

1. INTRODUCING THE DISTRICT PLAN

1.1 What is the District Plan?

The Wellington City District Plan sets out the policies and rules that Wellington City Council uses to manage the city's natural and built environment – sustainably, sensibly and fairly. It is a legal document which the Wellington City Council is required to have under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA).

The RMA is New Zealand's main piece of environmental legislation, and provides a framework for managing the effects of activities on the environment. Under the Act, every district or city council must have a district plan and every regional council must have a regional plan to help them manage their local environment.

The key aim running through both the RMA and the District Plan is sustainable management of the city's natural and physical resources. Those resources include:

- Land. The RMA requires the Council to focus particularly on land use and this is reflected in the District Plan.
- Water
- Air
- Soil
- Energy
- All plants and animals (native or introduced)
- All structures.

Sustainable management, as defined in the RMA, means balancing human needs and activities with the need to protect the natural, physical and built environments and the resources they provide.

The District Plan is a tool with which the Council aims to achieve the best possible balance between these various demands. But it is not the only tool. Operating above and alongside the Plan are many other laws, plans, policies and standards which also influence how the Council manages the city.

Some originate from central or regional government. Wellington City Council's own Strategic Plan and Annual Plan are closely integrated with the District Plan. At a broader level, the District Plan also endorses the principles contained in global agreements – such as Agenda 21, which came out of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Maori principles of resource management are another key influence on the District Plan.

