

TO THE MINISTER OF CONSERVATION
EXECUTIVE BUILDING
WELLINGTON

Board of Inquiry Report on the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Introduction

We now provide the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008 (PNZCPS) within the terms of reference set, as required under s52(2) of the Act. Our report is in two volumes.

Volume 1 contains our findings and recommendations on the PNZCPS, including recommended new wording for the NZCPS which we call the ‘recommended NZCPS (2009)’ for convenience.

Volume 2 brings together material that informed and contributed to the decision making of the Board particularly on the individual policies. The Board considers these working papers may be of assistance to understanding and facilitating the implementation of the recommended NZCPS (2009) if our recommendations are approved by the Minister of Conservation.

No conclusion, recommendation or other material in the working papers in Volume 2 overrides or derogates from the findings and recommendations of the Board, including the recommended NZCPS (2009), in Volume 1.

Appendix B in Volume 2 lists the names of the individual submitters and organisations who so generously gave of their time, interest and expertise to assist the Board of Inquiry in its deliberations.

Because of the large number of submissions we received and heard it has been impossible to discuss or refer to each submission in detail. This report however does discuss the main issues which arose out of submissions.

Background

In 2008 the Minister of Conservation prepared a Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act), a review of the 1994 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and appointed a Board of Inquiry to inquire into and report on it. The members of that Board are Judge Kenderdine, Kathryn Edmonds, Rikirangi Gage and Philip Woollaston. The Minister set terms of reference for the Board.

Section 56 of the Act provides:

The purpose of a New Zealand coastal policy statement is to state policies in order to achieve the purpose of this Act in relation to the coastal environment of New Zealand.

The purpose of the Act is set out in s5 and is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Section 58 refers to the contents of a New Zealand coastal policy statement and s58A allows the incorporation of material by reference.

Within this context the Board considered those matters specified in s51(1) of the Act. Those are: Part 2 of the Act, all the submissions and the further material provided by those who attended the hearing, the PNZCPS as notified in 2008, as well as other relevant matters.

The Process

There were 539 written submissions on the PNZCPS. Substantial submissions were received from a wide range of community, conservation and recreational groups; from Local Government New Zealand and many regional and district councils; a range of professional organisations and from industry groups. The Board of Inquiry heard 175 submitters and a number of expert witnesses on 30 days of hearings in various cities and provincial centres between 26 August 2008 and 17 December 2008. We also heard from officials of the Department of Conservation, from whom we had sought a report under s42A of the Act. We were impressed by the calibre of the submissions and evidence, and the thoughtful and constructive work aimed at achieving the best possible outcome for the coastal environment. This reflects not just the obvious passion New Zealanders have for the coastal environment but also a widespread concern that there is an immediate need to improve our coastal management.

We have carefully considered all the material put in front of us, and made a small number of site visits arranged to look at problems around the coast. The Board concludes that there is a need to adopt a different approach to that in the NZCPS 1994 and to make amendments to the PNZCPS 2008.

The Issues

The majority of the submissions drew attention to a relatively small number of key issues affecting the coastal environment that the Board agrees need addressing to achieve sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the coastal environment.

- Subdivision, use and development: a major issue is the extent and scale of subdivision and development on the coast, particularly for residential and rural residential use, and the resulting loss of the coastal character. The natural character and recreational values of New Zealand's coast are an important resource, not just available to New Zealanders but also to visitors from overseas. The intensity of built development along the coastline also has consequences for biodiversity and other direct and indirect effects such as limiting opportunities for future development of necessary infrastructure and other resource uses both on land and in the coastal marine area.

- Access: access to the coastline and the coastal marine area is a core value for most New Zealanders. We found that in many places little or no priority is being accorded to ensuring the protection of the public open space and recreation values of the coastal marine area and adjoining public land, or public access to it, despite the provisions of the Act and particularly s6(d).

- Degradation: in many parts of the coastline water quality has been significantly degraded by both point source and non-point source discharges. Sedimentation is a particular problem, stemming from urban as well as rural land use. This degradation has widespread adverse effects on economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

- Coastal hazards: natural hazards such as coastal erosion are a continuing problem which will be exacerbated by sea level rise and other changes associated with climate change. Probable changes to the nature of New Zealand's coastline need to be considered when decisions are made about future development and about the management of existing development as well. Those decisions need to take a broader view and also consider (for example) the needs of biodiversity and for public space, which is likely to be squeezed by coastal development in areas subject to coastal erosion.

- Relationships between tangata whenua and the planning process: tangata whenua values and interests in sustainable management have not been well catered for, with a need for key agencies to build on, or in some places establish, relationships to recognise and provide for tangata whenua involvement. There has been limited recognition of the enduring relationship of tangata whenua over their lands, territories and resources and their spiritual and cultural practices. That includes protecting characteristics of the coastal environment that are of special value to tangata whenua.

- Infrastructure and renewable energy: one issue is to ensure that infrastructure needs and the potential for renewable energy projects are adequately recognised in the sustainable management of the coastal environment. Already major airports and ports straddle the coastal marine area and the landward edges of the coastal environment, as do roads and railways, while some renewable energy projects may only be able to locate in the coastal marine area. Careful consideration of location is needed for all these projects particularly in the light of the need to be close to transmission facilities, the advent of climate change, and given the long life of some.

These problems need to be dealt with urgently dealing with given the finite nature of the coastal environment and New Zealand's situation as an island heavily reliant on natural resources and distant from global markets. Many of the issues have a link to New Zealand's international obligations which we refer to in the preamble.

Structure

- **Preamble:**

Our recommended NZCPS includes a Preamble which we consider will assist in interpreting and applying the NZCPS. This is in line with the approach taken in other recently notified proposed national policy statements.

- **Issues:**

We add a short and inclusive statement of the issues confronting decision makers and which informed the setting of the objectives and policies.

- **Policy Focus:**

In our recommended NZCPS we focus on objectives and policies that address the key issues rather than attempting to cover every aspect of sustainable management. We also concentrate on objectives and policies which provide further guidance for decision makers than is already contained in the Act, and recommend deletion of policies in the PNZCPS which do little more than repeat provisions of the Act, or which go beyond policy and stipulate particular methods.

- **Balance:**

Many submissions commented on the need for balance in the NZCPS. However, that balance was generally perceived and portrayed differently according to the interests of the submitter. We conclude that there are major problems with the current balance applied by decision makers, reflected for example, in the extent of and growth in residential and rural residential development in the coastal environment. As a result the coastal environment does not reflect the 'sustainable management of natural and physical resources' which is the purpose of the Act. The NZCPS needs to send a stronger message, a national direction sought by many submissions including a number from district and regional councils.

- **Integration:**

We agree with the many submissions which call for better integration of responsibilities under the Act, and greater coordination among agencies holding them. This not only applies across the line of Mean High Water Springs and between adjacent regions and districts along the coastal environment, but also to the integration and coordination of responsibilities under the Act and other legislation such as the Local Government Act 2002 and Conservation Act 1987. Non-regulatory and regulatory approaches also need to work hand in hand.

- **Immediate Effect:**

A frequent theme in submissions was a concern that the time frame of several years for giving effect to a revised NZCPS through the statutory processes of policy statement and plan changes would mean that significant adverse effects on the coastal environment could continue for a decade or more; that by the time the stable door of plan changes was in place the horse would have bolted. Many councils also raised concerns over both the time frame for and the cost of a series of 'one-off' changes to planning documents. We therefore considered whether to recommend the use of s55 2A(b) of the Act which states:

A national policy statement—

...

- (b) may direct that specific provisions are to be included in a document, without notification or hearing, under clause 16 of Schedule 1.

thereby removing the need for the statutory submission and appeal process. We concluded that this is not essential, could itself be costly for local government, and may lead to confusion over the relationship between existing objectives and policies in regional and district planning documents, and new (possibly conflicting) policies imported in this way.

The Board shares the concern that, at best, the process of research and consultation, policy statement and plan change will take several years, however the wording in Part 2 of the Act requires that 'all persons exercising functions and powers under it ... shall recognise and provide for' the matters in s6, and 'shall have particular regard to' the matters in s7. These provisions clearly have effect irrespective of the state of regional and district planning documents and we conclude that the objectives and policies in the recommended NZCPS, the sole purpose of which is to achieve the purpose of the Act, will have immediate effect once it is gazetted.

To make this clear we recommend that the objectives and policies be amended to accord more closely with Part 2 of the Act by requiring such persons ('all decision-makers') to achieve the purposes of the Act by implementing the objectives and policies immediately, irrespective of progress on incorporating them in regional policy statements and regional and district plans. This will have particular effect in guiding persons and authorities considering applications for resource consent, requirements for designation and private plan changes. The evidence we received on the current state of some parts of the coastline suggests that it has been too often overlooked that 'all persons exercising functions and powers under' the Act are bound by the provisions of ss5, 6, 7 and 8, irrespective of the contents of regional and district planning documents.

We believe this approach will be effective in avoiding ongoing adverse effects on the coastal environment, efficient in reducing costs on local government, the courts, resource users and other parties, and is in line with s32 of the Act.

The Objectives

We agreed with those submitters who found that some, or most of the objectives in the PNZCPS did not add to the matters already contained in Part 2 of the Act or address the key issues.

We identified seven areas with a national priority for attention and recommend re-writing the objectives accordingly. They are:

- the life-supporting capacity of the coastal environment
- the coastal character
- the public open space and recreational value of the coastal environment, and public access to it
- the Treaty of Waitangi and kaitiakitanga
- coastal hazards, including potential effects of climate change
- enabling protection, subdivision, use and development

- recognising and providing for New Zealand's international obligations.

The recommended objectives contain aspects of the Principles in the 1994 NZCPS that are still very relevant today.

The Policies

Many submissions called for balance in the policies, though interpretations of 'balance' obviously varied greatly. In our recommendations we have tried to ensure that the balancing of factors and interests has a better environmental result, for example by reflecting the Act's emphasis on the need to safeguard the life supporting capacity of natural resources and in retaining the precautionary principle to underpin decision making. Many submissions also asked for a greater focus on 'avoiding' adverse effects as the starting point of decision making. The evidence we received supports the view that there is a growing tendency for applicants and decision makers to concentrate on 'mitigating' adverse effects rather than considering how to 'avoid' them in the first instance.

When dealing with the predicted effects of climate change, the PNZCPS has focussed on the effects on settlements and infrastructure. In our view a balanced approach requires decision makers to take a broader view and also consider the potential effects of climate change on biodiversity, public space and access and amenity values. 'Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity' of the coastal environment's natural resources and ecosystems as required by s5 of the Act calls for a healthy functioning intertidal area and nesting and breeding areas for fish and birds to be buffered against a 'coastal squeeze' between development and an advancing coastline.

While there are provisions and mechanisms in the Act to recognise Maori values, it is clear these are not working well for Maori in many locations even if there has been some improvement in recent times. We propose specific actions to improve the position, such as greater recognition of the value of iwi management plans and cultural impact assessments.

Policies 1 to 6 of our recommended NZCPS deal in general with the way in which the sustainable management of the coastal environment is to be planned for and undertaken. They include (Policy 5) a requirement for more collaboration between authorities and agencies with responsibilities in the coastal environment and greater integration of their outputs; and (Policy 6) and the need to consider, anticipate and avoid adverse cumulative effects over time.

A further policy need is to ensure decision makers consider the conservation and protection purposes for which land and water is held and managed under an Act of Parliament to avoid other activities having significant adverse effects on those purposes (Policy 7). There is also a need to consider publicly notified proposals for statutory protection of areas.

- **Subdivision, Use and Development (Policies 8 – 12)**

Many submissions detailed the causes of current problems with subdivision and built development in the coastal environment, particularly for residential, rural residential and associated uses. Reasons advanced included an inadequate focus on protection under the current regime and a lack of clear identification or specification of what constitutes inappropriate subdivision, use and development; resulting in the incremental loss of coastal values. Our attention was also drawn to inadequate buffer zones and future proofing for amenity, open space, public access, coastal hazards and climate change, and an oversupply of

sections compromising other values and opportunities. A further problem is individuals effectively commandeering public space on land and in the coastal marine area because of the location and design of development in the territorial authority area. Such development also compromises existing and potential uses of both the coastal marine area and the wider coastal environment.

Submissions emphasised that it is hard to tell where the pressure for built development on the coast may come from. There are techniques and approaches available under the Act to deal with these problems but not enough councils are adopting them. The focus tends to be on the process rather than the environmental outcomes required, with little attempt to adopt a forward looking and spatial approach to avoid potential adverse cumulative effects.

A further concern expressed time and again is the extent to which decision makers disregard the NZCPS and other planning documents in approving resource consent and private plan change applications. In addition, in many planning documents permitted, controlled and limited discretionary status for subdivision and extra houses, the areas involved and the scale and size of buildings permitted, present an inappropriate permitted baseline and foreseeable future environment under the Act, meaning that further subdivision and development are inevitable.

Submitters therefore had a concern that the NZCPS needed to give a much stronger direction to prevent a continuation of this trend.

The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) initially sought a moratorium on subdivision under a certain size to counteract these problems. It also wanted a national exercise to identify areas with high natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes and for those to be subject to national objectives, policies and rules. We concluded that their request was outside our terms of reference.

We see that many of the conflicts that are occurring in the coastal environment stem from a lack of forward thinking at a strategic and spatial level. Those conflicts are not just about the location and nature of coastal settlement, whether consolidated or of a spread-out character, but also about a potential inability to provide activities important to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities. The points made by those with an interest in aquaculture and renewable energy for example demonstrated a need to ensure that ad hoc development does not compromise the ability to locate and undertake these activities in the coastal environment. That would not achieve the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Regional and territorial authorities need to co-operate to address these issues at a strategic and spatial level in policy statements and plans.

Until local authorities act to ensure their policy statements and plans deal with these issues, we see a need for stronger direction through the NZCPS.

We appreciate that the use and development of the coastal marine area, with its emphasis on public open space, has a different starting point from that on the land. The Act recognises the difference with limitations on activities and the duration of consents in it. There is also little of the coastal marine area in private ownership, a point not well understood by many living alongside and taking advantage of it. Accordingly, there is a need for a specific policy setting out the basis for the use and development of the coastal marine area. That includes the

general principle that it is not a place for activities that do not have a functional need to locate there, a direction in the previous NZCPS.

- **Biodiversity (Policies 13 – 14)**

We agreed with the widespread support for policies directed at protecting New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity but, as many submitters pointed out, Maui dolphin does not require a specific policy of its own. We recommend listing it with some other highly endangered taxa in a footnote and adding the protection of areas set aside for full or partial protection of indigenous biological diversity under other legislation, such as marine reserves. The policy on biosecurity should help with that protection.

- **Natural Character, Features and Landscape (Policies 15 – 17)**

The preservation of natural character and the protection of outstanding natural features and landscape are all matters of national importance identified in s6 and many submissions supported the inclusion of policies directed at them. We agree that it is essential that areas with high natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified and that more weight is given to their protection than is occurring currently especially at district level. Protection of our coastal character is more than a matter of amenity value, being important to both domestic and international tourism.

Identifying areas of high natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes could be done most efficiently and effectively by a collaborative effort between all levels of local government either on a regional scale or, even more efficiently, nationally. A robust and consistent methodology would assist in informing this work and reducing challenges to it. We understand that a considerable body of work has already been done around the country and that the task may not therefore be as expensive and difficult as some submitters suggested. We recognise that making recommendations on the funding of such work is outside our remit and requires a commitment by local government, but observe that without such assessment it is difficult for decision making under the Act to accord relativity between, and priority to the protection of, areas of high natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes.

We also recommend strengthening the obligation in the NZCPS to restore the natural character of the coastline where this is feasible. As well as receiving submissions and evidence on this the Board saw, for example, historic rubbish tips leaching into otherwise natural areas of the coastal marine area.

- **Dunes and Surf breaks of National Significance (Policies 18 – 19)**

We received many submissions seeking the retention of the policy listing and protecting surf breaks of national significance, as well as others questioning the singling out of surf breaks. Some of New Zealand's surf breaks are nationally and even internationally significant, attracting visitors from around the world, as well as providing a variety of surfing opportunities including some for learning on nursery surf breaks. The quality of the wave can potentially be compromised by developments in the swell corridor seaward of the break, and the enjoyment of surf breaks by surfers compromised by discharges, limitations on access, and changes to natural character. Some nationally significant surf breaks can and should be named (on an inclusive basis) to ensure recognition of their national priority for protection. There are no other mechanisms available to protect such surf breaks. We note this is in line with developments occurring internationally, with other mechanisms available

in Australia for example. The economic value of surfing to tourism and the social benefits should not be underestimated.

We also have added a policy recognising and protecting active dunes of national significance, including naming a number which are under threat, particularly from the spread of exotic species but also from some land use activities, along similar lines to the surf break policy. We also recommend the incorporation of maps identifying them into the NZCPS by reference as is provided for by s46B RMA. That will require publication of an external document containing those maps and a reference to it in Schedule 3 of the recommended NZCPS.

- **Heritage (Policy 20)**

Comparatively recently historic heritage became a matter of national importance under the Act. The NZCPS needs to make it clear that local authorities must give a greater priority to avoiding the loss of historic heritage, working collaboratively with other bodies and agencies involved with heritage. That should not be seen as just the role of the Historic Places Trust and the Historic Places Act 1993, which is the current tendency in some places. Collaborating with Maori is essential to protect historic heritage of significance to tangata whenua.

- **Public Open Space and Access to it (Policies 21 – 22)**

There are several policies requiring local authorities to adopt a forward looking approach to achieving practical walking public access to and along the coastal marine area, along with open space and public space to complement it. That provision is important to the amenity of urban areas and coastal settlements, as well as to the more remote areas of the coastline. It needs to factor in erosion and predicted sea level rise so public access remains available to future generations. Restrictions on public access should not be lightly imposed as the policies recognise. A minimalist approach to providing esplanade reserves and strips is unlikely to achieve these policies.

There is a need to take a stronger position to address the conflict between vehicle access to beaches, foreshore, seabed and adjacent public land and other important values. Vehicle traffic (apart from emergency vehicles) should be prohibited where there is damage to dune or other geological systems and processes, harm to ecological systems or indigenous flora and fauna including bird breeding areas and shellfish beds, danger to other beach users, disturbance of the peaceful enjoyment of the beach environment, and damage to historic heritage and to sites of significance to tangata whenua. Decision makers should identify locations where vehicle access can occur without a likelihood of these consequences, or needs to be provided for boat launching or access to private property or public facilities or for the operation of existing commercial activities. Some local authorities are already taking, or moving to this approach, as are some overseas countries.

- **Water Quality and Marine Resources (Policies 23- 25)**

The 1994 NZCPS included provisions designed to deal with Maori concerns about discharges of human sewage to water, including requiring sewage to pass through land before discharge into the coastal environment. That presented technical and other questions, with ‘passing through land’ not necessarily dealing with matters of concern to Maori or the wider community. We recommend a different approach, making it clear there must be no discharge of human sewage directly into waters of the coastal environment without treatment and requiring the consideration of alternative methods for decision makers on resource consents and designations to be informed by an understanding of tangata mana whenua values and the

effects on them. Local authorities must have early, meaningful and ongoing consultation with tangata mana whenua before including objectives, policies and rules in plans which provide for the discharge of treated human sewage into waters of the coastal environment. We also recommend strengthening the water quality policies to ensure that decision makers considering discharges to water in the coastal environment have proper regard to how to prevent or minimise adverse effects, particularly on ecosystems, habitats and the life-supporting capacity of water. That includes considering whether there is a need to discharge the contaminants to water, the risks involved in doing so and recognising the opportunities to reduce waste at source.

A further policy on the enhancement of water quality recognises the reality of the deterioration of water quality to an extent that is having a significant adverse effect on ecosystems and natural habitats, or restricting existing lawful uses, such as water based recreation, shellfish gathering, aquaculture and cultural activities. That requires includes restoring water quality to support such activities as well as excluding stock from the coastal marine area, adjoining intertidal areas and other waterbodies and riparian margins in the coastal catchments within a time frame to be set by local authorities.

We include a new policy on sedimentation that requires local authorities not just to monitor sedimentation levels but also to take action to minimise sedimentation from activities such as subdivision, development and stock movement in the coastal environment. Sediment and other discharges from aquaculture can also be a cause of adverse effects on the intertidal zone, seabed and marine resources.

- **Coastal Hazards (Policies 26 – 30)**

In considering future subdivision and development, local authorities need to identify areas in the coastal environment that are likely to be affected by coastal hazards and where new development or redevelopment that increases the problem should be avoided. We endorse at least a 100 year time frame for consideration of natural hazards, and local authorities should take into account the most recent available national and international guidance on the likely effects of climate change. We also include tsunami as future coastal development needs to consider necessary responses to a real threat to communities along the coast.

We also accept that there is a need to encourage managed retreat in places, rather than to wait until the inevitable happens. A further need is to recognise the value to the coastal environment of natural protection, such as dune systems, rather than relying on hard protection structures. Hard protection structures often result in individual benefit to landowners and a loss to the community of public space and amenity values as well as natural values such as biodiversity. We recognise that the situation may be different for existing strategic infrastructure, such as roads, railways, ports and airports and the protection required for our coastal cities and towns.

- **Monitoring and Reporting (Policy 30)**

It is important that there is monitoring of the coastal environment and the implementation of the NZCPS to assess whether it is achieving its purpose. We recommend that monitoring and reporting can be most efficiently and effectively done by the Department of Conservation working with local authorities and other bodies and agencies to ensure information is collected, recorded, reported on, accessed and can be compared on a consistent basis. It will inform the need for future review of the NZCPS.

Policies Omitted

- **Restricted Coastal Activities:**

While the process for dealing with Restricted Coastal Activities (RCAs) is in Part 6 of the Act which deals with resource consents generally, the authority for the Minister of Conservation to direct regional councils to treat activities as RCAs is contained in Part 15, the ‘Transitional Provisions’ of the Act¹. This raises the question (as did some submitters) of whether RCAs were intended by Parliament to be a permanent feature. We understand that the genesis of the RCA consent process involved a concern about the ability of regional councils to exercise powers formerly held by government departments in the absence of fully developed coastal plans.

Information provided by the s42A Report, submissions and evidence indicate that the RCA process has now served its purpose. While there may be room for improved decision making by some consent authorities, the answer does not lie in the inclusion of a Minister’s representative on a hearing panel or in the (probably limited) ability of the Minister to veto an application.

There are several other opportunities for the Minister of Conservation to have a major influence on both the contents of coastal plans and on consents issued for activities under them. These include signing off regional coastal plans, the ability to call in an application in certain circumstances, and through participation in the Act’s processes by the Department of Conservation.

We have therefore recommended the removal of references to RCA from the NZCPS and the deletion of the second Schedule.

- **Coastal Occupation Charges:**

While we see potential advantages in terms of efficient use of coastal space in the coastal marine area and a source of significant revenue for research and coastal enhancement works, we find that the current legislation for coastal occupation charges presents problems that could not be overcome through a policy in the NZCPS.

Recommending law reform is not our function, however, there are issues with the coastal occupation charging regime in the Act that mean its use is likely to be confined to Southland (the only regional council to use it to date). It is also clear from the submissions that there are inconsistencies and anomalies in the way that local authorities rate and otherwise charge for certain activities in or adjacent to the coastal marine area, but it was not within our terms of reference to investigate these.

- **Other**

We recommend covering the Crown’s interests in the coastal environment and the coastal marine area in particular in the Preamble to the NZCPS and through amendments to policies rather than in a specific section. We found that the approach of referring back to the purpose

¹ Section 372 RMA.

of the Act, as contained in proposed policies on aquaculture, energy and infrastructure was unlikely to advance decision making.

We recommend the omission of other policies we consider unnecessary, adding little or no further direction to that in the Act, or better covered in other parts of the NZCPS. This had the added benefit of shortening the document, as was called for by a number of submitters.

Matters Outside Our Terms of Reference

Implementation is outside our terms of reference. There were many submissions from councils on the need for adequate resources to give effect to the NZCPS. Councils and others emphasised the importance of implementation packages, which would allow a more efficient and effective approach to be taken nationally rather than each area attempting to reinvent the wheel. Submitters drew our attention to the Aquaculture Implementation Package as a worthwhile model with wider application to a new NZCPS.

Submitters drew our attention to several key areas where central government assistance would be immediately beneficial. They included the development at a national level of methodologies for assessment of natural character, natural features and landscape values in the coastal environment (and in some submissions, the assessments themselves). This would have the advantage of creating a more certain regime for plan writing and consenting, with important areas requiring greater protection from inappropriate subdivision, use and development identified.

Many submitters expressed their appreciation of the national guidance provided in the recent climate change manual produced by the Ministry for the Environment (A Guidance Manual for Local Government New Zealand)². Submitters also suggested a national environmental standard for sea level rise. This could be of assistance to local authorities as an additional response to sea level rise and climate change, provided it assumes at least a 100 year time frame in line with this recommended NZCPS and it is regularly updated.

The Minister of Conservation is seen by many submitters as an important presence to provide protection to the resources of the coastal environment. Some submitters called for a greater presence by the Department of Conservation in the Resource Management Act process to ensure the NZCPS is given effect to.

Conclusion

We wish to acknowledge the authors of the 1994 NZCPS and their foresight in laying down the foundations of sound national coastal management. Much of the policy thrust in it is still relevant today. Our recommended NZCPS packages the messages in the 1994 NZCPS in a way that we hope will be more effectively implemented in the future. We have the benefit of hindsight in looking to see where improvements are needed.

² A Guidance Manual for Local Government New Zealand 2nd Edition, July 2008.

We also acknowledge the work of those who drafted the PNZCPS 2008 and who provided the basis for an impressive and successful public consultation and the platform on which the Board has built these recommendations.

In concluding we wish to acknowledge the excellent support we received from the small group of Department of Conservation staff available to assist the Board and particularly Jo-Anne London, Executive Officer, NZCPS Board of Inquiry.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement be amended as follows.

Respectfully submitted by the members of the Board of Inquiry into the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Shonagh Kenderdine [Environment Judge]	Presiding Member
Kathryn Edmonds [Environment Commissioner]	Member
Hon. Philip Woollaston	Member
Rikirangi Gage	Member

10 JULY, 2009