

Ten years on
– A review of the
Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki

Taranaki Regional Council
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Stratford

September 2004

Executive summary

Ten years on, this discussion document has been prepared to assist the Taranaki Regional Council in its statutory review of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* ('the RPS').

This document effectively 'kickstarts' the public process in relation to that review. Through the discussion document, the Council is presenting its **preliminary** thoughts on what has changed since the adoption of the RPS ten years ago, and whether or not change to the provisions of the RPS are needed. In so doing, the Council wishes to present you, the community, with an early opportunity to comment on its position and approach on particular issues. Are there any new issues or are some issues no longer regionally significant? Should some issues be addressed differently and why?

Potential 'change' factors that need to be taken into consideration when assessing the on-going relevance of the issues in the RPS and policy approaches include:

- Comprehensive monitoring of the state of the environment over the last 10 years, which shows that Taranaki retains a high quality environment on most measures and that policies in the RPS are being effective. However, analysis of environmental issues, attitudes and priorities have flagged some issues for ongoing or heightened attention eg, effects of continued dairy intensification.
- The Council and three district councils have implemented or are implementing all the programmes and actions listed in the RPS (95% of the methods were implemented in the first 5-years of the RPS).
- The RPS has not been changed or legally challenged since its adoption.
- Through the regional plans, the Council now has more specific and detailed policy frameworks in place that did not exist at the time that the RPS was developed. Therefore, it is possible that the next RPS does not need to be as detailed in some areas because the regional plans provide much of that detail.
- A review of case law, which did not identify any cases ruled on by the Environment Court or higher Courts that require fundamental changes to the RPS.
- Changes to the Resource Management Act, which have increased the Council's responsibilities for indigenous biodiversity and imposed new obligations for the Council to consider the efficient use of energy from minerals, the effects of climate change and benefits derived from non-renewable energy.
- Enactment of the Local Government Act 2002 and the identification of seven broad community outcomes for the future well-being of the region.
- Enactment of other statutes that impact or impinge on the Council's statutory responsibilities.
- Progress by the Government on settling Treaty of Waitangi claims with some Iwi.
- New Government policies, strategies and initiatives including the preparation of national environmental standards, aquaculture reform, the review of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement*, the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy and the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.
- Advances in good practice in terms of the form, content and structure of regional policy statements.

An analysis of each of the issues in the RPS shows that the current policy approach to these issues has been generally effective in achieving the desired environmental outcomes. However, a number of minor changes are proposed where provisions are able to be improved or sharpened and where the RPS needs to be brought into line with developments over the last 10 years.

An analysis of each of the issues in the RPS also shows that, in the main, the issues identified in the RPS continue to be relevant. However, there are a number of areas where issues can be merged to focus attention on the larger issues, while still retaining the overall policy approach that has been successful to date. Some issues will change as a result of changes in Government policy.

Proposed changes to the RPS of most significance are:

- Amend Issue 3.2.2 of the RPS [Soil contamination] to broadly deal with soil health issues incorporating soil compaction, nutrient depletion and residual soil contamination.
- Include Issue 3.2.3 of the RPS [Indigenous vegetation] within a broader issue and in a stand-alone section of the RPS dealing with indigenous biodiversity issues incorporating land, fresh water and coastal ecosystems. This new section will take into account the Council's and district council's enhanced responsibilities for the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity.
- Include Issues 3.2.6 and 3.2.7 of the RPS [Solid waste] within a broader issue and in a stand-alone section of the RPS dealing with all forms of waste (liquid, gaseous) and their management, which incorporates waste minimalisation, recycling and waste disposal.
- Merge Issues 3.2.8 [Contaminated sites] and 3.2.9 [Hazardous substances] of the RPS to broadly deal with both current and historical issues associated with hazardous substances.
- Include Issues 3.2.10 [Landscapes], 3.2.11 [Amenity and heritage values] and 3.2.12 [Infrastructure] in a new stand alone section of the RPS dealing with landscapes, amenity values, heritage values and the built environment.
- Include Issues 3.2.13, 3.3.8, 3.4.3, 4.4.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.3 of the RPS in a stand alone section of the RPS that identifies resource management issues of significance to Iwi.
- Merge Issues 3.3.1 [Water availability] and 3.3.3 of the RPS [Water conservation] to broadly deal with all water allocation issues.
- Amend Issue 3.3.4 of the RPS [Protection of wetlands] to deal only with land drainage and associated diversions (and their effects) and incorporate relevant wetland protection policies and methods in a new section addressing indigenous biodiversity.
- Merge Issues 3.3.6 and 3.3.7 of the RPS [Water quality] to broadly deal with all potential sources of water quality degradation under the issue of maintaining and enhancing water quality.
- Amend Issue 3.4.2 of the RPS [Enhanced greenhouse effect] to reflect more recent Government policy on this issue and the role of local government in preparing for climate change.
- Include Issues 4.2 [State of the environment monitoring] and Chapter 5.2 of the RPS [Monitoring the RPS] within a broader section of the RPS, dealing with research, gathering of information and monitoring.

- Delete Issues 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 of the RPS [Consent processing, enforcement and cost recovery].
- Merge Chapters 4.5 [Cross boundary processes] and 4.6 of the RPS [Integrated Resource Management] to broadly deal with all integrated management and cross boundary issues.

The Council is seeking your views on the review. The Council is seeking confirmation on what are the resource management issues of significance in the Taranaki region and what changes (if any) are needed to the policy and management approach to address these issues that could be incorporated into the next *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki*.

You are invited to address your comments to:

Chief Executive
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
Stratford

Comments are invited by **Friday, 15 October 2004**.