

WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 1 TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN FOR THE WELLINGTON REGION

MINUTE 13

NATIONAL DIRECTION CONSULTATION

1. The Panels have received a memorandum of counsel on behalf of the Wellington Regional Council in light of the national direction consultation being released by the government on 29 May 2025. A copy of that memorandum has been uploaded to the Hearings webpage and can be accessed here.
2. The government has sought 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 on the 3 packages closes on 27 July 2025. A further consultation package is expected for release in mid- June – 'Going for Housing Growth'.
3. Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (**NPS-FM**) are part of the consultation package and those changes will be relevant to Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan (as will some other proposed changes).
4. The Council has sought via its memorandum some time to consider its 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.
5. However, the Council (and the Panels) are conscious of the upcoming hearing dates set for Hearing Stream 4 (Hearing Stream 4 is currently scheduled to commence on 12 August 2025) and the due dates for officers' reports and submitter evidence. All parties are currently expending resources preparing for that hearing.
6. Before continuing with the HS4 process and the balance of the Plan Change 1 hearing processes, the Council has sought time to consider its options. It also states that it wishes to provide some certainty to submitters about timing and the need to expend further resources over the next two months.
7. The Council has requested that Hearing Stream 4 hearing dates are vacated for now and that post the 26 June Council meeting it will report back to the Panels on a proposed way forward.
8. We consider this is a sensible approach in the circumstances and therefore we direct that:
 - a. the Hearing Stream 4 dates of **12-26 August 2025 are vacated**, and

- b. Council is to report back to the Panels by **2 July 2025 or earlier** as to its proposed way forward, and
 - c. the Council is still to file its right of reply material by **2 July 2025** for Hearing Stream 3, as directed by Minute 9.
9. We note that due to Panel members' availability, hearings will not reconvene prior to the second week of October 2025 at the earliest. We will issue a minute once we have clarity on timing and next steps from here. We appreciate this is a period of uncertainty for submitters and we undertake to provide further information as soon as it is available.

Date: 13 June 2025



Dhilum Nightingale
Chair
For and on behalf of
Freshwater Hearing Panel
Part 1, Schedule 1 Hearing Panel