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Submission on Proposed Plan Change 65 Manawatu District Plan

Clause 6 of First Schedule, Resource Management Act 1991

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Preliminary Matters

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has military interests throughout New Zealand and has a long history in the Manawatu District, with the RNZAF Ohakea Air Base and Raumai Air Weapons Range located within the District. This enduring relationship has been acknowledged with the 2019 re-signing of a Statement of Intent between New Zealand Defence Force, Manawatu District Council and Palmerston North City Council, citing mutual benefits between the three parties and recording the intention of these parties to work together in mutual areas of interest.

NZDF undertakes Temporary Military Training Activities (TMTA) across the country as part of its function of maintaining the nation's security, maintaining NZDF's operational capacity and providing for the well-being, health and safety of communities. TMTA can include a range of activities, from office/ classroom based activities to large scale military exercises, and may involve Search and Rescue, infrastructure support (such as deployment of water purification and supply facilities as used in the aftermath of the Canterbury and Kaikōura earthquakes), bomb deactivation training, weapons firing, personnel movements etc. They may be undertaken over a period of days or weeks on an intermittent or continuous basis, during both day and night. Specifically in relation to PC65, TMTA may include training activities including Search and Rescue within the Ruahine Ranges which is identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL). Further information on TMTA is provided in **Attachment 1** to this submission.

NZDF is currently engaged in a nationwide exercise to achieve consistency in the management of TMTA across district plans. NZDF has commissioned professional acoustic advice and developed a set of permitted activity standards for noise associated with TMTA to be included in district plans nation-wide. These provisions are detailed in **Attachment 2** to this submission, and an explanation is provided in **Attachment 3**.

TMTA are currently provided for under the Operative Plan Rule A2 as a permitted activity district-wide (subject to permitted activity standards). The Council's 'Plan Changes' webpage currently shows that TMTA, through Rule A2, are proposed to be dealt with via an 'Omnibus' Plan Change scheduled for 2022, if not already covered. Based on conversations with Council Officers, NZDF understands that the intention is to provide for TMTA solely in the Rural Zone. However it is vital that NZDF personnel can train in a wide variety of environments to reflect real life scenarios and to give diversity in training scenarios according to Defence output requirements. This is of local and national importance and it is therefore essential that NZDF is able to carry out appropriate TMTA across all zones in the district.

Overall, it remains unclear how TMTA will be provided for through this sectional Plan review process, where different zones and overlays are subject to separate plan changes. NZDF understands that Council intends to provide for TMTA through the upcoming Rural, Lifestyle, Residential and Village chapter reviews. NZDF is keen to discuss TMTA provisions with Council as soon as possible specifically in relation to the Plan Change 65 process but also more broadly in terms of the District Plan review process.

NZDF is taking a conservative approach to ensure that TMTA can be undertaken throughout the district, and is requesting that TMTA are provided for in the areas covered by Plan Change 65. Further information and commentary is provided in Table 1 (attached).

NZDF **could not** gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

NZDF **wishes to be heard** in support of this submission.

If others make a similar submission, **we will consider** presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.



Person authorised to sign
on behalf of New Zealand Defence Force

Date 13/03/2020

Table 1:

Point	Provision	Support/ Oppose	Reasons	Relief Sought
1	<p>Permitted Activity provisions</p> <p>New rule NFL-Rx</p>	Support in part	<p>NZDF requires the flexibility to undertake TMTA on an as and when required basis, utilising various situations and locations, including bush/forest and other landscape areas. Being able to stage training activities in varied locations is essential, as NZDF personnel may be deployed to a wide range of locations around New Zealand and the world. The types of TMTA undertaken within the areas subject to this Plan Change would generally be suited to the location, such as search and rescue training, and would generally not include significant vegetation removal/destruction.</p> <p>In addition to the noise limits requested in this submission, NZDF agrees that TMTA should also be subject to the relevant limits for earthworks and vegetation alteration or removal contained within PC65 provisions, and across other chapters of the Plan where relevant.</p>	<p>NZDF requests that TMTA are provided for as a permitted activity within the areas identified by this Plan Change, subject to the permitted activity noise standards provided by NZDF as Attachment 2.</p> <p>NZDF requests the following wording:</p> <p><i>Rule NFL-Rx: Temporary military training activities where the relevant noise standards below are met:</i> <i>[Insert text from Attachment 2 of this submission]</i></p>

Attachment 1 – Temporary Military Training Activities Information Sheet

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is required to undertake training activities in accordance with the Defence Act 1990.

These training activities include a wide range of activities, including: physical training, dog training, signals (radio communications) exercises, medical and dental exercises, Medivac simulation, Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) exercises, IEDD search exercises (in commercial or industrial buildings as well as outdoors), Small construction tasks, camp setup, including field kitchens and ablutions, search and rescue, Civil Defence support, driver training and infrastructure support (e.g. water purification and supply facilities). NZDF also undertakes activities that are more recognisable as military exercises, including the use and firing of weapons (both live and blank ammunition) and the detonation of explosives.

A practical example of training relates to the unit that provides dental services to deployed troops. A key part of training is setting up and operating their deployable facilities in locations remote from their home base. They exercise that skill by setting up in location for a period and providing free dental care to patients who might otherwise miss out. School children in areas remote from dental services are often the beneficiaries of that training activity.

Troops also train within NZDF owned properties, military camps and bases. However, it is important that troops are trained outside of these locations to ensure the skills learned are able to be applied in new and different situations, not just in familiar areas.

Many activities are carried out “off-base” by NZDF personnel are essentially similar to training activities conducted by other public service or commercial organisations. Included in that comparison are (for example) NZ Police, NZ Fire Service, the various ambulance services, search and rescue, and specialist cliff rescue teams.

Training activities may include the use of powered machinery, vehicles or aircraft and may involve weapons firing and the use of explosives, in addition to the deployment of personnel. In some exercises weapons may be carried or set up for realism but not fired. Temporary military training activities may be undertaken over a period of days or weeks on an intermittent or continuous basis, during both day and night.

Training activities are carried out “off-base” for a variety of reasons and two of the important reasons are diversity and realism. Skills that are learned and practiced “on-base” must be tested or extended in unfamiliar contexts “off base”.

Extended “off-base” activities are costly in terms of funding and time and are not used for routine, repetitive training. An extended duration is not required to achieve the objective of testing skills in a different context. So, while an exercise might be undertaken over a period of days or weeks; typically an exercise would only take place in one locality for a period of a few days.

Attachment 2 - Permitted Activity Noise Standards for Temporary Military Training Activities

Rule X: Temporary Military Training Activities are permitted activities provided they comply with the following noise standards:

1. Weapons firing and/or the use of explosives

- a. Notice is provided to the Council at least 5 working days prior to the commencement of the activity.
- b. The activity complies with the following minimum separation distances to the notional boundary of any building housing a noise sensitive activity:
0700 to 1900 hours: 500m
1900 to 0700 hours: 1,250m
- c. Where the minimum separation distances specified above cannot be met, then the activity shall comply with the following peak sound pressure level when measured at the notional boundary of any building housing a noise sensitive activity:
0700 to 1900 hours: 95 dBC
1900 to 0700 hours: 85 dBC

2. Mobile noise sources

Shall comply with the noise limits set out in Tables 2 and 3 of *NZS6803:1999 Acoustics – Construction Noise*, with reference to ‘construction noise’ taken to refer to mobile noise sources*.

Note: Mobile noise sources (other than firing of weapons and explosives) include personnel, light and heavy vehicles, self-propelled equipment, earthmoving equipment.

3. Fixed (stationary) noise sources

Shall comply with the noise limits set out in the table below when measured at the notional boundary of any building housing a noise sensitive activity*.

Time (Monday to Sunday)	L _{Aeq} (15 min)	L _{AFmax}
0700 to 1900 hours	55 dB	n.a.
1900 to 2200 hours	50 dB	
2200 to 0700 hours the next day	45 dB	75 dB

Note: Fixed (stationary) noise sources (other than firing of weapons and explosives) include power generation, heating, ventilation or air conditioning systems, or water or wastewater pumping/treatment systems.

4. Helicopter landing areas

Shall comply with NZS6807:1994 Noise Management and Land Use Planning for Helicopter Landing Areas*.

* Noise levels shall be measured in accordance with NZS6801:2008 Acoustics – Measurement of Sound.

Attachment 3: Explanation for replacement noise standards for Temporary Military Training Activities

NZDF wishes to make sure that the noise standards included in Plans are up-to-date, appropriate for the type of noise generated and relatively simple to understand and assess compliance with. To this end, NZDF has commissioned professional acoustic advice on appropriate permitted activity standards to control noise effects from Temporary Military Training Activities (TMTA). This report can be provided on request. Based on this advice, NZDF has developed revised noise control standards that it will seek to have included in proposed plans nation-wide.

The replacement noise standards proposed by NZDF focus on compliance at dwellings, residentially zoned sites, and buildings used for residential, educational or healthcare purposes.

In summary, the NZDF's proposed standards divide noise sources from TMTA into four categories: weapons firing and explosions; other mobile sources such as vehicles and earthmoving equipment; fixed noise sources such as power generators and water pumping; and helicopter landing areas. Each of these noise sources has different noise characteristics, and therefore a different set of standards for controlling noise. NZDF considers that this division allows a more comprehensive and appropriate method for controlling noise from TMTA.

1. Weapons firing and/or the use of explosives

The noise control standard uses a tiered approach for weapons firing and explosives, where the first tier is separation distances between the activity and any sensitive receiver (dwelling, residentially zoned site, or building used for residential, educational or healthcare purposes). Two separation distances are specified – a nighttime distance and a daytime distance. The distances are conservative and have been arrived at after review and analysis of data measured from real military activities, to ensure that the sound levels received at the specified distances will be reasonable (generally less than 55 dBA for daytime and less than 45 dBA for nighttime). Using separation distance as a standard has the advantage of being an easy to comply with and easy to monitor standard.

For weapons firing/ explosives activities that are not able to meet the separation distance standard, or if the site location conditions meant that the setback could be reduced (e.g. where a hill separates a sensitive receiver from the TMTA), then the second tier - the peak sound pressure levels (dBC) - would apply. Where these peak sound pressure levels can be met, then the TMTA would be a permitted activity.

2. Mobile noise sources

For mobile noise sources (other than weapons firing and explosives), compliance with the construction noise standards is recommended, as this standard most appropriately addresses this type of noise.

3. Fixed (stationary) noise sources

For fixed noise sources, which can be located to ensure compliance with standards, dB LAeq levels are specified, in line with NZS6802:2008 Acoustics – Environmental Noise. This is considered the most appropriate way to control noise levels from these sources.

4. Helicopter landing areas

NZDF has also considered noise from helicopters associated with temporary military training activities. NZDF proposes the use of NZS6807:1994 Noise Management and Land Use Planning for Helicopter Landing Areas to control this type of noise.