



Submission on proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region, 2009

Pursuant to Clause 6 of the first Schedule and Section 79 of the Resource Management Act 1991

Submission can be:

Posted to: Freepost 118112
Proposed Regional Policy Statement
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

Delivered to: Ground Floor Reception, 142 Wakefield Street, Wellington

Faxed to: 04 385 6960

E-mailed to: rps@gw.govt.nz

Submissions need to be received by 25 May 2009 at 4pm

Your name and contact details:

Full name: Higgins Group Holdings Ltd

Full postal address: c/- Good Earth Matters Consulting
PO Box 1268
PALMERSTON NORTH 4440

Telephone no.: Work: 06 353 7560 Home:
Facsimile: 06 353 7561

Contact person: Grey Norton

Address and telephone no. as above
(if different from above)

Submission

1. The specific parts of the proposed Regional Policy Statement that my submission relates to are as follows:

..... Please refer attached documents

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(Clearly indicate which parts of the document you support or oppose, or wish to have amendments made to. Please continue on separate sheet(s), if necessary)

SUBMISSION ON A PUBLICLY NOTIFIED PROPOSED POLICY STATEMENT

Under Clause 6 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991

To: Greater Wellington Regional Council

Submission on: Proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement

Name: Higgins Group Holdings Limited

Address for Service: c/- Good Earth Matters Consulting
PO Box 1268
Palmerston North 4440

Attention : Grey Norton

Telephone: 06 353 7560
Fax: 06 353 7561

Hearing: Higgins Group Holdings Limited wishes to be heard in support of this submission. If others make a similar submission, Higgins will consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.

INTRODUCTION

Higgins Group Holdings Ltd (Higgins) undertakes a range of infrastructure related activities in the Greater Wellington Region including concrete batching, bitumen and asphalt blending, aggregates crushing and sales and various activities involving the use and application of aggregates based materials.

The activities undertaken by Higgins are essential to the well being of the Greater Wellington Region and to New Zealand as a whole. The Proposed Regional Policy Statement (PRPS) identifies ten community outcomes for the Region, derived from the key outcomes within the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Council's Long Term Council Community Plan. The provision of infrastructure is an activity that underpins the ability for these outcomes to be realised. In particular, the provision of infrastructure and other building is a key part of ensuring a "connected community" and of meeting the "essential services" and "prosperous community" outcomes. The provision of aggregates based materials and the undertaking of activities related to the building and development industry are key in achieving the "quality lifestyle", "sense of place" and "prosperous community" outcomes.

Aggregates are fundamental to the maintenance, growth and development of New Zealand as they are essential to the building of our infrastructure and our houses. In 1991, 14 million tonnes of aggregates were produced, which equates to 4 tonnes per person per year. Consumption in 2008 was 11 tonnes per person (50 million tonnes in total) per year, an amount that (as recently as 2006) industry projections suggested might take fifteen years to reach. Further statistics and information [a fact sheet prepared by the Aggregate and Quarry Association of NZ Inc] about the important role aggregates have in New Zealand are attached to this document.

There are significant benefits to be gained from sourcing aggregates from within the Wellington Region, as increasing the transportation distances required has vast implications in terms of increasing costs. However, access to aggregate (crushed rock, gravel or stone) is increasingly problematic due to a lack of recognition of the need to protect aggregate resources and quarrying activities, and public misconceptions about the industry. Few people understand the extent of the role aggregate has in New Zealand's economy and infrastructure and in people's everyday well-being. Quarrying and aggregates processing often have negative connotations due to the effects arising from the generation of noise and dust. They are also susceptible to reverse sensitivity effects arising from subdivision taking place in the vicinity of existing operations. Additionally, aggregate resources are at risk of being 'sterilised', where development is allowed to occur that will prevent the future extraction of aggregates from a site.

It is possible to avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of extraction activities using best practice measures to ensure that people are not unduly affected by any such activities. However, it is also necessary to ensure that quarrying and aggregate processing activities are provided for in the Regional Policy Statement, in order to ensure that adequate recognition is given to the importance of these activities on a local, regional and national scale. The Regional Policy Statement needs to not only recognise and provide for these activities in its objectives and policies, but also needs to include methods to achieve these objectives and policies that provide specific guidance as to how Regional Plans and District Plans are to give effect to them.

It is important, therefore, that the Regional Policy Statement recognise the role that aggregates associated activities have in achieving the identified community outcomes by providing for the integrated management not only of the physical resource (aggregates) but of the associated activities necessary to utilise this resource. For this purpose, Higgins' specific submissions on the PRPS are set out below, and comprise a reference to the part of the PRPS to which the submission relates, the reasons for the submission and the relief sought.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Part of PRPS:

Entire Proposed Regional Policy Statement

1.1 Submission:

Higgins supports in part the Proposed Regional Policy Statement

1.1 Reasons for the submission:

Higgins considers that there are several key issues relating to aggregates that should be addressed in the Regional Policy Statement in order to ensure that aggregates and aggregates associated activities are appropriately planned for and managed. It is essential that the PRPS include recognition of the importance of the role of aggregates in the development of the Greater Wellington Region and the benefits of utilising locally sourced aggregates. Higgins considers that the PRPS should provide

a clear framework for the management of aggregate extraction and processing. The framework should provide a clear indication as to how river based extraction and discharges to air, land and water resulting from aggregate extraction and processing will be managed in Regional Plans. It should provide policy guidance to the effect that Regional Plans should aim to manage the environmental effects of aggregates activities in a way that recognises their locational constraints and their public good benefits. The framework should also address key issues relating to aggregates activities including reverse sensitivity effects and the sterilisation of aggregate resources via the development of future extraction sites for activities that prevent extraction. The framework for planning for aggregates set out in the PRPS should also provide clear direction to district councils as to how they should manage this issue in their district plans.

Higgins supports the PRPS in part because it recognises the importance of sourcing aggregates within the Region and the potential problems that can arise in association with reverse sensitivity effects and aggregates activities. The PRPS also recognises, to some extent, the importance of the provision of infrastructure in terms of the well being of the Region. However, Higgins considers that this could be done in a more comprehensive manner in order to ensure the integrated management of aggregates and aggregates associated activities, and subsequently the achievement of the relevant community outcomes identified in the PRPS.

1.1 Relief Sought:

Amend the Proposed Regional Policy Statement to more comprehensively address the issues of aggregates and the provision of infrastructure, including objectives, policies and methods that address the matters raised in subsequent sections of this submission below.

2. AIR QUALITY

2.1 Part of the PRPS:

Objective 1, Policy 1, Policy 2 and Method 30

2.1 Submission:

Higgins supports in part these provisions

2.1 Reasons for submission:

There are locational constraints on aggregates processing activities that involve discharges to air because increasing transport distances between extraction sites, processing sites and the site of final use has significant cost implications which can prevent the activities from being undertaken. Viable locations for processing activities are sometimes near residential areas or other sensitive activities and therefore there is a potential for adverse effects to occur from discharges to air. However, adverse effects on air quality resulting from aggregates processing and associated activities can be managed through the implementation of best practice measures and this needs to be recognised in the PRPS as part of the approach to ensuring the integrated management of aggregates activities.

Objective 1 relating to air quality is “*discharges of odour, smoke and dust to air do not adversely affect amenity values and people’s well being*”. Associated Policy 1 recognises the potential for reverse sensitivity effects to arise in relation to existing activities that emit odour, smoke or dust and directs that district plans shall include rules that discourage land uses locating in such a way that will exacerbate this potential. Higgins supports this policy. Policy 2 directs that regional plans shall include provisions that protect or enhance amenity values of neighbouring areas from discharges of odour, smoke and dust and protect people’s health from such discharges. Higgins considers that this Policy is unduly restrictive in that it does not give adequate recognition to the operational realities of activities such as aggregates extraction and processing. Some level of discharges to air are unavoidable and ought to be acceptable and the discussion relating to Policy 2 should specify that a reduction in the adverse effects of discharges to air is only required where necessary due to elevated (defined) levels of air pollution. It should also be recognised that adverse effects on air quality associated with aggregates activities are able to be practically and effectively managed through the use of best practice measures.

Higgins supports Method 30 for achieving Objective 1, which relates to the development of common local authority protocols for the management of earthworks and air quality. It is important that the management of these issues is integrated between regional and district councils so as to avoid unnecessary restrictions on activities due to the ‘doubling up’ of provisions within regional and district plans and inconsistencies between neighbouring local authorities.

2.1 Relief Sought:

- Retain Objective 1 and Policy 1: and
- Amend Policy 2 to allow activities involving discharges to air where effects on the environment can be avoided, remedied or mitigated and to state that a reduction in adverse effects on air quality is only necessary where existing levels of pollution are elevated; are
- Retain Method 30.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 Part of the PRPS:

Chapter 3.3, including Issues 1, 2 and 3, Objectives 9 and 10, and Policies 6 and 38 and their associated methods

3.1 Submission:

Higgins supports in part these provisions

Reasons for submission:

Higgins is supportive of the recognition within Chapter 3.3 of the significance of energy, waste and infrastructure as significant resource management issues for the region. However, there is a lack of connection in the PRPS between the role that

soils and minerals (and aggregates in particular) have in the provision of infrastructure. It is considered that, in conjunction to the relief sought throughout this submission in terms of additional provisions relating to aggregates activities, appropriate cross referencing needs to be included in Chapter 3.3 to ensure that the role of these activities in relation to infrastructure is recognised and provided for. Additionally, Policy 65 relating to waste management is silent on the matter of cleanfill waste and disposal sites and the role they have in waste management and it is considered that they should be provided for in the PRPS.

Relief sought:

- Retain Chapter 3.3 but add cross references to the relevant provisions of Chapters 3.1, 3.4 and 3.11 in order to ensure that the role of aggregates extraction and processing is recognised and provided for as integral to the provision of infrastructure; and
- Provide recognition of the need to provide for the disposal of clean fill as an element of regional in waste management, within Policy 65 or where otherwise appropriate.

4. FRESHWATER

4.1 Part of the PRPS:

Chapter 3.4 (all parts)

4.1 Submission:

Higgins supports in part this chapter

4.1 Reason for the submission:

Higgins is supportive of the wide range of matters relating to freshwater recognised by the Council in Chapter 3.4. Higgins is supportive of the need to ensure that adverse effects on water quality and associated habitats are avoided, remedied or mitigated and to ensure that water is appropriately allocated in the region. This is important to the activities undertaken by Higgins because access to a reasonable and foreseeable quantity of water is necessary in order to undertake aggregates processing activities. It is important therefore that the PRPS include clear guidance as to how water resources are to be allocated within regional plans, and this should be done on a priority allocation basis that recognises the needs of activities which are essential to the provision of locally and regionally significant infrastructure.

Higgins also considers that Chapter 3.4 could better recognise several matters relating to the operational needs of aggregates extraction and processing activities. These include the need for extraction activities to occur that intercept the water table, where all potential effects on groundwater quality are avoided, remedied or mitigated, as well as importance of river based extraction. The provisions included in Chapter 3.4 need to recognise the role of best practice measures in managing the potential effects of aggregate extraction activities on water quality and on the beds of lakes and river.

Relief sought:

- Provide clear guidance within the PRPS as to how water is to be allocated within Regional Plans and specify that a priority allocation system will be used that recognises the needs of activities that have a significant public good benefit, such as aggregates extraction and processing; and
- Retain Chapter 3.4 but amend it to include a Policy that seeks to enable aggregates activities to occur that intercept the groundwater table, subject to best practice measures and the avoidance, remediation or mitigation of any adverse effects on groundwater quality; and
- Amend the PRPS to include provisions recognising the importance of river based aggregate extraction and which aim to enable this importance activity for the purpose of the provision of aggregates infrastructure as well as for flood management and river control purposes.

5. SOILS AND MINERALS

5.1 Part of PRPS:

Chapter 3.11 and Significant Resource Management Issue No. 5

5.1 Submission:

Higgins supports in part Chapter 3.11

5.1 Reasons for the submission:

Higgins is pleased that the management of activities relating to soil and minerals has been recognised as a regionally significant resource management issue. Higgins is supportive of the recognition within Chapter 3.11 of the locational and functional constraints relating to aggregates activities, reverse sensitivity effects and the benefits of processing and using locally sourced aggregates within the Greater Wellington Region. However, Higgins considers that it would be appropriate to refer specifically to “aggregates” in regionally significant resource management issue No. 5, which is currently described as “*limited mineral resources*”. The discussion of the issues relating to aggregates in Chapter 3.11 is limited to a discussion of reverse sensitivity and the need to source aggregates locally. This discussion should be expanded to recognise other matters relating to the management of aggregates, including the need to enable these activities to occur through an efficient consenting process and to provide for activities such as river based extraction and aggregates processing. This would be appropriate for ensuring that the particular issues relating to aggregates are specifically provided for within the objectives and policies of the RPS and subsequently in Regional and District Plans. It is considered that this is essential to ensure the integrated management of this issue as envisaged by Section 30 of the RMA, and Sections 30(1)(a)(b) and (gb) in particular.

5.1 Relief Sought:

Expand the discussion within Section 3.11 of the Significant Resource Management Issue No. 5 relating to aggregates activities in order to 'set the stage' for more specific objectives, policies and methods to be included in Regional Policy Statement so as to ensure the integrated management of aggregates and aggregates associated activities.

5.2 Part of PRPS:

Objective 30 and Policy 60

5.2 Submission:

Higgins supports in part Objective 30 and Policy 60

5.2 Reasons for the submission:

The primary objective set out in the PRPS for addressing Issue No.5 is Objective 30 which is "*the demand for mineral resources is met from local sources as much as possible*". Associated Policy 60 is supported in part because it recognises the benefits of utilising mineral resources within the region and protecting these resources from incompatible land uses occurring alongside them. However, this policy should also recognise that extraction and processing activities require protection as well, not just the mineral resources themselves. Furthermore, Policy 60 only requires that these matters be given particular regard in considering resource consent applications, notices of requirement, or changes/variations to or replacements of district plans. Higgins considers that the Regional Policy Statement should require that regional and district plans contain policies, rules and/or methods that recognise the social, economic and environmental benefits from utilising mineral resources within the region and protect the extraction and processing of mineral resources from incompatible development occurring in their vicinity. This could be achieved by the inclusion of additional methods within Chapter 4 of the PRPS relating specifically to aggregates extraction and processing activities. Higgins also considers that the Regional Policy Statement should include an additional policy that seeks to enable aggregates and extraction activities to occur where effects on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated to a reasonable degree.

The RPS does not appear to include provisions relating specifically to river based aggregate extraction. This type of extraction can play a significant, beneficial role in flood management and rivers control, in addition to providing an alternative to land based extraction where this is not achievable. It is considered that it would be appropriate to include, either in Chapter 3.11 or in Chapter 3.4 relating to freshwater, provisions relating to river based extraction that recognise the benefits of this activity as well as the need to operate machinery in the beds of rivers in order to undertake this type of extraction.

5.1 Relief Sought:

- Amend Policy 60, subsection (b) to refer to protecting not only mineral resources but also aggregate extraction and processing activities from incompatible activities occurring in their vicinity; and
- Amend the PRPS to include additional methods directing that regional plans and district plans shall include specific objectives, policies and methods to enable aggregate extraction and processing activities provided their effects on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated where practicable; and
- Amend the PRPS to include provisions recognising importance of river based aggregate extraction and which aim to enable this importance activity for the purpose of the provision of aggregates for infrastructure as well as flood management and river control purposes.

5.2 Part of the PRPS:

Method 51

5.2 Submission:

Higgins supports in part method 51

Higgins is supportive of the intent of method 51, which is that the region's significant mineral resources will be identified. Higgins considers that it is appropriate for the Council to identify locations of significant mineral resources within the Region, as this will assist in the effective management of this resource and associated activities. However, Higgins seeks that the PRPS be amended to more specifically state the manner in which these resources will be identified (and associated mapping) and the timeframe in which this work will be undertaken.

5.2 Relief Sought:

Retain method 51 but provide detail as to how and when the identification of the region's significant mineral resources will occur.

Grey Norton
08 June 2009

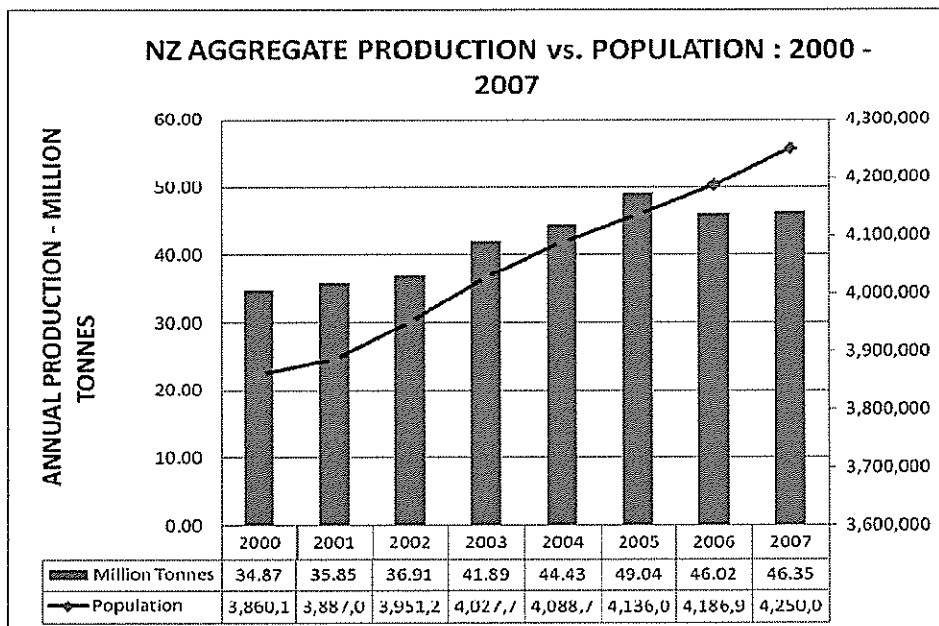


AGGREGATE FACTS

Aggregates play an essential part in the lives of everyday New Zealanders. Without an ongoing supply of aggregate; the development of buildings, roads, motorways, all infrastructure and the production of concrete would stop.

So how much does New Zealand produce, what are the economic impacts and how does our consumption compare with other countries?

- In 2007, 46.34 million tonnes of aggregates were produced worth \$592 million.
- The consumption of aggregates was 10.9 tonnes per person (one truck load per person).
- Over half is used on roads, and 21% for construction of commercial and residential buildings.
- The population of New Zealand at 31 December 2007 was estimated at 4,250,000.
- Direct, indirect and induced economic impact is \$2.1 billion and nearly 10,000 jobs.



Location and Transport

Every 30 kilometres aggregates have to be transported, the cost of those aggregates doubles.

Comparisons

| <u>Country</u> | <u>Tonnes Per Person</u> | <u>Year</u> |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| New Zealand | 10.9 | 2007 |
| United States | 8.4 | 2007 |
| Australia | 7.0 | 2005 |
| Europe | 6.9 | 2007 |
| Great Britain | 4.7 | 2005 |
| World (estimate) | 3.0 | 2005 |

08/06/2009

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