

Council Submission on the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

Meeting: Kaipara District Council
Date of meeting: 26 February 2020
Reporting officer: Paul Waanders, District planner

Purpose/Ngā whāinga

To approve the submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

Executive summary/Whakarāpopototanga

In November 2019, the Ministry for the Environment released the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) with submissions closing 14 March 2020. Staff have drafted a response (Attachment A). Council is requested to approve the submission or make amendments to the proposed submission.

Recommendation/Ngā tūtohunga

That the Kaipara District Council:

- a) Approves the Council Submission to the Ministry for the Environment, on the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.
- b) Delegates the Mayor and Chief Executive the authority to approve editorial changes if required.

Context/Horopaki

In terms of the Resource Management Act (RMA) the Government can develop and promulgate national policy statements for matters of national significance that are relevant to achieve the purpose of the RMA. Once the NPS-IB is finalised, the Minister will issue the NPS-IB, requiring Local Authorities to give effect to the NPS-IB in the District Plan.

Submissions such as these on National Policy statements are not delegated to staff and therefore require a Council decision.

Discussion/Ngā kōrerorero

The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2000 and its Action Plan, guided biodiversity matters until the present time. (<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/new-zealand-biodiversity-strategy-2000.pdf>) This Strategy is under revision and a Biodiversity Collaborative Group of individuals made the recommendation for a National Policy Statement to be developed.

The NPSIB has been released for submissions (<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/draft-npsib.pdf>) with an accompanying Discussion document (<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Biodiversity/he-kura-koiora-i-hokia-discussion-document.pdf>).

This documentation is supported by a section 32 report, cost benefit analysis and an Impact statement. These can be found on the MfE website (<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/consultations/nps-indigenous-biodiversity>)

The main objective of the NPS-IB is to maintain indigenous biodiversity under the RMA. Managing Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and other provisions in the NPS-IB will ensure biodiversity is maintained overall, including no reductions in the following:

- the size of populations of indigenous species
- indigenous species occupancy across their natural range
- the function of ecosystems and habitats
- the full range and extent of ecosystems and habitats
- connectivity between, and buffering around, ecosystems
- the resilience and adaptability of ecosystems.

The NPS-IB seeks actions from councils and landowners to show the vital role we all play in ensuring indigenous biodiversity is maintained. Partnerships and collaboration between landowners, tangata whenua, communities, councils, and public agencies are critical to its success.

The NPS-IB requires councils to consistently identify areas with significant vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna and manage their protection through regional and district plans, and consent processes under the RMA. SNAs would be identified by councils and ecologists working with landowners, using significance criteria developed by ecologists.

For pastoral farming, some areas may have the potential to be identified as SNAs, for example, if they contain significant indigenous grasses or rare indigenous fauna. The NPS-IB provisions allow existing farming to continue if impacts on indigenous biodiversity do not increase. The NPS-IB will require councils to promote restoration of degraded SNAs, important buffering or connectivity areas, wetlands, urban areas, or other areas that align with national priorities.

All Northland Councils have started identifying SNAs in accordance with the Regional Policy Statement for Northland.

Options

1. Approve the proposed submission, with or without amendments as part of the online process. This is the recommended approach as the online process assists the Ministry to compare replies effectively and efficiently in a standardised way. Additionally, a submission gives Council an opportunity to highlight support or challenge national policy, whilst presenting to central government local Kaipara issues to be considered.
2. Do not approve the submission on the Draft National Policy Statement for Biodiversity and passively accept national directive without bringing to central government's attention, any associated local Kaipara issues.

Policy and planning implications

Local Authorities have to give effect and implement National Policy Statements. Kaipara District Council (KDC) must provide protection mechanisms for biodiversity through the SNA identification and planning instruments in the District Plan.

Financial implications

The study to identify the SNAs has already cost KDC more than \$70,000 and collectively for all Northland Councils \$285,000. Ground truthing and the development of the Plan Change will add another \$60,000 to that amount for KDC. No funding has been budgeted for any incentives recommended in the NPS-IB.

The cost to the public has not been calculated but this must be weighed up against the loss of biodiversity if nothing is done.

Risks and mitigations

The risk of not submitting means that Kaipara concerns will not be considered. It is therefore considered best policy practice to write a submission identifying local issues and voicing support or dissent for the proposed national direction.

Significance and engagement/Hirahira me ngā whakapāpā

The decisions or matters of this report do not trigger the significance criteria outlined in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, and the public will be informed via agenda on the website

Other public or stakeholder engagement will follow when the SNAs are socialised with Kaipara's partners, stakeholders and communities as part of the District plan review process.

Next steps/E whaiake nei

Complete the online process and provide a submission, with or without amendments.

Attachments/Ngā tapiritanga

	Title
A	Submission on the Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity