

A wide-angle photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, there is a rocky shoreline with a small, calm inlet of water. To the left, a sandy beach meets the ocean under a clear blue sky. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains. The top of the image is framed by dark, leafy branches.

Implications of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 for New Zealand communities

Issues & Options Paper

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Executive Summary

The recently released New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) 2010 provides a mandate for action on a range of coastal issues and promotes improved national consistency in the design of responses. Local authorities are required to give effect to the NZCPS 2010 in their policies, plans, and selection of methods to address various issues. This paper considers how the new NZCPS might be implemented to achieve its objectives and how the different policies might work together.

Amongst the key policy changes are new policy topics and changes of emphasis from the previous NZCPS that introduce new priorities for coastal management. However much of the content has yet to be interpreted in practice and is highly dependent on its translation into management actions. Responses to the NZCPS 2010 including methods of engaging with and influencing the public have to work together to achieve the desired results. In addition the mix of approaches adopted needs to reflect the local context including the unique nature of the issues present and stakeholders involved.

In general the NZCPS 2010 highlights many matters for attention including greater integration of management responses whilst leaving room for local authorities to develop management responses to address these matters as they see fit. In comparison to the previous NZCPS 1994 there are fewer individual policies in the NZCPS 2010. However each policy contains greater detail with the effect that most issues addressed in the NZCPS 1994 are also addressed somewhere in the NZCPS 2010.

A notable difference is that the NZCPS 2010 includes a greater number of policies that make direct provisions for human use of the coastal environment. These policies set up a tension that may be difficult to resolve alongside the environmental protection requirements. Since both the 'pro-development' and the 'pro-protection' sections of the NZCPS 2010 contain ambiguities, local authorities have considerable leeway to interpret either way. The appropriateness of such interpretations will therefore be a key point of focus for participants in RMA processes.

The existence of stronger provisions than the status quo in addition to expectations over a greater number of policy topics also implies that the role of monitoring will be critical. However reviews of the previous NZCPS 1994 found the monitoring component to be an especially weak area of implementation to date. As a consequence local authorities will need to improve their monitoring performance markedly in the coastal environment and also apply this to a greater number of topics. This will be essential to enable all parties to assess the effectiveness of current and proposed management responses against the requirements of the NZCPS 2010 and make improvements where required.

These are some of the aspects of difference between the NZCPS 1994 and the new NZCPS 2010 that will result in changes to coastal management. It is important for interested parties to further consider these matters and participate in the implementation of NZCPS policies in their areas since regional and local level resource management process will add further interpretation to the NZCPS 2010 in the near future. These will be critical to the identification and development of appropriate implementation methods and consequently to the pattern of outcomes achieved.