



Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

First National Conservation Policy Statement: Policy Approvals

Portfolio **Conservation**

On 11 March 2026, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

Background

- 1 **noted** that in June 2025, Cabinet approved changes to modernise conservation land management and invited the Minister of Conservation (the Minister) to report back on policies for the National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS) which will unlock economic activity within appropriate constraints [CAB-25-MIN-0213.01];

Policies for the National Conservation Policy Statement

- 2 **noted** that in June 2025, Cabinet agreed that the NCPS will describe exempt and pre-approved activities to enable faster processing of concessions [CAB-MIN-0213.01];
- 3 **agreed** that the NCPS include the list of exempt and pre-approved activities (along with the terms and conditions for each activity), detailed in Attachment 1 to the paper under ECO-26-SUB-0030 (the proposal document);
- 4 **agreed** that the NCPS require the mapping of “visitor zones” detailed in the proposal document, to describe recreational and tourism values;
- 5 **agreed** that the NCPS include guidance about where the set of activities in the proposal document are likely to be consistent with visitor zones and statutory land classifications;
- 6 **noted** that in June 2025, Cabinet agreed that the NCPS will specify what content an area plan can include, to support faster and more consistent interpretation of area plans during concession decisions [CAB-MIN-0213.01];
- 7 **agreed** that the NCPS will specify that area plans can include the content listed in the proposal document;
- 8 **agreed** that the NCPS will specify that area plans cannot include area-specific policies, including limit-setting policies or concession conditions;
- 9 **noted** that the limitation in paragraph 8 above would not apply to area plan provisions for visitor amenities areas to enable those plans to take a spatial planning approach to development within that zone;

- 10 **agreed** that the NCPS maintain limited discretion for authorising new private accommodation and clarity that existing private accommodation may be authorised under certain conditions, including where the structure has or has had a valid authorisation at some stage, and where the structure meets all relevant requirements relating to its use for accommodation purposes (or can meet those standards within a certain timeframe specified in the concession agreement);
- 11 **agreed** that the NCPS require a condition to be placed on all private accommodation concessions that demonstrably limits the ongoing use of the structures for private accommodation purposes and that this includes a maximum term of 30 years, with no right of renewal;
- 12 **noted** that in June 2025, Cabinet agreed that the NCPS and area plans can define Crown activities that will be exempt from district resource management rules where they do not have a significant adverse effect beyond the boundary of conservation land [CAB-25-MIN-0213.01];
- 13 **agreed** that the activities listed in Appendix 5 of the proposal document can be exempt from district resource management rules, where conditions of the exemption are met;
- 14 **agreed** to the other policies to guide management of specific activities, as detailed in the proposal document;

Preparing the National Conservation Policy Statement

- 15 **noted** that drafting for the Conservation Acts (Land Management and Other Matters) Amendment Bill (the Bill) is underway based on Cabinet's June, July and September 2025 decisions [CAB-25-MIN-0213.01, ECO-25-MIN-0107, CBC-25-MIN-0049];
- 16 **noted** that the NCPS will be secondary legislation empowered by the Bill, and will be made after the Bill is enacted;
- 17 **agreed** that the Department of Conservation (DOC) will publish the proposal document to support the Environment Committee's consideration of the Bill;
- 18 **directed** DOC to commence consultation on the proposal document, and to draft the first NCPS;
- 19 **invited** the Minister to report back to Cabinet on the final policies for the NCPS and draft NCPS;
- 20 **authorised** the Minister to make minor policy decisions for the NCPS proposals in line with the intent of the policy agreed to by Cabinet [CAB-25-MIN-0213.01];
- 21 **authorised** the Minister to make minor changes to the proposal document ahead of publication, in line with the overall policy outlined in the paper under ECO-26-SUB-0030.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present: (see over)

Present:

Hon David Seymour (Chair)
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Simeon Brown
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Dr Shane Reti
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Penny Simmonds
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon James Meager
Hon Scott Simpson
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for ECO