

National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land What it means for you



The National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) came into force in October 2022 and is relevant to land that is Land Use Capability (LUC) classes 1, 2, & 3.

What is the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land [NPS-HPL]?

The NPS HPL was developed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and will give councils more clarity on how to map and zone highly productive land and manage its subdivision, use, and development.

Why is it needed?

The growth of towns and cities is increasingly occurring on our most productive land. It is important for councils to be given a clear direction so they can balance the demand for housing and urban growth with the protection of highly productive land.

What's the aim?

The policy aims to direct new housing development away from highly productive land, where possible. Preventing inappropriate subdivision, use and development will ensure the availability of highly productive land for food and fibre production.

How will the NPS-HPL affect subdivision and land use?

NPS-HPL provides strong direction to preserve highly productive land by preventing subdivision and inappropriate land use. This means declining applications unless the proposal meets one of the few policy exemptions.

Currently, there is no scope to consider permitted activities (that do not need to apply for consent), controlled activities (which must be approved).

Subdivision of highly productive land will generally be declined, unless the applicant can demonstrate the proposal meets one of the limited exemptions.

This usually requires an assessment, prepared by experts such as agricultural or soil specialists, with suitable qualifications and experience.



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Activities that are not land-based primary production must be avoided [declined] unless at least one of the exemption to the policy apply.

Subdivision may be allowed where an applicant demonstrates that the proposed lots will retain the overall productive capacity of the subject land.

Applications for subdivision consent must describe in the application how this can be satisfied.

This could be met by a range of different methods, such as:


- evidence from the landowner/farmer about how the land is and can be used, including site specific constraints such as topography;
- specialist technical evidence in the form of soil testing;
- land use capability analysis of how the productivity of all new lots will be retained.

The assessment of productive capacity should be at a sufficient level of detail appropriate to the proposal to ensure an informed decision on the application can be reached and needs to be considered over at least a 30-year period.


Wairarapa Combined District Plan

 www.cdc.govt.nz/district-plan

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

 environment.govt.nz/national-policy-statement-highly-productive-land

Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research

 https://ourenvironment.scinfo.org.nz/maps-and-tools/app/Land%20Capability/Iri_luc_hpl

Wairarapa Maps

 <https://gis.mstn.govt.nz/WairarapaMaps/>

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