

BEFORE THE

Gore District Council

IN THE MATTER OF

Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

Submissions and Further
Submissions on the
Proposed Gore District
Plan

Hearing Stream 9

Natural Features and Landscapes, Natural Character

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RACHEL SHALINI THOMAS AND
BERNADETTE ELLEN HUNT ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTHLAND PROVINCE OF
FEDERATED FARMERS OF
NEW ZEALAND**

Dated 27 January 2025

Introduction

Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Rachel Shalini Thomas. I hold a Bachelor of Arts (hons) in Political Science from Otago University and a Masters in Public Policy from Victoria University. My views are closely aligned with those of Federated Farmers, due to my personal farming background. Further elaboration on my qualifications and experience is provided in the evidence submitted for Hearing Stream 1.
2. Bernadette Ellen Hunt is a member of the Southland Province Executive for Federated Farmers and was first elected to the Southland Provincial Executive in 2015. Bernadette was previously the Senior Vice President of the Executive and has participated in a variety of Resource Management Act (RMA) and local government planning processes including various plan reviews. Further elaboration on Bernadette's qualifications and experience is provided in the evidence submitted for Hearing Stream 1.
3. Federated Farmers is a voluntary membership-based organisation that represents farmers and other rural businesses. Federated Farmers has a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of New Zealand's farmers and as such has a keen interest in the Gore District Plan.
4. This evidence relates to the Natural Features and Landscapes Chapter. We have provided separate planning evidence for the proposed new Natural Character chapter.

Natural Features and Landscapes Chapter

5. Our submission expressed concern about the lack of pre-notification engagement on the Natural Features and Landscapes Chapter, and we submitted on numerous individual provisions generally seeking recognition and support for existing and ongoing farming activities within ONL, while still protecting the ONL values.

6. The s42A report identifies that a working group was formed comprising Council staff, affected ONL landowners (being Stoney Creek, McLeod-Wantwood Trust), with expert landscape, ecology and planning input¹, and consensus has been reached².
7. We commend the Council's collaborative approach to resolving concerns with chapter content.
8. More permissive rules for farming practices have been tailored to the areas considered more capable of absorbing change from a landscape perspective³. The report writer notes the workshop changes focussed primarily on rules and standards and subsequent changes to objectives and policies have been to reflect the working group consensus⁴.
9. We support the more nuanced approach, which includes new policy NFL-P5, and amendments throughout the chapter, to Appendix 5, and to the Hokonui Hills maps (including the addition of ridgelines and lower sensitivity areas).
10. Overall, we support the relief recommended by the S42A report writer and developed by the working group.

Conclusion

11. Federated Farmers thanks the Hearing Panel for the opportunity to present this evidence statement.



Bernadette Hunt
Executive Member
Southland Province Federated
Farmers of NZ



Rachel Thomas
Senior Policy Advisor
Federated Farmers of NZ

¹ S42A report, para 52

² Ibid, para 53

³ Ibid, para 82

⁴ Ibid, para 55