

Consultation on the National Planning Standards

The 2017 amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) introduced a new type of regulation, being the National Planning Standards (Standards). The Standards are also known as template plans, the purpose of which is to provide consistency in plan and policy structure, format and content.

The first set of draft Standards have now been released and are available on the [Ministry for the Environment](#) website.

It is important for councils to consider how the draft Standards will apply to regional policy statements and plans, district plans and combined plans. Councils will be required to amend their plans to align with the mandatory content in the Standards within 5 years of the Standards being gazetted, except for the councils listed under the 7 year timeframe.

There are two types of directions in the draft Standards, being mandatory and discretionary. The draft Standards are largely mandatory with the only draft standard containing discretionary content being the zones chapter structure standard¹.

When councils align a plan with the Standards at a minimum a public notification process is required. Any consequential changes or implementation of non-mandatory Standards will require the normal Schedule 1 plan change process.

The individual Standards are as follows:

- S-RPS: Draft Regional Policy Statement Structure Standard
- S-RP: Draft Regional Plan Structure Standard
- S-DP: Draft District Plan Structure Standard
- S-CP: Draft Combined Plan Structure Standard

¹ S-ZONES

- S-IGP: Draft Introduction and General Provisions Standard
- S-TW: Draft Tangata Whenua Structure Standard
- S-SD: Draft Strategic Direction Structure Standard
- S-DWM: Draft District Wide Matters Standard
- S-ASM: Draft Area Specific Matters Standard
- S-SAM: Draft Schedules, Appendices and Maps Standard
- F-1: Draft Electronic Accessibility and Functionality Standard
- F-2: Draft Mapping Standard
- F-3: Draft Spatial Planning Tools (Regional) Standard
- F-4: Draft Spatial Planning Tools (District) Standard
- F-5: Draft Chapter Form Standard
- F-6: Draft Status of Rules and Other Text and Numbering Form Standard
- CM-1: Draft Definitions standard
- CM-2: Draft Noise and Vibration Metrics Standard

The Standards are grouped into three categories, being structure standards, form standards and content and metric standards.

Structure standards

The draft structure standards specify how regional policy statements and plans, district plans, and combined plans are set out and the names and order of chapters².

There are also draft structure standards that apply to parts or chapters of policy statements plans³. The draft Area Specific Matters Standard⁴ includes chapters for

² S-RPS, S-RP, S-DP and S-CP

³ S-IGP, S-TW, S-SD, S-DWM, S-ASM and S-SAM

⁴ S-ASM

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zones⁵, precincts⁶, development areas⁷ and designations⁸. The zones chapter provides for 27 zones grouped into the following:

- Residential zones: low density residential, residential, medium density residential, high density residential;
- Rural zones: rural, rural production, rural residential, rural settlement;
- Commercial zones: neighbourhood commercial, local commercial, commercial, mixed use, town centre, city centre;
- Industrial zones: light industrial, industrial, heavy industrial;
- Open space and recreation zones: open space, sport and active recreation, conservation; and
- Special purpose zones: airport, port, hospital, education, stadium, future urban, Māori cultural.

The purpose statements for each zone are set out in the zones chapter of the Area Specific Matters Standard. Councils retain the ability to use other zones being special purpose zones but only if criteria around regional significance and inappropriateness of other zones, overlays, precincts or development controls are met. Zones must also be consistent with the zone structure and order in the District Plan Structure Standard⁹.

Form standards

The form standards prescribe the way in which policy statements and plans are to be made available online and how the documents themselves are set out. For example map zone colours and symbols, spatial planning tools,

chapter form and rule, text and numbering format are prescribed in the draft Standards¹⁰.

Content and metric standards

The Definitions Standard requires councils to include the definitions in the Definitions Table. The standard sets out the criteria a council must consider when determining which terms to standardise and define in their plans. However, these 109 mandatory definitions could have significant consequences for the operation of rules in a plan, meaning that aligning a plan to these definitions could be a significant undertaking for a council. The Noise and Vibration Metrics Standard¹¹ requires council to use the latest relevant acoustic NZ Standards when measuring and assessing noise and construction vibration.

National roadshow and submissions

The Ministry for the Environment is hosting a national roadshow seeking feedback on how the Standards will work in your region. The location and dates of the seminars during the consultation period are available on the [New Zealand Planning Institute](#), [Resource Management Law Association](#) and [Ministry for the Environment](#) websites.

Submissions on the draft Standards are due by **Friday 17 August 2018**.

The councils that will have 7, instead of 5 years, to amend policy statements and plans are:

- Auckland Council
- Marlborough Council
- Northland Regional Council
- Southland Regional Council
- Wellington Regional Council

⁵ S-ZONES

⁶ S-PREC

⁷ S-DEV

⁸ S-DES

⁹ S-DP

¹⁰ F-1 to F-6

¹¹ CM-2

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- Christchurch City Council
- Dunedin City Council
- Hurunui District Council
- Invercargill City Council
- Kāpiti Coast District Council
- Queenstown-Lakes District Council
- South Taranaki District Council
- Thames-Coromandel District Council

Want to know more?

For further information and to have your say on the first set of Standards see the [Ministry for the Environment](#) website.

Please contact our specialist [resource management team](#) if you have any questions about the consultation on the Standards and what this might mean for you.

We can assist in making submissions on the draft Standards.