

Submission Presentation

Hello, my name is Kelvin Ashby and for the past 36 years Woodend has been my home town. The reason I am here today is to speak in opposition to Woodend being included by the WDC in the government's medium density housing legislation.

Statistics NZ is the official data source for the New Zealand government and it describes Woodend as a small urban area which at the 2018 census had a population of 2784.

So when the WDC came out in 2022 and said that the government's medium density housing legislation also applied to Woodend I was shocked given that it clearly does not meet the population threshold stated in the legislation guidelines. In August 2022 I visited the WDC drop in centre held at Pegasus and had a discussion with Peter Wilson.

My take home messages from that day were:

1. The WDC's hands were tied as this was being forced on them by the government and as there was cross party support for the legislation then nothing would change after an election, and
2. There is no boundary that defines Woodend and so an interpretation has been made to define Woodend/Ravenswood/Pegasus as one because *"Pegasus and Woodend have been intended to form a third urban area in the district and this is listed in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement"*.

Following this meeting I did some further research. I rechecked the Statistics New Zealand website and it definitely shows Woodend does have a boundary.

I then arranged to have a meeting with Matt Doocey my local MP in September 2022. Matt was in the opposition at that time but as there was cross party support for the legislation I felt justified in asking him the question "Was it the intention of this legislation to include the township of Woodend"? His reply was "absolutely not".

Interestingly a newspaper article then came out in October 2022 in which David Parker (Environment Minister at the time) stated *"The MDRS does not apply to Woodend and Pegasus as the population of these settlements is less than 10,000"*.

Further on in that same article Matt Doocey is quoted as saying *"Central government never intended Woodend, Ravenswood and Pegasus to be treated as one urban area when applying the MDRS. These towns individually don't reach the population threshold but with the council taking the interpretation to link those towns together it will have the unintended consequences of the intensification being focused on Woodend"*. The article then notes that Mr Doocey encouraged the council to take the Environment Ministers advice and not apply the standards to Woodend and Pegasus.

So, yes it is true that there was cross party support for the MDRS legislation, but what is apparent is that there was also cross party agreement that these standards should not be applied to Woodend and Pegasus.

It was surprising therefore to read the S42A report (Section 6.1) and note that the WDC has continued on with their intention to include Woodend/Ravenswood/Pegasus in this legislation.

As such my submission and others who submitted on similar matters have been rejected.

The council response to these submitters is using phrases such as *“Council must apply the MDRS to all relevant residential zones”* which seems to still be suggesting that this is being forced on them by central government when, from my own investigations, it would appear that the exact opposite is the case, ie senior members of both sides of government are urging WDC not to include Woodend and Pegasus in this legislation.

I noted paragraph 127 in Section 6.1.2 of the S42A report uses phrases such as *“...s2 RMA gives discretion to the Council..”* and *“..the wording does not on face value provide an ability to opt out...”*

The advice of government ministers is an open invitation to opt out in applying this legislation to Woodend and Pegasus, but it appears that the WDC are keen to find a loop hole to justify “opting in”. Why would any council “opt in” when they could “opt out” without any opposition from the law makers? This suggests to me there is a hidden agenda going on here – at the very least there is a total lack of transparency from our local council.

To summarise:

- There is a boundary which defines the township of Woodend,
- The population of Woodend does not meet the MDRS threshold, and
- There is no expectation from central government to include Woodend in the MDRS, ie the WDC’s hands are not tied.

So my plea to this hearing panel is to do what I did and discuss with the law making politicians whether the intention of this legislation is to apply it to smaller towns. This matter is far too important for its legitimacy to be based on a council discretionary interpretation to use a set of criteria outside of the guidance material or failing to apply an “opt out” option based on something that doesn’t appear to be on face value.

Thank you.

Confusion over housing rules

By DAVID HILL,
Local Democracy Reporter

Bureaucracy has led to confusion over whether new housing rules apply to Woodend and Pegasus.

New housing rules were announced by the Government in October last year, setting medium density residential standards (MDRS) as the default position for towns in high growth areas, such as Greater Christchurch.

The Waimakariri District Council (WDC) notified variations to the proposed District Plan in August to apply the MDRS to Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus.

In an email to *North Canterbury News* last month, Environment Minister David Parker said, based on advice from the Ministry for the Environment, the MDRS apply to Rangiora and Kaiapoi.

"The MDRS does not apply to Woodend and Pegasus as the population of these settlements is less than 10,000."

Waimakariri District Council development planning manager Matt Bacon says the confusion comes down to how the 'area' of Woodend is defined.

The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement identifies Woodend, Pegasus and Ravenswood as one urban area rather than separate towns.

"This is why the MDRS were applied to Woodend/Pegasus/Ravenswood, although this is still subject to the submissions and hearings process," Mr

Bacon says.

Adding to the confusion, the National Policy Statement (NPS) on Urban Development sets the criteria as a population in excess 10,000 residents for towns in high growth areas.

But the legislation, which gave effect to the NPS, set the criteria as: "an area predominantly urban in character that the 2018 census recorded as having a residential population of more than 5000".

At the time of the 2018 census, Woodend had a population of 2784 and Pegasus 2637 - a combined population of more than 5000.

The legislation, the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 was backed by both Labour and National.

But a lack of consultation meant councils were "blindsided" and the Waimakariri District Council made a submission against the legislation.

Waimakariri MP Matt Doocey says he is surprised by the council's position.

"I think it's quite contradictory for the council to say they oppose the legislation on one level because they don't agree with it, but then seek to enforce some of the most punitive measures."

Mr Doocey says central government never intended Woodend, Ravenswood and Pegasus to be treated as one urban area when applying the MDRS.

"These towns individually don't reach the population threshold, but with the council taking the interpretation to link

those towns together it will have the unintended consequence of the intensification being focused on Woodend."

Covenants set in place when Pegasus was first established would likely prevent the new standards being applied in the township, he said.

Mr Doocey encouraged the council to take the Environment Minister's advice and not apply to the standards to Woodend and Pegasus.

The new standards allow for up to three homes and buildings up to three storeys to be built on some sites without a resource consent, provided conditions are met

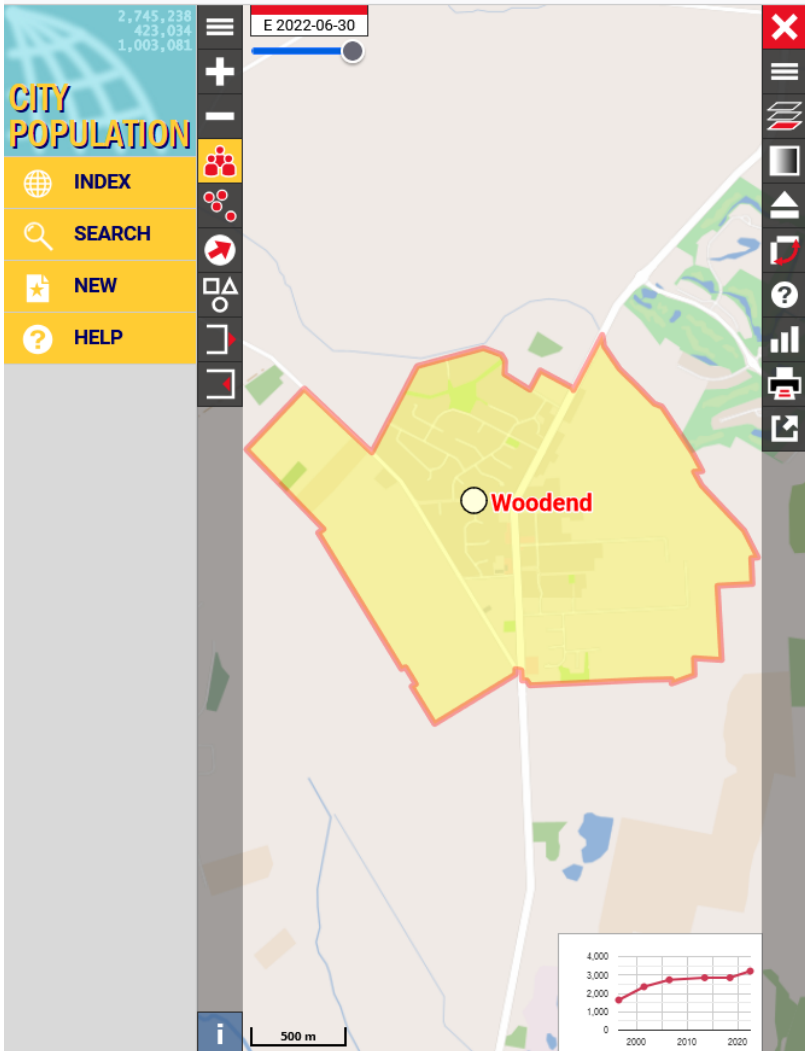
Conditions include maximum heights, setbacks from boundaries, no more than 50 percent of land covered by buildings and at least 20% of the section must be landscaped with trees, grass or garden beds.

Building consents will still be required.

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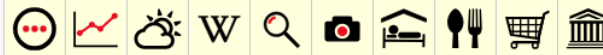
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Woodbourne	Rural Settlement	Marlborough	940	720	700	420	610	670
Woodbury	Rural Settlement	Canterbury	70	60	80	100	110	120
Woodend	Small Urban Area	Canterbury	1,640	2,360	2,740	2,850	2,860	3,210

Woodend

- **3,210** Population [2022] – Estimate
- **3.487 km²** Area
- **920.6/km²** Population Density [2022]
- 📈 **2.9%** Annual Population Change [2018 → 2022]

🇳🇵 Woodend: town in Canterbury, New Zealand



Woodend Beach	Rural Settlement	Canterbury	180	190	200	260	270	300
Woodlands	Rural Settlement	Southland	310	290	260	270	290	300
Wyndham	Rural Settlement	Southland	670	600	540	570	590	590

Source: Statistics New Zealand / Te Tari Tatau (web).

Explanation: Settlements in 2022 boundaries. Population estimates for 2018 and later are based on the results of the 2018 census. The 2022 figures are provisional.



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