

Report 2017.203
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Committee Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee
Author Lucy Harper, Team Leader, Environmental Policy

Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region development and update

1. Purpose

To provide Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee with a background to development of the Proposed Natural Resources Plan (the Proposed Plan) and an update on progress since notification. Further meetings will address the issues and content of the Proposed Plan.

2. Background

The Proposed Plan was developed in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act). The statutory context for the Proposed Plan is detailed in **Attachment 1**.

The purpose of the Proposed Plan is to identify outcomes for the management of natural and physical resources and put in place policies and methods (including rules) to achieve the purpose of the Act. The Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region is a combined Regional and Coastal Plan and once operative will replace the five existing Regional Plans (Regional Coastal Plan, Regional Air Quality Management Plan, Regional Freshwater Plan, Regional Plan for Discharges to Land and Regional Soil Plan).

3. Development of the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

3.1 The role of Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee

Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee (the Committee) was established in 2009. The purpose of the Committee is to “*promote the sustainable management of the region’s natural and physical resources by overseeing the review and development of regional plans, changes and variations for the Wellington Region, as required under the Resource Management Act 1991*”.

The specific responsibilities of the Committee include the review of the operative regional plans, the preparation of the proposed regional plan and any

plan changes, and recommending to the Council that proposed plans or plan changes proceed to public notification.

Mana whenua involvement in the review of the regional plans was motivated by their concern for the mauri of the region's water. The iwi represented on the GWRC inter-iwi representative group Ara Tahi had agreed on four priority issues affecting their relationship with the environment in the development of the Regional Policy Statement (2013). These are:

- Lack of tangata whenua involvement in resource management decision-making
- Loss of mauri, particularly in relation to fresh and coastal waters
- Continuing loss of quality, quantity, and access to mahinga kai and natural resources used for customary purposes
- Degradation and destruction of places, sites and areas with spiritual, cultural or historic heritage value to tangata whenua.

Mana whenua sought an opportunity to address these issues through a collaborative partnership with Council in the review of the five operative plans. The formation of Te Upoko Taiao enabled all matters pertinent to the Plan, both form and content, to be reviewed and discussed by Council and mana whenua together. The result is that the Proposed Plan both integrates mana whenua perspective and also specifies mana whenua values in objectives, policies, methods and schedules throughout the document.

3.2 Factors shaping the Proposed Plan

The Proposed Plan was shaped by five principal factors:

- The overall approach to managing the natural resource issues of the region as directed by the Committee and the Council
- A range of national and regional level policies, plans and other statutory instruments, such as national environmental standards, national policy statements and the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (2012) that are produced or recognised under the Resource Management Act
- Scientific and technical information
- The integration of mana whenua values and information
- The views of individuals, community groups and industry or sector organisations; gained through four years (from 2010 to 2014) of public meetings, workshops, seminars and stakeholder meetings held with communities, community groups, iwi, territorial authorities, agencies and regional organisations. Online surveys were held in 2010, 2011 and 2014 to supplement the public events.

3.3 Guiding principles of Te Upoko Taiao

The Committee's intention is that the Natural Resources Plan be achievable, practical and affordable for the region. The Committee established a set of guiding principles (shown in **Figure 1**) to underpin the overall management approach of the Natural Resources Plan. These are:

- *Ki uta ki tai (connectedness)* – managing natural and physical resources in a holistic manner, recognising they are interconnected and reliant upon one another
- *Wairuatanga (identity)* – recognition and respect for mauri and the intrinsic values of natural and physical features, and including the connections between natural processes and human cultures
- *Kaitiakitanga (guardianship)* – recognition that we all have a part to play as guardians to maintain and enhance our natural and physical resources for current and future generations
- *Tō mātou whakapono (judgement based on knowledge)* – recognition that our actions will be considered and justified by using the best available information and good judgement
- *Mahitahi (partnership)* – partnership between Greater Wellington (Wellington Regional Council), iwi (mana whenua) and the community, based on a commitment to active engagement, good faith and a commonality of purpose.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE REVIEW OF REGIONAL PLANS



Figure 1: Te Upoko Taiao’s principles to guide the review of the regional plans

The make-up of the Committee and these guiding principles reflect an understanding that mana whenua, the Wellington Regional Council and the wider community all share the responsibility of caring for the region’s environment. Collaboration between regulators, resource users, mana whenua, the government and the wider community has been a critical part of the development of the Plan.

3.4 Progress through a Working Document for Discussion and draft Plan to notification

In 2013 all of the input referred to above culminated in the Council releasing a “working document for discussion” that described the direction of possible regional plan provisions. Following its release, public and stakeholder meetings were held covering specific matters related to significant sites, wetland management, historic heritage and the management of regionally significant infrastructure.

This further input was incorporated into the draft Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region which was released by the Council in September 2014. The purpose of the draft was to enable people to review likely plan provisions and provide the Council with feedback about ways to improve these. Over 150 people and organisations provided over 4000 feedback points. Most of the feedback related to water allocation, indigenous biodiversity, coastal management, discharges to land, air, or were of a general administrative nature.

The feedback along with further stakeholder meetings, focus groups and analysis then shaped the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region which was publicly notified on 31 July 2015.

Schedule 1 of the Act requires any proposed plan to be accompanied by an evaluation report prepared in accordance with section 32 of the Act. Twenty two reports were prepared to address the requirements in accordance with this section and importantly provide narrative background to the provisions.

4. Post notification

4.1 Submissions and beyond

Four hundred and thirty submissions were received with a total of approximately 11,450 submission points to be addressed. Ninety-five further submissions were also received, either in support or opposing a submission point that another party has made. All of these submissions are available on our website in a searchable database.

The Hearing Panel for the Proposed Plan consists of three independent commissioners: Mark St Clair (Chair), Liz Burge and David McMahon. Hearing reports (S42A reports) are the staff or officers reports which provide recommendations to the Hearing Panel as to whether a submission should be accepted or rejected, from the view of the Council. These reports are prepared in advance of the hearing and placed online for all to read. Submitters are also asked to provide expert evidence before the hearing to help the process.

Hearings are now underway with the first hearing stream covering overall policy framework for the proposed plan, beneficial use and development, and areas and sites with significant mana whenua values.

Hearings are anticipated to conclude in 2018 and a decision version will be presented to Council later in that year.

5. Communication

No communication is required as an outcome of this report.

6. Consideration of Climate Change

The matters addressed in this report have been considered by officers in accordance with the process set out in the GWRC Climate Change Consideration Guide. Officers consider that climate change effects, mitigation or adaptation, are not significant in these matters.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. This report is for the purpose of updating the Committee on the development of, and progress with, the Proposed Natural Resources Plan.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Lucy Harper

Team Leader
Environmental Policy

Report approved by:

Matthew Hickman

Manager
Environmental Policy

Report approved by:

Nigel Corry

General Manager
Environment Group

Attachment 1: Statutory context