



Submission by
Te Aka Tauira - Victoria University of
Wellington Students Association (VUWSA)
on the
Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy
Statement for the Wellington Region 2022

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To	Greater Wellington Regional Council
From	Te Aka Tauira - Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA)
Date	12th of October 2022
Subject	Wellington City District Plan
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This submission is prepared by Katherine Blow and Sophia Honey on behalf of Te Aka Tauira - Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA)

We **would** like to be heard in support of our submission in person. If others make a similar submission, we **will** consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.

We could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission. We **are not** directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that adversely affects the environment, and does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

1. Introduction

Te Aka Tauira - Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) represents the over 22,000 students that are at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. Students want to live in a city that is sustainable, accessible, and climate-friendly. Students want healthy and affordable housing, sustainable and reliable transport options, and access to green spaces. We want to change that upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi and listens to Mana Whenua; Wellington should reflect kaitiakitanga as a city.

VUWSA generally supports the proposed change Greater Wellington Regional Council Policy Statement for the Wellington Region and is fully in support of work to ensure Wellington is protected for future generations, to ensure students have access to warm and liveable housing and a city that is liveable and thriving.

2. Climate Change

VUWSA supports the changes for the climate provisions, specifically the insertion of Chapter 3.1A: Climate Change. We recognise that climate change effects are unavoidable and commend the council in its efforts to ensure communities can prepare to adapt to these effects.

We also support the maintaining of the regional emissions reduction target to stay within 1.5 degrees of warming above pre-industrial levels, including a 50% reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050. This is a realistic goal to ensure Wellington meets its emission commitments.

Ensuring the regional policy statement responds to climate change is imperative as many students and young people experience climate anxiety and worry about their futures. Public transport, walking and cycling are many ways students get around the City, so ensuring that these options are accessible and attractive as possible is also important to meet this goal.

3. Urban Development Provisions

We support the maintenance and strengthening of the links in the RPS between transport and urban development emissions reduction so that any new transport and urban development projects must show how they will not increase emissions.

The vast majority of students are renters. Renters live in poorer quality housing, do not benefit from rising land values, and find it hard to see a future where they have the option of renting a home that is stable, warm and affordable. The proposed changes set a clear direction that everyone deserves access to good housing. If we

want to leave neighbourhoods that last generations we need to ensure that they don't contribute to an unsustainable climate.

Denser suburbs that are well connected by public transport with reduced dependence on private motor vehicle transport are the best way to ensure that we're leaving neighbourhoods, and a sustainable climate, for generations to come.

Many other countries have metropolitan areas that have seen the benefit of denser housing and are now reaping the reward. Denser communities contribute to fewer emissions through reduced car dependence, affordability through more efficient land use, and happier communities through localised amenities and shared spaces. VUWSA supports this vision for the students at Te Herenga Waka.

4. Freshwater Provisions

VUWSA supports the maintenance of strong provisions on freshwater including the provisions related to Te Mana o Te Wai and the environmental bottom lines related to freshwater pollution. Te Tiriti should be upheld in freshwater policy through stringent pollution targets. The important relationship between freshwater and iwi must be recognised and reflected in regulation and consulting policies.

Freshwater bodies are incredibly important for health, recreation, biodiversity, and liveability. Its regulation affects the well-being of the whole community and we cannot afford to compromise this. VUWSA supports ambitious freshwater guidelines that serve a healthy community. Students should live in a city with healthy waters and rich water biodiversity.

Partial implementation of the National Policy on Freshwater Management is beneficial for working towards improving degraded water bodies and preventing further degradation of wetlands and streams. VUWSA supports the integration of Te Mana o Te Wai in freshwater management. This is about recognising the importance of freshwater ecosystems and communities relying on them for health and well-being.

5. Plain Language and Accessibility

VUWSA supports the use of plain language in all areas of government, including local bodies like regional councils.

Active participation is a core pillar of democracy and with more students working longer hours or multiple jobs to meet rising living costs, they need to be able to easily read and understand changes to regulations that have implications for them, so they can provide their input and ensure that their voice is heard.

In the future, it would be great to see these documents become more accessible to the communities they serve through plain language or the inclusion of documents such as a summary and overview information sheet. Not only does this benefit those who are time-poor, but also those whose first language is not English.

6. Concluding Statement

VUWSA would like to acknowledge the importance of regional policy statement and the need for this tool to be used in the best way possible for climate justice, Te Tiriti justice, housing justice and environmental justice and commend GWRC for proposing changes that are aspirational and will create meaningful change.