

Introduction to the Resource Management Act 1991 Section 32 reports

For the Proposed Natural Resources Plan



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao



Issues and Evaluation Report



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

Introduction to the Resource Management Act 1991 section 32 reports

for the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the
Wellington Region

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1. Introduction

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (referred to as the proposed Plan or PNRP) describes the objectives, policies and methods, including rules, for people and organisations, that have a role in managing and using the physical and natural resources of the region. Natural and physical resources are defined in the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA) as including land, water, air, soil, minerals and energy, all forms of plants and animals and all structures.

Under section 32 of the RMA, any proposed plan change must be accompanied by a report that assesses both the extent to which each objective is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act, and whether the proposed policies and methods are the most appropriate way in which to achieve the objectives in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness. A series of topic-based section 32 reports have been prepared and published alongside the proposed Plan for all the objectives, policies, and methods, including rules.

The section 32 reports for the proposed Plan meet the requirements of section 32 and follow the procedures outlined in the guide for preparing a section 32 report (Ministry for the Environment, 2014). All section 32 reports have been presented to, and considered by, Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Committee in workshop sessions prior to recommending that the proposed Plan be notified.

The report structure is shown below:

- *Statutory context:* provides an overview of the key sections of the RMA that set the statutory context for the Council and the content and approach of the proposed Plan (Section 2 of this report)
- *Section 32 requirements:* provides a more detailed discussion on the requirements of section 32 and the structure of the section 32 reports for the proposed Plan (Section 3 of this report)
- *Preparation of the proposed Plan:* provides information on the preparation of the proposed Plan, the make-up of Te Upoko Taiao and the stakeholder consultation (Section 2 of this report)

The purpose of this report is to provide the information, procedural guidance and background that are common elements to all of the topic-based evaluation reports. This report is designed to be used as a reference guide to the fundamental principles of section 32 summary evaluations and outlines the key national guidance, regulations and standards that have guided and influenced the development of the proposed Plan.

2. Statutory context

2.1 Section 32 evaluation requirements

As mentioned above, under section 32 of the RMA, any proposed plan change must be accompanied by a report that assesses both the extent to which each objective is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act, and

whether the proposed policies and methods are the most appropriate way in which to achieve the objectives in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness.

Section 32(1)(a) of the RMA requires that an evaluation report must examine the extent to which the objectives of the proposal being evaluated are the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the RMA.

Section 32(1)(b) requires an examination of whether the provisions are the most appropriate way to achieve the objectives by identifying other reasonably practicable options for achieving the objectives and assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions in achieving the objectives. Section 32(2) expands further on the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness.

Section 32(2) of the RMA states:

(2) An assessment under subsection (1)(b)(ii) must—

- (a) identify and assess the benefits and costs of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the provisions, including the opportunities for—*
 - (i) economic growth that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and*
 - (ii) employment that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and*
- (b) if practicable, quantify the benefits and costs referred to in paragraph (a); and*
- (c) assess the risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the provisions*

There are a number of terms used in section 32 reports that have quite specific meaning or significance, such as ‘appropriate’ and ‘effective’, and these are discussed and defined in section 3 of this report.

2.2 The purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991

Section 5 of the RMA states the purpose of the legislation, which is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Section 5(2) defines sustainable management as:

In this Act, sustainable management means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while—

- (a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*

- (b) *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
- (c) *avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

2.3 Functions of regional councils

The Council must prepare the proposed Plan in accordance with its functions as set out in section 30 of the RMA. The Council does not have the ability to control all effects from the use and/or development of all natural and physical resources. Section 30 limits the functions of a regional council to include the following:

- The establishment, implementation and review of objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region (section 30(1)(a))
- The control of the use of land for certain purposes (section 30(1)(c))
- The coastal marine area (section 30(1)(d))
- The control of the taking, use, damming and diversion of water, and the control of the quantity, level and flow of water in any water body (section 30(1)(e))
- The control of discharges of contaminants into or onto land, air, or water and discharges of water into water (section 30(1)(f))
- Allocation of certain resources (section 30(1)(fa)and(fb))
- Control of the introduction or planting of plants in the bed of a water body for certain purposes (section 30(1)(g))
- Indigenous biodiversity (section 30(1)(ga))
- Strategic integration of infrastructure with land use (section 30(1)(gb))

2.4 The purpose and preparation of regional plans

Section 63 of the RMA states the purpose of a regional plan is to assist the regional council to carry out their functions in order to achieve the purpose of the Act.

Section 64(1) states there shall be at all times, for all the coastal marine area of a region, one or more regional coastal plans. Section 64(2) enables the regional coastal plan to form part of a regional plan in order to promote the integrated management of the coastal marine area and any related part of the coastal environment. This has been the approach of the proposed Plan. Therefore, all section 32 reports are relevant to the management of the coastal marine area.

Clause 2(2) of Schedule 1 of the RMA requires any proposed regional coastal plan to be developed in consultation with the Minister of Conservation, iwi

authorities of the region and any customary marine title group in the region (of which there are none in the Wellington Region). As the proposed Plan is an integrated plan with the coastal marine area provisions woven through the document, the Council has consulted with the Minister (through the Department of Conservation) and the region's iwi authorities on the entire plan.

2.5 Matters to be considered by regional councils

The matters to be considered by regional councils in its plans are set out in section 66 of the Act. Section 66(1) requires the Council to prepare a regional plan in accordance with its functions under section 30, the provisions of Part 2, and its duty under section 32. Section 66(2) requires the Council to have regard to the following:

- (a) *any proposed regional policy statement in respect of the region; and*
- (b) *the Crown's interests in the coastal marine area; and*
- (c) *any:*
 - (i) *management plans and strategies prepared under other Acts; and*
 - (ii) *relevant entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero required by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014; and*
 - (iii) *regulations relating to ensuring sustainability, or the conservation, management, or sustainability of fisheries resources (including regulations or bylaws relating to taiapure, mahinga mataitai, or other non-commercial Maori customary fishing...)*

2.6 National planning context

The RMA provides for a number of different planning instruments to give national, regional or district policy direction and sets out responsibilities for the management of the region's natural and physical resources. The RMA sets out how this range of policy statements, national environmental standards and plans work together. Figure 1 below shows the geographical boundaries of the policy statements and plans within this resource management framework.

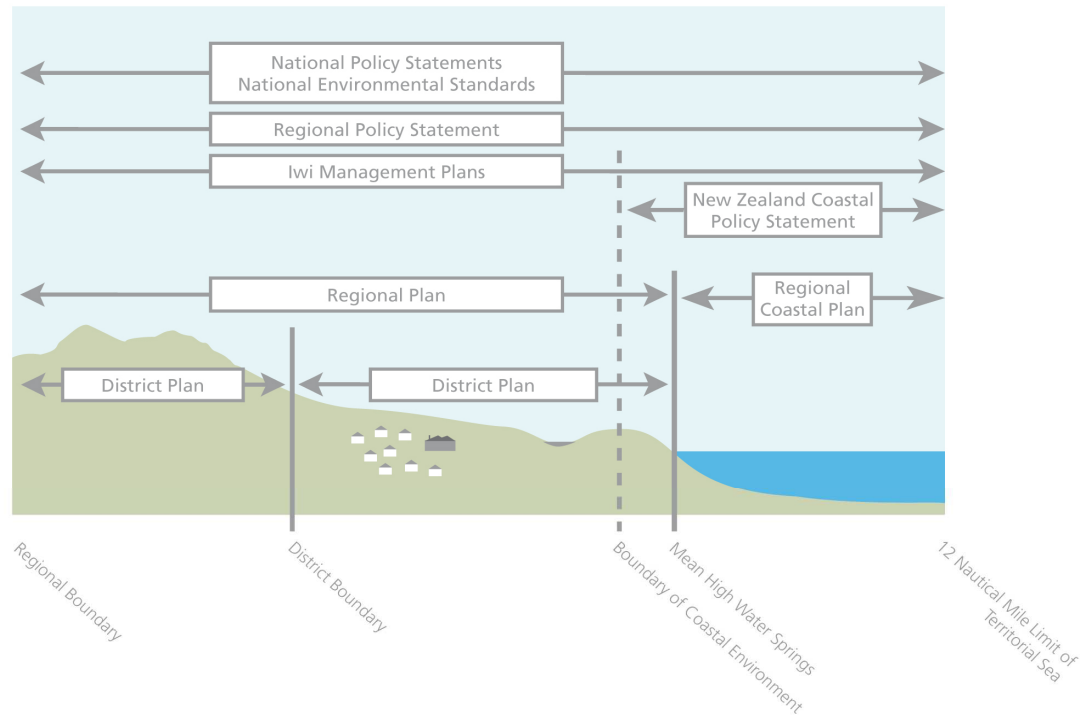


Figure 1: Resource management framework

2.7 National policy statements

A national policy statement is an instrument available under the RMA to help local government decide how competing national benefits and local costs should be balanced. National policy statements must be given effect to in regional plans. At the time of writing, there are four national policy statements in place. These are:

- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (2014)
- National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (2008)
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Generation (2011); and
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010)

2.8 National environmental standards

National environmental standards are regulations issued under sections 43 and 44 of the RMA that prescribe technical standards, methods or other requirements to manage environmental matters. The regulations apply nationally, so every regional, city or district council must enforce the same standard, or, in some circumstances, may apply a stricter standard. The purpose of a national environmental standard (NES) is to protect people and the environment by securing a consistent approach and decision-making process throughout the country. At the time of writing, there are five national environmental statements in place. These are:

- National Environmental Standard for Air Quality 2004
- National Environmental Standards for Sources of Human Drinking Water 2008
- National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities 2008
- National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities 2009; and
- National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2012

2.9 The regional planning context

The Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (RPS) became operative in April 2013. Under section 67(3) of the RMA a regional plan must give effect to any regional policy statement. The purpose of the RPS is to establish a series of complementary policies that provide a robust, integrated approach to promoting the sustainable management of the region's natural and physical resources. The RPS contains policies which provide direction to the Council and the territorial authorities on the management of the following topic headings:

- Air quality
- Coastal environment
- Energy, infrastructure and waste
- Fresh water
- Historic heritage
- Indigenous ecosystems
- Landscape
- Natural hazards
- Regional form, design and function
- Resource management with tangata whenua; and
- Soils and minerals

Many of the policies direct the regional and district plans by clearly setting out the type and tone of policies required to manage or address specific resource management issues in the region. Other policies need to be given particular regard to where relevant when assessing or deciding on resource consents or when changing or varying plans, such as the regional plan. The RPS also provides policies which clearly set out the allocation of responsibility for

particular resource management issues or topics across the territorial authorities of the region and other stakeholders, and also non-regulatory policies.

2.10 Immediate legal effect of rules

All of the rules in the proposed Plan will have immediate legal effect as they meet the requirements of section 86B(3). Section 86B(3) states:

(3) A rule in a proposed plan has immediate legal effect if the rule—

(a) protects or relates to water, air, or soil (for soil conservation); or

(b) protects areas of significant indigenous vegetation; or

(c) protects areas of significant habitats of indigenous fauna; or

(d) protects historic heritage; or

(e) provides for or relates to aquaculture activities.

3. Section 32 requirements

3.1 How is ‘appropriateness’ of proposed objectives assessed?

Objectives in the proposed Plan are statements of what is aimed for in resolving a particular resource management issue. They often describe how the environment should look, or how a particular resource should be managed in order to achieve sustainable management of natural resources. Objectives can promote positive outcomes, or express what the community considers desirable to realise their natural resource values.

Section 32 requires an assessment of each of the proposed Plan’s objectives to determine whether they are the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the RMA; that is, to promote the sustainable management of the region’s natural and physical resources.

The appropriateness test as applied in this report consists of four standard criteria: relevance, usefulness, reasonableness and achievability. These criteria can be summarised as follows:

- *Relevance* – is the objective related to addressing a resource management issue? Will it achieve one or more aspects of the purpose and principles of the Resource Management Act?
- *Usefulness* – will the objective guide decision-making? Does it meet sound principles for writing objectives?
- *Achievability* – can the objective be achieved with tools and resources available, or likely to be available, to the local authority?
- *Reasonableness* – what is the extent of the regulatory impact imposed on individuals, businesses or the wider community?

These four elements of appropriateness – relevance, usefulness, reasonableness and achievability – are all addressed in each of the section 32 reports.

The reports then consider the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed policies, rules and methods for each objective, as explained in section 3.3 below.

3.2 Identifying policies, methods and rules

In the proposed Plan, policies are designed to establish the course of action to be pursued to achieve or implement the objectives, and in many circumstances one objective will have several associated policies. Methods are the means by which policies are implemented, and can be regulatory or non-regulatory. Methods include rules that must be observed in any implementation of policy, for example, the most common examples of regulatory methods to achieve objectives are rules in plans and conditions on resource consents. Methods can also include tools such as water conservation orders and heritage protection orders and enforcement protocols. Non-regulatory methods include regular monitoring, the provision of education, information and training, the delivery of council services, the provision of incentives, establishing voluntary agreements between, for example, resource users and Council, undertaking land purchase, and levying charges.

The requirement to consider alternative policies and methods as a means of achieving or implementing an objective is not explicit in section 32. However, it is implied, as section 32 requires that having regard to effectiveness and efficiency of achieving objectives, the evaluation in the report must show that the proposed policies, rules and methods in the proposed Plan are the ‘most appropriate’. Therefore each section 32 paper has a section addressing the appropriateness of policies, rules and methods.

Establishing whether the proposed policies, rules and methods are the most appropriate requires assessing a range of realistic alternative approaches to the proposed approach. For example, the proposed Plan may include a package of measures which could be characterised as a ‘flexible regulatory’ approach, and will be compared, in the course of the section 32 summary evaluation, against a range of realistic alternatives, such as maintaining the status quo, or applying a ‘do nothing’ or alternately a ‘highly regulatory’ approach.

The interconnected nature of many of the resource management issues facing the region has naturally led to the development of policies, rules and methods that, in many cases, work together to form a comprehensive package of measures. It will therefore not always be necessary or appropriate for policies, rules and methods to be considered on an individual basis in the separate section 32 reports.

3.3 Effectiveness and efficiency

Having identified reasonable and realistic alternative policy approaches, it is then necessary to assess the effectiveness of the various alternatives considered to achieve the relevant objectives. To better understand the effectiveness of the options, the section 32 evaluation reports explore the assumptions underpinning the given options; establish what risks exist to the successful

implementation of each approach; determine what results can be expected, and when; and examine how the success of a particular option may be measured.

This process will lead to a relative assessment of each of the policy alternatives, from which conclusions will be drawn about their effectiveness by the Council. Having determined the most effective policy approach a summary evaluation is provided of the costs and benefits associated with that approach. This is a test of the policy or policy package's efficiency. Analysing efficiency means analysing the various environmental, economic, social and cultural costs and benefits associated with the implementation of the approach. These are not just those costs and benefits that fall on the Council, but also those affecting the community, the environment, resource users and other relevant parties.

3.4 List of section 32 reports and structure of the reports

The section 32 reports listed in Table 1 have been prepared to accompany the consultation of the proposed Plan. Each report analyses and evaluates the provisions specific to a particular resource topic managed in the proposed Plan, and the relevant proposed objectives in each report are also shown in Table 1.

Table 1: List of section 32 reports and objectives

Section 32 report	Objectives
Air quality management	Objective O39, O40, O41
Soil conservation	Objective O42, O47
Contaminated land and hazardous substances	Objective O43, O51
Natural hazards	Objective O20, O21, O22
Water quality	Objective O23, O24
Māori values	Objective O3, O11, O14, O15, O16, O26, O33
Discharges to land	Objective O42, O44, O46, O49
Management of the coastal marine area	Objective O53, O54, O56, O57, O59
Sites with significant historic heritage values	Objective O34
Wetlands	Objective O28, O31, O35
Beneficial use and development	Objective O2, O12, O13
Aquatic ecosystems	Objective O18, O25, O27, O29, O30, O31, O35
Beds of lakes and rivers	No objectives are analysed in this report
Ki uta ki tai -mountains to the sea	Objective O1, O4, O5
Discharges to water	Objective O48, O50
Livestock access, break-feeding and cultivation	Objective O45, O47
Activities in the coastal marine area	Objective O19, O58
Recreation, public access and public open space	Objective O9, O10, O55
Natural heritage	Objective O17, O32, O36, O37, O38
Water quantity	Objective O6, O8, O52

Each of the reports broadly follows the structure set out below. Any variations to the structure will be in response to the way in which the natural and physical resources pertinent to each topic are managed in the proposed Plan:

- Overview and purpose of the report, including legislative background to the provisions and the evaluation methodology
- Summary of the resource management issues pertaining or relevant to the topic
- Regulatory and policy context which has influenced and guided the development of the provisions relating to the topic
- Summary of the appropriateness of the objectives to achieve the purpose of the RMA in respect of the topic
- Summary of the appropriateness of the policies, rules and methods to achieve the objectives
- References
- Tables providing a summary evaluation of the resource management issues, the proposed objectives, and the appropriateness of the preferred provisions and any reasonable alternatives considered by the Council.

3.5 Evaluation methodology

Each report discusses the methodology chosen to evaluate the extent to which the proposed provisions (policies, rules and other methods) are the most effective and efficient means of achieving the objectives. In each report, the discussion describes how the Council has identified and assessed the benefits and costs of the full range of the effects anticipated from the implementation of the provisions; explained the degree to which the benefits and costs have been quantified and, where quantification has been undertaken, the methodology employed; and whether and how the monetisation of costs and benefits has been used.

In respect of the management of a number of resources, the RMA is restrictive in the sense that many activities require resource consent unless permitted by the regional plan. For example, the discharge of contaminants into water cannot occur unless there is rule in a regional plan permitting the discharge or a resource consent allowing the discharge. In these instances, it is necessary for the Council to include rules in the proposed Plan to avoid the community having to incur unnecessary and unreasonable costs securing resource consent for a wide range of everyday or necessary activities. This is the common sense approach expected by our community, and one that automatically reduces compliance costs for the community and carries a range of benefits to people living and working in the region. The Council does not consider it necessary, helpful, or proportionate to quantify or monetise these baseline costs and benefits.

Moreover, in the management of a number of resources, the proposed objectives and provisions generally seek to establish a permissive management framework supported by performance standards based on local, regional and national evidence, developed in line with industry good practice, and tailored to specific activities and discharges. Costs incurred by industry to conform to permitted activity standards, for example, may well be incurred by those activities in any event to comply with other legislation, workplace safety law and guidance, and Standards New Zealand requirements. In this respect, industry is unlikely to experience additional economic costs to comply with the proposed provisions.

Where the Council has quantitative or economic data, for example for the costs of monitoring and enforcement of air quality in the region, this data has been used to illustrate the appropriateness of proposed provisions. The aim of an economic analysis is to provide an indication of the costs and benefits of implementing the proposed policies.

3.6 Integration of evaluation reports

The proposed Plan takes an integrated approach to the management of the region's natural and physical resources. The proposed Plan has taken five operative plans, including the regional coastal plan, and integrated them into one document that seeks to manage natural and physical resources in a more holistic manner. This approach has influenced the structure of the proposed Plan. For example, there is a single objectives chapter and a single policies chapter which apply across the management of all natural and physical resources as opposed to having separate air, land, water and coast chapters. This structure influences how the evaluation reports relate to one another.

As a specific topic-based example of how the proposed Plan is integrated, the proposed Objective O3 for the sustenance and enhancement of mauri is directly achieved by the implementation of proposed Policy P17 relating to mauri, but is also strongly influenced by the implementation of a large number of other policies specifically guiding resource use and development in the region, such as the policies governing water quality, water quantity and aquatic ecosystem health.

Where the achievement of a proposed objective is anticipated through the implementation of a broad range of policies and methods, a specific topic report takes the lead on the evaluation but with appropriate acknowledgement of the wider context within which those provisions operate, and with cross-references to other reports which examine how the achievement of that objective will be contributed to within specific areas of resource management. In the example of Objective O3, the report that evaluates the management of Māori values takes the lead on the discussion regarding the achievement of that objective. This is appropriate, as the concept of mauri and its place in the management of natural and physical resources in the region is most effectively appreciated within the wider mana whenua context that the proposed Plan seeks to support and promote. However, the mana whenua evaluation includes cross-references to other evaluation reports such as section 32 reports on water quality and water allocation, where an evaluation is provided of how provisions relating to those topics seek to contribute to the achievement of Objective O3.

The structure of the evaluation reports and the way in which they have been designed to relate to one another seeks to ensure that the proposed provisions can be understood within a specific, often activity-specific, context, and appreciated within the more general context of integrated management of natural and physical resources.

4. Preparation of the proposed Plan

The introduction of the proposed Plan begins with this statement:

<i>'Ka ora te wai</i>	<i>If the water is healthy</i>
<i>Ka ora te whenua</i>	<i>The land will be nourished</i>
<i>Ka ora te whenua</i>	<i>If the land is nourished</i>
<i>Ka ora te tangata</i>	<i>The people will be provided for</i>

What defines a place? The features, the natural resources and the people.

What sustains a place? The way we humans interact with our environment.'

This whakatauki or traditional saying expresses the fundamental importance of water quality as the basis for environmental health and ultimately the wellbeing of people. Mana whenua have emphasised through the proposed Plan process that maintaining the mauri of fresh and coastal waters is a matter of the utmost importance for the region. This perspective has been formative to the regional plan review and the ongoing development of the whitua chapters that represent catchment communities.

The proposed Plan must fulfil its statutory obligations as described in Section 2 of this report. In effect, the proposed Plan must identify and address situations where human activity may result in the region's natural and physical resources being managed in a manner which is less than sustainable.

The proposed Plan is shaped by four principal factors:

- The overall approach to managing the natural resource issues of the region as directed by Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee and the Council
- A range of national and regional level policies, plans and other statutory instruments, such as national environmental standards, national policy statements and the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (2013) that are produced or recognised under the Resource Management Act 1991 (discussed in Section 2 of this report)
- Scientific and technical information
- The views of individuals, community groups and industry or sector organisations

4.1 The operative plans

The Council has five operative regional plans, as listed below. The Regional Coastal Plan is the only mandatory regional plan; the others are prepared at the discretion of the Council.

- Regional Plan for Discharges to Land (1999)
- Regional Air Quality Management Plan (2000)
- Regional Soil Plan (2000)
- Regional Freshwater Plan (1999); and
- Regional Coastal Plan (2000)

Each of these plans contain objectives, policies, rules and other methods that govern the use of natural and physical resources and manage the effects of that use, for example managing what is discharged to land or water, what amount of water can be taken and used from rivers, streams and groundwater, and what contaminants can be allowed to enter the atmosphere.

Under the RMA, reviews of plans must commence 10 years after they have become operative. The Council formally adopted the first of the current suite of regional plans in December 1999, so the review started in 2009.

The Council has made a commitment to managing catchments in an integrated way, with one integrated natural resources plan, instead of the set of five plans that it currently has so as better to recognise the inter-relationships between different activities, whether they are on land or water.

This proposed Plan for the Wellington Region has been developed in collaboration with people from the diverse communities that make up the Wellington Region and that have economic, spiritual, cultural and environmental interests in our land, water and coastal resources. The proposed Plan represents a synthesis of Māori and non-Māori values, priorities and perspectives.

4.2 Guiding principles of Te Upoko Taiao

Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee intends that the Natural Resources Plan will be achievable, practical and affordable for the region. The committee established a set of guiding principles (shown in Figure 2) that underpin the overall management approach of the Plan. These are:

Ki uta ki tai (connectedness) – managing natural and physical resources in a holistic manner, recognising they are interconnected and reliant upon one another

Wairuatanga (identity) – recognition and respect for mauri and the intrinsic values of natural and physical features, and including the connections between natural processes and human cultures

Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) – recognition that we all have a part to play as guardians to maintain and enhance our natural and physical resources for current and future generations

Tō mātou whakapono (judgement based on knowledge) – recognition that our actions will be considered and justified by using the best available information and good judgement

Mahitahi (partnership) – partnership between the Council, iwi (mana whenua) and the community, based on a commitment to active engagement, good faith and a commonality of purpose

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE REVIEW OF REGIONAL PLANS

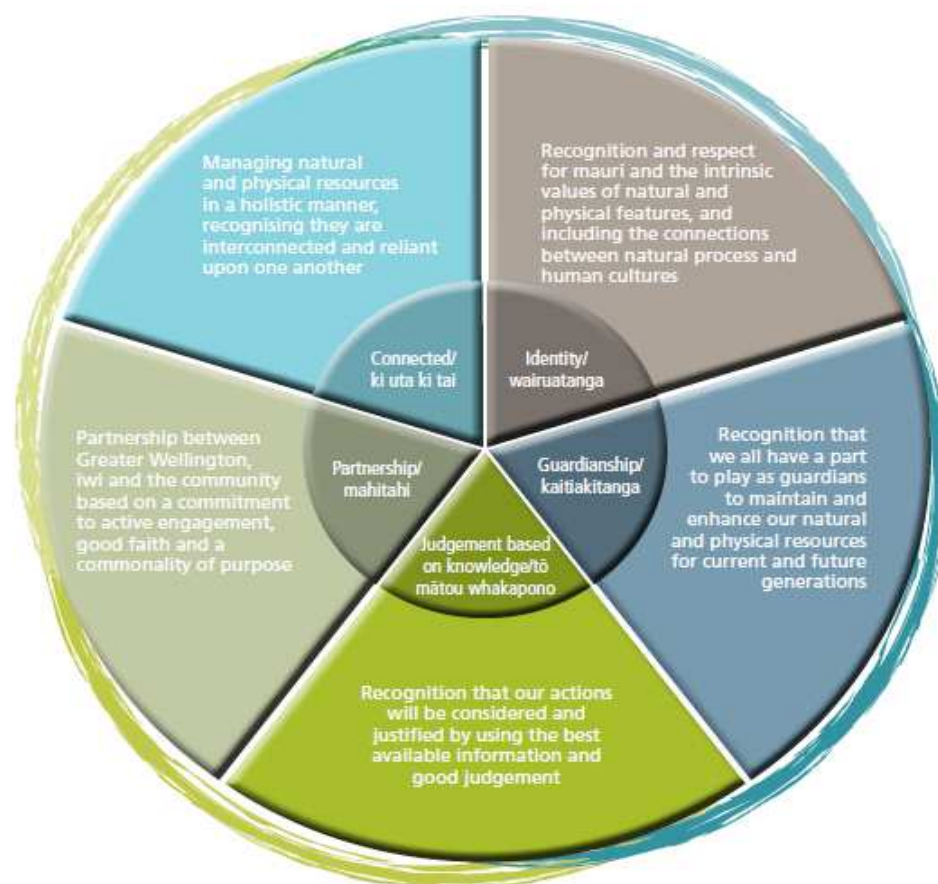


Figure 2: Te Upoko Taiao's principles to guide the review of the regional plans

The make-up of the committee and these guiding principles reflect an understanding that mana whenua, the Council and the wider community all share the responsibility of caring for the region's environment. Ongoing collaboration between regulators, resource users, mana whenua, the

government and the wider community will be required to manage the region's natural and cultural resources effectively.

Te Upoko Taiao has also specified that the Natural Resources Plan must be a document that meets the needs of its users, who are typically a wide range of people ranging from professional planners and consents officers to individual property owners. This means that the structure and content must be readable, functional and accessible.

4.3 Mahitahi – a work in partnership

In developing this plan a new approach has been taken, both through the establishment of Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Management Committee (Te Upoko Taiao) and active engagement and collaboration with the regional community to incorporate their interests and views in the propose Plan. This approach is referred to as mahitahi – a work in partnership between the Council, mana whenua and the community. It is based on a commitment to active engagement, good faith and a commonality of purpose and is one of the guiding principles of the Te Upoko Taiao).

Te Upoko Taiao, formed by seven councillors and seven members recommended by the region's mana whenua, was created in 2009 as an expression of the Treaty of Waitangi relationship at a regional level, enabling a mana whenua perspective in resource management policy direction. Te Upoko Taiao grew from Ara Tahi, the partnership committee formed between mana whenua leaders and Wellington regional councillors more than two decades ago.

Te Upoko Taiao sets a new standard for recognition of kaitiakitanga in regional resource management. The Council delegated the responsibility to oversee the development of the proposed Plan to Te Upoko Taiao and, as a result, the objectives, policies and methods contained in the Plan recognise shared values of both the Council and mana whenua. This is most clearly emphasised in new, shared objectives for regional water quality in this plan. The proposed Plan requires that all water quality is maintained or is improved in order to provide for aquatic ecosystem health and mahinga kai, and for contact recreation and Māori customary use. It is anticipated that the process of achieving these objectives will not only improve water quality but support the role of mana whenua kaitiaki in regional resource management. The committee will also have an active role in implementing the Natural Resources Plan at a local and community level, ensuring an ongoing management partnership between the Council and mana whenua.

In 2010 the process to actively engage the wider community began. More than 1,400 people participated from the start of the process through a series of community workshops and online participation.

There are a number of other important regional partners who have a particular role to play in managing natural resources, including district and city councils, primary industry groups and community and interest groups. They have all played a significant role in the development of the Proposed Natural Resources Plan through workshops, and feedback on draft provisions and documents.

4.4 Integrated catchment management

Integrated catchment management is the management of all natural and physical resources within a defined area (usually an area around a water body) in a coordinated way, from the mountains to the sea – ki uta ki tai.

The first step in integrated catchment management is to identify the values held by the community, identify desired outcomes and then look for solutions at the catchment scale. Te Upoko Taiao has adopted an innovative model to ensure collaborative development of both regional and catchment-specific programmes and an integrated approach to the management of natural and physical resources. The emphasis is on the identification of local community values as a basis of decision-making. This model includes the establishment of committees for the five identified catchments which the Council has termed 'whaitua' (Figure 3). Each whaitua committee will have a majority of members from the local community, along with regional and city/district councillors and mana whenua representatives.

The whaitua committees will each continue to develop sections of the Natural Resources Plan related to their local catchment. This will form the basis of the Council's programme to implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (addressed in section 2.7). The aim is to improve the integration of activities and achieve better resource management practices reflecting local aspirations. The whaitua will each develop a whaitua implementation programme which will include both regulatory provisions and non-regulatory programmes. The regulatory provisions will be included progressively by way of variation or plan changes in the whaitua-specific chapters of the proposed Plan as the committees make their recommendations.

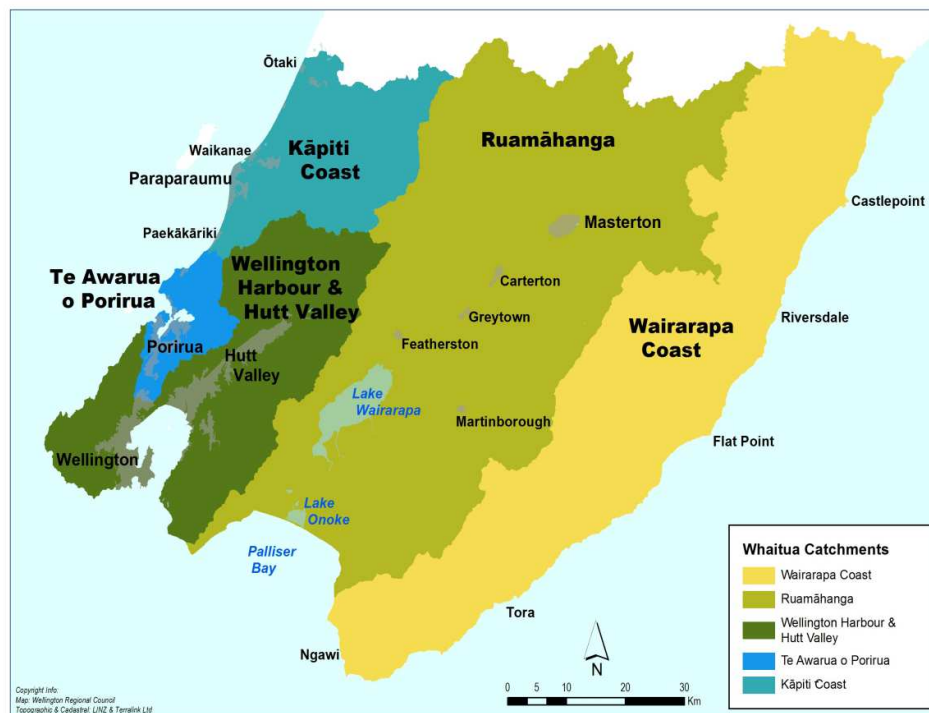


Figure 3: Whaitua catchments

4.5 Scientific and technical information

The Council has a number of projects that monitor the state of the environment in the Wellington Region. Reports are produced annually and made available on the Greater Wellington Regional Council website, along with monitoring data. The topics include:

- Air quality
- Meteorology
- Rainfall
- Land and soil
- Rivers and streams
- Groundwater
- Lakes
- Wetlands
- Recreational water quality
- Coasts and estuaries

4.6 Stakeholder consultation

Working with regional communities to understand how they are affected by resource management issues has been crucial to the development of the proposed Plan. Between 2010 and 2014, public meetings, workshops, seminars and stakeholder meetings were held with communities, community groups, iwi, territorial authorities, agencies and regional organisations. Consultation meetings were held between relevant departments within the Council to encourage inter-departmental participation in the review process. Online surveys were held in 2010, 2011 and 2014 to supplement the public events.

Consultation results were analysed and reported in four documents as listed below. These are available on the Council's website, or from the Council upon request.

- Your view about our environment: Public engagement (2010) for the Natural Resource Regional Plan Review for the Wellington region (March 2011)
- Your environment – Are we on the right track? Public engagement (2011) for the Natural Resource Regional Plan Review for the Wellington region (December 2011)
- Review of Greater Wellington Public Engagement and Consultation for the Natural Resources Regional Plan 2009-2013 (2013); and

- Make it our plan. Public engagement (2014–2015) for the Natural Resource Regional Plan Review for the Wellington region in preparation

4.7 The five key areas raised by the community

The workshops and online forums identified five key areas that the community considered the new regional plan – the proposed Plan – needed to focus on. These are:

- Urban water quality
- Rural water quality
- Water allocation
- Coastal and marine management; and
- Hazard management

In addition, community views indicated a strong preference for provisions in the new plan that would be specific to catchments to enable better management of water quality, and to better management the interactions and relationships between land use and development and water quality outcomes. More effective management of the cumulative effects of activities was also a high priority for participants, as was the development of better links between statutory and non-statutory resource management policies and programmes.

Other natural resource management issues such as soil conservation, air quality, heritage protection and managing sites of significance are also addressed in this plan.

4.8 Reports of 2010 consultation and engagement

The workshops held during 2010 identified that the most critical resource of concern to participants was fresh water. Feedback indicated that the management of fresh water in both rural and urban contexts was the most critical issue that needed to be addressed by the regional plan review. The main threats to water quality were considered to be from: town sewage discharges, stormwater systems, erosion, chemical contamination, livestock access, farm dairy effluent, flood management and low river flows. People generally wanted surviving wetlands in the region to be protected. The potential harvesting and use of water for irrigation was widely supported.

Biodiversity was the second most important topic after water quality, and participants were concerned by the perceived decline in the areas of native bush in the region and the effects that this could have on wider biodiversity values across the region.

4.9 Results of 2011 consultation and engagement

Consultation and engagement in 2011 focused on possible policy responses to the resource management issues for the region identified and confirmed in 2010. This included policy direction for integrated catchment management, natural hazards, mana whenua values, biodiversity, the allocation of water, and

discharges to land. Results from the workshops, surveys and other events held throughout 2011, supported the Council's continued development of an integrated catchment management approach to addressing water management issues.

4.10 Reports of 2012-13 consultation and engagement

In 2012, Council meetings with stakeholders mainly focussed on: the uses and management of the coastal marine area; hazard management; the use and management of the beds of lakes and rivers; rural land uses that could impact on water quality; water allocation; and urban land uses that could impact on water quality (in particular, management of stormwater). Of these, the policies and methods related to rural land use, water allocation and stormwater management produced the most divergent views among different sectors taking part in the discussions. The policies relating to stormwater management planning were supported in general, but it was recognised that they potentially had substantial cost implications for some communities.

In 2013 the Council released a "working document for discussion" that described the direction of possible plan provisions. Following its release, public and stakeholder meetings were held covering specific matters related to significant sites, wetland management, historic heritage and the management of regionally significant infrastructure.

4.11 Reports of 2014-15 consultation and engagement

In September 2014 a draft Natural Resources Plan was released by the Council so that people could review possible provisions and provide feedback about ways to improve these. Over 150 people and organisations submitted feedback to the Council. Most of the feedback submissions were about water allocation, indigenous biodiversity, coastal management, discharges to land, discharges to air, or were of a general nature.

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The Greater Wellington Regional Council's purpose is to enrich life in the Wellington Region by building resilient, connected and prosperous communities, protecting and enhancing our natural assets, and inspiring pride in what makes us unique

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