

Chapter 3

STRUCTURE OF THE REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

This chapter explains the rationale behind the approach adopted in Chapters 4 to 17.

Each chapter commences with a preamble concerning the topic and its general relevance to the West Coast.

Sections 59 and 62 and Parts I and II of the Second Schedule of the Act determine what shall be stated in a RPS. Generally, each topic which comprises each chapter is dealt with sequentially under a number of headings. These are explained as follows:

Issues. These refer to matters which need to be addressed in the RPS to achieve the purpose of the Act. They relate to an environmental problem, usually include its cause and recognise some kind of environmental outcome. Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Act effectively set out matters which will generate the issues to be considered.

Objectives. These are statements of desired environmental outcomes from the resolution of the issue and determine the ultimate state of the resource or environmental value that is sought.

Policies. These are intended to address the effects or the issue in order to achieve the objective and be capable of guiding resource consent decision-making. They are intended to lead to effects-based decisions and to state how the effect is going to be dealt with. Most of the policies are cross referenced to related policies in other chapters to give an indication of the other resources to which they apply. In addition some policies are cross referenced to corresponding policies (of the same words) in complementary chapters. Readers should also refer to the methods of achieving those policies. The purpose of these cross references is to assist the integrated management of natural and physical resources - one of the principal aims of the Act. It should be noted that cross references are not exhaustive and cannot possibly deal with every contingency. In such instances it is appropriate to refer to the Act's provisions.

Some policies include lists of "matters to be considered", which will be used to guide decision making. For example whether the effects of an activity are likely to be considered adverse or when a feature might be considered significant or outstanding. These lists, which for many policies are not exhaustive, help give resource users and the public certainty.

Methods. These are the specific actions, techniques, programmes and procedures to be adopted, to implement the policies. They are wide ranging and fall under several broad categories - promotion, service delivery, regulation and economic instruments. The options chosen are intended to minimise the costs of resource management, maximise the benefits of resource use and at the same time lead to sustainable management. Section 32 of the Act provides the necessary guidance when assessing the

application of methods for use in achieving the objective and meeting the policy requirements. Several options are available under each of the above categories viz:

Promotion

Information and advice

This includes the preparation of educational material such as brochures, displays, press releases, supplemented through direct contact by organising and conducting workshops, courses and seminars.

Advocacy

Involves making representations and submissions to other agencies including the Crown - through lobbying, persuasion, voluntary agreements and encouragement.

Service Delivery

Provision of goods and services

Examples are the Regional Council providing design of flood protection works and hydraulic calculations for culverts and bridges. At a more practical level it could include providing rock for flood protection works, where this is cost effective, and undertaking pest and weed control.

Collection and distribution of information

There are situations where different agencies and organisations collect data on issues of common interest. The sharing of this information can often be of mutual benefit. One example is the assessment of areas at risk from natural hazards.

Monitoring

This consists of gathering environmental data to assist the Regional Council in making resource management decisions and to ensure performance specifications are met. To be of practical value, this information should be made available to potential or existing resource users. Examples include monitoring water quality, river cross sections and beach profiles.

Regulation

These are more formal means available to control the effects of activities on the environment and include:

1. The application and enforcement of regulations authorised under statute and set by the Crown;

2. The application of water conservation orders;
3. Adopting codes of practice, negotiated agreement between parties, charters, covenants or contracts as conditions placed on resource consents;
4. Use of the best practicable option, which weighs the costs and benefits of dealing with the potentially adverse effects of an existing or proposed resource use;
5. Enforcement of resource consent conditions, regulations made under the Act and rules and performance standards in regional and district plans; and
6. Prosecutions for breaches of resource consent conditions.

Economic Instruments

These are financial incentives or mechanisms for encouraging resource users to achieve desired outcomes. They include the application of:

1. Subsidies, grants and rates relief.
2. Levies.
3. Bonds.
4. Tradeable permits for use of a resource, with a ceiling set on the total permissible rate of use of a resource.

The Regional Council prefers to use promotion where possible, in preference to the application of service delivery, regulation or economic instruments. Resource user charges will be considered during the preparation of regional plans as a source of funding for monitoring their effectiveness, compliance monitoring of resource consents and the restoration of degraded environments. Regulation will be used in situations where there is significant potential for adverse effects from an activity. The deterrent of paying for repeated inspections of activities in breach of resource consent conditions is considered to be an economic instrument which applies to the management of most activities.

In the event of breach of resource consent conditions, abatement notices, enforcement orders and prosecution are further avenues open to the Regional Council under the Act.

Explanation. This section contains principal reasons for adopting the objectives, policies and methods. Resource management options for any issue are chosen following an evaluation as required under section 32 of the Act. The explanation also discusses who is responsible for managing the effects of the activity to which the issue relates and, where appropriate, who manages any complementary functions.

Anticipated Environmental Results. These are expected environmental outcomes and provide a way of determining whether the objective has been achieved in accordance with the provisions of the Act.