

Before the Hearings Panels

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
In the matter Proposed Plan Change 1 (PC1) to the Natural
Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

**Memorandum of counsel on behalf of Wellington Regional Council
regarding consultation on national direction changes for
infrastructure, development, primary sector and freshwater**

Date: 11 June 2025



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MAY IT PLEASE THE PANELS

- 1 This memorandum of counsel is filed on behalf of Wellington Regional Council (**GWRC**).
- 2 On 29 May 2025, the government called for feedback on 3 packages, which propose to change and inform development of national direction under the resource management system. The packages propose changes to a wide range of existing national direction, as well as proposing 4 new pieces of national direction. Consultation closes on those on 27 July 2025. A further consultation package is expected for release in early June – 'Going for Housing Growth'.
- 3 A number of the matters addressed in the consultation documents are likely to have relevance to Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan. In particular, as the Panels are making recommendations on a freshwater planning instrument, the freshwater component of the national direction will be particularly relevant. In terms of the freshwater component, the MfE website states:

Further consultation will be undertaken through an exposure draft process, which will have more detail, later this year.
- 4 Accordingly, it seems a gazetted NPS-FM is unlikely to be in place until early 2026. Until the final detail of the changes are available and any transitional provisions finalised, GWRC, submitters and the Panels cannot determine what impact a revised NPS-FM may have on Plan Change 1 provisions.
- 5 GWRC is currently considering next steps for Plan Change 1 and the implications of the timing of proposed changes to the NPS-FM. It will formally consider these issues and the options available to it at its next Council meeting on 26 June 2025.

However, GWRC is conscious of the hearing dates set for Hearing Stream 4 and the due dates for officers' reports and submitter evidence and it wishes to provide some certainty to submitters about timing and the need to expend resources over the next two months (Hearing Stream 4 is currently scheduled to commence on 12 August 2025).

6 Accordingly, to allow all parties to pause work on Hearing Stream 4 while GWRC considers its preferred way forward, it is seeking that:

6.1 The hearing dates for Hearing Stream 4 are vacated.

6.2 It reports back to the Panels with a suggested way forward post the 26 June Council meeting.

6.3 Next steps are then directed by the Panels.

7 GWRC is aware all parties need adequate time to prepare for any resumed hearings and it will work with the Panels to ensure that reasonable notice is provided once a way forward is determined. It is also noted that GWRC intends to still file its right of reply material by 2 July 2025 for Hearing Stream 3, as directed by Minute 9 from the Panels.

Date: 11 June 2025



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