

# GENERAL RURAL ZONE

This colour identifies the General Rural Zone on the Planning Maps

The General Rural Zone covers approximately 80% of the district and is the powerhouse of farming and forestry. There are around 420 drystock and 100 dairy farms and a smaller number involved in cropping, deer, goat and pig farming and horticultural activities. Farm sizes vary, but 47% of our rural properties are 200 hectares or larger. Other rural activities including quarrying, recreational hunting and greenhouses are also expected in this zone.

Within the General Rural Zone there are special features such as areas of indigenous bush identified as significant natural areas, outstanding landscapes and sites and areas of significance to Māori. You can find out if you have a proposed overlay or feature on your property by using the [Draft DP Snapshot tool](#).



## What is most important in the General Rural Zone?

- Ensuring the zone supports the operation of farms and allows the opportunity to run activities ancillary to farming such as tourism and visitor accommodation
- Giving effect to the outcomes in the Waikato River Vision and Strategy
- Making sure new development does not limit existing rural activities
- Recognising papakāinga and marae as part of the rural environment
- Protecting our karst and cave systems
- Making sure earthworks do not create runoff into the streams, rivers and sea
- Recognising the characteristic smells, dust and noise of farming are part of rural operations and that they often happen late into the night or early in the morning
- Accommodating the supply of aggregate from local sources while managing the effects of extraction

## How is the draft General Rural Zone different from the current Rural Zone?

The current plan only has one Rural Zone whereas the new plan proposes two – the General Rural Zone and the Rural Production Zone which provides for large industrial and extraction activities. You can read about the Rural Production Zone [here](#).

The current plan is not specific about what activities are allowed, instead it concentrates on standards like height, number of employees and setbacks. The new plan proposes:

- Reduced setbacks from the boundary for smaller sites
- Setbacks from intensive indoor farming activities
- The maximum size of buildings is replaced with a percentage cover that reflects the size of the property

There are other changes as well, this fact sheet summarises the main changes.

## Can I change the type of farming on my property?

Apart from intensive indoor farming, there are few proposed controls on the type of farming you can undertake. You will need to check the Waikato Regional Plan and there are additional rules if your property is in an overlay or has a special feature on it.

## How many houses can I have on my property?

Because agriculture, pastoral and horticultural activities are the main purpose of the General Rural Zone properties are larger, and the anticipated number of houses is different from urban properties. Often a property has more than one record of title. For each record of title, you can have:

- 1 house, 1 minor residential unit, and 1 house for a farm worker OR
- A papakāinga housing development of no more than 6 houses.

## How many sheds can I have?

- There is no limit on the number of sheds but there are maximum sizes for packing sheds and greenhouses.
- There is a maximum percentage of the site that can be covered by buildings:
  - For sites equal to or less than one hectare, up to 15% can be covered by buildings
  - For sites greater than one hectare, up to 3% can be covered by buildings

## What is intensive indoor farming?

This is farming that occurs inside buildings. It can include growing mushrooms, or keeping milking goats, cows, chickens or pigs. Establishing an intensive indoor farming operation will require a resource consent.

Read more about General Rural Zones on the next page



## How close to the boundary can I build?

SITUATION	MINIMUM SETBACK
From the road	10m
From a state highway	30m
From another property	<p>Houses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5m on sites less than 2,500m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- 10m on sites greater than 2,501m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- 50m from existing wool or shearing sheds or milking sheds, feed lots, feed pads or similar structures greater than 100m<sup>2</sup> in area</li> <li>- 250m from a boundary with the Rural Production Zone</li> <li>- 500m from a structure housing intensive indoor farming</li> </ul> <p>Other buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10m for buildings less than 150m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- 25m for buildings greater than 150m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Between dwellings	5m where there is more than one residential unit/minor residential unit
Farm buildings (wool sheds, milking sheds and ancillary yards, feed lot or feed pad, or similar structure or enclosure) greater than 100m <sup>2</sup>	<p>30m from the boundary with another property, or 50m from a house on another site whichever is greater</p> <p>100m from a boundary that has a different zone</p>

## Why can't urban activities locate in the general rural zone?

Once rural land is converted into urban uses it cannot be easily converted back to farming. It is important that shops and services are provided in our towns to continue to make them interesting and vibrant places.

## Can I start a tourism or retail business?

Yes, small-scale enterprises are permitted. There are some limits in terms of location (it must be outside of the amenity precinct), on hours of operation and vehicle movements. The maximum floor area of building is limited to 150m<sup>2</sup> for tourism facilities and 100m<sup>2</sup> for retail activities.

## Wineries, breweries, distilleries and cafes

We have specifically recognised these activities where they are ancillary to a farming operation, but a resource consent will be required as not every site will be appropriate.

## What are the controls around the Te Kūiti aerodrome?

There are additional controls for buildings near the Te Kūiti aerodrome including height restrictions, to make sure it can operate safely.

## Can I operate my business from home?

- Yes, but there are limits on things like the number of people working in it and its operating hours to make sure that the home business is not too big and doesn't affect surrounding rural activities. Home businesses also cannot involve panel beating, spray painting, motor vehicle repair or wrecking
- If you are already running a business that meets the current rules, you can keep doing that
- If you want to start a new larger scale commercial or industrial business, you may need a resource consent

## Are quarries allowed?

Farm quarries are permitted to extract 1000m<sup>3</sup> per year of rock, lime or sand for use on the holding. Larger commercial quarries will need a resource consent.

**Please note this factsheet is a summary and does not include the full set of rules. You can read the full set of rules [here](#)**

