



Proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

Submission Template

We would like to hear your views on the proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL).

Please feel free to use this template to prepare your submission. Once complete please email to soils@mpi.govt.nz.

You can also make a submission using the online submission tool. A link to the online submission tool is available at www.mpi.govt.nz/HighlyProductiveLand.

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Are you submitting on behalf of an organisation? Yes [yes] No []

If yes, which organisation are you submitting on behalf of?

Dunedin Rural Development Inc (DRD)

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Under the Privacy Act 1993, people have access to information held by agencies about them. Any personal information you send with your submission will only be used in relation to matters covered by this document. In your submission, indicate if you prefer that we do not include your name in the published summary of submissions.

Questions for submitters

The questions for submitters that are included throughout the discussion document are provided below. We encourage you to provide comments to support your answers to the questions below. You do not have to answer all questions for your submission to be considered.

The page numbers mentioned below indicate where further information about the question is located in the discussion document.

Section 2.3: Defining highly productive land [page 19]

What are the values and benefits associated with highly productive land?

The intrinsic inherent properties that exist in situ which are often formed over many hundreds of years in time. Some of the key attributes as topography, climatic properties, soil properties such as texture, soil macropores, rooting depth, topsoil gravel content, natural drainage and profile available water and readily available water. Furthermore , how easy to cultivate and manage the land eg in early vegetable crops and less energy used to establish a crop. Productive land is often in a very natural state (ie physical properties) and can be cropped/managed with minimal other additions (say excluding the fertility regime which is dependant on the crop type eg vegetable crop vs kiwifruit etc).

What are the values and benefits associated with existing food growing hubs and how can these be maximised?

The key food hub areas in NZ often require less inputs and also being close by to an urban suburb means less energy usage in transport. Also it can encourage local farmers market to be sustainable.



Section 3.1: Problem statement [page 23]

Does the RMA framework provide sufficient clarity and direction on how highly productive land should be managed? Why/why not?

It seems to go in part but seems to be cumbersome. The old Sec 3 (1) d of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 seemed to provide a better focus and definition eg *“The avoidance of encroachment of urban development on and the protection of land having a high actual or potential value for the production of food”*. This section was covered under matters of National importance.

The old definition appeared to be working and many Case Law examples existed where land was protected.

Does the RMA framework provide sufficient clarity on how highly productive land should be considered alongside competing uses? Why/why not?

As above does not have clarity as above.

How are values and wider benefits of highly productive land being considered in planning and consenting processes?

No comment really but the RMA seems to be cumbersome and all the other values for communities take precedence eg a subdivision is approved on High class land because the community the demand arises of building land in particular when the land is flat.

Section 3.2: Urban expansion on to highly productive land [page 24]

How is highly productive land currently considered when providing urban expansion? Can you provide examples?

Other values take precedence eg lack of flat land elsewhere, infrastructure is close by so is cost effective than to build on productive land & the size of site.

How should highly productive land be considered when planning for future urban expansion?

A number of factors to consider but the area of non urbanised productive land that exists is important and the location.



Section 3.3: Fragmentation of highly productive land [page 25]

How is highly productive land currently considered when providing for rural-lifestyle development? Can you provide examples?

We are (ie DRD) is familiar with the Dunedin City Council area in particular the zoning and Location of the blocks. Often the issues are where High Class soils are located on flat-undulating land and adjacent to urbanised built up land like at Mosgiel to the NE and near Wingatui and also currently new subdivisions at Outram which are deemed some of the best High Class soils (Based on Landcare Research definition by T Webb et al.) in Otago.

How should highly productive land be considered when providing for rural-lifestyle development?

Must firstly consider all issues but a major one is the size (area not built on) and location.

Section 3.4: Reverse sensitivity [page 26]

How should the tensions between primary production activities and potentially incompatible activities best be managed?

A very difficult issue but in many cases existing uses and management systems/practices should take importance. When a new owner purchases a new urban property which is adjacent to a block of productive primary land there has to be a better information system eg by the local Council to highlight the types of activities that occur on the farmed/horticultural land and “buyer beware principle” should exist.

How can reverse sensitivity issues at the rural-urban interface best be managed?

Better information by eg Federated Farmers, Horticultural groups and local Councils with seminars and handouts especially when a new subdivision occurs. Can also be included in annual Council rate notices.

Section 3.5: These issues are being seen throughout New Zealand [page 26]

Do you agree that there is a problem? Has it been accurately reflected in this document?

Possibly but it varies around NZ as some of the issues are just site specific and just one person/family at times.

Are you aware of other problems facing highly productive land?



When new subdivisions occur (eg larger area like a lifestyle Block) and if on a floodplain new landowners often improve and create more internal fencing which suits the pasture/crop or animal type.

These small internal blocks within the total lifestyle block can create major issues when major flood events by creating bottle neck areas of water, more silt/debris and vegetation collected by fences. An issue can be plastic baleage rounds floating and being trapped and accentuating the flood damage.

The other concern is the removal of excellent topsoil when new roads are built and areas cleared for building sites/new subdivision sites. Where does this soil go to and what other options are open.

Section 4.5 Preferred option – a National Policy Statement [page 31]

Which option do you think would be the most effective to address the problems identified in Chapter Three? Why?

This option is preferred as we have a very workable Land Use Capability (LUC) in place through out NZ. This NPS would also align well to the other NPS eg like the NPS-PF.

Are there other pros and cons of a National Policy Statement that should be considered?

Not really at this stage.

Are there other options not identified in this chapter that could be more effective?
Not that i am aware of.

Section 5.2 Purpose of the proposed National Policy Statement [page 34]

Should the focus of the National Policy Statement be on versatile soils or highly productive land more broadly? Why/why not?

If you follow the Highly Productive Land (HPL) concept it aligns well with the LUC system.

Should the focus of the National Policy Statement be on primary production generally or on certain types of food production activities? Why/why not?

You need a broad base on primary production. If you just follow certain types of food with climate change new foods will emerge eg maybe that can grow in NZ in 20 yrs time. Furthermore, primary production may also be vital for other productive purposes such as energy production as we make the transition to a low carbon economy in NZ.



Section 5.3 The scope of the proposal [page 35]

Do you support the scope of the proposal to focus on land use planning issues affecting highly productive land? Why/why not?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

What matters, if any, should be added to or excluded from the scope of the National Policy Statement? Why?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Should future urban zones and future urban areas be excluded from the scope of the National Policy Statement? What are the potential benefits and costs?

No they should not. One needs to reevaluate these areas to see how much HPL exists.

Should the National Policy Statement apply nationally or target areas where the pressures on highly productive land are greater?

Apply nationally. If we get it right at the start it will form the basis of prudent rules in District and Regional Plans.

Section 5.4 The proposed National Policy Statement [page 37]

What would an ideal outcome be for the management of highly productive land for current and future generations?

Inappropriate use of Highly productive land in particular where eg the resource is scarce.

Policy 1: Identification of highly productive land [page 41]

If highly productive land is to be identified, how should this be done and by whom?

1..Using the LUC system. Update some of the maps in NZ where the scale of soil maps used in the first mapping in the 1970s is updated/refined.

2..Update and improve some soil map identification especially the scale and accuracy of the boundaries of HPL. An example is "Soils of Dunedin City and Environs NZ. NZ Soil Survey Report 37 1978" where scale of mapping is 1:31680.

3..Updated soil maps and more accurate boundaries will form the basis of improved updated LUC maps (see above in no2).

4..Landcare soil scientists to refine using new digital technologies.

Are the proposed criteria all relevant and important considerations for identifying highly productive land? Why/why not?

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Policy 2: Maintaining highly productive land for primary production [page 42]

What are the pros and cons associated with prioritising highly productive land for primary production?

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Alignment with the Urban Growth Agenda [page 43]

Do you think there are potential areas of tension or confusion between this proposed National Policy Statement and other national direction (either proposed or existing)?

Not sure.

How can the proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land and the proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development best work alongside each other to achieve housing objectives and better management of the highly productive land resource?

Using the best data and good scale mapping so as best land use options occur.

Policy 3: New urban development on highly productive land [page 45]

How should highly productive land be considered when identifying areas for urban expansion?

Have minimum size HPL that is protected.

Policy 4: Rural subdivision and fragmentation [page 46]

How should the National Policy Statement direct the management of rural subdivision and fragmentation on highly productive land?

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Policy 5: Reverse sensitivity [page 47]

How should the National Policy Statement direct the management of reverse sensitivity effects on and adjacent to highly productive land?

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Policies 6 and 7: Consideration of private plan changes and resource consent applications on highly productive land [page 49]

How should the National Policy Statement guide decision-making on private plan changes to rezone highly productive land for urban or rural lifestyle use?

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

How should the National Policy Statement guide decision-making on resource consent applications for subdivision and urban expansion on highly productive land?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Section 5.6 Implementation [page 52]

What guidance would be useful to support the implementation of the National Policy Statement?

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

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The questions below are included in the outline of the proposed NPS-HPL (Chapter Five of the discussion document) and may assist technical experts when providing a submission.

Specific questions

Section 5.3: The scope of the proposal [page 35]

How should the National Policy Statement best influence plan preparation and decision-making on resource consents and private plan changes?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Should the National Policy Statement include policies that must be inserted into policy statements and plans without going through the Schedule 1 process? What are the potential benefits and risks?



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

What areas of land, if any, should be excluded from the scope of the proposed National Policy Statement? Why?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Specific questions

Section 5.4: The proposed National Policy Statement [page 37]

What level of direction versus flexibility should the objectives provide to maintain the availability of highly productive land for primary production?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Should the objectives provide more or less guidance on what is “inappropriate subdivision, use and development” on highly productive land? Why/why not?

Needs to be clarified and clear definition. The more guidance the better as it will benefit the decision makers.

Specific questions

Policy 1: Identification of highly productive land [page 41]

What are the pros and cons of requiring highly productive land to be spatially identified?

Within reason having the best up to date scale digital soil maps. From this basis then the LUC system maps can be refined.

Is the identification of highly productive land best done at the regional or district level? Why?

Regional level but the inherent soil maps and LUC MAPS need to be refined first.

What are the likely costs and effort involved in identifying highly productive land in your region?

A considerable sum in some districts where existing scale maps are not as accurate.



What guidance and technical assistance do you think will be beneficial to help councils identify highly productive land?

Get standard soil map and LUC updated.

Specific questions

Appendix A: Criteria to identify highly productive land [page 41]

Should there be a default definition of highly productive land based on the LUC until councils identify this? Why/why not?

Not sure at this stage

What are the key considerations to consider when identifying highly productive land? What factors should be mandatory or optional to consider?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

What are the benefits and risks associated with allowing councils to consider the current and future availability of water when identifying highly productive land? How should this be aligned with Essential Freshwater Programme?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Should there be a tiered approach to identify and protect highly productive land based on the LUC class (e.g. higher levels of protection to LUC 1 and 2 land compared to LUC 3 land)? Why/why not?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Specific questions

Policy 3: New urban development on highly productive land [page 45]

How can this policy best encourage proactive and transparent consideration of highly productive land when identifying areas for new urban development and growth?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX



How can the proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land best align and complement the requirements of the proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development?

Use the base soil maps and LUC as one of the layers to plan for urban areas.

Specific questions

Policy 4: Rural subdivision and fragmentation [page 46]

Should the National Policy Statement provide greater direction on how to manage subdivision on highly productive land (e.g. setting minimum lot size standards for subdivisions)? If so, how can this best be done?

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Should the proposed National Policy Statement encourage incentives and mechanisms to increase the productive capacity of highly productive land (e.g. amalgamation of small titles)? Why/why not?

It is worthy of consideration esp when it is LUC 1 and 2 class land

Specific questions

Policy 5: Reverse sensitivity [page 47]

How can the National Policy Statement best manage reverse sensitivity effects within and adjacent to highly productive land?

XXX

Specific questions

Policy 6 and Policy 7: Consideration of private plan changes and resource consent applications on highly productive land [page 49]

Should these policies be directly inserted into plans without going through the Schedule 1 process (i.e. as a transitional policy until each council gives effect to the National Policy Statement)? What are the potential benefits and risks?

XXXX

How can these policies best assist decision-makers consider trade-offs, benefits, costs and alternatives when urban development and subdivision is proposed on highly productive land?



XXXX

Should the policies extend beyond rural lifestyle subdivision and urban development to large scale rural industries operations on highly productive land? Why/why not?

XXXX



Specific questions

Section 5.5: Interpretation

Do any of the draft definitions in the National Policy Statement need further clarification? If so, how?

XXXX

Are there other key terms in the National Policy Statement that should be defined and, if so, how?

XXXX

Should there be minimum threshold for highly productive land (i.e. as a percentage of site or minimum hectares)? Why/why not?

XXXX

Specific questions

Section 5.6: Implementation [page 52]

Do you think a planning standard is needed to support the consistent implementation of some proposals in this document?

XXXX

If yes, what specific provisions do you consider are effectively delivered via a planning standard tool?

XXXX

Specific questions

Section 5.7: Timeframes [page 52]

What is the most appropriate and workable approach for highly productive land to be identified by council? Should this be sequenced as proposed?

XXXX

What is an appropriate and workable timeframe to allow councils to identify highly productive land and amend their policy statements and plans to identify that land?

XXXX



Additional comments From Dunedin Rural Development Inc (DRD)

1..DRD has been in existence for over 24years focussing primarily on rural opportunities in Dunedin City Council catchment area. We have been involved in running seminars and field days and research projects along with infrastructural support. Furthermore, we have initiated seeding and support funding to assist farmers and horticultural growers.

2..DRD assisted in the funding of \$30,000 (1 yr project 2013-014) in association with DCC and the Otago Regional Council funding to detail Smap (soils maps) Fact sheets and attribute data. In particular better soil maps at 1:25,000 scale and further highlighting High Class soils.

3..DRD has been concerned for some considerable time over the loss of High Class soils (land) due to the conversion by subdivisions and more intensive urban development. In relation to this matter *DRD has made submissions to the DCC 2GP plan in February 2017*. Our concerns related to the loss of very productive soils around Dunedin urban area and on the Taieri Plains. Furthermore, in our submission we discussed the Land Use Capability system (LUC) and High Class soils (HCS) definitions and terminology. A summary table was submitted high lighting the area remaining of LUC 1 and LUC 2 land and compared the areas based on the HCS new soil data maps. The conclusion based on LUC1, 2 and 3e used as the productive baseline in the 2GP Plan equates to 5.1% of the DCC total land area. Some of the remaining productive soils left are in pockets eg beside the Taieri River and small areas so the significance of that left for effective use is a real practical issue.

4..DRD has also been very proactive in keeping an eye out for new subdivision proposals when Resource consents have been notified. In two cases DRD submitted reports on two Consent applications under the existing DCC District Plan on the Taieri Plains at Ashton St near Mosgiel (August 2017) and at Formby Rd (July 2017) at Outram. Our real concern was the loss of top quality High Class soils. The decisions from the two hearings by DCC was that part of the proposals resulted in part of the land (ie High Class soils area) being allowed to be built on.

5..DRD appealed the Dunedin City 2GP plan which was notified 7th November 2018 mainly in relation to the definition of High Class land and soil and the protection of these valuable soils.

Note: A summary of our Appeal is available if required dated 15/Dec 2018.

DRD is now associated with the Federated Farmers Appeal process with the Environment Court. However Federated Farmers now withdraws its appeal point 193 in relation to High Class soils. Discussion has been agreed with the Council that the best way to sort these matters to be discussed when the NPS of Urban Development is given effect (Dated 29th July 2019).



6..GENERAL COMMENTS

6.1..Importance of retaining High Class land (Productive land) for future generations. This land is becoming more scarce and in some cases maybe land locked.

6.2..Highly Productive Land (HPL) is vital valuable resource to provide our growing population with healthy and cost effective food. Furthermore, retaining HPL in strategic locations will maintain the cost efficiencies and provide families with local food thus minimising the need to import food goods.

6.3..HPL will ensure safe and environmental sustainable production.

6.4..Urban developments in the future need innovation concepts and planning using less need for the land area (size) on productive soils/land. Making the smaller compact subdivision, designing new systems and technologies including smaller allotments and double storeyed buildings.

Murray Harris, Chairman, Dunedin Rural Development Inc
DATED.9th October 2019

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.