

7. The Coastal Environment

7.1 Introduction

The coastal environment of the Wellington Region varies greatly in character and provides for a diverse range of human needs. The character ranges from the largely rural Wairarapa coast to the highly developed urban areas around Wellington and Porirua Harbours. The Kapiti Coast has sandy beaches, is experiencing rapid population growth and is an important recreational resource for the Region. The south coast is rugged yet, because of its proximity to the Hutt Valley and Wellington City, is a popular place to visit.

The tangata whenua have especially strong links with the coastal environment, value its mauri, and all it offers. From Otaki round to the Wairarapa, the Region's coastal environment also contains significant habitats for a wide variety of plants and animals.

The coastal environment is thus an important focus of human activities and aspirations. It is also a location where particular types of natural processes and unique ecological values can be found. Balancing the use and the protection of the coastal environment requires careful management.

The Act gives the coastal environment special recognition in the following ways:

- Preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area are identified in s. 6 as matters of national importance;
- The Minister of Conservation is required to prepare a New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement to state policies for the sustainable management of the coastal environment; and
- Regional councils are required to prepare a Regional Coastal Plan. The Plan provides objectives, policies, rules and other methods for the management of the coastal marine area of the coastal environment.

The Regional Policy Statement provides an interpretation of the

Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 for the coastal environment of the Wellington Region. The Statement also provides the broad context for the more specific matters addressed in the Regional Coastal Plan. Additionally, it provides a policy framework for the "wet" and "dry" parts of the coastal environment. This framework recognises the ecological, geographical, cultural, social, and economic links between land and sea, and the complementary responsibilities that different authorities have for coastal management.

Care needs to be taken in describing the component parts of the coastal environment. The Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 use particular terms to describe specific parts of the coastal environment. These have been used in the Regional Policy Statement. The parts of the coastal environment and the various responsibilities for its management are shown in figure 3.

7.2 Issues

Issue 1

Many activities in the coastal environment cause few adverse effects when considered in isolation. However, there is **potential for individual developments to cause significant adverse effects**. Also, the **cumulative effects** of individual and otherwise insignificant developments or uses can also be significant. Together, these effects mean that there is **increased potential for loss of natural character and damage to coastal ecosystems and landscape features**. These effects can arise from:

- Demands for the expansion of existing urban areas along coastal margins, resulting in sprawling urban development (e.g., along the Kapiti Coast, and around Porirua Harbour);
- Demands to subdivide isolated rural coastal properties as a consequence of the downturn in the rural economy, resulting in sporadic development (e.g., in the Wairarapa);
- Development pressures for specific facilities that need to be located in the coastal environment (e.g., expansion of port facilities, marinas, etc.); and
- Pressures from activities which consume natural and physical resources (e.g., mining) or which can cause adverse effects (e.g., driving of vehicles along beaches and sand

Coastal
Environment
Objective 1.

dunes).

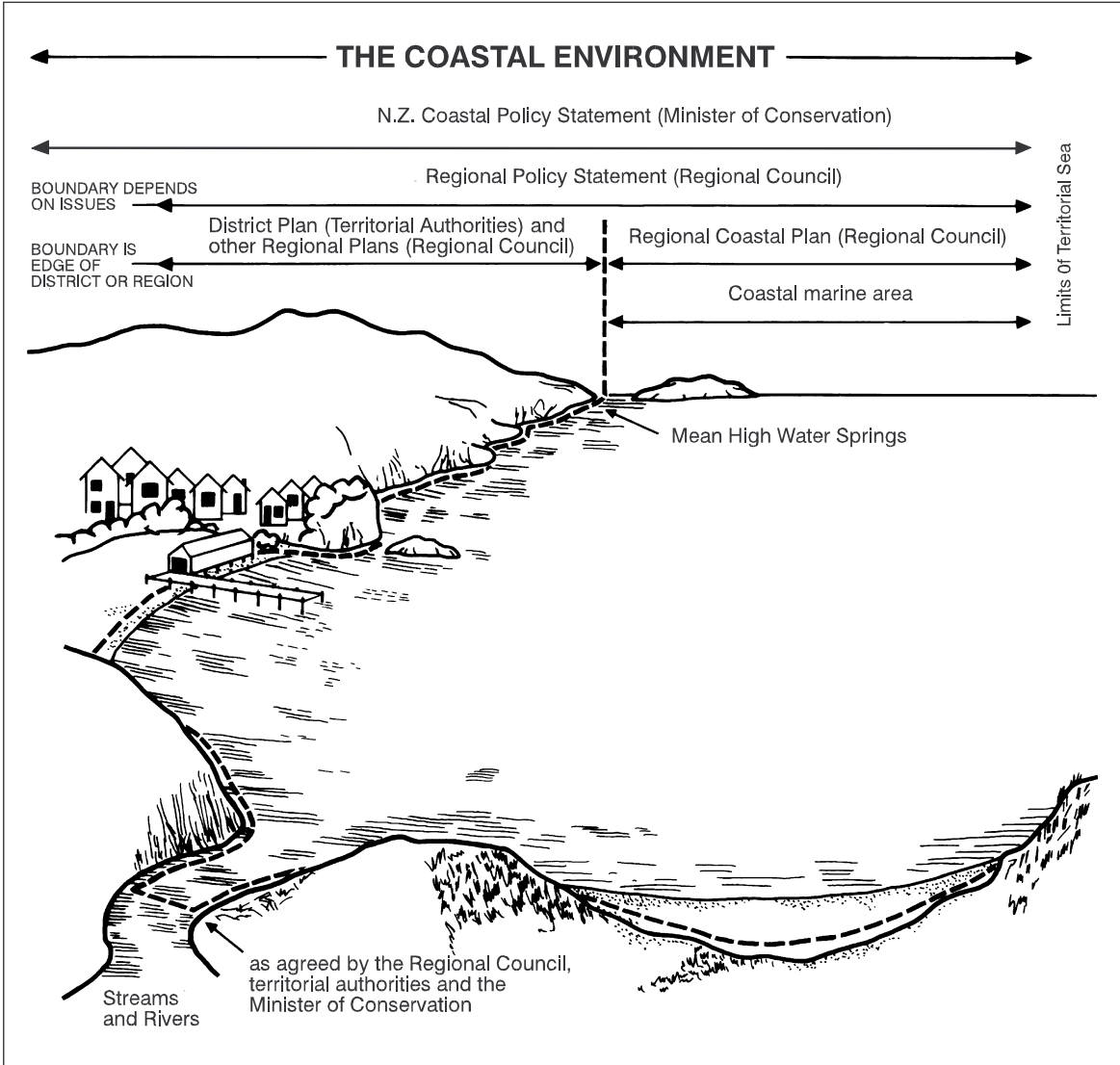


Figure 3 : The Coastal Environment

Issue 2	<p>Conflict arises from the need to maintain and enhance public access to and along the coastal marine area, and the need to protect certain areas or rights. Restrictions on public access may be necessary to protect ecologically sensitive areas, for security and Customs requirements, and for the safety of people.</p> <p>Access may be restricted because of private ownership of stretches of coastal land. Such restriction may result in problems relating to public expectation for access to and along the coast. Access may also need to be limited in order to reduce conflict between coastal activities at particular times or in certain places.</p>	Coastal Environment Objective 2.
Issue 3	<p>There is a problem in balancing the needs of activities requiring finite coastal resources (e.g., those needing waterfront land or space in sheltered waters). Some activities, because of their inherent nature, require a coastal location. For other activities a coastal location is merely desirable. Consideration also has to be given to the direct and indirect adverse effects of those activities that do have to be located in the coastal environment.</p>	Coastal Environment Objective 1.
Issue 4	<p>A variety of human activities, in the coastal environment and further inland, are causing degradation of coastal water quality, contamination of sediments and biota, and disruption to natural processes. Specific examples include the pollution of the Waiwhetu Stream, sewage discharges off the south Wellington coast and degradation of water quality in the Pauatahanui Inlet as a result of silt discharge from upstream subdivisions. Silt from catchments surrounding Pauatahanui has smothered filter feeders and exacerbated infilling of the inlet. There is potential for this to continue where land development occurs without careful run-off management.</p>	Coastal Environment Objectives 1 and 3.
Issue 5	<p>There is quite limited knowledge of the nature and functioning of coastal ecosystems and coastal processes, particularly in the coastal marine area. The lack of knowledge makes for difficulties when local authorities need to make decisions about the potential effects of subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment whilst providing for the preservation of the natural character of that environment.</p>	Coastal Environment Objective 1.
Issue 6	<p>There is potential for significant adverse effects on the coastal environment as a result of catastrophic events. These events may have a low probability of occurring, but when they do occur they have significant impacts. This is particularly a problem with vessels containing liquid fuels or other hazardous and dangerous</p>	Coastal Environment Objectives 1, 3 and 4.
		See also Ecosystems Issue 9.

materials. Similarly, hazards such as tsunamis, earthquakes and sea level rise may have a low probability of happening or occur over a long period of time, but they can cause significant impacts.

Issue 7

There is a need to recognise and provide for **the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with the coast**. Considerations include water quality, access to waahi tapu, tauranga waka, mahinga maataitai and areas of taonga raranga, and the provision for papakainga housing and marae development.

Coastal
Environment
Objective 4.

7.3 Objectives

Objective 1

The natural character of the coastal environment is preserved through:

- (1) *The protection of nationally and regionally significant areas and values;*
- (2) *The protection of the integrity, functioning and resilience of physical and ecological processes in the coastal environment;*
- (3) *The restoration and rehabilitation of degraded areas; and*
- (4) *The management of subdivision, use and development, and the allocation of resources in the coastal environment so that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

Coastal
Environment
Policies 1-3
and
6.

Objective 1 seeks to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment in the Wellington Region. The term "natural character" is not defined in the Act or the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994. Natural character can be thought of as the extent to which the naturally occurring ecology and/or physical processes of a place or resource remain intact. It does not exclude structures or other human induced changes — a place may retain some of its natural character even with a building on it — but it is reduced by their presence.

As natural character is not an absolute concept, its absolute preservation is not required in every case. It is appropriate therefore that the policy prescription of "avoid, remedy or mitigate" should apply, depending on the degree of natural character of the area or site in question. In places where the natural character is largely intact the emphasis of management

should be on avoiding adverse effects. Where human activities have already modified the natural character, a more flexible approach may be appropriate. Where substantial deterioration of natural character has occurred, some effects might still need to be avoided but remedying or mitigating adverse effects may have a more prominent role.

The objective recognises that specific sites and particular values help make up natural character in the Wellington Region. Clauses (1)-(3) seek to protect these places, values and physical and biological processes, and to restore or rehabilitate them where they have been diminished in some way.

The wording of clause (4) of the objective is intended to convey a message that the coastal environment should also be available for use. There are particular areas that do warrant higher levels of protection. However, there are also areas where the qualities and values that help comprise natural character would not be seriously compromised by use or development, so long as any adverse effects can be properly managed. Clause (4) also acknowledges the fact that land and other resources in the coastal environment are limited, and that there is a need to allocate these resources.

Objective 1 is necessary because preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment is identified as a matter of national importance in s. 6 of the Act. The objective is also needed for consistency with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

Objective 2

Existing provisions for public access to and along the coastal marine area remain and appropriate opportunities are taken to enhance public access.

There are a variety of ways to provide public access to and along the coastal marine area, and "access" can take a number of forms. Pedestrian access and vehicular access (e.g., to launch boats, fish, and for various forms of active or passive recreation) are familiar forms of access. Other aspects of access relate to tangata whenua use of coastal resources, and to visual access — access to views of the sea from the coastal environment, and views of the coast from offshore. These are all forms of "access" which people would like to have, but which may not always be possible or appropriate. Exceptional circumstances when access may need to be limited are set out in the explanation of Coastal Environment Policy 4.

Coastal
Environment
Policy 4.

Objective 2 seeks to retain, as a minimum, the quality of existing legal access to and along the coastal marine area. "Quality" is interpreted in the explanation of Coastal Environment Policy 4. The objective also seeks to provide for improvements to access by taking appropriate opportunities. Improved access could take the form of an increased number of access points. It might also find expression in a lower number of more convenient access points to and along the coastal marine area but, subject to Policy 4, the quality of existing legal access must be retained.

Objective 2 is necessary because s. 6 of the Act identifies as a matter of national importance the need to recognise and provide for public access to and along the coastal marine area. While public access is a matter of national importance, there is also a need for those enjoying such access to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects of their access that threaten the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment. Preservation of natural character and the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area are both requirements of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 that together need to be met.

Objective 3 *Coastal water quality is of a high standard.*

Coastal
Environment
Policy 5.

Objective 3 recognises that clean unpolluted water is a key component of the sustainable management of the coastal environment. High quality water will safeguard life supporting capacity and allow full recreational, aesthetic and commercial use of the coast.

Objective 4 *There are increased opportunities for the aspirations of the tangata whenua for the coastal environment to be met.*

Coastal
Environment
Policy 7.

Objective 4 explicitly acknowledges tangata whenua aspirations for the coastal environment in the Wellington Region. Amongst these aspirations are that the coastal marine area and its resources are accessible to tangata whenua, and that the sea continues to be a source of sustenance for the whole community.

Because of its cultural significance, the quality of water in the coastal marine area (Objective 3) is a fundamental issue affecting

the viability of the relationship between Maori and the coastal environment in the Wellington Region. **Objective 4** also recognises aspirations for papakainga housing and marae development on Maori owned land and reserves in the coastal environment.

The principal reasons for adopting **Objective 4** are to fulfil the requirements of the Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

7.4 Policies

Policy 1

To give effect to the following matters when planning for and making decisions on subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment:

- (1) *Protection, from all actual or potential adverse effects, of areas of nationally or regionally significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats for indigenous fauna, including those listed in table 8;*
- (2) *Protection of the values associated with nationally or regionally outstanding landscapes, seascapes, geological features, landforms, sand dunes and beach systems and sites of historical or cultural significance, including those listed in tables 9 and 10;*
- (3) *Protection of sensitive, rare or unusual natural and physical resources, habitats, amenity values and ecosystems which are unique to the coastal environment (including estuaries, coastal wetlands, mangroves and dunes, and their margins) by avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects so as to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment.*
- (4) *Protection of the integrity, functioning and resilience of the coastal environment in terms of the:*
 - (a) *Dynamic processes and features arising from the natural movement of sediments, water and air;*
 - (b) *Natural movement of biota;*

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

See also
chapter 10,
Landscape
and
Heritage.

- (c) *Natural substrate composition;*
- (d) *Natural water quality and quantity, and air quality;*
- (e) *Natural biodiversity, productivity and biotic patterns; and*
- (f) *Intrinsic values of ecosystems.*

Policy 1 provides guidance for district and regional plans and for resource consent decisions to ensure that important aspects of the coastal environment are recognised and potential adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

The policy distinguishes in clause (1) those areas where, because of their national or regional significance, all adverse effects have to be avoided and not simply remedied or mitigated. The policy does not aim to prevent all use or development in these areas. By requiring that adverse effects must be avoided, the policy is acknowledging that such areas can be used, but with great care.

Clause (2) identifies landforms, landscapes, seascapes, natural features and sites of historical or cultural significance that have special values associated with them. The policy aims to ensure that if any subdivision, use or development takes place, that the values that make the features significant in some way are protected from any adverse effects that may arise.

Clauses (3) and (4) provide a general requirement for the protection of specific components of natural character through the management of adverse effects of activities in all parts of the coastal environment.

The areas, sites and features currently listed in tables 8 to 10 are derived from a variety of sources.¹⁴ Some of these sources have used databases that are periodically updated and other sites or features may be identified to which the provisions of **Policy 1** would also apply. The number of sites and features listed in the tables may therefore be added to and amendments will be incorporated in future reviews or changes to the Regional Policy Statement.

Policy 1 is included to give effect to s. 6(a) of the Act and policies for the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment set out in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

1994.

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- ¹⁴ (1) Department of Conservation, 1993, *The Protected Natural Area Programme*, Department of Conservation Database, Wellington Conservancy, Wellington.
- (2) Department of Conservation, 1993, *Wetlands of Ecological and Representative Importance*, Department of Conservation Database, Wellington Conservancy, Wellington.

Table 8 : Sites of National or Regional Significance for Indigenous Vegetation or Significant Habitats for Indigenous Fauna

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kapiti and Mana Island Nature Reserves (N) (3)• Mana "Bridge" (Between the island and the mainland) (N) (8)• Motungarara, Tokomapuna, Tahoramaurea, Taputeranga, Somes, Mokopuna, Ward and all smaller islands and rocks, such as Kahau Rocks (R) (6)• Kapiti Marine Reserve (N) (6, 8)• Coastal Escarpments between Pukerua Bay and Wairaka Point (R) (3)• Plimmerton — remnants of coastal forest and the Taupo Swamp (N) (2, 3)• Pauatahanui Inlet (Wildlife Refuge, Wildlife Management Reserve), and Horokiri (Wildlife Management Reserve) (N) (1, 2, 3)• Makara Stream Estuary (R) (6)• Black Point (R) (3)• Red Rocks (Scientific Reserve) (N) (1, 4, 8)• Sinclair Head (Scientific Reserve) (N) (3, 4)• Kohangapiripiri Lake (R) (2)• Kohangatera Lake (N) (2, 3)• Turakirae Head (to Barneys Stream) (N) (3)• Cape Palliser (Haurangi State Forest Park) (R) (3)• Honeycomb Rock (foreshore and sea bed) (R) (8)• Castlepoint Scenic Reserve (R) (3) <p>"N" denotes sites of national significance and "R" denotes sites of regional significance</p>
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¹⁴ (contd) (3) Department of Conservation, 1993, *Sites of Special Wildlife Interest*, Department of Conservation

Database, Wellington Conservancy, Wellington.

- (4) Kenny J A and Hayward B W, 1993. op. cit.
- (5) Partridge T, 1992, *The Sand Dune and Beach Vegetation Inventory of New Zealand*, DSIR Land Resources Scientific Report No. 15, Christchurch, pp. 253.
- (6) Department of Conservation, 1990, *The Coastal Resources Inventory : First Order Survey, Wellington Conservancy*, Department of Conservation, Wellington, pp. 103 + maps.
- (7) Historic Places Trust pers. com., 13 July 1993.
- (8) Stevenson M L, Field K D, Holton A L and Baxter A S, 1987, *Regional Background Discussion Paper on Areas to be Investigated for Proposed Marine Protected Areas in the Central Fishery Management Area*, Unpublished report, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Wellington, pp. 98.
- (9) Wellington Regional Planning Authority, 1979, *Coastal Maritime Objectives and Policies*, Wellington Regional Planning Authority, Wellington, pp. 159 + appendices.
- (10) Wellington Harbour Maritime Planning Authority, 1988, *Wellington Harbour Maritime Planning Scheme*, Wellington.

Table 9 : Landscapes and Seascapes of National or Regional Significance

- Kapiti, Motungarara, Tokomapuna, Tahoramaurea, Mana, Taputeranga, Somes, Ward and all smaller islands and rocks (such as Kahau Rocks) as viewed from the sea and the mainland. **(N)** (6)
- Coastal escarpments and small beaches from Paekakariki to Owhiro Bay (excluding Pukerua Bay settlement, Porirua Harbour and Plimmerton). **(R)** (6, 9)
- Pauatahanui Inlet, Cape Terawhiti, Sinclair Head **(R)** (6)
- Baring Head - Turakirae Head **(R)** (6)
- Cape Palliser, including the lighthouse, "Kupe's Sails" and views of the South Island. **(R)** (6)
- Castlepoint scenic reserve, including the lighthouse. **(N)** (6)

"N" denotes sites of national significance and "R" denotes sites of regional significance

Table 10 : Outstanding Natural Features, Landforms and Sites of Historical Importance

1. Geological Features and Landforms

- Otaki Beach ridges **(R)** (4)
- Kapiti, Motungarara, Tokomapuna, Tahoramaurea, Mana, Taputeranga, Somes, Ward and all smaller islands and rocks (such as Kahau Rocks) **(R)** (4)
- Titahi Bay: fossil forest in beach **(R)** (4,6)

- Rock Point: fossils **(N)** (4,6)
- Tongue Point: marine terraces **(N)** (4,6)
- Makara Stream Flats **(R)** (6)
- Red Rocks: volcanic intrusions **(N)** (6)
- Island Bay lawsonite **(N)** (4)
- Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera : raised beach **(N)** (4)
- Turakirae Head: uplifted beach ridges **(N)** (4, 6)
- Honeycomb Rock and Kahau Rocks **(R)** (R)
- Castlepoint Scenic Reserve: nationally significant marine benches of limestone and marine fossils **(N)** (6)
- White Rock : amuri limestone **(R)** (4)
- Whakataki-Mataikona coast: tongue and groove erosion patterns. **(R)** (6)

Table 10 (contd)

- Kaiwhata River Mouth fossil forest **(N)** (6)
- 2. Sand Dune and Beach Systems with National or Regional Biological Values**
- The dunes north of Otaki **(R)** (5)
 - The dunes north of Peka Peka **(R)** (5)
 - Coastal forest fragments at Paekakariki **(R)** (5)
 - Dune system at Te Humenga Point **(N)** (5,6)
 - Dunes from Whareama River to Riversdale **(R)** (5)
 - The dunes at Ocean Beach, Castlepoint, White Rock and Uruti Point **(R)** (5)
 - Dunes west of Cape Palliser **(R)** (6)
- 3. Historical Features**
- Wellington Harbour, Sheds 7, 11-13 and 21 (10)
 - Massey Memorial, Point Halswell (10)
 - Paiaka shipwreck (7)
 - Fitzroy Bay - concentration of archaeological sites (7)
 - Pencarrow lighthouses (7)
 - White Rock to Oroi - concentration of archaeological

sites (7)

"N" denotes sites of national significance and "R" denotes sites of regional significance

Policy 2

To consider, where relevant and to the appropriate extent, the following matters when planning for and making decisions about subdivision, use or development in the coastal environment:

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

- (1) The degree to which the proposed activity will impose effects additional to those resulting from existing subdivision, use and development, and the extent to which such cumulative adverse effects on natural character may be avoided, remedied or mitigated;*
- (2) The extent to which natural character has already been compromised in an area and the need to avoid sprawling or sporadic subdivision, use or development;*
- (3) The efficient use of finite resources in the coastal environment and the viability of alternative sites outside the coastal marine area and outside of the coastal environment for the proposed activity;*
- (4) The potential impact of projected sea level rise;*
- (5) The actual or potential adverse effects of subdivision, use or development on areas of cultural or spiritual significance, heritage resources and on scenic, scientific, recreation, open space or amenity values; and*
- (6) The adequacy of provision of infrastructure services (particularly for the disposal of waste).*

Policy 2 identifies some matters for consideration when planning for or making decisions about subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment. The policy recognises that the provision of adequate information is crucial, if the evaluation of adverse effects on the natural character and the integrity, functioning and resilience of the coastal environment is to be effective.

The considerations identified are not exclusive. They relate to the qualities and characteristics that have been noted in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 and this Regional Policy Statement as being part of natural character. The matters listed

also indicate the need to recognise that land and other resources in the coastal environment are limited in their extent or quantity.

Clause (2), for example, highlights the need to consider how far natural character may already have been compromised and the need to avoid sporadic or sprawling development. Clause (3) points to the requirement for proposals that involve activities in the coastal marine area to include an assessment of alternative sites. Such sites may be outside of the coastal marine area but in the coastal environment or they may need to be inland of the coastal environment. All assessments should be clear in identifying how any adverse effects are to be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Clause (5) recognises the importance of areas of historical, cultural or spiritual significance and of scenic, scientific, recreation, open space and amenity values in the coastal environment, and the need to give such areas and values appropriate protection.

The principal reason for adopting **Policy 2** is to encourage better estimation of adverse effects on coastal processes, systems, and values, and assessment of the degree to which it is necessary to locate an activity in the coastal environment.

Policy 2 is consistent with and helps implement the provisions of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

Policy 3

To restore and rehabilitate the natural character of the coastal environment where appropriate.

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

Policy 3 seeks to repair significant damage to the natural character of the coastal environment caused by existing or past activities. Examples include damage to coastal dune systems from development, inappropriate vehicular use, and modification of vegetation.

However, the policy also acknowledges in the use of the words "where appropriate" that certain significant changes may have legitimately taken place in the past. An example would be changes brought about through the development of port facilities. The policy is not intended to enforce or require restoration or rehabilitation in such circumstances, nor to prevent further site specific changes, including rehabilitation, associated with

appropriate new uses or development.

When deciding which areas require restoration and rehabilitation, priority should be given to nationally and regionally significant areas, habitats or places and sites having special values specified for protection in Policy 1. Matters to be considered in assessing whether other areas should be restored or rehabilitated, and their priority, will relate to the extent to which the qualities that comprise "natural character" have been modified or degraded.

Policy 3 is included to give effect to policies for restoration and rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal environment contained in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

Policy 4

To ensure, in planning for or making decisions about new subdivision, use or development, that there is no reduction in the quality of existing legal access to and along the coastal marine area; and that opportunities are taken, other than in exceptional circumstances, to enhance the amount and variety of public access to and along the coastal marine area.

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

Policy 4 deals with the issue of maintaining existing legal opportunities for access to and along the coastal marine area, and, when possible, enhancing access.

The policy recognises that there will be changes in land use that lead to situations where existing legal access points are removed or altered. In these situations, the policy requires that there is no overall reduction in the quality of access. "Quality" refers to legal access to and along the coastal marine area of a type and scale that allows users of the coastal marine area to continue to enjoy the benefits and values they derive from the coastal marine area and from existing legal access to it. The policy also indicates that if opportunities arise for enhanced access, whether through the statutory resource consent process or through some other means, these opportunities should be recognised and provided for where possible.

However, the policy also acknowledges that there will be situations where improved access will not be possible or may be inappropriate. These circumstances may apply when there is:

- A need to protect the special characteristics of the sites and values identified by Policy 1, including those listed in tables 8 to 10, or sites and values identified through the

implementation of Policy 7 of this chapter;

- A need to provide for public health and safety;
- A need to provide for security on private property;
- A need to protect the rights of property owners, including the protection of crops and stock;
- A need to meet the security requirements of the Department of Customs; or
- A need to provide for quarantine facilities.

The principal reasons for adopting **Policy 4** are to meet the requirements of the Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994, and to alleviate community concerns that existing opportunities for public access to and along the coastal marine area could be limited by policies in plans or as a result of resource consent decisions.

Policy 5

To maintain or improve the quality of coastal water by:

- (1) *Improving, where necessary, the quality of fresh water entering the coastal marine area;*
- (2) *Avoiding, remedying or mitigating the effects of activities in the coastal environment that can degrade coastal water; and*
- (3) *Avoiding, remedying or mitigating the effects of point discharges that directly enter the coastal marine area so the effects do not render any water in the coastal marine area unsuitable for any purpose specified in a Regional Coastal Plan for the Wellington Region.*

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

See also
Fresh Water
Policy 6 and
Methods 17-
33.

Policy 5 seeks to improve coastal water quality in the future and to prevent further degradation of coastal water quality as a result of current human activities. Clause (1) seeks to improve the quality of fresh water entering the coastal marine area from rivers, streams or other watercourses. The clause also recognises, in the phrase "where necessary", that water quality may be generally acceptable and would only need improving in those areas where quality is unacceptable.

There is wide recognition and acceptance amongst people and communities in the Wellington Region, particularly tangata whenua, that water has been degraded in many areas and that degraded quality places restrictions on many coastal activities. A high standard of water quality is desired by, and is beneficial to, the community. Temporary degradation of water quality will occur. However, such degradation is only acceptable as long as there are no long-term, unsustainable environmental effects arising from the activity causing the degradation.

Policy 5 is included because of public concern about water quality and for consistency with provisions in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

Policy 6

To adopt a precautionary approach to the evaluation of risk in making decisions that affect the coastal environment, recognising that there will be situations where there is a low probability of an event occurring, but that such an event has the potential to create major adverse effects. Such events include:

- (1) *Earthquakes and tsunami;*
- (2) *Maritime shipping disasters; and*
- (3) *Accidents involving release of contaminants into the coastal marine area.*

Policy 6 requires decision makers to adopt a precautionary approach when making decisions about activities that may be significantly affected by events that may occur in the coastal environment. The policy identifies some of the possible events that would need to be considered when assessing possible risks.

The Act, in s .3, recognises that "effects" can include those that have a low probability of occurrence but a high potential impact and it is these types of effects to which the policy refers. The policy will require decision makers to place a considerable amount of emphasis on low probability, high impact events.

Another example where caution is required is the berthing or anchoring of ships containing hazardous and dangerous materials in close proximity to large population centres. In both examples **Policy 6** directs decision makers to consider explicitly the question of risk.

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

See also
Natural
Hazards
Policy 3.

Policy 6 is included for consistency with the provisions of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

Policy 7

To protect, where appropriate, the characteristics of the coastal environment of special value to the tangata whenua including waahi tapu, tauranga waka, mahinga maataitai and taonga raranga.

Coastal
Environment
Methods 1-3.

Policy 7 requires that policies and plans which seek to promote sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment recognise Maori values and the traditional uses which Maori make of coastal resources.

Information relating to the sites identified in **Policy 7** are held by iwi. The Policy points to the need for information concerning the location and values associated with sites of significance to tangata whenua to be considered in the consent granting process.

See also Iwi
Method 4.

The principal reasons for adopting **Policy 7** are to recognise the aspirations of tangata whenua in the Wellington Region and to fulfil the requirements of the Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994.

7.5 Methods

Method 1

The Wellington Regional Council will prepare a Regional Coastal Plan.

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Policies 1-7.

The Wellington Regional Council, in conjunction with the Minister of Conservation, is responsible for promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the coastal marine area. The Regional Council is required to prepare a Regional Coastal Plan to assist it to achieve this purpose.

The Plan will contain detailed issues, objectives, policies and methods (including rules) which will provide the framework for decision making in the coastal marine area.

The Regional Coastal Plan will be the principal method by which **Policies 1-7**, where they deal with the coastal marine area, will be implemented.

Method 2

District plans would be an appropriate means of implementing Coastal Environment Policies 1-7.

Coastal
Environment
Policies 1-7.

District plans are the principal means available to implement policies concerning the use of land above mean high water springs.

District plans could specify the criteria in **Policy 2** as appropriate information to accompany resource consents for proposals on the "dry" part of the coastal environment.

In relation to **Policy 4**, plans could provide direction on when esplanade strips or access strips would be appropriate for access, or for the protection of sensitive ecosystems.

District plans could also help in the implementation of **Policy 5** by containing provisions (e.g., run-off controls) that improve the quality of fresh water entering the coastal marine area.

The principal reason for **Method 2** is that district plans are statutory documents which will complement the Regional Coastal Plan by offering coverage of the land component of the coastal environment, and land inland of the coastal environment.

Method 3

To achieve integrated management, other means which could be used to implement Coastal Environment Policies 1-7 include:

Coastal
Environment
Policies 1-7.

- (1) *Development and implementation of management plans and other non-statutory plans by territorial authorities for areas and issues that impact on the coastal environment;*
- (2) *Liaison between the Wellington Regional Council, territorial authorities, iwi and the Department of Conservation to identify projects in the coastal environment of the Wellington Region where voluntary organisations, companies and individuals may assist in caring for the coastal environment; and*
- (3) *Liaison between the Regional Council, Department of Conservation and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.*

Method 3 identifies other means by which territorial authorities and other relevant organisations and authorities could help implement coastal environment policies.

Clause (1) of **Method 3** acknowledges that there may be non-statutory plans and documents that help implement coastal

environment policies.

Clause (2) of **Method 3** gives recognition to the fact that primary responsibility for management of the coastal environment falls to a few authorities, but that a number of other groups, organisations and individuals are also interested in carrying out a variety of roles, both individually and in partnerships, in maintaining and enhancing environmental values.

Fisheries conservation and management is excluded from the functions of the Regional Council and the Department of Conservation under s. 30(2) of the Act. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for management strategies under the Fisheries Act 1983. However, there is an important interface between the provisions of the Fisheries Act 1983 and resource management legislation. Integrated management can be enhanced through liaison between the respective administering authorities and this is recognised in clause (3).

The principal reason for adopting **Method 3** is that statutory plans are not the only way to put the coastal environment policies into effect. The method acknowledges that involving people and communities in coastal management can be a cost effective way of mitigating and remedying adverse effects. It is also an effective way of generating public support, providing publicity and assisting in changing attitudes to the environment, all of which are critical if the coastal environment objectives are to be achieved.

7.6 Anticipated Environmental Results

- (1) The natural character of the coastal environment is preserved and protected from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development; where appropriate, sites of national and regional significance are protected and degraded areas are restored.
- (2) Public access to and along the coastal marine area is maintained and enhanced, except in those circumstances in which access is constrained to protect ecological or cultural values, provide for property rights and security for property, meet the requirements for Customs or quarantine facilities, or to provide for the safety of people.

- (3) There is no further degradation of the quality of water in the coastal marine area and, where possible, water quality is improved.
- (4) Finite coastal resources are used efficiently.
- (5) The characteristics of the coastal environment of special value to the tangata whenua are protected, where appropriate.