

**BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL**

**UNDER THE** Resource Management Act 1991 (**Act**)  
**IN THE MATTER OF** Proposed Change 1 to the Wellington Regional  
Council's Regional Policy Statement (**PC1**)  
**BETWEEN** **WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
Local Authority  
**AND** **WAIRARAPA FEDERATED FARMERS**  
Submitter 163 to PC1

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**HEARING STREAM TWO**  
**HEARING STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH MCGRUDDY ON BEHALF OF**  
**WAIRARAPA FEDERATED FARMERS**

**30 JUNE 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Wairarapa Federated Farmers (**WFF**) made a submission on Proposed Change 1 (**PC1**) to the Wellington Regional Council's (**GWRC**) Regional Policy Statement (**RPS**).
2. The purpose of this hearing statement is to summarise WFF's submission in respect of Hearing Stream 2 (**HS2**), namely:
  - (a) Scope of amendments (s42A Issue 10)
  - (b) The matters set down for the Freshwater Plan Process (FPP)
  - (c) Proposed resource management issues (s42A Issue 1, 2, 3)
  - (d) Proposed Objective A (s42A Issue 4)
  - (e) Proposed Policy IM.1, IM.2 (s42A Issue 5, 6)
  - (f) Proposed Method IM.1 (s42A Issue 7)

## SCOPE OF AMENDMENTS

3. WFF relief seeks generally that the scope of PC1 be restricted to those changes necessary to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Urban Development; and specifically that the proposed amendments to Chapter 3 over-arching issues and objectives be deleted and considered in the full review of the RPS scheduled in 2024 (WFF submission point 1.2).
4. The s42A report recommends rejecting our submission, noting that (para 231) "*there is some uncertainty on whether a full review of the RPS will be undertaken in 2024*". However there is no documentation of the source of that statement. To the extent it may relate to "*national direction requirements*" which are still under development, WFF reiterates that the full review would be the more appropriate time to consider "*over-arching*" matters in Chapter 3.
5. To the extent that amendments to Chapter 3 are progressed, WFF proposes alternate relief on specific provisions below.

## FRESHWATER PLAN PROCESS

6. WFF seeks that the Freshwater Hearing Panel send the notified freshwater planning instrument back to GW to reconsider the allocation of provisions between the FPP and the P1S1 Process. The reasons for this were given as part of HS1 and are not repeated here.

## PROPOSED OVERARCHING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES (RMI)

### RMI One: Adverse Impacts

7. In respect of RMI One, WFF recommended (WFF 1.4) that the full review of the RPS in 2024 should be informed by careful analysis and interpretation of up-to-date regional state and trend data and should include findings from pNRP provisions directing Council investigation of environmental issues.
8. The s42A report (para 57) suggests that RMI One is overly negative and definite; and the author has not been able to find compelling evidence in support of the definitive language used.
9. Nevertheless the s 42A author accepts (para 57) that “*ecosystem loss is ongoing*”, referencing (footnote 5) State of the Environment (SOE) reports. Those SOE reports are all dated over a decade ago (2012); and on our reading do not support the authors assessment. Instead, the 2012 SOE Regional Overview<sup>1</sup> makes statements including:
  - “*Air quality is good most of the time*”
  - “*Soils at 78% of sites were in good health*”
  - “*Groundwater quality is generally very good*”
  - “*The results for river health are mixed*”
  - “*Estuaries are all in a moderate or fair condition*”
10. WFF notes that those 2012 SOE reports informed the development of previous Council statutory plans (the pNRP, notified in 2015). In respect of RPS Change One (notified 2022), WFF agrees with the s42A report (para 60) that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://archive.gw.govt.nz/assets/Our-Environment/Environmental-monitoring/Environmental-Reporting/Regional-Overview-low-res.pdf>

*“Developing RPS issue statements based on the best available information is a necessary response to RMA statutory requirements”.*

11. Further to this point, MfE guidance on s32 evaluations emphasises the importance of clearly defining the problem: *“Clearly defining the problem, issue or opportunity is a critical part of robust policy analysis and is strongly linked to s32 evaluation. The degree of clarity about the problem will influence the type and range of policy solutions to be considered, and the quality of analysis of the options”*<sup>2</sup>
12. WFF does not agree (s42A, para 60) that the 2012 SOE reports and other statements made in the s32 report represent the *“best available”* information at the time RPS PC1 was drafted. WFF reasons – including references - are set out at:
  - WFF 2.7: regional emissions are trending down
  - WFF 4.2: strong evidence of overall water quality improvement at the regional level over the past decade
  - WFF 5.3: no change or small increases in indigenous landcover in the period 1996-2018, and a net gain in wetlands
13. In this context, WFF does not agree the amendments recommended in the s42A report (para 65) sufficiently address the overly negative and definitive tone of RSI One. If this issue is retained, it should either be amended to more accurately reflect the 2012 SOE reports relied on; or preferably be amended to reflect best available current information.
14. Alternatively, WFF propose an alternate over-arching regional issue intended to support the overarching “integrated management” frame set out in the operative RPS (including at RPS 2.4, referenced at WFF 1.4), and the “integrated management” intent of matters under consideration in HS2 (s42A, including at para 31, 33).
15. WFF propose words to the following or similar effect:
  - Sustain and accelerate the multi-agency delivery platforms for empowering catchment communities for collective action to address the twin challenges of improving environmental outcomes and sustaining thriving economies and connected communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry for the Environment, A Guide to Section 32 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (Incorporating changes as a result of the Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017), section 4.2

16. The s42A report (para 64) considers the wording doesn't add anything significant. WFF's intent is a more energetic RSI which puts people at the centre of enacting change, and it is open to wording changes to achieve that intent.
17. WFF also propose an over-arching issue addressing climate change implications and specifically the looming water supply-demand gap which has come to the forefront in the decade since the RPS was made operative. WFF reasons are set out at WFF 1.4, including that:
- The multi-stakeholder Ruamahanga Whaitua Implementation Plan recommends integrated solutions to water reliability and pilot projects to prove feasibility
  - The multi-stakeholder Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy recommends whole of catchment thinking to understand catchment hydrology, respond to climate change and enlist the support of surrounding communities across a portfolio of nature-based and constructed storage solutions
18. WFF propose words to the following or similar effect:
- Accelerate the multi-agency delivery platforms to address the looming water supply-demand gap (giving back to the wai while sustaining the people)
19. WFF reiterate the central importance of this issue with implications across water, climate change, biodiversity, economy and community; and is open to wording changes to capture the intent.

### **RMI Two: Housing Capacity**

20. WFF agree this issue is relevant to giving effect to the NPS-UD, but do not agree it requires elevation to an "over-arching" issue in the RPS. WFF reiterate its recommendation (WFF 1.4) that this issue be re-located to Chapter 3.9.

### **RMI Three: Lack of mana whenua involvement**

21. WFF note this issue repeats the exact words (lack of involvement) of the operative RPS (3.10). Accepting that these words may have been well-founded

at that time (decision 2010, operative 2013), WFF do not agree (WFF 1.4) that “lack of” involvement is a reasonable representation of iwi involvement in council decision-making in recent years. If this issue is retained, further amendments should be made to more accurately reflect the level of current involvement.

22. Alternatively, WFF note that review of the RPS Tangata Whenua chapter has been deferred (Council 18 August 2022 Order Paper, para 43), and further consideration of this issue could be deferred to that review.

### **PROPOSED OBJECTIVE A**

23. WFF proposed alternate wording (WFF 1.5), consistent with the operative RPS which promotes a whole-of-catchment approach, and consistent with the alternate regionally significant issues recommended by WFF, ie:

- Alternate Objective A: Catchment communities are enabled and empowered to collaborate in working together to support the mana of the land and the water and the people who live and work within
- Alternate Objective B: Catchment communities are enabled and empowered to develop and prototype weaving together nature-based and built solutions for respecting and sharing water

24. The s42A (para 128) expresses support of the intent but suggests these alternate objectives are narrower in scope than proposed Objective A which is intended (para 129) to elaborate on “*how integrated management is best achieved*”.

25. WFF reiterate that building forward from the existing strong network of catchment groups across the region is central to how integrated management is best achieved in this region, including for the reasons – including references - set out at WFF 1.4, citing:

- NZs First Emissions Reduction Plan: *Government is looking to empower communities and maori to champion local actions specific to their situation*
- Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment: *Getting beyond laudable vision statements will require engagement with real communities on the ground...focus on giving those who live there the*

*incentives and the means to address environmental and socio-economic concerns in parallel*

- Ruamahanga Whaitua Implementation Plan (WIP): *Empower communities to recommend and implement management options*

26. WFF is open to wording changes to achieve its intent: in essence, empowering catchment communities to achieve integrated management.

## **PROPOSED POLICIES**

### **Policy IM.1: Integrated Management**

27. WFF sought that Policy IM.1 be deleted (WFF 9.2).

28. The s42A recommends rejecting WFF relief, but proposes amendments to address other submitter concerns, including to clarify that Policy IM.1 applies only **to the extent relevant** (Para 150, authors emphasis); and to clarify that the direction to ‘partner” with mana whenua was intended to be directed at local authorities rather than resource consent applicants (para 151).

29. WFF generally agree that it is Councils who exercise functions and powers under the Act: to the extent Policy IM.1 is retained, it should exclude resource consents.

### **Policy IM.2: Equity and Inclusiveness**

30. WFF sought that Policy IM.2 be deleted (WFF 9.3).

31. The s42A report (para 175) was ‘finely balanced” on recommending deletion.

32. WFF reiterate that Policy IM.2 should be deleted, for the reasons set out in the s42A report (para 170-172), including that that it is not clear how Policy IM.2 relates to the purpose of the RMA and overarching Objective A.

## **PROPOSED METHODS**

### **Method IM.1: Integrated Management**

33. WFF sought that Policy IM.2 be deleted (WFF 11.6).
34. The s42A report recommends retaining with minor amendments (para 194).
35. Alternatively, WFF propose alternate relief, consistent with its alternate relief on Objective A, specifically to provide for empowering collective action by catchment communities. The alternative could read to the following or similar effect:
- To achieve integrated management.....
- a) Partner with and provide support to community catchment groups...
  - b) Provide support to mana whenua to provide for matauranga Maori...
  - c) Work together with other agencies to support action on the ground...
  - d) Enable connected and holistic approach...
  - e) Incentivise opportunities and programmes that achieve multiple objectives and benefits

## **CONCLUSION**

36. WFF relief seeks that the provisions under consideration in HS2 be deferred to the full review of the RPS scheduled in 2024.
37. To the extent these provisions are retained, they should be heard by the Schedule One Hearing Panel.
38. WFF acknowledge the s42A report attempts to address submitter concerns, but the recommended changes do not generally satisfy WFF concerns.
39. WFF is however open to changes to better address the concerns set out in its submission.