

---

## Media release

### New rule book gives certainty

5 April 2019

Minister for the Environment, David Parker today announced the Government's approved first rule-book for the country – the National Planning Standards.

The planning standards contain mandatory and discretionary directions from the Minister determining whether provisions have immediate effect or must follow the standard process involving the public. Many of the provisions will be automatically adopted across the country with little or no public process. Some discretionary directions require local authorities to choose provisions from a range of options appropriate to their area and the public will be involved in choosing provisions relating to a zone framework component. In those instances, the changes will happen within five to seven years.

President of the Resource Management Law Association (RMLA) Rachel Devine says "The National Planning Standards fill a real need for consistency in the structure, form and content of plans and policy statements."

"The standards will create easier access to plans and policy statements for the country's diverse communities. They will also benefit resource management practitioners: standardising plans and policy statements will make them more user-friendly. These standards are basic essentials for planning – a clear planning framework that applies across council borders – ultimately it will help people understand the rules and get resource consents."

"While this is an excellent start, there is more that could be done, like more standardised definitions. We hope that future iterations of the national rule book will continue at the same pace."

To ensure the success of these standards, RMLA wants sufficient support provided to councils to embrace the necessary technology to effectively implement the planning standards.

"We will be listening to feedback from our members about the operation of these standards and will be feeding that back to the Minister," says Rachel Devine.

Within a year anyone looking for plans will be able to see the same structure of planning information online, regardless of where they live.

The planning standards were introduced as part of the 2017 amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) begun under the National-led government and have been developed further over the last two years under the current Labour-led coalition government.

The Ministry for the Environment partnered with the RMLA and the New Zealand Planning Institute to run regional workshops on its research report and discussion paper. Resource management practitioners discussed and debated the discussion paper through an online shared workspace available to the Ministry. Select groups provided targeted feedback to establish how the standards could function within existing plans and policy statements and, when the draft planning standards were first notified for public submission on 6 June 2018, the RMLA helped deliver a roadshow of presentations around the country.

**Ends**



THE ASSOCIATION FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS

*Te Kahui Ture Taiao*

---

President of the Resource Management Law Association ([RMLA](#)) and [MinterEllisonRuddWatts](#) Partner specialising in Environmental Law, [Rachel Devine](#) has practiced for more than 20 years in this high profile area of law, acting for government and the private sector.

The RMLA is New Zealand's leading forum for interpreting and implementing environmental legislation, including the Resource Management Act. The industry association promotes an understanding of resource management law and its implementation; excellence in resource management policy and practice; resource management processes which are legally sound, effective and efficient; and which produce high-quality environmental outcomes.