



Environment Court of New Zealand
te Kooti Taiao o Aotearoa



Planning for the future, the future of our plans

Environment Commissioner Kathryn Edmonds

Looking backwards

- What are the opportunities for our plans provided by the RMA?
- Why have planning documents not lived up to the promise of the RMA?
- What can be learnt from the extensive government- funded research into plan quality – the Planning Under Co-operative Mandates (**PUCM**) project?

Do we have too many plans?

- Would fewer plans result in better integration of policy, rules and other methods?
- Are unitary plans the answer?
- What else needs to occur?

Is our policy well-founded and strong enough?

- Are we asking and answering the right questions?
- Does our policy (and associated rules) make the hard choices?
- Do we defend our policy in plans (and through resource consenting)?
- Do we spend too much time in compromise resulting in sub-optimal approaches?

Should the community have a say?

- Does the community really get much of a say in practice under the current system?
- How can the community engage with lengthy, repetitive and complex documents?
- How can the community consider (or comply with) plan provisions that they cannot readily access?

How can we improve our plans?

- How can we spend the necessary time on our plans pre-notification?
- Why are we writing plans that need to contain lengthy explanations of objectives, policies and rules?
- Can we better link our policy framework with the rule framework?
- Why are we making such heavy use of controlled and restricted discretionary activity status?

- What about local plans?
- What about a template document?
- How can we achieve simplicity?
- Why does it take so long to develop and make our plans operative?
- Are rolling reviews the answer, or are they part of the problem?
- Could the Quality Planning Website provide greater leadership?

How can we achieve better co-ordination and integration?

- Are there ways in which barriers to achieving better co-ordination and integration can be overcome?
- In what ways can our planning documents better deal with the linkages with other legislation and instruments that deal with natural and physical resources?

- How can the relationship between the RMA and non-statutory approaches and documents be improved e.g. spatial plans, growth strategies?
- What approaches are there to factoring in resource management and environmental considerations in collaborative initiatives at the sub-national and regional levels?

Natural hazards and climate change

- How well integrated is the way plans deal with natural hazards with the approach under the Building Act, Local Government Act and other legislation?
- Are the implications of climate change being addressed?

Better communication

Technology

- How well is the potential for better use of technology and electronic media being recognised and progressed?

Organisation and presentation

- How can we make plans readable, comprehensible and easy to use for both lay and professional people?

More hands-on involvement?

- Should there be a body with a more hands-on national responsibility to ensure the quality and consistency of policy and planning instruments?
- Could we develop some good models quickly?

Discussion?

Are the PUCM principles for evaluating plan quality still relevant?

- Interpretation of the mandate
- Clarity of purpose
- Identification of issues
- Quality of fact base
- Internal consistency of plans
- Integration with other plans and policy instruments
- Monitoring
- Organisation and presentation