



# National Planning Framework

24 March 2023

Regional planning committees will be established to develop Regional Spatial Strategies and Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA) plans, both of which must comply with the NPF. These Committees will include representatives of each region's local authorities, mana whenua and central government.

The Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) will provide long-term, high level, strategic direction for integrated planning in the region, focusing on the big issues and opportunities facing the region. They will set out a vision and objectives to guide the region over the next 30 years, accompanied by a set of priority actions. They will also identify areas that are suitable for development, need to be protected, require infrastructure, and/or are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural hazards. Each RSS will provide direction for NBA plans and local authority transport and funding plans and infrastructure strategies and will inform central government investment decisions.

NBA plans will replace Regional Policy Statements, Regional Plans and District Plans. Local authorities will undertake consenting and local compliance monitoring and enforcement. Infrastructure providers will still be able to be "requiring authorities" that can issue designations as a form of "spot zoning" over a site area or route in an NBA plan.

## **National Planning Framework: what it will do and who it will affect**

The NPF will comprise a single, cohesive and coherent body of national regulation to direct regional planning committees in preparing Regional Spatial Strategies and NBA plans and local authorities in undertaking consenting in the new resource management system.

It will bring together the policy intent in 23 existing RMA national direction documents, including National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards, National Planning Standards, regulations under section 360 of the Resource Management Act, and New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. It will also include new national direction, including natural environment limits and direction on all outcomes in the Natural and Built Environments Act.

The purpose of the NPF will be to address "matters of national significance" or require nationally consistent ways of doing things where this has significant benefits.

## **When it will be consulted on and when it will be operative**

The first NPF will be released in draft to a Board of Inquiry for consultation soon after the enactment of the Natural and Built Environments Act in 2023, and then be finalised to become operative by 2025.

This NPF will initially direct the development of regional spatial strategies, which will be the next new "cab off the rank" in the new Resource Management System. The NPF will impact regulatory planning at a later date when it is amended in time to inform the development of NBA plans. It is likely that the NPF will continue to evolve with more detail being added over time.

## Timeframe for the first NPF

Milestone	Timeframe
NPF engagement with PSGEs, and with iwi/hapū through regional hui, prior to Board of Inquiry consultation process	March through to April 2023
Ministerial decisions on new NPF content	May 2023
Passage of NBE Bill, followed by Cabinet approval of first NPF	July to August 2023
Notification of first NPF	August to September 2023
Board of Inquiry process (public submissions heard by Board of Inquiry)	From September to mid-2024
Final Ministerial decisions on the first NPF	Late 2024

## Existing RMA national direction will continue in force until replaced

The 23 existing RMA national direction documents, plus some that are in draft (such as the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity) will continue to direct decisions under the RMA until NBA plans are in force. For example, there will be a period of time after the NPF has become operative, that RMA national direction will continue to apply to Regional Policy Statements, Regional Plans and District Plans and consenting, while the NPF is directing the first new Regional Spatial Strategies.

Because it will take some time to fully transition to the new Resource Management system, the Government may also amend some existing RMA direction to take earlier effect. For example, it is amending the National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation to enable consenting of renewable energy projects that contribute to New Zealand's greenhouse gas emission reduction target and budgets as soon as possible.