Hon Chris Bishop

Attorney General
Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Associate Minister of Finance

23 June 2026

CB-COR3023

Aksel Bech
Mayor of Waikato
Waikato District Council
By email: aksel.bech@waidc.govt.nz

Cc Craig Hobbs
Chief Executive
Waikato District Council
By email: craig.hobbs@waidc.govt.nz

Dear Aksel,

On 31 October 2024, I received a letter from former Chief Executive, Gavin Ion, referring two rejected Independent Hearings Panel recommendations and the Council's alternative recommendations to me in relation to Waikato District Council's (the Council's) intensification planning instrument (IPI), Variation 3 Enabling Housing Supply to its Proposed District Plan (PDP).

I made a decision on Matter A (rezoning of 46 Jackson Street, Ngāruawāhia) in April 2025 and deferred making a decision on Matter B (relating to the site at 5837 Great South Road, Ngāruawāhia), until the resolution of an Environment Court appeal on the site. The Environment Court appeal on Matter B has now been resolved.

The referred recommendation for Matter B relates to 5837 Great South Road, Ngāruawāhia, with three component parts:

- Matter B, Part 1: rezoning a specified area of the property from General Residential Zone to Medium Density Residential Zone 2
- Matter B, Part 2: to incorporate rule MRZ2-S1A to the area subject to a SASM qualifying matter which restricts development within the Site and Area of Significance to Māori (SASM) by permitting only one residential unit per site within the SASM extent without resource consent
- Matter B, Part 3: the application of a qualifying matter to the area of the property that is subject to the SASM.

I note officials at the Ministry for the Environment sought clarification from Council officers on the decision sought on 1 December 2025 and on 1 May 2026 regarding a clarified alternative recommendation following the resolution of the appeal. Requesting this information was necessary to inform my decision. I thank Council staff for their assistance in providing this information.

I have made the following decisions on Matter B:

- Matter B, Part 1: accepted the Independent Hearing Panel's recommendation to rezone the specified area of the site from General Residential Zone to Medium Density Residential Zone 2
- Matter B, Part 2: accepted the Independent Hearing Panel's recommendation to incorporate rule MRZ2-S1A to the area subject to the SASM
- Matter B, Part 3: rejected the Independent Hearing Panel's recommendation relating to the spatial extent of the SASM overlay and accepted the Council's alternative recommendation relating to the SASM extent.

My decision for Matter B has been made in accordance with Schedule 1, clause 105 of the Resource Management Act 1991. The reasons for my decision are:

Matters B Parts 1 and 2

a. the Council's alternative recommendation for rezoning the site to MRZ2 and incorporating rule MRZ2-S1A is now the same as the Independent Hearings Panel's recommendation; and

b. the Independent Hearings Panel's recommendation complies with the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991 to implement the medium density residential standards, subject to a justified qualifying matter, and gives effect to the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 by enabling greater development capacity for the site subject to an appropriate qualifying matter

Matter B Part 3

c. it complies with requirements under the Resource Management Act 1991 to implement the medium density residential standards, subject only to a justified qualifying matter; and

d. it appropriately applies a Site and Area of Significance to Māori qualifying matter to the spatial extent confirmed by the Environment Court, balancing protection of cultural values identified on the site with enabling development capacity; and

e. it is consistent with the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, particularly by providing greater development capacity for the site.

I want to thank the Independent Hearings Panel and Council staff for the work undertaken to progress the Intensification Streamlined Planning Process. Ministry for the Environment officials will also contact Council staff to inform them of my decision.

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform