

## 6.6 OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES

The following objective, policies and methods have been adopted in response to the significant resource management issues set out in Part 5.7.

The City's outstanding natural features are subject to natural processes which means that they will alter over time. Some, such as the dune lakes and dune systems on the West Coast will alter more quickly than others. People's actions can exacerbate the natural processes to the point that a landform can erode or slip, in a way or at a rate that would not have occurred naturally. Although most of the City's outstanding landforms are located within sparsely settled areas or on public land, (see Part 3 for a description), a number are still subject to pressures. This is particularly true where they are located adjacent to coastal settlements and in the northern part of the City. To address these issues the District Plan has adopted the following Objective:

### Objective 6

**To maintain the form, integrity and extent of the City's outstanding natural features (landforms, geological sites, representative and high fertility soil types), and, in the case of the City's high fertility soils, to maintain their availability for use by future generations.**

#### *Explanation*

The question of protecting the highly fertile soils of the northern part of the City, rests on the requirements of Section 6(b) and also Section 5(a) of the Resource Management Act. Research has shown that horticultural techniques can make little direct use of the soils. Although the fertility of these soils is valued by horticulturists, there is a trend towards soil-less practices. (These soils are identified in Part 3.5.)

From the point of view of commercial horticulture, protection of these soils is less pressing than it may have been in the past, and the question of density of population or coverage of soils is therefore less relevant. However, those horticultural techniques may change again over time. In addition, the Resource Management Act requires that regard be given to safeguarding such resources for the

future, where this does not unreasonably impede present use of the resource. Therefore, the approach taken in the District Plan is that these soils will continue to be safeguarded, both in terms of the effects of activities on soil quality, and in terms of their ultimate availability for future use. This will be done in a way that does not unnecessarily impede their use at present.

Set out below are the policies that are adopted in relation to this Objective.

### Policy 6.1

Settlement should be:

- located in a way that minimises encroachment of structures and roads on outstanding landforms and geopreservation sites;
- consolidated within the urban area to protect the City's high fertility soils from adverse effects associated with intensive settlement, including coverage by structures and impermeable surfaces.

#### *Explanation*

This policy is intended to minimise settlement pressures on outstanding landforms and geopreservation sites. It also places limits on the coverage of high fertility soils within the Special Soils Area, such that the significance and availability of these naturally fertile soils is retained, wherever possible. This is a key policy direction for land to the north of the urban area, which is under considerable pressure to absorb urban expansion, or to intensify to a "rural/residential" settlement pattern.

#### Methods

##### *District Plan Rules:*

Subdivision within Protected Natural Areas, (which includes all identified outstanding landforms and some geopreservation sites), is possible only where new building sites are not being created. This places restraint on further settlement in these areas. Building on existing vacant subdivided sites is possible, but must take into account impacts on landforms and geopreservation sites.

Pressure on the



the response: objectives, policies & methods