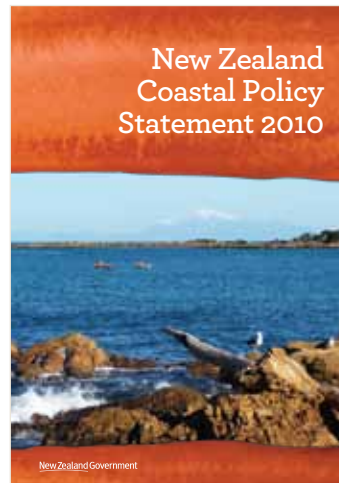


Managing New Zealand's coastal environment

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), national policy statements can be created to help local government and other RMA decision makers respond to nationally significant issues.

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) is one of four national policy statements currently in place. Its purpose is to state policies to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical coastal resources. The RMA requires there to be an NZCPS at all times.

Because the Minister of Conservation has responsibilities for sustainable management of the coast, the preparation of the NZCPS sits with that Minister. The other existing national policy statements, which deal with electricity transmission, freshwater management and renewable energy generation, are the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment.



A new NZCPS is in place

On 3 December 2010, a new NZCPS came into effect, wholly replacing the Statement in place since 1994. The NZCPS 2010 is based on the recommendations of a Board of Inquiry appointed by the Minister of Conservation, and reflects changes in New Zealand's social, cultural, economic and environmental context over the intervening 16 years.

Before 2017, the Minister of Conservation will review what difference the NZCPS 2010 has made to regional policy statements, plans and resource consents, and other decision making.

The main players

Local government and DOC have shared interests and responsibilities in the management of the coastal environment under the RMA.

Local government agencies are responsible for implementing the NZCPS 2010 through plans and policy statements. No absolute deadline has been specified for any necessary amendments to existing documents; local authorities are directed to do so '*as soon as practicable*'. It applies immediately to all resource consent decisions.

The Minister of Conservation must approve all regional coastal plans developed under the RMA. DOC is partnering with local government to support effective implementation of the NZCPS 2010, and is consulting with other government agencies and stakeholders.



The scope of the NZCPS

The NZCPS has a seaward limit of 12 nautical miles offshore. Its inland influence varies according to local geography.

Major themes include integrated planning and management, coastal hazards, indigenous biodiversity, water quality, natural character and natural features and landscapes, public access, the Treaty of Waitangi, tangata whenua and Māori heritage, and ports and aquaculture. These are presented via 29 concise policies (its predecessor had 57).

What's new

The new NZCPS contains several new elements. A significant addition is the direction for strategic and integrated planning and management—this translates to coordinated management across council boundaries and between the land and sea. As well, climate change has more emphasis—councils must consider it in managing their responses to hazards.

Other new elements include:

- Priority actions for indigenous biodiversity, natural character, and natural features and landscapes.
- A more explicit requirement to consider the foreseeable needs of communities.
- Greater recognition of the need to consider nationally or regionally significant infrastructure when developing plans and making consent decisions. This includes planning for the needs of ports.
- Providing for open space, public walking access and controls on vehicle access.
- Specific policies on sedimentation, surf breaks and biosecurity.
- Clearer direction for the management of sewage discharges.
- Updated policy on how planning and decision making should recognise Māori values and the relationships Māori have with coastal places and resources.
- Support for effective planning for aquaculture development, to provide more certainty about where aquaculture will and will not be appropriate.

Restricted coastal activities are no longer specified.

Applying the NZCPS

The NZCPS will have a strong influence on strategic and spatial planning documents—including regional policy statements, regional plans and district plans. In RMA-speak, these council policies and plans will need to ‘give effect’ to the NZCPS. Authorities who make decisions on resource consents must ‘have regard’ to relevant provisions of the NZCPS.

Providing certainty

The NZCPS 2010 will lead to more comprehensive and effective council plans that have coastal values clearly identified, along with clear policies to direct their management.

That will give developers and communities more certainty about where new subdivisions and developments will be appropriate, where these are likely to require careful consideration and where they should not happen.

Further information on the NZCPS 2010 is available from www.doc.govt.nz/coastalpolicy.



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai