



## A Guide to Preparing an Assessment of Environmental Effects

### What is an Assessment of Environmental Effects?

An Assessment of Environmental Effects ("AEE") is the process of preparing a written statement identifying the effects of your proposed activity on the environment. If the effects are going to be adverse (negative) it is also the process of identifying how these can be avoided, remedied or mitigated (reduced). An AEE will accompany an application for resource consent.

### Do I need to prepare an AEE?

Yes. Every application for resource consent must be accompanied by an AEE.

### Why do I need to prepare an AEE?

The AEE is an accurate and objective statement about the effects of your proposed activity on the environment. The AEE process is required to:

- Help you identify and understand the effects of what you want to do;
- Help identify both the negative and positive effects early in the process;
- Help in planning and designing your proposal;
- Help you to consider the views of other people;
- Help to identify how you could modify your proposal to manage adverse effects;
- Help the Council and affected parties to fully understand the details of the proposal and the anticipated effects on the environment;
- Help the Council decide whether it should grant consent to your proposal and, if so, what conditions need to be attached to the consent; and
- Where necessary, provide a basis for monitoring after the consent is granted.

### What is an effect on the environment?

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA") the definitions of "effect" and "environment" are very broad. For example "effects" can

be defined as positive or negative, temporary or permanent, past, present or future, or cumulative. Any such effects need to be identified in your AEE. If these potential effects are identified in advance your proposal can be modified or conditions imposed to ensure the effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

The term "environment" includes ecosystems and their parts such as people and communities, all natural and physical resources, amenity values and the social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions which affect these matters.

### What if I don't think there are any effects?

If resource consent is required for your activity it is because Council anticipates the activity may generate some effects which need to be controlled. Also, it is unlikely your activity will have no environmental effects when considering the definition of "effects" and "environment" in the RMA as discussed above.

### What should I include in an AEE?

Your AEE should include the following information as required under Section 88 and the Fourth Schedule of the RMA:

1. A description of your proposed activity;
2. An assessment of the actual and potential effects of your activity;
3. Where the above effects are likely to be significant, a description of available alternatives;
4. A discussion of the risk to the environment from hazardous substances and installation;
5. For contaminants, an assessment of the nature of the discharge and sensitivity of the receiving environment to the adverse effects;
6. A description of how the adverse effects may be avoided, remedied or mitigated;
7. The names of parties who may be interested in or affected by your proposal, whether any consultation was undertaken and the views of those consulted;
8. Where an effect needs to be controlled, a discussion of how it can be controlled and whether it needs to be monitored.

## How much information should I include in my AEE?

The comprehensiveness of your AEE should be proportional to the effects of your proposed activity i.e. the more effects generated by the activity the more information that should be included in the AEE. It should provide enough information for the Council to evaluate the potential effects. Things to consider addressing in your AEE include:

- Whether there is enough information available to be able to identify and understand the effects of your activity;
- Whether the activity is consistent with the relevant provisions such as the objectives, policies, rules and assessment criteria of the District Plan;
- Whether the activity is consistent with other activities in the area;
- Whether consultation was carried out and if so, what issues were raised during consultation;
- Whether you obtained written approval from adversely affected parties; and
- The activity's status - for example controlled, discretionary or non-complying.

## How do I prepare an AEE?

The following information is an outline of how to prepare an AEE. Further details on each step can be obtained from the Ministry for the Environment publication "A Guide to Preparing a Basic AEE".

### Step 1: Identify the activity or activities for which you are seeking resource consent.

Your application needs to include a full description of the activity for which you are seeking consent. Examples of matters to consider include:

- What and where will new buildings be erected? Will any existing buildings be removed?
- How will the site be serviced for water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications and/or electricity?
- Will the activity generate additional vehicle movements? How will vehicles access the site? Will on-site parking be provided?
- Will earthworks be required? If so, where and at what scale?
- Will your proposal generate noise, odour or any dust?

### Step 2: Conduct a site inspection

The purpose of the site inspection is to check that the site is appropriate for what you are proposing. Matters to consider include:

- What is the nature of the site - for example is it flat or sloping? Is it a regular or unusual shape? Is there any significant vegetation or trees that will be affected?
- Does the site contain any unusual features that may affect development potential – for example watercourses or areas of slippage?
- What are the effects on neighbouring properties and the surrounding area – for example is the activity consistent with other uses in the area? Are surrounding activities likely to be sensitive to your activity?

- Will this effect vary at different times of the day or week?
- What activities and buildings are existing on-site? How will they be accommodated in the development?
  - How will water and wastewater be provided for on-site?

### Step 3: Talk to the District Council

Council staff will advise you of the information you require to lodge a resource consent. They will also identify the type of consent you require and whether they know of any particular limitations on the site. Please note advice given by Council staff at this time is preliminary. When an application is lodged with Council they will undertake a full assessment as this is when they will have all the relevant information.

### Step 4: Identify the effects of your activity

Identifying the effects of your proposal includes:

- Developing an understanding of the proposal, the site and the surrounding properties to identify all the activity's potential effects;
- Assessing whether your proposal is consistent with the appropriate provisions, such as the objectives, policies, rules and assessment criteria of the District Plan; and
- Discussing the proposal with relevant specialist advisors, neighbours and any potentially affected parties.

Each of the above needs to be considered to identify all potential concerns associated with your proposal. As you go through the steps of preparing an AEE the issues may change or new issues may arise. These issues may also change your proposal.

### Step 5: Finalise the AEE

Check you have all the relevant information to draft your AEE. Once the AEE is finalised attach it to your application and clearly identify it as the AEE.

### Step 6: Lodge the resource consent application

The AEE forms part of the application. To lodge the full application you will need to include the completed application form, the AEE, a Certificate of Title, all relevant plans and the appropriate deposit fee. If you have been required to obtain written approvals from affected persons you will also need to submit these. For more information on written approvals and affected persons see Council's brochure "A Guide to Affected Persons & Written Approvals".

You can now either post the application to Council or present it over the counter. The application will be forwarded to the Planning Department and they will send you an acknowledgement letter advising that your application has been accepted, subject to it containing the required information. The letter will also advise of the Planner processing the application. It is recommended that you direct queries about the application to this person in the first instance.

## Need to know more?

For more detailed information about preparing an AEE please contact a Planner at your nearest Waipa District Council office. Also, see Section 88 and the Fourth Schedule of the RMA and the Ministry for the Environment publication "A Guide to Preparing a Basic AEE".

## Disclaimer

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