

# Making genuine change to the cost of compliance with the RMA



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As the cost of compliance with the RMA appears to be ever increasing, rural landowners and business should be aiming to take a stand and demand Councils find a way to reduce these costs. One of the most effective cost reducing tools that could be looked at is the content of district and regional plans, the actual rules and policies which trigger the need for a resource consent.

District and Regional Councils are required to review their plans every 10 years and a number of the South Councils are undertaking this review at the moment. Once a plan replacement is notified, any person can make submissions to it seeking changes. However if you choose not to make a submission in the first instance, there is little opportunity to seek genuine changes down the track, so timing is of the essence.

District and regional plans have the potential to impose compliance costs in a wide range of rural and urban activities and businesses. These might include activities such as water permits (and renewals), earthworks consents, subdivision consents and in some cases even the location and colour of farm buildings. This control is imposed on activities in order to achieve the purpose of the RMA which is to sustainably manage our natural and physical resources.

The question that rural land owners and businesses need to ask is if the proposed rules and methods are the most appropriate to achieve this purpose on their land, or if some other, more cost effective alternative solution can be used to produce a similar or better outcome. It is the answer to this question which could form the basis of any submission to proposed new planning provisions.

Marlborough District Council are looking to notify a whole new resource management plan before Christmas with submissions likely to be due early 2016. Nelson City Council are looking to notify a whole new plan in 2016. Tasman District Council are currently consulting on potential changes to rural land use and subdivision and on a large number of water regimes. All of these changes have the potential to impact on how you go about your daily businesses and the requirement for, and costs associated with, resource consents and environmental compliance.

So if you are concerned about the ever increasing costs of compliance and the future of your business, get a planner on board to investigate and develop your argument and make a stand for real, meaningful changes to district and regional planning provisions, by making a professional submission to your local plan change process.