

Submission by Ms Noelene Buckland

Submitter Type: Individual
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Overall Position: Support

Clause Will the proposed NPS improve decisions made about urban development under the RMA?

Notes It has the potential to do that. In fairness to local authorities previous legislation has contained so many factors to take into account that paralysis was inevitable. The purpose of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 was "the wise use and management of the resources, and the direction and control of the development, of a region, district, or area in such a way as will most effectively promote and safeguard the health, safety, convenience, and the economic, cultural, social, and general welfare of the people, and the amenities, of every part of the region, district, or area" - the perfect recipe for paralysis. The purpose of the more environmentally focused Resource Management Act 1991 was "to promote the sustainable development of land and physical resources" so again not wording that was intended to encourage urban development. The objectives of the NPS on Urban Development does address some of the previous conflicts in that it is particular as to the need to provide "sufficient residential and business development capacity to enable urban development that meets demand". Certainly a much better starting point than earlier efforts.

Clause Will the proposed NPS support greater understanding of the demand and supply of development capacity?

Notes Yes, but in doing so I suspect that local government are being asked to fund research that may well be used against them so government monitoring of the robustness of this research will likely be necessary and costly.

Clause • a better understanding of how planning interacts with the market?

Notes Possibly although I am not sure if planning is the bogey boy here. As mentioned, the legislation that local government has had to work with previously could hardly be described as facilitating successful development if success is measured by there being adequate land available for both housing and business. The challenge with collecting and manipulating large amounts of data is that it is time bound and is often well out of date for it to be of much use to the market. A better and more affordable option might be to allow the market to operate in a more open environment where the information is current and the risks sit with the market rather than with the local authority.

Clause • the ability for councils to plan for and respond to changing demand?

Notes . Most local politicians are forced into making decisions that are supported by the people who vote for them and that is dependent on what impact any decisions are likely to have on those same people. A more deliberate approach by government is likely to provide the better outcome.

Clause Would the policies in the proposed NPS support better coordination in regard to land use planning and infrastructure provision?

Notes Probably although I think that this has been reasonably well coordinated in the past but again the issue is not really coordination it is funding. Developing infrastructure - especially in green field spaces - is a very, very expensive way to provide for new housing and is rarely, if ever, within the average affordable range.

Clause The NPS proposes timeframes and frequencies for assessments, targets and monitoring. Are these reasonable? Are they appropriate?

Notes I think that they will add quite a lot more costs and time to the process and wonder if a better approach might be for the NPS to be more directive in it's purpose and in the manner that the above material is researched, collected, quantified, and published. Unless this is absolutely consistent across the country, the information will not be unusable for national comparative purposes.

Clause What will assist councils to implement the proposed NPS?

Notes Appropo the previous comment, I believe that New Zealand has reached the point where the NPS on urban development should require, as the starting point, that multi level residential and business use are a permitted activity in every urban zones and local authorities must then provide reasons, within parameters determined by government, as to why this should not be the case. This would make the implementation of the NPS a relatively simple and cost effective exercise with far more certainly for all involved - and that could be achieved relatively quickly with the market able to be a lot more proactive than has been the case over the past four or so decades. I have not seen any evidence to support the claim that New Zealand is suffering from a shortage of urban land - the shortage is in the zoning requirements and this has been the road block for a very long time.

Clause Do you have any further comments on the Government's proposal?

Notes Congratulations on getting the NPS on urban development to this point - it is well overdue and marks a good start to the issues of improving the availability of affordable housing and business premises across the country.