteria (neighbours' amenity, integration with surrounding development). -"" RPS assessment issue/criteria (impact on natural character values). -identification of proposals visual catchment. -identification of viewing audience groups (residents, travelers, shoppers, beach goers, boaties, farmers, recreators). -identification of key proposal view points. -evaluation of individual viewpoint landscape value (criteria: composite aesthetic value, spatial structure, natural character, urban pattern and form) and sensitivity (criteria: elevation and prominence, land uses, topography, vegetation cover, views). "" of proposal effects at each viewpoint (relating to: residential amenity losses, surrounding development integration, natural character losses with effect modifiers: distance to site, relative topography/elevation, sites context, and intervening development/vegetation). -"overall impact rating at each view point (low/moderate/high).	**Objective** -direct quotes from DP/RPS. -description of proposal visual catchment. -description of proposal viewing audience. -description of proposal view points. **Objective/subjective** -selection of DP/RP issues. -selection of criteria. **Subjective** --determination of the overall value, sensitivity, effects rating for each viewpoint. -evaluation of viewpoints overall impact ranking (low/moderate/high). -focus of assessment on integration with existing and foreseeable development.	
	DP, RPS.	Descriptive text, Appendices; Photographs from view points. Photographic simulations from key view points of proposal Table of viewpoint landscape values sensitivity, proposal effects and overall impact rating.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Apartment resource consent- EC hearing evidence for developer</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Steps</td><td colspan="2">Objective/Subjective</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources</td><td>Presentation</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">5. Overall effects of proposal on residential and visual amenity

-evaluation of proposals residential amenity beneficial effects compared with complying alternative (reference made to: open space, view shafts, deliberate segmentation of proposal, relationship to existing residential mix, planting effects, relationship to local terrain profile, relationship to scale and size of existing buildings, main views from surrounding properties, privacy, buffering/screening).</td><td colspan="2">Objective/Subjective
-description of proposals characteristics using sketches.

Subjective
-overall evaluation of proposal effect on residential visual amenity e.g. “relate well to the existing residential matrix”.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Past proposal specific assessment- same author.

DP proposed.</td><td>Descriptive text.

Secondary source drawings of proposal apartment footprint and profiles.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">6. Overall effects of proposal related to design and appearance of the proposal

-description of current residential development in proposal area.

-evaluation of proposal integration with existing development.

-“” foreseeable development permitted by zoning/present in wider area.

-description of proposal characteristics that contribute towards integration (e.g. building profile, footprint and facades).

-overall evaluation of proposal compatibility.</td><td colspan="2">Objective
-description of building height restrictions in proposed DP.
-description of proposal characteristics.

Subjective
-evaluation of current residential development ‘pleasantly attractive, unremarkable’.
-evaluation of contrasting and merging components of the proposal with existing residential development.
-evaluation of proposals potential to integrate with foreseeable development related to proposed DP.
-evaluation of proposal characteristics that contribute to integration.
-overall evaluation of proposals compatibility with existing and foreseeable buildings in the area.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Descriptive text, photographs of existing proposal area buildings.</td></tr>
</table>

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<tr><td colspan="3">Apartment resource consent- EC hearing evidence for developer</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Steps</td><td colspan="2">Objective/Subjective</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources</td><td>Presentation</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">7. Effects on natural character and features
-description of proposals effects on nature/culture balance.
-overall evaluation of proposals effects on natural character including reference to DP zoning foreseeable effects.
-evaluation of proposal colour scheme as mitigation for potential loss in natural character.</td><td colspan="2">Objective
-description of biophysical characteristics of area surrounding proposal site.
-direct quotes from secondary sources
Subjective
-evaluation of proposals adverse effects on natural character current and foreseeable
-evaluation of effects of proposals colour scheme on natural character.</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP, previous proposal specific DC hearing assessment documentation- same author.</td><td>Descriptive text, photographs of proposal site area.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">8. Statutory considerations
-DP (reference made to: Zoning- building height, maximum floor space proposed variations to rules).
-overall evaluation of proposal zoning rule compliance linked with effects of complying alternative.
-evaluation of proposal compliance with R Coastal Environment Plan (proposed) policies related to; sprawl, loss of natural character, cumulative effects, outstanding features and landscapes, cumulative coastal landscape qualities-channels, tidal flats etc., new development criteria-blend and maintain visual amenity.</td><td colspan="2">Objective
-direct quotes from secondary sources.
Objective/Subjective
-selection of appropriate statutory considerations.
Subjective
-evaluation of the validity of current zoning rules for part of the proposal.
-evaluation of proposals overall impact in relation to zoning rules in adjoining sites.
-evaluation of proposals limited discretionary activity status.
-evaluation of overall impact or compliance with policies in RCEP e.g. of ONF/L. “effects as being essentially minor in their degree”.</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP, past proposal specific assessment documentation- same author, proposed regional coastal environment plan.</td><td>Descriptive text, direct quotes form secondary sources, Proposal drawings from secondary sources.</td></tr>
</table>

Apartment resource consent- EC hearing evidence for developer		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Conclusions. -overall evaluation of proposal effect on integrity, amenity values and character. -overall evaluation of proposal statutory compliance; DP RCEP (proposed), RMA 5 (social, economic and cultural wellbeing). Section 104, 6a), b). 7 c) and f).	**Objective** **-**direct quotes from secondary sources. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of statutory considerations. **Subjective** **-** overall evaluation of proposals and compliance with statutory considerations.	
	RMA, DP, RCEP (proposed)	Descriptive text.

Hotel development resource consent-EC hearing evidence for existing business operator.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of assessment -to determine the potential effects of proposal (linked to ONF/L status). -site visits (extent and purpose). -secondary sources-proposal specific resource consent application documentation, same EC hearing expert evidence.	**Objective** The Brief.	
	Proposal specific resource consent application documentation and same EC hearing documentation.	Descriptive text.
2. Statutory context -RMA s3 effects, 6a), 6 b), 7 a), 7c), 7 f), s104 relevance.	**Objective** -direct quotes from RMA.	
	RMA	Direct quotes, descriptive text.
3. Landscape context -definition of landscape linked to proposal site area.	**Objective** -direct quotes form secondary sources. **Subjective** -selection of landscape definition sources and links with proposal site area.	
	Past district specific OL assessment documentation, past EC Wakatipu ES vs. Queenstown Lakes DC 1999 documentation.	Direct quotes, descriptive text

Hotel development resource consent-EC hearing evidence for existing business operator.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. DP provisions -ONF status of proposal site and evaluation of characteristics of the proposal site that contribute to its ONF status. -evaluation of proposal compliance with: • relevant objectives (ONF/L-avoidance of visual compromise, Coastal landscape units-variety; retention and enhancement, Subdivision-adverse visual and landscape effects mitigation). • relevant policies (ONF/L identification, scheduling and listing of ONF/L characteristics, restrictions on building etc. in ONF/L, anticipated outcomes of policies e.g. no visual compromise to ONF/L). • relevant rules (Landscape areas resource management units, permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary and discretionary, non complying activities in ONF area). -assessment criteria for controlled, discretionary and restricted activities in ONF/L areas and evaluation of.	**Objective** -direct quotes from DP. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of objectives and policies. **Subjective** -agreement and extension of ONF characteristics "views from **and across..** bay" . -evaluation of proposal rule compliance/status e.g. plantations status as a controlled activity in the proposal site area. -evaluation of the inappropriateness of DP activity assessment criteria for ONF/L.	
	DP.	Descriptive text.
5. Evaluation of previous District Landscape Assessment -description of landscape perception (how we orientate or read a landscape, how we mentally organize and physically experience the landscape) resulting from: legibility, creation of mental maps, recognition of landmarks, status as a recreation landscape, meanings, contribution to regional identity, picturesque aesthetics and contemplative values. -evaluation of proposal site legibility, status as a landmark, recreation landscape, meaning (to Tanagra Whenua), contribution to regional identity, picturesque aesthetics and contemplative values.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary source, **Objective/subjective** -selection of secondary source and definitions and criteria of landscape perception. -proposal area significance to Tangata Whenua and as a regional landmark. **Subjective** -evaluation of proposal site area perceived values.	
	Past District Landscape Assessment documentation.	Direct quotes, descriptive text.

Hotel development resource consent-EC hearing evidence for existing business operator.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Evaluation of previous District Landscape ONF/L Assessment - proposal site ONF status. -definition of ONF/L. -ONF/L matrix (criteria: natural patterns, human patterns, perception, and meaning). -evaluation of ONF/L matrix proposal site rating.	**Objective** –direct quotes from secondary source: ONF/L definition, matrix and limitations. **Subjective** -evaluation of the importance of the proposal areas perception and meaning matrix ranking.	
	Oxford Dictionary, past District Landscape Assessment documentation.	Descriptive text, tables showing proposal site ONF/L criteria rating-secondary source.
7. Evaluation of previous District Landscape Assessment defining characteristics of the proposal area. -proposal area biophysical and cultural characteristics. -potential effects of activities: buildings, earthworks or plantations(reduction in NC, compromise visual integrity and coherence). -unacceptable effects criteria (reduction of visual integrity of views and natural character).	**Objective** –direct quotes from secondary source. **Objective/subjective** **-**selection from secondary source.	
	Past District Landscape Assessment documentation.	Direct quotes and descriptive text.
8. Evaluation of previous proposal specific landscape assessment. -evaluation of the past assessments mitigation strategies, visibility analysis, evaluation of significance of visual effects, overall visual effects and appropriateness of the development.	**Subjective** -evaluation of past proposal assessment level of effects.	
	Previous proposal specific landscape assessment documentation.	Descriptive text.

Hotel development resource consent-EC hearing evidence for existing business operator.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Proposal area value and meaning evaluation -historical, cultural, scientific, wildlife values/significance.	**Subjective** -description of proposal area values/significance.	
	Past District Landscape Assessment documentation.	Descriptive text.
10. District implications of proposal -evaluation of proposals effects on past District Landscape Assessment process and ONL/ONF status/protection nationally.	**Subjective** -evaluation of the proposals effects on the status and protection of ONF/L	
	A place to stand. Peart (2004)	Descriptive text
11. Conclusions -summation evaluation of proposal effects on proposal site ONF, DP ONF/L status, DP inappropriate effects criteria, national ONF/L protection (linked to RMA 6 b).	**Subjective** -extension of ONF status. -evaluation of greater importance of perception and meaning values in proposal site area. - evaluation of proposals inappropriate effects on an ONF. -evaluation of proposals potential effects on ONF/L protection nationally.	
	RMA, DP.	Descriptive text.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of the assessment –independent landscape and visual effects considering impact on natural character and amenity values. -number and nature of site visits.	**Objective** The Brief.	
		Descriptive text.
2. Description of the proposal -proposal characteristics. -components of the proposal with greatest potential to cause landscape and visual and amenity value effects. -statement of secondary sources used.	**Objective** -description of the proposal characteristics. **Objective/subjective** -selection of past proposal specific DC hearing and report documentation. **Subjective** -selection of proposal components with potential significant effects.	
	Past proposal specific report and DC application documentation including AEE-different author.	Descriptive text.
3. Regional context -biophysical characteristics. -visual/view characteristics. -evaluation of regional landscape, visual quality and amenity values dependent on: • context of interpretation, legibility and intactness, modification and natural character [resulting from process, patterns and elements i.e. of earth science base], • juxtaposition and frequency of landscape elements, visual coherence, human attributes and values [resulting form responses or choices i.e. of perceptual science base].	**Objective** -description of the regions general characteristics. **Objective/subjective** -identification of factors that generate landscape, visual and amenity values. **Subjective** -evaluation of regional landscape, visual quality and amenity values.	
		Descriptive text.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Proposal site description -biophysical characteristics. -dominant views. -landscape and visual qualities. -aesthetic values. -potential adverse impact of proposal on landscape. -components of 'sense of place'. -evaluation of proposal areas value/importance/sense of place. -evaluation of effects of current development.	**Objective** -description of the area and proposal sites biophysical characteristics and composition of views to and from proposal site. **Subjective** –evaluation of importance/value of proposal areas characteristics e.g. as "one of the more memorable landscapes within the region" , important views, components that contribute to the proposal sites 'sense of place' and status as a "highly memorable landscape" at a 'threshold point' of visible influence of human intervention. -appropriateness of current/existing development linked to picturesque aesthetics.	
		Descriptive text.
5. Landscape and visual effects methodology description -use of objective/empirical and subjective methods. -basis earth and perceptual sciences. -landscape and visual amenity assessed. - objectivity in visual assessment linked to the use of models of aesthetic appreciation. -ecological and formal aesthetics aligned with proposal characteristics. -effects criteria used (spatial influence, duration, permanence, recurrence/cumulative effects). -selection of viewpoints (visibility/views described by; duration, type, numbers and characteristics of viewers). -landscape effects (changes to overall landscape ecological processes) using defined baseline (existing or pristine), landscape effects are independent of what can be seen (ranked by: human values-perception, aesthetic quality, use, rarity, intactness and existence values, or in terms of ecological values- such as habitat or process value).	**Objective** -description of methodology. **Objective/subjective** -selection of theories, criteria. **Subjective** -evaluation of proposal effects e.g. significant cumulative effect which would result in "pressure to develop other marina facilities". -criteria used to select viewpoints.	
		Descriptive text.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
5 a) Model of aesthetic appreciation used -aesthetic appreciation linked with RMA 7c) and RMA definition of amenity. -ecological and formal models of aesthetics proposed. -criteria determining application of aesthetics model (Development state of site-pristine/modified, Purpose of development ecological/cultural). -picturesque aesthetic characteristics aligned with formal aesthetics. -aesthetic values generated by each model. -application of both models to proposal site. -evaluation of proposal sites aesthetic quality. - " of proposals impact on aesthetic quality.	**Objective** -direct quotes from RMA, site/proposal specific reports and DP. -description of models of aesthetics. **Objective/subjective** -selection of aesthetic models relevant to proposal. –assertions of aesthetic models e.g. "if it is ecologically good it is therefore beautiful." **Subjective** -evaluation of the proposals potential adverse impact on ecological aesthetics. -evaluation of the appropriateness of both models of aesthetics with greater weighting on the formal. -assertion that evidence of degradation does not necessarily permit further development -assertion of current dominance of natural character in site landscape. -evaluation of proposal site landscape picturesque basis of its appeal. -assertion that some development increases picturesque values but are lost when built elements overwhelm natural. -assertion that differing aesthetic values generated by each model promote proposal sites aesthetic appeal value.	
	RMA, previous proposal/site specific reports-different author, DP.	Direct quotes, descriptive text, Graph-level of development versus aesthetic quality comparing formal and ecological aesthetics ratings.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Visual absorption capability (VAC)evaluation -VAC definition (landscapes ability to absorb visual change-screen/hide/integrate retain character/qualities) and criteria (visibility, visual and physical links, modification of surrounding landscape, appropriateness of scale, distance, backdrop, atmospheric conditions). -VAC locations. -VAC rating from each location. -evaluation of significance of VAC ratings.	**Objective** -description of VAC methodology. **Objective/subjective** -selection of VAC criteria. -application of VAC criteria to generate VAC rating for each location. **Subjective** -evaluation of the significance of VAC ratings with respect to the proposal e.g." resulting in a significant change in the character of the landscape within which it is located".	
		Descriptive text., attachment-description of VAC rating criteria and proposal site location VAC ratings, plan and photographs showing VAC rating locations.
7. Visual effects assessment -reiteration of overall assessment components (e.g. multiple site inspections, …identification of landscape and visual effects etc.). -visual catchment establishment. -additions to past proposal specific AEE view points. -GIS view shed analysis. -predominant viewer category identified by distance and elevation (close non elevated/elevated and distant non elevated/elevated views). -significant viewing audience (in close proximity) identified as: residents, motorists, boaties, pedestrians. -evaluation of visual effects by distance. -rationale for viewpoint additions (to represent those most effected). -evaluation link with RMA requirement for effects to be "no more than minor".	**Objective** -viewpoint and view shed description -viewer category description -view characteristics from close, middle and distant view points. -viewing audience determination by distance. **Subjective** -evaluation of change in content and character of views for close, middle and distant viewer groups. -evaluation of significant adverse effects for viewers in close proximity to the proposal as "development of a scale and nature that will visually overwhelm the natural values" – linked to "visual intrusion/obstruction". -rationale for viewpoint additions. -overall evaluation of visual effects for the proposal.	
	Past proposal specific landscape and visual documentation and reports-different author, RMA.	Proposal specific AEE photomontages, aerial photograph with viewpoints, Photographs from each viewpoint, View shed analysis map.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
8. Evaluation of past site specific landscape and visual assessment (different author). - evaluation of visual effects for each viewpoint (using photomontage) and identification of errors (location, scale) in past photomontage assessment by different author. -evaluation of contrasting viewpoint visual effect ratings given by different author.	**Objective** -direct quotes from past and present proposal specific landscape and visual assessment by different author. **Objective/subjective** -description of visual changes produced by the proposal at each view point using photographic simulation. **Subjective** -evaluation of photographic simulation discrepancies. -evaluation that discrepancies lend uncertainty and understatement of effects in proposal specific assessment by different author.	
	Past and present proposal specific assessment documentation-different author, Proposal data provided by the applicant in DC application documentation.	Descriptive text, direct quotes, photographic simulations.
9. Evaluation of past proposal specific landscape and visual assessment mitigation strategies by different author. -evaluation linked with plant establishment success rates, recreational opportunities, planting design appropriateness, requirement to undergo planting plan post approval.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. **Subjective** -evaluation of the effects of past proposal specific proposed mitigation strategies-different author.	
	Past proposal specific landscape and visual assessment and report documentation-different author.	Direct quotes from secondary sources. Descriptive text.

Marina resource consent-EC hearing evidence for Preservation Society.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
10. Review of relevant statutory documentation -RMA 6 a), b) and d), 7 c). -NZCP 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 3.2.4. -RPS Issue: Loss of natural character. -RCPS: Locally Significant Coastal Environment (status) and, policies related to natural character, natural features, representative features, and amenity and heritage values, marinas. -DP Issues: Coastal environment of national significance and of outstanding value, Degraded landscapes which would benefit from enhancement and protection, Natural character and development, Unplanned and non sustainably managed development effects on landscape values and character. -evaluation of the proposals compliance with statutory documentation.	**Objective** -direct quotes from statutory documentation. **Objective/subjective** -selection of statutory documentation sections. **Subjective** -evaluation of proposals compliance/support of statutory documentation.	
	RMA, NZCP, RPS, DP (proposed).	Descriptive text, direct quotes form secondary sources.
		Descriptive text.
11. Conclusions –aesthetic appeal of proposal site (linked with degradation, scenic model of appreciation, memorability). -threshold point status of proposal site (linked to perceptions of character, cumulative effects). -significant adverse effects of proposed proposal on scenic and amenity qualities. -inadequacy of past landscape and visual assessment (different author) mitigation strategies. -proposals overall significant landscape effects. “” greater than minor natural character and amenity value effect on the site.	**Subjective** **-**overall evaluation of landscape and visual character, quality and proposal landscape and visual effects.	
		Descriptive text.

Subdivision resource consent (1)- EC hearing evidence for 3 proposals/properties.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of assessment -review of the DC structure plan (applicable to the subdivision sites) landscape and visual issues. -alternative landscape analysis of structure (applicable to the subdivision sites) plan area. -support for 3 appellants subdivision rezoning requests.	**Objective** -the brief.	
		Descriptive text.
2. Assessment appeal references -proposal specific subdivision rezoning (2 properties) and site relief application (1 property). -description of appellant properties and current land use. -Description of appellant property location within DC structure plan.	**Objective** -description of the appellants subdivision rezoning application, land use and structure plan inclusion.	
	DP	Descriptive text, aerial photograph location of structure plan area and appellant properties.
3. ICM analysis (Integrated Catchment Management) - ICM linked to principles of landscape design -evaluation of the use of ICM in the structure plan area. (linked with the identification of : critical landscapes, holistic/integrated goals for ecosystems, resources and people).	**Objective** -direct quotes form secondary sources. **Objective/subjective** -selection of the key elements/principles of ICM relevant to the DC structure plan. **Subjective** - evaluation of existing DC structure plan.	
	DP, Landcare Research ICM documentation, previous ICM structure plan documentation- same author.	Descriptive text, photographs of proposal area, graphs of storm occurrence and soil loss.

Subdivision resource consent (1)- EC hearing evidence for 3 proposals/properties.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Summary of ICM analysis for proposal area -location of proposal specific structure plan area and 3 appellant proposal sites. -evaluation of the proposal specific structure plan areas climate, geology, topography, hydrology, aspect, soils, kaitiakitanga, original vegetation, historical land use patterns, existing land use patterns, growth and development and the key issues and opportunities for development. - evaluation and recommendations related to the proposal specific structure plan areas future land use patterns linked to current DP zoning.	**Objective** -description of the structure plan and proposal sites location. -description of proposal specific structure plan characteristics-climate etc. -direct quotes from secondary sources. **Objective/subjective** -selection of the structure plan areas key characteristics and summation e.g. "complex". **Subjective** -evaluation of the structure plan characteristics which represent critical issues and opportunities for development. -evaluation/recommendation of management strategies needed to address the proposal specific structure plan areas critical issues. - future landuse pattern evaluation and recommendations.	
	Previous site specific structure plan area structure plan, Iwi consultation, vegetation and erosion reports, and previous ICM structure plan documentation-same author.	Descriptive text, Direct quotes, topographical location maps, photographs and diagrams of structure plan area characteristics.
5. Evaluation of previous proposal site specific ICM structure plan -evaluation of site analysis methodology used with reference to: underlying natural processes and patterns, existing land use, capability, future land uses, comprehensive interpretation, resource management issues, and sustainability. -evaluation of the proposals potential links with resource management issues and sustainability.	**Objective** -direct quotes/exhibits used form secondary source. **Subjective** -evaluation of previous ICM methodology.	
	Previous site specific ICM structure plan report-different author.	Descriptive text.

Subdivision resource consent (1)- EC hearing evidence for 3 proposals/properties.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Evaluation of previous proposal specific assessment. -evaluation of the proposal sites previous assessment status in the RP and DP. -evaluation of the previous assessment of the proposals compliance with the DP structure plan objectives/policies. -evaluation of previous assessments emphasis on visual effects. -description of appropriate assessment criteria/factors (climate, geology, topology, hydrology, aspect, soil, ecology, kaitiakitanga, original vegetation cover, historic land use, patterns, existing land use, patterns and landscape features, visual affects of change). -evaluation of previous assessment criteria use. -"" proposal sites character analysis and proposals visual contrast with that character linked to future land use patterns permitted by DP zoning. -evaluation of previous proposal specific viewpoint visual analysis (additional viewpoints selected using GIS viewshed analysis with TIN and cross sections- based on topography only). Issues of viewpoint location, photograph direction, angle and extent discussed related to existing landscape character, existing residential development, slope, and landscape complexity. -evaluation of proposal site specific previous assessment zoning density status linked to RMA s5, potential fine grain development outcomes, cultural landscape and landscape amenity relative importance. -description of the differing values of cultural landscapes in Europe vs. NZ. -overall evaluation of past proposal specific assessment (visual focus, limitations), proposals sites ability to absorb visual effects.	**Objective** -direct quotes form secondary sources. **Objective/subjective** -description of views from viewpoints using photographs, GIS viewshed analysis and cross sections. **Subjective** -evaluation of previous ICM assessment methodology, proposal sites status and structure plan compliance and previous assessment emphasis/criteria/factor use and proposal sites character analysis. -evaluation of previous proposal specific assessment viewpoint visual analysis -evaluation of the landscape character shown in additional viewpoints. -evaluation of previous proposal specific assessment emphasis on landscape amenity and cultural landscape importance vs. sustainability. -evaluation of cultural landscapes in NZ.	
	Previous proposal specific assessment documentation- different author, RP, DP.	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary sources. Photographs of viewpoints used in previous proposal specific assessment and selected by author, diagrams of cultural landscape components.

Subdivision resource consent (1)- EC hearing evidence for 3 proposals/properties.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
7. Evaluation of appellant design concepts -same author concepts linked to proposal site specific structure plan objectives. -potential storm water design options. - LID (Low impact design) principles linked with DC structure plan recommendations, multiple design outcomes, regeneration, mixed indigenous/exotic cultural character. -evaluation of each proposal sites characteristics, constraints and opportunities, as of right opportunities, environmental and landscape outcomes of design solutions , visual effects of each site, limitations of analysis (data sources, investigation and observation, conceptual designs). -evaluation of proposals concept designs visual effects. -"" links with ICM. -"" proposals concept designs links with proposed DP zoning changes.	**Objective** **-**description of storm water design strategies -description of the proposal site characteristics -"" design concepts characteristics for each site e.g. combined recreation, pedestrian, vehicle revegetation and storm water management land use. **Objective/subjective** -selection of significant proposal site characteristics. **Subjective** -evaluation of effects of LID. -evaluation of effects of design concepts and ICM compliance e.g. respecting the "underlying patterns and processes and historic landuse activities". -evaluation of concept design visual effects e.g. "integrated pattern of residential settlement". -evaluation of links with proposed DP zoning.	
		Descriptive text, diagrams of storm water design components, diagrams of proposal site, design concepts, DP permitted and proposed storm water flow.
8. Conclusion -DP compliance of proposals. -evaluation of DP zoning provisions related to proposals. -evaluation of proposals overall contribution to visual change in the landscape.	**Subjective** -Evaluation of DP compliance, zoning provision compliance and overall visual effects.	
		Descriptive text.

Subdivision resource consent (2)-DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of the assessment -landscape and visual assessment (character, key features, visibility, effects) forming part of a DC resource consent application for a developer. -description and purpose of the site/area visits (viewing catchment, visibility from building platforms).	**Objective** The Brief.	
		Descriptive text, Location plan, scheme plan, planting concept plan, photographs of landscape character and views (50 mm, cropped).
2. Landscape and visual effects -sources of effects [changes in components, character, and quality resulting from: changes in landform, vegetation, structures, activities, facilities]. -assessment investigates physical effects resulting or influenced by proposal. -landscape change accommodation influence factors :landscape value [i.e. significance], quality [i.e. vividness], coherence [i.e. intactness] and character, ability to absorb development [dependent on: topography, vegetation, existing development, scale of landscape, patterns and level of enclosure], existing landuse, nuisance effects [i.e. glare, noise, dust etc.] adverse environmental effects [e.g. weeds, erosion] quality of proposal and mitigation [positive impact on landscape character/quality], impact on ecosystems. -description of visual assessment [i.e. investigating visual changes and affects on visual amenity]. -extent and nature of visual effects influenced by: degree of contrast, absorption ability, proposal visual or physical links with background, size of viewing audience and size of visual catchment, distribution of viewers and the extent nature and elevation of proposal view. -potential nature of effects-benign, enhance or detract from character/quality.	**Objective** -description of effects methodology. -description of range of potential effects. **Objective/ Subjective** -selection of sources of effects. -selection of factors that influence. accommodation of landscape change. -selection of components of visual assessment. -selection of factors that influence visual effects.	
		Descriptive text.

Subdivision resource consent (2)-DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
3. Visual and landscape context -general description of biophysical and cultural characteristics (including archaeological sites) of proposal site. -RP ONF/L status, visual sensitivity value, change accommodation rating (linked to dominant ridgelines, exposed slopes, open space). -existing landuse. -description of the proposal sites visual catchment. -summary of proposal site area landscape quality.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. -description of existing proposal areas biophysical features, landuse. **Subjective** -evaluation of proposal areas components that contributed to RP status. -evaluation of proposal site areas landscape quality (dependent on: coherence, vividness, intactness) resulting from areas characteristics.	
	RP.	Descriptive text, Direct quotes from RP, location map, photographs of landscape components/features.
4. Proposal site context -description of the proposal site biophysical, ecological and cultural characteristics. -" key visual components [natural character, complexity, pastoral land use, existing rural subdivision].	**Objective** -description of site characteristics. **Objective/subjective** -selection of characteristics and components.	
	Proposal site specific archaeology and ecology report documentation.	Descriptive text, location map, scheme plan-mapped archaeological sites.
5. Proposal context -description of proposal characteristics including design strategies aimed to reduce adverse effects [revegetation and protection of bush and wetlands, building; height, location and colours, earth bunds, screen planting]. - evaluation of proposed revegetation planting. -suggestions for plant replacement/further planting to screen/protect archaeological sites.	**Objective** -description of proposal components-layout, access, planting. **Subjective** -evaluation of the integration impact of proposed planting including wetlands.	
		Descriptive text, location map, figures and photographs showing lot locations.

Subdivision resource consent (2)-DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Statutory context	Reference to additional report.	
	Proposal specific statutory context report.	Referenced.
7. Proposal landscape and visual effect issues - factors influencing landscape and visual effects [physical catchment affected, scale, type and intensity of change, nature of viewing audience, nature of effects visual/landscape].	**Objective/subjective** -selection of factors contributing to change/effects.	
		Descriptive text.
8. Visual effects of proposal -definition of visual catchment-area influenced by visual change -" of visual sensitivity from viewpoints [dependent on; contrast, scale, extent of visibility, height in relation to viewer, distance, duration of view, extent to which proposal complements existing landscape character] -description of viewing audience, identification of main groups of viewing audience. -description of view points used, those discounted and assumptions made in visual analysis [e.g. building location]. -definition of visual effects categories used [severe, high, moderate, low, neutral] -identification of proposals potential effects [on character, value, amenity] and proposal site landscape values [scenic, rural, complexity] **Visual effects for existing residents by lot:** -description of the location of the view. -description of visual catchment -evaluation of landscape character. -evaluation of visual effect of proposal including effects over time. -summary of visual change and effects of individual lot. **-Description of visual effects for motorists** **"" along entrance road to subdivision.** **-"" boaties**	**Objective** -definition/description of visual catchment, sensitivity, viewing audience, visual effects methodology and assumptions. **Objective/subjective** -selection of factors that influence visual sensitivity. -identification of viewing audience groups. For each lot/motorist/boaties; -description of the visual catchment (by eye) -landscape character key components selection/definition -description of visual changes and mitigation (planting) effects. **Subjective** - description of visual effect levels. -evaluation of proposals potential effects on landscape character and amenity. -evaluation of the main components that contribute to the proposal sites landscape values. -evaluation of landscape character perceptual qualities e.g. "dynamic" of each lot. -overall evaluation of visual effects for each lot-extent of views, impact on character and quality of each lot, effect rating e.g. " no more than minor" -overall evaluation of effects for the motorist. -"" on entrance road to subdivision. -"" for boaties.	
		Descriptive text. Photographs from proposal site.

Subdivision resource consent (2)-DC application for developer.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Landscape Effects **-**evaluation of RP sensitivity to change status. -evaluation of existing landuse landscape effects -"" landscapes ability to absorb change created by the proposal including roading, construction, storm water and sewage, existing land use effects, nuisance factors [glare, noise etc, traffic]. -recommendations and evaluation of the landscape effects of mitigation strategies [e.g. location of buildings, stormwater treatment, weed control, pet covenants] -overall evaluation of the proposals effects on the quality and character of the landscape linked with continued existing landuse, protection of bush and wetlands, minimal intrusion of residential subdivision into farm landscape.	**Objective** -status of proposal site in RP **Subjective** -evaluation of sensitivity status, existing landuse, and proposal landscape effects.	
	Site area specific weed control management document, RP	Descriptive text.
10. Mitigation **-**recommendation or location and design/detail conditions related to proposal buildings -Evaluation of strategies used to prevent adverse effects on visual quality (earth bund, planting, roading materials, and revegetation).	**Objective** -description of mitigation strategies used/recommended. **Subjective** -evaluation of mitigation strategy effects.	
		Descriptive text
11. Conclusion -summary of issues [effects on: amenity values, landscape character, environment] -evaluation of amenity effects referenced to design and detailing. "" on rural character "" environmental effects [prevention of; sedimentation and erosion, bush and wetland enhancement]. -"" of ability of landscape to absorb proposal [linked with landscape complexity]	**Subjective** -summary evaluation of effects on amenity values, landscape character and environment	
		Descriptive text.

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of assessment - landscape and visual effects of subdivision accompanying resource consent application. -components of resource consent-subdivision and landuse. -applications discretionary status in RP/DP. -scope of illustrated material accompanying assessment e.g. planting plan. -description of site visits (conditions, purpose-character, natural character, topography, landscape features, land uses, visibility). -description of technical reports/consultation used in assessment (applicant, planner, engineer, architectural designer, surveyor, DOC).	**Objective** -The Brief	
	RP/DP, proposal specific scheme, building guide and planting plan-same author documentation.	Descriptive text, proposal location maps, aerial photograph of site Photographs of proposal site landuse and character (50mm).
2. Landscape context -description of the regions key biophysical historical and cultural characteristics including amenity values. -"" of proposal sites zoning and overlay status in RP/DP. "" geomorphology. "" water bodies and recommended areas for protection. -""land cover/land use.	**Objective** -description of biophysical and historical cultural characteristics of region, site and nearby marine reserve status -direct quotes from secondary sources –e.g. "threats to ..ecology..from visiting groups" **Objective/subjective** -selection of regions key characteristics. **Subjective** -description of regions zones of landscape character –urban, pastoral, coastal.	
	RP/DP, Regional Geology report (Inst of Geo and Nuclear Sciences 2000).	Descriptive text, photographs of the region and proposal site characteristics.

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
3. Site context -description of sites biophysical and cultural characteristics including hydrology. -description of views from within the site.	**Objective** -description of characteristics. - description of site formative processes. **Objective/subjective** -selection of sites key characteristics. -description of effects of bund, existing trees. -analysis of some view characteristics e.g. "panoramic", "focused to the east".	
		Descriptive text, photographs of/to proposal site and viewpoints.

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Existing environment -natural character definition (dependent on elements, patterns, processes, modification, perception). -coastal natural character zones (coastal marine zone, active coastal zone, coastal dominance zone, coastal influence zone) definition. -proposal site area coastal natural character assessment (criteria: landform, waterform, built elements, infrastructure, vegetation-indigenous/exotic. -proposal site stream riparian natural character assessment (landcover, channel and flow processes, built modifications, riparian edges and river bed, water quality, wildlife quality). -landscape character (expression of; physical, biological and cultural processes, dynamic) evaluation (rural pastoral, Maori occupation, coastal). -landscape values evaluation (dependent on people's perception: experience, education, preferences, and cultural affiliations). Values expressed (aesthetics, scientific, heritage, cultural, geological, and ephemeral). -proposal site area RP/DP ONF/L, amenity status, region wide report visibility, visual absorption capability ratings. -description of proposal sites amenity values (boat launching, education, camping, kai, swimming, lay by, dive business, views, ephemeral patterns, accommodation).	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. -description of proposal site coastal, riparian elements, patterns, processes. **Objective/subjective** -selection of definitions/criteria related to natural character. -selection of elements, patterns and processes used to describe coastal and riparian natural character. -status of proposal site areas coastal natural character zones. -description of modifications present in proposal site areas coastal natural character zones. -selection of landscape character criteria/factors -"" landscape value "". -description of the proposal sites amenity values. **Subjective** -ranking of proposal site areas coastal natural character zones. -overall evaluation of proposal sites coastal and riparian natural character and components that contribute. -evaluation of other values associated with riparian waterways e.g. "coherent visual link" -evaluation of proposal sites landscape character. -evaluation of proposal sites key landscape values.	
	Natural character –Environmental performance indicator (Boffa Miskell Ltd, 200-2002), Region specific landscape character of the coastal zones environment report, RP/DP.	Descriptive text, table of natural character analysis and rating for identified areas, photos of site characteristics/values.

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
5. Proposal description -scope of description. -description of proposal access, subdivision lots, existing vegetation, topography and construction earthworks, building materials and finishes. -landscape plan and planting plan characteristics, intent and mitigation effects.	**Objective** -description of proposed proposal characteristics e.g. vegetation removal/retention. -description of key components of building design guide and landscape planting plan. **Objective/Subjective** -evaluation of overall effects of proposed building design guide and planting plan e.g. "to enhance natural character".	
		Descriptive text. Landscape and planting plan appendix.
6. Statutory and Planning context -RMA s 104 (1) (a), schedule 4, s 5, s 6 a), b), d), e), f), s 7, amenity definition. -RP/DP-natural heritage objectives and policies (indigenous vegetation, significant habitats, ONF/L, quality of water, wetlands, aquatic habitats, natural character associated with lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal environment, subdivision), coastal environment overlay (vegetation clearance). -NZCPS 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 3.2.2, 3.2.4. - Outstanding landscape quality assessment report status, proposal site status, RP/DP report adoption (additions of ONF in proposal site area), and ONF/L status on proposal area.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. **Objective/subjective** -selection of statutory and planning context.	
	RMA, RP /DP, Region specific landscape character of the coastal environment report.	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary sources.
7. Landscape and Visual effects evaluation -definition of landscape effects (result from: vegetation removal, earthworks, waterway changes) can be temporary/temporary but lasting/ permanent. -definition of landscape sensitivity to change (dependent on: nature, scale and pattern of development landforms, vegetation, degree of modification, significance/quality, scope for mitigation). -definition of visual effects resulting from physical changes dependent on: viewer distance, extent of visibility, proportion of view occupied, view type (panoramic, expansive, enclosed, transient or stationary), contrast, coherence, size of audience. Effects determine mitigation strategies. -types of visual effects defined (positive, negative, neutral) -description of site visibility	**Objective** -definitions of landscape effects and landscape sensitivity. -definitions of visual effects . -description of site visibility. -description of viewpoint selection methodology. -" viewing audience characteristics. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of landscape and visual effects criteria and sensitivity criteria/factors. - overall summation of visual catchment characteristics. "relatively small" -selection of view points -selection of significant viewing audience. -description of proposal visibility from viewpoints (by eye) -overall summary of proposal visibility. -selection of significant landscape	

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
-Site visibility described (from Roads, neighbouring properties, beach, sea) -Viewpoint selection described(publicly accessible-roads, beach, camp ground, not sea) -Viewing audience described -Description of proposal characteristics visible from viewpoints and their visual effects-viewpoint analysis -Description of construction earthworks characteristics and visual effects -Visual effects summary (catchment, views from roads, boat ramp, camp ground, sea, close quarters, transit open space) mitigation recommendations. -evaluation of existing level of natural character modification. -evaluation of the proposals effect on coastal natural character. “” riparian natural character including enhancement. -evaluation of proposals landscape effects (dependent on: nearby ONF, existing vegetation and proposed planting, excavation and landform modification, clustered housing and landscape character) including effects of mitigation. -“” amenity effects (recreational, rural, neighbours, views) including effects of mitigation. -evaluation of proposals compliance within the statutory and planning context (natural character, clustered housing and landscape character, outstanding landscapes, public access, visual).	components effected by the proposal. **Subjective** -evaluation of overall visual effects of proposal from viewpoints and mitigation effects e.g. “many viewers will be drawn to ..sea views..on other side of the road”, “not likely to ..be out of character”. -evaluation of proposals effects on coastal and riparian natural character. -“” proposals landscape effects including mitigation recommendations e.g. “ # houses..considered to be of a scale suited to this enclosed environment..”. -evaluation of proposals statutory and planning compliance.	
		Descriptive text, aerial photograph with marked viewpoints, photographs supporting site visibility from selected viewpoints.
8. Mitigation -building materials and colour description and evaluation of effects. -Planting””	**Objective** -description of mitigation strategies characteristics. **Subjective** -evaluation of mitigation strategy objectives/purpose e.g. “building height restrictions increase potential.. to nestle into the environment”.	
		Descriptive text, photographs demonstrating mitigation strategies, proposed planting plans.

Subdivision resource consent (3)- DC application for developer.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Conclusion -proposals links with s5 of RMA (reference to: sustainability, other potential land uses, footprint, effects on; natural character, coastal environment, ONF, visual and visual amenity effects, mitigation and avoidance of adverse effects).	**Subjective** **-**summation of proposals effects.	
		Descriptive text.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of the assessment -summary overview of proposal, site and surrounding areas biophysical and cultural characteristics. -assessment as part of an AEE (other technical reports). -statement of secondary sources/additional proposal specific ecological report. -summary of applicant public consultation findings. -site visit (conditions, purpose). -aims/purpose of assessment: natural character (dependent on: alteration to physical features, landform, vegetation cover, scale and the experience of traveling through the landscape), landscape and visual effects (as a result of: changes in views and the overall visual influence of the development). -summary of findings/overall effects of the proposal.	**Objective** -description of proposal, site and area characteristics. -the brief (assessment focus) -"" of secondary sources used. -site visit descriptions. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of secondary sources. -summation of public consultation findings. **Subjective** -criteria selected to determine character, landscape and visual effects. -overall summary evaluation of proposal effects.	
	Past wind farm assessment documentation and workshops- same company, NZ Wind Energy Conference proceedings (2005), Section 5.4.2 of the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority: Guidelines for local authorities on wind power (NZEECA, 1995).	Descriptive text.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
2. Proposal site context -description of site biophysical and cultural characteristics. -absence of previous regional/district landscape assessments relevant to the proposal site noted. -overall summation of landscape character (linked with existing plantation and industrial landuse).	**Objective** -description of proposal site biophysical and cultural features. -note re previous assessment availability. **Objective/subjective** -selection of site characteristics in description. **Subjective** -evaluation of some site characteristics e.g. as having a "good level of local landscape amenity value." -summation of the overall landscape character.	
	DP	Descriptive text
3. Proposal site description -description of the proposal sites cultural and biophysical characteristics (general, landform, landcover, landuse). -summary of landscape character (linked with beach, coastal escarpment, wetlands, lakes, streams, pastoral landuse and regenerating bush, industrial activities, forestry, isolation , separation from coast).	**Objective** -description of proposal site characteristics. **Objective/Subjective** **-**selection of elements/characteristics factors used to describe proposal sites character. -overall description of proposal sites landscape character. **Subjective** -evaluation of condition/quality of some characteristics e.g. "Ecologically the site is highly degraded".	
	Same office site specific ecological values and effects report.	Topographical and landform maps with proposal location overlay, photographs of proposal site landscape character.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Proposal description -description of layout, design of wind farm. -brief description of internal access roads, off site works (both outside scope of this assessment).	**Objective** -description of proposal physical characteristics-referenced to secondary source.	
	Proposal specific application documentation – full AEE.	Descriptive text. Landform, topographical maps and aerial photograph showing wind farm layout. Sketch of typical wind turbine.
5. Planning context -reference to full planning context report in AEE documentation. - NZCPS: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2. -RMA definition of Amenity. -Regional coastal plan: natural character, regionally significant/representative landscape policies, status of regionally significant site in proximity to proposal site and potential effects of proposal. -DP zoning of site (activities permitted and height restrictions, rules/restrictions). -recent EC directives-wind farm determinations.	**Objective** -direct quotes from the secondary sources **Objective/subjective** -selection of the planning context -identification of potential effects on regionally significant landscape outside site **Subjective** **-**evaluation of proposals compliance with planning context. e.g.NZCPS 1.1.3 "Being part of Tangata Whenua, it is considered that the applicant is well-placed to address these issues." -evaluation of the relevance of the EC Awhitu decision to the proposal. -evaluation of the key differences between the Awhitu wind farm and this proposal.	
	Proposal specific full AEE report, NZCPS, RMA, RCP, DOC regional coastal conservation management strategy (draft), DP, Awhitu EC wind farm documentation.	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary sources.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Natural character effects -consideration of construction and long term effects on natural character -RMA context 6 a) -rationale for natural character assessment-potential inappropriateness/impact on natural character. -definition of natural character (based on; natural elements, patterns and process, modifications to landscape/seascape) -"" coastal environment (sub tidal, intertidal, coastal dominance, coastal influence, hinterland) -description of proposal site and surrounding area natural character values/ranking. -description of potential impact of the proposal on natural character and varying perceptions of naturalness. -evaluation of proposals natural character effects (linked with general wind farm site requirements, DP zoning rules, proximal natural character values, and tourism).	**Objective** -direct quotes form secondary sources **Objective/subjective** -selection of definitions, criteria, secondary sources. -description of varying perceptions of natural character. -description of the coastal environment zone characteristics-delineation and proposal location within zone of coastal influence. **Subjective** -evaluation of the natural character values of the proposal site and surrounding area. -evaluation of proposals appropriateness in a coastal environment. -evaluation of DP zoning rules on proposals natural character effect considerations. -evaluation of the significance of proximal natural character values on the consideration of the proposals effects on the site. -evaluation of potential positive impacts of proposal on tourism -overall evaluation of natural character effect.	
	Environmental Performance Indicators: landscape aspect of natural character (Boffa Miskell Limited, Ministry for the Environment, 2002), Renewable Energy Guidelines for local authorities: Wind Power (New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority 2004).	Direct quotes from secondary sources, descriptive text.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
7. Landscape effects -consideration of construction and long term effects on landscape. -landscape effects resulting form changes to landform and vegetation. -description of future landscape changes not part of the proposal which will effect spatial and visual perception of proposal (e.g. forestry removal). -recommendations on landscape change mitigation which would limit the above. -evaluation of proposal sites existing landscape values. -potential effects on landscape values (criteria; changes to landscape/views, magnitude of changes, timing-temporary/permanent, direct/indirect, irreversibility), reference made to other proposal specific siteworks report. -overall evaluation of landscape effects (linked to existing land use, remoteness, elevated landforms, scale of landscape and proposal site, integration, earthworks mitigation, ONF/L in proximity).	**Objective** -description of potential landscape change related/not related to proposal on site. -description of criteria used to assess landscape effects. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of landscape effects criteria. **Subjective** **-**evaluation of sites existing landscape values. -evaluation of landscape effects of proposal. Proposal specific siteworks report.	Descriptive text.
8. Visual effects -definition of visual impact (objective change to landscape/view) compared to visual effects (subjective effect change to landscape/view will have). -description of methodology (review of proposal brief and feasibility, site visit-proposal location, DTM-zone of visual influence identification, proposal simulations, field work to determine broader landscape context effects, report preparation). -intervisibility study using DTM to produce Zvi (zone of visual influence) map showing numbers of turbines visible in distance categories. Interpretation limitations: geographic location, weather conditions, light and time of day. -description of turbine visibility at long (up to 30 km), mid (within 10 km) and short (within 5 km) distance from the site. -selection of viewpoints based on Zvi and fieldwork (public access, representative viewing distances and experiences, numbers of viewers). -visual simulations from viewpoints methodology description (including: limitations, strategies used to reduce inaccuracies, potential sun and atmospheric	**Objective** -description of methodology. -description via Zvi of turbine visibility –coded by number and distance. -description of factors that might influence visibility. -description of nature and extent of views classified by distance. -"nature and location of main viewing audience. **Objective/subjective** **-**delineation/description of impact vs. effects. -delineation of viewing distance categories. -view point selection (none from sea-based on numbers of viewers). -selection of visual impact criteria. -overall evaluation of potential adverse visual impact by distance and turbine location summarizing individual viewpoint ratings. -shadow flicker analysis exclusion-based on existing location of residences/roads. **Subjective** -visual impact rating from each viewpoint -evaluation of viewer attitudes most effected by adverse visual impact.	

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
influences, definition of turbine visibility-any part, use of most visible turbine orientation, potential effects of motion not shown, forestry removal effects not shown). -visual impact rating (dominant, prominent, present, negligible-described) from each view point. -visual impact analysis from selected buildings within 5 km of site (number of turbines visible), notification recommendation and potential of mitigation strategies to influence effects. -rationale for irrelevance of shadow flicker assessment. -cumulative effects; definition, sources (resulting form multiple wind farms-visible from same viewpoints, same landscape unit, differing turbine design, differing direction of rotation and grid layout). -summary of visual effects of the proposal.	-evaluation of potential mitigation strategies influence on adverse visual impacts. -overall evaluation of the significance of the number of buildings that will experience potentially adverse visual effects and resident notification recommendation. -evaluation of potential cumulative effects based on non consented application for another wind farm in the vicinity. -evaluation of proposals visual potential impact on amenity value for viewpoints at short distance mitigated by screening and viewer attitude.	
	Proposal specific applicant feasibility report, Visibility analysis guidelines-University of Newcastle for Scottish Natural Heritage Association, In house previous wind farm assessments, cadastral data and secondary source property ownership data. Cumulative definition, effects, sources (Spon, 2002 and Landscape Design Associates, 2000), NZEECA guidelines.	Descriptive text, Zvi map, viewpoint location map, table of viewpoint location and characteristics, simulation photographs from viewpoints, viewpoint visual impact rating table, selected building viewpoint location map and table showing number of turbines visible.

Wind Farm resource consent (1) -DC application for local tangata whenua land owner incorporation		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Mitigation strategies -description of mitigation strategies used in proposal design.	**Objective** -description of mitigation strategies. **Subjective** -evaluation of strategies ability to mitigate potential adverse effects.	
	Proposal specific application AEE documentation.	Descriptive text.
10. Summary of natural character, landscape and visual effects -overall evaluation of landscape and visual effects. -overall evaluation of effects on natural character. (reference made to: existing land use, existing modification to natural character, isolation of proposal site, mitigation provided by landform and forestry, ONF/L status of proposal site, effects on; visual integrity, landscape values, natural character, localized effects, external effects, local community support).	**Subjective** **-**evaluation of magnitude of proposals overall effects.	
		Descriptive text.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
1. Scope of assessment -landscape and visual assessment (steps: statutory and planning framework, environment and proposal, effects on natural character and amenity values, past wind farm assessment relevance, adverse effects mitigation).	**Objective** The Brief	
		Descriptive text
2. Planning framework -RMA, s 5, 6(a), 6(b), 7(c), 7(f) including proposal site ONF/L status. - NZCPS 1.1.1 and 1.1.3 . -Regional Policy Statement (provisions relating to: coastal escarpments, natural character, and ONF status). -Regional Coastal Plan (provisions relating to: amenity values, natural character). -District Plan (provisions relating to: amenity values, rural character, non rural activities, natural features, coastal environment, coastal marine environment, ridgeline and hilltop overlay, wind energy facilities [discretionary activity] assessment criteria for adverse effects; amenity, nuisance, visual effects, extent of earth works, compatibility with rural design guide, cumulative effects).	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. -ONF status in proposal site. -description of use of RMA s 5 in additional wind farm EC decision. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of planning framework. **Subjective** -evaluation of the relevance of past wind farm EC decision.	
	RMA, NZCPS, RPS, RCP, DP, past wind farm EC evidence documentation - same author.	Descriptive text, direct quotes.
3. Existing site and proposal -biophysical and cultural characteristics of site and proposal (assumptions made re wind turbine height).	**Objective** -description of the site and the proposal.	
	Wind farm data- applicant, previous proposal specific resource consent application assessment documentation.	Descriptive text, direct quotes form secondary sources.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
4. Natural character of the proposal site coastal environment -evaluation of proposal sites status as a coastal environment linked with RMA 6 a)and the biophysical and cultural characteristics of proposal site (land form, land cover, land use) including significant detractors from natural character (buildings, power cables, modified land cover. -natural character rating of landscape units within proposal site-secondary source.	**Objective** **-**application of 6a) to proposal site**.** -description of the proposal site natural character landscape unit ratings from secondary source. **Subjective** -evaluation of secondary source proposal site landscape unit natural character ratings. -evaluation of significant existing natural character modifiers e.g. power lines.	
	Wind farm data-applicant, previous proposal specific resource consent application assessment documentation.	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary sources, table summarizing proposal site landscape unit natural character ratings based on secondary source assessment information.
5. Evaluation of ONF/L status of the proposal site in RPS and pRLP. -rationale for inclusion of proposed Regional Landscape Plan in assessment. -references to provisions and status in the proposal site area relating to: • landscapes and seascapes of regional or national significance • outstanding natural features, landforms and sites of historical significance • outstanding landscapes • significant landforms • geological features and landforms • peneplain remnants	**Objective** -direct quotes status of areas within the proposal site	
	RMA, RPS, proposed Regional Landscape Plan (since withdrawn).	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary source.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
6. Proposal site amenity value status -7 c), 7f) - DP provisions relating to: • Open space • Rural Design Guideline • Ridgeline and Hill top overlay • Discretionary activity assessment criteria	**Objective** -direct quotes from RMA, DP. **Objective/Subjective** -selection of secondary source sections/policies.	
	RMA, DP Previous proposal specific resource consent application assessment documentation.	Direct quotes, descriptive text.
7. Proposal site ONL status -definition of ONF/L and assessment criteria: natural science factors, aesthetic values, expressiveness, transient values, values shared or recognized, value to Tangata Whenua, historical associations. -evaluation of proposal site ONF/L status.	**Objective** - designated ONF/L areas within the site from secondary source. **Subjective** -evaluation of non designated areas which are potentially ONF/L or features versus landscapes.	
	RMA, previous EC decisions case law (Pigeon Bay and Wakatipu), RPS, proposed Regional Landscape Plan, previous site specific resource consent application assessment documentation.	Descriptive text, direct quotes from secondary sources.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
8. Proposal site natural character status and effects of proposal on natural character. -definition of natural character. - description and, evaluation of factors that influence (existing loss, and protection, scale and location of proposal) the consideration of proposal effects on natural character. -evaluation of existing contributors to loss of natural character in proposal site area. -evaluation of proposals effects on natural character (relating to; views, viewpoints, visibility and dominance). -overall evaluation of the proposals adverse effects on natural character linked to specific turbines, mitigating factors (e.g. existing landform, brevity of view) and 6 a) compliance. -evaluation of proposals adverse effects on natural character related to past wind farm EC decision and s5 of RMA.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. **Objective/subjective** –selection of secondary sources. -selection of natural character definition/loss consideration criteria. **Subjective** -evaluation of existing sources of natural character loss -evaluation of proposals adverse effects on natural character --evaluation of the relevance of past wind farm EC decision.	
	RMA, Past assessment documentation (MFE, Beacon Rock Decision- definitions/criteria of natural character and natural character loss) Past proposal specific resource consent application assessment documentation- rating natural character, past wind farm EC hearing documentation – same author.	“” Simulation photographs -from previous proposal specific assessment and video simulation from - past EC wind farm hearing documentation- same author.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.

Steps	Objective/Subjective	
	Resources	**Presentation**
9. Amenity value status and effects -definition of amenity. -identification of the proposals most significant potential amenity effects (noise [outside this assessment] and visual amenity particularly for residents in close proximity to turbines. -identification of resident locations most affected. -description of factors that influence visual amenity effects: distance, backdrop, complexity of vegetation and landform, extent of turbine visible, elevation of turbine, expanse of vista, house design, screening. -evaluation of proposal visual amenity effects for each affected resident location using influence factors as criteria. -evaluation of shadow and flicker effects including mitigation strategy (low reflective paint).	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources -description of proposal visibility (duration, proportion etc) from resident locations most affected. -description of flicker effects and duration. **Objective/Subjective** -identification of resident locations most affected - identification of factors that influence visual amenity effects. **Subjective** -identification of influence factors relevant to each affected resident location. -assertion that a mix of amenity effect influence factors mitigates visual amenity adverse effects. evaluation of overall visual amenity effects for each affected resident location e.g. " In my opinion, the effect on visual amenity values is significant". -evaluation of shadow and flicker effects. -evaluation of mitigation strategies effect.	
	RMA, past site specific resource consent application documentation, past wind farm EC hearing documentation- same author.	Descriptive text and direct quotes from secondary sources.

Wind Farm resource consent (2)- EC hearing evidence for DC.		
Steps	**Objective/Subjective**	
	Resources	**Presentation**
10. Proposal DP policy compliance linked to provisions concerning effects on: • rural character • amenity values (linked with discretionary activity compliance DP guidelines) • earth work effects	**Objective** -reference to discretionary activity rules in DP. **Subjective** - evaluation of wind turbines as 'engineered [in]character' not industrial modifying rural character but not causing a loss of. -evaluation of proposals effects on amenity values (see step 9). -earth work effects; determination of overall impact.	
	DP, RMA	Descriptive text.
11. Conclusion -identification of location of turbines with significant adverse effects on; • natural character • amenity values -evaluation of mitigating factors (e.g. existing landform, proposal characteristics) and additional mitigation recommendations at these locations (e.g. screen planting). -adverse effects linked to RMA in terms of matters that are given regard (amenity), matters of national importance that should be recognized and provided for (natural character) and the subjectiveness of these to s5 sustainability requirements.	**Objective** -direct quotes from secondary sources. **Subjective** -summation of overall effects and proposal links/compliance with RMA.	
	RMA.	Descriptive text.

Section 3: Assessment Criteria and Definitions

Assessment criteria and definitions identified in the professional informant assessment documentation are summarised under the following headings and listed by resource consent application context e.g. subdivision, marina etc.

- Visual characteristics
- Viewpoint selection criteria
- Viewpoint types
- Viewpoint existing characteristics criteria
- Viewpoint existing value criteria
- Viewer sensitivity criteria
- Viewpoint sensitivity criteria
- Visual absorption capability ratings
- Visual absorption capability criteria
- Visual impact levels
- Visual impact viewpoint criteria
- Visual effect types
- Visual effect levels
- Visual effects viewpoint criteria
- Visual effect proposal criteria
- Landscape sensitivity criteria
- Landscape effects criteria
- Natural Character definition
- Natural Character criteria
- Natural Character proposal effect considerations
- Natural character effects criteria

Visual characteristics

Sample 1: Subdivision

- naturalness
- memorability
- coherence
- intactness

Viewpoint selection criteria

Sample 1: Wind farm

- publicly accessible.
- providing a representative range of viewing distances.
- providing a representative range of viewing experiences.
- having a reasonably high potential number of viewers.

Viewpoint types

Sample 1: Marina

- **Close** –within 500m
- **Mid ground** –between 500-1000m
- **Distant views**-over 1000m

Viewpoint existing characteristics criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

- **Location**: geographical location, height above sea level, distance to proposal.
- **Viewing Audience**: type and size of audience, are they static or moving, residential or recreational.
- **View Type**: is the view panoramic (over 180º) expansive (90º to 180º), or enclosed (less than 90º).
- **Existing View Components**: description of the main elements within the view.
- **Landscape Sensitivity**: what is the overall level of landscape sensitivity in the view from this location? This is based on a combination of the landscape's ability to absorb change (i.e. its degree of modification, nature of existing vegetation and topography) and its quality.

Viewpoint existing value criteria

Sample 1: Apartment

(5 point scale) no value----------moderate----------very high value

- **Composite Aesthetic Value:** vividness / memorability, diversity & cohesion
- **Spatial Structure:** key landmarks & legibility of spatial patterns
- **Natural Character**
- **Urban Pattern & Form -** Streetscape

Viewer sensitivity criteria

- **Extent of view** (narrow versus panoramic)
- **Distance** (to object/s creating visual change-the proposal)
- **Elevation** (markedly above or below eye level will increase effects)
- **Portion of the view (that the proposal would feature in)**
- **Contrast** (of proposal in terms of scale, line, form, colour etc. with existing features)
- **Duration of view** (viewer stationary, walking, traveling by car)
- **Presence of view cues** (e.g. directional or framing elements)
- **Orientation of view** (from an existing viewpoint e.g. from lounge windows, towards the rising sun)
- **Frequency of view** (is this an existing viewpoint for large numbers of people)
- **Permanence of view** (is this a view experienced by residents or transients)
- **Purpose of view** (is this a view experienced intentionally e.g. by tourists, residents, recreators or incidentally e.g. by employees, travelers**)**
- **Perception of existing view quality/values** (e.g. as a regional landmark, representing 'wilderness' etc.)
- **Perception of proposal characteristics visual quality/value.**
- **Official status of view** (in RP or DP for example e.g. scenic roadways)

All things being equal a viewer will be likely to experience adverse visual effects from object/s creating visual change-the proposal- that are: close, a significant part of a narrow view and where the proposal is in distinct contrast with its surroundings.

The affects are also likely to be more adverse if the viewer can see the proposal for a long time, where there are cues to look in that direction, from a known view point that is used often, on purpose and where the existing view holds values or importance. Numbers of viewers may also add significance to the effects (but not necessarily, particularly in areas valued for their naturalness/wilderness).

Similarly the most sensitive viewers are likely to be residents (in particular those that have moved to the area more recently) and special interest groups particularly those who use value the area for recreation, conservation and investigation (scientific/artistic).

Viewpoint sensitivity criteria

Sample 1: Apartment development

(5 point scale) no value----------moderate----------very high value

- Physical Elevation & Prominence
- Existing Land Uses
- Topography
- Vegetation Cover
- Outlook / Key Views

Visual absorption capability ratings

Sample 1: Marina development

- **Very Low**
  a) The proposed development will be highly visible and may act as a primary focal attraction or feature. It would also be expected that the proposed development will significantly alter the existing character of the surrounding landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  b) The development will introduce a new visual element into the landscape or view which will be significantly different in appearance or scale from the landscape elements surrounding it, and/or;
  c) The development would be found very rarely in that or similar landscape types.

- **Low**
  a) The proposed development would be clearly visible but would not act as a primary focal attraction, and/or;
  b) It would be expected that the proposed development would alter the existing character of the surrounding landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  c) The development may introduce a new visual element into the landscape or view. The development may be viewed infrequently in that or similar landscape types.

- **Neutral**
  a) The proposed development would neither be screened nor become a visual intrusion or focal attraction within the landscape or view in which it is seen. The proposed development may act as a minor focal attraction from some locations, and/or;
  b) The development would not affect the existing character of the surrounding landscape overview in which it is seen, and/or;
  c) The development would introduce a visual element into the landscape or view which may be viewed occasionally in that or similar landscape types.

- **Moderate**
  a) The proposed development would be partially screened or visually absorbed by existing landscape features but still readily identifiable. The development may act as a secondary focal attraction within the landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  b) The development would not affect the existing character of the surrounding landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  c) The development may also introduce a visual element into the landscape or view which maybe viewed commonly in that or similar landscape types.

- **High**
  a) The proposed development would be mostly screened or visually absorbed by existing landscape features but still be identifiable. The development may act as a tertiary focal attraction within the landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  b) The development would not affect the existing character of the surrounding landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  c) The development may introduce a visual element into the landscape or view which may be viewed frequently in that or similar landscape types.

- **Very High**
  a) The proposed development would be completely screened, almost completely screened or completely absorbed by existing landscape features. Any views of the development would be either unidentifiable or at a great distance, and/or;
  b) The development would not affect the existing character of the surrounding landscape or view in which it is seen, and/or;
  c) The development would introduce a visual element into the landscape or view which may be viewed very frequently or continuously in that or similar landscape types.

Visual absorption capability criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

The Visual Absorption Capability rating (VAC) is an indicator of a landscape's ability to absorb visual change affected by:

- viewer proximity,
- site visibility
- scale of development
- the nature of the development
- topographical features
- location and density of surrounding vegetation cover
- scale and type of surrounding development and
- existing landscape character

Sample 2: Marina development

A Visual Absorption Capability rating (VAC) is an indicator of a landscape's ability to absorb visual change, that is how well a landscape can either screen or hide a development or how well a development integrates with the surrounding landscape without changing its essential character and qualities. It is influenced by:

- The degree to which a development is visible.
- Visual and physical links with other similar elements in the landscape.
- The level of modification to the surrounding landscape.
- Appropriateness of scale.
- Distance.
- Backdrop.
- Atmospheric conditions

Visual impact levels

Impact versus effects
Visual impact of a proposal, that is the change to the view or landscape, which can largely be measured or described in an objective manner, and the
Visual effects which a change in landscape character or quality will have for the viewing audiences involved.

Sample 1: Wind Farm

- **Dominant:** The feature has a defining influence on the view and is a focus in the view (for example, when viewed from within the subject site boundaries).
- **Prominent:** The feature is clearly visible in the view and forms an important but not defining element of the view.
- **Present:** The feature is neither dominant nor prominent, but is visible in the view (for example, when viewed from within the wider landscape at a distance of around 5.0km).
- **Negligible:** The feature is visible but may go unnoticed as a minor element in the view, or is not visible (for example, when viewed at a distance of around 10.0km or greater).

Visual impact [viewpoint] criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

- **View Obstruction**: which elements of the proposal block/screen which components of the existing view and what is the nature or significance of these components, e.g. are they landmarks or notable features.
- **Landscape Contrast/Coherence**: how does the proposal contrast/provide coherence with the existing views of the landscape.
- **Prominence within Photoframe**: within the specific photoframe how prominent will the proposal be.
- **Relationship to Overall View**: given the extent of the overall view (i.e. View Type) how does the proposal relate to this scope.

Sample 2: Subdivision

- **Specific Photoframe**: the 50 mm (45º) photo.
- **Total View**: within the total context of the view.
- **Potential for Mitigation**: to what extent can the proposal be mitigated.

Visual effect types

Sample 1: Subdivision

- **Positive** (beneficial), contributing to the visual character and quality of the environment.
- **Negative** (adverse) detracting from existing character and quality of the environment; or
- **Neutral (benign),** with essentially no effect on existing character of quality of the environment.

Sample 2: Subdivision

- **Enhance** the quality of the landscape/be positive or beneficial
- **Detract** from the existing character
- **Be neutral or benign** - have essentially no effect.

Visual effect levels

Sample 1: Subdivision

- **Severe effect** - Unacceptably high visual effects.
  Where the proposal becomes the dominant feature in the scene, landscape elements become subordinate and the quality and character of the landscape is significantly affected
- **High effect** - High visual effect
  Where the change may form a significant and immediately apparent part of the scene and where it will affect and change the overall landscape character.
- **Moderate effect** - Visual effects of some significance
  Where the change may form a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene and where it may have a noticeable impact on the viewer
- **Low effect - No more than minor visual effects under the RMA**
  Where the change may have no more than a minor effect on the existing view. The proposal constitutes a minor component of the wider view and awareness of the proposal will not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.
- **No effect** - No visual effects
  Where no part of the proposal is discernable.

Visual effects [viewpoint] criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

- degree of contrast with surrounding landscape
- landscape absorption ability
- proposal visual or physical links with landscape and background.
- size and location of visual catchment
- numbers and type of viewing audience [residents, motorists etc.]
- extent [proportion], dominance [distance] and duration[permanent/temporary, frequency] of views
- elevation of view [higher-more effects]

Visual effects [viewpoint] criteria…..

Sample 2: Subdivision

- distance between the viewer and the development,
- extent of visibility of the development,
- portion of the view: that would be occupied by the development (prominence).
- view type: panoramic (180 degrees), expansive (90-180 degrees), or enclosed (less than 90 degrees) and whether the view is transient (from a roving vehicle) or stationary (from a window in a house),
- visual coherence or contrast: of proposal with its surroundings
- size of the viewing audience

Sample 3: Subdivision

- extent of contrast with existing landscape
- scale of proposal in relation to “”
- extent of proposal visibility
- height of proposal in relation to viewer,
- distance to the proposal
- duration of view
- extent to which proposal complements existing landscape character

Sample 4: Subdivision

- Distance to proposal site
- Sensitivity of viewers from that viewpoint
- Nature of view (open /enclosed)
- Degree of visual intrusion (full/partial/glimpse/none) proportion of the view occupied by the proposal
- Proportion of the proposal visible
- Transient or fixed view
- Magnitude of effect during: construction, year 1, year 15 (high, medium, low, nil)
- Significance of effect (substantial, moderate, low, negligible)
- Effect classification (neutral, positive, negative)
- Residual effects (long term, cumulative)

Visual effects [viewpoint] criteria

Sample 5: Apartment development effects on residential amenity and streetscape character

Effect modifiers considered -distance to site, intervening buildings/vegetation, relative elevation/topography, site context.

(5 point scale) minimal effects----------moderate----------severe effects

- Aesthetic Value
- Residential Character
- Spaciousness & Gardens
- Building Dominance
- Privacy
- Built Form & Scale Pattern
- Building Density & Distribution

Sample 6: Wind farm development

- **Distance** – greater distance to the turbine reduces the visual effect on amenity
- **Backdrop** – whether the turbines are seen against the sky or not, with a sky backdrop having a greater contrast and adverse effect
- **Complexity of vegetation and landform**– the greater the diversity, the greater the absorption capacity of the landscape to reduce the adverse visual affect
- **Extent of turbine visible** – full turbine exposure normally has greater adverse effect than partial exposure, but this can vary with viewers' personal preference
- **Elevation to turbine** – turbines normally have greater adverse visual effect if level with or higher than the viewer, but there is a limit at which the turbine become sufficiently elevated to start to reduce in adverse effect as it moves out of the main angle of view
- **Expanse of vista** – a wide angle of view allows the adverse visual effect of turbines to be reduced as more features are seen in the view. Conversely, a narrow angle of view can focus attention, increasing the effect of the turbines.
- **Screening** – local screening, garden layout, fencing and hedging can have significant benefits in terms of providing immediate separation of the turbines from activities near the house
- **House design** – orientation of the house and rooms within it, layout of the rooms within the house, layout of windows, location and orientation

Visual effect [proposal] criteria

Sample 1: Marina development

- **Spatial influence** at local, regional or national levels;
- **Duration:** Is the effect short, medium or long term;
- **Permanence:** Is it reversible or irreversible; and
- **Recurrence:** Is it a cumulative effect, does it set precedence or is it an isolated development.

Landscape sensitivity criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

- **landscape value** [i.e. significance].
- **quality** [i.e. vividness, coherence, intactness] and character.
- **ability to absorb development** [dependent on: topography, vegetation, existing development, scale of landscape, patterns and level enclosure].
- **existing landuse.**
- **nuisance effects** of proposal [glare, noise, dust etc.].
- **adverse environmental effects "**" [weeds, erosion etc.].
- **quality of proposal and mitigation** [i.e. positive impact on landscape character/quality and environmental health].
- **impact on ecosystems** of proposal.

Landscape effects criteria

Sample 1: Wind farm

- **changes to the landscape or views** that would be caused by the proposal and its infrastructure.
- **the magnitude of the changes.**
- **the timing of the effects**, i.e. whether during construction phase or the operational phase or both.
- **whether the effect is direct or indirect**, for example, damage or disturbance of regenerating native vegetation and/or earthworks has a direct effect, whereas the change to landscape character of an area from which the proposed extension is visible is an indirect effect as it involves perception of the landscape;
- **the reversibility of the effects**, that is whether at some future date the elements that cause the effects could be removed and hence the effects reversed.

Natural Character definition

Sample 1: Subdivision

"Natural character is a term used to describe the naturalness of all coastal environments, wetlands and lakes and rivers. The degree or level of natural character within an area depends on;

- The extent to which natural elements, patterns and processes occur.
- The nature and extent of modifications to the ecosystems and landscape/seascape.

The highest degree of natural character (greatest naturalness) occurs where there is least modification.

The effects of different types of modification upon the natural character of an area vary with the context, and may be perceived differently by different parts of the community". *Boffa Miskell Ltd. (2000, 2002).*

Natural Character criteria

Sample 1: Subdivision

Consists of natural elements, patterns and processes associated with:

- Landform
- Waterform
- Built elements
- Infrastructure
- Vegetation (indigenous)
- Vegetation (exotic)

Natural Character proposal effect considerations.

Sample 1: Wind farm

- Is the area in question already affected by the loss of natural character?
- Is the natural character of the environment preserved and protected in terms of section 6(a) notwithstanding the development?
- Is the location and scale of the proposal on this site inappropriate?

Natural character effects criteria

Sample 1: Apartment development-analysis by viewpoint

Effect modifiers considered -distance to site, intervening buildings/vegetation, relative elevation/topography, site context.

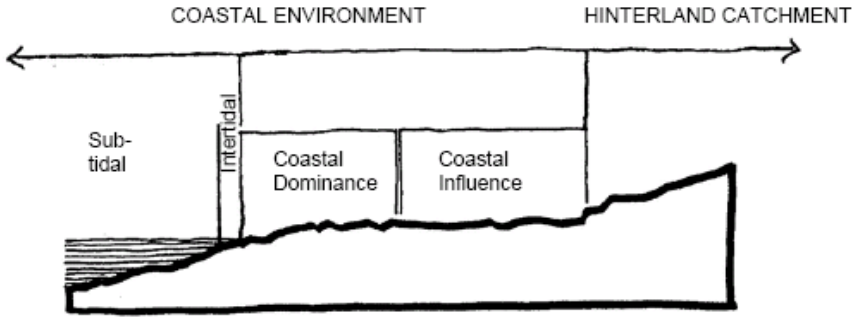
(5 point scale) minimal effects----------moderate----------severe effects

- Proposal obstruction of views to areas of high natural character
- Proposal effect on the integrity of natural character in the area.
- Topographic profile of the proposal site/area (relief will tend to reduce adverse natural character effects)

Coastal environment zones

Sample 1: Coastal environment rural subdivision

- **coastal marine zone** -out at sea
- **active coastal zone-**where the waves wash at low and high tide including the fore dunes or rock platforms
- **coastal dominance zone** –the back dune system or coastal cliffs
- **coastal influence zone**- behind the coastal dominance zone to the nearest ridgeline



Sample 2: Wind farm

- **coastal dominance** is visually discernible from the zone of coastal influence due to derived landforms, for example dunes, cliffs, headlands, etc. The width of the zone of coastal dominance obviously varies along the coast
- **coastal influence zone** is an area that is still visually (and to an extent ecologically) very much part of the experience of the coastal environment, but which has a less immediate relationship with the sea. Again, the extent of this zone is variable. In general terms, the extent of the zone of coastal influence can be defined as either the first visually enclosing ridgeline or a distance of 5-8km from mean high water springs, whichever is lesser.

Section 4: Professional Informant Interviews

Key professional informants from 10 Landscape Architecture firms in the Hawkes Bay, Hamilton, Auckland and Whangarei were interviewed during late November 2006. Each interview took approximately 1 ½ hours. The informants had been given an opportunity to critique the questions and were sent the final version several days prior to the interview.

A summary analysis of the interview responses is presented here highlighting issues and opportunities related to visual assessment best practice methodologies in the context of a resource consent application in the coastal environment. This section also attempts to reflect issues and opportunities relating to the broader contexts of assessment, design and the profession raised by the informants.

Where appropriate to the question, some (no doubt subjective) indication of the frequency with which similar responses emerged is given i.e.

Always	a view expressed by all respondents
Nearly always	a view expressed by most (7-9) respondents
Often	a view expressed by a some (3-6) respondents
Occasionally	a view expressed by a few (1-2) respondents

Note: Response frequency needs to be viewed in the context of the question i.e. the summary attempts to present an analysis of all responses whether or not they related directly to the question.

1. What are the key steps used by your office in proposal VBPM associated with a resource consent application in a coastal environment?

Responses to this question in association with the analysis of assessment documentation provided by the key professional informants was used to develop a VBPM Flow Chart of assessment checkpoints presented in Section 1 of this report.

2. In what steps are objective (quantifiable) and subjective (qualifiable) criteria used and how important are these in the overall process?

Responses to this question:

- Were (no doubt) influenced by the respondent's understanding or perception of objectivity and subjectivity.
- Were highly variable i.e. they ranged from "it's all subjective" to "it's all objective".
- Nearly always indicated that a foundation of objective assessment components or steps lent authenticity/credibility to the subjective components of the assessment and ideally form a significant/larger part of the assessment.
- Nearly always indicated greater use of objective criteria in determining: the assessment context, the existing environment, proposal characteristics, the visual catchment and visual change resulting from the proposal (see Section 1: VBPM Flow Chart).
- Nearly always indicated use of subjective criteria in the assessment process as important and inevitable i.e. assessment requires an application of professional opinion.
- Often indicated the subjective steps of assessment were more credible if the proposal incorporated (but did not necessarily make direct reference to) values ascertained from direct or indirect public consultation (see Question 6).
- Often indicated that subjective criteria are used to determine levels of sensitivity (to the visual change resulting from the proposal) and, subsequently, the response or visual effect of the proposal on the viewing audience (see Section 1: VBPM Flow Chart).
- Often indicated that the use of numbers (particularly in relation to subjective criteria e.g. visual absorption ratings) resulted in the loss of valuable information about a proposal's effects.
- Often cautioned against making assumptions regarding actual viewer sensitivity and viewer response to visual changes (resulting from the proposal) highlighting the potential differences between this and professional opinion (irrespective of the use of a rationalised assessment methodology).
- Often indicated that explicit and rationalised criteria lent transparency and credibility to the assessment process.
- Occasionally indicated that explicit and rationalised criteria lent objectivity to the assessment process.

3. How does the use of visibility and simulation digital technology contribute to your VBPM?

Responses to this question indicated:

- Visibility and simulation digital technologies are not always used in VBPM and their level of use is dependent on the size of the proposal.
- Visibility and simulation digital technologies are a tool that can help communicate a complex situation. They are not the assessment.
- The most commonly used VBPM visibility and simulation digital technologies included:
    - Topographical maps and aerial photographs overlayed with proposal and assessment key locations e.g. building platform parameters.
    - Plan graphics of proposal design concepts, master plans, and soft and hard work implementation plans particularly planting plans.
    - Diagrams/sketches of proposal components e.g. wind turbine, house profiles.
    - Perspective drawings of the proposal from selected viewpoints using e.g. Vectorworks.
    - Single frame images of the area and proposal site taken using a (typically) 50mm lens digital camera.
    - 'Stitched' panoramic images of the area and proposal site.
    - Images that simulate visual changes resulting from the proposal on the site utilising modeling and image manipulation software e.g. Photoshop.
    - Graphical Information System (GIS) visibility analysis/viewshed analysis maps utilising digital terrain models (DTM) and (at times) other features of known height to create maps of proposal visibility. Laser Imaging Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technologies were noted for improving the accuracy of base information used in GIS.
    - 3D interactive modeling e.g. using K2Vi (Key to virtual insight) software enabling interactive 'flight path' analysis of the proposal. Most commonly used in the EC.
- Digital technology issues identified included:
    - Cost and related to that,
    - Difficulties experienced in convincing clients of the value of digital technology graphics in the resource consent application process.
    - Technical and interpretive skills required to minimise and ascertain errors, verify digital technology graphic construction to decision makers and effectively peer review assessments.
    - Confusion caused by the use of varying digital technologies. In particular, debate concerning the most appropriate lens size to use (50mm versus 24mm, versus 90 mm).
    - Limitations of topography based analysis which over represent areas of proposal visibility by discounting the effects of other screening elements – trees, buildings etc.

- Reality limits-the authenticity or accuracy of the graphics produced are dependent on input data quality and quantity and the capability of the technology used. K2Vi was mentioned in particular here e.g. where it is difficult and expensive to accurately represent colours/textures contributing to the over or under representation of visual effects. And, related to this
- Lack of understanding/acknowledgement by some landscape architects, decision makers and members of the public of digital technology reality limits (even photographs are simulations). And, related to this...
- The potential use of digital technologies to create non authentic simulations e.g. through selective use of viewpoint, lens size, non existent panoramas, and print size etc.
- A perception by some landscape architects that digital technologies graphics may in some way 'blind' members of the profession, decision makers and members of the public and exacerbate the under representation and reduced consideration of the importance of the other experiential (sound, movement, smell etc.) and landscape effects.

♦ Digital technology benefits (where errors are minimised, and limitations and assumptions fully understood) identified included:

- Value in the design iterative process e.g. in the simulation of alternative proposal characteristics/locations which might generate less adverse visual effects and/or positive visual effects.
- Potential ease of producing a greater range of graphics which complement and at times supersede text and numbers as a communication tool.
- Potential ease of producing non plan graphics e.g. 3D models which are more easily interpreted by non landscape architects.
- Greater accuracy in determining proposal visibility where the size of the proposal site, the variable terrain and restricted public access make it difficult to do so in the field.
- Greater accuracy and efficiency in determining the most critical viewpoints or critical zone of visual influence which can streamline field work.
- Greater accuracy and efficiency in the identification of viewer group sensitivity and visual effects when used to assist public consultation assessment processes.
- Similarly, digital technology graphics may assist decision makers by facilitating a greater understanding of the visual change and potential response or visual effects that result from a proposal.

4. How important and separate is the visual component in the overall resource consent assessment process?

All respondents indicated that a VBPM forms part of a combined landscape and visual effects assessment and that this is typically part of broader AEE (Assessment of Environmental Effects) process in a resource consent application.

On the importance of the visual (effect) component of the assessment process:

Responses to this part of the question:

- Generated a broad range of response.
- Always indicated that assessment of landscape effects was just as important as the visual.
- Nearly always indicated that the assessment of landscape effects was more important than the assessment of visual effects.
- Nearly always indicated that visual effects are perceived as very important by members of the public, developers and decision makers.
- Nearly always indicated that visual effects and landscape effects may overlap i.e. some landscape effects will have visual attributes and vice versa.
- Often indicated that importance is dependent on the context of the resource application i.e. in some cases the potential visual effects will be minimal and the landscape effects significant and vice versa.
- Often indicated involvement in the design process reduced the importance of visual assessment where adverse visual effects are minimised and positive effects integrated.
- Often indicated that assessment of landscape and visual effects had a significant influence on resource consent application outcomes when compared with other types of assessment included in an AEE.
- Often indicated that other landscape architects and decision makers over emphasised the importance of visual effects in a resource consent application.
- Often indicated that level of importance is determined by the RMA s7c) i.e. that visual effects are matters to have regard to (in contrast to e.g.6a) a matter of national importance). And that, the importance of visual effects is increased by explicit reference in Schedule 4 and by the definition of amenity in the RMA.
- Often indicated assessment of visual effects is not over emphasised by the profession or decision makers and reflects the importance of vision in the perception of our environment and of landscape character.
- Occasionally indicated that the assessment of visual effects can delay the decision making process e.g. where an assessment of visual effects is required by councils even for permitted activities.
- Occasionally indicated a focus on visual effects in the assessment process may directly contribute to unsustainable development outcomes and a resistance to change.

- Occasionally indicated a focus on visual effects in the assessment process may directly contribute to a disregard of other factors that contribute to amenity e.g. noise, glare, smells, movement.
- Occasionally indicated that visual effects assessment assumes greater importance in the decision making process as a result of a focus on the landscape values associated with character: natural, urban, rural, and coastal, and ONF/L which are assessed using the visual resource of the landscape.

On separateness of the visual (effect) component of the assessment process:

Responses to this part of the question:

- Always indicated inclusion in a combined landscape and visual effects assessment process.
- Nearly always indicated a preference for the inclusion of VBPM in a design iterative based assessment.
- Nearly always indicated significant points of overlap in the assessment of landscape and visual effects i.e. in establishing the assessment context, the existing environment and the proposal characteristics (see Section 1: VBPM Flow Chart).
- Nearly always indicated significant points of separation in the assessment of landscape and visual effects i.e. in the analysis of the proposals visual catchment, (versus landscape catchment) and in the analysis and evaluation of the visual change (versus landscape change) resulting from the proposal and the subsequent visual effects (versus landscape effects) of that change.
- Occasionally indicated the use of Integrated Catchment Management principles as an assessment methodology and associated design practice guide that minimises negative visual effects incidentally.

5. What theories are these VBPM steps based on? For example:

- Landscape theories related to
  - aesthetics
  - concept of landscape
  - landscape assessment

Professional informant response to this question was often pre empted by a discussion exploring and qualifying the meaning/s of aesthetics, concept of landscape and landscape assessment and possible theoretical models.

Occasionally respondents queried the separation of aesthetics, concept of landscape and landscape assessment in the question.

On aesthetics

Response to this part of the question:

- Nearly always indicated theories of aesthetics informed VBPM unconsciously and/or insignificantly.
- Often indicated uncertainty about the theories of aesthetics and how they might influence assessment practice.
- Often indicated respondents thought landscape was much more than aesthetics.
- Occasionally made reference to their assessment documentation (see Section 2: Assessment examples) which integrated explicit, justified application of specific aesthetic models.
- In subsequent discussion respondents indicated:
  - Formal aesthetics informed their assessment process through the use of criteria such as; unity, harmony, proportion, variety, scale, line, form, colour and texture.
  - Values associated with aesthetic perceptions of 'naturalness', 'wilderness' and unmodified landscapes are supported by the RMA, are reflected in assessment criteria and the decision making process.
  - Aesthetic coherence (integration) values are supported by assessment criteria, the RMA and the decision making process.
  - Picturesque and sublime criteria (e.g. ruggedness, naturalness, prominence) are used to identify existing landscape values in the proposal region/district or site.
  - Associations with picturesque aesthetics in VBPM are supported by a focus on view points, the use of photography and terminology used to describe pictures e.g. backdrop, framed by, panoramic.

- Use or consideration of the aesthetics of appropriateness or 'sense of place' related to the concept of genius loci.
- Contrast and conflict between anthropocentric notions (associated with assessment criteria such as coherence, complexity, mystery and legibility) of biological aesthetics related to creating landscapes supporting human survival and prosperity and,
- Wide spread support for the use of ecological/sustainable principles in design and issues surrounding 'what might look good, may not be good'.
- When defined in its wider sense (sight, smell, experience, memory etc. i.e. all the senses) aesthetics can be synonymous with a holistic concept of landscape.
- Evident colonial Arcadian/pastoral and picturesque values tend to support the retention of status quo landuse in rural landscapes which may not be sustainable.

On concepts of landscape

Response to this part of the question:

- Always made reference to landscapes integration of biological, physical, perceptual/experiential and cultural components.
- Always indicated a concept of landscape that included patterns and processes.
- Always described landscape as temporal/changing.
- Nearly always indicated the importance of cultural values (several mentioning Iwi values) in the landscape.
- Nearly always made reference to the "Pigeon Bay" criteria (natural science factors, aesthetic values, expressiveness, transient values, values that are shared and recognised, value to tangata whenua, historical associations) as a definition of landscape and within this:
  - Often indicated that use of the criteria was pragmatic associated with the EC.
  - Occasionally highlighted concerns for the potential for these criteria to be reserved for assessing ONF/L.
  - Occasionally indicated that by using the EC classification of landscapes: 'outstanding, rural amenity or other' other landscapes are potentially denigrated in terms of resource management.
- Often indicated the need for further research into public perception and preference particularly in terms of Iwi values
- Often indicated the need for further research in relation to cumulative effects, threshold points and the calibration of inappropriate change-"how much is too much".
- Occasionally mentioned Simon Swaffield and John Fairweather's public perception landscape preference studies as a source of information on New Zealanders landscape values.

On landscape assessment approach (expert assessment versus public consultation)

Response to this part of the question:

- Always indicated greater use of expert assessment in resource consent applications was pragmatically driven by the cost of public consultation. Direct and indirect methods of public consultation used and associated issues are further discussed in Question 6.
- Always indicated their preference for involvement in assessment as part of a design process allowing greater opportunities to avoid adverse effects and integrate positive effects but noted that only 50% of their assessment work included a significant design focus.
- Always supported variability in assessment approaches used by landscape architects but indicated the need for standardised/mandated.
    - Terminology (and definitions).
    - Digital technology use at (particularly EC) hearings.
    - Checkpoints of assessment (agreement on the relevant objects/subjects of assessment for a particular context , proposal).
    - Rationalised/clear methodology.
- Often indicated current resource consent decision making process supported an expert approach i.e. it is somewhat mandated by the requirement to complete of an AEE.
- Often indicated concern regarding the resource consent application and decision making process related to:
    - Degraded landscapes i.e. at the 'other end of the spectrum' these landscapes also warrant avoidance, remediation and mitigation of adverse effects and that this may conflict with RMA and NZCPS provisions aimed at reducing urban sprawl/creeping development.
    - The assessment of cumulative effects and potential threshold points where a particular proposal may match permitted baseline (e.g. other 5 story buildings nearby) but represents a change that will 'tip the balance' in terms of character/values and/or provide precedent for further development which is likely to do the same.
    - Support for unsustainable 'lifestyle blocks' increasing commuting traffic and restricting future potential to develop mixed landuse -dwellings, production and revegetation etc. Associated with this; Council zoning that often prevents potentially more sustainable clustered development via restrictions on 'urban patterns' of development outside the metropolitan area.
    - Support for unsustainable landuse via the retention of existing land use associated with professional, public, and decision makers' perceptions of the value and aesthetic appeal of status quo rural landuse.
    - Lack of consideration for the actual landscape and visual effects created by zoning provisions which may be difficult to adapt (lifestyle blocks mentioned in particular) in the future and result in the variable application and effectiveness of reactive mitigation conditions of consent.
    - Support for a focus on mitigation rather than avoidance. And related to this,
    - Lack of horticultural knowledge in the profession which results in plant specie recommendations that may not be suited to the site in mitigation strategies.

- Disregard for the effects of time taken to fully implement mitigation conditions particularly associated with plant establishment.
- Planting plan mitigation conditions associated with the rights to subdivide which are unlikely to be successful/are not effectively monitored.

6. What other factors or processes drive the development or modification of these steps in your office? For example:

- International VBPM
- Consultation
  - Community values
  - Iwi values.
- Statute and Council considerations
  - The NZ Coastal Policy
  - Sections of the RMA
  - Regional Council coastal plans, policy and coastal environment management strategies.
  - Regional Council and/or District Council plans
  - Outcomes and case law from EC hearings
  - The context of the resource consent application (building versus wind farm etc.)

On International VBPM

Responses to this part of the question:

- Always indicated the use of international journals, conferences as the main sources of useful international assessment methodologies. Related to this, some respondents raised concern at having been unaware of opportunities to meet with visiting assessment consultants (Carys Swanick).
- Nearly always indicated some familiarity and alignment with the US models of assessment founded by the US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management and the UK Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment produced by the Landscape Institute. And related to this, greater alignment with the UK discursive model of assessment in contrast to the quantified US approach.
- Nearly always indicated NZ VBPM and broader BPM of assessment needed to uniquely reflect our cultural and biophysical characteristics and statutes, particularly the RMA.
- Nearly always supported variability in VBPM used associated with the particular assessment context and professional judgement/varying concepts of landscape.
- Occasionally indicated the use of Integrated Management Catchment principles in their assessment methodology. ICM is a nationwide programme facilitated by Landcare Research in NZ with international links/origins.

On Consultation

Response to this part of the question indicated:

- Direct (face to face) public consultation may form a limited part of a VBPM or landscape and visual effects assessment related to a resource consent process. Respondents attributed this to:
    - Cost and time required to carry out effective public consultation is often beyond the budget and schedule of resource consent applications. And related to this,
    - Client attitudes related to the value or need for public consultation.
    - Difficulties experienced in engaging in consultation that reflects a representative range of public views and in gaining a clear/consensual directive from the process.
    - Limited resource consent process mandate for clients (beyond gaining written approval) restricting opportunities to engage in meaningful public consultation which might influence the design process.
    - A decision making process that often promotes reactive address/inclusion of values i.e. that emerge after the application has been lodged via submission, at hearings etc.
    - The role and value of the independent submission process.
- Successful direct public consultation (usually associated with larger proposals) strategies suggested by respondents included :
    - Open days/meetings, where the proposal sites key biophysical and cultural characteristics and design principles (not concepts) were introduced and integrated with genuine opportunities for the public to identify values and provide input into the design process.
    - Small key stakeholder interviews/workshops which identify values and offer opportunity to be involved in the design process.
    - Individual resident visits using a similar approach.
    - Providing opportunities for members of the public to observe simulations of the proposal (e.g. in the Landscape Architects office) ideally during the design iteration phase and prior to resource consent application lodgement.
    - Contributing to submissions or expert evidence for members of the public in hearings.
- Indirect public consultation often contributes to the landscape and visual effects assessment process related to resource consent. Respondents noted the following sources/strategies assist them to identify existing values and sensitivity in the proposal area:
    - Past District and Regional landscape assessment documentation where direct public consultation processes were used.
    - RP and DP's with respect to their ability to incorporate public values and sensitivities (some skepticism here).

- RC and DC websites which make assessment documentation available (for all notified resource consents). Past assessment documentation within the proposal region/district or in a similar context e.g. wind farm in another region/district .
- Other direct public consultation processes that the landscape architect has been involved in.
- Involvement in other community groups.
- Residence in the area i.e. insider knowledge and understanding of the community.

On Iwi values (consultation)

Response to this part of the question indicated:

- Iwi consultation and inclusion of Iwi values is often part of a separate assessment process or only partially covered in a landscape and visual assessment related to a resource consent application. This was associated with:
  - Requirements by decision making bodies for separate assessment of Iwi values and effects of the proposal using Iwi nominated assessment consultants.
  - Cost and time required to undertake Iwi consultation.
  - At times, difficulties experienced in engaging with an appropriate Iwi/Hapu representative.
  - At times, difficulties experience in engaging with an Iwi/Hapu representative that will be widely supported by the Iwi/Hapu.
  - Issues of tikanga maori and the rights of tangata whenua to choose not to identify taonga supported by e.g. NZCPS policy 2.1.1
  - Potential for tokenism or perceptions of tokenism.
  - The need for perceptual research related to Iwi values.
  - Opportunities for Iwi consultation presented by the submission process.
  - Decision making processes that may promote reactive address/inclusion of values i.e. that emerge after the application has been lodged via submission, at hearings etc.
- Successful direct Iwi consultation strategies used (often in relation to larger proposals) described by the respondents included:
  - Connections made with appropriate Hapu representatives via archaeological consultants.
  - Employment of staff with Iwi/Hapu associations and specialised training in Iwi consultation processes.
  - DC and RP coordinated Iwi consultation e.g. documenting appropriate Hapu representatives and clear processes for cultural audits etc.
  - Iwi involvement early on in the proposal with genuine opportunities to be involved in the design process.

- Useful indirect Iwi value and sensitivity sources mentioned included:
    - Hapu or Iwi resource management plans for the region/district.
    - Iwi consultation documented in RP, DP, and in region/district wide landscape assessment reports etc.
    - Resource consent documentation in the same region/district or context where significant Iwi consultation took place.
    - Current research (Janet Stephenson-Otago University) initiative focus on Iwi values in Northland which may provide guidelines and greater understanding of Iwi values relevant to any landscape and visual effects assessment process.

On statute and council considerations

Responses to part of the question:

- Always indicated the importance of the assessment context in determining the relevant planning context and the value of fostering communication with Council planners who can provide clear direction on the relevant plan provisions that need to be addressed.
- Always indicated a hierarchy of importance in statute and council provisions reflecting the RMA i.e. where consideration of s5 of the RMA may take precedence over 6 a) etc. and where DP should reflect the RP etc.
- Nearly always indicated the use of EC case law in providing understanding of the judicial process, direction on the definition of key principles, terms or criteria etc.(not covered by RMA) and indications of values supported by the court.
- Nearly always cautioned against making direct reference to past EC court determinations in assessment documentation noting decisions are made on a case by case basis and that legal issues are outside at the professions expertise. Exceptions to this may occur where the context of the assessment is relatively new, unique and/or there are very few RP or DP provisions relevant to the context. In the examples analysed (Section 2) direct quotes from previous EC hearings were used in the context of wind farm applications.
- Nearly always indicated that non adopted DC or RC plan changes, management plans, region/district wide assessments etc. can only be used to provide background information i.e. the policies, rules etc. recommended hold no weight in the decision making process.
- Often indicated considerable variation in the quality or extent with which RP and DP reflected the RMA and the NZCPS necessitating their critique in the landscape and visual assessment. Often this was related to the establishment of the status of important landscape values e.g. ONF/L within or near the proposal site. Use of the Pigeon Bay criteria was associated with this process.
- Often indicated exclusive reference to the DP provisions where they comprehensively reflected the RMA, NZCPS etc. and provided clearly stated objectives, policies, rules and guidelines relevant to the proposal that could be used as assessment criteria.
- Often indicated that DP objectives/rules etc. may prescribe appropriate effect levels i.e. an assessment can not conclude there are significant adverse effects if the DP permits and is reflective of the RMA and NZCPS.

- Occasionally indicated their assessment process did not make use of the NZCPS.
- Occasionally indicated a lack of appreciation of the inclusion of rivers, lakes and their margins in consideration of RMA 6 a) by other landscape architects.
- Occasionally indicated the extent to which statute and council provisions where referenced is dependent on the context of the decision maker and the DP i.e. more detail is provided at a Council compared to an EC hearing, and where significant gaps are recognised in the DP.
- Occasionally indicated the need for more Council's to develop provisions related to specialised activities such as wind farms and marine farms citing their unique potential visual (and landscape) effects.
- Occasionally indicated assessment and associated design iterations can be adversely affected by adopted DP zoning e.g. that allow high density development in an area of arguably high natural character.

Other important drivers of visual assessment methodology identified by respondents were:

- CPD and networking with other offices.
- Peer review processes required by DC/RC in resource consent application process.
- Multi discipline approaches to assessment, making use of particular expertise e.g. for ecology reports, digital technology graphics preparation.

7. What does your office consider to be the most important VBPM issues that would warrant further research or professional development?

In the first instance, issues related to VBPM generated from the interview process (i.e.Questions 1-7) are summarised below.

Broader issues relating to assessment, design and the profession are highlighted in the second part of this summary. In some instances they reiterate issues documented in the summary of previous interview questions.

VBPM issues:

Nearly all respondents supported the retention of variation in VBPM associated with the specific nature of the proposal, the differing potential magnitude of effects and the importance of exercising professional judgement in an assessment process.

Respondents indicated that VBPM would benefit from further development of:

- Assessment checkpoints i.e. greater agreement in terms of what the assessment might cover in a particular context, (not how it is assessed).
- Significant use of objective criteria/steps which support the credibility/authenticity of the inevitable and important subjective criteria/steps of the assessment.
- Explicit (transparent) assessment methodology including: assumptions, limitations, definitions, criteria and rationale.
- Standardised terminology (and definitions) for e.g.
    - Levels and types of visual effects i.e. neutral, adverse, positive, minor, moderate, significant.
    - Visual impact/visual change versus visual effects.
    - Visual effects and landscape effects.
    - Natural character, rural character, landscape character
    - Coastal environment.
- EC accepted digital photography best practice methodology and representation standards (particularly in relation to lens size and print size)
- EC accepted digital simulation best practice methodology.
- EC accepted visual catchment and visibility mapping best practice and related to this,
- A formal EC digital technology standards review process aimed at the (responsive) establishment of EC accepted best practice methodology standards effective for the duration of the review period.
- Inclusion in a combined landscape and visual effects assessment methodology and decision making process that does not over emphasise the importance and consideration of visual effects to the detriment of other experiential effects or the landscape effects of a particular proposal.
- Integrating a critique of the proposal sites existing visual characteristics (in rural areas in particular) in terms of their contribution to sustainability within the site/area/district/region.

- A greater focus on how VBPM could be used to facilitate positive/sustainable landscape change and landscape management.
- Development of an aesthetic model in VBPM which contributes to sustainable land use patterns in rural areas (in contrast to the picturesque and colonial Arcadian/pastoral models of aesthetics)
- Use of VBPM within a design iterative process where adverse visual effects are (somewhat incidentally) avoided and positive visual effects integrated into the proposal.
- EC accepted subdivision guidelines of strategies that can be used to reduce adverse visual (and landscape) effects.
- A greater recognition of the difference between visibility and adverse visual effects i.e. proposal visibility may result in adverse,positive or neutral visual effects.
- The development of landscape character interpretation skills as a basis for determining the potential visual (and landscape) effects of the proposal i.e. assessor ability to determine the key elements and characteristics that make up the existing character and how they might be changed by the proposal.

Assessment issues:

Responses indicated that landscape assessment in general would benefit from:

- Greater emphasis on the place of assessment within a design process.
- Greater emphasis on the role of assessment in landscape management and in making a positive contribution to landscape change.
- Development of assessor knowledge, understanding and use of the relevant planning context.
- Development of methodology criteria/guidelines relevant to highly contrasting proposals focusing assessment on the nature of the proposals contribution to character/values/sustainability which are often in conflict with perceived values of integration/coherence.
- Development of methodology criteria/guidelines that would assist landscape architects to more accurately assess cumulative effects and threshold points.
- Landscape perception studies particularly in terms of Iwi landscape values/sensitivities which would help identify values in a proposal.
- Landscape perception studies that would provide guidelines of the limits of acceptable change-how much is too much?
- Actively promoting the use of pre EC mediation, and pre hearing consultation (supported via recent practice notes) to provide greater opportunities for: proposals to represent appropriate development, agreement on standards of digital technology use, terminology and assessment coverage, and court focus on matters of disagreement/potentially less than minor effects.
- NZILA coordination of assessment methodology PD and updates including international guest speaker bench marking.
- More opportunities (like this) to discuss/share resources related to landscape assessment.
- Central analysed/summarised inexpensive EC case law reports.
- Central library of assessment documentation exemplars

- Access to the MFE (Boffa Miskell) 'Environmental performance indicator of natural character' reports.

Concern was also expressed related to nationwide issues of:

- Actual and evident lack of protection for ONF/L and preservation of natural character from inappropriate development associated with limited 'economic' notions of sustainability which translate into decision maker positions of pro development.
- Potentially significant cumulative adverse effects of wind farms on the landscape character of NZ not addressed by current regional decision making processes associated with the RMA.
- The potentially negative (visual and landscape) effects of a focus on new development in degraded landscapes associated with strategies used to preserve, protect, and have regard for landscapes of greater value (ONF/L etc.) and prevent sprawl.
- Landscape patterns created by lifestyle block zoning that are usually uneconomic in terms of productive land use, increase commuter traffic and are difficult to re zone into alternative/ more sustainable mixed land use patterns.
- Managing landscape change outside of the metropolitan urban limits and perceptions related to the inappropriateness of 'urban patterns of development' in rural areas which may offer greater opportunities for sustainability and the integration of multiple land uses.
- Managing landscape change in the rural environment associated with current non sustainable land use and perceptions surrounding status quo rural character and rural amenity values.
- Council/decision maker focus on narrow economic notions of sustainability.
- Permitted baseline precedent use in the decision making process justifying cumulative effects and "creeping ugliness".
- The potential influence of budget constraints faced by members of the public 'pitted against multi millionaires' in the resource consent decision making process.
- Attempts by some landscape architects to over objectify or quantify landscape assessment in the EC reducing landscape to numbers contrasted with the value of subjective philosophical argument.
- The lack of resource management NZ Policy statements and environmental standards.

Design issues:

Respondents indicated that design processes would benefit from:

- Research into the principles and practicalities of sustainable rural subdivisions (design guidelines)
- Greater emphasis in the design process on avoidance and remediation of negative landscape and visual effects (as opposed to mitigation) and the integration of positive landscape and visual effects.

Profession Issues:

Respondents indicated that the profession would benefit from:

- Professional development/degree programmes related to:
    - assessment and design practices that reflect social responsibility, ecological health and sustainable design.
    - knowledge of ecology and the realities of land based production.
    - knowledge, understanding and use of the relevant planning context.
- Degree programmes that pragmatically provide graduates with a greater level of skill in carrying out proposal landscape and visual effects assessment in relation to a resource consent application (in contrast to region or district wide assessments which they are less likely to be involved in).