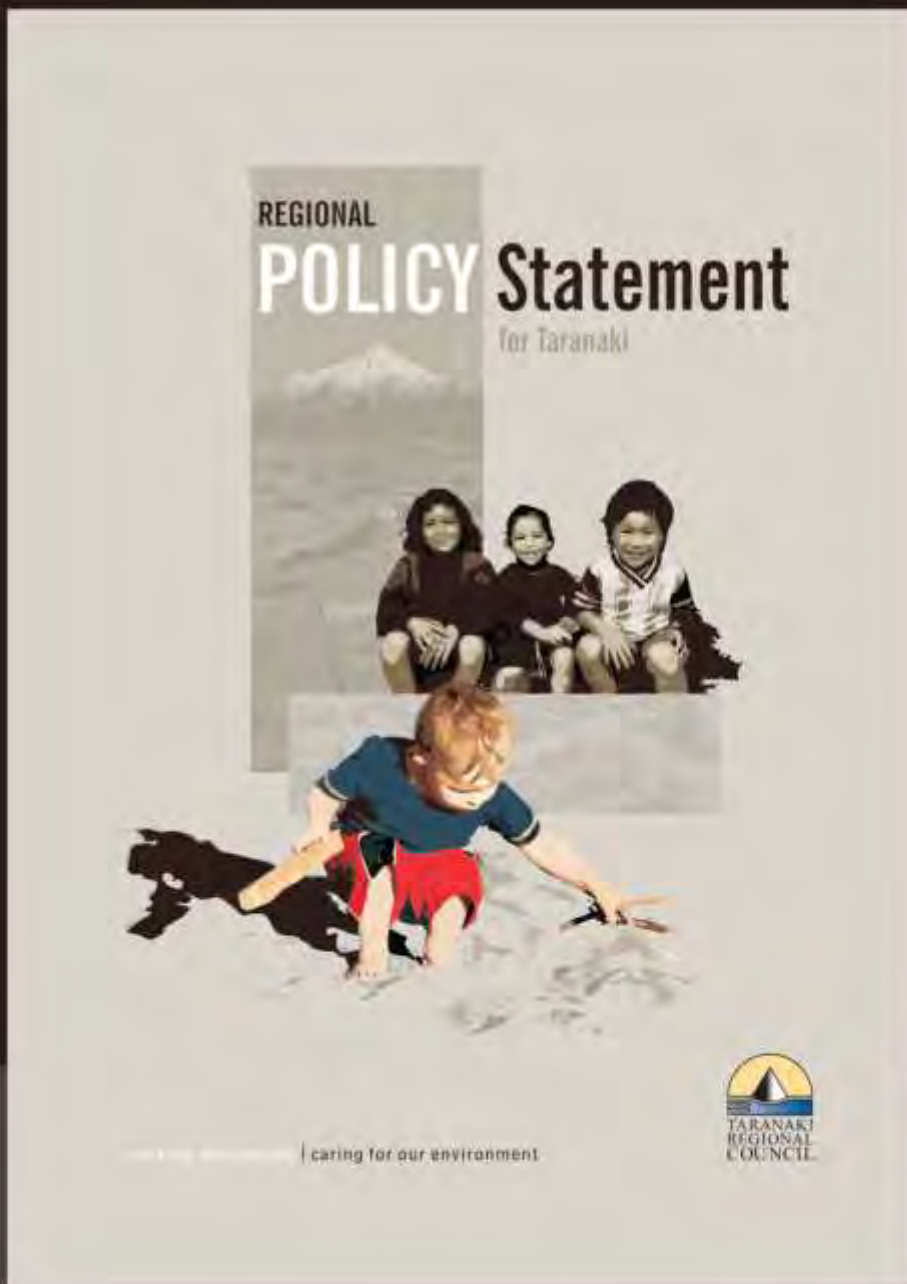


Interim review of the
Regional Policy Statement
for Taranaki 2010

Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness



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Final report on

Interim review of the Regional
Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010

Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency
and effectiveness

Taranaki Regional Council

Private Bag 713

Stratford

June 2017

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Executive summary

Under section 35 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Taranaki Regional Council (the Council) is required to undertake and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring into the efficiency and effectiveness of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (RPS).

The RPS was adopted in 2010. It is now timely to carry out an interim review of the RPS. The purpose of the interim review is to set out the findings of an internal evaluation and targeted consultation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS. Have the outcomes sought been achieved? Did the Council implement what it said it would implement in the RPS? Finally, do the benefits of having the RPS outweigh the costs?

From its evaluation to date, which involved an internal review and targeted stakeholder consultation, six years on, the RPS is standing the test of time well and is assisting the Council in carrying out its resource management responsibilities. Key preliminary findings are:

- State of the environment monitoring confirms that the RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives (environmental outcomes).
- In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends.
- In terms of water quality, data shows that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change).
- Only one of the indicators relating to maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity showed data trends of concern. A small but ongoing loss in the areal extent of native forests, shrub-lands and wetlands is still occurring. Offsetting this trend however is the amount of work going into improving the condition of remnant sites.
- The assessment shows that the methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies are being implemented.
- The RPS contains no rules but maintains a suite of regional plans that regulate the use and development and protection of air, land, freshwater and coastal resources. Other non regulatory programmes, particularly the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes cover large parts of the region and protect freshwater quality and at risk soils.
- The RPS is efficient and effective. An internal analysis of the RPS shows that it has been efficient with it delivering benefits that are considered to be substantially greater than its costs.

The review has not so far identified cause for making immediate changes to the RPS. Notwithstanding the above, the report also identifies a number of 'change' factors (e.g. changes to legislation and government policy, and development of best practice), which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS that should be taken into account as part of the full review scheduled to occur in 2020. The report also identifies a number of areas to improve and build on the current RPS as part of the next review. It is recommended that Council investigate:

1. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans for air, the coast, freshwater and soil (of note the Council is likely to commence a full review of its Coastal Plan in 2017/2018 and full reviews of the RPS and other plans are scheduled to occur in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years).
2. Reframing RPS policies and methods, including those that apply to district councils, to be more directive.
3. Reframing RPS issues and objectives to focus on integrated management across the wider environment by having a smaller number of high level issues with other more specific issues/policies being left to regional plans.
4. Updating RPS provisions to ensure alignment with national policy directives (e.g. NZCPS, NPSFM, NPS-UD) and emerging Council policy, including a revised Coastal Plan.
5. Reviewing biodiversity provisions in the RPS in terms of their adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency to avoid small but ongoing biodiversity loss.
6. Working with iwi to better incorporate Maori values and principles and reframe the issues of significance to iwi so they reflect the Treaty settlements and apply across all the Council's plans.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to undertake and document an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010* (RPS) as part of the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council) non-statutory interim review of that document.

Accordingly, this report:

- assesses the appropriateness and ongoing relevance of the RPS (i.e. are the significant resource management issues still relevant in 2016 and are there any drivers for change?);
- assesses whether the RPS is achieving its purpose of providing for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the region;
- assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of RPS policies and method; and
- on the basis of the above, identifies whether changes to the RPS are required as a matter of urgency, including any recommendations for change.

1.2 Background

The RPS became operative on 1 January 2010. It is the second RPS to be prepared by the Council. Like the first RPS, no Environment Court hearing process was required with any issues being resolved through the engagement process.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) the Council must, at all times have an RPS, and a full review of the RPS must be commenced within 10 years of it becoming operative. The current RPS is due for full review on 2020.

Section 35(2) of the RMA further requires the Council to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and other methods. **Appendix I** contains the full text of section 35(2).

The RPS is one of the most important planning tools for Taranaki. It sets out how our natural and physical resources should be managed into the future – from the mountain to the sea.

The RPS impacts on how people, businesses and industry use, develop and protect Taranaki's resources and it directs district and regional plans.

Although the RPS does not contain rules, it directs the

integrated management of our resources (land, water, air, soil, minerals, and energy). This means considering the environment as a whole and recognising change and the effects of human activities, in one area or on one resource, can affect other resources.

Its stated purpose is to "... promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region by:

- Providing an overview of the resource management issues of the Taranaki region
- Identifying policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region."

This report gives effect to the requirements of Section 35(2) of the RMA. This report examines the ongoing relevance of RPS issues and the effectiveness and efficiency of its objectives, policies and methods. It is an important step in ensuring the RPS is delivering efficient and effective policy direction for the Taranaki region.



Figure 1: Taranaki region and three district councils

1.3 Structure

This report has eight sections.

Section One introduces the report, including its purpose, background, and structure.

Section Two outlines the planning context for undertaking an interim review, including statutory requirements, the criteria for evaluation, and the assessment methodology and approach undertaken to inform the review.

Sections Three and Four examine the ongoing relevance of the RPS.

Section Three presents examines potential 'change' factors or matters, which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS.

Section Four presents stakeholder feedback and views on RPS issues, including whether any changes are appropriate or necessary.

Section Five examines the effectiveness of the RPS in terms of whether the environmental outcomes sought (i.e. objectives) are being achieved.

Section Six examines the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS in terms of whether the Council implemented programmes, actions and activities identified in the RPS (i.e. methods of implementation).

Section Seven assesses the efficiency of the RPS in relation to its cost (in terms of administrative, compliance and broader economic costs) and benefits.

Section Eight presents the report's conclusions on the on-going relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS six years on, including recommended changes going forward.

Appendices are presented at the back of the report. The appendices set out section 35 of the RMA and the legislative requirement to undertake an interim review, the list of stakeholders consulted to date, the structured questions used during the stakeholder meetings, and copies or written responses from stakeholders on the interim review.

2. Interim review of the RPS

2.1 Section 35 of the RMA

Sections 35(2)(b) and (2A) of the RMA (refer **Appendix I**) requires that the Council undertake and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring into the efficiency and effectiveness of RPS policies and methods.¹

This report, amongst other things, gives effect to that requirement and summarises the findings of an internal review and targeted consultation on the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS.

Through this review process, the Council is seeking to ensure that the RPS remains relevant, lawful and appropriate and that it is achieving its purpose in an efficient and effective way. Depending on the conclusions drawn from the review, the Council will then need to determine whether changes to the RPS are required now or can wait until the 10-year review of the RPS.

2.2 Assessment criteria

In deliberating as to the necessity to make immediate changes to the RPS, Council has had regard to the following criteria:

- The *ongoing relevance* of the RPS in terms of section 32 matters. Part of this assessment will need to include consideration of the:
 - timeliness of any change, particularly in view of any proposed changes in legislation and new or emerging issues (refer sections 3 and 4 below); and
 - costs to the Council or resource users.
- The *effectiveness* of RPS policies in achieving its objectives (refer section 5 below).
- The *effectiveness* of the RPS in terms of its delivery of the methods of implementation (refer section 6 below).
- The efficiency of the RPS in terms of its benefits and costs (refer section 7 below).

¹ *Reviewing the effectiveness of policy is an important component of resource management, completing the circle of policy development, delivery of that policy through methods, monitoring the outcomes of delivering that policy and taking appropriate actions to deliver on the policy.*

2.3 Assessment methodology

The methodology for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS is similar to those previously undertaken by the Council for its regional plans. The methodology is also based on best practice guidelines set out in the report *Evaluating Regional Policy Statements and Plans – A Guide for Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities*.²

This report seeks to answer three key questions:

1. Are the significant resource management issues still relevant in 2016 (are there any drivers for change and does the RPS continue to focus on the appropriate *regionally significant issues*)?
2. Is the RPS effective and efficient in achieving its purpose of providing for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region (is it achieving its objectives, are the policies and methods being implemented)?
3. On the basis of the above, are changes to the RPS required as a matter of urgency (are there any priority areas where additional information and analysis may be required)?

To answer these questions the Council undertook:

1. A desktop review of legislative and government policy changes, state of the environment information, and other relevant information.
2. A series of interactive workshops and meetings with Council staff, major consent holders³ all three district councils and non-governmental organisations and community groups, Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand and the Taranaki District Health Board were held in August 2016.
3. Informal meetings and hui with iwi o Taranaki held in July and August 2016.
4. The preparation of this report to set out the Council's preliminary findings and to seek further feedback from stakeholders.

² *Enfocus Limited, July 2008.*

³ *A major consent holder was determined to be a person or company who has a current tailored annual compliance monitoring programme/s of \$10,000 or more.*

As noted above, a desktop review of the state of the environment information and Council databases was undertaken. Assessment of the effectiveness of the policies towards achieving the RPS objectives was largely based upon the Council's *Taranaki as One; Taranaki Tangata Tu Tahi State of the Environment Report 2015*⁴. This report summaries and is underpinned by comprehensive state of the environment monitoring undertaken by the Council.

For some RPS issues, particularly those associated with process or management issues (e.g. use and development), data was more limited. In such cases, the interim review necessarily relied on alternative sources (e.g. district council monitoring) and qualitative assessments, including the views of internal and external stakeholders.⁵

The Council undertook an internal workshop plus three separate stakeholder workshops (district councils, industry and major consent holders, and non-governmental organisations and community groups). These were held in July and August 2016. Separate individual meetings were also held with the Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand and the Taranaki District Health Board.

A structured questionnaire was used at interactive stakeholder workshops and meetings. **Appendix II** contains a list of all workshop and meeting participants. A copy of this questionnaire is attached in **Appendix III**. The draft notes from the workshops and meetings were fed back to all participants to ensure accuracy of information. Some participants also took the opportunity to provide written comment following the workshops.

In July and August 2016 a round of informal discussions was held with six out of the eight Iwi O Taranaki (Ngati Mutunga, Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngaruahine, Ngati Ruanui and Ngaa Rauru) were also undertaken. Ngati Tama and Ngati Maru were unavailable to meet at that time.

The discussion introduced the intention of the Council to engage on how to incorporate key principles and Maori values in the RPS and whether the current RPS provisions are still relevant in the post settlement environment.

On 24 January 2017, the Council undertook further targeted consultation with the circulation of a draft version of this report that presented and sought feedback on the

Council's preliminary findings on the interim review of the RPS.

The deadline for feedback on the draft report was 7 April 2017, Eight written responses were received (includes written feedback received following workshops) from:

- Fish and Game New Zealand
- Te Kaahui o Rauru
- Federated Farmers
- TrustPower
- Te Korowai o Ngāruahine
- Oil companies
- Climate Justice Taranaki Inc, and
- EnviroSchools.

These are presented in **Appendix IV** of this report.

2.4 This report

This report summarises the Council's assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and ongoing relevance of the RPS following an internal evaluation and initial consultation.

The report includes consideration of the scope of the RPS, whether issues are addressed or not addressed, the certainty and clarity of its provisions, the practicability and affordability of the methods of implementation, the equity of the methods in addressing the issue, and the lawfulness of its provisions).

In the event of any deficiencies in the RPS the Council must consider whether the deficiencies are significant or minor. If the deficiencies in the RPS are significant, changes to the RPS may need to be made immediately as a matter of urgency, i.e. sooner than the end of the statutory life of the Plan. If the deficiencies in the RPS are relatively minor then suggested changes can wait until the Council undertakes a full review in 2020.

Conclusions to the interim review are presented in Section 8 of this report. Written feedback from stakeholders is presented in **Appendix IV** of this report.

⁴ Read the report by clicking on the following link: <https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/plans-and-reports/environmental/state-of-the-environment-report-2015/>

⁵ This assessment has highlighted that the amount and quality of information for particular issues varies quite significantly. Comprehensive monitoring and information was more readily available on issues for which the Council is directly responsible for and/or is linked to a particular natural and physical domain, e.g. land, fresh water, air and the coast.

3. Changing context

A lot has changed since the current RPS was made operative in 2010. This section examines potential change factors in relation to the ongoing relevance of the RPS.

3.1 RMA amendments

Since the RPS was first proposed in 2006 and adopted in 2010, the RMA has been amended a number of times.

The Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Act 2009 represented the single biggest review of the RMA since 1991. The amendments focused predominately on improving the resource consent process and workability of national instruments. However, the amendments also clarified the ability of councils to produce combined planning documents that can meet the requirements of a regional policy statement, regional plan, or district plan (or any combination).

The Government made further changes through the Resource Management Amendment Act 2013 to:

- The resource consent regime.
- Create a streamlined process for Auckland's first unitary plan.
- Set a six-month time limit for processing consents for medium-sized projects.
- Create easier direct referral to the Environment Court for major regional projects.
- set up stronger requirements for councils to base their planning decisions on a robust and thorough evaluation of the benefits and costs.

More recently, the Government has introduced the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This Bill contains a package of resource management reform proposals comprises over 40 individual proposals aimed at delivering substantive, system-wide improvements to the resource management system. Key proposals of relevance to the RPS include:

- The development of a national planning template that aim to improve the consistency of RMA plans and policy statements, reduce complexity, and improve the clarity and user-friendliness of plans.
- The inclusion of a new matter of national importance in section 6 of the RMA – the management of significant risks from natural hazards. This change also supports changes to section 106 regarding consideration of risks from all natural hazards in subdivision consents.

- Amending sections 30 and 31 of the RMA to make it a function of regional councils and territorial authorities to ensure sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet long-term demand. This is designed to enable better provision of residential and business development capacity, and therefore improved housing affordability outcomes.
- Removing the explicit function of regional councils and territorial authorities to manage hazardous substances. This is designed to remove duplication between the RMA and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.
- Places a statutory obligation on councils to invite iwi to form an iwi participation arrangement that will establish the engagement expectations when consulting during the early stages of the Schedule 1 plan making processes. This proposal aims to improve consistency in iwi engagement in plan development.

The Resource Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced to Parliament on 26 November 2015. It had its First Reading on 3 December 2015 and was referred to Local Government and Environment Committee. Submissions closed on 14 March 2016 with the report from the Select Committee due on 10 May 2017.

The above amendments have not so far required Council to amend the current RPS. However, further significant changes to the RMA are anticipated over the next couple of years that will have implications when preparing a new RPS – scheduled to occur in 2020.

3.2 National policy statements and environmental standards

National policy statements (NPSs) and environmental standards (NESs) are issued by the government to provide direction to local government on matters of national significance.

NPSs and NESs that may be of relevance to the RPS are as follows:

3.2.1 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010

The *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010* (NZCPS) came into force on 3 December 2010 and replaced the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994*.

The NZCPS 2010 contains some new policy topics that were not specifically included in the NZCPS 1994, such as:

- Extent and characteristics of the coastal environment (Policy 1).
- Aquaculture (Policy 8).
- Ports (Policy 9).
- Harmful aquatic organisms (Policy 12).
- Surf breaks of national significance (Policy 16).
- Vehicle access (Policy 20).
- Sedimentation (Policy 22).

The NZCPS 2010 identifies seven objectives reflecting the Government's national priorities for the coastal environment. The NZCPS 2010 also contains 29 related policies. Most policies relate to one or more objectives and are not referenced to a particular objective.

The NZCPS 2010 has a number of provisions relating to Māori and their relationship with the coastal environment. This includes Policy 2 and Policy 17 in particular. The NZCPS 2010 provides national direction on how to incorporate Māori into the coastal planning and decision-making process.

While these policy topics are new in the NZCPS 2010 they are not new coastal planning topics. Many of these policies reflect and build on approaches developed through prior planning practice and are already addressed in the current RPS.

3.2.2 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

The *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014* (NPS-FM) directs regional councils to set objectives for the state their communities want for their water bodies in the future and to set limits to meet these objectives.

The NPS-FM replaces the 2011 version. Some of the key requirements of the NPS-FM are to:

- Safeguard fresh water's life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, and indigenous species.
- Safeguard the health of people who come into contact with the water through recreation.
- Maintain or improve the overall quality of fresh water within a region.

- Protect the significant values of wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies.
- Follow a specific process (referred to as the National Objectives Framework or NOF) for identifying the values that tangata whenua and communities have for water, and using a specified set of water quality measures (called attributes) to set objectives.
- Set limits on resource use (e.g. how much water can be taken or how much of a contaminant can be discharged) to meet limits over time and ensure they continue to be met.
- Determine the appropriate set of methods to meet the objectives and limits.
- Take an integrated approach to managing land use, fresh water, and coastal water.
- Involve iwi and hapū in decision-making and management of fresh water.

3.2.3 National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission

The *National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008* (NPS-ET) provides a high-level framework that provides national direction to local government on the management and future planning of the national grid.

It does the following:

- Acknowledges the national significance of the national grid, which has to be considered in local decision making on resource management.
- Gives guidance to local decision makers in the management of the impacts of the transmission network on its environment.
- Recognises the national benefits we all get from electricity transmission, such as better security of supply of electricity.
- Guides the management of the adverse effects of activities from third parties on the grid which helps reduce constraints on the operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the grid.
- Ensures long-term strategic planning for elements of the national grid.

3.2.4 National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation

The *National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation 2011* (NPS-REG) recognises the importance of renewable energy and will help New Zealand achieve the Government's target of 90 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2025. It includes:

- Small and community-scale renewable generation activities (solar, wind, biomass, hydro, geothermal and marine).
- Systems to convey electricity to the distribution network and/or the national grid.
- Electricity storage technologies associated with renewable electricity storage.

The NPS-REG aims to promote a more consistent approach to balancing the competing values associated with the development of New Zealand's renewable energy resources when councils make decisions on resource consent applications. It aims to provide greater certainty to applicants and the wider community. The NPS is only one of a number of factors that a RMA decision-maker must consider when making a decision on renewable generation proposals. The NPS-REG does not promote renewable electricity at any environmental cost.

3.2.5 National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity

The *National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016* (NPS-UDC) took effect 1 December 2016. The purpose of the NPS-UDC is to ensure regional and district plans provide adequately for the development of business and housing. With a projected population growth of 9.3% between 2013 and 2023 the New Plymouth District has been identified as a medium-growth urban area.⁶

Local authorities that have all or part of a medium- or high-growth urban area in their district or region must give effect to policies PB1–PB7, PC1–PC4 and PD1–PD2, in addition to the objectives and policies that apply to all local authorities. They include requirements to carry out a three-yearly housing and business land assessment. Both councils would also be required to monitor on a quarterly basis a range of indicators in relation to housing affordability, resource and building consents and business land vacancy rates.

As stated in Section 3.1 above, the Government also proposes amend sections 30 and 31 of the RMA to make it a function of regional councils and territorial authorities to ensure sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet long-term demand. This amendment and promulgation of the NPS-UDC is likely to be a new matter which will need to be given effect to in the RPS. The current RPS does not have a strong focus on urban growth issues because to date it had not been a major issue.

⁶ The high- and medium-growth urban area definitions in the NPS-UDC are based upon Statistics New Zealand population projections for the 2013 to 2023 period. Revised projections indicate that New Plymouth may be redefined as high-growth. Government will notify the local authorities likely to be affected by this revision in early 2017.

3.2.6 Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

Clear national guidelines on implementation of section 6(c) of the RMA are a Government priority⁷.

In 2011, the Government consulted on the *Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity*. The consultation identified a number of issues. The Ministry for the Environment is now aims for late 2018 to develop revised objectives and policies for managing natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biodiversity.

Proposed NPSs have no legal effect (i.e. councils are only required to give effect to them once they are adopted). Notwithstanding that, potential changes to the RPS may become necessary if the Proposed NPS is promulgated.

3.2.7 National Environmental Standards

NESs can prescribe technical standards, methods or other requirements for environmental matters. Each regional, city or district council must enforce the same standard. In some circumstances, councils can impose stricter standards.

The following standards are in force as regulations:

- *National Environmental Standards for Air Quality 2004.*
- *National Environmental Standard for Sources of Drinking Water 2007.*
- *National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities 2008.*
- *National Environmental Standard for Electricity Transmission Activities 2010.*
- *National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011.*

3.3 Historic heritage review

In 2010, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage led a review of the Historic Places Act 1993 and as a result of that work the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014* was enacted in May 2014. The Act made some changes to how Heritage New Zealand operates, and to archaeological provisions. It also formally changed the name of the Historic Places Trust to Heritage New Zealand.

⁷ For more information of the development of this NPS refer to link. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/more/biodiversity/national-policy-statement-biodiversity/about-national-policy-statement>

3.4 Treaty of Waitangi settlements

There are eight recognised iwi within the boundaries of the Taranaki region. Seven of these iwi have Treaty of Waitangi settlements (Ngati Tama (2001), Ngati Mutunga (2005), Ngati Ruanui (2001), Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi (2003), Te Atiawa (2016), Ngaruahine (2016), and Taranaki iwi (2016). Ngati Maru have recently commenced their formal settlement negotiations.

The settlements, amongst other things, document iwi o Taranaki's relationship with the natural environment. They detail iwi traditions and through instruments, such as statutory acknowledgements and statements of association, document an ancestral, cultural, historical and spiritual connection to the environment.

When the RPS was proposed in 2006, the focus of iwi was on establishing post settlement capacity and progressing settlements. In 2016, with seven out of the eight iwi o Taranaki effectively through the settlement process, the focus is now on setting strategic directions, with particular emphasis on ensuring Maori values and principles are upfront and central in resource management plans.

Also important to note, as part of Treaty negotiations, Ngāruahine, Te Atiawa, Taranaki iwi, the Crown and the Taranaki Regional Council have worked together to develop a framework for iwi involvement in the decision-making processes of the Council. Through these settlements all eight Taranaki iwi will have the right to nominate three members for appointment to the Council's Consents and Regulatory and Policy and Planning committees. The iwi appointees will have the same status as if those appointees were appointed by the Council under clause 31 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (i.e. they will have full voting rights on the committees).

This mechanism of Council representation also signals a willingness of all eight Taranaki iwi to work collectively together on important resource management issues.

Iwi management plans

The Council is required to take into account any relevant hapū/iwi management plans recognised by an iwi authority. Identified hapū/iwi management plans are:

- *Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi – Puutaiao Management Plan* (post 2008, date not specified in the plan);
- *Ngati Ruanui Environmental Management Plan* (2012); and
- *Draft Ngati Mutunga Iwi Management Plan* (to date this plan is still in draft and has yet to be presented to Council).

3.5 Population growth and urban development

The region's population is growing and changing. According to the 2013 census, 109,609 people live in the Taranaki region. This is an increase of 5.3% since the last census in 2006 (when the RPS was first proposed). In the preceding 2001 and 2006 census period the region's population growth was only 1.2%.

While the region is not experiencing the population growth pressures of other regions such as Auckland and Christchurch, Taranaki is experiencing a continued shift away from smaller rural towns to the New Plymouth urban area. Between 2006 and 2016 the population in the New Plymouth district grew by 7.7%, while Stratford and South Taranaki districts grew by 1.1% and 0.4%, respectively.

New Plymouth urban areas have a projected population growth of 9.3% between 2013 and 2023. In response to the pressures of increasing urban growth, the New Plymouth District Council approved *The Blueprint* (2015).⁸ *The Blueprint* is a high level spatial plan that supports and implements the District Council's vision. It seeks to deliver more integrated social, economic and environmental outcomes for the community and signals a move away from the willing developer approach to a more integrated and strategic approach to providing for urban growth.

3.6 Changes in how policy instruments are written

When the RPS was proposed in 2006, regional policy statements tended to capture all issues comprehensively so that they would provide the basis for regional plans to address those issues in detail.

More recently, regional councils have started to combine their respective RPS and regional plans and/or develop 'one-plans' where the RPS tend to only address the strategic issues, and regional plans (air, coast, land and water) are combined and address the functional issues.

A review of best practice advice and second generation policy instruments have highlighted a number of themes that provide guidance in relation to the form, content and structure of future RPSs and regional plans:

- Regional policy statements and plans should have clearly aligned issues, objectives and policies.

⁸ For more information on the *Blueprint for the New Plymouth District* refer to <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/CouncilDocuments/PlansAndStrategies/NewPlymouthDistrictBlueprint.htm>.

- Regional policy statements and plans should be user friendly. They should not be too lengthy, detailed or unnecessarily complex.
- Provisions in regional policy statements and plans should be based on sound issues identification. The focus should be on identifying a smaller number of genuinely significant issues for the region. Often sub-issues can be 'bundled' under a single key issue. Issues must be resource management issues and must not lie outside the scope of the RMA.
- Regional policy statements and plans should show clear links between issues, objectives, policies, and methods that address those issues.
- Objectives and policies should provide explicit, clear guidance to decision-makers about what is relevant and important.
- Objectives and policies determine what methods of implementation are to be used, not the other way round.
- Procedural issues such as cross-boundary issues and monitoring need to be addressed but do not need to be part of the objectives and policies framework.
- Objectives should state the aim or the purpose or target for the issue being addressed. They can either be open (setting a general direction) or closed (a finite statement) and should add value to the RMA rather than merely repeat the Act.
- Policies are statements of a course or general plan of action and can be either substantive (what is to be done) or procedural (how and by whom) and be inflexible or flexible, broad or narrow. Policies should not simply state methods.
- Avoid duplication (adopt a structure, form and provisions that avoid repetition).
- Be fact based (grounded on accurate information).
- Be set in the local context (clearly addresses local or regional activities, resources and effects etc).

Advice on improving the quality of regional policy documents from this and other reviews will be taken into consideration when drafting the next RPS. The current RPS already combines and groups its resource management issues. However, there may be further opportunities to recognise the linkages between the RPS and the regional plans and promote their alignment to avoid unnecessary duplication of policies and methods detailed across the documents.

3.7 Summary of key changes

As outlined above, there have been a number of potential 'change' factors or matters, which have emerged since the adoption of the RPS. However, a review of these change factors has not identified any new or emerging issues that warrant immediate changes to the RPS.

Notwithstanding the above, Council, when preparing the next RPS, will take Government reviews, strategies and initiatives (plus other change factors) into account where they are relevant to the purpose of the RPS.

Of particular note, legislative changes, the promulgation of NPSs and NESs, and building on Council relationships with tangata whenua will be a focus.

A review of emerging best practice in the development of regional policy instruments has also highlighted a number of areas where there are opportunities to promote better alignment in the form, content and structure of future RPSs and regional plans. Of particular interest is an emerging trend to combining RPS and regional plans to promote alignment, reduce unnecessary duplication, and enhance integrated management outcomes.

It is recommended that early consideration be given to exploring the combined RPS/regional plan approach. As part of the 'combined RPS/regional plan' approach, it is further recommended that Council investigate using technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness (i.e. Eplanning). Many users find planning documents such as the RPS overly complex and difficult to understand. Eplanning is a relatively new concept that many councils are interested in. It involves using digital and spatial web-based tools to:

- Support people accessing RPS/plan provisions
- Improve navigation and identify relevant provisions
- Make the RPS/plans more accessible to resource users at a range of scales
- Make better use of spatial (3D) imagery and information to improve understanding
- Assist in the preparation and communication of new RPS/plan provisions.



4. Stakeholder feedback on the relevance of the RPS

This section summarises stakeholder feedback on the on-going relevance and appropriateness of the issues of regional significance identified in the current RPS.

4.1 Determining significance

The RPS's regionally significant issues have been broadly grouped into 26 resource management issues and a further 4 resource management issues of significance to iwi. The RPS contains a larger number of sub-issues that address in more detail some of the broader issues and themes.

The significant resource management issues identified in the current RPS (refer Table 2 overleaf) were developed via comprehensive public processes in 1994 and more recently in 2010. At that time, determining the 'significance' of an issue generally involved the following considerations:

1. *Widespread problems* – A problem which is relevant throughout the region, possibly crossing local authority boundaries.
2. *Scarce resources* – A natural or physical resource that is scarce, rare or unique, and/or under threat. Scarce resources encompass internationally and nationally recognised resources (including resources that are nationally important in accordance with Section 6 of the RMA). They also include natural and physical resources that have particular locational requirements, or that form interlinked networks.
3. *Resource use conflict* – The presence of, or potential for, significant conflicts in resource use.
4. *Cumulative impacts* – The presence of, or potential for, significant cumulative impacts arising from resource use.

As outlined in section 2.3 above, as part of the interim review process, the Council undertook targeted stakeholder consultation involving iwi, district councils, industry and major consent holders, government organisations, and non-governmental organisations and community groups.

A series of workshops and meetings were held to ascertain stakeholders' views in relation to the ongoing relevance of the issues identified in the RPS and whether the significant resource issues in the RPS were still relevant in 2016.

Section 4.2 provides a summary of the key themes and issues highlighted by internal and external stakeholders via the workshops, meetings, and written feedback to an earlier evaluation document.

Table 1: Summary of significant resource management issues in the current RPS

Significant resource management issues	
Resource use and development	1. Recognising the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region
Land and soil	2. Protecting our soil from accelerated erosion 3. Maintaining healthy soils 4. Managing the effects of hazardous substances and contaminated sites
Fresh water	5. Sustainable allocation of surface water resources 6. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands 7. Maintaining groundwater flows and quality 8. Protecting the natural character of our wetlands 9. Managing land drainage and other diversions of water 10. Managing effects associated with the use of river and lake beds 11. Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes
Air	12. Maintaining our excellent air quality 13. Responding to the effects of climate change
Coast	14. Protecting the natural character of our coast 15. Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality 16. Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coast
Indigenous biodiversity	17. Maintaining and enhancing our indigenous biodiversity
Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values	18. Protecting our outstanding and important natural features and landscapes 19. Protecting our historic heritage 20. Maintaining and enhancing amenity values
Natural hazards	21. Reducing the risks to the community from natural hazards
Waste management	22. Minimising waste and managing its disposal
Minerals	23. Recognising and providing for appropriate use and development of minerals
Energy	24. Sustainably managing energy
Built environment	25. Promoting sustainable urban development 26. Providing for regionally significant infrastructure

Table 2: Summary of significant resource management issues to iwi authorities in the current RPS

Significant resource management issues to iwi	
1.	Taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
2.	Recognising kaitiakiatanga
3.	Recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga
4.	Recognising cultural and spiritual values of tagata whenua in resource management processes

4.2 Feedback on the on-going relevance of issues

4.2.1 Who uses the RPS and how?

Stakeholders were asked whether they have read the RPS, and how they used it. In general, statutory agencies, such as the district councils, Heritage New Zealand, Department of Conservation and Fish and Game had read the RPS. However, in the workshops they noted that their organisations do not tend to use the RPS in statutory processes, unless it provided clearer direction than what was available elsewhere in operative regional and district plans.

Industry and major consent holders tended to just refer to the relevant regional or district plan.

Iwi noted that they tended to rely more on their own policy instruments such as the statutory acknowledgements and statements of association in their respective Treaty settlements.

Within the Council, the RPS is referred to and informs the review of regional plans. In relation to the consenting process, most RPS policies are covered by the respective plans however, for some activities, are referred to where they provide stronger direction, e.g. when processing notified water take applications.⁹

4.2.2 Common themes / issues

Stakeholders and Council staff were also canvassed to ascertain their views on what are the most significant resource management issues facing their group / business / industry in 2016.

Of note, no new issues were identified for inclusion in any revised RPS but a number of existing issues were highlighted across all stakeholder meetings as being of particular concern (and for which further attention or action maybe required).

Integrated management

Section 17 of the RPS sets out processes for dealing with integrated management and cross boundary issues. However, a common theme discussed by all stakeholder groups was the demand for better integration in the management of the environment.

The demand for better integration had three elements.

- First, district councils, industry and many other stakeholders sought that the RPS be more directive so as to provide better direction and alignment across regional and district council plans and activities. Further (written) feedback was received from Te Kaahui o Rauru, the oil companies and Climate Justice Taranaki Inc seeking that a revised RPS be more directive (refer Appendix IV).
- Second, many stakeholders highlighted the need for the RPS to span across all physical domains (water, land, the coastal and air).
- Third, stakeholders, particularly environmental groups, sought a strong emphasis on empowering local communities and iwi to be more involved in the management of our natural resources, including decision making processes (both at a planning and consenting level).

Concerns were also raised about the fragmented way in which some issues and topics are addressed across agencies, such as notifying communities on when it is safe to swim.

A combined RPS and regional plan was seen as one mechanism where the current fragmentation across regional planning instruments could be addressed. Stakeholders were generally supportive of combining the RPS and regional plans so as to reduce duplication and to improve integration and alignment of policies.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback subsequently received from, Fish and Game and the Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust that included support for investigating the development of combined RPS and regional plans.

Protecting indigenous biodiversity

Section 9 of the current RPS contains provisions addressing the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and identifies the following six significant issues:

- Protecting under-represented habitats of terrestrial and aquatic indigenous flora and fauna.
- Reducing the impact of pest animals and plants, particularly where they threaten ecosystems and areas that have regionally significant indigenous biodiversity values.
- Encouraging connectivity between remnant habitats to maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity values.
- Reducing threats to freshwater and marine habitats, flora and fauna.
- Recognising the community benefits of appropriate use and development of resources when maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

⁹ *Pers coms Colin McLellan, Consents Manager, Taranaki Regional Council.*

- Working with others to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity values.

A common theme across all stakeholders groups was the importance of all indigenous biodiversity – not just the under represented habitats. This includes remnant areas in urban areas.

Widespread concerns relating to the ongoing loss of remaining wetlands were highlighted. Stakeholders further highlighted the importance of pest control and aligning the RPS with other national or regional initiatives, especially in protecting vulnerable indigenous species. In particular, stakeholders mentioned the need to align with the *Predator free NZ by 2050* and *Taranaki Mounga* initiatives (where the Department of Conservation aspires that the Egmont National Park will be the first National Park to be goat free).

The protection of biodiversity on private land remains a significant issue with district councils in Taranaki. District council officers raised the need for better integration in the management of biodiversity between the regional and district councils. Of note, district councils expressed support for the RPS being more directive.¹⁰

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback received from Fish and Game, Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine highlighting their concerns regarding the state of indigenous biodiversity in the region.

Maintaining the quality of our land, freshwater, coastal and air resources

Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the current RPS contain provisions relating to maintaining the quality of our land, freshwater, coastal and air resources. Thirty-three sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

Land and soil (6)

- Protecting our soil from accelerated erosion (1)
- Maintaining healthy soils (3)
- Managing the effects of hazardous substances and contaminated sites (2).

Freshwater (19)

- Sustainable allocation of surface water resources (4)
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands (3)

- Maintaining groundwater flows and quality at sustainable levels (2)
- Protection the natural character of our wetlands (2)
- Managing land drainage and other diversions of water (3)
- Managing effects associated with the use of river and lake beds (3)
- Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes (2).

Coastal (6)

- Protecting the natural character of our coast (2)
- Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality (2)
- Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coastal environment (2).

Air (2)

- Managing adverse effects on air quality arising from point sources of emissions
- Managing reverse sensitivity issues in relation to air emissions and which are created by incompatible land uses establishing next to industries or rural productions operations.

Again across all stakeholder groups there was a common aspiration to maintain our clean water (both coastal and freshwater) and air and maintain the quality of our soils. Concerns around impacts on coastal processes, natural character and ecosystems, including the deep water, were highlighted by some stakeholders believing the issues not well expressed in the current RPS.

The protection of surf breaks, while included as a policy in the current RPS, was highlighted as a significant resources management issue by recreational groups at the environmental group workshop.

District council officers commented that the NZCPS 2010 requires a higher level of protection for 'threatened' and 'at risk' coastal species, and requires the identification of the coastal environment and outstanding coastal landscapes and natural features.

The workshops confirmed that current issues around public access to the coast, the impacts of increasing coastal erosion, and the functional need for some industry such as Port Taranaki to be located in the coastal environment, remain relevant in 2016.

In terms of fresh water, the implementation of the NPS-FM has clearly sharpened the need for more precise issue definition relating to freshwater quality and quantity.

The workshops for environmental groups and industry groups highlighted concerns about nutrient management in Taranaki. Measures promoting the disposal of dairy farm effluent to land (rather than fresh water), while supported

¹⁰ Noting that district councils must give effect to a RPS, the current RPS was deliberately not prescriptive in setting out what district councils must do. However, there was strong and widespread support across stakeholder groups, including district councils, to be more directive in any revised RPS to promote integration and alignment across councils.

by all stakeholders, need to be carefully considered to avoid impact on other parts of the receiving environments (e.g. groundwater and air). Industry raised concerns about national responses to nutrient management issues, while some environmental groups sought the setting of in-stream limits.

Stakeholders also discussed issues relating to the swimability of our freshwater and coastal waters. The discussion tended to focus on clarification as to what was swimmable, how realistic is it for water to be swimmable 365 days of the year and how the public knows whether it is safe to swim.

Issues around the impacts of forestry harvesting in relation to potentially accelerating soil erosion and increasing sediment loads in rivers and coastal waters were raised in both the industry and environmental group workshops. Districts councils were concerned about the impacts of forestry trucks on rural roads. Stakeholders also raised concerns about soil contamination due to use of agrichemicals and hazardous substances.

The workshops highlighted few concerns around air quality. Most issues around air focused on the reverse sensitivity considerations, especially where urban growth encroaches on rural land. This was particularly relevant to the poultry, piggery and dairy industries. Air quality concerns were raised at the environmental group's workshop about the potential impacts oil and gas activities.

Further written feedback was received from Fish and Game, Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, oil companies and Climate Justice Taranaki Inc highlighting their views or concerns regarding the quality of the region's land, freshwater, coastal and air resources and/or the management framework (refer Appendix IV).

Natural hazards

Section 11 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to natural hazards. Three sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

- Increasing public awareness of and planning for natural hazards.
- Modifying natural hazards processes and taking into account potential changes in the frequency and intensity of natural hazards in the future.
- Reducing the costs of natural hazard events, emergencies and disasters.

As highlighted at the workshops, if the proposed amendments to the RMA go ahead the management of significant risks from natural hazards will become a matter of national importance. The focus on "significant risks" requires Councils to have an understanding of which hazards are significant to their region, including what the communities' perception of risk of each significant hazard is, and what is their level of acceptable risk.

Most natural hazard risks are well understood and documented through different planning processes including those associated with civil defence emergency management. However, as noted at the workshops, increased risks associated from climate change need to be taken into consideration.

Climate change projections depend on future greenhouse gas emissions, which are uncertain. However, the Ministry for the Environment in its June 2016 report *Climate Change Projections for New Zealand* states for the Taranaki region that there could be increased risk to coastal roads and infrastructure from coastal erosion and inundation, increased storms and sea-level rise, threatening vulnerable beaches and low-lying areas. Also more frequent and intense heavy rainfall events are likely to increase the risk of erosion and landslides. Flooding is likely to become more frequent and severe.¹¹

With this context in mind, the main hazards raised by stakeholders were the increased risk of flooding and coastal erosion. District Council officers requested that any new RPS policies and methods provide for flexibility in relation to the localized impacts of sea level rise where the impacts are uncertain.

The environmental groups workshop noted concerns about the impacts of increased flood events on in-stream and coastal ecosystems due to increased sediment loads.

Appendix IV presents written feedback was received from Te Kaahui o Rauru, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, and the oil companies on natural hazard matters.

Climate change

Section 7 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to natural hazards. One issue has been identified:

- Planning for and managing adverse effects on the environment, arising from climate change, particularly associated with rising sea levels and more variable extreme weather patterns.

Currently the issue of climate change is included in the chapter with air quality. It was suggested that including an issue on the effects of climate change in the chapter on natural hazards might be a more logical fit. Environmental groups were also concerned at other non-hazard related effects of climate change including increased animal and plant pests and changes to pest pathways and its impact on biodiversity values and agricultural production.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback on climate change subsequently received from Climate Justice Taranaki.

¹¹ For more information on how climate change may affect Taranaki click on the following link: <http://waterefficiency.org.nz/climate-change/how-climate-change-affects-nz/how-might-climate-change-affect-my-region/taranaki>.

Waste management

Section 12 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to waste management. Two sub-issues in total are grouped around the following themes:

- Minimising the volumes of waste generated and requiring disposal.
- Providing for the efficient and effective disposal of waste while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse environmental effects associated with waste disposal.

Industry highlighted waste management as a significant issue, especially the disposal of waste which was not acceptable to landfill. Industry requested that the RPS discuss the possibility of encouraging the establishment of a regional waste facility for waste unable to go to landfill.

Environmental groups raised issues of the impacts of litter, especially plastic, in the marine environment and the need to increase recycling and upcycling in the region.

Further written feedback was received from Te Korowai o Ngāruahine seeking that the RPS promote behavioural change with regards to waste management (refer Appendix IV).

Maori values, principles and involvement in decision making

Section 16 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to issues of significance to iwi authorities. The RPS acknowledges that all of its resource management issues of significance are of relevance to iwi but the following four issues in particular are identified as being particularly significant:

- Taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Recognising kaitiakiatanga.
- Recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.
- Recognising cultural and spiritual values of tagata whenua in resource management processes.

All stakeholders identified the importance of recognising and providing for Maori values. They also highlighted the importance of processes to involve iwi in decision making processes.

The Council is having on-going discussions and engagement with all eight Taranaki iwi on how to best reflect their principles and values, including the Treaty settlements, in the RPS and statutory plans. The outcomes of that engagement will be incorporated into a revised RPS.

Appendix IV of this report presents written feedback received from Te Kaahui o Rauru and Te Korowai o Ngāruahine on incorporating Te Ao Maori and mātauranga Maori into resource management processes, building Maori capacity, and promoting effective Maori engagement.

Enabling economic development while protecting the environment

Section 4 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to use and development of resources. One issue is identified:

- Recognising the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region.

Industry and district councils were supportive of RPS issues recognizing the importance of resource use and acknowledging economic drivers, including oil and gas and primary production, in providing for the sustainable use of the management of resources in the region.

District councils raised issues around the need to protect rural amenity, while recognising the functional need for poultry, oil and gas and some extractive industries to be based in rural areas.

Reverse sensitivity was highlighted by both the industry and district council groups as being an ongoing issue (refer discussion below).

Some environmental groups were concerned about that potential adverse effects of oil and gas exploration, production, and that waste disposal activities were not adequately addressed in the RPS. There was a suggestion that a national instrument such as a NPS is required to manage and regulate the effects of the oil and gas industry in the region.

Industry groups were particularly supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework. Industry wanted the RPS to continue to provide for and recognise the role of their activities but also recognized the need to provide for sustainable use of resources.

Energy companies felt more recognition should be given in the RPS to renewable electricity generation and the protection of regionally significant infrastructure, including gas and electricity network infrastructure.

Appendix IV presents written feedback from Federated Farmers, oil and gas companies, and TrustPower largely in support of the RPS's current provisions.

4.2.3 Specific issues / themes

Urban environment

Section 15 of the current RPS contains provisions relating to the urban [built] environment. There are four sub-issues grouped around the following themes:

- Promoting sustainable urban development (1).
- Providing for regionally significant infrastructure (3).

Industry groups were very supportive of current RPS issues on managing infrastructure. Although as mentioned earlier, energy companies requested more specific mention of the need to protection regionally significant infrastructure in relation to energy distribution. Increased traffic on rural roads due to logging activities was also of concern to district councils and community groups.

Both industry groups and district councils raised concerns about managing issues of reverse sensitivity where residential and business activities encroach into rural areas. It was noted that poultry and dairying industries, in particular, were potentially needing to constrain their activities to meet off-site odour requirements.

The New Plymouth District sought stronger guidance / direction in the RPS about strategic urban development and what constitutes good urban design and establishing strong city centres.

The New Plymouth District Council made the following comment:

"The Regional Policy Statement does not provide direction in some key areas where it has responsibility under the RMA. This reduces the mandate that TA's have to address some of the strategic urban development issues in the region. In particular these are, as relevant to the NP district:

- *ensuring a cohesive approach to urban growth that requires the efficient use of land and infrastructure and achieves strategic outcomes;*
- *providing a range of affordable housing choices for the communities different social and economic needs;*
- *locating growth so it is accessible and connected to infrastructure;*
- *ensuring urban form reduces impacts on the environment (low impact) and allows for connectivity and provides for a range of transport modes;*
- *ensuring activities and development does not undermine the prime role and function of the regions economic centres (ie: central city and town centres);*
- *ensuring appropriate management of stormwater and in particular management of urban tributaries; and*
- *ensuring the rural area is used for predominately rural activities and rural industry".*

The NPS-UDC signals a new emphasis for regional policy statements to address the issue of housing supply and affordability, as well as sustainable urban design. Urban development issues were less relevant for South Taranaki and Stratford, where the population growth is occurring at a much slower rate (approximately 1%).

Historic heritage

Section 10 of the current RPS includes three sub-issues relating to historic heritage:

- Identifying and raising awareness of Taranaki's historic heritage to promote its protection.
- Managing the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development activities on Taranaki's historic heritage.
- Promoting the active management of the region's historical heritage.

Although the Taranaki region has a large number of archaeological sites, Heritage New Zealand were the only stakeholder group to specifically raise the issue of the protection of historic heritage. However, other stakeholders did mention the issue of the identification of sites of significance to iwi, including wāhi tapu.

Heritage New Zealand's key concerns were around promoting the consistent identification and protection of historic heritage across the region. They also highlighted that RPSs have a key role in educating the community and developers on how to protect archaeological sites, as well as the processes you need to go through if you are going to work on or modifying sites.

Heritage New Zealand noted that RPSs, through appropriate methods, can provide incentives to reuse historic buildings and provide opportunities for heritage tourism.

Human health and the protection of public drinking water

The Taranaki District Health Board (TDHB) highlighted the importance of recognising human health in all aspects of environmental management.

The TDHB has a 'Health in All Policies' approach, which seeks synergies and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve societal goals, population health and health equity. An example given, was how Maori involvement in physically monitoring water quality through the development of a Cultural Health Index, has also been shown to have positive health outcomes, in terms of increased physical activity.

The TDHB requested that the 'Health in All Policies' approach be considered when reviewing the RPS and emphasized the need for the regional and district councils and the TDHB to take a more integrated approach.

The TDHB also requested a stronger emphasis be placed in the RPS on the security of supply and protection from contamination of public and community drinking water supplies. It was noted that with climate change there may be an increased risk of droughts. It was suggested that in times of water shortage, the maintenance of domestic and community water supply needs should be the first priority and this should be clearly stated in the RPS.

Citizen science

Environmental groups and the Taranaki District Health Board highlighted the importance of citizen science, where the community and in particular local hapu, were involved in the monitoring of the environment.

4.2.4 Summary of stakeholder views on RPS issues and directions

In comparing the current 30 RPS significant issues to those raised by stakeholders in 2016, the majority of the issues remain current and relevant.

No new issues were identified by stakeholders although, subject to a full review, the emphasis on some issues may need to be changed or fine-tuned to ensure the RPS issues continue to be relevant.

Stakeholders also highlighted issues where, since the adoption of the RPS in 2010, there have been significant changes to the legislative framework (e.g. the RMA, NPSs and NESs). It was noted that Government directives and policy interventions such as the development and changes to NPSs have changed the emphasis on some of these issues.



Taranaki has 300km of coast line, much of it dominated by cliffs and boulder reefs, all of it enormously valued

5. Are the objectives and policies effective?

The RPS contains 33 objectives and 92 policies. This section examines the effectiveness of the RPS in terms of whether the objectives and policies are achieving the outcomes sought and at an acceptable rate.

Where possible, this section presents state of the environment monitoring results relevant to the RPS although qualitative assessments are sometimes necessary.¹² The effectiveness or otherwise of the RPS five years on in terms of achieving or working towards its objectives is evaluated and assessed as:

- **Achieved** – objective is being achieved across the broad range of environmental indicators.
- **Generally being achieved** – objective is largely

being achieved. Monitoring results and this assessment indicates generally positive trends and outcomes across most (but not all) environmental indicators.

- **Partially being achieved** – monitoring results and this assessment has identified mixed positive and negative results across the range of environmental indicators. Negative results indicate significant risk that elements of the RPS objective may not be achieved.
- **Not achieved** - objective is not being achieved across the broad range of environmental indicators.



Port Taranaki.

¹² Not all of the RPS's significant resource management issues relate to a specific environmental domain or issue (e.g. land, water, air, biodiversity). Some, such as use and development, minerals and energy apply across a range of administrative and environmental domains. Such issues are more likely to be assessed through qualitative assessments and/or databases other than state of the environment reporting.

5.1 Use and development of resources

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for use and development of resources is:

- *Recognise the role of resource use and development in the Taranaki region.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objective was adopted to recognise the role of resource use and development in Taranaki.

Resource use and development provides benefits to people and communities in Taranaki and to New Zealand as a whole. The objective is about generally allowing people and communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing subject to activities being undertaken in a way which promotes the sustainable management purpose of the RMA.¹³

The RPS objective for resource use and development is **being achieved** based upon the following observations:¹⁴

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that provide for appropriate use and development of natural and physical resources.
- Through these plans, use and development activities causing little or no adverse effects are generally allowed for without the need for a resource consent subject to meeting the standards, terms, and conditions set out in the relevant regional plan. Other resource use and development activities are recognised and provided for subject to obtaining a resource consent.
- Taranaki has the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in New Zealand. The region contributes 4% of New Zealand's GDP despite only having 2.5% of the country's population.¹⁵

As noted in section 4.2.2 above, industry groups were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development.



Taranaki boasts one of the strongest regional economies in the country, which can largely be attributed to the strength of the agricultural and oil and gas industries

¹³ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

¹⁴ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

¹⁵ *New Zealand Government: Regional Economic Activity Report 2015.*

5.2 Land and soil

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for land and soil are:

- *To maintain and enhance the soil resource of the Taranaki region by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of accelerated erosion on soil resources.*
- *To maintain soil health in the Taranaki region by maintaining soil nutrients at appropriate levels and avoiding or minimising soil compaction and soil contamination caused by inappropriate land management practices.*
- *To avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse environmental effects arising from the storage, use, transportation and disposal of hazardous substances in the Taranaki region, including adverse environmental effects arising from existing contaminated sites.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives for managing land and soil are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- 92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed.
- Even within the more erosion prone eastern hill country, rates of sustainable land use are high at 87%. Despite some sporadic scrub clearance since 2007, there has been little change in overall sustainable land use since this time.
- Because much of its hill country is protected by woody vegetation, Taranaki has only a very small

proportion of the total North Island land area susceptible to mass movement erosion.

- Of the most at-risk land, 65% of privately owned land has a Council-prepared farm plan containing recommendations for sustainable land use on a whole-farm basis.
- Results of soil monitoring since 1995 show Taranaki has very few long-term issues with soil health.
- The latest monitoring completed in 2012 showed that 81% of samples met target ranges for soil productivity and health.
- There has been a decrease in macro-porosity since 1995 indicating an increase in soil compaction, but this can generally be reversed with appropriate land management.
- The vast majority of HAIL sites (Hazardous Activities and Industries List) investigated for potential contamination issues show no evidence of contamination. Over the life of this and the previous RPS, there has been a substantial effort to identify such sites and, where necessary, undertake remediation.
- There has been a small increase in the number of verified HAIL sites (Hazardous Activities and Industries List) awaiting further assessment but the number is still low. The increase in verified HAIL sites since 2009 is the result of an increase in clandestine drug laboratories (P-labs) discovered by the New Zealand Police, and subsequently entered on to the Council's Register of Selected Land Use database.



92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed.

5.3 Fresh water

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for fresh water are:

- *To sustainably manage the taking, use, damming or diversion of fresh water in the Taranaki region to enable people and communities to meet their needs for water while safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of water and related ecosystems and avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment arising from that use.*
- *To protect the natural character of water bodies from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- *To maintain and enhance surface water quality in Taranaki's rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands by avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of point source discharges to water.*
- *To sustainably manage the use of groundwater in the Taranaki region by:*
 - (a) *enabling people and communities to take and use groundwater to meet their needs while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects from that use; and*
 - (b) *avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on groundwater quality from over abstraction, intensive agricultural land uses, the discharge of contaminants, and poor well and bore construction.*
- *To improve knowledge of groundwater resources in Taranaki to promote the sustainable management of groundwater resources.*
- *To protect the natural character of Taranaki's wetlands from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and ensure that any adverse effects of activities are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*
- *To recognise and provide for the land production and management benefits of appropriate and associated diversions of water from land in the Taranaki region while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To enable appropriate use of and disturbance within river and lake beds in Taranaki while avoiding any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*
- *To maintain and enhance appropriate public access to and along rivers and lakes in the Taranaki region, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects that may arise from that access.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing fresh water are **generally being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

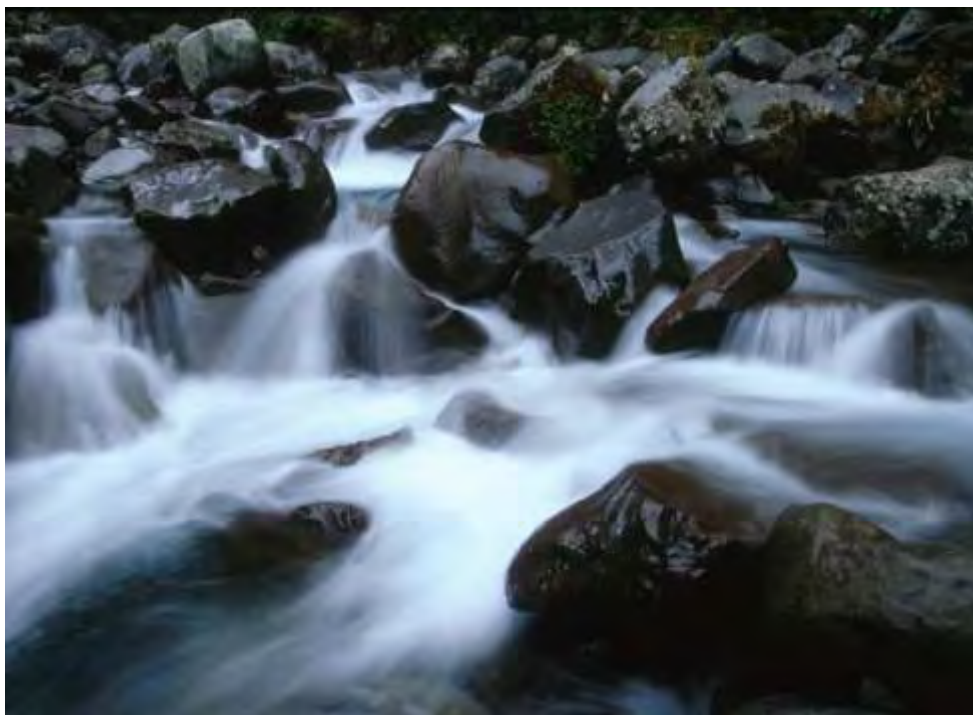
- Over the past 18 years, ecological health of Taranaki waterways has improved at a number of sites, especially in the middle and lower reaches of rivers and streams, with no significant deterioration at any site.
- Improving ecological trends at 14 freshwater sites have become 'highly significant' since 2007.
- Water quality is 'Good' to 'Very good' in the upper reaches of catchments and 'Fair' in lower reaches.
- Periphyton (or algae) levels rarely exceed Ministry for the Environment guidelines.
- Overall physicochemical water quality is good. There has been 'improvement' or 'no significant change' in nitrogen levels in the past 19 years.
- Water quality at popular swimming spots is significantly better than a decade ago. In the 2013/2014 summer, 91% of samples were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming, with water fowl responsible for almost all of the few exceedances.
- The Riparian Management Programme is the largest environmental enhancement planting scheme on privately-owned land in New Zealand. Some 99.5% of dairy farms have riparian plans: 14,000 kilometres of streambank is covered by fencing and planting plans, 80% of streambanks covered by riparian plans are fenced, and 65% of streambanks recommended for vegetation are protected by both established and more recent plantings.¹⁶
- There is a high level of environmental compliance with farm dairy resource consents but the future focus will require dairy discharges to land wherever practicable and all riparian fencing and planting to be completed by mid-2020.
- Water allocated for use in the region accounts for only 4% of the total allocation, and the majority of this is from several larger river catchments.
- A small proportion of catchments are fully allocated. Between 2008 and 2013 the number of catchments where more than 30% of mean annual low flow has been allocated decreased from 19 to 16. Most large allocations are associated with national and

¹⁶ As at 30 June 2016, 84% of riparian plan streambanks now protected with fencing and 70% protected with riparian vegetation. Refer 2015/2016 Annual Report.

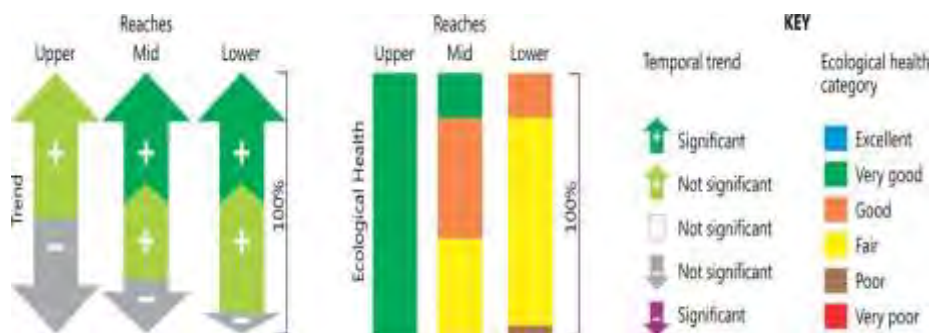
regionally significant activities such as town supply, hydroelectricity generation and industrial takes.

- There is good quality groundwater across all sites monitored and overall nitrate concentrations in groundwater have remained stable between 2002 and 2012. In the latest monitoring 96% of samples were within the Ministry of Health Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand. No pesticides have been detected in groundwater samples since 1998.

Notwithstanding the generally positive freshwater trends above, there continues to be a small and ongoing incremental loss associated with wetlands. Between 2007 and 2012 there has been a 1.3% loss of wetland area in Taranaki (although the annual rate of wetland loss has reduced by 60% compared with the preceding monitoring period between 2001 and 2007). Shortly, the Council will be releasing a Requirements document that sets out what is required by resource users to meet changing community expectations and evolving industry practices. The Council anticipates improvements in environmental practice in a number of areas, including farm dairy effluent discharges, forestry harvesting, oil and gas activities and activities in wetlands.



Latest Council monitoring shows that the ecological health of our rivers is the best yet measured. A summary of ecological health trends at monitored sites from 1995 to 2013 is presented below.



5.4 Air and climate change

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for air and climate change are:

- *To maintain the existing high standard of ambient air quality in the Taranaki region, to improve air quality in those instances or areas where air quality is adversely affected, and to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on people and the environment resulting from discharges to air.*
- *To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects on the Taranaki environment arising from climate change.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing air quality are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- The overall quality of air in Taranaki is excellent due to lots of wind light traffic and scattered industry. National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki.
- Increased levels of poultry farming and hydrocarbon exploration and production have resulted in increased numbers of resource consents for air discharges. However, effective regulation and monitoring means there has been a negligible impact on air quality in the region.

In relation to the objective for climate change, no state of the environment monitoring data is available. It is the Government's position that drivers of climate change require an international/national response. Recent Government directives clearly expect councils to plan for managing the effects of climate change, e.g. the effects of more droughts, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels on resource use, people and infrastructure.

The issue of climate change is currently grouped in the RPS with those relating to air quality. Upon review, and in discussions with stakeholders, there is general agreement that climate change issues would be better addressed with natural hazard management. Feedback from stakeholders, particularly district councils, was that this was one area where the effectiveness of the RPS would be enhanced by its policies providing more policy direction and support.



Overall quality of air in Taranaki is excellent. National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki

5.5 Coastal environment

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for the coastal environment are:

- *To protect the natural character of the coastal environment in the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use, development and occupation by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment.*
- *To provide for appropriate, subdivision, use, development and occupation of the coastal environment in the Taranaki Region.*
- *To maintain and enhance coastal water quality in the Taranaki region by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of discharges of contaminants to the coastal marine area.*
- *To maintain and enhance public access to and along the coastal environment in the Taranaki region, while avoiding remedying or mitigating adverse effects that may arise from that access.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing the coastal environment are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- The main influence on coastal water quality is from rivers and streams discharging to the coast.
- In the past six years, 95% of sites sampled at popular swimming spots were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming.
- Sand accumulation through natural processes has a major effect on intertidal rocky shore ecology.
- Survey results from 2008 to 2014 showed concentrations of metals and faecal coliform in shellfish to be well within the Australia and New Zealand Food Standard guidelines.
- All faecal coliform monitoring results between 2009 and 2014 were within national guidelines.
- As at 30 June 2013/2014, the total number of active coastal consents has decreased from 280 in 2012/2013 to 238.

Additional work undertaken as part of the review of the Coastal Plan has also confirmed Taranaki's coastal natural character has been maintained. Significant areas of the coast and offshore water have been set aside as marine reserves while other parts of the coast line have been identified as having outstanding natural character, landscapes and features.

Overall, Taranaki's coastal environment is characterised as having generally high natural character. The rugged nature of Taranaki's coastal environment means that much of the area has retained its distinctive natural character. The 300 kilometre coastline is exposed to the west, with high energy wave and wind conditions. Dominated by cliffs and boulder reefs, the coastline also includes river mouths, estuaries, and Taranaki's famous black sands. Activities authorised by resource consents in the coastal marine area have had negligible effects on the overall natural character of the coast. Most coastal permits are for coastal protection works.

The Taranaki's coastal environment offers extensive and important recreational experiences associated with fishing, diving, swimming, surfing, wind surfing, walking and boating. Public access to the coast is primarily protected through district plans. Generally the public is considered to have very good access to most parts of the coast but there are a number of district initiatives looking at promoting that access further, including the New Plymouth coastal walkway, and south Taranaki's proposed walkway that links to and along the coast.



The Taranaki coast continues to be valued, both in its natural character and as a place where people play, gather food and relax.

5.6 Indigenous biodiversity

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for indigenous biodiversity is:

- *To maintain and enhance the indigenous biodiversity of the Taranaki region, with a priority on ecosystems, habitats and areas that have significant indigenous biodiversity values.*

What this assessment shows

Council's biodiversity function is unique in the RMA in that regional and district council functions relating to biodiversity include an objective (maintenance) within the function itself. This is an ambitious ask for two related reasons:

- First, maintaining biodiversity in the face of the threats faced will likely require more than managing the negative externalities of resource use and will require active intervention by councils, other agencies or both.
- Second, whether biodiversity is maintained will depend on a range of parties and actions outside of a local authority's control (including for example, how well the Department of Conservation manages its estate and species recovery programmes).¹⁷

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing indigenous biodiversity are **partially being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- Approximately 40% of Taranaki is covered by native bush or forest.
- Approximately 21% of Taranaki's total land area has some form of legal protection.
- Approximately 52% of its land area – particularly on the ring plain and coastal terraces – is classified as acutely or chronically threatened (i.e. <10% or 20% of original indigenous vegetation remaining in that area).
- Between 2008 and 2013 Taranaki experienced a net loss of around 3,700 hectares of indigenous forest and shrub land. Most of the lost vegetation was converted to grassland.
- In Taranaki about 8.1% or 3,291 hectares of wetlands habitat remains. There has been a small (1.3%) loss of wetland area between 2007 and 2012.
- In 2011, almost 12,000 hectares or 76% of sand dunes in Taranaki are used for agriculture or

horticulture. Less than 2,000 hectares (12%) are still considered indigenous or partially modified.

- As at 2013, there are 344 QEII covenants covering 9,723 hectares in Taranaki.

In summary, there is a small but nevertheless ongoing loss in the extent of indigenous forest, scrubland and wetlands. On the other hand there has been significant community engagement and effort in promoting the condition of remnant sites.

QEII covenants have become increasingly popular with Taranaki QEII's representing 7.8% of all QEII protected land area across New Zealand (which is a relatively high percentage given Taranaki makes up only 2.7% of New Zealand's total land area). Furthermore, Council monitoring confirms that local restoration, pest and weed control efforts mean that more than half of monitored forest sites were assessed as having 'good' to 'very good' condition.



Loss of habitat and the effects of invasive plants and animals are the greatest threats to the region's remaining biodiversity.

¹⁷ *Enfocus, 2014.*

5.7 Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values

What the objectives say

Resource management issues relating to natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values have been grouped together in the current RPS.

The RPS objective for natural features and landscapes is:

- *To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of value to the region.*

The RPS objective for historic heritage is:

- *To protect the historic heritage values in the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and where practical enhance those values.*

The RPS objective for amenity values is:

- *To recognise the positive contributions of appropriate use and development in terms of providing for the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values in the Taranaki region, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of inappropriate use and development on amenity values.*

What this assessment shows

The issues and objectives for natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values relate to matters of national importance under the RMA. Pursuant to the RMA, both the Council and district councils must "...recognise and provide for" outstanding natural features and landscapes and historic heritage (s.6 RMA) and "...have particular regard to" amenity values (s.7 RMA).

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing significant natural features, historic heritage and amenity values are **generally being achieved**. Key findings include:

- No significant landscapes are identified by the district councils as currently under threat from any developments activities. Some land use activities, notably in association with coastal and rural subdivisions, may pose localised issues.
- There are 1,140 heritage buildings and items identified by Taranaki's district councils. Although this is a decrease since 2009, the number protected in district plans has risen from 193 in 2009 to 212 in 2014 – an increase of 19.

- The number of buildings, structures or items listed with Heritage New Zealand has increased by 10 from 150 in 2009 to 160 in 2014.
- No Category A structures have been demolished in New Plymouth since 2009.
- Earthquake strengthening has become a significant issue for heritage buildings since the 2010 Christchurch earthquakes. For some areas, such as South Taranaki and Stratford, earthquake strengthening is not always a viable option and the costs of strengthening has resulted in many heritage buildings becoming unoccupied.
- The Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme database includes 1,899 archaeological sites in Taranaki. The greatest number of sites, 976 is found in South Taranaki, followed by 717 in the New Plymouth District and 108 in the Stratford District.
- District council surveys confirm a high level of satisfaction by residents in relation to the amenity values in their area.
- All councils are actively involved in providing, developing or upgrading community facilities within their district.

Notwithstanding the above, one of the challenges of managing significant natural features, historic heritage and amenity values is that they are often hard to define. There can also be a lack of information and awareness about important sites or values. Of note, feedback from stakeholders, particularly district councils, was that this was one area where the effectiveness of the RPS would be enhanced by its policies providing more policy direction and support.



In all three district councils, one of the top three aspects residents liked most about where they live was the proximity to Mount Taranaki.

5.8 Natural hazards

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for natural hazards is:

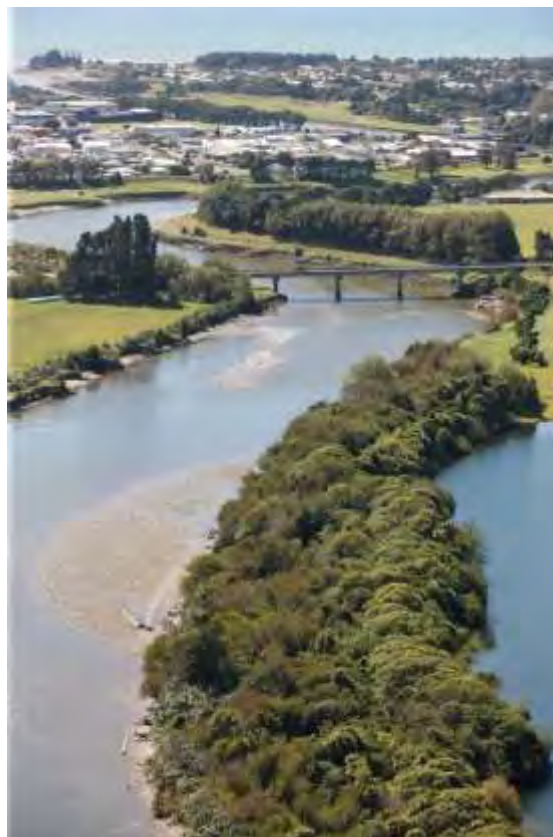
- *To avoid or mitigate natural hazards within the Taranaki region by minimizing the net costs or risks of natural hazards to people, property and the environment of the region.*

What this assessment shows

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing natural hazards are **being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- In Taranaki significant potential hazards include volcanic activity, earthquakes, high winds, drought and erosion and landslips, although to some extent, vulnerability to natural hazards depends on where in the region residents live.
- Taranaki's councils are readying themselves for future challenges from extreme climatic and geological events.
- Councils in the region have prepared RMA plans that contain controls to reduce hazard risks, participate in civil defence and emergency management (CDEM) and are continuously reviewing current hazard management information.
- Taranaki Civil Defence Emergency Management Group plans and prepares for emergencies.
- Taranaki is not considered a high risk area for earthquakes.
- Flood control schemes for Lower Waitara and Waiwhakaiho, Waitotara and Stony rivers are in place.
- Significant upgrades of the Waiwhakaiho and Waitara flood protection schemes have been completed.

As previously noted, the Council (and district councils) are continuously reviewing current hazard management information. The State of the Environment Report noted that, as a result of climate change, rainfall is predicted to decrease in summer and increase in winter. This may result in an increase in both the severity and frequency of flooding. Also of note, there is a 50:50 chance of Mount Taranaki erupting in the next 23 years. This is double the former annual probability estimates.



Waitara is built on a flood plain. Recent upgrades to the Council's Waitara Flood Protection Scheme offer the highest level of protection from flooding for the township.

5.9 Waste management

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for waste management is:

- *To minimise the quantity of waste being produced and disposed of within the Taranaki region and to ensure that the disposal of wastes avoids or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

Achievement of this objective is dependant upon actions by both the Council and the local district councils. The four councils have adopted a collaborative approach to promote regional waste minimisation.

The State of the Environment Report 2015 confirms that RPS objectives and policies for managing waste **generally being achieved**. Key findings of that report are:

- Environmental issues associated with solid waste disposal (such as odour, seagulls and pollution leaching to groundwater) have largely been addressed.
- The entire Taranaki region is served by one well-regulated landfill (Colson Road).
- District councils in the region follow current best practice in waste management by adopting the principles of minimisation, recovery and recycling and the trend is for this to continue in future.
- Kerbside recycling in the region has steadily increased over the past five years.
- The amount of waste being disposed of to the regional landfill (Colson Road) has remained relatively constant over the past six years. However, more than half of the waste going to landfill could be recycled or composted.
- Despite the region leading New Zealand in economic growth, waste disposal in Taranaki is not increasing as rapidly as it is nationally.

In summary, there are a significant number of actions being undertaken with generally positive trends in terms of minimising the amount of waste that ends up in a landfill. However, the quantities of waste needing to be disposed continue to increase (though at a smaller rate than the national average).



Recycling at Yarrow's Stadium, New Plymouth, All Black's test 2010.

5.10 Minerals

What the objective says

Current RPS objective for minerals is:

- *To provide for use and development of the region's mineral resources while avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objective provides for the appropriate use and development of the region's minerals resources. Minerals include aggregate (such as rocks, gravel, and sand), coal, and petroleum minerals (such as oil, gas and condensate).

As noted in the RPS, use and development of mineral resources may be of regional and national importance. It provides benefits to people and communities in Taranaki and to New Zealand as a whole.¹⁸

The RPS objective for mineral is **being achieved** based upon the following observations:¹⁹

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including mineral resources.
- Council compliance monitoring and enforcement programmes in place to address any adverse environmental effects associated with the industry.
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans to ensure mineral extraction activities avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects.
- The views of industry groups, which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development.

Notwithstanding the above, dissenting views include some environmental groups, which were particularly concerned about adverse effects associated with oil and gas activities (e.g. climate change) while district councils sought better alignment between regional and district plan provisions (refer section 4.2.2 and Appendix IV).



Taranaki is home to all of New Zealand's oil and natural gas production and provides 90% of the industry's nationwide employment.

¹⁸ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with mineral use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

¹⁹ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

5.11 Energy

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for energy are:

- *To promote the exploration, development, production, transmission and distribution of energy to meet the energy supply needs of the region and New Zealand in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To promote the use and development of renewable sources of energy in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.*
- *To increase efficiency in the exploration, development use, production, transmission and distribution of energy.*



Lake Rotorangi, hydro-generation storage lake created by the Patea Dam.

What this assessment shows

The RPS objectives were adopted to ensure Taranaki has an adequate supply of renewable and non renewable energy to meet the needs of people and communities in Taranaki and New Zealand and to encourage energy efficiency.²⁰

It is officers' view that the RPS objective for energy is **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:²¹

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including renewable and non-renewable energy resources.
- Council compliance monitoring and enforcement programmes in place to address any adverse environmental effects associated with the industry.
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans addressing the exploration, development, production, transmission and distribution of energy in a manner avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse environmental effects.
- The views of industry which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.
- RPS gives effect to national policy directions – the *National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008* and the *National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation 2011*.

Notwithstanding the above, dissenting views include some environmental groups, which were particularly concerned about adverse effects associated with oil and gas activities (e.g. climate change) and district councils sought better alignment between regional and district plans (refer section 4.2.2 and Appendix IV).

²⁰ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with energy use and development are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

²¹ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

5.12 Built environment

What the objectives say

Currently resource management issues relating to the built environment have been grouped together in the RPS.

The RPS objective for urban development is:

- *To promote sustainable urban development in the Taranaki region.*

The objective for regionally significant infrastructure is:

- *To provide for the continued safe and efficient operation of the region's network utilities and other infrastructure of regional significance (including where this is of regional importance), while avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment.*

What this assessment shows

The RPS objectives were adopted to ensure Taranaki recognises and provides for sustainable urban development plus network facilities and other regionally significant infrastructure. Meeting the objectives contribute to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities.²²

It is officers' view that the RPS objectives for the built environment are **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that explicitly recognise and provide for appropriate use and development, including those relating to the built environment.
- RPS has informed the review of the current freshwater, soil and coastal plans have increased provision and recognition of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure
- All three district councils have provisions in their plans addressing the impacts of land use on the built environment.
- The views of industry which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.
- In relation to regionally significant infrastructure, the RPS gives effect to national policy directions – the NPS-ET and the NPS-REG.

²² *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects associated with regionally significant infrastructure are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air and coast.*

Notwithstanding the above, both industry groups and district councils raised concerns about residential and business activities encroaching into rural areas and creating reverse sensitivities issues. This is impacting on industries such as poultry and dairying where they potentially have to constrain their activities to meet odour requirements.

District councils also sought further direction in the RPS to:

- require councils to adopt sustainable urban design
- require district councils to address the issue of housing supply and affordability;
- require district councils to locate growth so it is accessible and connected to infrastructure;
- ensure urban form reduces impacts on the environment (e.g. stormwater), allows for connectivity and provides for a range of transport modes;
- ensure the efficient use of land and infrastructure, including ensuring that rural areas are used for predominately rural activities and rural industry.

While the pressure of urban growth are not experienced universally across the Taranaki region, a projected 9-10% population growth between 2013 and 2023 in the New Plymouth District may be an emerging issue for Taranaki.



New Plymouth urban form overlooking Port Taranaki and the coast

5.13 Issues of significance to iwi

What the objectives say

Current RPS objectives for tangata whenua are:

- *To take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in the exercise of functions and powers under the Resource Management Act.*
- *To have particular regard to the concept of kaitiakitanga in relation to managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region, in a way that accommodates the views of individual iwi and hapu.*
- *To recognise and provide for the cultural and traditional relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, air, coastal environment, wāhi tapu and other sites and taonga within the Taranaki region.*
- *Management of natural and physical resources in the Taranaki region will be carried out in a manner that takes into account the cultural and spiritual values of iwi o Taranaki and in a manner which respects and accommodates tikanga Māori.*

What this assessment shows

The RMA currently requires the RPS to include a separate section on Issues of significance to iwi.

Tangata whenua of the region have particular interests and concerns relating to the natural environment. The objectives are about explicitly recognising and providing for their interests and concerns through regional and district council processes and plans. This includes taking into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, recognising their role as kaitiakitanga, and recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori with ancestral lands, water, sites, wahi tapu and other taonga, and recognising cultural and spiritual values of tangata whenua in resource management processes.²³

The RPS objective for resource use and development is **generally being achieved** based upon the following observations:²⁴

- The current RPS includes and documents a *declaration of understanding* between iwi o taranaki and the Council to document a mutual understanding on the principles of the Treaty of

Waitangi and the *Code of Conduct* that is an expression of the Council's commitment to take into account Treaty principles in the exercise of its resource management functions.

- All four operative regional plans (which are required to give effect to the RPS) include policies and rules that recognises resource management issues of significance to iwi
- Statutory acknowledgements included in regional and district plans
- Resource consent processes are in place to engage and consult iwi
- Historic heritage of importance to iwi, where it is known, is protected through rules and policies in regional and district plans
- As part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements, iwi representation on Council's regulatory and planning committees will occur.

Notwithstanding that, as stated in section 3.4 of this report, the political context in which councils and iwi operate in a post settlement environment means that the RPS needs to be updated and/or reframed to better incorporate Maori values and principles. This issue has been raised by iwi through many forums and iwi feedback on this review. Further work on incorporating Te Ao Maori and mātauranga Maori into resource management processes, building Maori capacity, and promoting effective Maori engagement needs to be well resourced and may occur over a long time period, so key learnings and understandings can be incorporated into regional and district planning processes.

5.14 Summary – are outcomes being achieved?

In summary, the RPS has been generally effective in achieving its resource management objectives. State of the environment monitoring and reporting confirms that the majority of objectives are being achieved or are largely being achieved.

In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change).

Of note this assessment did not identify any objectives that were not being achieved. However, one RPS objectives relating to managing natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biodiversity was only partially being achieved.

²³ *The effectiveness of the RPS in managing adverse effects impacting on resource issues of significance to iwi are separately addressed in the sections and findings relating to land, fresh water, air, coast, biodiversity, natural features and landscapes, historic heritage, and amenity values.*

²⁴ *This assessment must be necessarily based upon qualitative assessments or sources other than state of the environmental monitoring.*

State of the environment data showed significant community effort in promoting the condition and formal protection of remnant sites. However, across Taranaki, there has been a small but on-going loss in the areal extent of both wetlands and indigenous forest and shrub land. Maintaining indigenous biodiversity in Taranaki therefore remains a challenge requiring further effort by Taranaki's four councils.

This assessment has highlighted a number of areas to improve and build on the current RPS. This might include the RPS being more directive on a number of environmental issues, particularly those that require increased focus and effort. Of particular note, it was felt that the RPS could be updated to be more directive and progress initiatives and mechanisms to better incorporate Maori values and principle, give better effect to Treaty settlement obligations, and better work in partnership with iwi o Taranaki.

Table 3: Summary of the effectiveness of the RPS in achieving its objectives

RPS objectives relating to:		Are the objectives being achieved?	Comments
1.	Resource use and development	Achieved	Taranaki has the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in New Zealand with generally positive environmental trends
2.	Land and soil	Achieved	92% of land within the Taranaki region is sustainably managed. No significant soil health issues
3.	Fresh water	Generally being achieved	Latest Council monitoring shows improving ecological health of our rivers. Small but on going loss of wetlands however
4.	Air	Achieved	National air quality standards have never been exceeded in Taranaki
5.	Coast	Achieved	Values being maintained. Reduction in number of coastal permits
6.	Indigenous biodiversity	Partially being achieved	Increased community effort in promoting the condition of remnant sites. Small ongoing loss in the extent of indigenous forest, scrubland and wetlands still occurring
7.	Natural features & landscapes, historic heritage, & amenity values	Generally being achieved	Regional and district plans recognise and provide for these value but further policy direction and support sought
8.	Natural hazards	Achieved	Regional and district councils continuously reviewing hazard management planning, preparedness and response
9.	Waste management	Generally being achieved	Small but continuing increase in the quantities of waste needing to be disposed of in the region
10.	Minerals	Achieved	The views of industry groups, which were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework and believe it largely recognises the importance of resource use and development
11.	Energy	Generally being achieved	Comments as per above
12.	Built environment)	Generally being achieved	Generally provided for through district planning. However, issues associated with residential and business activities encroaching into rural areas and creating reverse sensitivities issues. Further policy direction and support sought by district councils
13.	Resource management issues of significance to iwi	Generally being achieved	Generally provided for through regional and district planning. However, improvements sought from tangata whenua to better incorporate Maori values and principles into regional and district planning processes. Further policy direction and support sought.

6. Are the methods being implemented?

This section identifies RPS methods to achieve its objectives and implement its policies and assesses to what extent the Council has delivered on its commitments.

The RPS contains 332 methods. For the purposes of this review, methods of implementation have been grouped according to the following nine broad themes:

1. Regional plans and the application of regional rules to allow and regulate activities.
2. District plans and the application of district rules to allow and regulate activities.
3. Information, education and advice to promote sustainable management practices.
4. Property planning and extension services, including the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.
5. Working with others contributing to RPS objectives.
6. Economic instruments.
7. Enforcement provisions of the RMA.
8. Monitoring and investigations.
9. Advocacy.

Assessment of whether RPS methods have been implemented is based upon Council's reporting of the Long Term Plan and state of the environment monitoring.

6.1 Regional plans

The RPS identifies the preparation, and review of regional plans in its methods of implementation for all 30 issues identified in the RPS.

RPS issues are addressed in one or more of the four regional plans prepared by the Council. The Council has a complete suite of operative plans, these being:

- *Regional Air Quality Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Soil Plan for Taranaki*
- *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki*

Regional plans, unlike regional policy statements, include regional rules that are used to regulate or allow activities that have potential to result in significant adverse environmental effects on freshwater, air, coastal and soil resources. They also provide certainty to resource users.

For activities having no or very little environmental effect, the regional plans have rules 'permitting' the activity without the requirement (and cost) to obtain a resource

consent. Permitted activities are still required to meet certain conditions dealing with the prevention or mitigation of adverse effects.

In circumstances where the conditions of the permitted rule cannot be met, a resource consent is required. For activities having more than minor adverse effects, a resource consent is required.

Since 1 January 2010, when the current RPS became operative, the second generation *Air Quality Plan for Taranaki* was made operative July 2011 and the Council has commenced reviews of its coastal, freshwater and soil plans (these reviews are still in progress). Over that time, 2,770 consents²⁵ were processed, issued, monitored and reported upon under these plans and in accordance with the RPS provisions.

This interim review has however highlighted that many stakeholders find the Council's planning documents complex and difficult to understand. These comments would not be unique to this council or this region. However, going forward (and particularly if we move towards having a combined RPS/regional plans), it would be useful to investigate using digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness (i.e. Eplanning).

6.2 District plans

The New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki district councils are responsible for managing land use. Through their land use responsibilities, district councils play an important role for a range of RPS issues including the protection of Taranaki's heritage, natural features and landscape, biodiversity and amenity values.

The RPS for the purposes of integrated management identifies that, for a number of issues, district councils **may** consider the inclusion of provisions in district plans to manage adverse effects of land use activities and management practices. However, unlike some regional policy statements elsewhere in New Zealand, it does not direct the district councils.

All three district councils have operative district plans. As previously noted, a number of stakeholders, including district councils, sought that a revised RPS be more directive to inform district plan reviews and to promote alignment across the region.

²⁵ Record of consents processed between 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2016, as derived from Consents database.

6.3 Information, education and advice

The provision of advice and information to promote awareness and/or sustainable practices is identified as a method in 23 of the RPS issues.

Since the adoption of the RPS, the Council has regularly developed, maintained and delivered comprehensive information, education and advisory programmes on a broad range of issues. Highlights include:

- Ongoing preparation, maintenance and distribution of a large number of guidelines, information sheets, and media releases on a broad range of subjects covered by the RPS.
- Upgraded website and social media to improve public accessibility to Council information and guidance.
- Each year, the Council receiving and responding to numerous requests from the public for information on resource management issues. For example, in 2015/2016, the Council provided information which assisted with the processing of 382 resource consent applications and 243 inquiries on sustainable land management and riparian management. All requests for general information and assistance are responded to within ten working days.
- Ongoing maintenance and distribution of information to resource users and the general public through other avenues such as social media, the website, seminars and field days.
- Ongoing maintenance of a network of 44 monitoring stations that continuous record rainfall, wind, water level, water temperature, air temperature and soil moisture and temperature. The data is publicly available on the Council's website and is updated as regularly as every 30 minutes.
- School programme actively targeting and working with teachers and school children to raise environmental awareness and encourage the sustainable use of the region's resources.
- In 2013 the Council established the Rainforest School at Pukeiti that presents 15 activity options for teachers and students that explore concepts such as sustainability and conservation.
- Annual Environmental Awards that recognise and showcase the efforts of individuals, groups and organisations to protect and enhance the environment.
- Project LiteClub, Para Kore and other waste minimisation programmes targeting sports clubs, marae and businesses to promote waste minimisation practices.

6.4 Property planning and extension services

The RPS identifies in relation to six issues that the Council will deliver property planning and other services as part of its non-regulatory (voluntary) riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.

Since 2010, the Council has prepared and achieved good coverage of property plans (figures 2 and 3 overleaf) and has maintained ongoing liaison with plan holders to assist with the implementation of plan recommendations.

As at 30 June 2016, there were 2,587 riparian management plans recommending the planting of 5,760 km and fencing of 6,580 km of stream banks. At June 2016, 85% of riparian plan streams are now voluntarily protected by fencing and 70% by vegetation where recommended.

As at 30 June 2016, there were a total of 359 comprehensive farm plans and 624 agroforestry plans have been prepared by the Council. The area of hill country covered by sustainable land management plans was 203,279 hectares. This represents 28% of the region and most of the hill country 'at risk' from erosion.

In addition to the delivery of comprehensive property planning services, the Council operates a scheme involving the supply to property plan holders of low cost native plants and poplar and willow plants for riparian and soil stability purposes. Including 2009/2010 (when the RPS became operative) the Council has supplied over 2.8 million native plants and poplars and willows to landholders over the life of the RPS.

The provision of planting material at cost was highlighted in the State of the Environment Report (2015) as a key component in the success of the Council's riparian and sustainable hill country programmes.

The riparian and sustainable hill country programmes also contribute to the accelerated erosion and freshwater objectives of the RPS.

Contributing to its biodiversity outcomes is an extension programme being delivered under the Biosecurity Act 1993 – including the Self-help Possum Control Programme (Figure 4 overleaf).

Through the Self-help Possum Control Programme most rateable rural land (including remnant bush and wetlands) on the ring plain and coastal terraces in the region is under programmed possum control with possums being maintained at very low levels.

As at 30 June 2016, the Self-help Possum Control Programme covers over 4,000 properties covering 240,200 hectares – 32% of the region. It also provides important protection to the Egmont National Park.

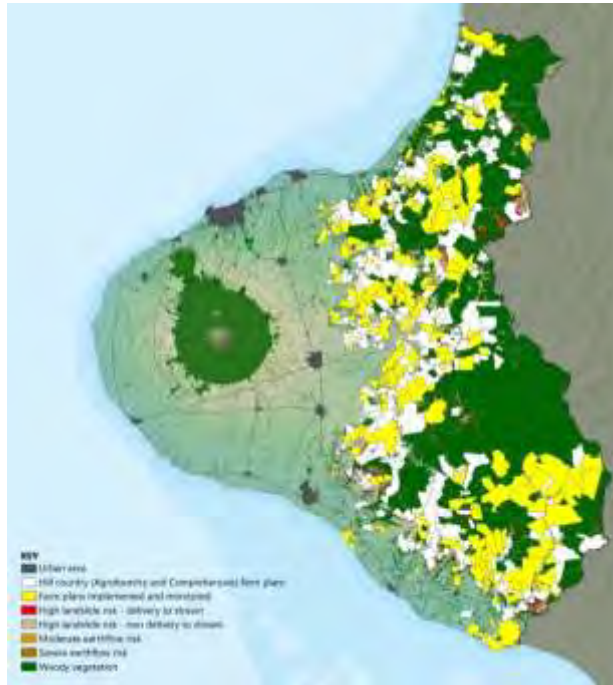


Figure 2: Coverage of comprehensive and agroforestry plans



Figure 3: Coverage of riparian plans and their implementation

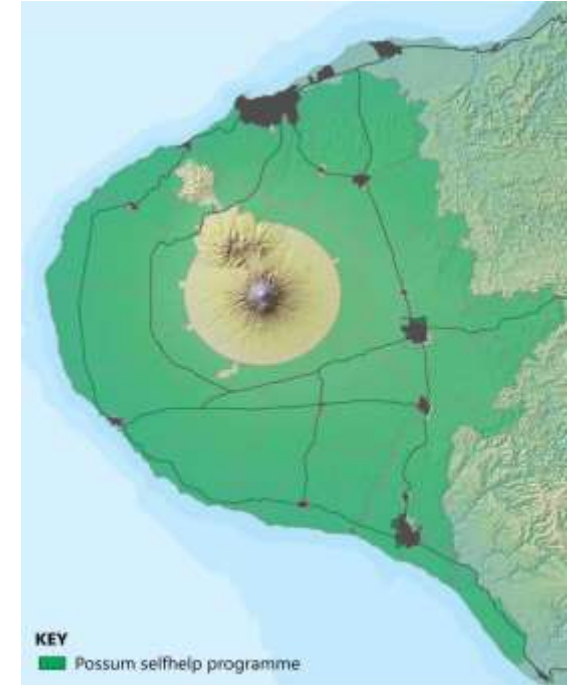


Figure 4: Coverage of Self-help Possum Control Programme

6.5 Working with others

Working with others broadly captures a suite of methods of implementation across all 30 issues identified in the RPS that involve liaising, assisting and supporting others contributing to RPS objectives.

Since the adoption of the RPS, the Council has regularly supported the efforts of other organisations, industries and resource users to achieve the policies and objectives set out in the RPS across a broad range of issues.

Highlights include:

- Liaising, advocating and having input into the development and implementation of Government policies and standards, including legislative reform, national policy statements and standards.
- Delivery of the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme involving the Council working with the Government (who contributed over \$1 million in funding) to build on the Council's programmes and promote soil conservation practices in the Waitotara catchment and other erodible land in the region.
- In 2010, following a Council investigation, it worked with the Government and South Taranaki District Council to remediate and 'clean up' the old Patea Freezing Works site, which had been identified as contaminated land.
- In 2009/2010, the Taranaki Solid Waste Committee was established that involves the Council and district councils collaborating on waste management issues and programmes of significance to the region.
- In July 2012 and November 2013, the Council, three district councils, brand owners and the Ministry for the Environment undertook / contributed to hazardous and special waste collections from rural areas.
- In 2012, the Council led the establishment of Wild for Taranaki²⁶ whereby signatories of the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum Accord (including DOC, district councils, QEII and other major conservation and community groups) agreed to work together to promote better biodiversity outcomes for Taranaki.
- Continued support and collaboration with district councils in relation to waste minimisation, transportation and civil defence responsibilities,
- Continued support and collaboration with Government departments including implementation of National Pest Plant Accord, Biosecurity Capacity

Network, marine oil spill responses, and civil defence emergencies.

- In 2011, for the purposes of improved integrated management, agreement to a transfer of powers under section 33 of the RMA with Stratford and New Plymouth district councils that they enforce rules relating to backyard burning in defined urban areas.
- Provision of advice and information into industry standards and guidelines.
- Supporting community groups, iwi, science providers and others on citizen science projects, including a *Curious Minds* project which aims to capture local knowledge on four coastal threatened species in Taranaki (orca, reef heron, little blue penguin and New Zealand fur seal) and SHMAK training for hapu and iwi representatives on monitoring the ecological health of local waterways.
- Supporting industry initiatives promoting freshwater outcomes such as the *Sustainable Dairying Accord* (and its predecessor, the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord*).

In addition, the Council has actively assisted individual land owners and community groups to achieve riparian, sustainable land management (refer section 6.4 above) and biodiversity outcomes. Through Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) programme, the Council has provided property planning services, financial assistance, and/or other assistance (e.g. enhancement plantings, weed and pest control) to plan holders to maintain and enhance biodiversity values.

As at 1 July 2016, the Council's Inventory of KNEs includes 218 sites, 172 of which are partially or completely privately owned. At that time 101 KNEs were subject to landowner management with Biodiversity Plans and ongoing Council support. The Council is targeting sites where the greatest amount of biodiversity protection could be achieved, alongside willing landowners, in the most cost effective manner.

6.6 Economic instruments

This method seeks to consider the use of economic instruments by the Council for land, freshwater, coastal and biodiversity purposes.

Presently, the Council provides quality riparian and soil conservation plant materials at low cost to property plan holders (refer section 6.4 above). This service reduces the cost to the land occupier of adopting sustainable resource management practices.

In the hill country, there are incentives under the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme to fence and plant erodible land (refer section 6.5 above).

²⁶ Charitable trust dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the region's ecosystems and landscapes

The Council further provides environmental enhancement funding. Including 2009/2010 (when the RPS became operative) and up until 30 June 2016, the Council has provided almost \$3.5 million of environmental enhancement funding to protect the environment. Typically these monies have been used to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity values associated with KNEs and wetlands. The Council also allocated monies to administer and service the Taranaki Tree Trust and more recently Wild for Taranaki

Financial contributions are increasingly required in association with consents for stream piping and realignments to mitigate in-stream habitat loss.

On occasion, the Council has considered other forms of economic instruments, particularly in relation to emergency events. Following the June 2015 storm event, which resulted in significant landslides, damage to farm infrastructure, and downstream flooding the Council delivered a storm response package worth almost \$400,000 to those most affected.

6.7 Enforcement

The Council provides a 24-hour, seven days a week environmental incident response service for the Taranaki region. Environmental incidents include incidents of non-compliance with the conditions of a resource consent, the rules of a regional plan, or Part 3 duties and restrictions of the RPS.

Since 2009/2010 (the financial year of adopting the RPS), there have been 2,685 public enquiries or complaints received by the Council in relation to land, fresh water, air and coastal incidents. It is estimated that the Council receives in the order of 380 complaints each year on resource management matters covered by its jurisdiction.

All complaints are investigated and appropriate action taken. The Council's response varies according to the circumstances. For example, in some cases, investigations will confirm that the activity is a permitted activity and no further action (besides possibly advice and information) is required. On other occasions, investigations will confirm that the activities require the land occupier to obtain a resource consent under one of its regional plans. On another occasions, activities result in the Council serving an abatement notice on the resource user.

Since 2010, the Council has prosecuted 32 individuals and/or businesses for serious non-compliance with its plans or the RMA. All prosecutions were successful.

Appropriate enforcement, underpinned by strong compliance monitoring, is considered essential.

6.8 Monitoring and investigations

This method outlines the Council's commitment to monitor the state of the land, fresh water, air and coastal resources in the Taranaki region. As outlined in Section 5 above, the Council has implemented comprehensive state of the environment monitoring programmes. Additional research and investigations are commissioned as required.

The monitoring results have been reported in the Council's state of the environment reports and have been used for this review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the RPS.

6.9 Advocacy

This method outlines the Council's commitment to advocacy and liaison with other agencies.

Since the adoption of the Plan, the Council has advocated to a large number of agencies on a broad range of topics covered by the RPS.

Between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2016, the Council has made 138 submissions on a plethora of resource management matters, including national policy, legislation and guidelines and district plans.²⁷

6.10 Summary – is the RPS delivering on its methods?

The RPS sets out methods for implementing its objectives and policies. As shown in Table 4 below, the Council is implementing all the methods of implementation set out in the RPS.

²⁷ Taranaki Regional Council list of submissions. Document number 87748.

Table 4: Summary of progress: implementing RPS methods of implementation

What did we promise to deliver?	Where are we at?	Conclusion
Preparation of regional plans and the application of regional rules	Plans prepared. Rules applied to allow and regulate activities Coastal, freshwater and soil plans currently being reviewed	Commitment is being delivered
Preparation of district plans and the application of district rules	Plans prepared. Rules applied to allow and regulate activities	Commitment is being delivered
Provision of information and advice to promote sustainable management practices	Responded to public requests for information Provide ongoing advice to plan holders Prepared and distribute guidelines and pamphlets	Commitment is being delivered
Implement significant extension programmes, including the Sustainable Land Management Programme	Prepared 359 comprehensive and agroforestry farm plans covering 28% of the region (and most of the 'at risk' hill country) Prepared 2,587 riparian plans. 85% of riparian plan streams now protected by fencing and 70% by vegetation Provided 2.8 million low-cost riparian and soil conservation plants to plan holders 32% of the region covered by the Self-help Possum Control Programme where possums being maintained at low numbers	Commitment is being delivered
Working with others	Delivery of South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme Member of and support for the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum Accord Delivery of KNE and Regionally Significant Wetland programmes, involving the protection of indigenous biodiversity values	Commitment is being delivered
Economic instruments	Provision of riparian and pole plants at low cost \$3.5 million of Environment Enhancement Grant funding since 2010 for environmental projects Serviced and supported the Taranaki Tree Trust and Wild for Taranaki	Commitment is being delivered
Enforcement of the RMA	Responded to about 380 incidents per annum Prosecuted serious non-compliance as appropriate (32 prosecutions since 2010)	Commitment is being delivered
Monitoring and investigations	Implemented comprehensive state of the environment monitoring programmes Additional research and investigations commissioned as required	Commitment is being delivered
Advocacy	Undertook advocacy and prepared submissions (138 submissions since 2010)	Commitment is being delivered

7. Efficiency of the RPS

Reviewing the efficiency of the RPS, at its simplest, is a measure of whether outcomes sought have been achieved at a reasonable cost. That is, does the delivery of the RPS represent value for money?

This section assesses the RPS's methods of implementations in relation to:

- The cost of the RPS in terms of administrative, compliance and broader economic costs; and
- The benefits of the RPS.

7.1 Costs of the RPS

Costs associated with the administration and implementation of the RPS are those incurred by the Council (i.e. administration costs) and the wider community (i.e. compliance costs and broader economic costs).

7.1.1 Administration costs

Administration costs are the costs incurred by Council to implement the methods of the RPS.

Council has evaluated and rated the administration costs associated with RPS as low. The RPS does not contain rules so there are no regulatory costs associated with the consideration and issuing of consents, compliance monitoring and enforcement (these costs are more properly considered as part of the implementation of regional plans).

The non regulatory methods of the RPS represent a significant investment by the Council. They include programmes such as the riparian, hill country and KNE programmes. However, these costs are low in comparison with the net environmental benefits and in comparison with other management options. Administrative costs associated with the non regulatory methods are publicly considered on an annual basis through the LTP process and on other occasions through the review of the RPS and regional plans.

Other administration costs incurred by the Council include policy and planning costs associated with the preparation, monitoring and review of the RPS (including state of the environment reporting), responding to public enquiries on its provisions, and general advocacy.

7.1.2 Compliance costs

Compliance costs are the costs incurred by resource users to comply with RPS provisions (e.g. costs associated with applying for consents and undertaking physical works to comply with consent conditions and/or RPS provisions).

While the RPS does not contain rules, section 104 (1) [Consideration of applications] of the RMA does require consent authorities to have regard to any relevant provisions of the RPS when considering a resource consent application and any associated submissions. However, as the regional plans give effect to the RPS there are no added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions.

Similarly there should be no added compliance costs resulting from the imposition of costs on resource users through requirements to modify their practices and equipment. Any additional costs would have been incurred through regional plans and the consenting process and do not represent an additional cost.

7.1.3 Broader economic costs

Broader economic costs refer to costs associated with a RPS constraining production and innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resources.

As previously noted, the largely non regulatory approach involves working with land owners to implement sustainable land management practices. Regulatory constraints imposed through the RPS are limited to those imposed by regional and district plans.

Few resource use activities are therefore potentially affected or constrained. Furthermore, standards, terms and conditions set out in the regional rules and resource consents are generally consistent with industry standards and best practice.

The RPS evaluation to date has not identified any issues where the Plan has unnecessarily constrained production and innovation, constrained resource use, or resulted in the sub-optimal use of resources.

Of note resource users, as part of this review, did not identify any issues around compliance costs and indeed noted that they were generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework (refer section 4.2 above).

7.1.4 Summary of the economic costs of implementing the RPS

A summary of the economic costs of implementing the RPS is set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Assessment of the costs of implementing the RPS

Type of costs	Measures	Evaluation			Comments
		Low	Moderate	High	
Administrative cost (costs incurred by Council to administer the Plan & implement non-regulatory methods)	Added costs incurred by Council to deliver regulatory methods	√			RPS does not contain rules. Regional plans give effect to RPS however minimal added administrative costs. Most costs are associated with delivery of non regulatory methods and with developing, monitoring and reviewing the RPS
	Costs incurred by Council to deliver non regulatory methods		√		
	Planning costs incurred by Council to develop, monitor and review RPS	√			
Compliance costs (costs incurred by resource users to comply with RPS provisions)	Added consenting and other costs charged to resource users	√			Regional plans give effect to the RPS therefore no added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions
Other economic costs (broader costs associated with RPS constraining production & innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resources)	Constraints limiting resource users' flexibility to achieve environmental results anticipated	√			No issues so far identified. RPS provisions generally consistent with industry best practice & should not unnecessarily constrain production, new entrants or resource use flexibility
	Production constraints placed upon targeted sectors	√			
	Constraints limiting new entrants to a sector / industry, or limiting resource use flexibility	√			
	Constraints through a lack of certainty to resource users about what they can do & how they manage resources	√			
Overall economic cost of RPS provisions					LOW

7.2 Benefits of the RPS

The benefits of the RPS are the environmental outcomes outlined in Section 5 above. These benefits are considered to be significant.

Unsustainable resource use can have (and historically has had) significant adverse environmental and economic costs through loss of soil and productive capacity of the land, impacts on water quality, degradation of amenity, cultural, biodiversity and historical values, increased natural hazard risk and damage to property and infrastructure. However, over the last decade, state of the environment monitoring confirms generally positive trends.

In addition to the largely positive environmental outcomes of the RPS, the RPS has enabled appropriate use and development of land, freshwater, air and coastal resources. That is the RPS does not unnecessarily restrict activities. Feedback from industry and resource users was generally supportive of the RPS and its current policy framework.

The benefits of the RPS also include increased certainty and clarity to resource users. The coastal, freshwater and soil plans predate the current RPS. As appropriate RPS provisions direct and or provide additional support of the policy intent of the older documents during the consenting process.

7.3 Benefits and costs of the RPS

Monetising all benefits and costs is impracticable. While Council costs with implementing programmes can be quantified (although not necessarily in monetary terms), it is less easy to quantify community and land occupier costs. It is less easy again to quantify the monetary value of the environmental outcomes achieved. Assessing the RPS has necessarily relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

Table 6 summarises the results of the Council's assessment of the benefits and costs of the RPS. In brief, the RPS has been assessed as being very efficient with the benefits being substantially greater than the cost. Through this document, Council will be seeking the views of stakeholders on their views on the efficiency of the RPS and whether they believe the benefits of the RPS outweigh its costs.

Table 6: Summary of the benefits and costs of the RPS

Benefits (Summary from cost effectiveness assessment)	Costs (Summary from cost estimation)
<p>Environment (outcome) benefit</p> <p>87% of hill country being sustainably managed</p> <p>84% of riparian plan stream banks fenced and 70% protected with riparian vegetation</p> <p>Improving ecological trends at 14 freshwater sites have become 'highly significant' since 2007</p> <p>No air quality issues</p> <p>In the past six years, 95% of sites sampled at popular swimming spots were within Ministry for the Environment guidelines for swimming</p> <p>Small overall decrease in areal extent of wetlands and indigenous forests</p>	<p>Administrative costs</p> <p>Non recoverable administrative costs incurred by the Council in administering the RPS principally relate to policy and planning costs associated with the preparation, monitoring and review of the RPS (including state of the environment reporting)</p> <p>Compliance costs</p> <p>RPS does not include rules. Compliance costs largely incurred through regional and district plans. No added compliance costs associated with meeting RPS provisions</p>
<p>Other benefits</p> <p>Protection of air, soil, freshwater and coastal resources and associated values, while also avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects associated with resource use</p>	<p>Economic costs</p> <p>Few constraints on resource users in terms of RPS constraining production and innovation, or resulting in the sub-optimal allocation of resource</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>Benefits of RPS assessed as high. Environmental monitoring shows positive progress on further enhancing already good environment. Some areas for improvement noted, particularly in relation to indigenous biodiversity and tangata whenua</p>	<p>Summary</p> <p>Costs and constraints associated with RPS administration and implementation have been assessed as low with the exception of costs associated with implementing the non regulatory methods such as the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes, which have been assessed as moderate</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	
<p>The RPS has a positive ratio of benefit to cost</p>	
<p>This conclusion is based on Council's assessment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPS is largely meeting or is on track to meet its targets. This assessment has not identified any objectives that were not being achieved. In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least maintaining (no significant change). However, two areas for improvement noted where two RPS objectives relating to indigenous biodiversity and tangata whenua are only partially being achieved. The RPS does not contain rules. Accordingly the administrative costs associated with the consenting and enforcement regime are nil with minimal costs on resource users. While the costs of implementing non regulatory methods such as the riparian and sustainable hill country programmes and Environmental Enhancement Grant funding are not insignificant nevertheless the costs are relatively minor in comparison to the environmental outcomes being achieved. 	
<p>The efficiency of the RPS is regarded as:</p> <p>High (the benefit is substantially greater than the cost)</p>	

8. Conclusion and recommendations

The RPS was made operative in 2010. The RPS is standing the test of time well and is assisting the Council in carrying out its resource management responsibilities. The RPS has been both effective and efficient and no issues have been identified that would warrant an urgent review.

This conclusion is based on Council's assessment that:

- The RPS is largely on track to meet its objectives. In relation to the maintenance of the quality of our air, water, coastal and health of our soil resources, state of the environment monitoring indicates that Taranaki is tracking well in terms of data trends. In terms of water quality, data suggests that the water quality is improving, or at the least being maintained (no significant change).
- Two areas in the RPS were highlighted for increased focus. First, there continues to be a small but on-going loss in the areal extent of both wetlands and indigenous forest and shrub land in Taranaki. Second, both regional and district plans (and associated resource consenting processes) recognise resource management issues of significance to iwi. However, the political context in which councils and iwi operate in a post settlement environment has completely changed and there is an opportunity to review planning systems and processes to account for this.
- Methods for implementing RPS objectives and policies have been implemented.
- Administrative costs are low with minimal costs on resource users. Achieving the RPS's objectives is based on a combination of regulatory and non regulatory methods. The costs of implementing methods are annually reviewed and tested via the long term planning process and though not insignificant nevertheless the costs are not large in comparison to the environmental outcomes being achieved.
- No change factors have been identified warranting immediate change to the RPS.

Notwithstanding the above, six years on, this review has identified a number of change factors that will need to be taken into account as part of the full review of the RPS scheduled to take place in 2020. These change factors include RMA amendments, the promulgation of NPSs and NESs, and developing best practice in relation to how policy instruments are written.

Further to the above, the internal review and stakeholder engagement has highlighted a number of themes and opportunities to improve and build on the current RPS and

which should be taken into account as part of the next review.

Of particular note was stakeholder feedback for the RPS for improved integrated management and for the RPS to be more directive, particularly in relation to district council issues, functions and responsibilities. All stakeholders were supportive of the concept of the Council developing a combined RPS and regional plan. It is suggested that the Council investigate this concept further.

Recommendations going forward

As part of the full review of the RPS, it is recommended that Council investigate:

1. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans

A combined RPS and regional plans for air, the coast, freshwater and soil was seen as one mechanism where the current fragmentation across regional planning instruments could be addressed. Stakeholders were generally supportive of this concept. Developing a combined RPS and regional plans would reduce duplication and to improve integration and alignment of policies.

Of note the Council is likely to commence a full review of its Coastal Plan in 2017/2018 and full reviews of the RPS and other plans are scheduled to occur in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years.

2. Developing an Eplan

Eplanning is a relatively new concept. Going forward (and particularly if we move towards having a combined RPS/regional plans), it would be useful to investigate using digital and spatial technology to improve the accessibility of our planning documents and their user friendliness. The benefits of an Eplan is that it provides an online platform and web-based tools that allows users to easily identify and interpret relevant provisions. Planning documents are inevitably large, complex and often difficult to understand. Through an Eplan the Council is aiming to improve the readability, accessibility and usability of its planning documents.

3. Reviewing RPS provisions to be more directive

At the moment the RPS has deliberately provided district councils with the discretion as to what methods are appropriate for their area. However, stakeholders, including district council officers, have requested that the RPS be more directive. There is an opportunity to reframe policies and methods to require district councils to adopt a certain approach/methods in response to particular issues,

e.g. biodiversity, tangata whenua, natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes, natural hazards and waste management. This would promote policy alignment and administrative efficiencies across the region.

4. *Reframing RPS provisions to promote integrated management*

There was an agreement from all stakeholders for the RPS to take a more integrated and strategic approach to regional planning in Taranaki. This may involve combining the planning documents (see (1) above) and/or the RPS being more directive (see (3) above). It also involves reframing the RPS issues and objectives to focus on the wider environment by having a smaller number of high level issues. For example, there may be opportunities to combine the land and soil, freshwater, air and coastal issues and possibly those relating to the built environment, energy and minerals. Council could also consider reframing issues relating to values (e.g. use and development, natural features and outstanding landscapes and amenity, biodiversity, heritage and cultural values) and 'process' matters (e.g. iwi engagement).

5. *Reviewing Coastal and Freshwater chapters in the RPS*

There is significant central government change occurring in these areas. Continue to maintain a watching brief on Government policy and, as appropriate, update RPS provisions to ensure alignment and that they give effect to national policy, including the NZCPS and NPS-FM. Also, in September 2016, the Council released its *Draft Coastal Plan for Taranaki*²⁸ on 1 September 2016 and shortly will be commencing a full review of that Plan. The strategic issues in the current RPS (and associated policies) should be updated to ensure they are consistent with a revised Coastal Plan.

6. *Reviewing Biodiversity chapter in the RPS.*

The loss of indigenous biodiversity in the Taranaki region is still on-going. It is suggested that RPS provisions including methods need to be reviewed in terms of their adequacy (effectiveness and efficiency) in avoiding further loss. This includes whether the RPS is directive enough.

7. *Reviewing the Climate Change chapter in the RPS.*

The issues of climate change and natural hazard management seem a more logical grouping, than the current climate change and air quality grouping.

There is significant central government change occurring in this area with the proposed amendments to the RMA. These matters should become clearer by the end of 2016. It is suggested Council maintain a watching brief on these issues and work closely with district councils and relevant experts to understand the implications for the Taranaki region and ensure they include the concept of 'risk' and 'acceptable risk'.

8. *Reviewing urban/built environment chapter of the RPS*

More direction on the built environment, particularly urban development in the New Plymouth District, was sought from district councils. While unclear from a structural point of view, whether the built environment should be a separate issue, or incorporated in the high level issue on integrated management, the issue of urban growth and development in the New Plymouth district needs more attention, especially to address the issues of reverse sensitivity on the urban/rural fringe. It is suggested that the Regional Council work closely with the New Plymouth District Council in the drafting of this issue, to ensure that the RPS gives the district the direction it needs to fulfil its functions and implementation of the *Blueprint for the New Plymouth District*.

9. *Working with iwi to better incorporate Maori values and principles*

The RMA currently requires the RPS to include a separate section on Issues of significance to iwi.

As highlighted by Treaty settlement obligations and mechanisms, and stakeholder comments, there is a need for on going discussion between the Council and all eight iwi O Taranaki about how to better incorporate Maori values and principles, and reframe the issues of significant to iwi so they reflect the Treaty settlements

10. *Reviewing chapters/issues on waste, heritage, and resource use and development*

The issues on waste and heritage are still significant for the Taranaki region in 2016, but could be sharpened to provide a more regional approach.

The current issues on recognising and providing for the appropriate development of minerals and sustainably managing energy could also be combined with the issue on resource use and development. Overall, this issue on resource use and development needs to recognise the importance of economic drivers as well as the need to provide for good environmental outcomes.

²⁸ For more information on the *Draft Coastal Plan for Taranaki* click on the following link: <https://www.trc.govt.nz/council/plans-and-reports/strategy-policy-and-plans/regional-coastal-plan/coastal-plan-review/draft-coastal-plan/>.

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Appendix I: Section 35 of the RMA

35. Duty to gather information, monitor, and keep records
- (1) Every local authority shall gather such information, and undertake or commission such research, as is necessary to carry out effectively its functions under this Act or regulations under this Act.
 - (2) Every local authority shall monitor—
 - (a) the state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district—
 - (i) to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act; and
 - (ii) in addition, by reference to any indicators or other matters prescribed by regulations made under this Act, and in accordance with the regulations; and
 - (b) the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules, or other methods in its policy statement or its plan; and
 - (c) the exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by it; and
 - (d) the exercise of the resource consents that have effect in its region or district, as the case may be; and
 - (e) in the case of a regional council, the exercise of a protected customary right in its region, including any controls imposed on the exercise of that right under Part 3 of the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011—and take appropriate action (having regard to the methods available to it under this Act) where this is shown to be necessary.
 - (2A) Every local authority must, at intervals of not more than 5 years, compile and make available to the public a review of the results of its monitoring under subsection (2) (b).

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Appendix II: List of external stakeholder participants

District Councils

New Plymouth District Council
Stratford District Council
South Taranaki District Council

Government departments

Department of Conservation
Heritage New Zealand
Taranaki District Health Board

Non government organisations/ community groups

Enviroschools
Taranaki Fish and Game
Taranaki Kiwi Trust
Waitara Alive
New Plymouth Boardriders
Surfing Taranaki
Taranaki Energy Watch
Wild for Taranaki
Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society
Climate Justice Taranaki

Industry/ major stakeholder groups

Federated Farmers
Greymouth Petroleum
Remediation (NZ) Ltd
Dairy NZ
Shell Todd Oil Services Ltd
Contact Energy
Trustpower
Tag Oil
Dairy NZ
Methanex
Fulton Hogan

Venture Taranaki
Dow Agro Sciences
PG Wrightson
Balance
Lepper piggeries
Tegel
Open Country
Silver Fern Farms
Powerco Ltd

Appendix III: Structured questions used for stakeholder meetings

- What are the significant resource management issues facing your group/business/industry in 2016?
- Does the current RPS provide support for the future directions for your group/business/industry?
- Do you refer to the RPS in resource management processes (applying for resource consents)? Does it help or hinder?
- Do you see the need for any changes? What changes?
- Would you prefer the RPS to be more flexible or more directive?

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Appendix IV: Stakeholder responses to the interim review of the RPS

Fish and Game New Zealand

Te Kaahui o Rauru

Federated Farmers

TrustPower

Te Korowai o Ngāruahine

Oil companies

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc, and

Enviroschools.

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File Ref: 2.3.5
7th April 2017

Chris Spurdle
Planning Manager
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
STRATFORD

Dear Chris

Interim review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010 - Evaluation of appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the interim review of the RPS for Taranaki (2010).

From a Fish & Game perspective, the TRC ran a very thorough process in developing the RPS (2010) and there was input from a wide range of stakeholders, at least partly in response to a change in legislation requiring local authorities to "give effect" to the RPS when preparing or changing regional or district plans.

In our view, the issues identified in the RPS (2010) remain relevant and while there have been changes in legislation etc. since the RPS became operative, we agree that there is no immediate need to make changes to the RPS. We also agree that the TRC should investigate developing a combined RPS and regional plans when the RPS comes up for its full review in 2020.

In terms of the effectiveness of the RPS, we consider it has not been as effective as it could have been in addressing issues such as the loss of wetlands and the cumulative effects of the piping and modification of small streams, largely because of the delay in reviewing the Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan (2001) and implementing more stringent rules to address these issues. Having said that, we acknowledge the resources the TRC has put into its non-regulatory approach to wetland protection and also its use of financial contributions as a way of at least partially off-setting the adverse effects of stream modification.

Likewise, in respect of water allocation, the absence of a reviewed regional plan to give effect to the RPS (2010) means the TRC has been unable to formally set allocable volumes and define full allocation (WAL METH 2(a)) for rivers and streams (excluding those listed in Policies 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of the operative freshwater plan). In many respects, it's fortunate there haven't been any new applications to take large amounts of water from Taranaki waterways.

In terms of the RPS's effectiveness in maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands, we agree that TRC monitoring indicates that water quality is generally being maintained and in some cases improved. We acknowledge and appreciate the large amount of good work that has gone on by farmers in fencing and planting their riparian margins and the resources the TRC has

Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats

Taranaki Region

put into facilitating this. We also acknowledge, that even in the absence of a reviewed freshwater plan, the TRC has been moving farmers towards the land disposal of farm dairy-shed effluent during discharge re-consenting, which can only benefit water quality.

However, we remain concerned about the rate of decline in water quality that still occurs down the length of ringplain catchments. For example, in the most recent TRC state of the environment biological monitoring report (2016-33) the MCI was reported to have declined by 51 points between upper and lower sites in the Waiwhakaiho catchment in the December 2015 sampling, from 130 near Egmont National Park (indicating "clean water"), to 79 in the river near Lake Rotomanu (bordering on "probable severe pollution").

Likewise, the latest available state of the environment periphyton monitoring report (2016-34) indicates that a number of lower catchment sites (e.g. KPA000700 & WGA000460) have breached the NPS-FM national bottom line for chlorophyll a (200mg chl-a/m²). While the TRC has not yet adopted the monthly sampling protocol needed to accurately determine periphyton attribute state, these results confirm our long-held view that periphyton proliferation in the middle and lower reaches of ringplain rivers and streams (and the consequent impacts on the macroinvertebrate fauna) is one of the key remaining water quality issues in the region. To address this issue may well require additional measures, over and above that contemplated in the RPS (2010), such as the establishment of in-stream objectives for concentrations of DIN and DRP to manage for the periphyton attribute.

The RPS (2010) identifies the issue (Section 6.6) "*managing effects associated with the use of and disturbances to river and lake beds*" and in particular, RLB ISS 3 "*providing for appropriate fish passage along Taranaki waterways*", with the commentary stating "*some structures such as dams, weirs and culverts can severely restrict fish migration, thereby reducing the abundance and diversity of fish species residing in upstream reaches and adversely affecting ecological and fishery values of the water body*". In our view, this issue remains a very relevant one and our concern (as articulated in our 2nd April 2015 submission to the TRC's 2015/2025 Long-Term Plan) is that progress on the provision of effective fish passage over structures and the removal of unused weirs has slowed in recent years and that this is an area where the RPS has not been as effective as it could have been.

The RPS (2010) also identifies "*maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes*" as an issue (Section 6.7). In our view, this section still accurately reflects the existing situation, where the existing legal access "*represents but a small proportion of the total length of Taranaki waterways, and public access remains disjointed and there is still relatively little formal access outside of urban areas*". It is acknowledged that implementation of the Objective and Policies is largely within the jurisdiction of the three district councils (i.e. WPA Methods 7-12), but it is difficult to assess how effective the RPS has been in maintaining and enhancing public access because information on where and how much additional access has been created since the RPS became operative is not readily available. Perhaps this could be collated by the TRC and made available for the 10-year review (or at more frequent intervals, as per WPA Meth 14).

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A Stancliff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Allen Stancliff
Fish & Game Officer

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7 April 2017

Taranaki Regional Council
STRATFORD

Email: chris.spurdle@trc.govt.nz

Teena koe

Submission on Regional Policy Statement interim review

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the interim review of the Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (RPS). As a critical planning tool for Taranaki that shapes the management of our natural and physical resources, it is valuable to identify how to strengthen the effective engagement of Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi as tangata whenua and kaitiaki.

In this letter, we provide some high level feedback to the review document and would be happy to discuss further. We recognise the value of an interim review in that it gives us time to work together to identify improvements and build a supporting business case in partnership with you for implementing in the future.

Capability Building

There is a need for building capability within both iwi and the council. This needs to embrace and reflect back a Maaori, and a specifically Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi, world view. Key elements to be included are improving the accessibility of information shared and building knowledge. This can be a two-way process, where science-based information is presented in a way that can be consumed by Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi, as well as council staff building their understanding of Ngaa Raurutanga. Specific methods to encourage this mutually-beneficial development could be identified to guide consistent commitment across territorial authorities, e.g. use of MOUs that understand the level of unpaid commitment delivered by iwi and hapuu, and agree appropriate fee schedules for paid contributions to be agreed between the parties.

Process Engagement

Currently, processes around resource consent applications prioritise notification and formalised consultation rather than true engagement. Information presented with a narrow focus doesn't reflect the more holistic approach that tangata whenua seek, particularly when dealing with impacts on freshwater. This means a wider and fuller context is sought. A commitment to changing this engagement to improve effectiveness is sought. Methods to set expectation on how to undertake this are suggested, e.g. face-to-face presentations at marae putting applications into a wider environmental management context.

Resourcing

Previous conversations have been held regarding the possibility of iwi and hapuu being resourced to participate more effectively in resource consent processes, supporting the council to meet its statutory obligations. The delivery of this has been constrained but there are increasing examples of this practice occurring around New Zealand, and we have identified suggested methods under *Process Engagement* above. A second aspect of resourcing is building the council's understanding of tikanga and use of te reo, to help strengthen engagement. Both these could be made more explicit in RPS directions, setting an expectation that territorial authority employees who engage with the public are skilled in understanding both a Maaori world view and have knowledge of Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi and other Taranaki iwi.

Minerals and Energy

Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi holds concerns regarding continued dependence on invasive extractive industries, particularly those contributing to climate change. While submissions are made in relation to specific proposals or via wider-ranging documents like the draft Coastal Policy Statement, there is a desire to be more influential about this unsustainable direction. We note the "importance of resource use and development" highlighted in the RPS, without a balancing commitment to support more sustainable economic development, like neighbouring Horizons' work with Te Pae Tawhiti within the Accelerate25 programme. We would like to see investment in supporting sustainable Maaori economic development in Taranaki.

Statutory Acknowledgements

The Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi settlement legislation identifies statutory acknowledgement areas and other special places, as identified in the RPS. There may be a need for further practical cross-referencing or identification of these places to ensure their importance is recognised. We are also interested in whether and how the council is analysing the range of post-settlement legislative commitments in Taranaki and how they connect or possibly conflict.

Directive Content

Overall, we agree with the conclusion that the RPS would benefit from more directive content. It has a risk of being so high level, it becomes redundant. This is particularly apparent regarding the commitments to tangata whenua, which largely replicate legislative statements without adding methods to guide implementation. There needs to be a clear direction that current practice is not achieving the levels of engagement and partnership envisioned and this needs to change – it is an urgent need. One specific weakness is the use of the term "accommodates" in relation to iwi and hapuu views under the RPS objective around traditional relationships.

Some of the needed directive content will come through specific methods identified to help give effect to kaitiakitanga. Where these need research to understand best practice and options, now is the time to resource this effort so greater understanding is available for the final review in five years' time.

Freshwater

The huge growth in public expectations around freshwater management could be more directly addressed. The Te Mana o Te Wai programme, including support and involvement of TRC in Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi's Te Wai Koiora programme, has strengthened connections and capability in kaitiakitanga for freshwater. The latest Freshwater Improvement Fund also presents new opportunities to grow this. While these are examples of deliverables, the overall context for undertaking practical work together should be reinforced by the RPS. There is opportunity to strengthen this through the description of methods to encourage specific practical partnerships building capability and kaitiakitanga.

Biodiversity

The loss of biodiversity and wetlands, although small, is significant. The lack of achievement of these goals within the RPS should not be understated. Wetlands in particular are highly vulnerable. Cross-reference to building capability as kaitiaki could be made in these sections. Ngaa Rauru Kiiitahi is directly responsible for only a small portion of land and waters within its rohe and needs support of territorial authorities to be a positive influence on the maintenance and enhancement of these places. Specific

methods that demonstrate how tangata whenua may deliver environmental management for and with territorial authorities will show how this can be practically delivered.

Eplan

Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi would benefit from increased access to well-designed digital management of land and resource planning tools. However, it is important to note there may always remain some sensitivities about sharing details of particular sites. There have been previous discussions between TRC and Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi about supporting use of environmental data, including through GIS systems. In addition to re-progressing our discussions around this, Ngaa Rauru Kiitahi is keen to see commitment to understanding our perspective in relation to more electronic processing of applications and other engagement, taking into account the practical engagement of hapuu and marae.

Natural Hazards

In the Whanganui region, significant effort has gone into identifying and explaining tsunami risk areas and escape routes. It would be good to see this replicated in Taranaki, particularly around coastal river mouth areas where many marae are located.

In conclusion, we would like to share some examples of what a successful RPS in action would look like to us to help explain the improvements we are seeking from TRC:

- Relationship agreements in practice, not in files
- Proactive contact outside consultation periods or in relation to specific applications
- Seeing our perspective as tangata whenua incorporated into communications
- Receiving information that is holistic and easily-consumed, explaining a wider story rather than deconstructing elements to a meaningless level
- Education and training in processes made available
- Increasing staff awareness and understanding, rippling through all territorial authorities
- Seeing more long-term projects between councils and iwi, particularly around freshwater, wetlands and biodiversity.

We look forward to continuing to work with the council to build a stronger relationship and deeper understanding of Ngaa Raurutanga, so we can all fulfil our obligations to care for the land, water and coast.

Noho ora mai



Anne-Marie Broughton
Kaiwhakahaere

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Mr Chris Spurdle
Policy Manager
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford

By Email: chris.spurdle@trc.govt.nz

Rāhina, 03 Paengawhāwhā, 2017

Tēnā koe Chris,

Review of the Regional Policy Statement

1. On behalf of Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust (TKONT) thank you for providing us with the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki – Evaluation of Appropriateness, Efficiency and Effectiveness*. We note that this interim review sets the course for the full statutory review which is due to commence in 2020. Thank you for providing us with an early opportunity to engage with this process.
2. As the post-settlement governance entity for Ngāruahine, TKONT makes comments and submissions to any relevant policy matters within our rohe. This does not prevent the affected Ngāruahine hāpu submitting on their behalf, nor should it be in any way viewed as affecting the mana motuhake of the hapū. Ngāruahine's interest in this matter is because the policy is an important statutory framework that regulates how the region responds to environmental protection and control across Taranaki.

Principles for investigation (p.i)

3. We agree with the six identified issues. With reference to number 6 – working with iwi, we also suggest that we look beyond treaty settlements and ensure that principles of Te Ao Māori are incorporated into the Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

Purpose of the RPS is still relevant (p.1)

4. In terms of the key changes that have emerged since the adoption of the RPS, TKONT is pleased to see that the Council's relationship with tangata whenua is identified and recognised as a focus. We suggest that the Council should prepare to prioritise the changes that may arise from the Proposed Policy Statement on Indigenous biodiversity. TKONT is particularly encouraged to see a commitment to e-planning. As regular users of



the Council's policy and planning tools we support all efforts that can improve our access to and navigation of this information.

Whether the RPS is achieving its purpose and the issues remain relevant

5. Table one identified the significant resource management issues in the current RPS. Whilst the majority are self-explanatory we are not quite sure what is meant by the following statements:
 - a. Recognising the role of resource development and use in the Taranaki region (1).
 - b. Protecting the natural character of our wetlands (8). The issue is beyond this, the issue is about protecting the existence of current wetlands and growing the number of wetlands.
 - c. Sustainably managing energy (24).
 - d. Promoting sustainable urban development (25).
6. In relation to the significant resource management issues to iwi, TKONT agrees with the list in table two, however we would also include the following:
 - a. Embedding Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori into resource management processes and plans.
 - b. Responding to the Treaty Settlement statements, principles and commitments as they relate to the environment.
 - c. Recognising for Iwi Environmental Management Plans.
7. In regards to section 4.2.1 the review document states that iwi tend to rely on their own policy instruments such as the statutory acknowledgements and statements of association. Whilst iwi do rely on the Treaty Settlements, we also rely on the RPS and other Planning Frameworks as a vehicle to leverage our advocacy for the environment. For TKONT we would like to move to a place where the respective documents and processes mutually support one another.
8. It is interesting to note that stakeholders called for better integration across boundaries to provide for better alignment. Whilst at one level there is an efficiency to this approach, the differences across the districts may not easily lend themselves to a 'one size fits all' approach. The urban environment of New Plymouth is markedly different to the rural and industrial environment of South Taranaki and in particular the Ngāruahine rohe.
9. We agree that the RPS should cover all of the physical domains, and we support the notion that community should be more actively involved in the management of resources. For iwi, this involves several processes, including but not limited to the iwi



representatives sitting around the Council table and the iwi being actively involved in providing comments on and input into policy matters within the rohe. Iwi can perform this role effectively because of the kaitiakitanga obligations that exist towards the environment as a whole, as opposed to there being a vested interest or bias.

Indigenous biodiversity

10. TKONT agrees with the assertions made about indigenous biodiversity. As a region we should be prioritising and promoting all indigenous biodiversity. As the Council is already aware, TKONT is very concerned about the continued loss and degradation of our wetlands, native forests and other native flora. This is a key area where we would like to see prescription that directs action to reverse some of the negative trends that we see in these areas.
11. We agree with the statements made about pest control and this is another area where the RPS should be more directive. Predator Free NZ cannot be achieved without the private land owners (who form the majority) actively addressing this issue on the land that they operate.

Maintaining the quality of land, freshwater, coastal and air resources

12. Within section 4.2.2 there is a comment that submitters were united in their view that clean water should be maintained. TKONT agrees with this statement, however we suggest that the emphasis in the RPS should be improving the cleanliness of water. As the Council knows, we are challenged by some of the assertions that are made about water quality across the region; we believe that there are further improvements that need to be made.
13. In regards to the comment made by District Council Officers that the RPS is “more prescriptive in terms of threatened and at risk species...” we are unsure what comment is actually being made here. Is the level of prescription viewed as positive? Is this prescriptive seen as an inhibiting factor? It would be helpful to receive some clarification about this.
14. It is clear that nutrient discharges into the receiving environments is an area where there are perhaps the most divergent views. TKONT strongly agrees that attention must be given to the effect that the discharges has on the receiving environments. We are in support of setting in-stream limits and argue strongly for the inclusion of this component into the new RPS. Unless we begin to impose tougher environmental standards on ourselves, we will not be able to reverse the negative trends in freshwater quality that we are currently confronted with.



15. With regards to the debate about swimmable rivers. TKONT is very concerned that this definition is deemed to apply to a very small number of rivers. TKONT would like to have a local debate about which rivers the Taranaki community believe should be of swimmable quality. We are confident that the community would be able to clearly identify the rivers and streams to which this standard should apply. The key point is that determination should be local. We agree that rivers will not be swimmable for 365 days a year, but a community conversation should take place about the locations, duration and seasons in which we expect our rivers and streams to be swimmable.
16. We agree with the concerns raised about soil erosion that arises from the forestry industry and we also agree about the concerns that were raised about reverse sensitivity. It is reasonable to assert the negative effects that often arise from odour in the rural community are improving, due to improved technology, and those people who move to a rural community should be mindful of the environment where they are moving to. We do not believe that any person should have to tolerate offensive or objectionable odour, but rural odours are to be expected and a degree of tolerance is necessary.

Natural Hazards

17. TKONT agrees that the determination of natural hazards should be a matter of national importance, noting that the local community must determine and agree on what those significant natural hazards are. The increased risks that arise from climate change are a concern for Taranaki and flooding and slips are two major concerns because of the impact they have on property, people and livestock, and how these issues can isolate communities. Whilst not connected to climate change there will also be an increased risk of flooding because of the intensive developments that are taking place in the urban environments and the RPS should take account of this issue. The district councils focus on intensive CBD and housing developments need to be matched with significant investment in stormwater management and flood control. Because the District Plans are autonomous of each other, the RPS is the vehicle to guide effective management of these risks.

Waste management

18. Ever increasing levels of waste are a major concern. The waste that is associated with consumerism is having a major effect on the environment. The regional landfill is already developing the required infrastructure, what is needed is policy instruments that encourages behavioural change at the point of supply and demand.

Māori values, principles and involvement in decision making



19. TKONT is heartened by the recognition that all of the resource management issues of significance are relevant to iwi. Our question relates to a better understanding about the determination of 'issues of significance'. There is likely to be resource management issues that perhaps the regional council do not perceive as significant, but iwi do. TKONT would like to be engaged in a conversation about this.

20. TKONT feels that we have already come a long way with the Regional Council regarding our involvement in resource management issues. We are looking forward to further developing and enhancing this relationship as part of the RPS process.

Enabling economic development while protecting environment

21. Whilst TKONT acknowledges the feedback raised by industry, the RPS provides the opportunity to ensure that the economic environment is grounded in strong principles of precaution, sustainability and environmental protection. TKONT want to see an RPS where the balance is tipped to the favour and benefit of the environment, only then we will see economic development that is truly forward thinking in the solutions and processes that are employed. If industry believes that the Regional Council is a soft touch, and that degrees of environmental degradation are tolerated, we can never expect to realise the environmental gains that Taranaki deserves. TKONT suggests that one of the strongest allies that the Council has to pursue this, is its treaty partners.

Effectiveness of the RPS objective and policies

22. The RPS review report states that the use and development of resources (5.1) is about allowing communities to provide for their economic, social and cultural wellbeing in accordance with the RMA. TKONT suggests that this objective should be broadened to provide for environmental wellbeing. When considering the TDHB request that health should be enshrined in all policies, this cannot be achieved unless environment wellbeing is also provided for. Whilst the perspective is that this objective is being met – a comment we do not necessarily disagree with, the challenge is perhaps that the objective is not strong enough in favour of protecting the environment.

23. With regards to land and soil (5.2), TKONT wishes to see more certainty and clarity around appropriate soil nutrient levels. It is our preference for clear standards to be established. This not only provides certainty for the environment but also for land users.

24. TKONT would appreciate having a better understanding about how the sustainable management of land is measured – particularly as the review document states that 92%



has met such a standard. We are also keen to better understand the statement ‘of the most at risk land, 65% of privately owned land has a Council prepared farm plan containing recommendations’. What about public land? And, how effective is the implementation of the recommendations in the plans?

25. In regards to fresh water (5.3), there is perhaps value in clarifying some of the language. Objective one details that the taking, using, damming and diversion of fresh water enables people and communities to meet their needs. Further specificity would be useful, with business and industry also included in this definition as it is they who make the applications for water use in its various forms.
26. As part of the review, TKONT does wish to see close attention paid to this objective. We will be looking for stronger statements about the reduction of surface water abstractions from our river catchments, increasing the number of wetlands and raising the quality of freshwater across the board. TKONT would also be seeking strong statements within the revised RPS about riparian planting. We would like to see a focus on native planting, extended planting where it already exists and greater numbers of streambanks planted. It is also no longer acceptable to cite the number of dairy farms that have riparian plans – we are now looking for statements that say ‘99.5% of dairy farms are fully fenced and riparian planted’. We would also like to see minimum standards being set for the level and type of planting that is required. We also want to see a shift to lower nitrate standards, we recognise that they have remained stable; we now want to see a trend downwards.
27. The objectives that relate to the coastal environment are largely sound, however objective one and two do feel somewhat similar. We would also like to see a greater emphasis on the avoidance of contaminant discharges into the marine environment
28. It is also useful for the next generation RPS to recognise the Tukatai Moana Act and the interests that coastal māori have in the foreshore and seabed.
29. Having a focus on significant indigenous biodiversity (5.6) whilst important should not be the sole focus for the RPS. As stated in an earlier section of the review document, there should be a broader attention given to indigenous biodiversity across the board. This objective has a strong correlation to the protection of native forests and woodlands, species recovery, covenants, wetlands, riparian planting and pest control. One area where the RPS can exert a greater level of influence is greater controls on the conversion of land. When land is converted to grassland, this is for economic purpose, and with each conversion the loss of indigenous biodiversity increases. So whilst the review document reports on the small losses, the cumulative impact of each small loss cannot be underestimated.



30. TKONT is broadly supportive of the objectives as they relate to natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity values (5.7). As noted in the review, we are mindful of the impact that increasing number of sub divisions are having on these local values and suggest that the RPS can take a stronger stance on this issue, ensuring that this is a matter that is given due consideration as part of the decision making processes.
31. We note that comment that earthquake strengthening is not always a viable option in South Taranaki and Stratford – it would be useful to understand why this is the case in these two districts, but not New Plymouth. From an iwi perspective TKONT is concerned about the earthquake status of its marae, noting that these are valuable civil defence assets in the heart of community. The plan comments that there is often a lack of information about sites. It is important that more engagement and consultation takes place with iwi, hapū and other members of the community who have knowledge about the important sites and heritage values within the areas.
32. When there is talk about natural hazards (5.8) there appears to be a presumption that these are beyond our control to influence. TKONT suggests that the natural hazards that we encounter are a result of the effects of human activity, so whilst we may not be able to reverse the trends in the short term, it is important that the RPS and other planning guidance and tools does all that it can to protect people and the environment, which may mean placing environmental protection over economics and profit.
33. TKONT is worried by the trend of increasing levels of waste needing to be disposed of at landfill, despite higher levels of recycling (5.9). TKONT would like to see a strong stance in the RPS which addresses this. The polluter pays model would work effectively, if there is a financial penalty placed upon waste disposal at a commercial level, the producers will be more considered about the type of packing that is used and the volumes of waste that are disposed of.
34. The regional policy statement is in a strong position to promote the use of renewable energies over the exploitation of minerals (5.10 and 5.11). If the policy environment placed the same level of emphasis and support on renewable technologies and industries, Taranaki has a better chance of reversing some of the environmental harms that we see across the region – which include water abstractions, water quality and waste management and disposal. Taranaki's reliance of mineral resources above an investigation of other renewal opportunities is short sighted for the economy and the environment.
35. TKONT agrees with the assertions in the plan that residential and business activities are encroaching into the rural areas, which are not only creating reverse sensitivity issues,



they are also affecting the environmental landscape, and the civic and amenity values that give the rural environment its identity and character. The RPS has the potential to guide the district councils and ensure that the planning environment protects and enhances the rural character of Taranaki.

36. Iwi have a strong intergenerational interest in the protection and enhancement of our environment. The interests of iwi are unique: they are intergenerational; they are obligations that are inherited from the past and passed into the future. Kaitiakitanga is much more than an interest in protecting the environment; it is a spiritual, cultural and social obligation to people and planet. When the environmental interests of iwi are recognised and provided for, the interests of the whole community will benefit. When the RPS is updated, TKONT would like to see a stronger recognition of a commitment to actively involving iwi in sustainable management and conservation processes. We would also like to see an RPS which recognises that the eco system cannot be delineated along boundaries and classifications, the RPS should recognise the interconnectedness of all environmental actions and the cumulative effects and impacts of each resource management issue that is consented and or undertaken.
37. TKONT would like to engage in a conversation with the Regional Council about the values that iwi would like to see represented and woven throughout the RPS. This is an important part of the process, which will take time to work through. Whilst the RMA requires issues of significance to iwi to be documented separately, the Taranaki Regional Council have the opportunity to develop a regional policy statement that combines Te Ao Māori alongside the western paradigms.
38. The RPS objectives (5.13) as worded remain relevant, but there is an opportunity to enhance these. The landscape has changed since the RPS was drafted, with nearly all Taranaki iwi having settled their Treaty of Waitangi negotiations. The RPS should make explicit reference to the statutory acknowledgments and protection principles within them. TKONT would also like to see the RPS provide guidance about how mātauranga Māori will be embedded into the decision making and monitoring processes. The RPS could provide guidance about how Iwi Environmental Plans will be recognised and provided for.

RPS Methods

39. A range of methods will always be needed to encourage, promote and direct action. TKONT is supportive of the nine method areas and suggests that together they offer a comprehensive suite of action. Iwi suite of opportunity.



40. TKONT is interested to read that some Regional Policy Statements direct district councils, but Taranaki's does not (6.2). We would be interested to learn more about what issues regional councils offer a directive on, and whether this is something that Taranaki should consider. It is interesting to note that district council themselves would like more direction.
41. For many years the Regional Council has offered support and guidance to land owners as a means to encourage them to undertaken riparian planting and fencing (6.4). It is laudable to see plans in place, but TKONT would now like to see more direction and prescription about the implementation of these plans. The supply of low cost plants is a very important initiative that has encouraged many landowners to undertake their planting; however for those who have not voluntarily undertaken this work, we would now like to see further prescription.
42. Cooperation and collaboration is the key to environmental improvement and enhancement (6.5). The Regional Council, through the RPS and beyond is in a strong position to facilitate such partnerships. TKONT is committed to working in partnership with the Regional Council, the district councils and consent holders to achieve the best possible outcomes for the environment. Since its inception in 2014, TKONT has seen a positive trend with our relationships and collaborative efforts; however we believe that it is now time to push the boundaries even further, only then will Taranaki realise the environmental changes that it deserves.
43. TRC works alongside the regional councils on many issues such as waste, biodiversity, civil defence, traffic and transportation and more, the potential for impact and change could be further strengthened if iwi were also partners around theses table. This is a conversation that TKONT would like to pursue.
44. The potential to use economic instruments more effectively is a matter that is worthy of investigation as part of the new RPS (6.6). The use of positive tools such as advice, guidance and low cost plants are important economic enablers, however TKONT would like to see greater use of financial contributions to not only offset environmental impacts, but also to enhance the environment in areas where it is depleting i.e. loss of wetlands and native habitats. TKONT also suggests that the region needs to have a conversation about waste management and disposal. A punitive economic environment for the waste polluters may encourage less non-recyclable waste. If this was coupled with a reward based system for those who are actively reducing their waste, we could support an environment where as much waste as possible is recyclable and reusable.

Efficiency of the RPS



45. It is very hard to comment on the section that comments on the cost of the RPS, because the section does not provide any transparent financial data. TKONT does not doubt that the RPS delivers value for money, but we would appreciate understanding how the assumptions in this section have been made, particularly as 7.3 states that monetising the RPS is impractical, but concludes that there is a positive ratio of benefit to cost. Further information is needed in order for us to be able to consider the consultation question, whether the RPS has been efficient in terms of its benefits being greater than its costs.

Conclusions and recommendations

46. TKONT has reviewed the recommendations section and is supportive of the proposals; however the timeframes for the various investigations are unclear. There is clearly opportunity to develop a combined RPS and regional plans; however it is not clear how this alignment will take place as several of these plans are currently under development (1). The e-plan represents an output that should be implemented for the RPS and regional plans (2). As we have alluded to in this comment, there are opportunities to investigate a greater level of prescription in the new RPS (3). The promotion of integrated management is an approach that is supported by TKONT (4). The review proposals in recommendations five to eight and ten appear siloed and not necessary if the other recommendations are adopted. Finally TKONT would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council about the integration of Māori values and principles throughout the plan.

47. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this preliminary review. In conclusion we do agree that the RPS is relevant and largely effective, whilst offering opportunities for refinement and improvement into the future. TKONT looks forward to working with this Council on the next generation plan. If you have any questions or queries about the comments please contact me or David More at policy@ngaruahine.iwi.nz.

Naku iti noa, nā

Louise Tester (PhD)

Kairangahau Matua (Social Initiatives and Policy Manager)

Hi Chris

Just following up from the phone call last week. To confirm, we're happy that the interim report on the RPS review captures our feedback. And we agree that the RPS is achieving its purpose, is effective and efficient. There are essentially no new issues, or definitely no issues that would require urgent changes to the RPS before the 2020 deadline. We also find the RPS useable / readable (having a high threshold for paperwork!).

Lisa

DR LISA HARPER

REGIONAL POLICY ADVISOR

Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Box 422, New Plymouth, New Zealand 4340

P 06 757 3425

✉ lharp@fedfarm.org.nz

www.fedfarm.org.nz



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Level 3
278 Northcote Rd
Takapuna, Auckland 0422

PO Box 27 811
Takapuna, Auckland 0740
New Zealand

Phone 09 917 4300
Fax 09 917 4311

Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford 4352

File: 16/085
DDI: (09) 917 4315
Email: nperera@burtonconsultants.co.nz

By email only: denise.young@trc.govt.nz

31 August 2016

Dear Denise

**RE: REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT INTERIM REVIEW
FEEDBACK BY THE OIL COMPANIES**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide comment on the Taranaki Regional Council (*the Council*) interim review of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for Taranaki.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Z Energy Limited, BP Oil New Zealand Limited and Mobil Oil NZ Limited (*the Oil Companies*) receive, store and distribute refined petroleum products.

The Oil Companies' core business relates to the operation and management of their individual service station networks, commercial refuelling facilities and bulk storage (Terminal) facilities at marinas, ports and airports. Hydrocarbons are the principal substance managed by the Oil Companies.

The RPS is an important document for the Oil Companies as it is often referred to by them in submissions on statutory planning documents and resource consent applications. For these reasons the framework provided by the RPS needs to be directive whilst also providing the flexibility necessary to minimise the need for resource consent applications for land uses and activities where the likely adverse effects are known, and can be effectively managed.

The Oil Companies' objectives for engaging in this process are to offer constructive suggestions that support the Council in the process of identifying the significant resource management issues facing the region and in reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the objectives, policies and methods in the operative RPS in managing those issues.

The Oil Companies' focus is to ensure that future policies within the RPS provide the necessary strategic framework to enable the effective and efficient management of their asset base, including infrastructure, within Taranaki. The Oil Companies see themselves as part of the communities in which they operate, and value the ongoing relationships they have with regional and territorial authorities.

2.0 FEEDBACK

The Oil Companies agree with the comment that *'a lot of things have changed in the six years since the RPS was developed in 2010'*. The Oil Companies are generally supportive of the current RPS. The current document is, however, a base document that provides a bare minimum of policy.

Accordingly, the Oil Companies seek the implementation of additional comprehensive policy within the RPS when it is reviewed. Policy that manages development in a manner that does not unreasonably and/or unnecessarily restrict the Oil Companies' storage, distribution, development and maintenance activities and oil distribution industry standardised procedures.

There are eight main areas where consideration within the RPS review is necessary to ensure an effective strategic policy framework is put in place to support the Oil Companies current and future operations within Taranaki. These areas comprise significant resource management issues and include:

1. Regionally Significant Infrastructure, Bulk Fuel Storage Depots and Fuel Distribution.
2. Reverse sensitivity.
3. Directive Nature of RPS.
4. Civil Defence – The Oil Companies role as a *'Lifeline Utility'*.
5. Codes of Practice and Industry Standards.
6. Hazardous Substances, Contaminated land, potentially contaminated land.
7. Operational Issues.

The rationale for the Oil Companies comment on each of these matters is set out in the following sections.

2.1 Regionally Significant Infrastructure, Bulk Fuel Storage and Fuel Distribution

Within Taranaki there are a number of bulk fuel storage depots, including the Port and at Omata. From the bulk storage facilities the Oil Companies supply truck stops and various retail outlets, which they either own and/or operate throughout Taranaki, and parts of the adjoining Manawatu-Whanganui region.

Under the Resource Management Act (*RMA*) bulk storage facilities and pipelines are a significant physical resource that should be sustainably managed. Any adverse effects on that infrastructure should, therefore be avoided, remedied or mitigated and appropriate policy to facilitate and maintain this should be included in the RPS when reviewed.

The mention of *'the Omata tank farm'* and *'a network of pipelines to transport the product throughout Taranaki and the North Island'* in section 15.2 relating to the Oil and Gas Industry is supported. The existing fuel storage facilities at the Port should also be directly referenced within this section.

The review needs to ensure that the RPS provides a comprehensive explanation of the Oil Companies distribution infrastructure. It is noted that section *'2.7.7 Infrastructure'* of the current RPS refers to pipelines and this is supported. Whilst section *'4.1 Use and development of resources'* refers to infrastructure, no mention is made to fuel storage facilities. Discussion of infrastructure in the RPS review should also refer to fuel storage facilities

The current RPS provisions go some way towards providing for the effective management of regionally significant infrastructure including bulk fuel storage, however it is considered that the RPS review should consider amendments to include policies, methods and explanations providing for the effective management of regionally significant infrastructure including bulk fuel storage and supply infrastructure.

2.2 Reverse Sensitivity

Section *'15.2 Providing for Regionally Significant Infrastructure'* and *'Issues INF ISS 1 and 2'* relating to the adverse effects of land use on the provision and safe and efficient operation of regionally significant infrastructure is supported. Policy 2 that manages adverse effects on the safety, efficiency, operation, maintenance and upgrading of physical infrastructure of regional importance is also supported.

The provisions, in particular the methods, need to be expanded to provide more direction in terms of management of reverse sensitivity effects from subdivision, use and development on fuel storage areas as existing regionally significant infrastructure, and for land uses which may be affected by sensitive

activities including residential development. The use, operation and upgrade of regionally significant infrastructure and the development of service stations and truck stops on a region wide basis is beneficial and generally appropriate.

In Auckland the Wiri Oil Services Terminal (WOSL) is protected through an overlay around it which is depicted in the Unitary Plan (the PAUP). This gives recognition of potential risks and ensures compatibility of land use planning by preventing sensitive activities from establishing. The Oil Industry is seeking similar provisions for terminals in other locations. Having a regional policy framework that facilitates such an approach is important – the RPS provisions in the Unitary Plan collectively do this through the Infrastructure, Transport and Energy provisions in particular, and it also helps that the infrastructure is in an appropriate zone to start with¹.

From a risk perspective certain activities are incompatible with regionally significant infrastructure. Having residential uses adjacent, or nearby, to bulk fuel storage facilities is inappropriate and there should be policy and methods that recognise this issue.

Policies and methods therefore need to be put in place to ensure that regionally significant infrastructure together with existing land uses that may be affected by sensitive land uses, and other land uses located within both rural and urban environments, that may affect the continued operation and maintenance of that infrastructure is controlled in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates the adverse effects generated by reverse sensitivity and recognises potential health and safety risks.

Appropriate guidance to protect certain existing land uses from new, incompatible use and development occurring under, over or adjacent to it, by locating and designing any new use and development to avoid, remedy or mitigate reverse sensitivity effects, is a significant issue that needs addressing more fully within the RPS. This could be done by incorporating within methods 7 and 18, or the development of new methods, to recognise that all affected regionally significant infrastructure providers need to be consulted. Method 9 would also benefit from recognising the need for maintenance and upgrading together with continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure.

It is noted that the Environmental results anticipated includes the outcome *'that continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure'*. It is considered that the provisions should be clearly providing for the continued operation and upgrading of regionally significant infrastructure to meet demand. This would have the benefit of recognising on a regional basis the need to provide for maintenance and upgrading together with continued operation of regionally significant infrastructure.

¹ Refer to the PAUP District Wide provisions (decision version) under E.29 to review the emergency management area provisions that apply to WOSL.

2.3 Directive Nature of RPS

As a general comment it is noted that the RPS is not very directive in relation to the methods that Territorial Authorities need to pursue. The Oil Companies would like consideration to be given to the RPS being more, in relation to the Territorial Authorities, from a “may wish to consider” approach to one with the use of more mandatory language (e.g., as used in the Environment Canterbury RPS) where they differentiate methods out on the basis of “TA’s will..” and “TA’s should”.

2.4 Civil Defence – The Oil Companies as a ‘Lifeline Utility’

The Oil Companies in their bulk storage facilities and Service Station sites located throughout the region are ready and able to provide a strategic function at any time in the regions emergency response plan.

Fuel tanks provide a necessary fuel reserve that is easily utilised in emergency situations. Fuel stored at Service Stations can be utilised to fuel generators to provide emergency power generation in emergencies and unforeseen circumstances when electricity connection is not available. It is essential to be able to use the fuel source in an emergency, often for extended periods of time. For example there are key service stations in the region that have been wired up to enable connection to a generator to get fuel from the tanks in the event of an emergency (e.g. sustained outage). Such facilities provide a strategic role and function under the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Fuel Plan.

It is recognised that lifeline utilities are specifically referred to in Section 11 Natural Hazard HAZ method 16 which requires natural hazards to be taken into account by territorial authorities when planning for the provision of lifeline utilities. HAZ Method 21 in relation to territorial authorities maintaining a civil defence emergency response capability is also supported.

There is a need to provide a greater level of directive policy within the RPS to facilitate and recognise the role of critical infrastructure/lifeline utilities and the existing provisions therefore require expansion. However this should not mean that all hazards are required to be avoided for such infrastructure.

The Christchurch earthquakes have proven how resilient oil industry infrastructure was to that event. Service stations can also be inundated from flooding without issue. Experience has shown that critical infrastructure (e.g. service stations in areas of liquefaction or transmission towers in riverbeds) are able to be located within some hazard areas. It is therefore important that policy and methods relating to such infrastructure recognises the degree of resilience provided by the specific infrastructure and that policy is targeted appropriately.

2.5 Codes of Practice and Industry standards

The current RPS in Sections 3.4 and '5.2 *Maintaining Healthy Soils*, encourages the use of industry self-regulation as a means of reducing bureaucratic intervention. Likewise the advocacy and promotion of codes of practice in methods 8 and 9 of section '6.2 *maintaining and enhancing the quality of our water in our rivers and streams, lakes and wetlands*' is also supported.

The Oil Companies undertake their activities in accordance with MfE national standards, guidelines and protocols including:

- National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to protect Human Health (NESCS 2011).
- Environmental Guidelines for water discharges from petroleum industry sites in New Zealand (December 1998).
- Guidelines for assessing and managing petroleum hydrocarbon contaminated sites in New Zealand (revised 2011).
- Checklist for the removal and replacement of petroleum underground storage tanks and underground equipment (October 2011).
- Draft Sampling protocols for and analytical methods for determining petroleum products in soil and water (May 1999).
- Contaminated land management guidelines No. 1: Reporting on Contaminated sites in New Zealand (revised 2011).
- Above ground bulk tank containment systems (June 1995)

The use of industry guidelines and monitoring programmes as a means of avoiding remedying or mitigating adverse effects of certain land uses is supported and the Oil Companies wish to see this maintained in the RPS review.

2.6 Hazard Substances, Contaminated/potentially Contaminated Land Sites

The Oil Companies are generally supportive of the RPS provisions in relation to contaminated land and hazardous substance in section 5.3.

There is a need to ensure that any review of the RPS provisions recognises the Governments intent to remove the management of hazardous substances from the RMA. However, there will still remain a land use component that will need to be managed in terms of bulk fuel storage and sensitive activities and therefore reverse sensitivity issues. (Refer section 2.2 above).

The term '*contaminated land*' should be utilised instead of '*sites*' as determining an entire '*site*' contaminated is unnecessary when it may only be a small part of the site as a whole that is contaminated. It should be noted that Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing

and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (NES) refers to 'piece of land' and not to a 'site'.

HZC Policy 4 and 5 is supported, however there is a concern that the overall framework needs to be improved. It does not deal adequately with passive discharges – those legacy discharges that have given rise to contaminated land and ongoing discharges from those as the level of contaminants degrade over time. Policy 6 appears to be more appropriately focused on hazardous substances management than existing discharges from historic contaminated land. An automatic requirement for remediation of any unauthorised discharge (of which most passive discharges from such land could be considered) is an issue and is not how contaminated land is managed in other jurisdictions.

A more appropriate framework to consider in relation to passive discharges is that in the Environment Canterbury RPS. Their framework provides a more appropriate approach to managing contaminated land (e.g. it sets out the basis upon which existing contamination may remain in the ground). It is suggested that Taranaki Regional Council look to incorporating the Environment Canterbury approach within a revised RPS.

2.8 Operational Issues

There is a need, in lower order plans, to have rules in place that provide for activities such as retanking of underground storage tanks at service stations and truck stop sites, which can necessitate earthwork consents at a district and regional level, together with a take and discharge consent to water and/or soil if dewatering is required during the retanking activity. Such activities generally only occur once in the life of any statutory plan and are temporary in nature generally lasting only one to two weeks. While obtaining these consents do not generally entail much difficulty the time and costs involved are often out of proportion to the benefits. Temporary water takes for construction has not been well provided for in other jurisdictions when addressing water allocation (e.g. consideration of such matters in GWR Policy 2 would assist). Such concerns apply to other infrastructure and for any temporary construction works requiring dewatering

What is needed in the RPS are provisions seeking to provide for short term construction activities (takes and discharges) to occur with a minimum of regulatory involvement. This could be done through various policies, or methods depending on the focus at region or district. Specifically providing for and recognising temporary dewatering and associated take and discharges for construction activities to be managed through good management practices that ensure discharges do not result in more than minor adverse effects, without regulatory (i.e. resource consent) involvement. The Oil Companies therefore wish to see consideration given to this within the RPS review.

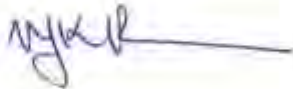
3.0 Conclusion

On behalf of the Oil Companies thank you once again for providing the opportunity to provide feedback on the Council's interim review of the RPS. The Oil Companies would be pleased to assist in the development and wording of provisions at a later stage in the process.

For any further information you may require or to discuss the issues referred to above please contact the undersigned on 09 917 4315 nperera@burtonconsultants.co.nz.

Yours faithfully,

BURTON PLANNING CONSULTANTS LIMITED

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nadine Perera', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Nadine Perera
Principal Planner

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc. Preliminary Comments for the Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki 2010

5 September 2016

Climate Justice Taranaki Inc. (CJT) welcome the opportunity of providing written comments for the Interim Review of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for Taranaki 2010. CJT understand this is a non-statutory process to check the effectiveness and efficiency of the Policy Statement, prior to its formal review in 2020.

At the RPS interim review workshop on 8 August 2016, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups were given four questions to guide discussions. We will focus our comments relating to these questions:

1. What is your organisation's/ group's top five significant resource management issues in 2016 and beyond?

CJT's over-arching concern is climate change and the associated social justice issues and their root causes. Under this broad concern are several interlinked resource management issues that are especially important to us:

- Energy
- Land and soil (sustainable agriculture)
- Freshwater
- Kaitiakitanga and sustainable communities
- Indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems

2. Does the current RPS provide support for the future direction of your organisation/ group?

While the RPS is unable to address our over-arching concern – root causes of climate change and the associated social justice issues – its framework does incorporate the key resource management issues that are important to us. However, we feel that there is a lot of rhetoric in the RPS and some rather different perspectives and emphases from those that CJT hold. The level of support that the RPS could provide CJT would depend a great deal on how well the RPS is implemented and how it evolves as 2020 approaches.

3. Do you see the need for any changes? What changes?

There are plenty of changes CJT would like to propose, but we are unsure whether this is the time to provide the details, and whether it would be effective without some open dialogues with Council and other NGOs. As we were unable to attend the first workshop, we would like to know if Council has plans for any follow-up workshops where we could have more in-depth discussions?

Below, we list just a few preliminary observations to be elaborated when we have the opportunity in future:

- Since 2010, a number of major research reports concerning climate change, sea level rise, state of our environment, freshwater, and oil and gas operations in New Zealand, have been published, notably by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and NIWA. The RPS need to be revised/updated to reflect the findings and implications of these reports.

- The Climate Change section (7.2) gives a fair introduction to the cause and effects of climate change, albeit brief. Given its overarching importance and linkages to so many resource management issues, we feel this section warrants a more prominent position in the RPS. The linkages/implications on the different resource management issues need to be presented in each of these sections (notably land and soil; natural hazards; energy).

- Chapter 5 on Land and Soil focusses a great deal on erosion and healthy soils which are crucial for Taranaki – a province heavily dependent on agriculture, and in view of climate change impacts, notably extreme rainfall. The Sustainable Land Management Programme is a worth-while initiative especially if landowners are given adequate support in implementing the farm-specific agroforestry and conservation plans. Transition to biological farming, organics and crop diversification also deserve serious support.

- We are unsure of the section 5.2 on Maintaining Health Soils, in particular the conclusion that *“there are no significant levels of fertiliser or agrichemical residues in Taranaki soils that pose a risk to human or animal health.”* We believe incorporating soil health and nutrient budgeting within onfarm management systems needs to go beyond advocacy (HSO METH 3), onto rules and support. These are essential for ensuring / restoring soil health as well as maintaining / improving water quality.

- We have serious issues concerning section 5.3 on Managing the Effects of Hazardous Substances and Contaminated Sites. We question why oil/gas exploration, production and waste disposal activities are not mentioned when these activities use and dispose of a wide range of hazardous substances on/into land. CJT have written detailed analyses and submissions on oil/gas waste disposal, notably landfarming, that can be accessed on our website.

- Re Chapter 6 on Fresh water, we have issues on statements like *“Taranaki’s water bodies have generally good to excellent water quality...”* We believe more robust science is needed in designing and implementing Taranaki’s freshwater quality monitoring, and the compliance monitoring programmes concerning contaminant discharges. Critically, it is time to take the precautionary approach seriously to protect the life-supporting capacity of freshwater; i.e. to *prevent* rather than manage the effects of human activities. With the dire status of our wetlands, much greater proactive actions are needed to protect the remaining wetlands and restore damaged/lost wetland ecosystems, rather than allowing (and mitigating the effects from) any further degradation and land drainage. Also relating to this chapter are our comments on the Draft Taranaki Water and Land Plan which we are happy to elaborate or discuss with Council and fellow NGOs.

- In the Air Quality section (7.1), the effects of emissions from petro-chemical industries (e.g. oil/gas wellsites and production stations, Methanex and Ballance Agri-Nutrient Urea Plant) appear very much understated, given their widespread occurrence and high intensity in some areas, leading to substantial cumulative effects. CJT wish to see more robust monitoring on these emissions and research on their potential impacts on the environment and people; as well as the scientific grounds for not identifying airsheds as defined by the NES for Air Quality.

- Chapter 13 on Minerals largely deals with fossil fuel extraction, although it includes also non-fuel minerals. We have some serious issues about this chapter, stemming from the fact that mineral resources cannot be extracted and consumed sustainably because of their largely un-renewable

nature. Overall, this chapter overstates the importance/benefits of mineral resources to economics, social and even cultural wellbeing of people and community in Taranaki, while understating the losses and harm to communities, especially those living amongst sites of mineral extraction and processing. Research by the University of Otago has shown that some of these areas are also the most deprived economically and socially, on the national scale. The impacts of mineral extractions on the mauri and wairua of the land and their cultural relationships with tangata whenua are also ignored.

- Chapter 13 also places a great deal of emphasis on “reverse sensitivity issues” where “*the ability to extract and utilise the minerals may become compromised by sensitive land uses locating near mineral extraction and processing activities or along access routes*”, without mentioning the actual and potential harm and compromise that some local communities suffer from nearby oil/gas activities (e.g. health and safety risks, property devaluation, opportunities for organic certification, etc.). This is an obvious bias especially when the explanation for Energy Policy 3 (p.113) specifically points out the “*effects on people and communities*” from renewable energy development.

- Chapter 14 on Energy deals largely with renewable energy, although it also includes non-renewable sources and issues concerning efficiency in network utilities, etc. As such, CJT see this chapter as one of the most important, given its potential contribution to lessening climate change effects, and the specific provisions in the RMA (Section 7) for Councils to have particular regards on “*the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy*” and “*the efficiency of the end use of energy*”. We would like to see more thoughts and support given to small/community-scale renewable electricity generation (Refer to NPS on Renewable Electricity Generation 2011), energy from waste (from farms, forestry and landfills), and public transport and freight based largely on renewable energy.

4. Should it be more directive or more flexible?

CJT believe that in some areas, a more directive approach may be helpful while in other areas, a more flexible approach may be more appropriate. There is a need to recognise and fill the knowledge gaps on some of the issues, notably the individual and cumulative effects of contaminant discharge, connectivity between surface and groundwater resources, and the inter-linkages between land/soil, freshwater and coastal water management. Overall, greater emphases and details on the methods of implementing the policy, and monitoring its effectiveness, would render the RPS more useful and practical.

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Kia ora Denise

Many thanks for pulling this together and including Taranaki Enviroschools in this review.

Please see my additional notes for inclusion in this review:

Throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand, the national Enviroschools programme is delivered through Regional Councils in 14 of the 16 regions. Taranaki and the West Coast of the South Island are the sole exceptions at this point in time.

Enviroschools supports and empowers young people to become the change makers needed moving into the future. The positive actions and outcomes are not limited to solely being based around the above but permeate further into strengthening communities through connections to people and place. Please see our [website](#) for further details.

The intensive and [results proven](#) Enviroschools programme is a complementary addition to TRC's current waste minimisation and environmental education project based roles and brings a deeper practice of long term sustainable outcomes of behaviour change in our young people.

The reason the Enviroschools programme is run through Regional Councils is because it supports the goals of Councils in numerous areas. These are identified below specifically relating to the TRC's Regional Policy Statement:

- Land & soil
 - 5.2 Maintaining healthy soils
- Fresh Water
 - 6.2 Maintaining and enhancing the quality of water in our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands
 - 6.4 Protecting the natural character of wetlands
 - 6.6 Managing effects associated with the use of and disturbances to river and lake beds
 - 6.7 Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along rivers and lakes
- Air & Climate Change
 - 7.2 Responding to the effects of climate change
- Coastal Environment
 - 8.1 Protecting the natural character of our coast
 - 8.2 Maintaining and enhancing coastal water quality
 - 8.3 Maintaining and enhancing public access to and along the coastal environment
- Indigenous Biodiversity
 - 9.1 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity
- Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity value
 - 10.2 Protecting our historic heritage
- Waste Management
 - 12.1 Minimising waste and managing its disposal
- Energy
 - Sustainably managing energy
- The Built Environment
 - 15.1 Promoting sustainable urban development
- Local Iwi & Hapu
 - 16. Support Māori Perspectives in all thoughts, plans, actions & intentions

The success of the Enviroschools programme is based on a facilitated model and is only limited by funding. It is recommended that TRC financially support the delivery of Enviroschools in this region to better enhance the positive outcomes of its (TRC's) own goals and KPI's in all of the areas (noted above) that this holistic environmental education programme can do. This is our recommendation on how to support our organisation and TRC with its RPS.

Nga mihi, Lauree Jones, Regional Coordinator,

022 014 7462

My general hours are Mon – Thurs 10 – 3. I'm available at other times by arrangement.

FB: Taranaki Enviroschools

enviroschoolstaranaki.blogspot.com

www.enviroschools.org.nz

www.sustainabletaranaki.org.nz