This submission is made by Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) which welcomes the opportunity to comment on the issues and options paper relating to the RMA review. The reasons for making this submission are that HPA promotes the preservation of historic places in Aotearoa Ne Zealand. HPA also has an interest in promoting the education of the public in the appreciation of heritage values. HPA is a key stakeholder in the consultation process and answerable to its affiliated regional societies and affiliated membership.

HPA makes the following two main points. Firstly, we do not wish to see the existing (fairly weak) support for built and other heritage in the RMA further weakened. While heritage is identified as a matter of national significance, in practice the general provision often falls short for actual protection in specific cases. In the last three years, for example, 3 Category 1 Heritage New Zealand listed buildings either have already been demolished or are in the process of being demolished. These are Aniwaniwa (Visitors Center Lake Waikaremoana), Erskin College main block Wellington, and the former teachers college at Karori Wellington. Countless category 2 buildings have been demolished all around Aotearoa. Councils are generally under resourced to support property owners who are willing to repair substandard heritage buildings. In other cases, owners target heritage buildings as a cheap option for demolition and development.

HPA supports efforts to make good use of urban space for much needed additional housing etc, but not at the further expense of retaining heritage buildings. Secondly, HPA supports the idea to introduce a mechanism for Councils to use spacial planning as a way of directing development into suitable specified areas, and thus provide clearer signals about where development and intensification would be welcome while identifying heritage areas where that is not suitable.