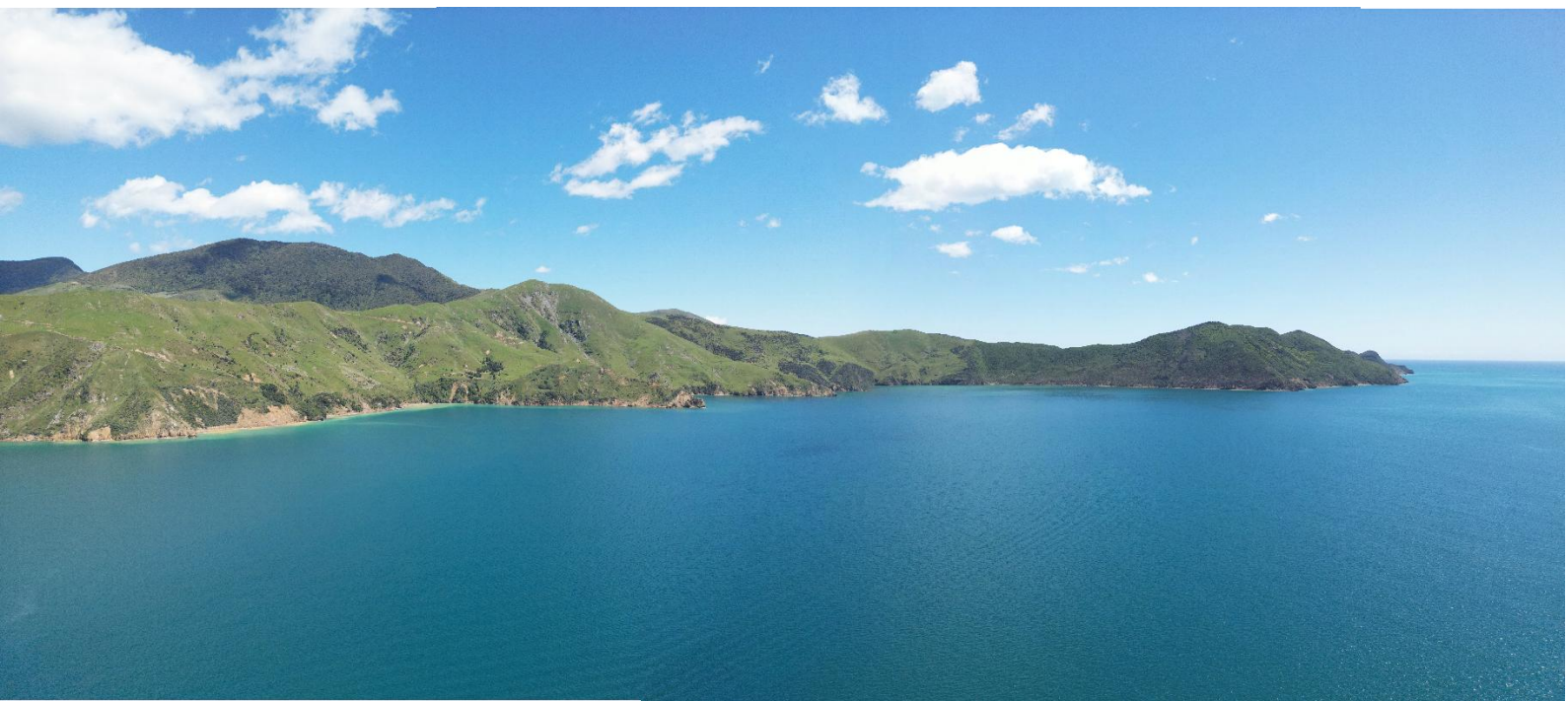




Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project – Papatua

LANDSCAPE, NATURAL CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY ASSESSMENT

October 2026

Isthmus.

Client Name: **Marine Farming Association Inc**
Project Name: **Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project – Papatua**
Document Name: **Landscape, Natural Character and Visual Amenity
Assessment**
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QA: **BC/QD/ED/EC/JH**

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Front cover drone photo: Josh Hunt

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EVIDENTIAL INTRODUCTION

- i. My name is Braddyn (Brad) Thomas Coombs.
- ii. My role in relation to the Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project (“**MSAP**”) has been to provide expert evidence in relation to landscape, visual and natural character effects of the Guards Bay and Papatua marine farm sites. I was the lead author of the Landscape, Visual and Natural Character Assessments for the Guards Bay and Papatua sites which are provided with the application.
- iii. This evidence has been prepared to accompany the applications for approvals required for the MSAP under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (“**FTAA**”). It has been prepared on the understanding that the process for determining applications under the FTAA does not require a hearing to be held, and accordingly the purpose of this evidence is to confirm that, relative to my area of expertise, the Landscape, Visual and Natural Character Assessment Report provides an appropriate description of the relevant environment, the proposed activities comprising the effects of the MSAP on that environment, and the way those effects are proposed to be managed.
- iv. While this application is not being considered by the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2023 and that I have complied with it when preparing this evidence. Other than when I state I am relying on the advice of another person, this evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- v. I am a Principal Landscape Architect at Isthmus Group Limited.
- vi. I graduated from Lincoln University with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (with honours)(1997) and Massey University with a Bachelor of Horticulture (1995).
- vii. I have worked at Isthmus Group (Isthmus) for 20 years, focussing on resource management and landscape planning work. Prior to working at Isthmus I worked at consultancy and local government offices in Aotearoa New Zealand and the United Kingdom. I have 30 years of professional work experience as a landscape architect.
- viii. I have worked on the following projects which are relevant to my experience of assessing the landscape, visual and natural character effects of aquaculture, marine and coastal projects:
 - a) 2006 – 2007 Waihi Beach seawall for Western Bay of Plenty District Council.
 - b) 2013 Re-consenting of the Guards May Marine Farm, Marlborough.
 - c) 2014 Applications to abandon the wreck of the MV Rena on Otaiti (Astrolabe Reef) (for the Department of Conservation).
 - d) 2015 Review of the Admiralty Bay Marine Farm for Clearwater Mussels.
 - e) 2015 Scoping of several marine farm sites in the Marlborough Sounds.
 - f) 2015 – 2020 Orewa Beach Seawall application for Auckland Council.

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- g) 2015 Bledisloe Park Seawall, Little Waihi.
 - h) 2016 Western Firth of Thames Marine Farm (664 ha of new aquaculture space).
 - i) 2017 Plan Change application for the Colville Marine Farm Zone, Coromandel.
 - j) 2017-2018 Waikawa Marina extension for Port Marlborough Ltd.
 - k) 2018 Scoping of a spat marine farm site, Mercury Bay, Coromandel.
 - l) 2020/2021 Coromandel Fin Fish Farm application, for Pare Hauraki.
 - m) 2020-2022 Te Kouma / Sugar Loaf Wharf, Coromandel commercial and public boat ramp and wharf expansion.
 - n) 2021 Te Tumu Kuku Eastern Hauraki Gulf Marine Farm.
 - o) 2021 Guards Bay Marine Farm assessment for the Marlborough Environment Plan.
 - p) 2021 Cliffords Bay Marine Farm assessment for the Marlborough Environment Plan.
 - q) 2021 – 2026 Peer Review of the applications by the Port of Tauranga to develop the wharves in the Stella Passage, for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.
 - r) 2023 - 2024 Novel aquaculture trails (submerged fin fish pens) at Rangitoto ki te tonga / D'Urville island.
 - s) 2024 Landscape and natural character evidence to support the Aquaculture New Zealand and Coromandel Marine Farmers Association submissions on the Waikato Coastal Plan.
 - t) 2024 – 2025 Waihi Beach Seawall, for private applicants.
 - u) 2025-2026. Hananui Aquaculture Project, in Te Ara a Kiwa (Foveaux Strait) for Ngāi Tahu Seafoods Ltd (recently consented under the Fast Track Approvals Act).
- ix. I am a Registered member and Fellow of Tuia Pito Ora - New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (TPO NZILA) and a past President of the Institute (2018-2021). I am a member of the Resource Management Law Association (RMLA) and have presented papers at the RMLA annual conference, including on marine management in September 2025. I have the Ministry for the Environments Making Good Decisions Resource Management Decision makers certificate and I have acted as an Independent Commissioner on several occasions.

CONFIRMATION OF CONTENTS OF REPORT AND PROPOSED CONDITIONS

- x. I confirm that in my opinion the contents of the Landscape, Visual and Natural Character Assessment Report may be relied on in making a decision on the approvals sought for the MSAP and confirm that provided effects within my area of expertise are managed as proposed in the application those effects will not be unacceptable and will be managed to a standard that I consider meets good practice.
- xi. I confirm that I have reviewed the conditions that are proposed for the approvals being sought as they relate to my area of expertise. I confirm that in my opinion, those proposed conditions are appropriate.



Braddyn Coombs
2 October 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 There is an established character of productive land and marine farming in the outer Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound and enclosing landscapes.
- 2 Mussel spat nursery farms have a functional need to be in sheltered waters where the waters are cool enough and with sufficient tidal flush for the operational needs of the farm.
- 3 To ensure that sufficient spat nursery areas are available to support the mussel farming industry, some outer Sounds locations are required.
- 4 The Papatua site within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is an accommodating location for a valued spat nursery farm, in addition to the existing mussel farm location.
- 5 The landscape and seascape of the site and the surrounding context is a productive landscape, with some areas of elevated natural character and landscape values.
- 6 The values of the Outer Sounds and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONLs are broad scale and mainly pertain to the bold landscape, the natural values and the exposed headlands and capes and rocky shores at an expansive scale.
- 7 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua would result in **Moderate** (adverse) effects on the high natural character of the site and **Low** (adverse) effects on the high natural character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. The outstanding natural character of The Capes would not be adversely affected.
- 8 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua would result in **moderate-low** (adverse) effects on the landscape character of the site and **low** (adverse) effects on landscape character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore
- 9 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua is assessed as having **Low** (Adverse) effects on visual amenity from the land and **Moderate – Low** (adverse) effects on visual amenity from the water.
- 10 The Papatua mussel nursery farm will have **low** (adverse) effects on the ONL values of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and Outer Sounds ONL areas.
- 11 The cumulative effects of the new mussel nursery farm on the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore catchment are assessed as **Low** (adverse).
- 12 Existing marine farming at Papatua and Melville Cove is authorised to remain until 31 December 2050. Ongoing marine farming at Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore reinforces the relevance of existing aquaculture as part of the enduring receiving environment for the life of the planning framework.
- 13 Policy 14.21.6(d) of the Marlborough Environment Plan identifies that additional marine farming activities are not appropriate within areas of High or Very High Natural Character

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where they would have significant adverse effects on the values and characteristics of those areas. Natural character effects are assessed above as **Low** to **Moderate** overall and are largely localised. The proposed farm is within a High Natural Character area, and the northernmost corner is within an Outstanding Natural Character area. Natural character effects are well below the level of significant adverse effects on the values and characteristics of the mapped Outstanding and High Natural Character areas.

- 14 The proposed Papatua mussel nursery farm would result in localised landscape, visual and natural character change within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and would not materially compromise the key landscape characteristics, the visual amenity of the wider receiving environment, or the broader values that underpin the Outstanding and High Natural Character mapping.
- 15 Papatua site within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is a logical and accommodating site for a new spat nursery mussel farm and is appropriate in landscape, natural character and visual terms.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- 16 Isthmus Group Ltd (IGL) has been engaged by the Marine Farming Association Inc (MFA) to undertake an assessment of the appropriateness of expanded marine farming at Papatua, Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore in the Outer Marlborough Sounds (“the Site” or “the Project”).
- 17 This assessment is part of a wider application for five aquaculture projects, collectively known as the Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project (MSAP). Each of these projects is assessed individually. The six projects are all within the Marlborough Sounds and are located at:
- Guards Bay;
 - Papatua, Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore;
 - Okuri Bay;
 - Hapuku Rock;
 - Onapua Bay; and
 - Richmond Bay.
- 18 The purpose of this report is to undertake an evaluation of the existing landscape character, natural character and visual amenity values of the Papatua area and to assess the effects of the proposed expansion of marine farming activities on those values.
- 19 New 90ha mussel spat nursery site in cooler waters. The site is a premium Outer Sounds location.
- 20 Iwi will have preferential access to sufficient spat lines to seed their proposed farms in Richmond Bay on usual MFA terms and could participate in the usual MFA balloting for additional lines again on usual MFA terms. Part of the revenue from this farm will be allocated to charitable purposes and will have direct benefits to the community and the environment.
- 21 The following explanation of the strategic importance of the provision of reliable spat nursery farms to the mussel industry is provided from the briefing documents¹:

The Sea temperatures are rising across all New Zealand marine farming areas. These and other environmental stressors are having effects on juvenile Greenshell™ mussels, known as spat. These issues have become more acute in recent times.

A significant issue is spat retention. Sites that tend to retain spat in above average numbers are known as nurseries. The industry needs space that has the qualities for good spat retention to respond to climate

¹ Marlborough Aquaculture: Fit For a Changing World: Climate Adaptation Fast-track Approvals Act Project. Provided by Gascoigne Wicks for the fast Track Approvals Act briefing.

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change. Such nursery sites tend to be in cooler oceanic water flow. Once the spat have reached a suitable size they can then be transferred to other farms. Increasingly, spat is not being retained on existing sites, leading to lost production.

- 22 Patterns of marine farming in New Zealand have seen marine farms located in sheltered areas in bays and in protected coastal areas, including the Marlborough Sounds. Some types of marine farming are more sensitive to site conditions, such as water temperature. With climate change and increasing ocean water temperatures, particular types of marine farming, including salmon farming and spat nurseries require cooler water temperatures. Recently outer Sounds and open ocean locations have been tested for marine farming. For example, open ocean sites in the Cook Strait and the Foveaux Strait have been consented for salmon farming, using open ocean pens, instead of the historic tendency to use sheltered bays.
- 23 In the case of mussel spat nurseries, or outer Sounds locations, with cooler water and higher tidal flushing rates are required to avoid the adverse effects of warming water temperatures on the success of spat survival. Therefore there is a tension between using inner Sounds locations, where marine farming is well established, and outer Sounds locations, which have generally been avoided for mussel farming in the past, due to their remoteness and more exposed locations. To ensure that sufficient spat nursery areas are available to support the mussel farming industry, some outer Sounds or locations are required.

METHODOLOGY

- 24 The following method has been used to assess the site, the broad physical context, the proposal and its landscape and visual effects:
 - A desktop review of the site area, including relevant documents, statutory provisions and the nearby consented marine farms;
 - A visit to the site and surrounding areas was undertaken on 4 and 5 December 2025. Photographs were taken during the site visit, included within **Appendix A – Graphic Attachments**. The author has visited the area for other marine farm assessment work in the past, as detailed below;
 - A description of the existing landscape and seascape context of the site and the surrounding area. The description includes reference to the site's existing uses, including historical and cultural associations;
 - An analysis of the landscape character, natural character and values of the site and of the surrounding area;
 - An assessment of the visibility of the Project from the surrounding areas;

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- An assessment of the potential landscape and natural character effects of the marine farm development on the site and the wider context;
- An assessment of the potential visual effects of the Project on the site and on the wider context; and
- An assessment of the cumulative effects of the Project.

- 25 An assessment of effects on landscape character, natural character and visual amenity is included within this report, referring to a 7-point rating scale for the level of effect. The rating of effects provides a summary of the assessment only. The rating 'scores' are considered alongside the descriptive sections of the assessment; to reduce the likelihood of landscape effects being considered out of context and in a formulaic way.
- 26 Comparisons of how adverse value ratings assigned in accordance with Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (TTatM) relate to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) terminology of 'less than minor', 'minor' and 'more than minor' are provided below.

SIGNIFICANT						
LESS THAN MINOR	MINOR		MORE THAN MINOR			
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH

- 27 A change in a landscape does not in itself mean that a proposal will result in an adverse effect on the values of that landscape:

*"Change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect."*²

- 28 The components of an effect are 'nature x magnitude'. The nature of the effect is the description of what it is (for example, disruption of landscape pattern, reduction of naturalness, modification of landform etc). The nature of effect can be **Adverse** (negative) or **Beneficial** (positive). An assessment of effects combines both value ratings (Very Low – Very High) and the adverse or positive nature of the effect.
- An adverse effect relates to an activity which results in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values; in this circumstance the RMA terminology of 'less than minor', 'minor' and 'more than minor' is applied.
 - A positive effect relates to an activity which enhances landscape and / or visual amenity values through restoration and / or provision of positive elements or features.

² Refer 6.03 - Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'

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- 29 Where a proposal will result in a change, but that change will have no effect on the characteristics or values of a particular landscape or view, a nature of effect rating of '**no effect**' will be provided.
- 30 The method used is consistent with the methodology (principles and approaches) set out in TTatM.
- 31 The methodology section above sets out a series of 'steps' that have been taken to assess the relevant landscape and visual effects of the proposal on the receiving environment. The methodology statement is provided for completeness to set out the key matters that have been taken into consideration. The detailed description of the work undertaken is contained under the relevant headings throughout the report.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- 32 The author undertook a site visit on 4 and 5 December 2025 and took a series of photographs from the surrounds of the site, included as **Site Photographs 2 to 5** within **Appendix A** – which illustrate the site and the surrounding environment. Additional context photographs are also provided.

Description of the site and its setting

- 33 The Marlborough Sounds is a complex landscape formed by an intricate system of drowned river valleys and includes a range of land uses and vegetation patterns.
- 34 The two main inlets in the Sounds are Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte Sound in the east and Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound in the west. The Sounds are also broadly divided into the Inner Sounds, a relatively sheltered, enclosed environment, and the Outer Sounds, which are more exposed to the open sea and weather. The Sounds are broadly orientated north-east to south-west.
- 35 Papatua in Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is in the outer margins of Pelorus Sound. The location of Papatua and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is illustrated in **Figures 1 – 6** within **Appendix A – Graphic Attachments**.
- 36 There is an existing marine farm at Papatua. Marine farming is a well-established activity in Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound, including in Melville Cove at the southwest end of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. See **Figure 2** in **Appendix A**.
- 37 Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is a large bay opening to the north-east. It is approximately 6km wide at the mouth, between Cape Lambert (west) and Cape Jackson (east) and is approximately 8km deep. Papatua³ is on the western side of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and is tucked into the coastal edge at the base of Cape Lambert. The sites' location in the Outer Sounds and exposure to Cook Strait means that weather, light and sea conditions are variable.

³ Also referred to as Pig Bay on Topomaps, etc.

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- 38 Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is made up of a series of smaller headlands and bays – Akina, Taratara, Papatua (Pig Bay), Hunia, Melville Cove, Tunnel Bay, Pool Head, Gannet Point, Te Ope-a-Kupē Rock, Onapopoia, Black Head, Kaitangata, Papatōrea, Waimatete Bay and Onehunga. The two main landforms that enclose Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore are Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson. They are prominent landforms reaching into the Cook Strait at the northeast end of the outer Marlborough Sounds. Waitūi Bay and Guards Bay are to the west of Cape Lambert and the main entrance to Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte Sound is to the east of Cape Jackson.
- 39 The enclosing landscape of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is characterised by steeply rising hill slopes from a rocky shoreline to elevations of up to 200-300m above sea level (asl) on the ridgelines of Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson. The inland enclosing landforms at the head of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore are Puzzle Peak (735 asl), Mt Furneaux (823m asl) and Ōterāwhanga (788m asl).
- 40 The landcover of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore catchment is dominated by regenerating indigenous coastal vegetation, notably within gullies, on the northern end of Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson and on the higher elevated hinterland hills. Areas of indigenous vegetation are generally recovering from historical clearance and burning. The shallower slopes close to the coastal edge, particularly at Papatua, Hunia, Melville Cove, Gannet Point are managed in grazed pasture.
- 41 Existing farm tracks and fencing in the grazed pasture areas reinforce a working rural landscape character in parts of the catchment. The main roads and access tracks in the catchment are at the south end, including Titirangi Road on the ridge and access tracks to houses at Melville Cove. Northern access tracks are low key. Overhead electricity lines services houses and farm buildings at the south end of the inlet.
- 42 There is an historic lighthouse at the end of Cape Jackson⁴.
- 43 Small collections of farm buildings and residences are located at the south end of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore at Melville Cove, Tinui, Pool Head and Te Ope-a-Kupē Rock, Onapopoia. The buildings and residences are all at least 4-5km from Papatua and some have elevated landforms between them and Papatua. Many of the buildings and residences at the south end of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore do not have resource or building consent.
- 44 The Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore catchment includes the Cape Lambert, Puzzle Peak, Melville Cove and Pari Kawanui Scenic Reserves, the Titirangi Farm Park Recreation Reserve and the Sounds Foreshore Local Purpose Reserve⁵. There is no continuous land access around the coastal edge. There are walking and access tracks out onto Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson to the Cape Campbell Scenic Reserve and the lighthouse at Cape Jackson.

⁴ This Cape marks the northern entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound. The Cape is approximately 100 meters high and the area is fringed with rocks close to the shore. About 600 meters out from the Cape is the old lighthouse standing on a sunken rock. There are rocks beneath the surface to the north-north east and south of the lighthouse. [Outer Sounds | Cruise Guide](#)

⁵ [Outdoor Access Map](#)

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- 45 An open ocean salmon farming project known as Blue Endeavour has recently been consented for a site approximately 7km to the north of Cape Lambert, in the Cook Strait. At the time of writing, trial pens have been installed at the site and fish are being introduced to the pens.

Description of existing marine farming in Papatua and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore

- 46 There is an existing 6 ha inshore marine farm (8167) is located at Papatua. The mussel farm has a maximum of 17 lines. Deeper into Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore at Melville Cove there are 10 consented marine farms of various sizes and shapes, generally long and rectangular, oriented parallel to the shoreline. See **Figures 3 to 5 in Appendix A**.
- 47 The coastal permit for the marine farm at Papatua expires on 23 February 2045. The Resource Management (Extended Duration of Coastal Permits for Marine Farms) Amendment Act extends the expiry date of the coastal permits for the marine farms at Papatua and Melville Cove to 31 December 2050⁶.
- 48 Due to the strategic location of the existing marine farm and its success at growing spat, the MFA intend to add a further spat nursery farm at Papatua. The proposed project, see details below, includes consenting an additional marine farm of 90 hectares. See **Figure 6 in Appendix A**.
- 49 This Assessment considers the intended additional marine farm, on the natural character, landscape character and visual amenity values of the area.
- 50 The additional marine farm is illustrated within **Appendix A**.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- 51 A new 90 ha site adjacent to (approximately 60 metres away from) the existing farm 8167 is proposed. The site is to be used as a mussel spat nursery. 8167 has a proven success rate for spat raising and is an extremely valuable site. Cooler oceanic sites like Papatua are rare in the Marlborough Sounds, as it is fed by the waters of Cook Strait.
- 52 The project comprises:
- A new marine farm of 90 hectares; and
 - Mussel spat lines.
- 53 A diagram of conventional line mussel farming is included within **Appendix A Graphic Attachments**, however as an overview conventional line farming typically includes:
- An anchor at the end of each line which is retained in-situ for the lifespan of the marine farm.

⁶

[Resource Management \(Extended Duration of Coastal Permits for Marine Farms\) Amendment Act 2024 | New Zealand Legislation](#)

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- A series of buoys along each line which are adjusted in number and spacing, depending on the weight of the crop on the line.
- An orange float at the end of each line to demarcate the mussel farm.
- Cardinal buoys with lights as specified by the Harbourmaster to mark the extents of the farm.

PLANNING CONTEXT

54 The following section provides a brief overview of the statutory context of the site relevant to natural character, landscape character and visual amenity matters. This section of the report is not intended to provide a planning assessment, but rather to highlight relevant provisions to help frame the assessment of landscape effects. A full planning assessment of the Project has not been undertaken here as that is not within the scope of this report. A full Planning Assessment is contained in the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE).

55 The site is located within the Marlborough District and Region.

Fast-Track Approvals Act

56 The applications are being made through the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024. The Fast-track Approvals Act provides a separate approval pathway for projects with regional or national benefits, including a decision-making framework that requires adverse impacts to be considered in relation to those benefits.

57 Under section 85 of the Act, an application may be declined where there are adverse effects of an application are so significant to be out of proportion to the project's regional or national benefits, after taking into account any conditions or modifications proposed to address those impacts.

Resource Management Act (1991)

58 With regard to Part 2 of the RMA, the relevant sections are contained within section 6: Matters of National Importance, and section 7: Other Matters:

- S6(a) - the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.
- S6(b) the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development
- S7(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values.
- S7(f) maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010) – Amended 2025 (NZCPS)

59 The objectives and policies of the NZCPS address the management of the coastal environment. The site is located within the coastal environment. The provisions of the NZCPS are relevant to this assessment under the RMA.

60 Relevant objectives and policies include:

- **Objective 2** – Preservation of Natural Character
- **Policy 1** – The Extent and Characteristics of the Coastal Environment
- **Policy 2** – The Treaty of Waitangi, tangata whenua and Māori
- **Policy 6** – Activities in the Coastal Environment
- **Policy 8** – Aquaculture
- **Policy 13** – The Preservation of Natural Character
- **Policy 14** – The Restoration of Natural Character
- **Policy 15** – Natural Features and Natural Landscapes

Marlborough Environment Plan (2025) – operative in part (MEP)

61 Again, this is an application being made under the FTAA, but it is relevant context to consider the Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP). The MEP is the (nearly fully) operative regional and district plan and provides the primary statutory framework at the local level in terms of RMA developments.

62 Relevant chapters of the MEP, and the relevance to Aquaculture, include:

- **Chapter 3:** Marlborough’s Tangata Whenua Iwi
 - Relevant objectives within this chapter (3.1, 3.4 and 3.6) signal that frameworks associated with the management of aquaculture must have regard to the relationship of tangata whenua and the coast.
- **Chapter 4:** Sustainable Management of Natural and Physical Resources
 - Objectives 4.1 and 4.3 acknowledge the multiple values of the Sounds’ natural resources and provide for a balanced approach to decision-making that integrates social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

- **Chapter 7: Natural Character**
 - Objective 7.1 establishes the degree of natural character while objective 7.2 seeks to preserve and promote restoration of the natural character of the coastal environment, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and to protect them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- **Chapter 8: Landscape**
 - Objectives 8.1 and 8.2 note that outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in Marlborough are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, while high amenity landscapes are to be maintained and enhanced.
- **Chapter 9: Indigenous biodiversity**
 - Objectives 9.1 and 9.2 provide a clear direction to protect and increase and improve existing indigenous marine biodiversity.
- **Chapter 14: Use of the Coastal Environment and the Allocation of Coastal Space**
 - Objectives within Chapter 14, provide direction, both broadly and specifically, around recognising the need to establish appropriate uses in appropriate places within the coastal environment while managing adverse effects. The occupation of public space for private gain should be sustainably allocated and managed.

63 **Appendix 1 and 2 of Volume 3** of the MEP includes the Landscape Schedule of Values and Coastal Natural Character Values Schedules, including for the Outer Sounds, Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, Cape Lambert / Cape Jackson and inner Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, respectively. **Appendix 4** of the MEP Determines Significant Adverse Effects on Natural Character.

64 The outer Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore area is mapped as having outstanding natural character in the MEP. See **Figures 2 and 7 in Appendix A.**

Statutory Acknowledgements

- 65 Te Tau Ihu (the northern South Island) is home to eight mana whenua iwi⁷. Te Tau Ihu Statutory Acknowledgements (2014)⁸ provides details on the Statutory Acknowledgement areas, including Statements of Association.
- 66 Of specific relevance to this project are:
- Te Ope a Kupe (Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore) (Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau);
 - Puhikereru (Mt Furneaux) (Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau);
 - Te Tau Ihu Coastal Marine Area – Coastal Statutory Acknowledgement (Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Maui, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Tama ki Te Tau Ihu); and
 - Coastal Marine Area – Statutory Acknowledgement and Deed of Recognition (Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Tama ki te Tau Ihu, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Maui, Ngāti Rārua).

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 67 The following section assesses the Project's effects on the landscape and visual amenity values of the site and the wider landscape setting. The specific **Natural Character**, **Landscape Character**, **Visual Amenity** and **Cumulative** effects considered are:
- a) **Natural Character effects:**
 - i. *Biotic attributes;*
 - ii. *Abiotic attributes; and*
 - iii. *Experiential attributes.*
 - b) **Landscape Character effects:**
 - i. *Effects on the Landscape and Character of Papatua*
 - c) **Visual Amenity effects:**
 - i. *Water based public viewpoints and locations within the immediate setting of the site; and*
 - ii. *Landscape setting of Papatua*
 - d) **Cumulative effects**

⁷ Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Tama ki Te Tau Ihu, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira

⁸ Te Tau Ihu Statutory Acknowledgements (2014) - <https://v3au.zone-secure.net/drive/5063/375991/#page=1>

Natural Character Effects

68 Natural character is not defined in the RMA nor the NZCPS.

69 TTatM adopts the interpretation that:

Natural character is an area's distinctive combination of natural characteristics and qualities, including degree of naturalness. Natural character and naturalness are not the same thing.⁹

70 Policy 7.1 of the MEP provides guidance on what constitutes natural character in the Marlborough context:

Policy 7.1.1 – Recognise that the following natural elements, patterns, processes and experiential attributes contribute to natural character:

- a. abiotic systems - physical processes, geomorphology, topography, landform, fresh and coastal water bodies, movement of water and sediment, water quantity/quality, natural darkness of the night sky;*
- b. biotic systems - species, communities, habitats, and ecological processes; and*
- c. experiential attributes - the way in which people experience those natural elements, patterns and processes in Policy 7.1.1.a. and b., including sounds and smell, and also in the case of Marlborough's tangata whenua iwi how natural character attributes form part of their cultural and spiritual values. [RPS]*

71 Part of the outer areas of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, including the outer waters, Cape Lambert, Cape Jackson and the upper elevations of the surrounding landscape hinterland are identified as having Outstanding Natural Character in the MEP. See **Figures 2 and 6** in **Appendix A**.

72 Papatua and the existing marine farm are not within the area of outstanding natural character. The 90ha proposed marine farm extends towards the outstanding natural character boundary of Cape Lambert / Cape Jackson. There is a small overlap with the northernmost corner of the proposed farm. The boundary of the outstanding natural character area is relatively arbitrary, as it is an arc that connects between the base of Cape Lambert and the base of Cape Jackson, that is, in the context of the boundary of the outstanding natural character area in the water of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, there isn't necessarily any physical difference between one side of the boundary line and the other.

⁹ Te Tangi a te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand, Landscape Assessment Guidelines: Chapter 09 Āhuetanga Taia, Natural Character.

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- 73 As discussed above, Papatua includes an existing marine farm, which is part a modified coastal landscape and seascape. Melville Cove, to the south, includes 10 marine farms and is a productive land and marine farming environment. The surrounding landform, is relatively remote and is modified and characterised by regenerating indigenous coastal vegetation, with intermittent areas of managed pasture and a series of small collections of residential and farm buildings, with access tracks and electricity lines.

Biotic attributes

- 74 The biotic environment on the Papatua site is described in detail in ‘Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project Coastal Ecological Impact Assessment’, by Robertson Environmental Ecological Assessment and Reporting Services. September 2026. (ECIA).
- 75 The seafloor below the marine farm is characteristic of a relatively low-diversity, soft-sediment; sandy mud, mud, muddy sand habitat ecosystem typical of Marlborough Sounds environments. The soft sediment habitat has low complexity and no identified reef, biogenic habitat, TAR benthic habitat or Ecologically Significant Marine Site (ESMS) overlap at Papatua¹⁰. The seafloor supports sparse epifaunal and infaunal assemblages. All soft sediment habitat at Papatua and across the wider MSAP context is assigned low ecological value¹¹.
- 76 The wider receiving environment at Papatua includes ESMS 2.33B which is described as Pig Bay to Hunia Coast (tubeworm) in the ECIA. ESMS 2.33B is retained as a discrete **Very High** ecological value feature because of its’ formally recognised ecological significance and contribution to the wider ecological context; their presence does not elevate the value assigned to intervening soft sediment habitat¹². ESMS 2.33 is located more than 170m from the Papatua consent area and more than 70m from its buffer edge.
- 77 Wild fish habitat at the Papatua site is assessed as having **Low** ecological value, with **Moderate** ecological value across the MSAP Project ZOI¹³.
- 78 Seabird habitat values are assessed as being **High** at the Papatua site and **Very High** across the broader ZOI for the MSAP¹⁴.
- 79 Marine mammal habitat values are assessed as being **High** at the Papatua site and **Very High** across the MSAP ZOI¹⁵
- 80 Avifauna use of the immediate site appears limited. Field observations recorded only a single little blue penguin, with no other seabirds or marine mammals observed during the survey. Nevertheless, wider evidence indicates that mussel farm structures can attract seabirds by providing feeding and roosting opportunities, suggesting some potential for

¹⁰ ECIA, Table 3-2, pg 14.

¹¹ ECIA, pg 12.

¹² ECIA, pg 13.

¹³ ECIA ,pg 16.

¹⁴ ECIA, pg 19.

¹⁵ ECIA, pg 23.

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localised increases in bird activity associated with aquaculture infrastructure. King Shags¹⁶ are known to forage outside and within marine farms.

- 81 Ecologically significant sites, habitats, or species (as defined under regional or national criteria) are absent within the Papatua consent area, and no reefs, biogenic habitats, or regionally significant benthic species were identified.
- 82 Overall, the biotic attributes reflect a modified but naturally low-complexity marine ecosystem, with limited ecological distinctiveness at the Papatua site scale
- 83 At a broader scale, the Marlborough Sounds region supports a high diversity of marine mammals (at least 22 species), including resident species such as bottlenose dolphins and occasional visitors such as orca and migratory whales. However, within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore itself, marine mammal presence is intermittent, and the bay is not identified as a significant habitat area for these species.
- 84 The avifauna letter prepared by Dr McClellan reviews the avifauna considerations for the MSAP, including the Papatua site. The letter considers seabirds of the Marlborough Sounds, longline mussel farms as bird habitats, threats facing Marlborough Sounds seabirds and mitigation. The operational mitigation measures include general waste management and a mussel float recycling program and the avoidance of King Shag habitat. The avifauna letter concludes¹⁷:

In my opinion, the proposed spat nursery and mussel production farms will not have negative effects on seabird species of the Marlborough Sounds. The farms are more likely to have positive effects on species that use the farms for safe roosts from which they can forage, both within and adjacent to mussel farms. Pelagic seabird species forage out to sea and are the least likely to be affected.

King shag are a very rare species restricted to the Marlborough Sounds. Research focused on the interactions of the species with longline farms has unequivocally shown that birds use the farms for foraging, and that the farms have a neutral effect on the species overall, with individuals exhibiting a variety of foraging strategies from almost exclusive use to low use of mussel farms.

- 85 Overall, the biotic attributes reflect a modified but naturally low-complexity marine ecosystem, with limited ecological distinctiveness at the Papatua site scale, set within a wider context of high or very high ecological values.

¹⁶ “King shag (*Leucocarbo carunculatus*) is one of the world’s rarest seabird species. The species is endemic to the Marlborough Sounds and is seldom observed outside of this region.” – as discussed within the ‘Biological report for an extension to marine farm 8164 in Hikoekoea Bay, Guards Bay, outer Pelorus Sound’ prepared by Davidson Environmental Ltd

¹⁷ Potential effects on seabirds of proposed longline aquaculture projects, Marlborough Sounds letter (and Appendix) prepared by Dr Rachel McClellan. 14 September 2026. Page 4.

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Abiotic Attributes

- 86 The Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore coastal embayment is a broad coastal bay, enclosed by Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson, facing outwards to the Cook Strait.
- 87 The seabed within the Papatua consent area is composed of soft sediment; sandy mud, mud, muddy sand, forming a gently sloping benthic environment at depths ranging approximately from 25m to 45m¹⁸. No rocky reefs, hard substrates, or abrupt bathymetric features were identified.
- 88 This soft sediment habitat is typical of Outer Sounds environments and is the dominant subtidal habitat type in the Marlborough Sounds.
- 89 Hydrodynamic conditions are relatively open, although sheltered from the south and the west, with tidal flows along the shoreline and water movement influenced more strongly by wind, particularly northerly and northwesterly weather events. Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore's proximity to Cook Strait contributes to relatively fast tidal flush compared with more enclosed inner Sounds environments.
- 90 Catchment influences are moderate to low, with surrounding land largely in regenerating coastal vegetation and pasture, closer to the Papatua consent area. Sediment runoff into the marine environment is expected to be at the lower end of regional ranges.
- 91 The physical environment is therefore characterised by:
- Uniform, soft sediment seabed substrates
 - Low structural complexity
 - Moderate water exchange and flushing
 - Limited terrestrial sediment inputs
- 92 Overall, the abiotic attributes reflect a relatively homogeneous and typical coastal marine environment of the outer Pelorus Sound, with low natural physical variability at the Papatua site scale.
- 93 The proposed change by way of a new 90ha mussel spat nursery farm, which includes both anchor points and weights or weighted ropes will result in some disturbance to the soft mud on the seafloor of the site. The initial installation of the anchors and regular lifting and re-submergence of weights or ropes will displace some of the soft material on the seabed, resulting in limited effects on the abiotic attributes of the seafloor, however the mud will re-settle around the anchors and weights.

Experiential Attributes

- 94 Presently, the existing conventional marine farm structure is visually well contained, enclosed by the landscape of Cape Lambert and southern Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore.

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However, the marine farm can be publicly experienced from private access tracks onto Cape Lambert, the water and aerial views.

- 95 The experiential qualities of Papatua are influenced by its remote coastal setting, natural landform enclosure, and generally undeveloped character, albeit with existing aquaculture activity present. The bay is moderately enclosed and framed by pastoral hill country with regenerating native vegetation along the coastal margins, contributing to a sense of naturalness and reduced human modification when viewed from the water. The landforms of Cape Lambert, Cape Jackson, Puzzle Peak (735m asl), the Titirangi Ridge (780m asl), Mt Furneaux (823m asl) and Ōterāwhanga (688m asl) provide a bold large-scale landscape which encloses Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. See **Figures 1 and 3** – Site Context and the Aerial Photographs in **Appendix A**.
- 96 Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is popular for outer Sounds fishing and diving, with Go Dive Pacific (Lermontov Lodge)¹⁹ being based at Melville Cove, with easy access to the sunken wreck of the Mikhail Lermontov at the south end of the bay being one of the world's most popular dive sites. A privately maintained track from Meretoto / Ship Cove provides tramping access out to the Cape Jackson Lighthouse.
- 97 Experienced from the water, marine farms are very difficult to discern from beyond a distance of 2km. Beyond 250m to 300m distance mussel farms cease to be an important part of a view^{20 21}.
- 98 Where the marine farm is visible, it is seen against the junction where the water meets that land and the backdrop of Cape Lambert which is a partially modified and working rural landscape with a dominant cover of regenerating indigenous coastal vegetation with large patches of managed pasture, and an existing marine farm inshore of the proposed new one. The area at the base of Cape Lambert which backdrops the marine farm site is in pasture with prominent side cut tracks and an unconsented shelter/shed to the north of the site. See photographs from **Viewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4** in **Appendix A**.
- 99 At night the navigation marker lights could be visible within 2-3 km from the site, but not otherwise. If the harbourmaster specifies standard marine farm lighting, that consists of a group of five yellow flashes every 20 seconds. The lights would be positioned 1m above the surface of the water and have a nominal range of 1 nautical mile. In good viewing conditions the lights can be visible for more than its nominal range.
- 100 Navigation safety lights do not interfere with the darkness of the night sky. They are a pinpoint of light which occurs below the horizon and are focussed horizontally. They do not interfere with night vision.
- 101 The mussel nursery farm will be visually recessive, with lines of mussel floats and limited additional infrastructure visible on the surface of the water which are required for

¹⁹ [Home | Go Dive Pacific | Training and Tours | Marlborough NZ](#)

²⁰ *Stormhaven Limited v Waikato Regional Council* [2026] NZEnvC 170.

²¹ *Clearwater Mussels Limited v Marlborough District Council* [2018] NZEnvC 88.

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navigational and safety reasons. The mussel nursery farm would be barely visible from the centre of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore channel.

- 102 Passing aerial views of the marine farm will be possible from sight-seeing planes or helicopters and/or those landing at the airstrip south of Gannet Point. The broader area is visible from passing commercial aircraft, generally at 10,000 – 20,000 feet above the site. See **Figure 9** in **Appendix A**. Note that it is impossible to see the existing marine farm at Papatua and Melville Cove at this distance, other than as a faint pattern on the water surface.
- 103 Where the marine farm is visible at those distances, it will be seen as a faint patterning on the surface of the water and will be visually subservient to the broader patterns of inlets and sounds set within the broader landscape of the enclosing landforms.
- 104 The area of high natural character at Inner Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore mapped in Volume 3 Appendix 2 of the MEP lists the following key characteristics²²:
- Relatively sheltered and largely unmodified intertidal and near-shore marine environment.
 - Cape Lambert Scenic Reserve.
 - Eastern and southern shores backed by regenerating scrub/forest.
 - Some ecologically significant marine sites.
- An Outstanding Natural Character overlay applies to this sub-area. Refer to Table ONC9 and accompanying Maps for further information.
- 105 As assessed above the mussel nursery farm will not have adverse effects on the key characteristics that are listed for the area of high natural character, particularly the terrestrial natural character values.
- 106 The outstanding natural character area ONC 9, The Capes, similarly lists a series of characteristics which are generally associated with terrestrial natural character values and are focused on the two capes, the coastline and a buffer into the adjoining coastal marine waters²³. A small section of the northern part of the mussel nursery farm is in mapped ONC 9 The Capes. The small section within the mapped ONC 9 could be excluded via an adjustment to the boundary of the mussel nursery farm consent area, however such a small intrusion would not adversely affect the characteristics listed in Volume 3, Appendix 2, of the MEP.

²² [Operative in part - Appendix 2 - Coastal Natural Character Schedule of Characteristics \(Updated 26 August 2026\)](#). Page 6.

²³ [Operative in part - Appendix 2 - Coastal Natural Character Schedule of Characteristics \(Updated 26 August 2026\)](#). Page 83.

Summary of Natural Character Effects

107 In summary, the new mussel nursery farm at Papatua would likely result in **Moderate** (adverse) effects of the natural character of the site and **Low** (adverse) effects on the natural character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, for the following reasons:

- The seafloor conditions beneath the site are suitable for consideration of marine farming activities;
- Installation of anchors and line weights will cause some disturbance to the seafloor; however, sediments are expected to re-settle naturally around the structures over time;
- The proposal presents a low risk of entanglement for marine mammals that is managed by conditions and management plans;
- Potential impacts on King Shags are expected to be neutral;
- Continued and new marine farming at Papatua may enhance foraging and roosting opportunities for certain bird species;
- The marine farm will be visually contained by the surrounding landform of Papatua, between Taratara and Hunia, limiting wider visibility;
- The development will primarily be experienced from water-based viewpoints; and
- Marine farming structures are visually recessive, particularly from a distance beyond 250m to 300m.

Landscape and Character Effects

Effects on the Landscape and Character of Papatua

108 Papatua is a visually and physically discrete part of the broader landscape of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, between Taratara and Hunia. The enclosing landforms are bold, as described above and illustrated in **Appendix A**. The landscape and seascape of the Marlborough Sounds is bold in scale, yet highly complex in its' patterns. See **Figure 1** in **Appendix A**.

109 Papatua includes both land and marine based farming development and a level of noticeable modification. Papatua and Melville Cove include roading infrastructure, residences and farm buildings, set within a modified and managed grassland landscape. The western side of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore at Papatua, Hunia and Melville Cove is the most developed part of the catchment.

110 Papatua is enclosed by steep hill slopes predominantly covered in grazed pasture, interspersed with fragmented areas of exotic vegetation and regenerating native bush. The immediate backdrop landscape is further characterised by farm tracks (sidecut into hillsides) which reinforces a working rural landscape character. The broader catchment of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore includes areas of higher natural values, including the broad pattern of regenerating indigenous coastal vegetation on the capes and the higher hinterland landscape.

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- 111 The inshore waters of Papatua Bay exhibit a modified, working character, containing existing marine farm (8167) located along the shoreline.
- 112 The broader landscape context of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is defined by steep regenerating native and pastoral slopes. The outer headlands of Cape Lambert and Jackson support regenerating coastal vegetation, while the upper ridgelines and peaks are characterised by indigenous forest cover.
- 113 The assessment of the landscape effects of the proposal on these characteristics is undertaken within three key groupings: physical, perceptual, and associative attributes, as outlined below. A more detailed assessment of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore landscape values and how they relate to the Outer Sounds Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) values, of which Papatua forms a small part, is provided later in this report.
- 114 The principal **physical effects** of the new marine farm will include the displacement of seabed sediments and the occupation of the water column by anchors, weights, lines, buoys, and mussel crops (spat). While this will result in a reduction in the naturalness of the immediate site, these effects are assessed within the context of the enclosing, modified landscape of Papatua, which supports working rural land uses and an existing marine farm. The new marine farm will contribute to increased biological productivity and will enhance water filtration within and immediately surrounding the site.
- 115 In terms of **perceptual effects**, the scale and enclosure of the surrounding landforms within Papatua, combined with the visually recessive nature of marine farm, mean that the vividness and memorability of the landscape are expected to remain largely unchanged.
- 116 Given the visibility of the site and the limited surface expression of mussel farming structures, effects on landscape perception will generally be confined to close-range viewpoints. It is only when approaching the site in proximity that the marine farm may influence the composition of the landscape or the visitor experience, noting that marine farms are very difficult to discern from beyond a distance of 2km. Beyond 250m to 300m distance mussel farms cease to be an important part of a view²⁴.
- 117 The Go Dive Pacific Lermontov Lodge is in Melville Cove and the Mikhail Lermontov wreck dive site is at the south end Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and southeast of the Hunia headland approximately 3km from the proposed mussel nursery farm site. Divers visiting the lodge and the wreck site have views of the marine farms within Melville Cove, however they will not pass or have views of the new marine farm site at Papatua.
- 118 With regard to **associative effects**, the broader landscape context, including the scale of the surrounding landforms and pastoral forested ridgelines that enclose Papatua and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore will remain unaffected by the proposal. Existing associative values relate to a remote, working rural environment and the walking track from Ship

²⁴

Stormhaven Limited v Waikato Regional Council [2026] NZEnvC 170.

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Cove (Meretoto) out onto Cape Jackson with the surrounding waters supporting both commercial and recreational fishing activities.

- 119 Overall, the presence of the new mussel farm is unlikely to generate adverse effects on associative values and may, for some users, result in positive associations, particularly in reinforcing the working character of the terrestrial and marine coastal environment at Papatua.
- 120 In summary, the new mussel nursery farm at Papatua is anticipated to result in **moderate-low** (adverse) effects on the landscape character of the site and **low** (adverse) effects on landscape character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, for the following reasons:
- While the proposal will lead to a localised reduction in naturalness within the immediate site, primarily due to seabed disturbance and occupation of the water column, the overall naturalness of Papatua will remain largely unchanged, as the development is viewed within the context of a large-scale enclosing, modified working rural landscape, within a broader more natural context.
 - The scale of the surrounding landforms and seascape, combined with the visually recessive nature of the mussel nursery farm, will ensure that the vividness and memorability of the landscape setting are maintained.
 - The wider landscape context, including the surrounding landforms and pastoral and forested ridgelines, will remain unaffected by the proposal.

Visual Amenity

- 121 The visible elements of a mussel farm are limited to the float lines and cardinal buoys, which are required for navigation, safety, harvesting, and maintenance purposes. The primary operational infrastructure, including backbone lines and longlines, is located below the water surface and is not visible from either land-based or water-based viewpoints. The float lines are visible and will be adjusted in number, depending on the weight of the mussel spat on the lines. Vessels will occasionally be present to maintain the mussel nursery and to harvest spat.
- 122 While the proposal includes a new marine farm, the existing mussel farm infrastructure offers a marine farming character to Papatua and southern Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore at Melville Cove, complementing the land-based farming activities. An expansion and change in water surface visibility will occur around the site and across Papatua, with the presence of marker buoys and surface activity introducing a localised visual pattern of activity that remains largely recessive within the wider coastal setting.
- 123 The only visible parts of the marine farm itself are those components that are floating on the surface for operational, marine safety and navigation purposes.
- 124 There are a number environmental and observational factors that influence the visibility of a marine farm:

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- Weather and sea conditions – marine farms are generally more visible in calm clear conditions where reflections on smooth water may make buoys appear larger in size. In contrast, swell, wave action, seas spray, and coastal haze can obscure (fully or partially) or temporarily conceal surface features. Reduced light can further limit visibility.
- Viewing angle and/or elevation – visibility tends to increase with elevation and is lowest when viewed from sea level.
- Viewing distance – the distance of the viewer from the visible structures of the marine farm.

Water based public viewpoints and locations within the immediate setting of the site

- 125 From near sea level, and under favourable conditions, marker buoys are generally difficult to discern beyond distances of approximately 2–3 km, with a noticeable decline in visibility at 1–1.5 km. Beyond 250m to 300m distance mussel farms cease to be an important part of a view²⁵.
- 126 Vessels travelling through Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore would typically be located 1.0 -2.0 km from the nearest edge of the marine farm as they navigate through the central part of the channel. At these distances, buoys would be viewed against the land backdrop of the shoreline at Papatua, which assists in visually integrating the mussel nursery farm into its setting. The marine farm will remain visually recessive, although it will be perceived by observers who are actively looking for it.
- 127 The scale and enclosure of the surrounding landscape is dominant over the scale and water surface of Papatua.

Land based views in the setting of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore

- 128 Land-based viewing opportunities are limited, particularly from publicly accessible locations. The marine farm is located approximately 300m from an isolated cabin/shed at the base of Cape Lambert. The cabin/shed is not consented. There are no other buildings or residences at Papatua. See **Figures 3, 6, 10, 11 and 12 in Appendix A**.
- 129 The site is not visible from Melville Cove or Tunnel Bay on the more developed southern edge of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. There is a line of site and therefore potential visibility from residences at Pool Head, the air strip, Gannet Point and Te Ope a Kupe Rock Onapopoia, however at viewing distances of 3km to 5km, the lines of floats would be distant patterns on the water's surface. Many of the residences and buildings at the south end of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore do not have consent. Vessels visiting and maintaining the new mussel farm would be more visible.
- 130 The Herenga ā nuku Aotearoa Outdoor Access maps identify the Cape Lambert Scenic Reserve at the head of the cape and the Sounds Foreshore Reserve around the coastal

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Stormhaven Limited v Waikato Regional Council [2026] NZEnvC 170.

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edge of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore²⁶. There are no formed coastal tracks around the foreshore reserve. There are no public access roads or tracks on the farmland enclosing Papatua or on Cape Lambert. There is a private walking track out onto Cape Jackson, at distances of 5km to 9km from the new marine farm site. Puzzle Peak Scenic Reserve is approximately 2km to the west of the proposed mussel nursery farm site. Other scenic reserves in the area that do not have views of the Papatua marine farm site include Melville Cove, Grants Lookout, Endeavour Inlet, and Cannibal Cove Scenic Reserves.

- 131 From elevated land vantage points, the site would typically be viewed at distances greater than 3km, particularly on the eastern side of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, where shadowing, reflections, and landscape complexity reduce visibility. In optimal conditions, buoys may be perceptible but would appear as minor and inconsequential elements within a broad panoramic view and would not adversely affect landscape amenity.
- 132 Marine traffic, including barges for maintaining and harvesting mussels will be visible, seen within the context of other commercial and recreational boats travelling to and from Melville Cove.

Aerial Viewpoints

- 133 From aerial viewpoints, such as sightseeing flights, the new mussel farm may appear as a subtle pattern on the water surface. Any such visibility would remain visually subservient to other marine farming activities within adjacent bays and the wider Sounds. See **Figure 9** in **Appendix A**.

Visual Amenity Summary

- 134 Overall, the new mussel nursery farm at Papatua is assessed as having **Low** (Adverse) effects on visual amenity from the land and **Moderate – Low** (adverse) effects on visual amenity from the water, for the following reasons:
- Visible infrastructure is limited to above-water infrastructure, which is limited to lines of floats and cardinal buoys floating on the surface of the water;
 - From water-based viewpoints, the marine farm will be visually recessive, and set against a more dominant landform, and will be typically only discernible within approximately 2 km, generally within the line between Hunia and Taratara, from the central channel of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore or by observers actively looking for it;
 - Land-based viewing opportunities are minimal, and where available, views occur at considerable distance, with the mussel farm forming a barely perceptible element within the wider landscape; and
 - From the air, the farm will appear as a faint, low-contrast pattern on the water surface, remaining subordinate to the broader marine farming context of the Marlborough Sounds.

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Assessment against ONL Values

- 135 Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is identified as being within an ONL overlay in the MEP, as a nested part of the Outer Marlborough Sounds Regional Landscape (06 – Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore District Landscape).
- 136 The identification of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) in the MEP reflects adjustments made to boundaries from the earlier Marlborough Landscape Study (2014) and the subsequent work of the Existing Marine Farms in Outstanding Overlays – Appropriateness of Marine Farms in the Marlborough Sounds (EMFOO) report.
- 137 The MEP, which formally identifies the Marlborough Sounds, including parts of the Outer Sounds such as Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, as an ONL based on biophysical, perceptual, and associative values. See **Appendix B**. The MEP identifies the Outer Sounds Landscape as an ONL and in a nested sequence, with smaller areas of ONL, including the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore Landscape, including Papatua. The area of marine farms at Melville Cove has been carved out from the ONL. See **Figure 7** in **Appendix A**.
- 138 The Outer Sounds ONL evaluation specifically mentions biophysical, perceptual and associative values for various areas, including but not limited to:
- i. Cape Jackson
 - ii. Te Aumiti / French Pass
 - iii. Cook Strait
 - iv. Torry Channel / Kara Te Au
 - v. Motutara, Brothers and White rocks
 - vi. Long Island, Kokomohua Islands
 - vii. Motutara Island
 - viii. D’Urville Island, Mount Stokes, Mt Furneaux, Bobs Peak
 - ix. Arapaoa Island
- 139 The evaluation of Perceptual and Associative values includes a strong emphasis on the remoteness of the outer Sounds, the interplay between the headlands and bays and the open ocean environment of the Cook Strait, rocky outcrops, steep exposed coastal cliffs, low modification levels, high legibility and visual coherence, the windswept coast line, high winds and rough seas, high level of perceived naturalness, past Māori and European cultural uses, strong Tangata Whenua associations, including Kupē’s visit, entry points to channels and sounds, strong recreational values and noted DoC Conservation areas.

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- 140 Given the scale of the MEP landscape evaluation of the ONLs and in particular the larger Outer Sounds ONL area, the description of the values which contribute to the ONL are necessarily broad-brush.
- 141 The Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONL is more specific in the identification of values as it includes the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore seascape waters and surrounding steep and enclosing peninsulas, headlands and the two prominent capes Lambert and Jackson. High levels of naturalness are noted, particularly at higher elevations, acknowledging levels of modification at lower elevations adjacent to the coastal edge.
- 142 The Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONL evaluation specifically mentions biophysical, perceptual and associative values for various areas, including but not limited to:
- i. Cape Jackson – drowned ridge crest – geo-preservation site
 - ii. Cape Lambert headland vegetation – exceptional biodiversity on both Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson
 - iii. Steep eroded cliffs and rocky shores
 - iv. Outstanding natural character on the two capes
 - v. Internationally significant sequence of indigenous vegetation – alpine to coast
 - vi. Mt Furneaux and associated connected peaks hold outstanding natural character
 - vii. Mt Furneaux is nationally significant for its' podocarp/broadleaf forest
- 143 Specific perceptual and associative values include the drowned ridge crest of Cape Jackson, impressive enclosing ridgelines of forested peaks, wild and rugged forms of the two capes defining Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, Cape Jackson marking the western entrance to Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte sound, the memorable Cape Jackson lighthouse, high experiential values due to remoteness and darkness of the night sky, popular areas for open ocean fishing, the headland capes act as navigational landmarks for marine traffic and the Mikhail Lermontov wreck dive site.
- 144 As illustrated on **Figure 2** in **Appendix A** several areas of the Outer Sounds and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONLs have been assessed has including ONL values, with the presence of existing marine farms either within or close to the ONLs. Some areas which have extensive areas of marine farms, including Anakoha Bay and Melville Cove, have been excluded from surrounding areas of ONL. Limited areas of mussel farming and broad-scale ONL values are therefore not mutually exclusive in the context of the MEP and the outer Marlborough Sounds.
- 145 The broad scale of the Outer Sounds ONL in relation to the project scale of the proposed mussel nursery farm at Papatua, ensure that the ONL values will experience limited effects

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from the proposal. The focus of the following evaluation is on the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONL landscape.

- 146 The project size of the new mussel nursery farm footprint, in relation to the overall scale of the landscape and seascape receiving environment, in conjunction with the limited biophysical effects of mussel farms ensures that the new mussel nursery farm does not necessarily have adverse effects on many of the identified ONL values for the Outer Sounds and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONLs in the MEP. The new mussel nursery farm is a reasonable scale for a mussel farm, however it is proposed within a large-scale landscape and it will not affect many of the values which contribute to the assessment and identification on the ONLs, for example, the mussel farm will not affect the rocky outcrops and coastal cliffs or any of the terrestrial landscape values identified in relation to the ONLs.
- 147 The broad scale of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore waters and the bold topography of the enclosing ridges, headlands and capes can accommodate a mussel farm proposal of this type without having adverse physical effects, beyond the site of Papatua consent area. The new mussel farm will be almost completely enclosed within Papatua between Taratara and Hunia. The physical effects of the new mussel farm would not extend outside of the enclosing landforms of Taratara and Hunia, within the broader context of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, which broadly measures some 5km wide by 10km long.
- 148 The perceptual values associated with the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONL are similarly focussed on the broad scale and enclosing landscapes, particularly the elevated areas of the connecting ridgelines around Mt Furneaux and Puzzle Peak and the enclosing landforms of Capes Lambert and Jackson. There will be no adverse effects on the broad patterns of landform and land cover as a result of the proposed new mussel farm. The Papatua site, as a small part of the broader Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is an enclosed and recessed part of a much larger and bolder landscape, which is recognised for its' broad-scale physical values.
- 149 Similarly the high experiential levels, including the remoteness and night sky darkness values of the surrounding ONL will experience limited effects from the presence of the mussel nursery farm. The broader conservation values of surrounding scenic reserves and the experience of people visiting and using those reserves will not be adversely affected by the new mussel nursery farm.
- 150 The Papatua mussel farm will have **low** (adverse) effects on the ONL values of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and Outer Sounds ONL areas for the following reasons:
- The Papatua site and the mussel nursery farm proposal are project scale and recessed features surrounded by broad scale seascapes and landscapes, which accommodate productive farming on the sea and the land.
 - Mussel farms have very limited physical effects which are not generally experienced beyond the immediate site of the farm itself.

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- The ONL values largely pertain to terrestrial landscape and vegetation values and the coastal edge, which are largely unaffected by mussel farms.
- The ONL values are broad and accommodating of the ongoing use of the waters for mussel nursery farm production.
- The outer Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound waters accommodate a range of existing marine farm developments which are integrated into the landscape and natural character values of the Sounds.

Cumulative Effects

- 151 The cumulative effects of the new Papatua mussel farm to incorporate an additional 90ha of mussel spat nursery will be limited to those effects experienced from a close distance to the farm. As illustrated on **Figures 2 and 4** in **Appendix A**, extensive areas of marine farming exist within Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound and Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte Sound, including the outer Sounds. The travel experience through or into Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is through or past areas of marine farming, including salmon and mussel farms. Many of the marine farming areas are tucked into bays, providing shelter for the marine farms and leaving the central parts of the channels available for passage by vessels.
- 152 The proposed mussel nursery farm site is tucked into Papatua within the broader Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and is outside of the main channels for vessel passage. Further marine farms are located in outer Sounds locations, for example at Melville Cove, Orchard Bay and East Bay. Any of these marine farming areas could be experienced in addition to the existing and proposed Papatua marine farm. Tucked into the broader scale of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and the enclosing landforms of Capes Lambert and Jackson, the Papatua mussel nursery farm is unlikely to be experienced as part of this travel experience unless the bay is being visited or is sought out for the sheltered mooring at Melville Cove.
- 153 From land and/or overhead, views of the new marine farm would be experienced as a small part of an overall pattern of marine farming in the outer Pelorus Sound.
- 154 Given the recessed nature of Papatua and the accommodating nature and scale of the surrounding landscape of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, the cumulative effects of the new marine farm are assessed as **Low** (adverse).

Effects Summary

- 155 The assessment finds that the proposal will result in no more than **Moderate** effects on landscape character and natural character. Effects on visual amenity for both land and sea-based viewpoints and ONL values are also summarised. A summary of effects is included in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Overview of Effects

	Level of Effect
Natural Character Effects	Moderate (adverse) – site scale Low (adverse) – Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore scale
Landscape Character Effects	Moderate - Low (adverse) – site scale Low (adverse) - Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore scale
Views from private land (adjacent farmland)	Low (adverse)
Views from Public land	Low (adverse)
Views from the sea	Moderate - Low (adverse)
Effects on ONL values of the Outer Sounds and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONL	Low (adverse)
Cumulative Effects	Low (adverse)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 156 There is an established character of productive land and marine farming in the outer Te Hoiere / Pelorus Sound and enclosing landscapes.
- 157 Mussel spat nursery farms have a functional need to be in sheltered waters where the waters are cool enough and with sufficient tidal flush for the operational needs of the farm.
- 158 To ensure that sufficient spat nursery areas are available to support the mussel farming industry, some outer Sounds locations are required.
- 159 The Papatua site within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is an accommodating location for a valued spat nursery farm, in addition to the existing mussel farm location.
- 160 The landscape and seascape of the site and the surrounding context is a productive landscape, with some areas of elevated natural character and landscape values.
- 161 The values of the Outer Sounds and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore ONLs are broad scale and mainly pertain to the bold landscape, the natural values and the exposed headlands and capes and rocky shores at an expansive scale.
- 162 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua would result in **Moderate** (adverse) effects on the high natural character of the site and **Low** (adverse) effects on the high natural character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. The outstanding natural character of The Capes would not be adversely affected.
- 163 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua would result in **moderate-low** (adverse) effects on the landscape character of the site and **low** (adverse) effects on landscape character of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore
- 164 The new mussel nursery farm at Papatua is assessed as having **Low** (Adverse) effects on visual amenity from the land and **Moderate – Low** (adverse) effects on visual amenity from the water.
- 165 The Papatua mussel nursery farm will have **low** (adverse) effects on the ONL values of the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and Outer Sounds ONL areas.
- 166 The cumulative effects of the new mussel nursery farm on the Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore catchment are assessed as **Low** (adverse).
- 167 Existing marine farming at Papatua and Melville Cove is authorised to remain until 31 December 2050. Ongoing marine farming at Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore reinforces the relevance of existing aquaculture as part of the enduring receiving environment for the life of the planning framework.
- 168 Policy 14.21.6(d) of the Marlborough Environment Plan identifies that additional marine farming activities are not appropriate within areas of High or Very High Natural Character

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where they would have significant adverse effects on the values and characteristics of those areas. Natural character effects are assessed above as **Low** to **Moderate** overall and are largely localised. Natural character effects are well below the level of significant adverse effects on the values and characteristics of the mapped Outstanding and High Natural Character areas.

- 169 The proposed Papatua mussel nursery farm would result in localised landscape, visual and natural character change within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and would not materially compromise the key landscape characteristics, the visual amenity of the wider receiving environment, or the broader values that underpin the Outstanding and High Natural Character mapping.
- 170 The Papatua site within Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is a logical and accommodating site for a new spat nursery mussel farm and is appropriate in landscape, natural character and visual terms.

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Appendix A – GRAPHIC ATTACHMENTS (refer separate document)

Appendix B – Outstanding Natural Landscape Values

OUTER SOUNDS LANDSCAPE
Regional Landscape: Outer Marlborough Sounds
Character Description: <i>The outer Sounds exhibit characteristics clearly influenced by the area's exposure to the sea. The area extends from the slopes around Croisilles Harbour, north to Admiralty Bay and D'Urville Island (Rangitoto ki te Tonga), east to Forsyth Island (Te Paruparu), the land around Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and Arapaoa Island and south to Te Whanganui / Port Underwood.</i> <i>The range of peaks either side of Mt Stokes (the highest point in the Sounds) separates the outer Sounds area from the inner Sounds.</i> <i>The outer Sounds are remote and rugged in appearance. There are many dramatic and distinctive features characteristic of this area, including the swirling currents between the narrow passage at Te Aumiti / French Pass, boulder spits and sand dune systems, highly weathered coastal cliffs, rocky islands and jagged rock stacks and reefs, narrow elongated ridges and steep coastal hill country.</i> <i>There are a number of important Geopreservation Inventory Sites in the outer Sounds, most notably on Rangitoto ki te Tonga / D'Urville Island, that include the northernmost copper mine in the South Island and geological features within Greville Harbour / Wharariki. The Inventory also notes that Cape Jackson displays a superb example of a drowned narrow ridge crest.</i> <i>The maritime influence on the outer Sounds creates a temperate climate and distinctive marine vegetation communities such as the salt-tolerant, low growing herb and shrub species that can survive the constant winds off Cook Strait. The extensive areas of modified grassland are a characteristic of the outer Sounds. The outer, eastern Sounds contain some large areas of exotic forestry.</i> <i>Rangitoto ki te Tonga / D'Urville Island is the largest island in the Sounds and, despite the efforts of early pastoral runholders, retains much of its indigenous cover containing some important native species.</i> <i>A number of predator-free island sanctuaries are located in the outer Sounds such as Motuara Island, Blumine Island / Ōruawairua and Stephens Island (Takapourewa). Long Island-Kokomohua Marine Reserve is located at the entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui. These reserves contain a range of rare or threatened species such as kiwi, tuatara, Hector's dolphins and king shags.</i> <i>The outer Sounds are richly associated with early New Zealand Māori and European history. Rangitoto ki te Tonga / D'Urville Island is the site of numerous prehistoric quarries as well as early European copper mines. Other areas in the outer Sounds, such as Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui and Tory Channel / Kura Te Au contain extensive archaeological remains regarding the original Māori occupiers, early contact with Captain Cook, and later Māori and European whaling and farming families.</i> <i>The cable station at Pukatea / Whites Bay is accessed by an unsealed road that connects south to Rarangi and north to Te Whanganui / Port Underwood and Waikawa/ Picton. A cluster of small coves and bays pepper this coastline, where numerous small fishing and former whaling communities established, including at Ocean Bay. The 350kV transmission line extends northwards along these eastern bays towards Oraumoa / Fighting Bay on the Cook Strait side of Te Whanganui / Port Underwood. These bays contain rich historical and cultural associations for both Māori and Europeans. At Oyster Bay for example, a marker commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on nearby Horahora Kakahu Island, while Pukatea / Whites Bay is the location of the first telegraphic link to the North Island in 1866.</i> <i>The outer Sounds are relatively remote, with less land-based development than in the more sheltered inner bays. Nonetheless, there are scattered bachs and jetties and occasional homesteads and associated farm buildings, usually near to the shore. Marine farms are present along many of the more sheltered stretches of coastline.</i>
District Scale Landscape Areas: There are a number of smaller 'nested' landscapes within the broader Outer Sounds Landscape and these are described over the following pages. They are: 01 Robertson, 02 Te Whanganui / Port Underwood, 03 Exposed Eastern Coastline, 04 Tory Channel /

Kura Te Au, 05 Outer Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui, 06 Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, 07 Forsyth, 08 Cook Strait, 09 Waitata, 10 Admiralty, 11 Northern D'Urville, 12 Eastern Tasman, and 13 Croisilles.	
Naturalness: This landscape area retains very high levels of naturalness due to the lack of modifications apparent. Where modification is apparent, it is generally localised. Some vegetation clearance has occurred for grazing and forestry along the eastern coastline, however there is a pronounced lack of structures associated with these areas. Aquaculture is very limited and contained to a few nodal areas (such as Melville Cove, Anakoha Bay, Admiralty Bay and Catherine Cove). The maritime influence is strong.	
Features of this landscape include: Slender peninsulas, islands, deep embayment's, Mt Stokes and other vegetated peaks and ridges containing the bays, Rangitoto ki te Tonga / D'Urville Island, broad open and exposed waters.	
Landscape Values associated with the Outer Sounds	
Biophysical	- Northernmost part of the highly legible drowned narrow ridge system, noticeably at Cape Jackson. - Numerous Geopreservation Sites of National and Regional Importance, including the submerged ridgeline under Te Aumiti / French Pass. - Nationally significant seascape (Cook Strait). - Swirling high flow currents of Te Aumiti / French Pass, Allen Strait, and Tory Channel / Kura Te Au. - Salt tolerant low growing herb and shrub species. - Island communities nationally and internationally important with distinct rare biotic assemblages (i.e. Motuara, Brothers and White Rocks, Long Island, Kokomohua Islands). - Many predator-free island sanctuaries (Motuara Island, Blumine Island / Ōruawairua and Stephens Island (Takapourewa)). - Extensive areas of vegetated elevated slopes, notably of D'Urville, Mt Stokes, Mt Furneaux, Bobs Peak. - Extensive areas of modified grasslands. - Subalpine vegetation of Mt Stokes. - Nationally significant broadleaf species and nationally significant endemic cliff vegetation on Arapaoa Island.
Perceptual	- Expansive views of the open sea broken up by the outer peninsulas, rocky outcrops, steep exposed seacliffs and Islands. - Exposed, remote and rugged seascape. - All islands have very low modification levels. - High legibility and visual coherency of the grasslands on the drowned ridge coastline. - High perceptual values associated with the wild windswept coast and high winds, rough sea, high-energy waves and associated sea spray. - Very high levels of perceived naturalness due to limited modification. - Impressive and weathered coastal cliffs and rocky windswept islands. - Prevalent high winds from Cook Strait and extreme weather conditions providing highly transient conditions.
Associative	- Rich in past Māori and European cultural use including prehistoric quarries and copper mines, whaling and pa sites. - Strong Tangata Whenua association and spiritual affinity with outer Sounds seascape and coastline. Many linked to Kupe's visit [Conservation Management Strategy, DoC, 1993]. - Noted 'entrance points' into Tory Channel / Kura Te Au, Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui and Pelorus Sound / Te Hoiere. - Strong recreational areas, including walking, boating, fishing and diving. - Noted DOC conservation areas.

Evaluation	Based on the above values, the Outer Sounds Landscape (as mapped) has been identified as an ONL due to its exceptional biophysical and associative landscape values and very high perceptual landscape values. The Outer Sounds Outstanding Natural Landscape comprises the open waters and series of islands and exposed peninsulas, headlands and bays that extend out into Cook Strait and Tasman Bay / Te Tai-o-Aorere. This landscape encapsulates the wide variety of rugged, often windswept landforms which are imbued with rich cultural and historical associations. Perceptually the Outer Sounds Outstanding Natural Landscape provides uninterrupted open seascape vistas of the very end of this drowned landscape. This area of the Marlborough Sounds is the least modified. It contains some of the district's most important predator-free islands holding outstanding levels of natural character.
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06 – TE ANAMĀHANGA / PORT GORE

Regional Landscape: Outer Marlborough Sounds

District Landscape: 06 – Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore

Method of identification: Visual Catchment

Character Description: *The Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore nested landscape is a large, irregularly shaped bay opening directly onto Cook Strait to the north east. It is enclosed to the west and east by steep, undulating, razor backed ridges that extend north east to Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson and to the south by a series of vegetated hilltops, including Oterawhanga, Mt Furneaux and Puzzle Peak to the west. The peaks are connected via a ridge which is over 500m asl. A*

section of the Titirangi Road follows the ridge above Melville Cove. Below this strongly enclosing landform the coastline displays a variety of characteristics. The line of the eastern shoreline follows a distinctively zig zag course with well-defined headlands (Gannet Point, Black Head, Papatorea, Onehunga) and sharply angled bays backed by steep rugged cliffs. A series of minor bays (Otaki, Tunnel Bay and Tinui) with only weakly defined headlands (e.g. Pool Head) define the southern part of this embayment. The western shore is more complex with the double bay of Melville Cove, the prominent cleared peninsula of Hunia and a series of shallow bays, i.e. Pig Bay, separated by minor headlands such as Papatua, Taratara and Akina. This shoreline is backed by cliffs. A small number of dwellings and huts are located within this bay, along with a road, tracks, an airstrip and powerlines. A lighthouse is located at the end of Cape Jackson. Aquaculture is located within Melville Cove, along with a greater area of modification. The open exposed expanse of the waters of the bay and the isolated location are strong characteristics of the landscape.

Naturalness: This landscape retains large amounts of indigenous and regenerating vegetation cover, notably in its upper elevations, and around its lower elevations within Inner Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore. There is a very low level of modification overall, which is focused in a small area around Melville Cove and parts of the head of the bay. Modification here includes a road, a small amount of houses, an airstrip, and farm tracks located on Hunia peninsula. The rest of the landscape area is sufficiently natural to be considered outstanding.

Features of this landscape include: The peninsulas of Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson and the smaller peninsula of Hunia, the steep and vegetated slopes of Inner Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, numerous headlands and defined undulating ridge that defines the visual catchment of this nested landscape.

	Landscape Values
Biophysical	- Geopreservation site: Cape Jackson drowned ridge crest. - Cape Lambert headland vegetation, exceptional biodiversity on both Cape Lambert and Cape Jackson. - Steep eroded cliffs and rocky shores, dominated by high energy waves define this exposed landscape. - Cape Jackson, Cape Lambert and the interconnecting outer waters hold outstanding levels of natural character. - The indigenous vegetation cover is internationally significant as it supports areas of alpine to coast vegetation sequences. - The natural biodiversity is high due to the range of altitude, landform and habitat. - Mt Fumeaux and its associated connecting peaks and ridges hold outstanding levels of natural character due to regenerating bush including subalpine vegetation and low modification. Remaining areas retain high and very high levels of natural character. - Mt Fumeaux is nationally significant for its podocarp/broad leaved forest.
Perceptual	- Cape Jackson is a superb example of a drowned ridge crest. - Impressive ridgeline of the forested high peaks above Guards Bay and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, leading to Mt Stokes. - Cape Jackson, Cape Lambert and Alligator Head have wild and rugged forms that are extremely legible and assist in defining the two outer Sounds bays of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore and Waitui Bay. - Largely unmodified coast. - Cape Jackson marks the western entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui. The lighthouse is very memorable and used as a reference point. - High experiential values, which are due to remote and expansive seascape vistas of a wild and exposed nature. - The darkness of the night sky adds to the sense of remoteness. - Impressive forested peak and ridges of inner Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore.

	- The area is particularly memorable where the level of modification is least. - The mountain top and ridges define and frame the associated bays and exhibit very high remote and experiential values.
Associative	- Popular areas for open ocean fishing. - Headlands act as navigational landmarks for boaties. - The sunken Mikhail Lermontov in Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is one of the world's top wreck dives at 37m deep.
Evaluation	Based on the above values, the majority of this nested Port Gore landscape is considered to be an ONL, holding exceptional biophysical and associative values and very high perceptual values. This ONL extends into landscape areas 03, 05, 07 and 08. Steep eroded cliffs and rocky shores, dominated by high energy waves, define this exposed Outer Sounds nested landscape. Outer Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore is a largely unmodified section of coast, with exposed rocky bluffs, headlands and reefs. Cape Jackson and Cape Lambert retain wild and rugged forms that are extremely legible. Cape Jackson is a superb example of a drowned ridge crest and is a listed Geopreservation Site. Exceptional biodiversity is exhibited at Cape Lambert and in the threatened plants, remnant forest and regenerating native vegetation of Cape Jackson. The night skies here are some of the darkest in the country and add to the sense of remoteness. Access is primarily by boat, and the area is popular for fishing in the more exposed ocean waters. A privately maintained track (known as the Outer Queen Charlotte Track) extends from Meretoto / Ship Cove to the Cape Jackson lighthouse, providing direct land access with this exposed coastline where expansive open ocean vistas are experienced. Cape Jackson lighthouse is very memorable and used as a reference point, marking the western entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound / Tōtaranui. An impressive ridgeline of forested high peaks above Guards Bay and Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, leads to Mt Stokes, a prominent feature to this landscape. Due to the factors listed above, the outer peninsulas hold very high experiential and associative values. Modifications include a lighthouse at Cape Jackson, vegetation clearance (particularly to the west of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore), tracks, power lines, buildings and moorings. There are also marine farms in Pig Bay as well as numerous dwellings at the head of Te Anamāhanga / Port Gore, along with a powerline, and an airstrip.

Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture Project.
Papatua.
Graphic Attachments.

October 2026
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Document record

Issue	Revision	Author	QA	Date
Draft	A	SF	BC	20.08.2026
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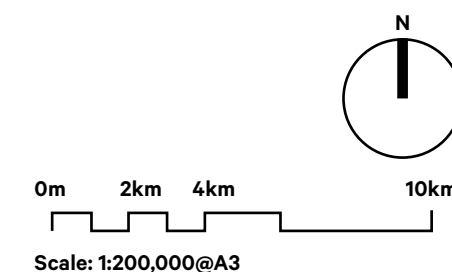
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Figure 01: Site Landscape Context.

Source: LINZ



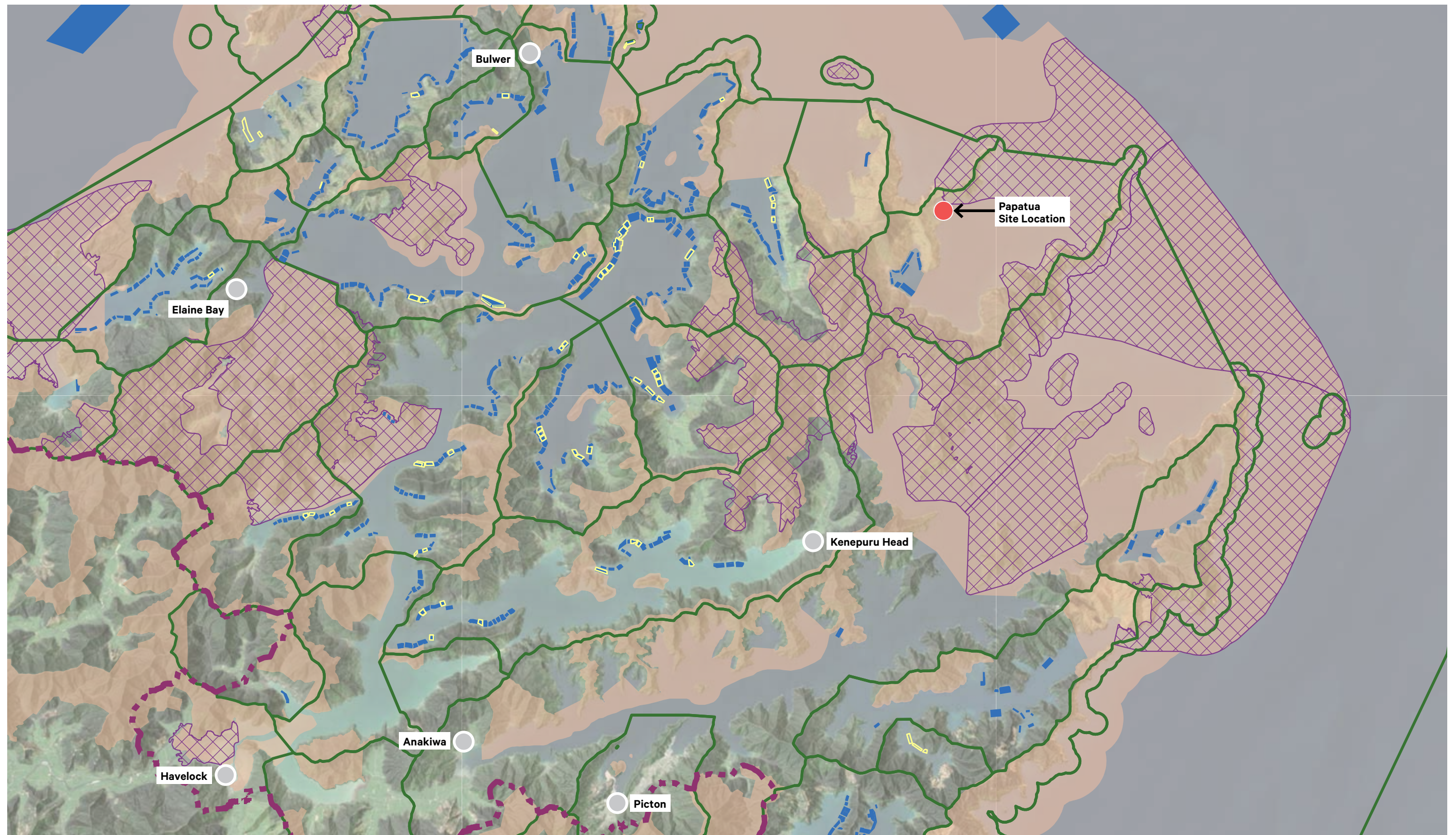
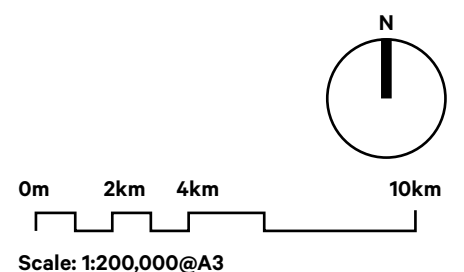


Figure 02: Statutory Context.

Legend

- Marine Farm: Granted
- Marine Farm: Processing
- Extent of Coastal Environment
- Coastal Management Unit
- Coastal Outstanding Natural Character
- Outstanding Natural Feature & Landscape



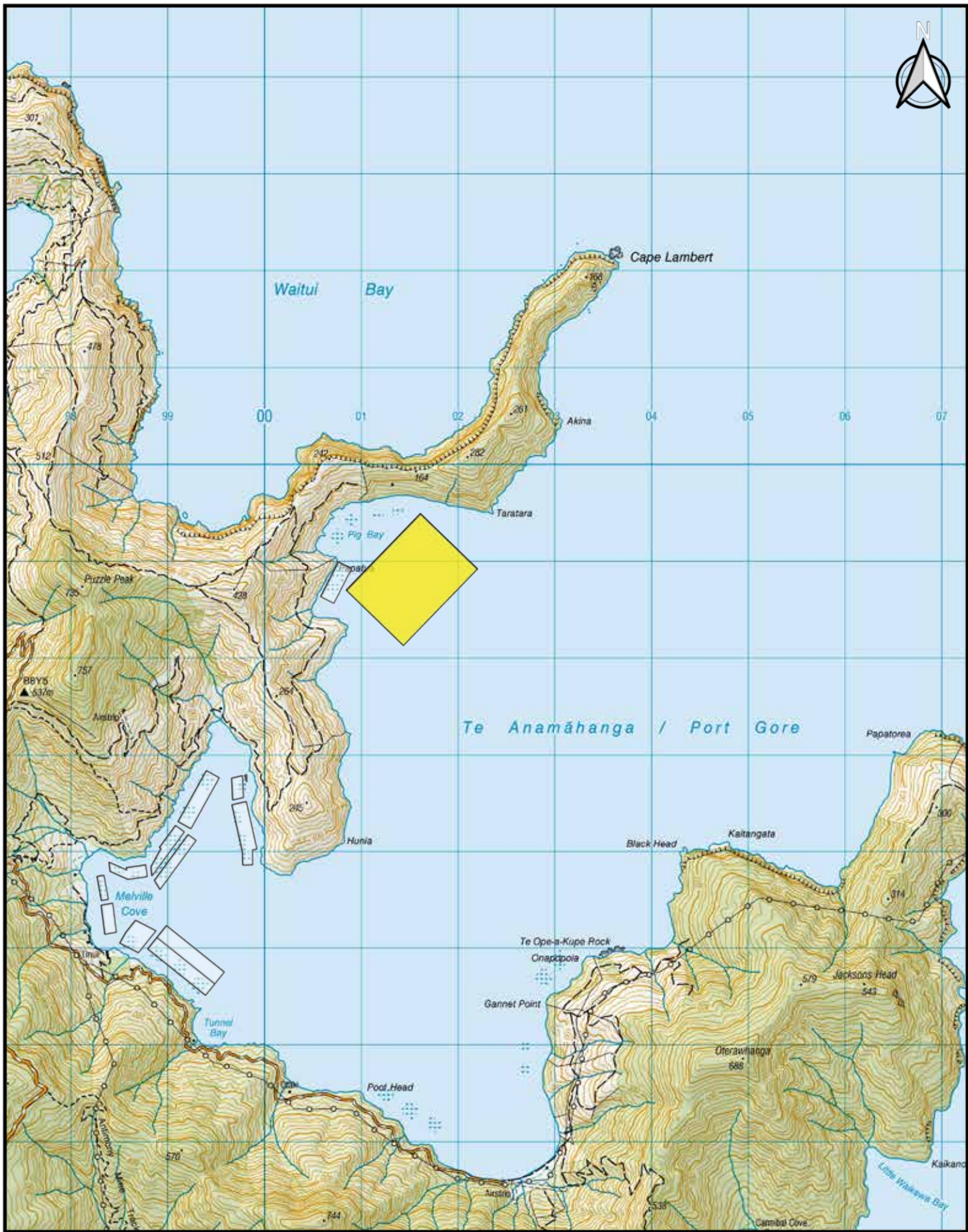


Figure 03: Locality Map.



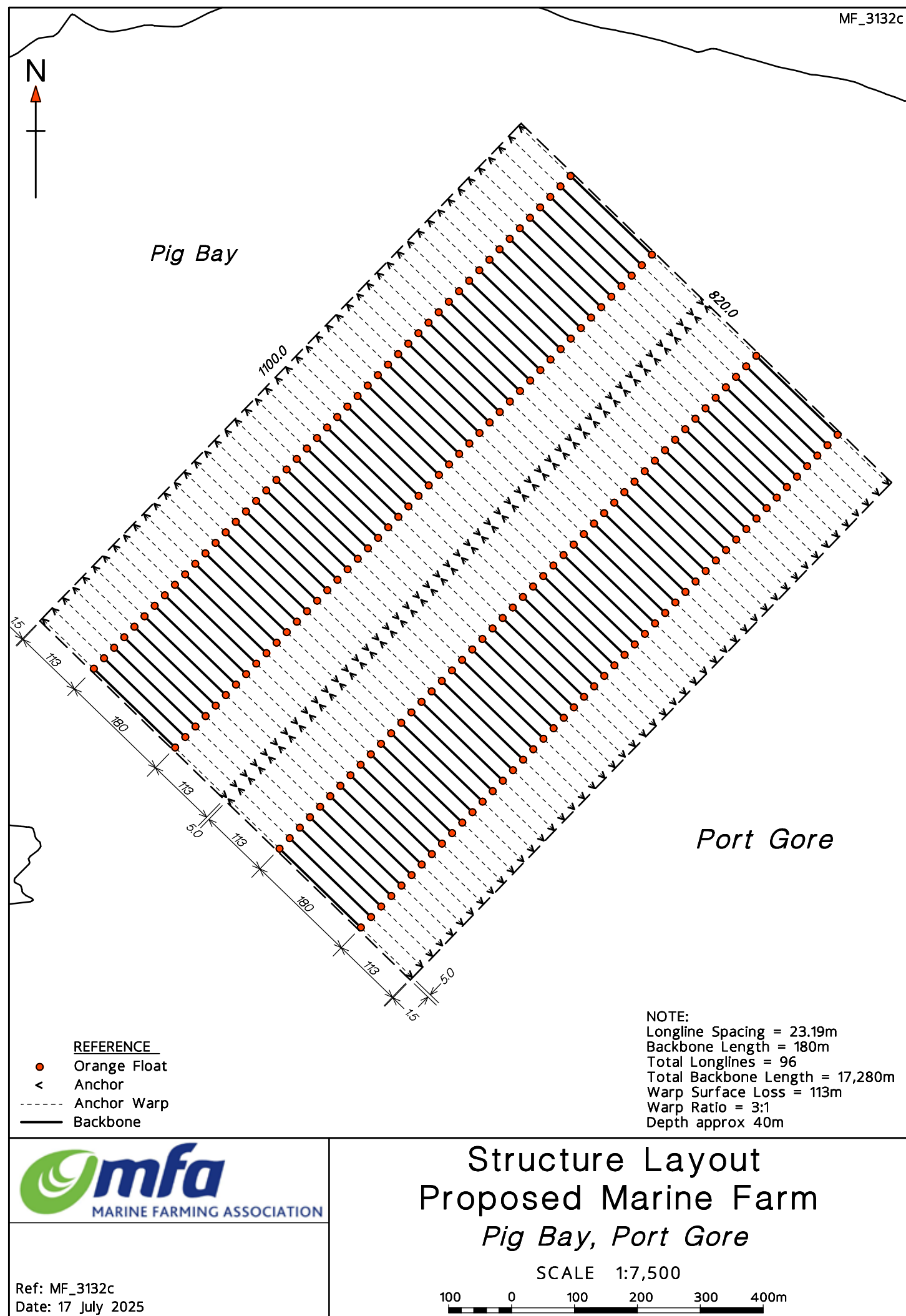


Figure 04: Structure Layout.

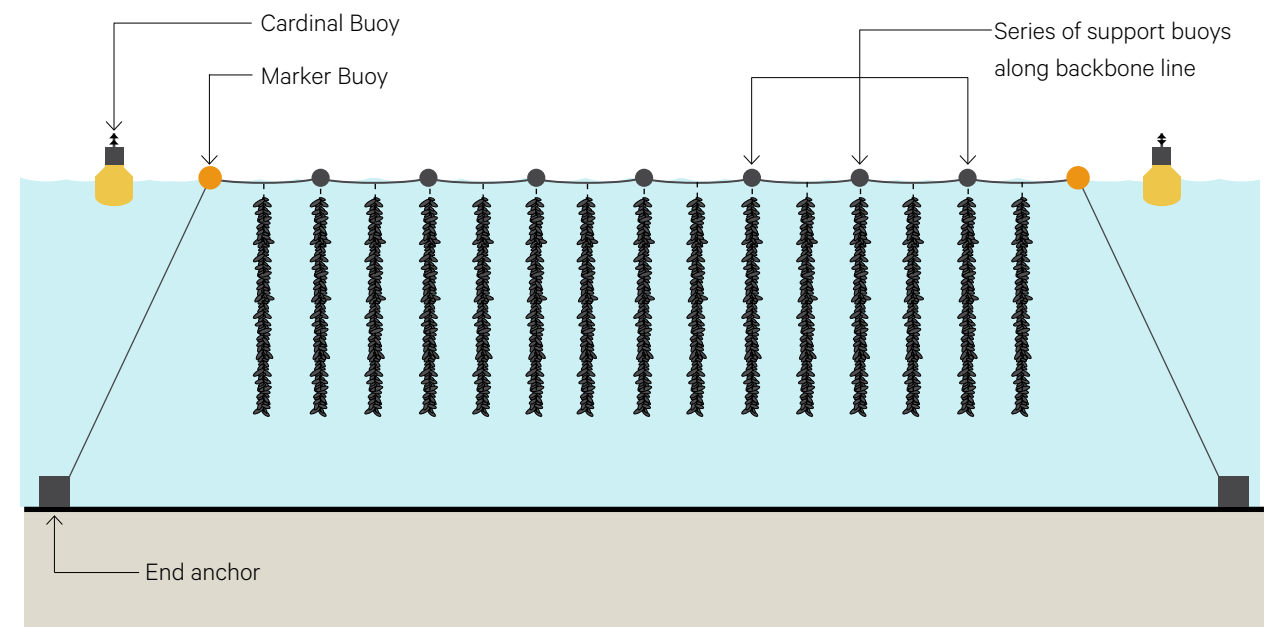
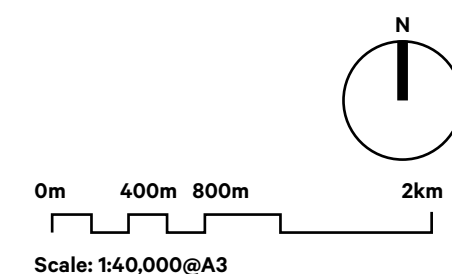


Figure 05: Indicative Illustration of Typical Conventional Mussel Farming.

Conventional mussel farming includes lengths of buoys on the surface of the water used to support crop. Buoys are more buoyant (and therefore more visible) when crop is lighter, or once crop has been harvested.



Figure 06: Papatua Site Context.



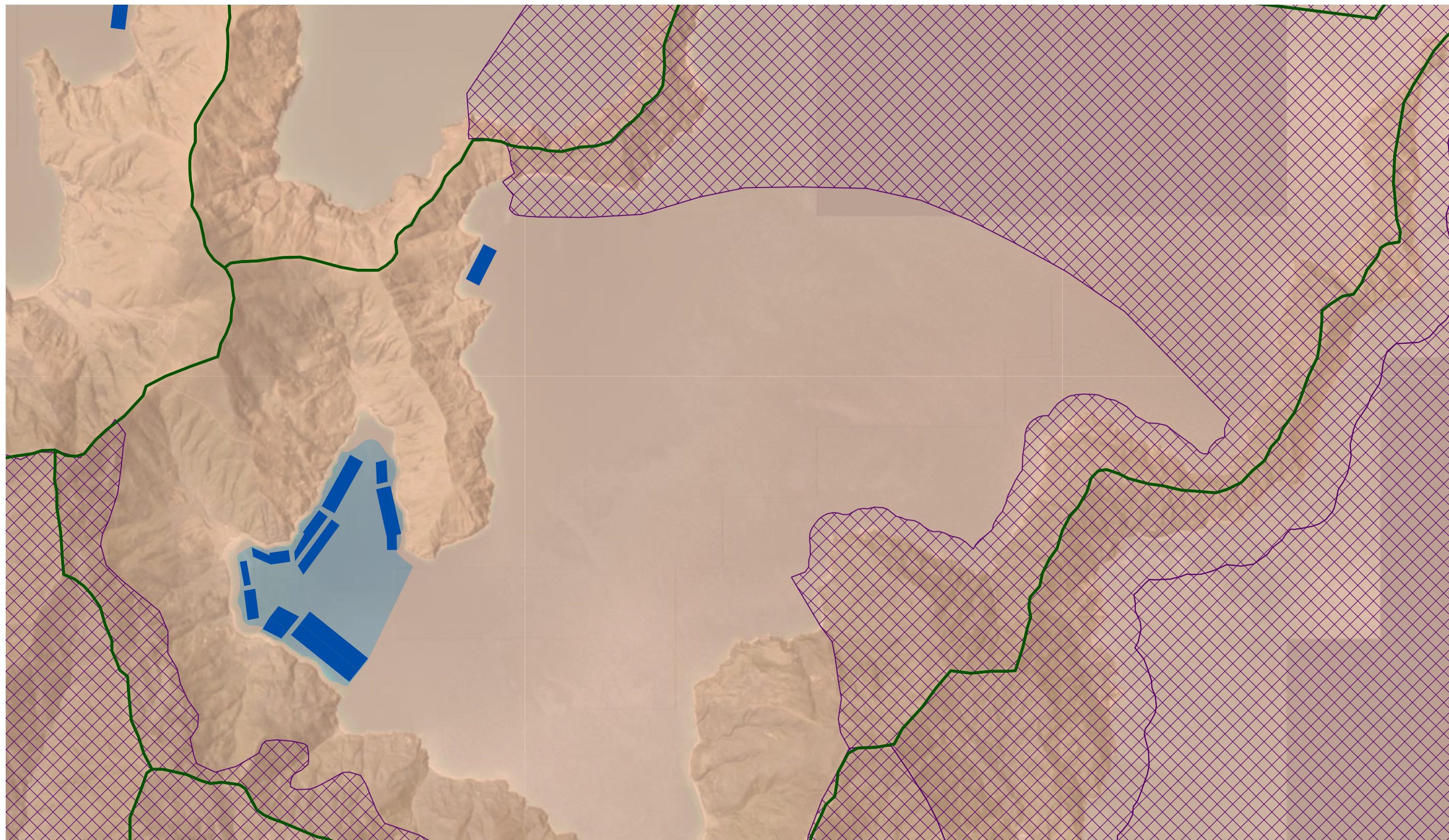
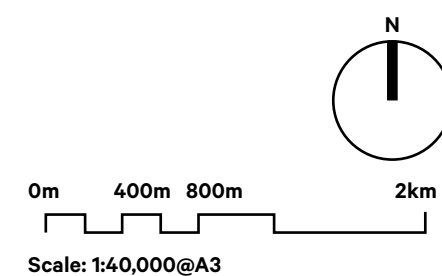
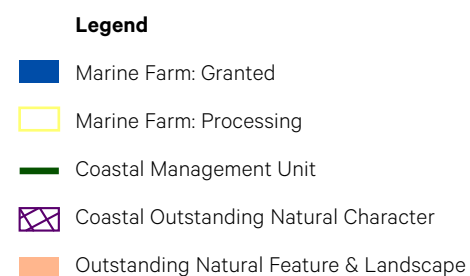


Figure 07: Papatua Statutory Context.



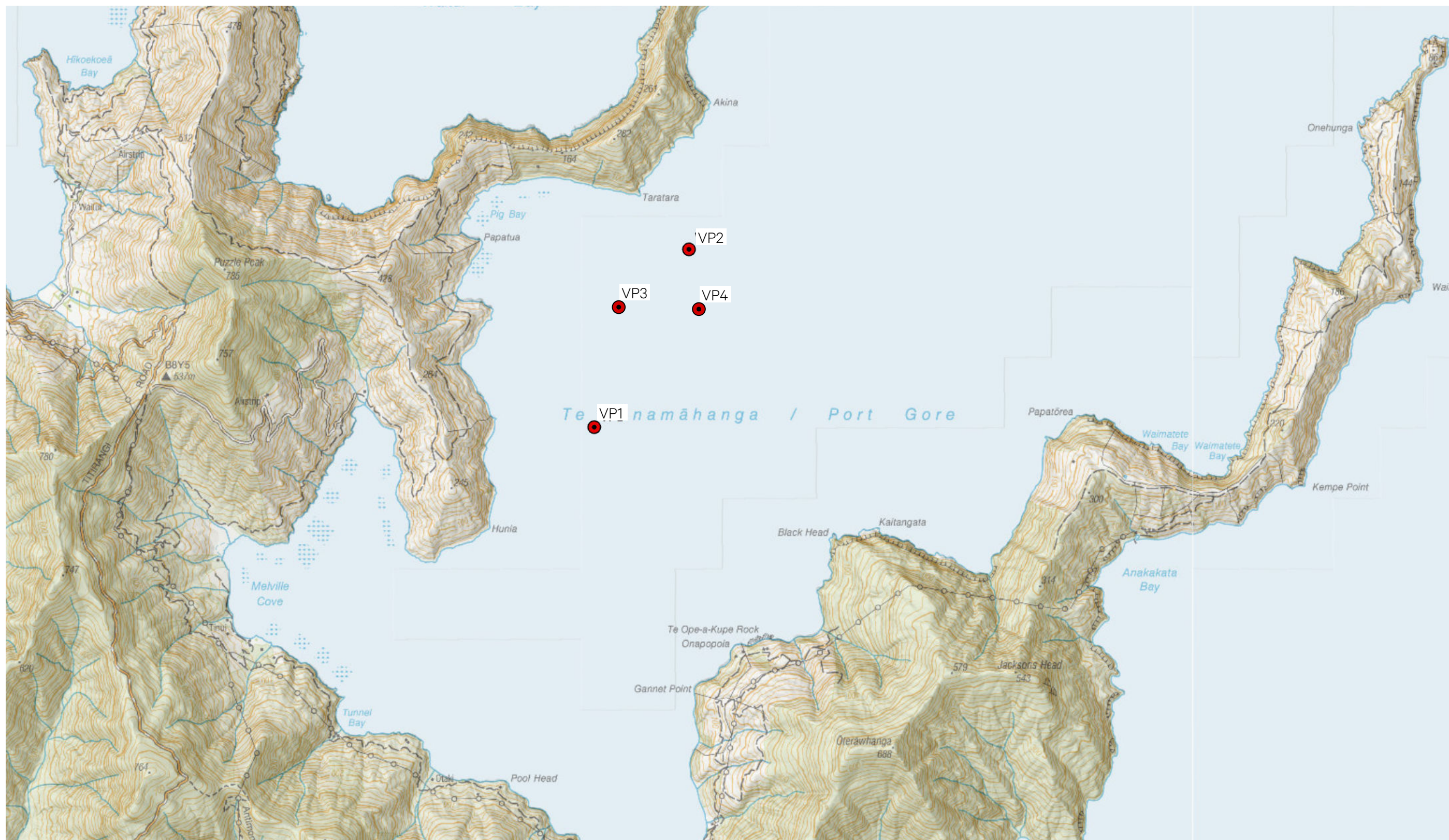
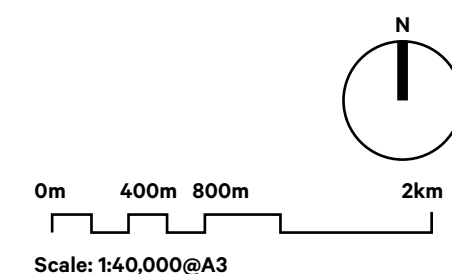


Figure 08: Viewpoint Location Map.



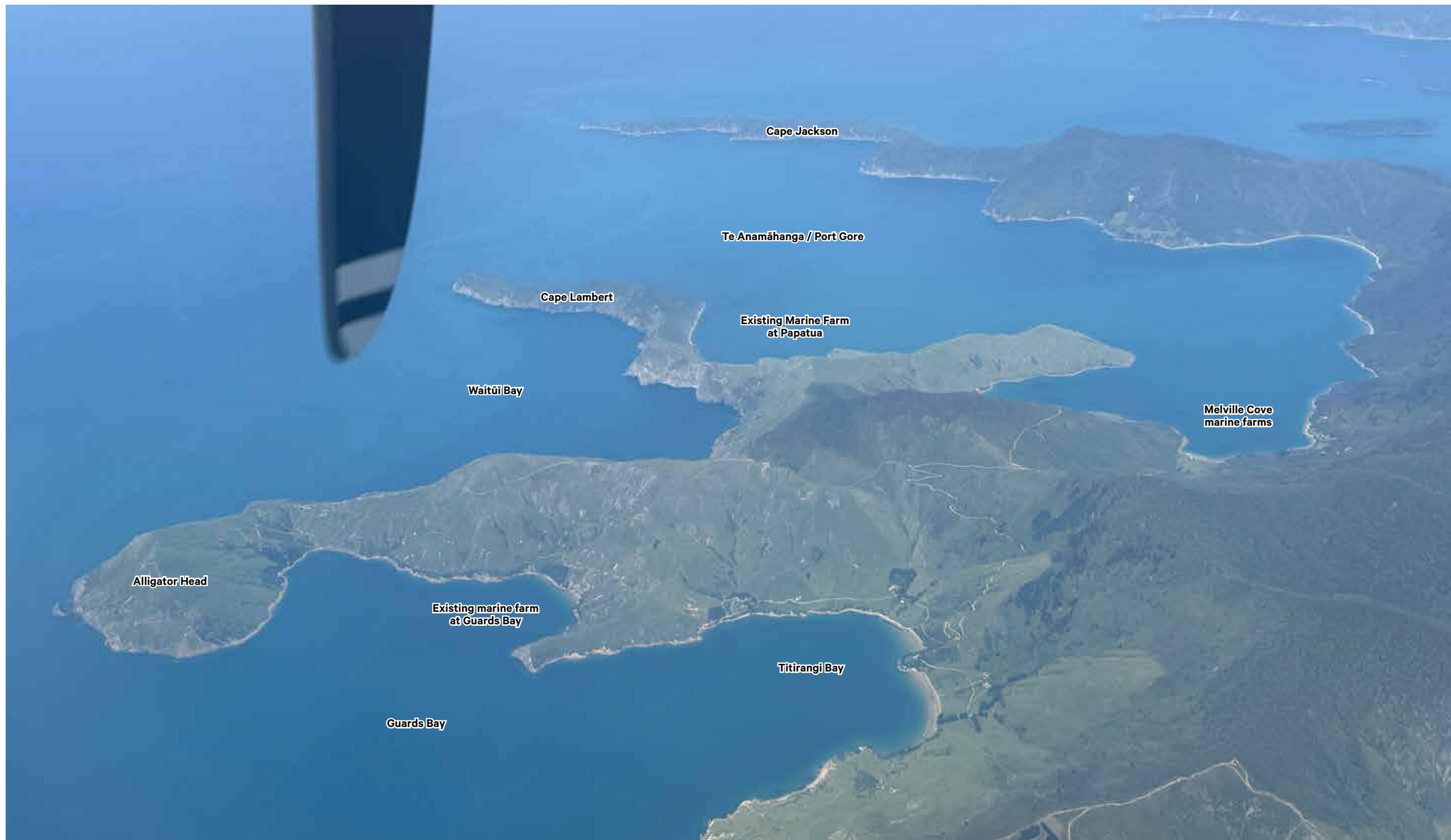


Figure 09: Context Aerial Imagery.

Aerial view from commercial flight over the site.



Figure 10: Viewpoint 1.

Aerial view towards Papatua and Cape Lambert.

Drone photo credit: Josh Hunt.







Figure 11: Viewpoint 2A.

Aerial view towards Papatua and Puzzle Peak.

Drone photo credit: Josh Hunt.







Figure 12: Viewpoint 2B.

Aerial view towards Papatua and Cape Lambert.

Drone photo credit: Josh Hunt.







Figure 13: Viewpoint 3.

Water level view of Papatua and Puzzle Peak.







Figure 14: Viewpoint 4.

Water level view of Papatua (left) and Cape Lambert.





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