

Boffa Miskell



Belmont Quarry Overburden: Land Exchange

Landscape Assessment
Prepared for Winstone Aggregates
1 December 2025





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<p>For any information regarding this report please contact: [REDACTED] Landscape Planner Senior Principal info@boffamiskell.co.nz</p>				
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Executive Summary

Boffa Miskell Limited was engaged by Winstone Aggregates to undertake a landscape assessment as a component of a conservation values assessment for a proposed land exchange. This entails exchanging land owned by the Department of Conservation and held as recreation reserve in Belmont Regional Park, with land associated with the adjacent Belmont Quarry, namely the Northern Gully, Southern Gully, Firth Block, and part of the former Dry Creek Quarry site.

This assessment follows *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines* and draws on field investigations, desktop review, and GIS visibility modelling. Accordingly, it evaluates physical, perceptual, and associative attributes of each site alongside any visual implications in the context of both the *Fast-track Approvals Act 2024* and the *Conservation Act 1987* and *Reserves Act 1977*.

Key findings:

- **Proposed Overburden Disposal Area (“Proposed OBDA”):**
Moderate landscape value and low–moderate visibility. Its proximity beside the established quarry reflects a relatively contained aspect of the broader Belmont Hills with capacity to absorb progressive quarry development.
- **DOC gets:**
 - *Northern Gully and Firth Block:* These sites both have Moderate–high landscape value with low to high visual sensitivity offering higher relative landscape values and visual integrity compared with the Proposed OBDA.
 - *Dry Creek Quarry and Southern Gully:* Moderate landscape value and low to low–moderate visual sensitivity, with potential for ongoing rehabilitation restoring natural character along existing streams and wetlands and expanding areas of regenerating native vegetation.

Net effect: The proposed land exchange would expand and strengthen the ecological, visual, and recreational fabric of the Conservation Estate, while consolidating quarry disturbance within a largely contained and modified area. From a landscape perspective, this represents a net gain in conservation value and aligns with the intent of the *Fast-track Approvals Act* enabling the delivery of infrastructure alongside enhancing the conservation value of public conservation land.

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Graphic Supplement (bound separately)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the report

Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) was engaged by Winstone Aggregates (Winstone) in May 2025 to undertake a Landscape Assessment for a proposed land exchange application to swap Department of Conservation (DOC) land within Belmont Regional Park, with adjacent land that forms part of Belmont Quarry. Winstone seek to acquire an Overburden Disposal Area (OBDA) from DOC via an exchange of land under schedule 6 of the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024, to then seek approvals for the deposit of overburden necessary to facilitate the ongoing operation of quarrying activity. The continued Belmont Quarry operation would remain located at 541 Hebden Crescent Lower Hutt, but would expand into the land acquired from DOC to develop an overburden disposal area subject to the substantive application.

To assist with evaluating the overall proposed conservation outcomes, BML have undertaken a comparative landscape assessment which evaluates the Proposed OBDA (the land which DOC gives) in exchange for adjoining areas of Winstone-owned land—namely Northern Gully, Southern Gully, Firth Block, and part of the Dry Creek Quarry (see **Figure 1**) which DOC would get in exchange. The existing characteristics and landscape values and likely visibility of each site have been described and evaluated.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 (Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses) and complied with that Code. A Curriculum Vitae of the primary author and peer reviewer are included in **Appendix 1**.

1.2 Project background

BML were previously engaged to assess the expansion of Belmont Quarry through Plan Change 33, approved in 2014. Subsequently, BML were engaged with the expansion of the Cottle Block enabling an increased deposit of overburden as part of the ongoing quarry operation which was consented in 2017. More recently BML advised Winstone on consideration of alternative sites for the OBDA, once it became clear that opportunities for OBDA within the Quarry site had been exhausted.

1.3 Assessment Method

This assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*. To inform this assessment, an initial site visit was undertaken on the 22 May 2025, during which the OBDA and areas proposed as part of the land exchange were visited as part of informing the assessment of landscape characteristics and values. During this site visit the weather was fine with good visibility.

In accordance with current best practice, this landscape assessment has engaged with articulating and evaluating the interplay between relevant physical, perceptual, and associative attributes to determine the overall landscape implications of the proposed land exchange. These relevant attributes can be summarised as follows:

Physical attributes refer to the tangible elements of the landscape—such as landforms, soils, vegetation, climate, waterways, and wildlife—alongside built and modified

features like roads, buildings, land use patterns, and heritage sites. These elements together shape the landscape's physical structure and ecological function.

Perceptual attributes relate to how people experience and interpret the landscape. This includes its visual coherence, aesthetic qualities, sense of scale, and the way natural and human-made features come together to form a legible and memorable environment.

Associative attributes capture the cultural, historical, and spiritual connections that people and communities have with a place. These include tāngata whenua traditions, stories, and values, as well as shared and recognised meanings linked to identity, belonging, and lived experience.

In accordance with the above method, this landscape assessment has involved an analysis of relevant factors based on a standard seven-point scale from very low to very high to determine the overall landscape value of each site, as set out below.



To assess the consequence of change on existing landscape values, current best practise recognise that 'Sensitivity' and 'Capacity' are widely used generic parameters which can be useful where future proposals are not yet fully known or subject to subsequent more detailed consideration (e.g. for issue-based assessments)¹. In these circumstances, 'sensitivity' means the susceptibility of a landscape's values to the potential effects of certain types of activity or change. 'Capacity' is an estimate of how much of that activity could be accommodated while retaining the specified landscape values.

As part of this assessment, opportunities for enhancement and provisions which may assist with the capacity of the landscape have also been considered. This includes preservation of natural character and related opportunities to restore natural character where this improves the existing condition of streams, wetlands and their margins. Notwithstanding this, the future specific form of development which may result through this land exchange will be addressed in further detail as part of any substantive application.

In terms of landscape outcomes, the land exchange would ultimately influence the configuration of Belmont Regional Park and adjoining areas within the Conservation Estate and Belmont Quarry, including in terms of available views. Landscape values are assessed together with visibility and influences the comparative value of this proposed land exchange, whilst acknowledging no physical or landscape change is entailed in the proposed change of ownership.

1.4 Other Technical Relevant Reports

The assessment of landscape values has been undertaken concurrently with the assessment of the following matters which complement and will further inform the final assessment:

- Planning – Wikaira Consulting Limited
- Cultural Values – Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa
- Recreation – Rob Greenaway and Associates
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology – Blue Green Ecology

¹ 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', (July 2022). Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, para 5.49.

2.0 Existing Environment

2.1 Site Location

The proposed land exchange occupies part of the north-eastern area of Belmont Regional Park (see **Figure 1**) and adjacent Belmont Quarry. Much of this area is now cloaked in regenerating vegetation supporting conservation and some recreation use. Puke Ariki Traverse / Buchanans Road Tramping Track passes in the vicinity of the northern edge of the Proposed OBDA which currently sits within the Regional Park and provides access between the eastern most park access at Dry Creek and Boulder Hill. Land proposed to be brought into the Conservation Estate in exchange includes part of the former Dry Creek Quarry and three contiguous vegetated areas which straddle the adjacent Belmont Quarry, namely the Northern Gully, Southern Gully and Firth Block.

Belmont Quarry is accessed off Hebden Crescent approximately 1.7 km to the south-west of the Belmont Regional Park entrance at Dry Creek. Belmont Quarry occupies part of the western escarpment defining the edge of the Hutt Valley and extending into the lower more visually contained slopes of the Belmont Hills, approximately 6 km north-east of the Lower Hutt Central Business District.

2.1.1 General Description

The area of Belmont Regional Park being proposed for exchange with Winstone's comprises of an irregular shaped block situated at the convergence of State Highway 2 and State Highway 58 adjoining Manor Park. The land has road frontage onto Haywards Hill Road / State Highway 58 along the northern boundary and can be accessed via a main entry to the park along Hebden Crescent at Dry Creek which is used by walkers, mountain bikers, horse riders and campers.

A main bush covered valley running to the northwest and accommodating the Waterfall Route, roughly divides this larger northeast area of Belmont Regional Park accessed from Dry Creek. To the north of Dry Creek, the land rises steeply onto rolling tops which continue to be managed as pasture adjoining areas of regeneration native vegetation continuing through gullies. Within much of the park, former areas of grassland are predominantly regenerating into native vegetation with some selective grazing. To the west of Dry Creek, the land rises towards Boulder Hill where the park opens out into grassland. This is recognised as the highest vantage point within this area of the park, providing a good bush walk before opening out to obtain panoramic views of Upper Hutt to the north, Wellington Harbour and Heads to the south and Pauatahanui/Porirua Basin to the west.

The park contains several four-wheel drive access tracks which are used for recreation and for access to service transmission tower corridors which traverse the park connected from the Haywards Substation. Bush walks are enhanced by high landscape quality and easy access to visitors from grassed camping areas and camping facilities.

2.1.2 Tangata Whenua and Mana whenua values

Tāngata whenua are the definitive holders of mātauranga and kōrero relating to their rohe—including matters relating to landscape. It is recognised that the mātauranga and tikanga of each tāngata whenua group informs contemporary tāngata whenua resource management in each landscape setting.

Mana Whenua refers to iwi and hapū who have historic and territorial rights over this area of Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt Valley. Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Āti Awa, Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Rangitāne o Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua and Muaūpoko, are all recognised iwi entities in this context, through which ongoing engagement will occur to identify and manage Māori cultural values which may be relevant to this application.

2.1.3 History

Since European arrival, the Dry Creek slopes west of the Hutt River have shifted from an almost continuous kohekohe–tawa–podocarp forest (with beech on ridge crests) to a heavily cleared, grazed landscape of pasture and scrub, and more recently back towards an almost continuous cloak of regenerating indigenous forest. Early European clearing and farming removed most lowland forest from valley floors and easier slopes; only steep gullies and upper slopes retained forest remnants.

From roughly the 1960s, retirement of marginal land, park acquisition, and later pest control and fencing have allowed gorse/manuka scrub and broadleaf species to re-establish. The larger Dry Creek Block which comprises the north-east area of Belmont Regional Park was originally purchased for State housing purposes and was transferred to the Department of Lands and Survey in 1983. Control of the land has subsequently passed to the DOC as Recreation Reserve and controlled and managed by GWRC as a mosaic of remnant tawa–pukatea–podocarp forest, advanced regenerating broadleaf forest and mānuka scrub, with only small areas of pasture remaining.

2.1.4 Geology

The broader area encompassing Belmont Regional Park was formed as part of an uplifted peneplain between the Wellington and Owhariu fault lines. The peneplain eroded over time to create the present rolling remnant landform characterised by the boulders familiar to the Kilminsters and Boulder Hill area. The surface geology is greywacke which has given rise to soils of low to moderate fertility.

2.1.5 Topography

The broader area of land which makes up adjoining areas included within Belmont Regional Park rises between approximately 40 metres above sea level (masl) at Dry Creek to approximately 442 masl at Boulder Hill. Contour varies greatly from rolling easterly facing hilltops, to the steep land which remains evident along the Wellington Fault. The greywacke base rock has given rise to the most common soils of the Makara steepland series on the steeper less fertile slopes and the Korokoro hill soils on the moderate to steep lower slopes and ridges.

2.1.6 Soils

The soils of the area can be classified, according to the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory Sheets into five major categories. They conform to the Central Yellow Brown earths formed of greywacke and are differentiated by varying soil depths as related to steepness and altitude.

2.1.7 Land Use Capability

The land exchange areas include a combination of LUC 4, 6 and 7 soils, representing arable land with significant limitations for arable use or cultivation, as well as non-arable land with slight to moderate and moderate to very severe limitations to pastoral use.

2.1.8 Vegetation

Vegetation within the land exchange areas includes mixed exotic and indigenous scrub and areas of regenerating indigenous forest of various ages. A full description and a botanical survey of the Site is included in the Ecological Assessment (Blue Green Ecology, 2025).

3.0 Statutory Context

Belmont Regional Park is a publicly accessible park administered by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC).

3.1.1 Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

The Fast-track Act streamlines decision-making for selected infrastructure and development projects. This also enables the exchange of public land (including regional park land) where certain criteria are met — including consideration of landscape and visual effects. Under this Act, Belmont Quarry Development including the proposed land exchange is included as a Schedule 2 Project.

3.1.2 Conservation Act (1987)

Under the Conservation Act (1987), managing conservation values means, “*the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations*”. Section 16A provides for exchanges of public conservation land where the exchange will enhance the conservation values of land managed by the Department and promote the purposes of this Act.

3.1.3 Reserves Act (1977)

As the land to be exchanged is part of a recreation reserve, values under the Reserves Act 1977 are also relevant. The general purpose of the Reserves Act requires:

- (a) *providing, for the preservation and management for the enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing –*
 - (i) *recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or*
 - (ii) *wildlife; or*
 - (iii) *indigenous flora or fauna; or*

- (iv) *Environmental and landscape amenity of interest; or*
- (v) *Natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, scientific, educational, community, or other special features or value.*
- (b) *ensuring, as far as possible, (where consistent with the use of the reserve) the survival of all indigenous species of flora and fauna, both rare and commonplace, in their natural communities and habitats, and the preservation of representative samples of all classes of natural ecosystems and landscape which in the aggregate originally gave New Zealand its own recognisable character:*
- (c) *ensuring, as far as possible, the preservation of access for the public to and along the sea coast, its bays and inlets and offshore islands, lakeshores, and riverbanks, and fostering and promoting the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and of the margins of lakes and rivers and the protection of them from unnecessary subdivision and development.*

Because the land to be exchanged (the OBDA Area) is held as recreational reserve, the purposes of recreational reserves under the Reserves Act offer further guidance when assessing landscape values. Recreational reserves are classified under section 17 for the general purpose of:

...“providing areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities, including recreational tracks in the countryside.”

Recreational reserves are also administered for the further purposes of:

- (a) *The public having freedom of entry and access to the reserve... subject to such conditions and restrictions as the administering body considers to be necessary for the protection and general well-being of the reserve and for the protection and control of the public using it.*
- (b) *where scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological, or other scientific features or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife are present on the reserve, those features or that flora or fauna or wildlife shall be managed and protected to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve....*
- (c) *those qualities of the reserve which contribute to the pleasantness, harmony, and cohesion of the natural environment and to the better use and enjoyment of the reserve shall be conserved:*
- (d) *to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve, its value as a soil, water, and forest conservation area shall be maintained.*

Landscape and visual amenity are inherent components of the values recognised in this legislation.

3.1.4 Greater Wellington Regional Council Parks Network Plan, Toitū Te Whenua (2020–30)

Toitū Te Whenua identifies that Belmont Regional Park is a place of regional significance for recreation, conservation, landscape character, and cultural heritage. In terms of landscape

values, the current plan recognises that the park contributes to legibility and identity of the Wellington landscape, particularly through its ridgelines, open spaces, and scenic views.

4.0 Landscape Characteristics and Values

The broader landscape character associated with each land area was previously assessed at both a district-wide scale and local scale as part of Belmont Regional Park, the findings of which are summarised below.

4.1 Hutt Landscape Study: Hutt Character Description

The boundaries of landscape character areas identified through previous district-wide landscape assessment undertaken for Hutt City Council in 2012² are shown on **Figure 3**.

In terms of the Hutt Landscape Study, the land exchange areas straddle the boundary between the Belmont Hills and the Western Escarpment landscape character areas, with the Proposed OBDA largely elevated above the Western Escarpment within the Belmont Hills. The extracts of relevant character areas are reproduced below.

Belmont Hills Character Area

The Belmont Hills character area includes the rounded hilltops and slopes above the Wellington Fault escarpment, adjacent to the lower reaches of Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River. The hills with their distinctive flat tops form part of a central plateau separating Wellington Harbour and the Hutt Valley from Porirua Harbour. This plateau is part of an ancient peneplain that has been uplifted and subjected to the freeze-thaw action of the most recent ice age, which has had a smoothing influence on ridge tops and spurs. At 410m asl, Round Knob is the highest point on this part of the peneplain. Broad basins, gullies and fault-defined valleys create diverse microclimates within the character area.

...

Much of this character area is part of the Belmont Regional Park, the first park in New Zealand to combine land for recreation, conservation and farming purposes. In pre-European times this would have been covered in podocarp forest. However, the elevated and open hilltops are now in pasture and grazed primarily by sheep. In the lower and more sheltered slopes and gullies, broadleaf indigenous hardwoods are present, although there are also large sections of gorse and broom and some pine plantations, particularly in the area to the east of Haywards Hill Road (SH58).

West of Haywards Hill Road, remnant native forest around Dry Creek includes pukatea, matai and kahikatea...

...

Easily accessible from Porirua and the Hutt Valley, the Belmont Hills including Belmont Regional Park, are popular for recreational activities such as walking, running, horse riding and mountain biking. Generally, development in the area is sparse, although the

² Boffa Miskell (2012), *Hutt Landscape Study: Hutt Character Description*, Prepared for Greater Wellington Regional Council, Hutt City Council, and Upper Hutt City Council.

area surrounding Sweetacres Drive, Stratton Street and upper Kelson contains a number of small farms and lifestyle blocks.

Western Escarpment Character Area

The Western Escarpment character area includes the steep escarpment on the north-west side of the Hutt Valley from Riverstone Terraces in the north-east to Petone in the south-west. The Wellington fault line runs along the north-western edge of the Hutt Valley; the Belmont Hills have gradually been pushed up while the Eastern Hutt hills have gradually been tilted down, thus creating the Hutt Valley.

The Escarpment's steepness compared to the surrounding landscape makes it a very distinctive feature of the Hutt Valley and clearly defines the valley's western edge. At a more local scale, the Escarpment is fragmented by numerous steep gullies that drain the Western Hills, resulting in a topographically convoluted landscape.

...

Residential areas occupy approximately 37% of the character area with the remainder being 'undeveloped'. The escarpment generally has a dense cover of native and exotic woody vegetation, which adds to its distinctiveness as a landform and as backdrop to the wider Hutt Valley landscape. The vegetation comprises a mix of mature exotic trees such as macrocarpa and pine, patches of gorse, small areas of pine plantation, and regenerating podocarp / tawa forest particularly in the gullies where moist, fertile conditions have allowed a dense under storey to thrive.

...

4.2 Hutt City District Wide Landscape Evaluation

The Hutt City Landscape Evaluation was undertaken by BML in 2016 which included identification of the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes included within the Proposed Hutt City District Plan, none of which apply to this land exchange. The nearest outstanding natural landscape is the Rimutaka Ranges located approximately 10 kilometres east and well beyond the Eastern Hutt Hills.

As part of the Hutt City Landscape Evaluation, parts of the Land Exchange Area were identified within the Belmont Hills Special Amenity Landscape (SAL). Following the completion of this draft, Hutt City Council has decided not to include SAL in the District Plan but rely on the appropriate zoning and other district wide provisions to manage and maintain the identified values³. While plans prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991 are not a relevant consideration for the exchange, these documents are helpful to gain an appreciation or understanding of the landscape values in the areas being assessed. The following description and evaluation are therefore relevant within the context of the surrounding landscape:

Belmont Hills SAL is located within the hill country of Hutt City forming the Valley's westerly backdrop. Rising above the Wellington Fault, the hills are bound by the district's western, northern, and southern boundaries. The grazed rolling hilltops and forested valleys and gullies contain notable features such as Korokoro Valley, Speedys Stream, Dry Creek and several distinctive geological natural features.

NATURAL SCIENCE VALUES: MEDIUM

Although ecosystem function along open hilltops has been compromised by grazing practices, highly functioning ecosystems are evident along many of the sheltered slopes

³ Hutt City Council (2024) Section 32 Evaluation NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPES, para 113.

and gullies where indigenous hardwood vegetation and regeneration is prevalent. The Korokoro Valley contains significant stands of rimu, rata, tawa, and kohekohe.

PERCEPTUAL VALUES: HIGH

The broad, undulating, rounded hilltops are highly expressive of the uplifted ancient peneplain. The hills form the visually striking westerly backdrop to the Hutt Valley. They are recognised both locally and in adjacent districts for their memorable qualities. While the forested slopes and gullies are highly natural with little modification as evidenced by an absence of roads, structures, and small communities of introduced vegetation, the hilltops are modified by grazing.

SHARED AND RECOGNISED VALUES: HIGH

Highly valued for a diverse range of active recreational opportunities.

Old Coach Road is significant to Māori as a war trail route linking Normandale and Pauatahanui. As early settlers established homestead sites within the Hutt Valley, the straight survey line through Belmont formed the alignment for The old Belmont to Pauatahanui Road (Old Coach Road), (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2012).

They are historically significant for having an extensive system of concrete magazines used to store weapons during World War II.

New Zealand's first gravity concrete dam is found within the Korokoro Valley (Astwood & Baines, 2014).

4.3 Belmont Regional Park Landscape Assessment

A previous landscape assessment undertaken in 1988 describes the broad landscape character areas which make up Belmont Regional Park⁴. Within this assessment, the northeast area of Belmont Regional Park was identified as the Boulder Hill Character Area.

This Boulder Hill Character Area includes the land to the east of the central ridge extending between Kelson and Haywards. Visually, this character area is recognised as being a significant feature in the Hutt Valley Landscape. It extends east to State Highway 2 and also includes the escarpment face from Haywards to Liverton Road. At the time, quarrying activity along the escarpment was identified as a major visual intrusion which required efforts to relocate and rehabilitate disturbed areas as a priority landscape management issue.

4.4 Summary of Landscape Context and Character of Land Exchange Areas

The proposed land exchange is located along part of the western hills of Lower Hutt and part of the eastern flanks of the Belmont Hills within Belmont Regional Park. This area is primarily elevated above and west of the Wellington Fault scarp which physically and visually encloses much of the western edge of the Hutt Valley. It also contains the area of existing extraction activity within Belmont Quarry and the former Dry Creek Quarry.

Land cover across most of the land exchange areas is dominated by regenerating vegetation, including seral forest of varying ages and more scattered tree ferns, manuka, and a variety of broadleaf species including some mature areas of forest. Pockets of mature pine and

⁴ Boffa Miskell (1988) *Belmont Regional Park Landscape Assessment*, prepared for Parks and Recreation Department, Wellington Regional Council.

macrocarpa are also present on the accessible ridgetop area that remains associated with former agricultural use. Land use in the wider landscape includes recreation tracks extending through Belmont Regional Park from the entrance at Dry Creek. Overhead transmission lines also pass through this area and connect into the nearby Haywards substation.

The broader landscape containing the identified land exchange areas is recognised as part of the Belmont Hills and Western Escarpment landscape character areas at the district scale, and as part of the Boulder Hill character area within Belmont Regional Park. This area of landscape is characterised by a transition from the rounded hilltops and slopes that rise above the Wellington Fault scarp west of the Hutt Valley and extending eastward across a distinctive flat-topped central plateau that separates the Hutt Valley from Porirua Harbour.

The Western Escarpment slopes away to the east of the Proposed OBDA and forms a more immediate backdrop to most residential development contained within the Hutt Valley. Near the Proposed Overburden Site, existing quarrying activity is often visually intrusive, albeit with some level of visual containment provided by the foreground toe of vegetated spurs. Areas of rural lifestyle development have also extended on parts of the western hills in the vicinity of Belmont Quarry including rural lifestyle development to the north of Kelson.

5.0 Visual Appraisal

The process of visual appraisal includes an analysis of the likely visibility of the land areas subject to this proposed land exchange alongside fieldwork to identify the viewing audience and obtain representative photographs.

5.1 Visibility Analysis / Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

As an initial step in the visual analysis, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping was undertaken of the proposed overburden to determine its potential visibility in the wider landscape.

Additional ZTV mapping has been based on the existing ground level of each land exchange site (see **Figures 4-8**). Cumulatively, it therefore represents the potential areas where the proposed land exchange is visible. As this visibility analysis is based entirely on 'bare ground' topographic data, this does not consider the screening effects of intervening vegetation or structures in the landscape. Conversely, vegetation within the land exchange may also be visible over broader areas in some more open contexts.

5.2 Viewing Audience and Representative Viewpoints

Following the initial ZTV analysis, field work was carried out to determine the actual extent of visibility and to check the localised screening effect of topography, buildings and vegetation from which the combined land exchange areas are visible. This helped to determine the potential visibility of the proposed land exchange when viewed from within Belmont Regional Park and within the Hutt Valley and including when viewed over longer distances from the northern edge of Kelson, Liverton Road and along the Eastern Hills of the Hutt Valley above Stokes Valley.

Representative viewpoints have been identified from the nearest available publicly accessible viewpoints and assessments carried out to date. Photographs from each viewpoint were taken

to demonstrate visibility of the proposed land exchange areas within their landscape context. The representative viewpoints do not include views from private properties. The selection of representative viewpoints has been based on the following criteria:

- The requirement to provide an even spread of representative viewpoints within the visual envelope;
- From locations which represent a range of near, middle and long distance views; and
- Whilst private views are relevant, public viewpoints are used to provide representative worse case views from private dwellings. Views from dwellings may also be curtailed by building location and orientation, intervening fences, vegetation or other buildings which cannot be assessed without gaining access to private property.

Using the above criteria, nine representative publicly accessible viewpoints were identified from which potential views have been considered. The locations of these viewpoints are illustrated together with ZTV analysis on **Figures 4-8** and summarised together with indicative representative viewing audiences in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Viewpoint number location and represented viewing audience

View-point	Location	Indicative Represented Viewing Audience	Extent of Land Exchange Area Visible ⁵				
			Proposed Overburden Site	Northern Gully	Firth Block	Dry Creek Quarry	Southern Gully
1	Buchanans Road Tramping Track	Recreation users within Belmont Regional Park	Partial	Glimpse	No View	Glimpse	Glimpse
2	Recreation track connecting with Kaitangata Crescent		Partial	Glimpse	No View	No View	Glimpse
3	Kaitangata Crescent	Residents of rural lifestyle dwellings to the north of Kelson	Partial	Partial	Glimpse	No View	Partial
4	Liverton Road	Residents of rural lifestyle dwellings along Liverton Road	Glimpse / No View	Glimpse / No View	Glimpse / No View	No View	Glimpse
5	High Street (opposite Pomare Shops)	Residents and commuters through the Hutt Valley floor	Glimpse	No View	Partial / Full	No View	No View

⁵ Extent of visibility assessed in terms of: Full View, Partial View, Glimpse View, No view.

View-point	Location	Indicative Represented Viewing Audience	Extent of Land Exchange Area Visible ⁵				
			Proposed Overburden Site	Northern Gully	Firth Block	Dry Creek Quarry	Southern Gully
6	Aldersgate Grove	Residents and visitors to residential dwellings along the Eastern Hutt Hills	Partial	No View	Partial / Full	Glimpse	No View
7	Eastern Hutt Road	Commuters along the Hutt Valley floor	Glimpse	No View	Partial	Partial	No View
8	Lord Street	Residents and commuters through residential areas along the Eastern Hutt Hills	Partial	No View	Partial	Partial	No View
9	Fraser Park	Recreation users within the Hutt Valley floor	Glimpse	No View	Partial	Glimpse	No View

6.0 Landscape Assessment

6.1 Proposed Overburden Disposal Area

The area of Belmont Regional Park proposed to accommodate the overburden (“Proposed OBDA”) entails a total area of approximately 23.2 hectares and forms part of the north-east area of the park. The Proposed OBDA adjoins and is directly accessible through the existing Belmont Quarry. Separate vehicle access also extends through public land and supports recreational activity enabled along the northern boundary of the OBDA associated with accessing existing transmission lines.

6.1.1 Physical Attributes

The existing topography within the Proposed OBDA ranges between approximately 160 metres above sea level (masl) and 216 masl and comprises a rolling ridge top and spur which is flanked by the upper reaches of steep undulating gullies. This forms part of the lower eastern flanks of the Belmont Hills and upper edge of the Western Escarpment within Hutt City.

In the local context, the landscape containing the Proposed OBDA contains a series of gullies contained beyond steeper spur faces which collectively rise from the Hutt Valley floor. This rolling hill country landform continues to the summit of Boulder Hill located approximately 1.3 km to the north-west of the Proposed OBDA and subsequently recognised as a significant geological feature associated with a broader ancient, uplifted erosion surface as well as an important visual and recreational feature in the Belmont Hills landscape adjacent the Proposed OBDA.

Vegetation within the Proposed OBDA predominately encompasses regenerating exotic and native vegetation with regenerating native shrub interspersed with pockets of gorse and clearings with pasture grasses. Pine and macrocarpa trees are also present, associated with previous farming use. Within Belmont Regional Park, and most typically in the northeast area surrounding the Proposed OBDA, areas of open pasture have gradually been colonised by scrub and regenerating native vegetation as pastoral grazing has been reduced.

Where present, regenerating native vegetation is reflective of differing stages of forest regeneration, most likely due to differences in intensity of past farming activity. Of the native scrub and forest species present, the seral tree, mahoe, is usually dominant in association with tree ferns, manuka, and a variety of broadleaf species.

Built form within the Proposed OBDA is largely absent, with former farm buildings no longer apparent. A series of transmission towers which supply electricity from the Haywards Substation extend along northern boundary. Access tracks servicing transmission lines are evident alongside some fence lines and other less defined informal tracks.

6.1.2 Perceptual Attributes

The Proposed OBDA forms part of the broader rolling vegetated landscape which is characteristic of the Boulder Hill Character Area within Belmont Regional Park.

Elevated above the Western Escarpment, the Proposed OBDA contributes to the expansive green backdrop that frames the upper slopes of the Western Hutt Hills. This forms a transitional landscape zone between the pastoral grasslands and regenerating native vegetation that typify this part of the park. Historically, the area supported a small farm building and associated access track, indicative of its former rural use. However, the physical remnants of these structures and pathways have been largely erased through natural regeneration processes and land management practices, with little evidence of prior occupation now evident.

When viewed from areas to the southeast and east of the Proposed OBDA, existing quarrying activity influences much of the immediate landscape character, expressed as a series of stepped terraces from which material has previously been quarried. Adjoining the quarry, established native vegetation is also a key characteristic of this area along the Western Escarpment. In addition, a framework of more recent regenerating vegetation typically encloses tracks which extend near the Proposed OBDA through adjoining areas within Belmont Regional Park.

The nearest rural lifestyle properties are located approximately 750 metres to the south-west of the Proposed OBDA along Kaitangata Crescent. Dwellings in this area are typically dispersed throughout areas of pasture and regenerating indigenous vegetation. Further south, a similar enclave of rural lifestyle development is located along Liverton Road beyond the northern edge of Kelson. To the south-east of the Proposed OBDA, residential development covers much of the Hutt Valley floor, extending east of the Hutt River. This includes the residential suburbs of Taita and Pomare, which are closest to Belmont Quarry. Most of these properties will have no view of the Proposed OBDA beyond the vegetated slopes of the Western Escarpment.

Over longer distances further to the east, residential development is located on the Eastern Hutt Hills which will have potential views towards the Proposed OBDA seen above the Western Escarpment. This includes dwellings accessed from Holborn Drive and Manor Drive either side of the entrance to Stokes Valley.

6.1.3 Associative Attributes

The landscape character of the Proposed OBDA forms part of the existing recognised extent of Belmont Regional Park. As part of an established Regional Park, this landscape is most typically associated with conservation, recreation and transitioning farming activity. This part of Belmont Regional Park also includes a section of the Puke Ariki Traverse which passes for approximately 250 metres through the northern area of the Proposed OBDA between Dry Creek Campground and Boulder Hill. Existing and former quarrying activity is also associated with this area. No specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified within this immediate area.

6.1.4 Landscape Evaluation

Based on the identified landscape attributes described above the OBDA is considered to have an overall **moderate landscape value** as set out below:

Attributes	Landscape Characteristics and Values	Value
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of a broader ancient and legible peneplain landform Reflects past agricultural use and natural recovery of native forest regeneration and biodiversity Minimal built structures; includes transmission towers and old fence lines and established vehicle tracks used for tower maintenance and recreation 	Moderate
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the broader elevated green and natural backdrop set back above the Western Hutt Hills Adjoins existing quarry and overburden activity, with some nearby rural lifestyle development Offers part of the context of scenic views and contributes to the naturalness of the Belmont Hills 	Moderate
Associative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms part of the broader area of Belmont Regional Park recognised for conservation, recreation, and transitioning farmland. Proximity to Boulder Hill enhances outdoor and recreational opportunities No specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified in context of existing and former quarrying activity 	Moderate
OVERALL RATING		MODERATE

6.1.5 Visibility

As pastoral grazing reverts to the indigenous vegetation, tracks and walking routes near the Proposed OBDA are becoming increasingly enclosed by regenerating exotic and native vegetation, limiting views from within and from adjoining access tracks which creates a sense of immersion for recreational users in terms of an available network of bush walks. Rural lifestyle properties located approximately 750 metres to the south-west obtain views however often have limited visibility of the Proposed OBDA due to distance and intervening landform, including the rehabilitated form of intervening overburden observed from Liverton Road. The residential suburbs of Taita and Pomare are largely screened by the vegetated slopes of the Western

Escarpment. However, there is potential for long-range views from elevated dwellings in the Eastern Hutt Hills, such as those along Holborn and parts of Manor Drive.

Within the context of the proposed land exchange, the Proposed OBDA will also have limited visibility from the land to be given as part of the proposed land exchange (see **Figure 4**). Potential views from within the Firth Block and part of Dry Creek are typically limited to glimpse views from elevated areas within which more extensive areas of vegetation are established and conceal available views. Similar extensive vegetation is established within the Northern Gully through which potential views of the Proposed OBDA will remain contained with the exception of some potential filtered views from the northern edge of the Cottle Block. From here, visibility is therefore limited in duration and consistent with a strong sense of enclosure within broader areas of regenerating vegetation.

VISIBILITY = LOW-MODERATE

6.2 Northern Gully

Northern Gully contains approximately 12.6 hectares forming the north-west extent of the existing Belmont Quarry Extraction Activity Area. Much of this area is established in mature forest cover wedged between the established overburden operation in the Cottle Block and Belmont Regional Park. The southern extent of this area remains accessible as part of the established Belmont Quarry operation for the purpose of monitoring water quality.

6.2.1 Physical Attributes

The topography of Northern Gully forms a steep sided gully which culminates along an unnamed stream for a length of approximately 350 metres. The northern corner of this land area forms the existing boundary of Belmont Quarry and reaches an elevation of 210 masl where it continues ascending within Belmont Regional Park. This area includes the largest densest oldest tawa forest in the local area.

The entirety of Northern Gully is covered in regenerating native vegetation with mature tawa kāmīhi forest in the northern end merging into mixed broadleaved forest along the gully floor. Mature tawa trees reach between 12 and 14 meters in height with areas of tree fern continuing along the margins of Belmont Regional Park. The southwest margins of Northern Gully wrap along the north-western slopes of the Cottle Block and reflect a sequence of more modified slopes from successive overburden deposits. By comparison this area supports areas of exotic and native vegetation as part of ongoing regeneration like what might be expected within the Proposed Overburden Site.

Existing vehicle access is also enabled to an unnamed stream before it enters culvert beneath a haul road within Belmont Quarry, however most of the gully included in the land exchange remains largely intact.

6.2.2 Perceptual Attributes

The folded gully system along the Western Escarpment and continuing west into the Belmont Hills is a distinctive and legible landform feature that contains and encloses western parts of the Hutt Valley. Steep, incised gullies cut down through the uplifted slopes and reveal ongoing erosion and a complex and convoluted vegetated character adjoining more significant areas of modification, including within adjoining areas of Belmont Quarry.

Visually, the pattern of incised gullies enhances the natural form of the escarpment and contrasts the more prominent spur features of the Wellington Fault typically viewed from within the Hutt Valley. Where cloaked in regenerating native vegetation, contained gully areas also support diverse microclimates and ecological niches, adding to the overall coherence of this folded landform.

As part of the established Extraction Zone adjoining Belmont Quarry, Northern Gully is not particularly memorable along the Firth Block of Belmont Regional Park or generally seen above the more prominent Firth Block of the Belmont Hills adjoining the Western Escarpment.

6.2.3 Associative Attributes

Part of Northern Gully contains forest identified as QEII covenant consistent with ongoing conservation, however this is not presently accessible except for part of the ongoing activity within the quarry. Notwithstanding this, the presence of this QEII covenant is consistent with acknowledging the wider shared and recognised values which actually occur. No further specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified within this area.

6.2.4 Landscape Evaluation

Based on identified landscape attributes within the Northern Gully, this area is assessed as contributing a **moderate-high landscape value** as set out below:

Attributes	Landscape Characteristics	Value
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steep-sided gully landform extending approximately 350 metres along an unnamed stream. The gully is fully vegetated with regenerating native forest, transitioning from mature tawa in the north to mixed broadleaved species and tree ferns along the gully floor and margins. Most of the northern gully remains intact adjoining the northwest slopes of existing overburden and an existing vehicle access and culverted stream. 	Moderate-High
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the broader elevated green backdrop set back and generally more contained above the Western Escarpment. The steep incised and vegetated gully form enhances the escarpment's legibility within the context of the adjoining modified quarry landscape. Regenerating native vegetation within the gully supports diverse microclimates and adds ecological and visual richness and opportunities to experience nature. 	Moderate
Associative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Gully forms part of a broader regenerating forest context including a QEII covenant which has specifically been identified across part of the Northern Gully, supporting its ongoing conservation and ecological value. No additional significant cultural or historical associations have been identified 	Moderate - High
OVERALL RATING		MODERATE – HIGH

6.2.5 Visibility

Views into Northern Gully are typically localised and observed from adjoining areas accessed through the quarry. Beyond this, there are some partial and glimpse views from rural lifestyle properties established to the north of Kelson including Kaitangata Crescent and access along Kelson Track ascending Boulder Hill. Vegetation within adjoining areas of Belmont Regional Park is typically well established and supported by ongoing regeneration of the Cottle Block which further contains potential available views.

VISIBILITY = LOW

6.3 Firth Block

This land area comprises 9.6 hectares along the Western Escarpment including a prominent spur covered in regenerating native vegetation and the lower reach of an unnamed stream. To the south of the spur is the Firth Plant which remains visually well contained within a cleared area of hardstanding excavated into the broader vegetated spur above.

6.3.1 Physical Attributes

The landform of this site forms part of the steep convoluted and vegetated slopes characteristics of the Western Escarpment. This extends between approximately 32 masl along the eastern boundary and reaches an elevation of approximately 180 metres in the north-west corner. An approximate 130-metre section of unnamed stream passes through the north-east area before flowing into a culvert beneath Hebden Crescent and SH2.

While the entirety of this area is now cloaked in regenerating vegetation, linear terracing remains evident along part of the lower southern edge of this spur which likely resulted from previous excavation in this area. Vegetation communities comprise of a mix of early, mid and later seral forest which culminates in an area of tawa-kāmihi forest near the upper edge of the spur.

No existing built form remains evident in this area as part of the vegetated spur frequently containing views of more expansive modification contained within Belmont Quarry and the Firth Plant below.

6.3.2 Perceptual Attributes

The Firth Block forms part of the larger contiguous vegetated Western Escarpment observed from the Hutt Valley. Within this context, the Firth Block contributes a prominent slope which rises to the west of the SH2 and the Hutt River and remains broadly visible from established settlement which extends through this area of the Hutt Valley. Formative tectonic process which has shaped the Hutt Valley remain highly legible and provide an important juxtaposition seen against more extensive modification which remains more comparatively contained within Belmont Quarry.

When viewed from the Hutt Valley, the forested slopes and gullies which characterise the Firth Block remain highly natural with little modification as evidenced by an absence of roads and structures. As a prominent green backdrop, this remains locally memorable in the context of the containing natural backdrop retained along the larger Western Escarpment.

6.3.3 Associative Attributes

All of the Firth Block is included as QEII covenant contiguous with conservation and recreation opportunities widely recognised within the adjoining Belmont Regional Park. No specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified located in the immediate context of ongoing quarrying activity.

6.3.4 Landscape Evaluation

Based on the identified landscape attributes within the Firth Block, this area is assessed as contributing a **moderate–high landscape value** as set out below:

Attribute	Landscape Characteristics	Value
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of a broader uplifted landform defined along the Wellington Fault Scarp Some terracing along the southern edge indicates past excavation Fully cloaked in regenerating native vegetation, ranging from early to later seral stages and culminating in tawa-kāmahi forest near the upper slopes 	Moderate-High
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prominent part of the larger elevated green backdrop set back above Western Hutt Hills The formative tectonic process which shaped this area of the Hutt Valley remain highly legible The forested slopes and gullies which characterise the Firth Block remain highly natural with little evident modification 	High
Associative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected as part of QEII Covenant. Broadly recognised as part of the broader vegetated western escarpment No specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified. 	Moderate-High
OVERALL RATING		MODERATE - HIGH

6.3.5 Visibility

Most of the Firth Block appears prominent along the Western Escarpment and contributes towards the vegetated green backdrop observed beyond the Hutt River along the Wellington Fault. Visibility of this spur extends throughout the Hutt Valley and along the Eastern Hutt Hills. It is highly visible as part of a sequence of steep vegetated spurs which rise to the west of State Highway 2 and the Hutt River Corridor and define the Wellington Fault Scarp.

VISIBILITY = HIGH

6.4 Part of Dry Creek

Land proposed to be included from within the former Dry Creek quarry site comprises some 7.9 hectares adjoining the operational Holcim Cement Plant accessed from Hebden Crescent. This

aspect of the proposed land exchange includes the steeper and typically more established areas of native vegetation surrounding the former quarry.

6.4.1 Physical Attributes

The landform of Dry Creek is influenced by and surrounds rehabilitated benching from the Dry Creek Quarry and remains contained in lower areas of the former modified gully. An unnamed stream remains culverted through this area and facilitates continued vehicle access into this area of the park. The surrounding topography extends from a low point of approximately 50 metres on the lower slopes of the Western Escarpment and a high point of approximately 180 metres along a vegetated spur which runs along the north-west boundary.

Vegetation surrounding the former Dry Creek quarry includes areas of early and late seral broadleaved forest with some signs of previous landform modification remaining apparent in some areas. The upper corner of Dry Creek includes overhead transmission lines connecting into Haywards substation with a general lack of built development otherwise apparent. The landcover established along the faces of the former clean fill below this site remain more modified and less extensively vegetated.

6.4.2 Perceptual Attributes

The former Dry Creek Quarry has modified this contained area along the Western Escarpment. This reflects rehabilitated landforms and private access in the context of ongoing industrial activity. While much of the internal form of this site has been modified by former quarrying and cleanfill operations and benching, elements of the original gully structure remain legible and help maintain a sense of topographic continuity together with more established vegetation on upper slopes. In land use terms, this site is also perceived as a missing piece of the wider escarpment system included in Belmont Regional Park, culminating along SH2 and Haywards Hill Road.

Aesthetically, the site does not presently exhibit a high degree of naturalness due to its recent and ongoing adjoining industrial use. In terms of coherence, the internal character of the site currently appears somewhat fragmented, with a mix of rehabilitated benches, emerging vegetation and residual vehicle access tracks. Nonetheless, when viewed from a distance or in the context of the adjoining vegetated hills, this site aligns visually with the surrounding landscape, particularly as natural cover remains more evident along the front faces of the Western Escarpment and extends onto the elevated vegetated slopes which adjoin the park.

6.4.3 Associative Attributes

The former Dry Creek Quarry holds limited associative values reflecting both its industrial legacy and its adjoining conservation and recreational context. While no specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified in this immediate context, filming for Helm's Deep and Minas Tirith in the Peter Jackson Lord of the Rings trilogy provide some more recent associative values, albeit limited duration which does not substantially increase sensitivity.

6.4.4 Landscape Evaluation

The identified landscape attributes of the former Dry Creek Quarry reflect a mix of natural regeneration and historic modification. The assessment of landscape value is set out below:

Attribute	Landscape Characteristics	Value
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landform reflects a modified gully with rehabilitated benching in lower areas and an unnamed culverted stream enabling vehicle access. • Topography rises from approximately 50 m to 180 m, culminating in a vegetated spur along the north-west boundary. • Vegetation includes early to late seral broadleaved forest on upper slopes, while lower modified faces remain visibly modified and less vegetated. • Overhead transmission lines cross the upper site, though built development is otherwise minimal. 	Moderate
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper extent of former quarry retains partial legibility of the original gully system. • Modified landform and benching adjoining this area and reduce overall naturalness. • Fragmented internal coherence due to mixed vegetation, former access tracks, and rehabilitated surfaces. • Visually integrates with the broader escarpment in longer-range views, where natural vegetation on upper slopes and adjacent parkland reinforces continuity. 	Moderate
Associative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to the broader conservation and recreational identity of Belmont Regional Park. • Adjoins Holcim Cement Plant, reflecting an ongoing industrial association. • No specific cultural or historical associations have been identified other than filming location for The Lord of the Rings 	Low - Moderate
OVERALL RATING		MODERATE

6.4.5 Visibility

The location of Dry Creek predominantly forms a localised depression adjoining a working quarry which means views typically remain contained and observed from within the adjoining quarry. Notwithstanding this, there are some more limited partial and glimpse views from rural lifestyle properties to the north of Kelson and glimpse views through open areas observed through clearings in vegetation within Belmont Regional Park.

VISIBILITY = LOW-MODERATE

6.5 Southern Gully

The proposed Southern Gully comprises some 3.9 hectares which skirts the lower south-west extent of overburden deposited in the Cottle Block and contiguous with the Northern Gully along its western extent. This aspect of the proposed land exchange forms a lower vegetated gully which separates modified terraces which are gradually revegetating in the Cottle Block and rural lifestyle development established along Liverton Road.

6.5.1 Physical Attributes

The Southern Gully straddles the middle section of an unnamed catchment which commences from the headwaters below Kaitangata Crescent and flows east into a steeper vegetated gully to the north of Liverton Road. The centre of the gully contains an approximate 225 metre section of unnamed stream corridor comprising areas of wetland before flowing through a steeper gorge-like section down a series of waterfalls adjoining Te Awa Kairangi/ The Hutt River. The physical attribute of the Southern Gully is influenced by a range of seepages from the surrounding hills, as well as natural barriers downstream that impede flows and back up groundwater. The existing wetland area comprises of approximately 0.27ha and is relatively large for the local area.

Part of the landform of the Southern Gully extends into the Cottle Block and is influenced by the lower western edge of rehabilitated overburden. This continues to the northeast of the Southern Gully and comprises of legible benching enclosure part of the adjoining gully system. Within the Southern Gully the topography extends from a low point of approximately 110 metres along the eastern edge of the stream corridor and a high point of approximately 160 metres near the north-east corner. Earthworks resulting from an overgrown track remain evident between the base of the gully and Liverton Road.

Vegetation surrounding the Southern Gully slopes are variously vegetated in later seral broadleaf vegetation with some emergent rimu and totara. The landcover established along the faces of the former overburden disposal remain more modified and less extensively vegetated. The wetland area includes a mix of indigenous and exotic plant communities. The upper and middle areas are rautahi (*Carex geminata*) dominated and the lower portions contain small areas of raupo (*Typha orientalis*), but it is predominantly a sedgeland with areas of exotic monkey musk. A range of native wetland plants have also been planted.

6.5.2 Perceptual Attributes

The Southern Gully forms part of an unnamed tributary located west of the modified area within the Cottle Block. The adjoining Belmont Quarry has reshaped this contained area along the Western Escarpment through rehabilitated landforms and private access associated with ongoing quarry operations. In this context, the Southern Gully functions as an established vegetated corridor located between the operational quarry from rural lifestyle development along Liverton Road.

In terms of aesthetic coherence, extending the existing pattern of contained vegetated gullies and wetland features would reinforce the natural form and character of the landscape, particularly in combination with the more prominent spur landforms associated with the Wellington Fault. Where retained and enhanced in planted and regenerating native vegetation, this more enclosed wetland environment supports a greater diversity of ecological niches and contributes positively to natural character, thereby strengthening the overall coherence of the natural landscape pattern.

As land wedged between the Cottle Block and Liverton Road, the Southern Gully is not especially memorable and is generally not visible above the more prominent Western Escarpment.

6.5.3 Associative Attributes

No specific significant cultural or historical associations have been identified in this immediate context to date. Within the context of the Western Escarpment, the Southern Gully forms a

localised area of regenerating vegetation and relatively large area of wetland which contributes to the coherence of the whole.

6.5.4 Landscape Evaluation

The identified landscape attributes of the former the Southern Gully reflect a mix of natural regeneration and historic modification. The assessment of landscape value is set out below:

Attribute	Landscape Characteristics	Value
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-catchment gully containing approximately 225 m of unnamed stream and 0.27 ha. wetland which is relatively large in the local context. • Natural landform partially shaped by rehabilitated overburden benching within the Cottle Block and evidence of historic track earthworks to Liverton Road. • Slopes covered in later seral broadleaf forest with emergent rimu and tōtara, and enclosing a mixed sedgeland wetland supplemented by planted native species. 	Moderate
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions as a vegetated corridor between Belmont Quarry and rural lifestyle properties on Liverton Road. • Contributes to a coherent pattern of contained gullies and wetlands linked to the Western Escarpment / Wellington Fault landforms. • Established and regenerating native vegetation supports diverse ecological niches and strengthens natural character. • Visually contained and not especially memorable in wider views, playing more of a supporting/background landscape role. 	Moderate
Associative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific significant cultural or historical associations identified to date. • Forms a localised pocket of regenerating native vegetation within the Western Escarpment. • Contains a relatively large wetland for the area, contributing to overall landscape coherence. 	Low-Moderate
OVERALL RATING		MODERATE

6.5.5 Visibility

Views looking into the Southern Gully remain limited as a section of gully wedged between Overburden within the Cottle Block and rural lifestyle development along Liverton Road. This means views are typically observed from within the adjoining areas of overburden and adjoining areas along Liverton Road and glimpse views from the upper end of Kaitangata Crescent and adjoining areas along Liverton Road. Beyond this, there are also some more limited partial and glimpse views from the Hutt Valley to the east with vegetation within the Southern Gully contributing part of the broader vegetated backdrop of the Western Escarpment.

VISIBILITY = LOW-MODERATE

7.0 Landscape Capacity

In response to the landscape characteristics and values which make up the proposed land exchange, the specific capacity of the landscape has been assessed in terms of the consequences of the land exchange on identified landscape values. This aspect of the assessment takes account of the landscape values of the proposed land exchange areas in the context of their broader landscape, adopting the character areas previously identified at the Hutt City Landscape Characterisation Study.

The consequence of the land exchange on landscape values addresses landscape as the connected, integrated environment which reflects the cumulative effect of natural and cultural process over the combined sites over time. Changes to one area can influence how we perceive or experience the surrounding landscape — for example, interrupting or extending natural patterns, by altering views, or shifting the sense of openness or enclosure. Having assessed the landscape values of each exchange area, assessing effects at the broader landscape character area level engages with the implications of the land exchange in the context of the broader landscape, acknowledging this remains subject to a separate substantive application as necessary to manage potential for significant adverse effects.

7.1 Belmont Hills

Within the Belmont Hills landscape character area, the proposed OBDA forms part of the edge of the broader central plateau which extends between Wellington Harbour, Hutt Valley, and Porirua Harbour. The character of this landscape remains expressive of uplift and freeze-thaw action from the last ice age and local highpoints providing lookout opportunities with broad basins, gullies, and fault-defined valleys supporting diverse microclimates. In this context, the land proposed to be given to Winstone forms a peripheral spur subject to regenerating vegetation which remains well set back beyond the more visible Western Escarpment. Steeper vegetated gullies, including the Northern Gully, adjoin this area and extend from the Western Escarpment into the Belmont Hills to reinforce nature conservation.

The landscape and visual effects associated of the proposed OBDA development will be assessed in the substantive application for resource consent approvals under the Fast Track application and do not form part of this assessment.

7.2 Western Escarpment

The Western Escarpment Character Area will experience a slight increase in visible land included within the Conservation Estate along the prominent Wellington Fault scarp and proportion of waterways forming tributaries along the true right of the Hutt River. This escarpment expresses the steep, defining western edge of the Hutt Valley, shaped by ongoing tectonic uplift and erosion. In response to the proposed land exchange, the surrounding landscape will remain characterised by the steep vegetated backdrop which remains prominent and forms a strong natural and green contrast with the surrounding urban areas, including as part of containing working areas within the adjoining quarry.

Along the Western Escarpment and its associated gully systems, the expanded vegetation cover will maintain and enhance the ecological diversity represented within Belmont Regional Park and adjoining Conservation Estate, reinforcing the escarpment's role as a prominent and visually cohesive natural backdrop along the Hutt Valley.

7.3 Summary of Landscape Values and Capacity

Based on the identified characteristics and values of the proposed land exchange, including the respective landscape value and visibility of each site as set out above, a summary of the overall landscape evaluation and capacity of this proposed land exchange is set out below:

Proposed Land Exchange	Site	Landscape Value	Visibility	Landscape Capacity
DOC Land Given	Proposed Overburden Site	Moderate	Low–Moderate	Belmont Hills Moderate landscape capacity within the broad, undulating, rounded ridgetop which remains stepped back from the Western Escarpment and relatively well contained in the context of former working rural activity. Gullies support areas of mature forest well suited to long term nature conservation.
DOC Land Obtained	Northern Gully	Moderate–High	Low	
	Firth Block	Moderate–High	High	Western Escarpment More limited capacity for change, most often visible within the context of areas of higher ecological and amenity value, including prominent revegetated spurs, enclosed wetlands and gullies. High capacity for enhancing landscape values including scenic aspects within the broader context of the Conservation Estate.
	Dry Creek Quarry	Moderate	Low–Moderate	
	Southern Gully	Moderate	Low	

8.0 Conclusion

From a landscape perspective, this proposal provides a net benefit in terms of the contribution to conservation values via the following improvements:

- Increasing the extent of high-value vegetated land (Northern Gully, Firth Block, Dry Creek, Southern Gully) with higher naturalness and intactness than the land removed.
- Maintaining the scenic backdrop role in the Hutt Valley, consistent with its recognition in the Greater Wellington Regional Council Parks Network Plan (*Toitū Te Whenua 2020–30*).
- Strengthening the contribution of landscape values to the Conservation Estate including connectivity and legibility along the Western Escarpment and support progressive quarrying activity in this context including the ongoing rehabilitation of Dry Creek.

In conclusion, the proposed land exchange is assessed as representing a balanced and strategic landscape response that supports the continued operation of Belmont Quarry while

enhancing the ecological, visual, and recreational values of the Conservation Estate adjoining Belmont Regional Park.

The Proposed OBDA holds moderate landscape values that are well suited to absorbing change due to this site's contained location and adjoining quarry context. In contrast, the land parcels offered in exchange, namely Northern Gully, Firth Block, part of Dry Creek and Southern Gully, are of higher collective relative landscape value with moderate to moderate-high landscape value and therefore afford greater relative contribution towards the Conservation Estate's overall long-term conservation value. The exchange will therefore result in a net landscape gain and is considered appropriate from a landscape perspective.

9.0 References

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Tuia Pito Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (July 2022) Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines',

Appendix 1: Curriculum Vitae



KAIWHAKAMAHERE WHENUA | LANDSCAPE PLANNER,
SENIOR PRINCIPAL | LANDSCAPE PLANNING TECHNICAL LEAD

TOHU MĀTAURANGA | EDUCATION

Master of Landscape Architecture,
Lincoln University

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology,
University of Canterbury

NGĀ PUKENGA O MUA | EXPERIENCE

20 Years

TŪHONO MĀTANGA | AFFILIATIONS

Registered NZILA Landscape
Architect

NOHOANGA KA TIKA | SUITABILITY FOR THE ROLE

has over 20 years of experience in landscape planning, both within New Zealand and in the United Kingdom. His expertise includes broad-scale landscape characterisation and evaluation assessments, natural character assessments, assessments of landscape and visual effects for development proposals, site planning, and the formulation of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects. He regularly provides evidence at Council hearings, and occasionally at Environment Court.

Projects he has worked on cover the breadth of urban, rural and coastal landscapes. His role involves the preparation of landscape and townscape character assessments, coastal and freshwater natural character assessments, landscape and visual impact assessments, landscape capacity studies identifying opportunities and constraints to inform development opportunities, landscape management and rehabilitation plans, and landscape strategies to support successful development proposals.

He is experienced in collaborating with multi-disciplinary teams to deliver effective landscape outcomes. He takes pride in maintaining strong relationships with clients, colleagues and stakeholders.

PUKENGA HANGARAU | TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects
- Landscape Assessment and Planning
- Guidance Papers and Methodologies
- Landscape Capacity Studies and Site Planning
- Urban Planning
- Management Plans
- Expert Evidence

TŪMAHI WHEAKO | PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BURNHAM QUARRY, WINSTONE AGGREGATES 2025

Landscape and visual effects assessment and evidence to support a council hearing for new consented quarry operation in Selwyn District in Canterbury.

WHEATSHEAF QUARRY EXPANSION, WINSTONE AGGREGATES 2024

Landscape and visual effects assessment and evidence to support a council hearing for expansion of existing quarry operation in Selwyn District in Canterbury.

MOUNT MUNRO WINDFARM, MERIDIAN ENERGY LIMITED, 2021-2024

Preparation of assessment and evidence for direct referral relating to a recently consented 20 turbine wind farm located to the east of between Masterton and Tararua District Councils and approximately 5km south of Eketahuna.

UPPER RUAMAHANGA FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN, WAIRARAPA, GREATER WELLINGTON, 2013 – 2019:

Preparation of floodplain management plan directing ongoing floodplain management of the Upper Ruamahanga catchment.

KAIWHARAWHARA FERRY TERMINAL REDEVELOPMENT, KIWIRAIL, 2020:

Preparation of a landscape and natural character effects assessment for consented redevelopment and upgrade to the Wellington Interislander Ferry Terminal. Cancelled following withdrawal of Government funding.

OMĀRARO PRINCE OF WALES RESERVOIR, WELLINGTON WATER, 2017:

Assessment of landscape and visual effects and associated hearing evidence to support a buried 35,000 m³ reservoir within the Wellington Town Belt. This included the development of virtual reality visualisations to assist community engagement.

WAIHI NORTH - OCEANA GOLD NEW ZEALAND, 2017-2025:

Landscape and visual effects assessment and evidence to support a Fast Track Application lodged to expand the existing Waihi Gold Mining Operation.

ASHFORD PARK QUARRY, WINSTONE AGGREGATES 2015:

Assessment of landscape and visual effects and preparation of evidence to support a major extension of existing aggregate extraction through a resource consent application.

**MAHINGA O MUA |
BACKGROUND**

2018 to present

Senior Principal Landscape
Planner,
Boffa Miskell, Christchurch

2012 to 2018

Principal Landscape Planner, Boffa
Miskell, Wellington

2007 - 2012

Associate Landscape Planner,
Barton Willmore, London

2006 - 2007

Principal: Landscape Architecture,
Lakes Environmental, Queenstown

2004 - 2005

Landscape Architect, Civic
Corporation Limited, Queenstown

**BELMONT QUARRY EXTENSION, LOWER HUTT, WINSTONE
AGGREGATES, 2012–2013:**

Assessment of landscape and visual effects and preparation of evidence
and landscape rehabilitation management plan to support a major
extension of quarrying activity through a private plan change.

TRANSPower 220KV SUPPLY LINE, PARAPARAUMU, 2013:

Assessment of landscape and visual effects informing a preferred supply
line for a new 220kV connection upgrade to Paraparaumu substation and
enabling the removal of 24km of existing 110kV line through Transmission
Gully to make way for the highway.

KAIMAHERE TAIAO | LANDSCAPE PLANNER, SENIOR PRINCIPAL

**TOHU MĀTAURANGA |
EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Design, Landscape
Architecture (Hons), Victoria
University of Wellington, 2005

**NGĀ PUKENGA O MUA |
EXPERIENCE**
19 Years

**TŪHONO MĀTANGA |
AFFILIATIONS**

Registered NZILA Landscape
Architect

Chartered Member, Landscape
Institute (CMLI), United Kingdom,
2015 - 2018

**NGĀ HAUTAKA |
PUBLICATION RECORD**

*Getting to Grips with Glint and
Glare*, Local Government New
Zealand Magazine, December
2024

*Spatial Planning for New Zealand's
renewable energy future* (cover
article), Resource Management
Journal, April 2021

A Case for Solar Energy, Local
Government NZ magazine, May
2021

*Natural Character assessments
and provisions in a coastal
environment* (co-author), New
Zealand Association of Impact
Assessment Newsletter #6,
January 2019

Interview in Local Government New
Zealand Magazine: *Smart
Solutions -Coastal Management*,
December 2018

NOHOANGA KA TIKI | SUITABILITY FOR THE ROLE

I have a wide range of experience working for both public sector and private clients on landscape assessment, landscape planning, landscape design and regeneration projects in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

I have specialist expertise in carrying out landscape and visual impact assessments, natural character assessments and landscape sensitivity and capacity studies for a range of development types, including residential, energy and renewables, commercial, industrial, minerals developments and the acquisition and disposal of reserve land.

I also have landscape design experience working from concept through to detailed design in areas including social housing, extra care schemes, residential developments and infrastructure projects.

I have experience representing both Councils and private entities at Hearings and in the Environment Court in relation to landscape, visual and natural character matters.

PUKENGA WHAKARITE | MANAGEMENT SKILLS

I have experience coordinating and managing multi-disciplinary projects, bringing together specialists from various fields (both internal and external to Boffa Miskell) to ensure that timeframes, budgets, and expectations are successfully met. I have also served as a team manager in the Boffa Miskell Wellington office since 2022, which has included coordinating team members and respective inputs across the landscape planning and urban design teams in the Central (Wellington and Nelson offices) Region.

PUKENGA HANGARAU | TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Assessment of Effects on the Environment
- Landscape Design
- Master Planning
- Landscape Assessment and Planning
- Management Plans
- Open Space Planning and Development
- Site Planning
- Visual Assessment

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, NGĀPOTIKI STATION LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT, 2024:

Prepared a landscape and visual effects assessment for a proposed minor dwelling in the Coastal Environment and High Natural Character overlays on the South Wairarapa Coast. The project was granted non notified consent in 2024.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, HUTT CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW, 2024:

Review of Proposed District Plan provisions and boundaries for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Coastal Natural Character Areas, engagement with affected landowners on behalf of Council and provided representation for Council at the District Plan Hearing. The Draft Plan was adopted for public notification in December 2024.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, WHAKAWHIRINAKI – SILVERSTREAM PIPE CROSSING, WELLINGTON, 2018-CURRENT:

Provided natural character and landscape inputs into the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) process to select a preferred site and method of crossing. Prepared the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment as part of the Resource Consent Application for the bridge. Provided project management of the design team who detailed design drawings for hard and soft landscape elements for the bridge surrounds and prepared an Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) for discharge of conditions relating to the resource consent. The project is currently under construction, completion due mid 2025.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, MCLEAN ROAD SOLAR FARM, HELIOS ENERGY, WHAKATANE DISTRICT, 2023:

Prepared Glint and Glare assessment (including representing client at Council Hearing) and provided internal peer review of Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment for a proposed 115MW solar farm near Edgecumbe.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, MT MARUA, UPPER HUTT, 2019

Assessment of landscape and visual effects and landscape mitigation plan for proposed 14 lot residential development at Mt Marua, Upper Hutt.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 49, JOHNSTONE ST, WAITARA. NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL, 2020:

Provided landscape advice, including peer review of landscape and visual effects assessment on behalf of New Plymouth District Council.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 48, WAIRAU ROAD, OAKURA. NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL, 2019

Provided landscape advice in relation to the proposed Plan Change, including representing Council at a public Hearing.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT. PORIRUA COASTAL STUDY: NATURAL CHARACTER EVALUATION OF THE PORIRUA CITY COASTAL ENVIRONMENT, WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL AND PORIRUA CITY COUNCIL, 2018:

Preparation of combined region and district wide natural character assessment and subsequent evaluation of areas of high and outstanding natural character in accordance with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

**MAHINGA O MUA |
BACKGROUND**

2018 to present

Principal Landscape Architect,
Boffa Miskell, Wellington

2015 - 2017

Principal Landscape Architect,
WYG, Cardiff, UK

2012 - 2015

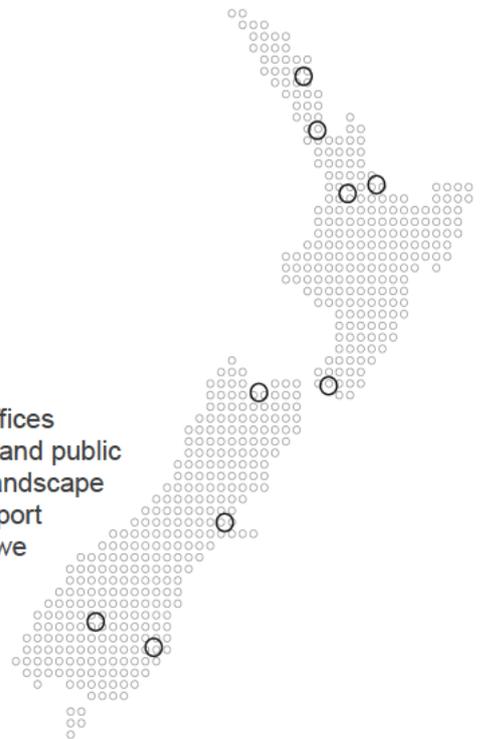
Senior Landscape Architect, WYG,
Cardiff, UK

2005 - 2012

Registered Landscape Architect,
PAOS Ltd, Wellington

Together. Shaping Better Places.

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand environmental consultancy with nine offices throughout Aotearoa. We work with a wide range of local, international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, Te Hihiri (cultural advisory), engagement, transport advisory, climate change, graphics, and mapping. Over the past five decades we have built a reputation for creativity, professionalism, innovation, and excellence by understanding each project's interconnections with the wider environmental, social, cultural, and economic context.



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09 358 2526	09 358 2526	07 960 0006	07 571 5511	04 385 9315	03 548 8551	03 366 8891	03 441 1670	03 470 0460