

APPENDIX 3:

**MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT - RECENT
EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES, PLANS AND POLICY
STATEMENTS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE
GENERATION OF ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLE
SOURCES**

Recent examples of strategies, plans and policy statements that are relevant to the generation of electricity from renewable sources

One of the ways the Ministry for the Environment intends to support effective implementation of the proposed NPS is by drafting a non-statutory guidance note for publication on the Quality Planning website. In late 2008 the RMA Implementation team at the Ministry for the Environment completed some background work for the guidance note, including collating recent examples from around the country of strategies, plans and policy statements that are relevant to the generation of electricity from renewable sources. Examples highlighted by this work include:

1. **The Wellington Regional Strategy** identifies promoting alternative sources of energy such as wind farms as one means to future proof the Region against the potential impacts of peak oil.
2. **Environment Canterbury's Regional Energy Strategy** 2004 forms part of the Region's wider Regional Energy Strategy Project. The Strategy aims to help the regional community to move towards a more secure energy future by reducing its growing dependence on non-sustainable forms of energy. They are currently preparing an updated Regional Energy Strategy.
3. **The Southland Regional Energy Strategy** prepared by Venture Southland includes a number of guiding principles, including that:
 - Future demand can be met by encouraging the effective use of energy resources;
 - Alternative energy technologies offer significant opportunity for users;
 - A variety of energy resources should be developed; and
 - That there is a need for strong advocacy and proactive planning practices to facilitate improvements to transmission and electricity generation opportunities.

The Strategy includes the following approaches to implementing the strategy:

- Advocate for a review of the current Regional Policy statement to allow the Southland Regional Strategy recommendations to be implemented.

- Develop a Strategic Regional approach to RMA planning as this relates to energy and exploration practices.
4. **The Gisborne District Council Energy Strategy** identifies key opportunities and priorities based on an earlier Regional Energy Assessment. The earlier assessment identified that the region is facing an electricity supply constraint as transmission and distribution lines into parts of the Region reach capacity. Relevant principles include:
- Encourage investment in local large, small and micro generation facilities.
 - Energy impacts need to be appropriately recognised through resource planning, management procedures and the LTCCP
 - Continue to monitor and evaluate alternative renewable sources of energy.
5. **The Sustainable Energy Strategy for Christchurch City Council** sets out a purpose to establish a framework that will result in a move towards an energy sustainable way of life. The Strategy suggests a set of initiatives, or action plans, designed to encourage, advise, assist and make individuals, commerce and industry more aware of the critical energy issues and take appropriate action. The long term vision includes that the City's energy supplies are provided solely from renewable sources. The Strategy sets out that the Council will encourage and promote the development and increased use of hydro, wind, biogas, biomass, waste, solar, cogeneration and all other renewable energy sources for generating electricity. The Strategy includes a key objective of increasing the share of renewable energy used in the total energy mix, and also includes an Action Plan for how the Strategy will be realised.
7. Section 3.4, Takitumu Me Ona Uri (High Country and Foothills), of **the Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku Natural Resource and Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2008** contains a specific chapter including issues and policies on energy generation and efficiency.

8. While there are no community action plans that specifically address renewable energy, it is addressed as an issue in the **Kapiti Coast District Council's Climate Change Action Plan** and the **Wellington City Council's Climate Change Action Plan**.
9. **The Kaipara District Council's Estuary Estates Structure Plan** (which originated as a private plan change) includes design guidelines that specifically include renewable energy as a relevant consideration.
10. **Wellington City Council's revised Subdivision Design Guide** promotes the creation of lots which have potential to use renewable energy sources and recommends that developers and planners, take into account opportunities for joint energy schemes e.g. small scale wind turbines, solar generation and/or solar heating. The design guide also prompts developers and planners to consider options for producing renewable energy within a subdivision for the benefit of multiple lots, and to make allowances for the space and orientation requirements of any such joint energy scheme.
11. Section 2.3, Energy, Infrastructure and Waste of the **Draft Wellington Regional Policy Statement** includes sources of energy vulnerable to supply disruptions and contribution to climate change as a significant issue in the region. Draft objective 9 seeks that the region's energy needs are met in ways that "... maximise the use of the region's renewable energy resources; and diversify the type and scale of renewable energy development in the region ..."

Chapter 3 contains policies and methods of implementation to support this objective. In particular, draft Policies 8 and 37 requires the recognition of the benefits from regionally significant infrastructure and renewable energy in regional and district plans and in resource consent applications, notices of requirement and plan changes.

12. Chapter 12 of the **Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki** identifies sustainably managing energy as a significant regional issue, particularly promoting the use and development of renewable energy resources. Policy 2 seeks that "the use

and development of renewable energy resources will be encouraged as far as is practicable and appropriate in a manner that does not compromise the sustainable management of natural and physical resources or the achievement of other policies in this Regional Policy Statement” . The policy is supported by a number of methods of implementation, ranging from advocacy, supporting codes of practice for renewable energy, provision of advice and information, and that regional and district plans include provisions that provide appropriate encouragement for renewable energy.

13. Issue 3.1 in Chapter 3, Infrastructure, Energy, and Waste of **the Proposed Horizon’s One-Plan** identifies that “there is potential for concerns about local adverse effects to prevail over the regional and national benefits of infrastructure and renewable energy”. Objective 3-1 seeks that “resource use activities associated with the provision, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure, and/or with the use of renewable energy, will be recognised and enabled”. The Chapter includes policies that seek to recognise the benefits of renewable energy generation in RMA decision-making and regional and national importance of renewable energy generation. Policy 3.3 includes guidance on where effects from renewable energy development should be avoided, and where the effects might be tolerated. Policy 3.4 directs that “the development of renewable energy generation and use of renewable energy resources shall be preferred to the development of non-renewable energy resources in policy development and resource consent decision-making”.
14. **Chapter 16, Network Utilities and Energy, of the Proposed Combined Wairarapa District Plan** (as amended by decisions) includes the potential adverse effects resulting from energy generation facilities, the realisation that some level of adverse effects resulting from energy generation might need to be accepted to support the economic and social well-being of the districts, and the environmental benefits of renewable energy development as significant issues. The chapter includes an objective that encourages renewable energy generation, supported by policies that:

- “Provide for renewable energy generation, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects, particularly of large-scale and/or prominent facilities.
- [...] recognise and promote the use of environmental management codes of practice and best practice methods in energy generation, distribution and use.
- [...] recognise the operational requirements of energy generation and distribution and its benefits to the wellbeing of the Wairarapa in setting and implementing appropriate environmental standards and assessing resource consent applications to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects on the environment.”

New and existing energy generation facilities are permitted activities, subject to compliance with relevant standards. Where these standards are not met, applications are assessed as a discretionary activity. The permitted activity standards provide some guidance for the assessment of discretionary activity consents.

15. **Proposed Plan Change 32 to the Wellington City District Plan** introduces two new chapters (25 and 26) on Renewable Energy. The proposed plan change provides for wind energy facilities as a discretionary activity within the Rural Area, and includes a number of assessment criteria which includes the contribution that the proposal will make to central government’s energy policy objectives and renewable energy targets.
16. **Proposed Plan Change 7, Windfarms, to the Porirua City District Plan** introduces a new objective and policies relating to renewable energy, specifically wind farm development, into the existing plan framework. Wind energy facilities are provided for as a discretionary activity within the Rural Zone, subject to assessment criteria that includes the contribution to achieving national, regional and local policy objectives. These objectives are articulated in the objective, policies and explanations.

17. The Final Community Outcomes contained in **Marlborough District Council's Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)** include the desire for a decreasing dependence on non-renewable energy sources and to be a place that uses its natural energy sources to best effect.
18. **Far North District Council's LTCCP** includes the implementation of a plan change to address renewable energy and energy efficiency as a key district plan management issue.
19. **Rotorua District Council's LTCCP** includes a chapter on energy resources. The LTCCP outlines the Council's intention to take a sustainable approach to energy resources by:
 - Recognising that Rotorua's geothermal resources are a renewable energy source that can contribute to the future energy needs of the district and exploring the potential for economic development of this resource in a sustainable manner.
 - Staying aware of the potential of alternative energy sources, particularly renewables such as hydro, wind and solar power.