

20 August 2018

Planning Standards  
Ministry for the Environment  
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**Attention:** Jack Clifford

**DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARDS – SURVEY AND SPATIAL NEW ZEALAND SUBMISSION**

Thank you for the extension of time to 20 August 2018.

***Who are we?***

Survey and Spatial New Zealand (S+SNZ, formerly the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors) represents surveyors and spatial professionals. We are a stakeholder across a wide range of government policy areas and the sector including housing development, land subdivision, construction, infrastructure, spatial information and resource management. Our members are lead professionals for the delivery of residential developments and subdivisions and are involved from the beginning of feasibility investigations and concept plan development. They manage the resource consent process and often control the subdivision construction process through to subdivision acceptance and the creation of new titles.

***What does our submission cover?***

Our submission includes a general comment about Structure Standards (but not the detailed standards themselves), and greater input on Form Standards and the Definitions Content Standard.

S+SNZ expects to have greater input in future sets of planning standards that are content-based and to which our members' can contribute their expertise.

***Structure Standards - General Comment***

S+SNZ welcomes the introduction of national planning standards. Many of our members work across a number of local and regional councils and the removal of any unnecessary variation in RMA planning documents will enhance efficient and cost-effective provision of services by our members to their clients.

However, S+SNZ is concerned at the extraordinarily long timeframe for implementation of the standards, which is five years for most standards and most councils. S+SNZ urges a return to the original time frame of one year (and certainly no more than two years) from gazettal for all planning standards in order to realise the benefits of national standardisation to users.

### ***Form Standards***

#### **Electronic accessibility and functionality**

S+SNZ supports the one-year implementation timeframe for baseline electronic accessibility and functionality.

#### **ePlan requirement**

S+SNZ supports the requirement for ePlans that are fully interactive, hyperlinked plans located on a website with an embedded GIS system. We strongly support the requirement to make datasets publicly available in NZVD2016 (F-1, Table 18, Data Standard 14). Local authorities should start working on converting all their datasets now, so all are on a common platform at implementation time thus allowing diverse spatial datasets to be correctly correlated and compared within a consistent framework.

S+SNZ would like to see a shorter implementation timeframe than five years or seven years (for councils that recently notified the decisions version of a plan). Given that only 22 percent of councils already have an EPlan or are currently developing one, it will be a long time before the benefits are realised. We would like to propose that larger councils be required to have an ePlan within two years, and that a timetable be set for smaller councils according to their means and broadband capability (but which is within five years). This would mean rolling implementation of the ePlan requirement with priority given to areas where benefit realisation is likely to have the greatest impact.

### ***Mapping & Spatial Planning Tools***

S+SNZ supports standards for display of spatial information on maps and spatial (region and district) planning tools but, again, the implementation timeframe of five to seven years is considered to be too long. Ensuring consistency of data format will enhance data integration, reusability and value.

From the spatial perspective, what does not appear to be covered in this set of national planning standards, is providing digital delivery standards and requirements for data handover. Consistent data format/standards nationally (including metadata/attribution standards) can vastly improve discoverability and re-use of data, and support an integrated and 'smart' national planning system rather than having this information treated in silos. This will enable better inter-regional collaboration, a much richer national overview, and more informed decision-making capabilities at multiple levels. S+SNZ urges that this be a priority for the development of the next set of national planning standards.

### ***Definitions Content Standard***

#### **Drafting principles**

S+SNZ generally supports the principles but urges their consistent application and also expansion to include cross-references to relevant definitions in other legislation if RMA terms and definitions are going to be included by way of cross-referencing.

## **Specific definitions**

**GROUND LEVEL** – S+SNZ generally supports this definition but would like to see a technical amendment to part (c) so that it reads:

*(c) If, in any case under paragraph (a) or (b), a retaining wall or retaining structure is located on the boundary, the level on ~~front~~ the surface of the retaining wall or retaining structure where it intersects the boundary.*

In most cases the ground level will be on top of the retaining wall/structure, or on the front face of an inclined retaining wall/structure. When the boundary is on or very close to the front face of a vertical retaining wall/structure, the ground level would be at the bottom of the wall.

**HEIGHT IN RELATION TO BOUNDARY** - S+SNZ generally supports this definition but would like to see it refined so that it reads:

*Means the maximum height of a structure, as identified in the relevant rule, relative to its distance from the boundary of a site or other specified location.*

This change would allow the local council to identify within the proposed rule, which structures would be subject to a height in relation to boundary standard.

**NET SITE AREA** - S+SNZ generally supports this definition but would like to see it refined so that part (b) reads:

*(b) any area of land, as identified in the relevant rule, used primarily for legal access to a rear site.*

This change would allow the local council to identify within the proposed rule, which part of the site (i.e. an access leg / access way up to 6m wide) would be excluded from a rear site.

“Rear site” is undefined but is an ordinarily understood term.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** was removed from the final definitions list on the ground that it was a commonly understood term. It should be included by way of cross-reference to the definition in section 6 of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

**ARTIFICIAL WATERCOURSE** is not included in the definitions table but occurs in the definition of **DRAIN**. Artificial watercourse needs to be defined as it is a wider term than **DRAIN** and, in the definition of **RIVER** in section 2 of the Resource Management Act **ARTIFICIAL WATERCOURSE** includes irrigation canal, water supply race, canal for the supply of water for electricity power generation, and farm drainage canal. Artificial Watercourse should be defined and could be by cross-reference to the RMA.

**MHWS - MEAN HIGH WATER SPRINGS** has not been included because it “requires localised consideration”. The term can be defined universally, and local variation should not affect the definition.

*DAM* is not included in the definitions table on the ground that it is a plainly understood term. *DAM* is defined in section 7 of the Building Act 2004 (extracted below) and should be included by way of cross-reference:

- dam—
- (a) means an artificial barrier, and its appurtenant structures, that—
    - (i) is constructed to hold back water or other fluid under constant pressure so as to form a reservoir; and
    - (ii) is used for the storage, control, or diversion of water or other fluid; and
    - (iii) [Repealed]
  - (b) includes—
    - (i) a flood control dam; and
    - (ii) a natural feature that has been significantly modified to function as a dam; and
    - (iii) a canal; but
  - (c) does not include a stopbank designed to control floodwaters.

*MANA WHENUA* is included in the definitions table, notwithstanding that *te reo Māori* words were to be excluded, suggesting either an error in the table or that *te reo Māori* words can be included by way of cross-reference to legislation. S+SNZ prefers the latter approach and on that basis seeks inclusion of the definition of *WAHI TAPU* by way of cross-reference to section 4 of Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993 or section 6 of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

*RIPARIAN ZONE* should be included in the definitions by way of cross-reference to clause 3 of the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry) Regulations 2017:

- riparian zone –
- means that margin and bank of a water body, including the area where direct interaction occurs between land and water systems, that is important for the management of water quality and ecological values.

### **Definitions to be standardised in future sets of planning standards**

S+SNZ consider that standardised definitions for the following terms be considered in future sets of planning standards, notwithstanding that they do not meet two or more of the criteria required to be considered in the definitions or are used in variety of ways:

*ANNUAL EXCEEDANCE PROBABILITY* – with changing global climate and increasing intensity of storms, greater consideration is being given to protection of property and this term may provide additional clarity when dealing with rainfall intensities.

*IMPERVIOUS AREA* – “impervious surface” did not meet the criteria but should be reconsidered in future sets of planning standards.

*ACCESS WAY / ACCESS LEG / ENTRANCE STRIP* - it would be good to have a standardised term to be used in conjunction with the definition of NET SITE AREA when considering rear sites.

*EPHEMERAL STREAM* – if, as suggested, this term is used in a variety of ways by Councils, then all the more reason to have standardisation. Typically, there are three types of stream: ephemeral, intermittent and permanent and standardisation would enable the terms to be used with the same meaning/understanding.

Please address any enquiries about this submission to the Chief Executive, Survey and Spatial New Zealand ([hadyn@surveyspatialnz.org](mailto:hadyn@surveyspatialnz.org)).

Rebecca Strang

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Strang', written in a cursive style.

President  
Survey and Spatial New Zealand