

WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

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

MINUTE 14

PAUSING OF PLAN CHANGE 1 HEARING PROCESS

1. The Panels have received a memorandum of counsel on behalf of the Wellington Regional Council in response to our directions in Minute 13 (ie, to report back to the Panels by 2 July 2025, with a suggested way forward post the 26 June full Council meeting). That full Council meeting considered the impacts of the national direction consultation documents released by the government on 29 May 2025, including proposed changes to the NPS-FM (which is a key document Plan Change 1 is seeking to implement).
2. The Council has provided an update in its memorandum of the Council's resolutions at the 26 June 2025 full Council meeting.
3. The Council has effectively requested that the remaining hearing processes for Plan Change 1 are put on hold until 2026, with a report back to the Panels by the Council on a proposed way forward within one month of the details of the amended NPS-FM being finalised.
4. We note that the Council's proposed way forward in its memorandum does require the Council to seek extensions and approvals from the Chief Freshwater Commissioner and the Minister for the Environment, which it will be working through over the coming months. That process is independent of the Panels and will be progressed by the Council.
5. We consider the approach put forward in the memorandum of counsel for the Council is a sensible approach in the circumstances and therefore we direct that:
 - a. All future hearing processes for Plan Change 1 are **put on hold until 2026**, and
 - b. Council is to report back to the Panels **within one month of the amended NPS-FM being finalised** (which may be post-Cabinet decisions and prior to gazettal) with its proposed way forward to complete the Plan Change 1 hearing processes, and
 - c. **Leave is provided** to all submitters and the Council to seek alterations to the above, or further directions, as necessary.
6. We will then issue a minute once we have further clarity on timing and next steps from here.
7. We thank everyone for their patience in this period of uncertainty. We look forward to resuming our collective work on Proposed Change 1 in the new year.

Date: 02/07/2025



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