

## Executive Summary

Section 35 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) requires the Northland Regional Council (NRC) to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules, or other methods in its regional policy statement. A report on this review of the Regional Policy Statement for Northland (RPS) must be completed within five years of the plan being operative.

### Introduction to the Report

This review consisted of workshops with NRC staff, workshops with the District Councils, input from Tangata Whenua and Stakeholder workshops, all collectively resulting in an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS.

The report analysed sections 12 to 28 of the RPS in some detail. Sections 1 to 11 of the RPS provide background information on Northland and set out the legislative framework and structure under which the RPS operates. The complete structure is best understood by viewing the table of contents which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

The purpose of the RPS is to provide an overview of the resource management issues of the region and provide objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region. The preparation of the RPS began in 1992 and the RPS was made operative in March 1999.

### Highlights from the Report

Whilst air quality related incidents and issues continue to dominate the complaints received by the Regional Council, generally the air quality section is working well. Northland has a high standard of air quality.

Overall it is felt that the provisions of the outstanding natural features and outstanding landscape section are good but this section has not been effective because it has not been implemented.

The water quality and water quantity and flows sections are not considered to adequately address sewage systems in coastal communities, de-forestation, land use change, non point source discharges and minimum flows. These sections do not adequately address the increasing rate and scale of subdivision and development occurring throughout the region, particularly in regard to effluent disposal, stormwater management and cumulative effects on the environment. Water allocation on an individual stream and/or catchment basis is a significant challenge for the region that urgently needs to be addressed.

There is a real need to increase co-ordination, communication and consistency with other agencies involved in managing Northland's land resource, its biodiversity and ecosystems. Versatile and productive soils are not being managed.

Clear policy direction is required focusing on avoidance of natural hazards, utilising soft protection measures rather than engineered hard protection works and setting clear direction on when the risk of natural hazards is too great and development should be declined. There are significant areas of improvement to be made in regard to the integrated management of the coastal environment – particularly in relation to the line of mean high water springs, the landward coastal environment and landscapes.

Heritage protection is a ‘mixed bag’ of effective protection and complete in-action across the region.

At present there is no real co-ordinated approach to waste minimisation. A substantial percentage of the regions refuse is now transported and disposed of outside the region, which is not an efficient means of disposal. The Hazardous Substances section is considered to be very effective. The hazardous substances spillage procedures and programs for the disposal of hazardous substances are working very well.

Population growth and the scarcity of high quality aggregate is a significant issue in Northland. The Energy section is generally well written but needs active implementation.

Much of the Transport section has been effective. However there is an increasing need to promote and require a strategic and fully integrated approach to transport planning.

### **Conclusions on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the RPS**

The RPS is reasonably effective in achieving integrated management. However it is considered that there are gaps in the integration of decision making, environmental research and overall environmental management between agencies, interested parties and Tangata Whenua across the region.

The RPS is heavily focused on the statutory requirements such as those associated with consultation and monitoring. Generally speaking, the RPS does not achieve anything greater than that which is required under the RMA.

## 1. Introduction to the Review

The twofold purpose of a Regional Policy Statement is to provide an overview of the resource management issues of the region and provide objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region. The preparation of the Regional Policy Statement for Northland (RPS) began in 1992 with the document being made operative in March 1999.

Since the RPS was made operative, annual workshops have been held with Northland Regional Council (NRC) staff, primarily focusing on the non-regulatory methods in the RPS. The workshops have been used to help determine which of the methods have been implemented, and how effective these have been in achieving the anticipated environmental outcomes identified in the RPS. This information has been used to assist in the NRC's annual planning process for the following year.

Section 35 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) requires that the Regional Council shall monitor, amongst other things:

*'the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules, or other methods in its policy statement or its plan'*

Furthermore, every local authority must, at intervals of not more than five years, compile and make available to the public a review of the results of its policy and plan monitoring.

### ***Purpose of this Report***

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the review of the RPS. This review consisted of workshops with NRC staff, workshops with the District Councils, input from Tangata Whenua and Stakeholder workshops, all collectively resulting in an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS. The workshops and resulting feedback has been used to develop this report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS.

Individual reports have been completed for each step of the process. Specifically, those reports are as follows:

#### **Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness Report**

A summary report of the annual workshops held with NRC staff to discuss each individual method of implementation in the RPS. The issues that were discussed included:

- NRC person or department responsible for each method
- Whether or not, and how, the method was actioned
- If not actioned, any priority assigned to the method to ensure action
- How the methods contribute to achieving the RPS Environmental Results Anticipated.

This information has been summarised for each of the resource process and policy sections in the RPS along with the monitoring results for relevant environmental indicators as identified in the State of the Environment Report.

#### **WDC Feedback Report**

RPS Review Evaluation Sheets were distributed to staff from the Whangarei District Council and these have been used to develop the WDC Feedback Report.

#### **FNDC Feedback Report**

This report outlines the results of the workshop with the Far North District Council on 19 June 2006 and the extra information provided through completion of the evaluation sheets that were distributed as part of the workshop.

#### **KDC Feedback Report**

This report outlines the results of the workshop with the Kaipara District Council on 24 July 2006.

#### **Tangata Whenua Feedback Report**

This report outlines the results of the input from Tangata Whenua into the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS. Three Te Waka Motuhake o te Tai Tokerau Hui have been held to facilitate Tangata Whenua involvement in this review process. This process was facilitated by Te Roopu Piratahi on behalf of the NRC. These hui focused in quite some detail on section 14: Involvement of Tangata Whenua, and section 24: Heritage Protection.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback Report**

This report outlines the results of the input from the Stakeholder Workshops that were held over three days (17, 24 and 26 October 2006). The workshops facilitated a group discussion and input in regard to each section. The results of this discussion were recorded on a table each day, which forms the basis of this report. Additional information from the evaluation sheets (that were pre-circulated to all participants) has been included where available.

#### ***Format of this Report***

The RPS contains 28 sections; however this report addresses only sections 12 to 28. The reason for this is that sections 1 to 11 provide background information on Northland and set out the legislative framework and structure for the RPS. The complete structure is best understood by viewing the table of contents which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Sections 12 to 15 are grouped under the heading 'Part III Resource Management Process' and contain policy related to resource management procedures and processes i.e. integration, community involvement, Tangata Whenua involvement and monitoring.

Sections 16 to 28 are grouped under the heading 'Part IV Resource Policy' and contain policy relating to the use, development and protection of various resources i.e. air quality, water quality, natural hazards etc.

This report is set out in the following format for each section:

#### **Anticipated Outcomes**

Lists the anticipated environmental results for the section as defined in the RPS. It is noted that sections 12 to 15, which are related to 'management process', do not have any anticipated environmental results.

**Policy Mix**

Sets out the objectives for the section and discusses the policy approach taken within the section. The policies are usually grouped into several categories, related to the objectives for the section, and the summary discussion is of the policy grouping rather than individual policies. This area also lists the number of methods of implementation that result from the policy direction.

**State/Pressures/Reality**

Provides a brief summary outlining the existing state of the environment and pressures relevant to the section, if available.

**What has worked well in this section?**

Provides a brief summary of the areas that have been identified as having been implemented and are considered to be working well.

**What has not worked in this section?**

Provides a brief summary of the areas that have been identified as not being implemented and are not considered to be working well.

**General comments on this section:**

Provides general comments on the overall section.

**Emerging Issues for this section?**

Discusses any new or emerging issues related to the section as well potential gaps or issues that the section does not currently cover.

**Is this section Efficient & Effective?**

Provides a brief assessment and commentary of whether the policies and methods are considered to be efficient and effective for the section.

***Reading this Report***

**This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the Regional Policy Statement for Northland (RPS).**

**To assist the reader, wherever possible references have been included within this report directing the reader to the appropriate section within the RPS.**

