

HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Sent via email to:

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Dear Sir/Madam

SUBMISSION – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT NATIONAL DIRECTIONS

Introduction

The Hurunui District Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the Government's proposed package of Resource Management Act 1991 National Directions.

The Hurunui District is located in North Canterbury. The district has approximately 14,200 residents and cover an area of 8,640km² spanning from the east coast across to the Main Divide. The Hurunui District is primarily a rural district with large areas dedicated to primary production interspersed with small service towns. The district's economy is primarily reliant on primary production and tourism.

The Hurunui District Council is broadly supportive of the intent behind the proposed package of amendments to national directions. We acknowledge the importance of a more comprehensive, integrated, and coherent national planning framework, and agree that stronger national direction is needed to address systemic challenges and elevate key environmental outcomes.

While we support the overall direction of reform, we do so with caveats. In our view, the scale, pace, and complexity of the proposed changes introduce several significant risks, particularly for councils operating across diverse geographies and community needs, and with varying planning capacity. A successful transition will require national direction to be practical, proportionate, and responsive to the diverse contexts in which it will be implemented.

This submission outlines several high-level concerns that we believe must be addressed to ensure effective, equitable, and durable implementation of the proposed national instruments. Our key concerns are discussed in the main body of this submission. Detailed technical comments on specific instruments are provided in Appendix 1.

Key Concern 1: Unresolved policy gaps and interactions across the package that need to be resolved

While we support the overall intent to provide stronger and more comprehensive Government direction, we are concerned that the proposed package of national directions introduces multiple, potentially competing objectives without adequate mechanisms to guide prioritisation or resolve conflicts in practice.

Many of the draft instruments, for example, those concerning infrastructure, natural hazards, freshwater, highly productive land, and indigenous biodiversity, each set out laudable objectives. However, when considered together, they create a complex and potentially contradictory planning environment. Councils may be left navigating unclear trade-offs between:

- Enabling urban development and infrastructure delivery
- Protecting freshwater bodies and indigenous ecosystems

- Avoiding development on highly productive land or in hazard-prone areas
- Managing reverse sensitivity, contaminated sites, and other environmental risks.

These interactions introduce significant uncertainty, cost, and complexity into both plan-making and consenting processes, especially for councils such as Hurunui, which manage large geographic areas, diverse communities, and a range of rural and urban planning challenges. The lack of explicit direction on how to reconcile conflicting objectives risks not only inefficient and inconsistent outcomes but also increases legal vulnerability and delays in delivering much-needed development.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the package be amended to include:

1. A clear national-level hierarchy of outcomes or conflict-resolution framework, guiding how councils should weigh competing objectives.
2. Clarification of which instruments are binding and how they interact, including whether any objectives have primacy in specific contexts.
3. Guidance on when and how certain outcomes may be prioritised, qualified, or set aside, including examples and thresholds for acceptable trade-offs.

Providing this clarity is essential to ensure the intent of national direction translates into workable, defensible, and efficient implementation on the ground. Without it, councils may be forced to pursue all objectives equally, even when they are incompatible in practice, undermining the very certainty and consistency these directions aim to provide.

Key Concern 2: Local Autonomy and Decision-Making

We support the introduction of a more comprehensive and integrated package of national direction. We recognise the need for stronger and more coherent national guidance to address systemic challenges in the planning system and to elevate environmental priorities.

However, we are concerned that the increasing prescriptiveness of national direction risks constraining local autonomy and reducing councils' ability to reflect the unique character of their communities and environments. A highly centralised approach may inadvertently undermine local democracy, reduce meaningful community engagement, and marginalise the integration of mātauranga Māori and place-based knowledge into planning outcomes.

National direction should explicitly recognise and uphold the principle of subsidiarity—ensuring that decisions are made at the most local level capable of addressing the issue effectively. This includes:

- Affirming the role of local authorities as primary decision-makers in matters where local context, values, and knowledge are critical to achieving outcomes.
- Enabling councils to interpret and apply national direction in ways that reflect the distinct environmental, cultural, and social characteristics of their communities.
- Supporting the integration of local expertise, and community priorities, including mātauranga Māori, into planning processes, rather than imposing uniform solutions that may not be fit for purpose.

Recommendation:

We recommend that national direction be designed to support both consistency and responsiveness by:

1. Embedding the principle of subsidiarity, enabling local authorities to tailor implementation to local context
2. Ensuring sufficient flexibility is retained for councils to exercise discretion in how outcomes are achieved
3. Providing clear national expectations and bottom lines, while allowing adaptation of methods and timing to reflect community needs and resource capacity.

Key Concern 3: Implementation Costs and Capacity Constraints

The administrative, technical, and financial burden of giving effect to the National Directions is likely to be significant. Councils with broad mandates and diverse planning environments may face particular challenges in implementation.

Recommendation:

1. Provide central government support for implementation, including training, data infrastructure, guidance, and financial assistance. Consider a funding mechanism that supports all councils to deliver equitable and effective implementation, recognising the varying scales and scopes of local government responsibilities.

Key Concern 4: National Direction on Managed Retreat and Climate Relocation

We are concerned that the proposed package fails to address the urgent and growing need for a system to support managed retreat (also referred to as proactive relocation, planned relocation, or *te hekenga rauora*), an omission that is inconsistent with both the findings of the Expert Working Group (EWG) on Managed Retreat and the Government's own climate adaptation priorities.

The current package of National Directions does not incorporate any mechanisms, guidance, or direction to support managed retreat or proactive relocation of communities and assets facing intolerable or compounding climate risks (e.g. sea-level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, and wildfire zones). This is despite:

- The August 2023/2024 report of the Expert Working Group on Managed Retreat, which recommended a clear legislative and policy framework to govern both voluntary and mandatory relocation
- Ongoing climate-induced displacements in areas such as Hawke's Bay, Westport, Tairāwhiti, and Auckland
- The Government's prior commitment to developing a "planned relocation system" under the Climate Adaptation Act.

The proposed NPS-Natural Hazards presents an important opportunity to provide interim guidance to councils and communities while the Climate Adaptation Act is being developed. Without such direction, councils are exposed to a policy vacuum that hinders timely, coordinated, and legally robust decisions around risk-based land use and relocation.

By excluding managed retreat, the current package of National Directions risks being misaligned with national adaptation goals and leaves a critical gap in the climate resilience toolkit. In the absence of clear policy direction, there is a risk of fragmented, inconsistent, and reactive responses across the country. This also increases the potential for litigation, inconsistent zoning decisions, and public uncertainty, placing greater liability and reputational risk on local authorities.

In addition, while we acknowledge there is an intent to establish a long-term, principled approach to climate adaptation, we are concerned that the current articulation of the proposed framework lacks sufficient detail regarding, integration, and implementation. In particular, the interaction between the Climate Adaptation Act, National Adaptation Plan, and NPS-Natural Hazards remains opaque, increasing the risk of fragmentation and misalignment across planning instruments.

We recommend that central government develop a transparent, time-bound implementation plan that clarifies how these instruments will interact, and how responsibilities and cost of implementation will be shared between central government, local authorities, iwi/Māori, and other affected parties.

To assist in bridging the gap until the Climate Adaptation Act is enacted, we recommend that the Government consider piloting managed retreat approaches in selected high-risk areas. This would help identify practical barriers, test policy mechanisms, and inform the future development of national direction. Such pilots could also support shared learning and capacity-building across the sector.

Recommendation:

1. Explicitly include managed retreat in the package of National Direction:
 - Develop and notify a National Policy Statement on Climate Resilience and Managed Retreat, either as a standalone instrument or an addition to the proposed direction package.
 - Include clear policies and objectives that:
 - Identify areas subject to high climate risk where relocation may be required
 - Set criteria for risk assessments (including climate change scenarios), thresholds for relocation, and triggers for withdrawal of infrastructure or services
 - Require regional spatial plans or strategies, and district plans to integrate relocation pathways and land-use changes.
2. Implement the Recommendations of the Expert Working Group, including:
 - Establishing a central coordinating agency to manage funding, oversight and coordination of managed retreat
 - Creating legally defined powers to enable land acquisition, title adjustments, and service withdrawal
 - Designing a fair and transparent funding model involving central and local government, insurers, and asset owners
 - Integration with regional adaptation plans and Climate Adaptation Act provisions.
 - Undertaking a set of regionally diverse pilot projects to test different retreat pathways, funding models, and community engagement mechanisms, particularly in areas already facing known risks
3. Ensure alignment and integration with the proposed Climate Adaptation Act:
 - Future-proof the proposed national direction instruments to ensure consistency with the proposed Climate Adaptation Act
 - Avoid duplication, legal uncertainty, or inconsistent mandates by establishing a cohesive and integrated planning and legislative framework for managed retreat.
 - Ensure that the NPS-Natural Hazards plays a bridging role between the current RMA framework and the future statutory regime under the Climate Adaptation Act, to maintain policy continuity and legal coherence
 - Include a requirement for regional and district plans to give effect to the National Adaptation Plan and forthcoming Climate Adaptation Act, ensuring strategic consistency and long-term resilience planning
 - Develop a publicly available implementation roadmap outlining legislative timelines, transition phases, and agency responsibilities to support local government preparedness and avoid planning and investment uncertainty.

Key Concern 5: Freshwater Management

We support the overarching intent of the NPS-FM and the principle of Te Mana o te Wai. We recognise the need to restore and protect the health and well-being of our freshwater bodies for current and future generations. The prioritisation of freshwater health, alongside the needs of people and communities, is a vital foundation for sustainable resource management.

We share the Government's concern that the current hierarchy within the NPS-FM's single objective may be being interpreted too rigidly in practice. We understand that in some cases, this has led to the perception that "pristine" water quality must be achieved before any other use of freshwater is permitted. Such an approach risks creating unrealistic expectations, stalling necessary community and economic activities, and undermining local support for freshwater reforms.

Recent climatic changes have intensified extreme weather events across Aotearoa New Zealand, placing growing pressure on both central and local government resources, as well as sectors such as agriculture. These events are expected to become more frequent and severe, reinforcing the need to build the

resilience of our freshwater ecosystems. Healthy and resilient freshwater systems are essential to sustaining key ecosystem services, including the provision of clean drinking water, irrigation for food production, water purification, and flood mitigation. These services are fundamental to public well-being, food security, and climate adaptation.

In this context, freshwater management must be treated with urgency and foresight. In some regions, reduced rainfall and growing demand may turn freshwater into a scarce and contested resource, increasing pressure across land uses and compounding water security risks. This, in turn, could reduce the viability of primary production in affected areas, further challenging national food security and regional economic resilience.

In general, we support the proposed shift from a single-objective hierarchy to a multi-objective framework within the NPS-FM. A multi-objective approach has the potential to offer the flexibility needed to reflect diverse environmental, social, cultural, and economic contexts. For Hurunui, it is anticipated to enable practical, staged improvements aligned with community capacity and long-term goals.

To ensure the success of the revised framework, we seek:

- **Recognition of Staged Improvements:** Guidance that enables councils to set ambitious, yet realistic and achievable, pathways for freshwater improvement over time, particularly in catchments with legacy issues.
- **Balanced Decision-Making:** Direction that allows for the consideration and balancing of environmental, social, economic, and cultural outcomes, reflecting the diverse needs of our communities.
- **Certainty for Implementation:** Clear national direction to reduce ambiguity, avoid unnecessary litigation, and support effective plan-making and consenting processes.
- **Support for Councils with Diverse Needs:** Targeted technical and financial support for councils implementing the revised framework across varied geographies and catchment contexts.

We recognise the importance of Te Mana o te Wai and the role of tangata whenua in freshwater planning. Meaningful engagement is essential to the integrity and success of freshwater management. However, we also acknowledge that this requires more than intent, it requires clear engagement protocols, capacity-building for both councils and iwi/hapū, and adequate funding to support participation. We recommend that the Government:

- Co-develop engagement protocols with iwi and hapū that are adaptable to local contexts.
- Provide ring-fenced funding to support Māori participation in freshwater planning and decision-making.
- Support training and capacity-building initiatives for council staff to strengthen cultural competency and partnership capability.

Recommendation:

1. ***Retain Te Mana o te Wai as the Foundational Principle:*** Ensure Te Mana o te Wai remains central to the NPS-FM, grounding all objectives in a holistic, mātauranga Māori-informed approach. This principle must continue to guide freshwater planning and decision-making across all regions.
2. ***Embed Robust Environmental Bottom Lines:*** Accompany the multi-objective framework with clear, enforceable environmental bottom lines to prevent degradation and protect freshwater ecosystems. These bottom lines should be nationally consistent but adaptable to local catchment contexts.
3. ***Support Staged and Realistic Implementation:*** Provide national guidance that enables councils to set staged, achievable freshwater improvement pathways, particularly in catchments with legacy issues.
4. ***Target Support for Capacity-Constrained Councils:*** Ensure sufficient time and resources are allocated for all councils to transition effectively to the new framework. This includes:

- Clear transitional guidance for plan-making and consenting.
- Meaningful engagement with tangata whenua, industry, and community stakeholders throughout the transition period.

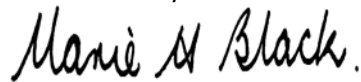
5. ***Strengthen Tangata Whenua Involvement:*** Support meaningful and consistent tangata whenua involvement in freshwater planning by:

- Co-developing engagement protocols with iwi and hapū that are adaptable to local contexts.
- Providing ring-fenced funding to support Māori participation in planning and decision-making.
- Supporting training and capacity-building initiatives for elected members and council staff to strengthen their cultural competency and partnership capability.

We reiterate our support for the intent to modernise and strengthen New Zealand's planning system through coherent and enforceable national directions. However, the success of these reforms will depend heavily on practical implementation, careful sequencing, and meaningful partnership with local government.

We thank the Ministers for the opportunity to comment and welcome ongoing dialogue to ensure these directions deliver improved outcomes for our environment, communities, and future generations.

Yours faithfully



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Appendix 1 – Specific Submission Points on the Proposal

Provision or Proposal	Hurunui District Council Feedback and Recommendation if Applicable
Relevant to all proposed and amended national direction	
Definitions - Cross reference related definitions	At various points proposed instruments use similar but not identical definitions, e.g. 'local authority' 'decision maker' 'consenting authority' in the NPS Infrastructure, while 'decision makers' appears in the NPS REG, and 'local authority' is used in the NPS-NH in a way that appears to mean decision maker. The NPS-NH refers to infrastructure but is unclear if they are referring to the RMA definition of infrastructure or the NPS-I definition. Ultimately, there should be a single, consistent, group of definitions, and we recommend staff spend additional time to ensure these are appropriately cross referenced and aligned.
Definitions - urban environment and related terms	There is occasional confusion between 'urban environment', 'urban zone' and 'urban area' through the current National Direction framework. There is a particular assumption that all urban areas are urban environments, which is not true as small councils such as Hurunui do not meet the population threshold and do not apply the NPS-UD. In the proposed documents these terms are used in an almost interchangeable way. For example, NPS-ET P9 uses 'urban environment' while the policy intent appears to anticipate effects in an 'urban area' or 'urban zone' – as there is no fundamental reason why a routine subdivision in Christchurch's Residential Zone needs to consider space requirements for EDN assets, while an equivalent application in Hurunui's Residential zone would not (as we do not meet the 10,000 person

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	threshold for an urban environment despite having an urban area with urban zones). We recommend that all proposed uses of 'urban' are carefully cross checked (or alternatively the definition of 'urban environment' is amended, which is beyond the scope of the current proposal).
Natural hazard and climate change impact resilience	To include natural hazard and climate change impact resilience as a requirement for all instruments, which includes built infrastructure.
National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units)	
Where does it apply? This NES is proposed to apply to MRUs in residential, rural, mixed use, and Māori purpose zones across all of New Zealand.	The Hurunui District Plan does not have mixed use or Māori purpose zones. We do permit dwellings in the Business 1 Zone (but not the Business 1A or 1H Zones or Business 2 Zone). There is no definition in the National Planning Standards for a business zone. The National Planning Standards define mixed use zones as areas used predominantly for a compatible mixture of residential, commercial, light industrial, recreational and/or community activities. The application of the NES to MRUs needs to recognise that district plans may have more permissive provisions. Recommendation: This NES is proposed to apply to MRUs in residential, rural, mixed use, and Māori purpose zones across all of New Zealand, <u>except where more lenient rules apply in existing district plans.</u>
All other provisions in district and regional plans Other than as provided for in the NES, all other district and regional plan provisions are proposed to apply in relation to:	The Hurunui District Plan has specific provisions to address reverse sensitivity effects from primary production activities and the protection of the natural and built environment in areas that are particularly valued

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▪ subdivision; ▪ Resource Management Act 1991 section 6 matters of national importance (eg, management of risks from natural hazards); ▪ the specific use of the MRU (other than for residential activities); ▪ regional plan rules; ▪ papakāinga; ▪ earthworks; and • setbacks from transmission lines, railway lines and the National Grid Yard	by the community due to their natural features or amenity values, such as Hanmer Springs that need to continue to apply. The latter would not be captured by s6 of the RMA as they fall outside of the protection of: - Outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development; - The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development: Recommendation: The District Plan rules in relation to the following be added to the provisions: • Setbacks from unsealed roads, mineral extraction activities, intensive primary production activities, sewage treatment facilities and effluent disposal areas.
D1 Minor residential unit A self-contained residential unit that is ancillary to the principal residential unit and is held in common ownership with the principal residential unit on the same site.	The definition needs to include the requirement that the MRU is completely detached from the PRU on the same site. This would provide consistency with the Building and Construction (Small Stand-alone Dwellings) Amendment Bill. Recommendation: That a minor residential unit be defined as follows: A self-contained stand-alone residential unit that is ancillary to the principal residential unit and is held in common ownership with the principal residential unit on the same site.
D2 Residential unit	Whilst this definition achieves consistency with the National Planning Standards it is not consistent with the Building and Construction (Small Stand-alone Dwellings) Amendment Bill as it states that a residential unit can be part of a building, not a stand-alone building as set out in the Bill.

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A building(s) or part of a building that is used for a residential activity exclusively by one household, and must include sleeping, cooking, bathing and toilet facilities.	Additionally, there is no requirement to include laundering facilities which is a requirement for housing under Clause G2 of the New Zealand Building Code contained in Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations 1992. Recommendation: That a residential unit be defined as follows: A building that is used for a residential activity exclusively by one household, and must include sleeping, cooking, bathing, toilet and laundering facilities.
PA 1 One minor residential unit per site as a permitted activity Permit one minor residential unit per site in residential, rural, mixed use and Māori purpose zones where they meet permitted activity standards, except where more lenient rules apply in existing district plans.	There are sensitive coastal environments within the Hurunui district where the Hurunui District Plan (the District Plan) restricts accessory buildings to a gross floor area of 40m² and stipulates that they cannot contain kitchen facilities. This includes the Claverley Comprehensive Development Zone (CCDZ). These provisions are consistent with section 6(a) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), which identifies that the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment is a matter of national importance. We support the proposed NES-GF and specifically commend the provision that limits the application of the NES-GF in areas where matters of national importance under section 6 of the RMA apply. We seek confirmation that the NES-GF will not override District Plan provisions in areas where matters of national importance under section 6 of the RMA apply, for example sensitive coastal environments such as the CCDZ. Recommendation:

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	That the final NES-GF and any associated guidance material explicitly acknowledge and reinforce that such district plan rules will continue to apply in areas where section 6 matters are relevant.
PAS 1 Maximum internal floor area The maximum internal floor area is 70 square metres (m2). The maximum internal floor area is measured on the inside of the enclosing walls or posts and columns.	The definition of the measurement of maximum internal floor area does not align with proposed Schedule 1A of the Building Act 2004 which defines a small stand-alone dwelling as having a net floor area that is equal to or less than 70m². It would be possible under the current proposal to insert a mezzanine floor, given that the definition of a MRU does not stipulate that it has to be single storey, and being a mezzanine it would not be enclosed by walls or posts and columns. This conflicts with proposed Schedule 1A of the Building Act 2004 which defines a small stand-alone dwelling as being single storey and of simple construction. We also note that the Building Regulations 1992 set out the building code in accordance with the Building Act 2004 defines floor area as all interior spaces used for activities normally associated with domestic living. As such, a non-habitable space such as an attached garage would be excluded from the floor area definition, while under the proposed NES-GF it would be included. Recommendation: That the maximum internal floor area be described as follows: The maximum net internal floor area is 70 square metres (m2) <u>over a single storey.</u>
PAS 2 Number of minor residential units per site and relationship to principal residential unit	A principal residential unit to be open to multiple interpretations. For example, a principal residential unit could contain a principal dwelling and attached family flat. Alternatively, a site could contain a principal residential unit, and under the District Plan, an accessory building of up

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One MRU per site, and the MRU is held in common ownership with a principal residential unit on the same site, except where more lenient rules apply in existing district plans.	to 40 square metres used for residential purposes (such as a self-contained studio). In both of these scenarios permitting a MRU on the site would go beyond what is intended to be enabled by the proposed NES-GF. Recommendation: A principal residential unit needs to be defined and added to the existing definitions included in the NES-GF.
PAS 3 Maximum building coverage per site Maximum building coverage of 50% for MRUs and principal residential units collectively in residential, mixed use and Māori purpose zones.	The proposed maximum building coverage is for MRU and PRU collectively but does not include accessory buildings such as detached garages and sleepouts. As such the maximum building coverage on a site containing accessory buildings would be significantly over 50% The Hurunui District Plan permits a maximum building coverage of 20% for the Residential 3 Zone, 35% for the residential 1 Zone and 40% for the Residential 2 Zone. Given the bulk and scale of an MRU they will be compatible with the residential scale of the site and surrounding area and a site coverage of up to 50% would still provide for open space, vegetative cover and privacy. However, a maximum building coverage of 50% would adversely affect the stormwater drainage systems and overland paths in settlements such as Amberley that have a requirement for stormwater flow to be managed in accordance with the Council's Amberley Stormwater Management Plan; and to avoid any increase in peak stormwater flow within Amberley's drainage system. Recommendation: That maximum building coverage be described as follows:

Provision or Proposal	Hurunui District Council Feedback and Recommendation if Applicable
	Maximum building coverage of 50% for MRUs, principal residential units <u>and accessory buildings</u> collectively in residential, mixed use and Māori purpose zones <u>excluding zones subject to a specific requirement for the management of stormwater flow.</u>
PAS 4 Minimum building setbacks from boundaries Setbacks in residential zones: 2 metres (m) from the front boundary, 2 m from side and rear boundaries.	The Hurunui District Plan generally requires a setback of 4.5 metres from the front boundary and 1 metre from the side and rear boundaries. An MRU setback 2 m from the front boundary, as per the proposed NES-GF would not necessarily have an adverse effect on residential character and amenity values given the constraints on their bulk and scale. We note that in the longer established townships in the district, such as Amberley, the older housing stock is set close to the road and does contribute to providing an active edge condition to the street. We also note that in the Terrace residential area in Hanmer Springs, there is no front yard requirement for dwellings.
PAS 4 Minimum building setbacks from boundaries Setbacks in rural zones: 10 m from the front boundary, 5 m from side and rear boundaries.	The Hurunui District Plan requires a setback of 10 m from the front boundary from a sealed public road that is not a strategic arterial road, a district arterial road or a collector road and as such is consistent with the proposed NES-GF. However, the majority of rural public roads within the district are unsealed with the District Plan requiring a 25 m setback from the front boundary to mitigate effects from dust and noise. Reducing the setback to 10 metres will result in reverse sensitivity effects and potentially increased demands on Council to seal unsealed roads. Whilst a property owner could elect to set an MRU further back from the road boundary, this would result in extra costs to run services such as electricity and water in from the road boundary.

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	We also note that for strategic arterial roads that are a State Highway and under the control of Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency that any MRU established within 80 m of the State Highway would need to be designed to achieve a design noise level of 40 dB LAeq (24h) inside all habitable spaces. This will result in additional design and build costs. The Hurunui District Plan does not have side and rear setback requirements, instead relying on a separation distance of 100 m between dwellings on different lots under different ownership to maintain landscape character. Recommendation: The front boundary setbacks be set on the basis of the formation and classification of the road they adjoin.
PAS 5 Building setbacks from the principal residential unit The MRU must be at least 2 m from the principal residential unit.	For Rural Zones there needs to also be a maximum setback from the PRU to maintain landscape character by ensuring that dwellings and principal buildings are grouped, rather than scattered over the site. In the Hurunui District Plan minor dwellings are required to be located within 30 m of the main dwelling. Recommendation: That the setback from the PRU be described as follows: The MRU must be at least 2 m from the principal residential unit <u>and in rural zones not more than 30 m from the principal residential unit.</u>
Matters council cannot apply to MRUs – R2 Councils cannot apply the following standards to MRUs: • requiring individual outdoor space • privacy, sunlight, glazing	The District Plan does not have standards in relation to the provision of outdoor living and service courts, nor glazing. Privacy and the admission of sunlight is controlled through setback and the construction of recession plane angles at the boundaries. Given the

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parking, access.	setback provisions in the proposed NES-GF and the maximum building height provisions in the Building and Construction (Small Stand-alone Dwellings) Amendment Bill privacy and the admission of sunlight should largely be maintained. It is technically possible that a MRU could include an attached single garage of 18m² within the permitted 70m² maximum internal floor area. If this is the intent of the NES-GF, parking and access standards should be controlled by the standards in the District Plan. Recommendation: That the final NES-GF and any associated guidance material further address the definition of Residential unit and Minor residential unit, in particular, if residential activity includes an attached garage. If attached garages are anticipated, Councils need to continue to apply standards in relation to parking and access.
National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards	
Activities and environments (under Application section)	Infrastructure should be widened to include lifeline infrastructure. Lifeline infrastructure needs to be resilient enough so that in any events of natural hazards, the community's basic needs are protected during these critical times. Recommendation: Widen the scope of this NPS to include lifeline infrastructure. Lifeline infrastructure needs to be built with climate resilience in mind, so that it remains accessible for vulnerable communities during natural hazards events.
Definition of residual risk	Residual risk is mentioned once in the discussion document "Package 1: Infrastructure and development" and once in Attachment 1.8: Proposed

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	provisions – New National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards. However there is no definition of this phrase, and therefore risks misinterpretation on what the phrase actually means. Recommendation: Have a definition for ‘residual risk’ in the proposed new NPS.
Precautionary approach principle	Councils may not be able to obtain complete and updated information about natural hazards in some areas. Rather than wait for information to become available, councils could be directed to take a precautionary approach for new development. Recommendation: To include in the relevant policies, where Councils are required to take a precautionary approach when information is lacking on natural hazards..
National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land	
Should LUC 3 land be exempt from NPS-HPL restrictions on urban development (leaving LUC 3 land still protected from rural lifestyle development) or, should the restrictions be removed for both urban development and rural lifestyle development?	We consider LUC3 land should still be protected from rural lifestyle development as we don’t see how enabling rural lifestyle development contributes to helping solve the housing supply issue and is an inefficient use of land. It may make more sense to provide for the use of LUC3 for urban development around cities that need room to expand if that is the only logical location. To ensure a balanced approach to rural land use, it would be beneficial to introduce provisions that allow or make it easier to pass the NPS tests for farmers seeking to subdivide a small portion of their property for retirement purposes, or for their children. The Hurunui District Plan currently includes mechanisms that support this outcome, allowing for the creation of smaller lots—down to 5000 m²—as a discretionary activity. This is contingent on a covenant being placed on an adjoining site to maintain an overall rural density of one dwelling per 4 hectares. These

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	provisions help preserve rural character while offering flexibility for succession and retirement planning. Recommendation: Retain restrictions on LUC3 land in relation to rural lifestyle development. Introduce provisions to allow limited subdivision of large land holdings to provide for one or two undersized land holdings.
If the proposal was to exempt LUC 3 land from NPS-HPL restrictions for urban development only, would it be better for this to be for local authority led urban rezoning only, or should restrictions also be removed for private plan changes to rezone LUC 3 land for urban development?	HPL is only one consideration of many in terms of whether land is suitable for urban expansion and supports sensible urban expansion. It could be worth still having tests to pass for LUC3 but make these less stringent than for LUC1 and LUC2 land. Council considers that if private plan changes were blocked on LUC3 land that this would be more stringent than current NPS provisions which do not restrict private plan change applications on LUC1, 2 and 3 land.
If LUC 3 land were to be removed from the criteria for mapping HPL, what, other consequential amendments will be needed? For example, would it be necessary to: a. amend 'large and geographically cohesive' in clause 3.4(5)(b) b. amend whether small and discrete areas of LUC 3 land should be included in HPL mapping clauses 3.4(5)(c) and (d) c. amend requirements for mapping scale and use of site-specific assessments in clause 3.4(5)(a), and amend definition of LUC 1, 2 or 3 land d. remove discretion for councils to map additional land under clause 3.4(3). e. use more detailed information about LUC data to better define HPL through more detailed mapping, including farm scale and/or more detailed analysis of LUC units and sub-classes.	The decision on whether to extend timeframes for mapping Highly Productive Land (HPL) or to defer mapping in favour of a longer-term solution should be informed by the timing of the proposed replacement RMA system. Currently, progress on the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS) is delayed due to unrelated factors, which in turn is holding up the regional mapping process. Council anticipates that any plan change to implement HPL mapping may face significant opposition from property owners, potentially resulting in a lengthy and contested process. Given the likelihood of a new planning framework being introduced in the near future, such a plan change may ultimately offer limited value.

Provision or Proposal	Hurunui District Council Feedback and Recommendation if Applicable
Should timeframes for local authorities to map highly productive land in regional policy statements be extended based on revised criteria? Alternatively, should the mapping of HPL under the RMA be suspended to provide time for a longer-term solution to managing highly productive land to be developed in the replacement resource management system?	Council suggests allowing time to develop a more enduring solution. In the interim, site-specific assessments should be permitted to guide decision-making. Relying solely on a high-level, desktop mapping approach is inappropriate where detailed site-specific investigations provide contradictory evidence. To ensure robustness, these assessments could be subject to peer review. While this may introduce additional costs, it offers a clearer and more defensible pathway forward. Similar to Preliminary and Detailed Site Investigations under the National Environmental Standard for Contaminated Land (NES-CS), these assessments could be submitted to the regional council to inform future HPL mapping at the regional scale. Recommendation: That regional mapping be deferred until the timing and framework of the proposed replacement Resource Management Act (RMA) system is clearer. In the interim, site-specific assessments should be permitted to guide land use and subdivision decisions. Where such assessments provide evidence that contradicts desktop-based mapping, they should take precedence, subject to peer review to ensure technical robustness. While this approach may introduce additional costs, it offers greater clarity, flexibility, and defensibility. These assessments, similar to Preliminary and Detailed Site Investigations under the National Environmental Standard for Contaminated Land (NES-CS), should also be submitted to the regional council to inform future HPL mapping at the regional scale.

