

Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

Air quality



Wellington Regional Council's air quality policy covers all sources of particulate matter such as smoke, industrial discharges and dust, as well as odour that is offensive or objectionable beyond a property boundary.

Air quality is measured by Wellington Regional Council using samples taken from defined areas known as 'airsheds', which are large volumes of air that have particular characteristics due to geography or meteorological patterns. Airsheds can vary from relatively small areas within valleys to urban or region-wide areas where the effects of urban air pollution (such as ozone) may extend over many kilometres.

The Proposed Natural Resources Management Plan (proposed Plan) recognises eight airsheds within the Wellington Region: Kāpiti Coast, Wainuiomata, Porirua, Lower Hutt, Karori, Upper Hutt, Wellington City and the Masterton urban area. The Masterton urban airshed is the only polluted airshed in the Wellington Region and was gazetted on 1 September 2014. This airshed replaces the Wairarapa Valley airshed.

Wellington Regional Council monitors specific gases and small particles of airborne solid or liquid matter associated with combustion and natural processes, including nitrogen dioxide (along with other nitrogen oxides) produced by high temperature combustion and carbon monoxide gas produced by incomplete combustion in home fires and vehicles.

Health effects from airborne particulates

Particulate material associated with burning, industrial discharges and dust can be offensive, objectionable, odorous, corrosive, dangerous and harmful to human health. The accumulation of airborne particulates within a confined geographical area can add to pollution from vehicles and industry and affect health. The adverse effects associated with exposure to airborne particles are predominately respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

Burning materials

Several provisions in the proposed Plan manage the effects of inside and outside fires:

- In urban areas, using recognised solid fuel or wood-burning devices for inside fires is a permitted activity provided specified materials such as plastic, treated wood and wet wood are not burned. Burning garden vegetative waste in outside-fires is also permitted as long as the smoke and nuisance effects on neighbours are minimised.
- In rural areas outdoor burn-offs are permitted, as long as they do not include specified materials, such as machinery parts, tyres, plastic or petroleum products, treated or painted timber or animal waste.
- Some industrial and trade processes are permitted to discharge to air provided there are no objectionable or offensive odours, smoke or dust beyond the boundary of the property. The discharge of methyl bromide used as a fumigant is a controlled activity and requires consent from Wellington Regional Council.

What is the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region?

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan (the proposed Plan) is a new regional plan designed to integrate the Wellington Region's five existing regional plans-- the [Regional Coastal Plan](#), [Regional Freshwater Plan](#), [Regional Soil Plan](#), [Regional Air Quality Management Plan](#) and [Regional Plan for Discharges to Land](#). Regional plans are developed under the Resource Management Act to set out the objectives, policies and methods for people and organisations that use a region's resources for a variety of purposes:

The proposed Plan was developed following a review of the five existing regional plans from 2011 to 2015. Until the GWRC decides to adopt the proposed Plan, resource users must comply with rules in the proposed Plan and rules in the five existing plans.

There is a lot of information in the proposed Plan and a lot to understand, so if you need help to figure out if your activity is permitted, or requires a resource consent, or if you have any questions at all, please contact us for more information 0800 496 734 or regionalplan@gw.govt.nz

Permitted: no resource consent is required provided you comply with the conditions in the rule.

Controlled, discretionary or non-complying: a resource consent from Wellington Regional Council is required. Conditions may need to be met.

Prohibited: cannot be undertaken at any time.