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Tēnā koutou katoa

Reform of the RMA – proposed Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill

Kāpiti Coast District Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the two proposals related to the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act): the Planning Bill (PB), and the Natural Environment Bill (NEB), which together would repeal and replace the Act.

However, we note concerns regarding:

- The relatively short consultation period for such a significant legislation change. Additional consultation time would better enable full assessment of the content and implications of the Bills, given their significance for current and future generations. We would encourage the Government to consider an extension to the consultation period to ensure fair and transparent democratic participation.
- Additional 'hidden' unfunded costs passed onto local authorities, and rate payers in our communities, through these proposals due to conflicts between legislation under reform (including the Local Government Act, the proposed 'rates target model' new RMA Planning Bill and RMA National Environment Bill), and New Zealand's Te Tiriti obligations, and legislation related to iwi Treaty Settlement processes. These conflicts need to be addressed, for the system to work effectively

<u>Kāpiti Coast District Council's Submission on the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill</u>

1. Council supports the reform programme's stated objectives of: clearer and more consistent rules, strong environmental protections (including limits), and better use of digital tools. Our view is that any change should not be about fewer consents, but about appropriate regulation to achieve the aforementioned points, and that use of single 'regional' plans should be on the basis that they are informed by relevant district or territorial authority views, so that these aims are achieved in practice and not at the expense of local context, sustainable environmental outcomes, or meaningful public and iwi participation.
2. Our submission is in two parts:
    2.1. Our overall observations on the reform package, highlighting some concerns that we think may impede the successful implementation of the reform agenda. These are outlined in this letter.

2.2. Detailed comments on the provisions of the two Bills, with suggested amendments, we believe will better deliver on the purposes of the two Bills and achieve their goals. These are outlined in the Appendix attached.

3. We also note that Council is fully supportive of the submissions from Local Government New Zealand and Taituarā on the reform package, with the submission from Taituara informed by legal advice from Simpson Grierson on particular matters. We agree with the matters raised in these submissions, and provide Kāpiti Coast district specific comments, in the table below, regarding the need for further work on the respective Bills to ensure:

   - Clarity of roles.
   - Improving the coherence of legislative design.
   - Setting realistic timeframes.
   - Ensuring appropriately allocated system and transition costs.
   - Landing a workable regulatory relief framework
   - Manageable transition pathways.
   - Improved balance between centralisation, local needs and public voice.
   - An equitable and efficient system aligned with Te Tiriti.

Concern area	Council's comment	Recommendation
Clarity of roles	National instruments contain rules and standards with significant impacts on communities and the environment. Council is concerned that the intended degree of central direction will limit the ability of communities to achieve positive and future-focused local planning outcomes. There is need for a system that better balances consistency with space for local voice. It is unlikely that any single Minister will hold in-depth understanding of local circumstances and community aspirations across the country, and how to shape the use and development of their environment. Section 46(4) also allows the Minister to decide whether to appoint technical advisers, the discretion creating a risk that national instruments could be set without adequate technical input. Any Minister should be well supported with appropriate technical expertise and local perspectives, not holding the responsibility and risk of such decisions without appropriate advice.	Introduce a requirement for national instruments and Ministerial powers to be subject to scrutiny: • Require any power to prepare and confirm national instruments, to be subject to full Cabinet and parliamentary scrutiny to ensure robust development and oversight. • Set qualification criteria for central government members on panels formed under Schedule 4 should be introduced, focusing on expertise and experience in relevant fields (ie planning, RM law, mātauranga Māori, infrastructure delivery etc). • Require transparent reasons to be provided when ministerial directions override local recommendations. • Provide consistent decision timeframes across ministerial functions (noting the 12-month timeframe that already applies to certain spatial plan decisions) should be introduced for Ministerial and Ministry decision-making to give clarity to key stakeholders.
Improving the coherence legislative design	We acknowledge the clarity that comes from separating land use planning (PB) from environmental management (NEB). However, the Bills will only work if national instruments are timely, coherent and adequately funded, and if spatial plans genuinely integrate growth expectations, infrastructure (both that provided by local government and central government),	• Re-sequence the timeframes for developing national direction and standards so they are set well in advance of regional spatial plans. • Set national policy direction, prior to enactment of legislative change to enable the system to be well prepared, and communities' experience of transition to be as seamless as possible.

Concern area	Council's comment	Recommendation
	biodiversity, highly productive land, coastal management, and freshwater outcomes. While the PB sets out the overall framework, the detailed national instruments will ultimately determine how the system functions in practice. Until this detail is available, councils face significant uncertainty and risk, particularly around trade offs, impacts, and the scale of change involved.	
	At present, the PB refers to climate change only in the context of natural hazard risk, leaving broader climate mitigation and adaptation requirements unaddressed. If these matters are intended to be covered through the Government's wider climate change work programme, then this should be clarified.	• Clarify the status of adaptation plans and where they fit in the planning hierarchy, to avoid confusion in the 'delivery' stage of regulation (ie are they "must give effect to" or "must consider").
Setting realistic timeframes	The Bills propose a relatively rapid transition to the new system with the new system expected to be fully operational by 2029. The new system is designed to get it right at the top, so time and effort will need to be spent on the national direction to ensure that the combined regional plans are successfully implemented. This does not appear to be achievable given that the first tranche of national instruments is due for delivery at the end of 2026 and the second tranche by mid-2027, leaving an incomplete policy context for developing the regional plans. Our concern is that we will see a repeat of the RMA implementation, where supporting national direction was delayed, undermining the whole system and costing councils and the country as a whole many millions in unnecessary costs litigating policy and standards.	• Extend implementation timeframes, especially for developing and agreeing national guidance. • Set timeframes to enable national direction instruments to be set, before regional spatial plans and land use plans are required to be prepared, rather than requiring councils to "build the plane while flying it."
Ensuring appropriately allocated system and transition costs.	The proposed system changes are intended to reduce the cost of managing our physical and natural environments, delivering more effective outcomes at a lower overall cost to New Zealand. While councils and their communities may realise these savings over the long term, the immediate and transitional costs for local government will be substantial. This comes at a time when ratepayers are facing cost of living pressures, councils are navigating numerous legislative and system reforms, proposed amalgamations, and the possibility of operating under a rates cap. Council therefore seeks clarity on who will fund these changes, or alternatively, what trade-offs in services and infrastructure the government is prepared to accept and advocate to our communities.	• Require Regulatory Impact Statements to more comprehensively assess the actual financial impacts on local authorities and rate payers of system changes and regulatory mandates. • Request the appropriate Ministry to provide advice to Government on the funding required to be transferred to local government to implement the new planning and environment regulatory system change proposals or exclude their costs from the proposed rates capping regime. Failing this, excluding these costs from proposed rates capping.

Concern area	Council's comment	Recommendation
Landing a workable regulatory relief framework	The proposed regulatory relief framework would require councils to provide development rights, rate reductions, or cash compensation where rules on specified topics significantly affect the undefined concept of "reasonable use." Its retrospective application creates substantial fiscal risk, intensified by proposed rates capping. For example, significant natural features are identified through rigorous scientific and technical processes. Comparable jurisdictions[1] do not require local authorities to compensate landowners for protecting significant environments. Compensation would also be in response to councils following rules that are statutorily required. As drafted, we are concerned that the proposal increases legal and financial risk to councils that wish to protect significant natural features and other important environmental protections, including through unclear statutory thresholds where such relief would apply. The proposed framework will impose significant costs on ratepayers for actions councils must take to protect environmental and urban outcomes. We consider this to be out of step with the Government's "growth pays for growth" funding model by offsetting development levy-levy revenue with compensation liabilities. Additionally, it is unclear how transferred development rights could work, whether rate reductions would be legal under other legislation[2], and whether cash compensation would become an easy 'go to' that would drive long-term environmental degradation. Given the significant pressure on councils to manage costs efficiently, alongside the potential introduction of rates caps, the proposed regulatory relief framework creates a major challenge, as councils will be forced to trade off these relief obligations against maintaining essential infrastructure and services in order to stay within those caps. Council therefore agrees with LGNZ's comment: that this proposal is uncosted and unworkable in its current form and could have serious unintended consequences on wider council funding and to operations.	• Amend the legislation to establish that where relief arises from statutorily required protections, compensation liability should be met by central government. • Clarify the legal and financial implications of the proposal (for regulatory relief) or remove the proposal as currently set out. • Clarify the alignment between the regulatory relief framework and the "growth pays for growth" funding model already introduced by the Coalition Government. • Require Regulatory Impact Statements to more comprehensively assess the actual impacts on local authorities and rate payers. • Require the appropriate Ministry to provide advice to Government on the funding required to be transferred to local government to implement the regulatory relief framework and meet obligations arising from statutorily required protections. Failing this, excluding these costs from proposed rates capping.

[1] Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and United States of America

[2] Local Government (Rating) Act 2002

Concern area	Council's comment	Recommendation
Manageable transition pathways	The new system front loads public participation into the national direction and plan making stages, reducing opportunities later in the process, unlike the RMA's multiple engagement points. If communities miss these early-stage opportunities, later avenues are limited. With many standards set nationally and local variation restricted and resource intensive, early, well informed engagement is essential. Communities need a clear understanding of how new settings will affect their rights and everyday activities to maintain democratic legitimacy. Although local variation is possible, the process is complex and may erode existing local provisions, creating tension with community expectations. In implementing the government's previous direction on Medium Density Residential Standards, our community has raised concern that this can limit recognition of local amenity and character. We had significant local concern raised on the change to local character in some areas (such as our Waikanae garden precinct). This local experience underscores the need for clearer guidance on when and how councils can pursue localised provisions.	• Clarify expectations around realistic timeframes and well-designed engagement and education processes for local aspirations to be incorporated (particularly for the PB).-designed engagement and education processes • Provide clearer guidance on when and how councils can pursue localised provisions. • Ensure processes balance the efficiency of centralised decision-making and consistent standards with the legitimacy of local input and identity of place.
Improved balance between centralisation local need and public voice	The Bills, alongside the "Simplifying local government reforms", shift the "rules" element of the system toward greater centralisation, trading national consistency against the ability to recognise local values and priorities. The mixed representation model risks making it harder to see and act on local perspectives, especially for smaller councils. Over time centralisation weakens local influence and place-based outcomes and erodes trust, if communities feel their priorities are not reflected. These pressures are compounded by tight budgets and shared regional and national responsibilities for infrastructure investment.	• Clarify Government's infrastructure needs, priorities, sequencing, and funding commitments given that central priorities will 'trump' local needs (without this clarity and partnership, councils risk being held accountable for outcomes they can no longer effectively shape). • Clarify how national decisions will align with Long-term Plan requirements (which are driven by local need and direction from communities) given that key infrastructure decisions, and rules, will be set at higher levels.
An equitable and efficient system, aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Bills represent a clear shift in Māori and iwi involvement. Although they include goals recognising Māori interests in planning instrument development, replacing RMA "engagement" with "participation" reduces Māori and iwi influence. Effective front-loaded engagement will require sufficient time, support, and processes that treat Māori and iwi as partners, not stakeholders. Our Council has one of the longest running partnerships with our mana whenua, established in 1994, and we highly value the outcomes this partnership supports.	• Māori and iwi involvement in the new planning system be strengthened to recognise their role as kaitiaki of the environment and their special relationship with the whenua. • Ensure absolute clarity in how Treaty Settlement provisions will translate across to the new framework and that costs will be met by Treaty Partners (ie the Crown).

Concern area	Council's comment	Recommendation
	We are concerned that the changes proposed mean Māori have no guaranteed role at the consent stage unless deemed affected parties, and the first key instruments – due within nine months – are not required to be shared with iwi in draft form. The removal of explicit Treaty principles further weakens recognition of iwi as kaitiaki of the environment and raises concerns about meaningful input within short timeframes.	
	While sites of significance, including wāhi tapu, are recognised, their classification as a "specified topic" is contradictory, as protections could trigger regulatory relief requirements that will penalise councils. The regulatory relief framework may also create tension around Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori (SASM), increased costs for councils (and ratepayers), and lead to trade-offs that risk important sites and taonga.	• Clarify how regulatory relief would apply for SASM and in similar instances. • Clarify who is best placed to pay for such relief (eg how do other processes such as the Waitangi Tribunal and Treaty Settlement processes inform this classification and requirements for the Crown, rather than communities)

4. The Appendix to this letter provides further detailed comments on Bill provisions, individual sections, and Schedule clauses.

In closing, we note that Council supports a modern, digital, and consistent planning system that is faster, clearer, environmentally robust, and responsive to local needs. We are available to discuss our feedback further.

Nāku iti nei, nā

Darren Edwards
Chief Executive
Kāpiti Coast District Council

Janet Holborow
Mayor
Kāpiti Coast District Council

Appendix 1: Detailed comment on provisions, sections and Schedule clauses

Positive aspects of the Bills that we support
Infrastructure – land use integration (PB goals). The PB's goals emphasise planning and providing for infrastructure alongside enabling land development, which we support for growth sequencing and investment certainty.
Compliance, monitoring, and enforcement (CME). The CME approach largely carries through familiar tools with a strong emphasis on digital systems and standardisation across plans, which should support risk-based monitoring and reporting, and make transitioning to the new system easier.
Realistic processing timeframes. We support the 45-working-day maximum for non-notified consents (PB s117(3)), which better reflects actual processing practice and improves certainty for applicants and councils.
Treaty settlement carry-over. We support provisions to give the same or equivalent effect to Treaty settlement arrangements (such as statutory acknowledgements) under the new system. However, as outlined in above our letter, we do not think these provisions provide sufficient recognition of the role of Māori as kaitiaki and their relationship with the whenua.

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
Effects excluded from scope (PB s14) risk poor quality outcomes. Section 14 directs decision makers to disregard key design and amenity considerations, which, while intended to reduce red tape, limits councils' ability to ensure functional urban design and well-functioning environments.	Amend s14(1)(e)–(h) so that essential public-realm design requirements remain in scope. Excluding all amenity considerations risks long-term poor design outcomes that are difficult or impossible to fix once implemented.
Cumulative effects and thresholds (PB s15; NEB s15). Both Bills adopt a "less than minor" threshold that **can be considered** only where 2 or more such effects create effects "greater than less than minor".	Explicit guidance will need to be provided on how cumulative effects are to be considered at plan stage and consent stage, including across sites, to avoid ambiguity and litigation.
Standardisation and local variation (PB Subpart 3 & Schedule 3). We support standardised rules where appropriate but requiring a "justification report" for any local variation risks discouraging legitimate tailoring (eg. for coast-hazard design responses, character areas supported by communities).	Clearer guidance on when variation is expected and a more streamlined justification process are needed.
Compressed publication deadlines for submissions and summaries. The 20-day deadlines in section 3, for publishing submissions and summaries are impractical for complex or high-volume plan changes and risk errors.	Extend the timeframe (e.g., to 40 working days) or allowing extensions on complexity grounds.
Consent notification timing and affected persons (PB s123). The Bill removes the need for public notification where all affected persons can be identified, but councils often cannot reliably identify all affected parties for proposals with wide-reaching effects.	While a 20-day notification decision timeframe is acceptable, clearer guidance is required on when public notification is appropriate, particularly where the extent of effects is uncertain. If this provision remains, additional criteria are needed.

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
Housing outcomes—quantity without quality controls By excluding certain matters (e.g., housing type, tenure, affordability, and future residents), and visual amenity/design, the PB risks privileging quantity over quality.	The planning system needs to enable councils to set minimum functional design requirements (e.g., passive surveillance, interface design) through national instruments and plans, notwithstanding s14.
Technical clarifications • Clarifications of technical requirements are needed for PB s15, and s38	• Definitions: PB s15 defines "less than minor", but "minor" and "more than minor" are not defined in either Bill, inviting inconsistent interpretation, and relying on these to be settled by the Planning Tribunal or Environment Court over time. This seems needlessly inefficient. • Cumulative effects (PB s15 / NEB s15): Recommendation: Clarify that cumulative effects may be assessed within the site and in combination with adjacent sites. • Permitted activity rules (PB s38): Before operationalising new permitted activity arrangements, provide implementation guidance (including data requirements and cost recovery for monitoring permitted activities).
Timeframes for panel recommendations and decisions. The Bill imposes tight, interlocking plan-process deadlines, including publication and recommendation milestones, with Ministerial powers to grant extensions.	Add a bespoke extension power for independent hearings panels where complexity warrants it, alongside the existing mechanism to seek more time from the Minister under Schedule 3, clause 28.
Land-use compatibility and reverse sensitivity. We support the PB goal to avoid unreasonable land-use effects and separate incompatible activities, but reverse sensitivity should be expressly recognised, including buffers for regionally significant infrastructure and rural production. As land-use controls are loosened, councils also need enforceable powers to protect areas zoned for heavy or large-format industrial or commercial use.	An explicit reverse-sensitivity objective should be added to PB s11 or addressed through national direction.
Resourcing and plan-making capacity. The transition asks councils nationwide to develop regional spatial and combined plans to aggressive timeframes, while central instruments are still being prepared.	To see these timeframes achieved, staggered sequencing and dedicated central government co-funding for capacity, digital planning and iwi participation will be essential.

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
Section 69 - Process agreement for preparation of regional spatial plan Council is concerned that it is unclear what 'agreement' by local authorities means. Does this mean that all local authorities must agree? What would occur should one council not agree? Would decision be by majority vote, or Ministerial decision?	Clarify what "agreement" by local authority means.
Section 86 – Incentives. It is unclear to Council why limitations would be placed on the ability for local authorities to formulate incentives to help achieve objective and policies of a plan.	Delete clause (a) to enable bespoke incentives to be formulated.
Amendments to Schedules to the Planning Bill **Clause 19 of Schedule 3 – 20 working day notification period:** Council opposes the requirement to notify the further submission period within 20 working days of submissions closing for proposed plans. Council notes that substantial proposed plans and plan changes often generate hundreds (or thousands) of submissions. Getting all submissions into the correct format and uploading these to a website takes significant resourcing and time. **Clause 20 of Schedule 3 – further submissions** Council opposes the exclusion on the ability of interest groups to make further submissions. In Council's experience, interest groups often bring significant and important perspectives and matters to the attention of decision makers via further submissions in response to submissions. This generally leads to more robust and better decisions. **Clause 22 of Schedule 3 - Striking out and publishing further submissions, summary of submissions:** Council opposes the 20-day requirement to notify the further submission period, as large plan changes often generate hundreds or thousands of submissions, making timely formatting and publication unrealistic. Council also opposes excluding interest groups from making further submissions, as they commonly raise important issues that strengthen decision-making. Similarly, the 20-day timeframe to publish summaries of submissions and further submissions is unworkable for complex or high-volume plans; recent examples show that summarising major submissions alone can take many dozens of hours, and the new requirement to summarise further submissions adds further workload. Council also opposes the five-month limit for independent hearings panels to make decisions, as it disregards the time required to prepare technical and evaluative reports and risks setting panels up to fail;	**Clause 19 of Schedule 3 – 20 working day notification period:** • Remove requirement for 20 working days for submissions closing for proposed plans **Clause 20 of Schedule 3 – further submissions** • Remove exclusion of interest groups to make further submissions **Clause 22 of Schedule 3 - Striking out and publishing further submissions, summary of submissions:** • Remove requirement for 20-day notification for further submission • Remove exclusion of interested groups from making further submissions • Remove 20-day timeframe to publish summaries of submissions • Remove five-month limit for independent hearings panels to make decisions

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
instead, an overall decision timeframe, as under the current RMA, would better allow case-by-case complexity to be managed. **Clause 26(8) of Schedule 5 – timeframe for independent hearing panel to make decision:** Council opposes the five-month timeframe from the date on which the summary of the submissions and further submissions were made. This is because this arbitrary timeframe overlooks the time it takes to prepare the necessary evaluative and technical reports that are prepared in advance of a hearing. Council considers that this timeframe will generally not be met. Rather than set up independent hearing panels to fail, Council requests that an overall timeframe for Council to make a decision on a proposed plan be retained as the overriding direction on hearings processes, as per the current RMA. This existing approach enables bespoke timeframes to be adopted according to the complexity of each plan change on a case-by-case basis, with the overall timeframe for releasing decisions still being met.	**Clause 26(8) of Schedule 5 – timeframe for independent hearing panel to make decision:** • Remove requirement for five-month timeframe from the date on which the summary of the submissions and further submissions were made.
Natural Environment Bill Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Goals require stronger signals (NEB s11). NEB s11 rightly emphasises environmental limits, life-supporting capacity, human health, no net loss of indigenous biodiversity, hazard risk management, and Māori interests.	Elevate biodiversity ambition to net gain over time (where feasible) and explicitly recognising inter-generational wellbeing to reflect sustainability principles.
Managing effects (NEB s14–s15). We support an effects hierarchy and the use of offsetting/compensation where appropriate and nationally directed. However, offsetting options should follow a clear hierarchy, with cash compensation being a last option, to stop it becoming an easy go to option that would inevitably lead, in the long-term, to environmental degradation.	Early and robust national guidance is needed to avoid inconsistent practice and litigation during the transition.
Cumulative effects clarity (NEB s15). The “less than minor” rule should be accompanied by worked examples in cross-Bill guidance (with the PB) to ensure cumulative effects are not inadvertently excluded where PB increases permitted activity thresholds.	Ensure cumulative effective are not inadvertently excluded where PB increases permitted activity thresholds.
Sequencing: spatial plans and limits. Regional spatial plans must be “within environmental limits”, yet many limits will only be set by future national instruments and the first-generation natural environment plans. An authoritative implementation roadmap to avoid sequencing conflicts is required.	Implementation of the system needs amending to either require the national environmental limits instruments to be delivered prior to completion of RSPs or RSPs delayed to ensure this work is completed first.
Undefined terms. The terms ‘minor’ and ‘more than minor’ are not	Define terms “minor and “more than minor”, If not to be defined in the Bills,

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
defined in either of the Bills. Only the term 'less than minor' is defined in this Bill. This could lead to inconsistent interpretation of meaning and ongoing litigation as council variously interpret the limits.	then the phrases must be provided definition in national direction, perhaps relative to effects in each field of activity.
Matters common to both Bills	
Monitoring the new system and permitted development, and online tools. With the shift toward more permitted development, councils will need clear mechanisms to identify development and support effective monitoring, including clear expectations that permitted activities contribute to monitoring costs rather than general ratepayers. A centrally developed national monitoring system, linking data from resource consents and permitted activity approvals, will be essential for consistent monitoring, streamlined data capture, and better understanding of environmental baselines, system performance, and development impacts.	At local level, online tools and processes must also be developed alongside any E-Plan to ensure efficient implementation and alignment with the original aims of the National Monitoring System.
Permitted activity rules Council considers that the proposed registration of permitted activities under section 38 and the associated requirements to demonstrate permitted status has not been scenario tested or informed by experienced practitioners to confirm the implementation and cost and time implications to applicants and Council.	Remove the requirement for registration of permitted activity under s38.
Future protection Positive provisions that help identify and protect future land are important as while we have a growth strategy and district plan, they do not afford much protection to prevent sprawling development that will not support longer term well-functioning areas and outcomes.	Provide further details on the use and strength of these provisions to support and enforce plans will be important.
Existing uses Council notes that section 20(3)(a) does not, as currently worded, apply to uses of land that previously fell under a designation under section 20(2). The enablement of the use of land in a manner authorised by a designation after the designation has been removed also requires a timeframe limitation. Council notes that the absence of this clarification is likely to result in uncertainty and litigation where a previously designated land use activity commences years after the designation was removed.	Review section 20(3)(a) and include land that previously fell under designation section 20(2).
Timeframes for audit by chief executive and Ministerial decisions	If such powers are retained, clear statutory timeframes are needed for all ministerial and chief executive

Planning Bill – Matters of concern and recommended changes	
Issue	**Recommendation**
Council is concerned that the Bills impose strict planning timeframes on local authorities, yet provide no equivalent deadlines for decisions by the chief executive or the Minister—even when councils must wait for those decisions. This lack of certainty is just as concerning for those awaiting the outcome of a plan change as uncertainty in local authority timings, perhaps moreso given the additional ministerial powers provided for in the new legislation.	decisions to support efficient planning processes and effective allocation of resources.
National instruments—certainty and co-design. Given how much rides on national direction, we support firm statutory milestones and the ability to **extend** those only where justified (PB Schedule 1, cl 6), alongside co-design with local government and iwi to ensure they can be implemented	Set firm statutory timeframes for settin national direction, and the ability to **extend** those only where justified (PB Schedule 1, cl 6), alongside co-design with local government and iwi to ensure they can be implemented
Participation settings. Front-loading participation at national instrument and plan stages can work, but only if (i) timeframes are realistic, (ii) hearings are held when requested, and (iii) iwi participation is resourced. As drafted, Schedule 3 cl 24 allows a panel to **decline to hold hearings** despite requests—this should be amended to a requirement for a hearing to be held if requested by applicant or submitters.	Amend schedule 3 **"**to a requirement for a hearing to be held if requested by applicant or submitters" rather than to "decline to hold hearings".