

Wellington Regional Policy Statement Plan Change 1

Greater Wellington region | November 2024

What is the Regional Policy Statement Plan Change 1?

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) sets priorities for resource management in the Greater Wellington Region. It provides direction for future regional and district plans and plan changes. Regional and districts must implement the RPS.

Greater Wellington Regional Council notified Plan Change 1 (PC1) on 19 August 2022 to implement national direction for urban development, freshwater and indigenous biodiversity. The plan change also introduces specific provisions for climate change.

After public consultation and hearings, the Council notified the decision version of the plan change. These decisions could be appealed to the Environment Court before 18 November 2024. HortNZ did not file an appeal. The plan is not yet operative, but district councils do have to give effect to the plan change when writing their own plans or making district plan changes.



Key topics

- **Highly productive land:** After HortNZ raised the issue of highly productive land in hearings and in written evidence, the Hearing Panel recommended an amendment to the overarching issues that guide the plan to “recognise the impacts of inappropriate use and development on highly productive land”.¹ The Panel also indicated that a further plan change will be needed to fully implement the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land.
- **Freshwater:** PC1 begins implementation of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) 2020 by incorporating Te Mana o Te Wai and the hierarchy of obligations, which prioritise the health of waterways, then the health needs of people, and then all other uses. PC1 defines the health needs of people as

¹ [Part-B-P1S1-Integrated-Management-Hearing-Stream-2.pdf \(gw.govt.nz\)](#)

the water for hygiene, drinking water, and stock drinking water. It explicitly places irrigation and process water in the third hierarchy.

- **Climate change:** PC1 sets the objective that Wellington Region will be low-emissions and climate-resilient and establishes policies and rules to achieve that aim. It seeks rapid greenhouse gas reductions from changes to transport, agriculture and renewable energy. These include direction to support farmers and growers to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. Regional and district plans will need policies to avoid or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Natural hazards:** The RPS now identifies hazard sensitive activities and sets expectations for how those activities should be able to establish in areas at risk of natural hazards like flooding or earthquakes. Horticultural buildings and operations are not considered hazard sensitive activities.

Key changes for horticulture

Provision	Implications for growers
Policy 12: Management of water bodies – regional plans	Regional plans will be required to identify values and environmental outcomes for freshwater, set targets for the environment that will determine how much water different activities can take and how much they can discharge (i.e. pollute). In the Greater Wellington Region, this is being implemented through plan changes to the Natural Resource Plan.

Summary of wins from HortNZ’s submission

Notified Provisions	Summary of HortNZ’s submission	Summary of decision
Integrated Management Issue 1 and Objective A	HortNZ sought overall recognition of highly productive land in the Plan.	Loss of highly productive land is recognised as an adverse impact on natural environments and the importance of highly productive land for well-functioning rural areas is recognised in the Plan’s overarching resource management issues and objectives (Chapter 3A: Integrated Management).
Climate Change Policy CC.15	HortNZ sought overall recognition of food security and transition to low	The policy seeks to support rural communities to promote land management practices

	emissions land uses (i.e. horticulture) in the climate change sections.	and land uses which improve resilience to climate change, including rural water resilience and food security (Chapter 3.1A: Climate Change).
Regionally significant issues, Objective 22, Policy 56, Policy 67	HortNZ sought that provisions enabling urban development are balanced with protecting the productive capacity of land for growing food.	The Plan contains multiple provisions which protect or recognise the productive capacity of rural areas.
Method 48: Water allocation policy review	HortNZ sought that water allocation to low emissions land uses is supported.	The reporting officer initially disagreed with our submission but was convinced by our hearing evidence and presentation to change the method. Future policies for water allocation now need to promote land use change to lower emission land uses (e.g. horticulture).
Policy FW.8	HortNZ sought that the Council support, research and promote lower emission land uses.	The provision now says that the Council will support primary sector groups and landowners in researching and promoting climate-resilient and lower emission land uses and pathways to move to new land uses.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Read more about the RPS [on the Council website](#).
- Read more about the [Decision version of the RPS](#).
- Keep an eye [on HortNZ's website](#).
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