

The Regional Policy Statement Review

1.0 The Legislative / Planning Context

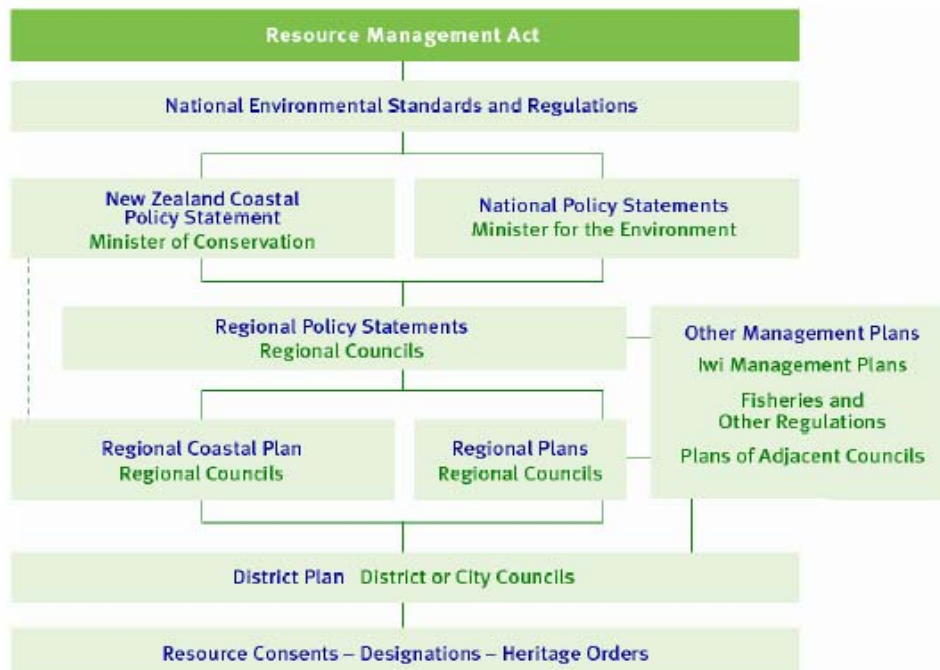
The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues of the region. It sets out how natural and physical resources (land, water, air, soil, minerals, energy, all plants and animals, and all structures) are to be managed in an integrated way to promote sustainable management - the over-riding purpose of the Resource Management Act (RMA). Sustainable management involves managing the resources of the Canterbury Region in ways which provide for the needs of current and future generations.

Integrated management involves taking a holistic approach to the management of natural and physical resources. Such an approach acknowledges the links between the resources and recognises that decisions on any particular resource may have effects on other resources. Integrated management also recognises that the decisions of resource management agencies such as regional councils and territorial authorities need to be co-ordinated. Their functions and powers overlap, particularly in respect of land related matters.

1.1 The Planning Hierarchy

The RMA requires councils to prepare plans to help them manage the environment in their area. Regional policy statements set the basic direction for environmental management in the region. Regional plans tend to concentrate on particular parts of the environment, like the coast, a river or the air. District plans set out the policies and rules that a council will use to manage the use of land in its area. By looking at these plans you will be able to find out if you need to get a resource consent for the activity you want to do.

When central government wants to give local councils a bit of direction on environmental issues, it can issue national policy statements or set national environmental standards. Recent amendments to the RMA require District plans to now give effect to the Regional Policy Statement. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the different types of policy documents.



2.0 The Canterbury RPS

The Canterbury RPS is broken down into 4 parts as outlined below.

2.1 PART I

Part I provides background information on the content, scope and structure of the Regional Policy Statement. It outlines the context within which resource management is developing in New Zealand, including international influences and the Treaty of Waitangi. Key sections of the RM Act are stated, in particular sections 5-8 dealing with Purpose and Principles and those sections which prescribe what the purpose of regional policy statements is and what they must contain. The role of the Regional Council's annual plan in providing resources to give effect to the Regional Policy Statement is outlined. Part I concludes with a description of the Region's natural and physical resources and of the regional community.

2.2 PART II

Part II identifies issues and how they are to be solved. It closely follows the structure of section 62 of the RM Act. It commences with a description of the significant resource management issues of the region and is followed by a chapter prepared by Tangata Whenua which sets out matters of resource management significance to them. The rest of Part II focuses on developing the objectives, policies and methods needed to resolve the resource management issues. A thematic approach has been adopted to issue resolution because the Regional Policy Statement is intended to provide an overview of the natural and physical resources of the region and because its policies generally apply region-wide. Although a bio-geographic approach could provide more area specific recognition of issues and the inter-relationship between resources, it would also lead to repetition of policies where the same issues occur in each bio-geographic area addressed. The thematic approach allows the management of resources to be approached in a region-wide context, and in distinct and manageable parts. Links between thematic chapters are achieved by extensive cross-referencing, in recognition of the integrated nature of resource management.

Each chapter concludes with a statement of environmental results anticipated from the implementation of the policies and methods, and monitoring to be undertaken.

2.3 PART III

Part III identifies processes needed for achieving a co-ordinated and integrated approach to resource management by regional and district councils sharing a boundary with Canterbury, and by district and city councils within the region.

2.4 PART IV

Part IV describes the procedures to be followed in monitoring the effectiveness of the policies and methods in achieving the environmental results anticipated in this Regional Policy Statement. Feedback from this will contribute to the ongoing review of the Regional Policy Statement. Procedures for doing so are detailed.

3.0 The RPS Review

The RMA requires Regional Councils to review their RPS every 10 years from the date they were made operative. As this date is fast approaching (the current RPS was made operative in 1998) ECan has determined to begin its review this year (2006).

The intention is to complete a detailed project scoping report for the review by 30 June 2006.

Inputs to this report include:

- Stakeholder consultation
- A review of legislative changes and relevant case law
- A chapter by chapter analysis of the current RPS to determine whether the issues, objectives, policies and methods have been effective and remain relevant.