

# Submission from the AQA on the Rangitikei Spatial Plan

April 2022

## Introduction

The Aggregate and Quarry Association (AQA) is the industry body representing construction material companies which produce 50 million tonnes of aggregate and quarried materials consumed in New Zealand each year.

Funded by its members, the AQA has a mandate to increase understanding of the need for aggregates to New Zealanders, improve our industry and users' technical knowledge of aggregates and assist in developing a highly skilled workforce within a safe and sustainable work environment.

We would like to thank the Rangitikei District Council for the opportunity to comment on the [Discussion Document](#), *Pae Tawhiti Rangitikei Beyond - Planning our places and spaces* (the Document) which paves the way for the Long-term Spatial Strategy and Plan for the Rangitikei District.

## Key Points

- Aggregate is an essential ingredient in climate change adaptation; and the building of infrastructure, roading and housing, and will be needed to achieve the growth and development of the region as anticipated in the Document.
- The risk of shortages due to sterilisation and the need to protect aggregate resources from future development is overlooked.
- The Document seems to be focused on protecting “highly productive” agricultural land for primary production but not highly productive quarrying land. We note that quarrying is part of the primary production definition in the National Planning Standards.

## The importance of Aggregates and Council Planning

Aggregate (crushed rock, gravel and sand) is an essential resource for the construction of housing, roading projects and other transport infrastructure. It is used for general construction - in concrete, asphalt, mortar and other building products.

Aggregate is also important for increasing resilience and adapting to extreme weather events and climate change.

Due to the unprecedented levels of construction and infrastructure development activity, aggregate is increasingly in short supply in many parts of New Zealand including Rangitikei.

Not only is there high demand, supply is constrained. Aggregate deposits are 'location specific' - limited in quantity, location and availability. They can only be sourced from where they are physically located and where the industry is able to access them.

This means it is important that the locations of aggregate resources are identified by councils and access is not inadvertently shut off through land development and council planning.

Note that quarries have a finite life. Once the rock is extracted the land is returned to the community and can be used in a variety of ways. It is not inconceivable that housing and other developments can occur on and around former quarry land that has had the rock extracted.

## Pae Tawhiti Rangitikei Beyond

The Rangitikei Spatial Plan will aim to influence where and how growth occurs in the region over the next 28 years.

We are concerned that insufficient attention has been given in the Document to the role and importance of aggregates in achieving this growth.

It is important that land for existing and future aggregate extraction activities is adequately identified and available. Care must be taken to ensure it is protected from encroachment of non-compatible land uses.

## Residential Environments

Page 19 of the Document, under *Residential Environments*, refers to the importance of new residential areas being close to existing infrastructure, town centres and parks etc.

We believe the Plan should also consider the location of aggregate resources when considering where that development occurs.

Determining an optimal distance for residential areas from potential quarry areas is important. Too far away means significant expense of transporting quarry materials as well as congestion and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>1</sup>. Too close brings reverse sensitivity issues due to the nature of extractive industry operations – including noise, vibration and dust. Development areas should ideally be as close as reasonable to identified areas of aggregate.

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<sup>1</sup> The cost of aggregate doubles when transported 30 kilometres from its source

## Highly Productive Land

There are several references in the Document to the needs to protect the district's highly productive farmland and the importance of the primary sector but none to the need to protect productive land containing aggregate resource.

We note that quarrying is part of the primary sector and is included in the definition of primary production in the Nation Planning Standards.

Just as the document emphasises that development on valuable soils should be avoided, land incorporating aggregate and other mineral resources should also be protected from development.

## Aggregate Potential

We have attached a map provided by GNS which outlines the areas of aggregate potential in the North Island. This is a high-level representation, and we recommend that the council work with the industry to identify aggregate potential at a more granular level, but it shows that the Rangitikei is a relatively low source of hard rock.

## Climate Change

The Document rightly highlights that Rangitikei District is vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

It is important to note the role of aggregates in strengthening resilience to natural hazards and climate change. Aggregates, for example, are needed for flood protection and to adapt to sea level rise and coastal erosion through the strengthening of sea walls etc. They will be needed to repair damage to coastal infrastructure and to make infrastructure generally more resilient to greater intensity storms and extreme weather events.

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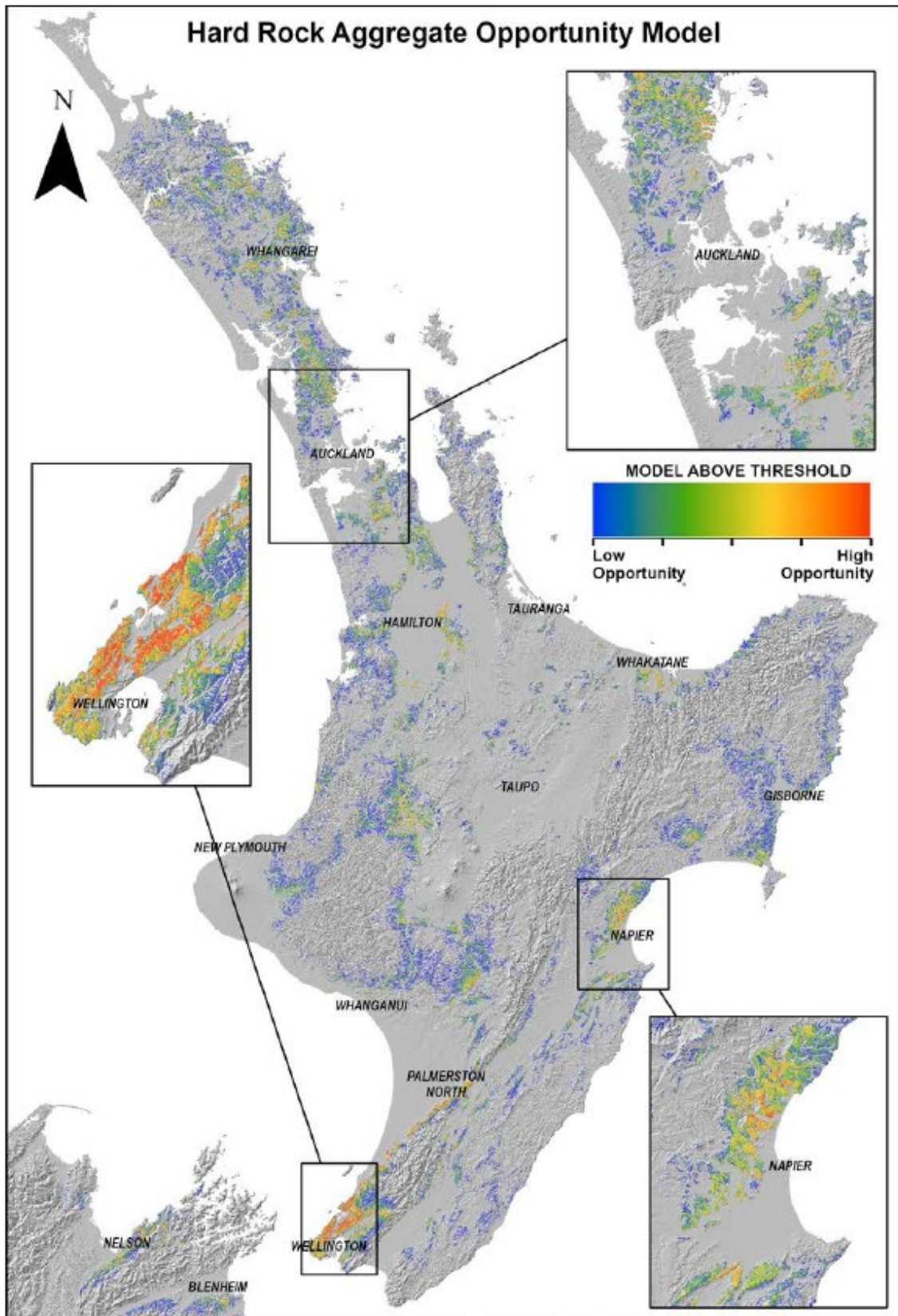
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## Appendix 1 – Aggregate Potential, Rangitikei



**Figure 1:** Map of the aggregate opportunity hard rock model results for the North Island. Colours represent areas above the anomalous threshold determined for the model, with blue representing comparatively low opportunity and red high opportunity. Inset maps illustrate more detailed results for Auckland, Napier and Wellington.