

Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

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Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

Why a National Policy Statement?

- RMA provisions for protecting and maintaining indigenous biodiversity unclear
- Different interpretation, application and monitoring by councils
- Repeated litigation costs, confusion, uncertainty and undervaluing of indigenous biodiversity in decision making
- Continued loss of indigenous biodiversity

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Preparation

- Regulatory tool for implementing the vision and goals in the Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy
- In March 2017, a Biodiversity Collaborative Group was established to prepare a draft NPS
- In October 2018, this Group delivered a report including a draft NPS
- Draft was refined by MfE and DOC
- Early engagement with Treaty Partners, Councils and other stakeholders

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Objectives

- **Maintain indigenous biodiversity**
- No reductions in:
 - Size and population of species
 - Indigenous species occupancy across their natural range
 - Function of ecosystems and habitats
 - Full range and extent of ecosystems and habitats
 - Connectivity between, and buffering around, ecosystems
 - Resilience and adaptability of ecosystems
- May require the restoration or enhancement of ecosystems and habitats

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Recognising te ao Māori and the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi

- Hutia te Rito – concept and whakataukī underpinning NPSIB
- Enhancing the role of tangata whenua in decision-making about Aotearoa NZs indigenous biodiversity and incorporating tikanga and mātauranga Māori
- Specific role in identification of taonga, monitoring, regional biodiversity strategies, etc
- Provision for papakāinga, marae and ancillary community facilities and use of Māori land

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Identifying important biodiversity and taonga

- Councils required to identify, map and schedule SNAs
 - “Significance” defined – Appendix 1 significance criteria
 - Set process
- Councils required to identify and manage highly mobile at-risk or threatened indigenous fauna
- Tangata whenua to identify and manage taonga species and ecosystems

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Managing effects on indigenous biodiversity

- Avoid certain adverse effects on SNAs and manage other adverse effects, to maintain indigenous biodiversity
- Provide for specific new activities within SNAs
- Direction for managing significant indigenous biodiversity in plantation forests
- Provide for existing activities, including pastoral farming
- Manage adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity outside of SNAs
- Direction on use of biodiversity offsets and biodiversity compensation

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Restoration and enhancement of biodiversity

- Restoration and enhancement priorities: degraded SNAs, corridors and buffers, and wetlands
- Council plans to include targets to increase indigenous vegetation cover
- Require collaboratively developed regional biodiversity strategies

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Implementation

- **Mid-2020:** Planned gazettal of the NPSIB
- **2023:** Regional councils without biodiversity strategies to have initiated their collaborative development
- **2025:** Territorial authorities to have identified and mapped all SNAs
- **2026:** Territorial authorities to have scheduled all SNAs in a district/city/unitary plan (update every 2 years) AND regional councils to have completed/updated their regional biodiversity strategies
- **2028:** All councils to have implemented the NPSIB in full

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Key themes to date in Local Government sector discussions

- Scale of the challenge
 - Threats include plant and animal pests, and land clearance/drainage
- Fundamental system challenges
 - Multiple agencies responsible for managing indigenous biodiversity
 - Regulatory and non-regulatory methods
- People and partnerships – a critical ingredient for biodiversity management
- Focus of the NPSIB – getting our priorities right

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Key implications for Council and potential submission points

- Identification and mapping of SNAs
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Query the two levels (medium and high), which adds costs and complexity
 - Query expansive identification criteria
- Managing adverse effects on SNAs
 - Query the few exceptions, which may restrict reasonable use

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Key Implications for Council and Potential submission points

- Restrictions potentially apply everywhere
 - Oppose requirements for highly mobile species
 - Oppose general rules applying outside of SNAs
 - Oppose requirements for increasing indigenous vegetation cover

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Questions?

- Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity and more information
 - <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/consultations/nps-indigenous-biodiversity>
- Anyone can make a submission
 - Submissions close at 5pm 14 March 2020