

9 August 2021

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RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION

Natural and Built Environment Bill Exposure Draft

Introduction

Rural Women New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the exposure draft of the Natural and Built Environment Bill.

Comments

1. RWNZ ask that rural planning is included in the final bill presented to Parliament if it is not going to be covered in the next two bills.
2. The name of the bill suggests that rural New Zealand would be covered by the Natural Environment part of the Bill, particularly around land use, because it is not covered in the more urban Built Environment.
3. If rural is to be considered under natural environment there needs to be more prescription and given this is not in the exposure draft, we would like the national planning framework to include rural areas in the full draft of the bill.
4. Rural community voices and perspectives need to be considered in the final draft of the bill. Representatives of rural communities need to be directly involved with what is included in the national planning framework.
5. In particular, RWNZ urge rural community consultation on Clause 8(m) of Part 3 which relates to development of rural areas with specific consideration to economic, social and cultural activities
6. We are disappointed that specific analysis has not yet been carried out for rural communities and given that there is still to be a final regulatory impact analysis done, RWNZ requests that both a rural impact analysis and gender impact analysis are also carried out to proof the bill against any adverse impacts on rural communities. The intersectionality of gender and rural living and any adverse impacts on this intersectionality caused by this bill will directly impact rural communities.
7. Appropriate public participation is not yet in the exposure draft. The public need to know what the new regime is going to look like – will it be participatory democracy? Will it include local input? Participatory democracy in our view is intrinsically linked to the success of the rural community and we would like to see this concept used in this bill.
8. RWNZ is disappointed that existing use and activities are not in the exposure draft. Inclusion in the final bill is vital to ensuring that rural communities feel valued, especially where communities are feeling that this bill might take away their livelihood if existing use and activities aren't prescribed.

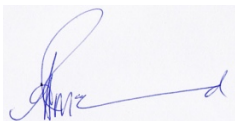
9. The exposure draft talks about one plan per region prepared by a plan committee. Our reservations with this is representation and RWNZ would like to see rural representation on the committee. At least one member and also, that there be legislated provision for gender balance.
10. We are concerned that there will be additional functions for the plan committee which have not been included in the exposure draft. This raises the question with RWNZ as to what those additional functions are likely to be and how will they impact rural communities.
11. The planning committee is to approve or reject submissions and it is our view that the committee needs to be representative.
12. RWNZ suggests that representation should be proportional to the population of each city/town in the region, and include rural representatives, including women.
13. Further questions on the plan committee from RWNZ include: will the committee be chosen from a pool of candidates? If so, who makes that decision? If all are appointed, how will these appointments be made? If it is Ministerial, what are the criteria?
14. Funding of the secretariat is problematic to RWNZ and we have the following questions— why are local authorities expected to fund it when they are not imposing it? If this funding is expected in this way, what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that this cost is not passed on to ratepayers?
15. There has been no indication of changes required for rural communities in meeting the requirements of the Bill and at this stage, it seems more might be envisaged, then rural communities need to be resourced to carry out any changes.

About Rural Women New Zealand

16. Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and has an authoritative voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.
17. RWNZ strives to ensure that all rural residents, workers and families have equitable access to services, inequalities are addressed by Government, and the wellbeing of rural communities is considered from the beginning of all policy and legislative development.
18. RWNZ is affiliated to the Associated Country Women of the World and as such upholds all United Nations, ILO, FAO and WHO conventions and outcome statements as they relate to women and rural women in particular.

We look forward to seeing changes in the final Bill presented to Parliament and if there is an opportunity to do so, discussing this further with you in person.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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