

# 1. Introduction

In Marlborough, quality of life and wellbeing are very much dependent on how we use, develop and protect our natural and physical resources such as the coast, soils, rivers, groundwater, air, landscape, towns, roads, infrastructure, biodiversity and so on. The use or development of natural resources, including land, freshwater and coastal water, also provides for social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

We all know that our very existence and desire to develop and grow as a community can compromise the things that make our life in Marlborough special. Dealing with the pressures surrounding how we use our resources is challenging, especially as we have differing views about how Marlborough's natural and physical resources should be looked after. It is therefore important that the best interests of the environment as a whole be the guiding factor in achieving sustainable management. We need to be concerned with the long-term implications of how we respond to change, ensuring that future generations and their quality of life is not limited by the decisions or actions (or inaction) we make today.

How we use, develop and protect Marlborough's resources is governed to a large extent by the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The RMA's single purpose is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

## 5 Purpose

- (1) *The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.*
- (2) *In this Act, sustainable management means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while—*
  - (a) *sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*
  - (b) *safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
  - (c) *avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

## 6 Matters of national importance

*In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:*

- (a) *the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
- (b) *the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
- (c) *the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna:*
- (d) *the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers:*
- (e) *the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga:*

- (f) *the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
- (g) *the protection of protected customary rights:*
- (h) *the management of significant risks from natural hazards.*

#### 7 Other matters

*In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to—*

- (a) *kaitiakitanga:*
- (aa) *the ethic of stewardship:*
- (b) *the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources:*
- (ba) *the efficiency of the end use of energy:*
- (c) *the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:*
- (d) *intrinsic values of ecosystems:*
- (e) *Repealed]*
- (f) *maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:*
- (g) *any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources:*
- (h) *the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon:*
- (i) *the effects of climate change:*
- (j) *the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy*

#### 8 Treaty of Waitangi

*In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).*

To achieve the purpose of the RMA, the Council is required to prepare a range of documents, some of which are mandatory, while others are optional. A regional policy statement, regional coastal plan and district plan are mandatory documents, whereas other regional plans are optional. As the Council is a unitary authority, that is, it has the roles of both a district and a regional council, it is responsible for preparing all of the required RMA policies and plans.

The purpose of regional policy statements is set out in Section 59 of the RMA and it is "*to achieve the purpose of the Act by providing an overview of the resource management issues of the region and policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region*". The purpose of regional and district plans is to assist the Council in carrying out its functions in order to achieve the purpose of the RMA and specifically for a regional coastal plan, to achieve the purpose of the RMA in relation to the coastal marine area.

Commented [ 1]: Environmental Defence Society  
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## Changed resource management framework

Previously, the Council has had a separate regional policy statement and two geographically-based coastal, district and regional plans (the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan and the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan). In Section 79(1) of the RMA there are requirements set out for when regional policy statements and plans are to be reviewed. These documents may be reviewed either in part or in full; the Council undertook a full review of the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement 1995 and the Marlborough Sounds and Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plans in accordance with Section 79(4) of the RMA.

In undertaking a statutory review of these documents, the Council has opted to combine all three into a single Marlborough Environment Plan (the MEP). This approach is enabled through Section 80 of the RMA. The intention is to provide a simplified and more streamlined resource management framework for all users. More detail on the approach is set out in Chapter 2 - Background but overall the framework:

- describes how we as a community want the natural and physical assets of Marlborough to be managed;
- provides a coherent view on how our coasts, freshwater resources, rural areas, towns, natural habitats, etc and their interrelationships should be managed;
- influences the actions of individuals and the actions of the Council; and
- manages the actions of all resource users.

~~At this time, the PMEPP does not include the provisions relating to marine farming, which are still subject to review.~~

**Commented [ 2 ]:** Environmental Defence Society  
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**Commented [ 3 ]:** Clause 16

**Commented [ 4 ]:** Marine Farming Association and  
Aquaculture New Zealand  
ENV-2023-CHC-61

**Commented [ 5 ]:** Sanford Limited  
ENV-2023-CHC-73

## Structure of the MEP

Four volumes form the MEP:

### Volume 1

Volume 1 sets out the regionally significant issues facing Marlborough and the objectives and policies to achieve integrated management of Marlborough's natural and physical resources. It is structured according to the different natural and physical resources and values that exist in the Marlborough environment and provides a comprehensive policy framework within which decisions can be made. It is also a guide to the development of courses of action to achieve the objectives.

Immediately after each of the objectives, policies and methods, the principal reasons for adopting them are given. Where relevant, the provisions of each chapter of Volume 1 are to be read in conjunction with provisions from other chapters in Volume 1 to help inform the sustainable management purpose of the RMA. This reflects both the interconnected nature of resources and in particular the Council's role as both a regional and district council.

Volume 1 also includes methods to achieve the policies using both regulatory and non-regulatory means. In some cases these methods outline who is to carry out the action. Environmental results anticipated from implementing the policies and methods are identified at the end of each of the values, area and activity based chapters.

### Volume 2

This volume of the MEP sets out the rules to follow in order to achieve the objectives, policies and methods. The rules are a combination of zone-based and district-wide provisions and in some cases are also subject to overlays. Volume 2 contains both regional and district rules as well as a glossary section that defines the words, terms and phrases used in the MEP.

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## Volume One

### Volume 3

Volume 3 contains the appendices referred to in Volumes 1 and 2. This includes designations, areas of heritage values, landscape and natural character significance values etc.

### Volume 4

Volume 4 contains the planning maps for Marlborough, an integral part of the MEP in that they establish graphically the areas to which the rules set out in Volume 2 apply. This volume also includes overlay maps to which policy and rules apply.

Two other volumes are included for information, but do not form part of the statutory MEP in terms of being subject to First Schedule processes of the RMA.

### Volume 5

Contains copies of national policy statements, national environmental standards and resource management regulations.

### Volume 6

Records the statutory acknowledgments for Marlborough's tangata whenua iwi.

**Commented [ 6 ]:** Manawa Energy Limited (previously Trustpower Limited)  
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#### Note:

The MEP Hearings Panel decision of Topic 16 - Climate Change includes a decision to restructure the order of the chapters in Volume 1 in order to give the climate change provisions more prominence. This version of the Plan incorporating the decisions does not implement the restructuring at this point in time at the direction of the Panel. The Panel has used the notified provision numbers in their decision. Restructuring the MEP in accordance with the Panel's decision on Topic 16 would have made it difficult for submitters to cross reference the decision with the restructured plan content. It is intended to restructure the Volume 1 content when the MEP is to be made operative. To avoid any doubt, this note has no statutory weight, it is merely included to inform plan users of the Panel's intent.