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25 July 2025

Ministry for the Environment
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Phase 2 National Direction – Submission from Transpower New Zealand Ltd

Transpower appreciates the Ministry for the Environment's ongoing efforts in developing the Phase 2 National Direction, particularly as it relates to the electricity sector. We acknowledge and welcome the improvements officials have recommended within the proposed National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (NPS-EN) and the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities (NES-ENA) documents. These represent positive steps towards a more enabling regulatory framework for electricity transmission, which is crucial for New Zealand's decarbonisation and electrification goals.

While the Phase 2 proposed documents are improved on the current national direction for electricity, they are not a complete solution for accelerating the electrification of New Zealand's economy. Our submissions detail critical areas where tensions between Section 6 (RMA) matters and national direction still exist. These unresolved tensions will continue to perpetuate uncertainty and hinder the pace and scale of electricity transmission development required to meet New Zealand's emission reduction targets. Given the Phase 2 national direction could exist and play a role in resource management decision-making for five years or more as Phase 3 policy is developed, passed into law and then implemented, it is imperative that these conflicts are definitively resolved within the national direction now.

Transpower is committed to enabling New Zealand's energy transition, as highlighted in our "*Te Kanapu*" initiative, which outlines the development of our future grid blueprint to power Aotearoa. Rapid expansion of renewable electricity generation and robust transmission infrastructure are essential to meet increasing demand and achieve our nation's climate change commitments. While we appreciate the progress made, we look forward to continuing our engagement with officials on Phase 3 of the reform programme, which we believe holds the key to truly unlocking the potential for New Zealand's electrification and securing a thriving, sustainable energy future for Aotearoa.

Yours sincerely

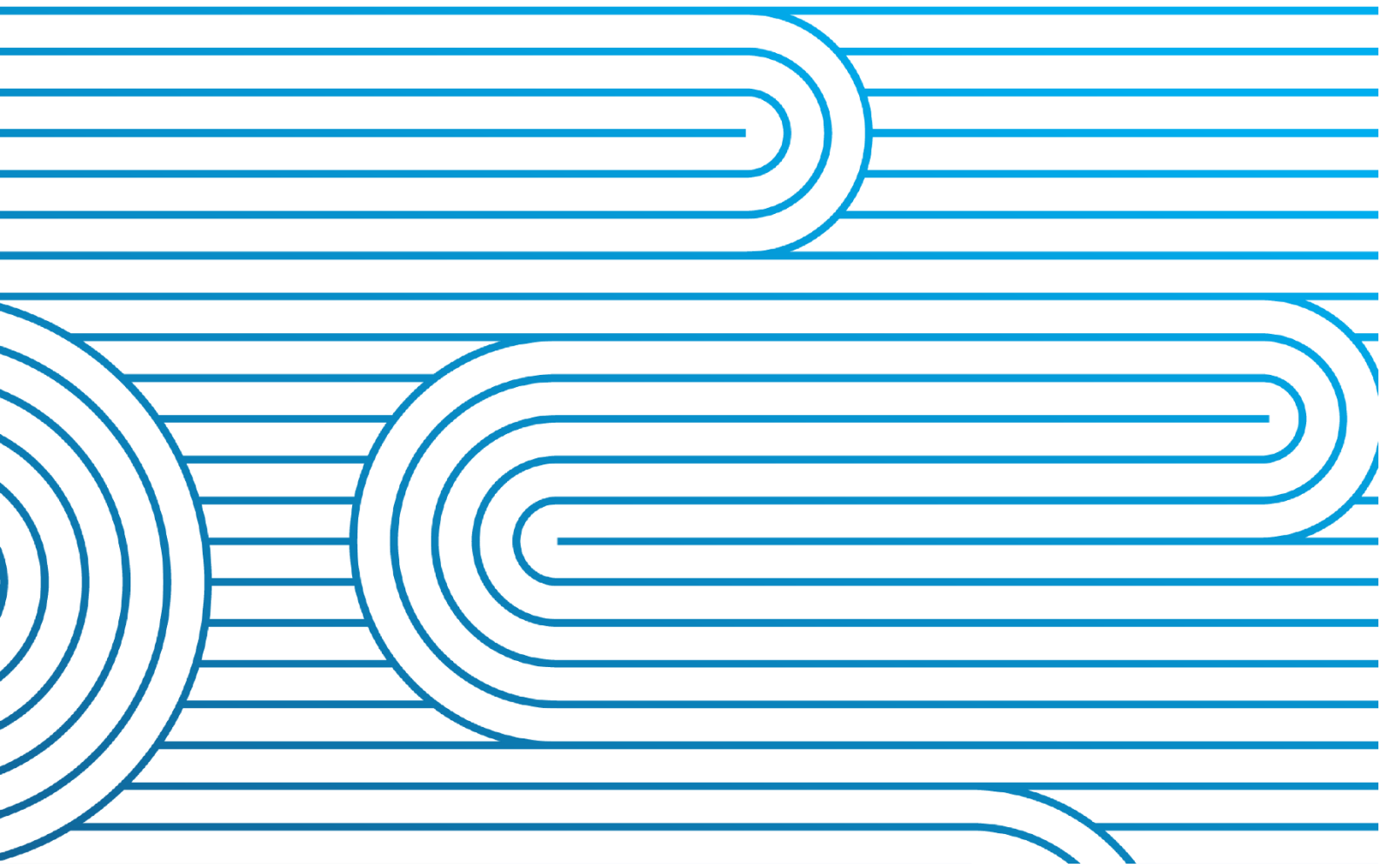
Raewyn Moss
EGM, Customer & External Affairs

Submission by Transpower New Zealand Limited

Consultation on the National Direction for Freshwater

National direction consultation – Package 2 and Package 3:
Freshwater National Direction

25 July 2025



Consultation on the National Direction for Freshwater

Ministry for the Environment

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1.0 Introduction

Introduction to Transpower New Zealand Limited

Transpower is the backbone of New Zealand's energy future. As the owner and operator of the nation's 11,000 km high-voltage electricity transmission network – our National Grid – we are responsible for powering every home, business, and industry from Kaikohe to Tiwai Point. This extensive, interconnected system, supported by nearly 200 substations and a sophisticated telecommunications network, is more than just infrastructure: it's a strategic national asset.

Operating such a vast and linear network presents unique challenges. The Grid must often traverse sensitive environments, connecting fixed points like energy generators to towns and major industries. While route flexibility can be limited, Transpower is committed to maintaining and developing this vital asset sustainably.

Crucially, the National Grid is at the heart of New Zealand's climate response. Our nation's ambition to achieve climate change objectives, including net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, hinges on the rapid electrification of the economy, a shift that will see electricity demand more than double by 2050. This transformation demands a resilient and reliable electricity system, making Transpower's role more critical than ever.

To meet this unprecedented demand, we face a significant undertaking: strengthening the National Grid to support massive growth in renewable electricity generation. This includes an estimated 60-70 new Grid connections over the next 15 years, alongside 10-20 major core Grid upgrades by 2035. These are not minor adjustments; they are foundational projects essential for New Zealand's social, economic, and environmental wellbeing for decades to come. The resource management system must become more enabling of rapid electrification if we are to support a secure supply as we electrify and grow Aotearoa.

2.0 Submission Overview

Transpower acknowledges the release of the Phase 2 national direction documents within the broader context of the ongoing Resource Management (RM) system reform. We understand these Phase 2 documents serve as an interim measure. This is consistent with messaging received from Ministry for the Environment (MfE) officials, indicating that the Phase 2 national direction will be "lifted, sifted and shifted" into the subsequent Phase 3 legislation. We recognise that Phase 3 of the RM reform will introduce entirely new legislation to replace the RMA – the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act – each with its own comprehensive suite of national direction.

The NPS-FM and NES-F must acknowledge the importance of existing and new National Grid infrastructure. Transpower has expressed its concerns over the management of freshwater in various forums and through consistent feedback and submissions to central, regional and local planning processes. Transpower understands and supports the need for a strengthened NPS-FM and NES-F. However, it is important that these documents are workable, clear on their face so there is no ambiguity, and that they provide for Transpower's activities given the extent and national importance of Transpower's assets across New Zealand.

As a consequence of its linear nature, Transpower has a large number of existing National Grid infrastructure assets located in or adjacent to waterways, including natural wetlands. Works undertaken within or adjacent to these waterbodies includes maintenance of access tracks, vegetation clearance, and transmission line support structure foundation works. These works are all routine but critical activities that occur at various times across the country – to enable the ongoing operation, maintenance, and upgrade of the National Grid. While these works at individual sites are generally of limited scale, short duration, and are generally associated with established assets accessed via a network of established access tracks, they need to be enabled so the National Grid can safely and effectively function. Similarly, new development may need to locate in or adjacent to waterbodies due to operational or locational constraints, and this development also needs to be enabled.

Amendments requested through this submission are provided throughout this submission (shown as blue text). Edits proposed as part of the consultation material are shown as red text.

To assist officials in understanding the relief sought in the Transpower submissions on the various national direction instruments, Appendix A provides a summary of the submissions and amendments requested.

Package 2: Operational Need

'Package 2; Primary Sector', proposes changes to the NPS-FM and NES-F specific to mining and quarrying. Of specific interest to Transpower are the proposed changes to include reference to 'or operational need' within Clause 3.22(1)(d)(iii) and (1)(e)(iii) of the NPS-FM, and Section 45A(6)(b), and Section 45D(6)(b) of the NES-F. The amendments would result in mining and quarrying being subject to a 'functional need or operational need' test, as opposed to the current, onerous 'functional need' test.

Given the importance of specified infrastructure (as recognised in the NPS-EN and proposed NPS-I) Transpower requests similar policy changes be made to the NPS-FM and NES-F for specified infrastructure (which includes the National Grid).

Given the linear nature of the National Grid, it may often have an operational need to locate within, or within proximity of, wetlands, but may not have a functional need (as defined) to do so. As such, where it is technically possible that an activity can occur elsewhere, but there are

technical, logistical or operational reasons why it is necessary for the activity to occur at the location (e.g. issues of cost, land ownership), there is no functional need.

The amendments sought would provide consistency with the approach in other national direction, specifically the NPS-IB and NPS-HPL and that proposed for Policy 6 of the NZCPS. It is also noted that construction of specified infrastructure would still need to meet the other requirements within clause 3.22(1)(b) and Regulation 45(6) (including needing to provide benefits and application of the effects management hierarchy). The amendments would also provide consistency with enabling policy direction in the NPSET and NPS-EN.

Transpower understands the above relief may be out of scope of Package 2 but considers the change to be of such significance that it should be made as soon as possible. Therefore, if the change can't be made as part of amendments to Package 2, then at the very least it needs to be included as part of Package 3.

Transpower requests the following amendments:

NPS-FM Subpart 3: Specific requirements	Requested provisions
Clause 3.22(1)(b)(iii)	Amend clause 3.22(1)(b)(iii) to add 'operational need' so it reads " <i>there is a functional need <u>or operational need</u> for the specified infrastructure in that location and...</i> ".

NES-F Part 3 Subpart 1 – Natural inland wetlands Regulation	Requested provisions
Specified Infrastructure Section 45(6)(b)	Amend to add 'operational need' so it reads " <i>satisfied itself that there is a functional need <u>or operational need</u> for the specified infrastructure in that location; and...</i> ".

Package 3 – Overview

The proposed changes to the approach to wetlands is generally supported by Transpower in terms of providing clarity around the importance of wetlands and what areas are 'wet land'. However, of particular concern to Transpower is the potential removal of the requirement for regional councils to map wetlands and/or the delay in the identification and mapping process.

Also of concern to Transpower is the lack of reconciliation between the various national direction instruments as they apply to the National Grid. It would appear that there has not been time or capacity to ensure that all of the national direction changes work together or that there is alignment across similar or related direction. It is requested that consideration is given to providing reconciliation between national instruments and that efforts be made to ensure that all of the national direction documents 'talk to each other'. Transpower seeks that this reconciliation occurs as soon as possible. One option to achieve greater reconciliation is to revisit and reevaluate whether the wetland regulations within the NES-F are appropriate for infrastructure generally, and specifically the National Grid, particularly in relation to existing National Grid assets.

Discussion Document Questions	Transpower Response
<p>1. What resource management changes should be made in the current system under the RMA (to have immediate impact now) or in the future system (to have impact longer term)? From the topics in this discussion document, which elements should lead to changes in the current system or the future system, and why?</p>	<p>Transpower acknowledges the imperative to consider both immediate and long-term resource management changes. Transpower's primary concern is that a phased implementation of reforms, involving both immediate adjustments under the Resource Management Act 1991 and subsequent changes with the future legislative framework, risks perpetuating regulatory instability and uncertainty. Such an approach could lead to ongoing inefficiencies, creating a "moving target" scenario for compliance and strategic planning.</p> <p>However, Transpower also recognises the inherent challenge that deferring all improvements until the complete establishment of the future system would mean current critical issues remain unaddressed for an extended period. This delay could hinder essential operational, maintenance and development activities necessary for the National Grid.</p> <p>Therefore, any proposed changes, whether immediate or long-term, must be carefully considered to minimise disruption and provide certainty for critical infrastructure providers such as Transpower, while also ensuring that pressing current issues are not left unresolved.</p>

3.0 Objectives

Transpower considers that the proposed approach to introducing a number of objectives will be beneficial as this better recognises that there are ranging issues from environmental to development and wide-ranging community views and aspirations. Including multiple objectives provides a more balanced perspective which will be helpful for all parties, including Transpower.

Discussion Document Questions		Transpower Response
2.	Would a rebalanced objective on freshwater management give councils more flexibility to provide for various outcomes that are important to the community? How can the NPS-FM ensure freshwater management objectives match community aspirations?	Transpower considers that rebalancing the objective, or having multiple objectives, provides better reflection of the complexity of freshwater management. The use of multiple objectives better recognises that the community does not have one collective aspiration but has wide-ranging views. Also having better direction will recognise that the community is interconnected with the environment, and both need to be maintained and improved but that sometimes development and protection cannot be achieved at the same time and choices will need to be made. It is important that the objectives for freshwater management do not set up a 'no effects' expectation as that would unnecessarily curtail use and development as it relates to freshwater management.
3.	What do you think would be useful in clarifying the timeframes for achieving freshwater outcomes?	Transpower considers that it is important to have some timeframes but that these may act better as guidelines for monitoring and measuring change rather than as a blunt instrument. It is necessary to have a realistic reference point for achieving improvement, but this should also recognise the view that improvements are about medium to long term gains, not immediate change.
4.	Should there be more emphasis on considering the costs involved, when determining what freshwater outcomes councils and communities want to set? Do you have any examples of costs associated with achieving community aspirations for freshwater?	<p>Transpower believes that there should be a greater emphasis on considering the comprehensive costs involved when determining freshwater outcomes set by councils and communities. While aspirational environmental goals are vital, a pragmatic approach necessitates a thorough evaluation of the economic implications, particularly concerning the feasibility and affordability of achieving these outcomes. Unrealistic or uncosted aspirations can lead to significant financial burdens, impact critical infrastructure development, and ultimately affect the wider economy and consumer costs.</p> <p>Incorporating a robust cost-benefit analysis into the process of setting freshwater outcomes will ensure that objectives are not only environmentally sound but also economically sustainable and achievable, providing greater certainty for critical national infrastructure.</p>

4.0 Wetlands provisions

Transpower supports the intent to improve the situation in relation to wetlands however Transpower has significant concerns over the indication that the regional identification of wetlands may be delayed.

Under the NPS-FM, Regional Councils were given 10 years to map all existing natural inland wetlands. Until this process has been undertaken, there is a lack of certainty as to whether proposed activities will be within proximity of a natural inland wetland. Significant time, effort and investment is required to determine whether works are near a wetland, and therefore whether or not those works will trigger consenting obligations under the NES-F.

If it is unknown whether a site contains a wetland, an applicant must:

- Firstly, determine whether any areas of the site are a wetland as defined under the RMA.
- Secondly, determine whether any areas identified as a wetland are a 'natural inland wetland' as defined in the NPS-FM.
- Finally, determine the 'extent' of the natural inland wetland, to determine if consenting obligations under the NES-F apply. For example, many of the wetland regulations involve a 10 m or 100 m setback requirement. To know whether this is satisfied will depend on clear and accurate identification of the natural wetland and its boundary, which may not be known or clear.

Therefore, if it is unknown whether an area includes a wetland, and there is limited information on the vegetation, soil and hydrology of the site, some form of ecological assessment on-site to confirm wetland presence is likely to be required.

Given the NES-F includes such restrictive regulations relating to natural wetlands, there should be clarity as to exactly where they apply. Transpower considers applicants and the public require certainty. Users should be able to easily determine where they cannot meet a standard and a resource consent is required, or for new infrastructure development areas, whether they will affect a wetland. The existing lack of mapping means most of the wetland regulations require expert assessment in order to ascertain whether or not they are triggered, and/or sufficient background data about the existing state of the wetland (which is unlikely to be readily available in most circumstances).

These requirements are even more onerous for linear infrastructure that may traverse hundreds or thousands of kilometres (like the National Grid). A transitional approach should be adopted with the regulations not applying until such time as Central Government or regional councils have developed a practical "desktop assessment" tool/map of significant natural inland wetlands (as determined by LiDAR data or a similar high-level assessment tool).

We also note a practical concern with wetlands not being identified “up front” – a limited number of ecologists being available to carry out necessary assessments. Transpower has regularly made use of ecologists in applying the NES-F to date – but at times there have been lengthy delays (sometimes of many months) in determining whether an area is a natural wetland, due to the availability of ecologists. These time delays (on top of delays in consents being processed) create consequences for accessing, maintaining and upgrading the National Grid. A good example of a consequence in this regard is missing the outage window (i.e. the period of time the line is ‘switched off’) in which the works are scheduled. With the increase in connections to the grid (which has increased significantly in the past five or so years), outages have become increasingly difficult to obtain, and the wait time for a new one (if one is missed) has increased. This issue with outage window availability will only get more acute as the grid expands to meet the massive increase in electricity demand which is forecast.

The issue is even more pronounced for the development of new National Grid assets given the typical linear nature and scale of such activities. When selecting the route of any new transmission line or the site of any new substation, Transpower follows the “ACRE” site selection process (comprised of four initial steps being Area, Corridor, Route, Easement (and designation/consents), with two subsequent steps being Documentation and Statutory process). Transpower developed the ACRE model to identify and secure the most suitable location for transmission infrastructure. It is based on a progressive filtering approach, where increasing and more specialised detail is provided on environmental, property and engineering constraints throughout the process to enable the identification of a preferred route or site. The existence of mapped wetlands would assist the robustness of the ACRE process, as known wetlands could be avoided as a priority where possible. When selecting sites for new National Grid assets, Transpower's inability to access all properties for on-site assessments means unmapped wetlands may be overlooked, preventing their avoidance in the ACRE site selection process. This lack of certainty, of course, also undermines the ‘avoid’ policy in the NPS-FW.

While Transpower accepts the need to involve ecologists in work near wetlands, the expert input required of them needs to occur in the most efficient and effective manner. Upfront mapping is one way this could occur.

The proposed changes introduced in this package explore options to remove the mapping requirement for wetlands by Regional Councils or to delay the identification and mapping process. This is of concern to Transpower as it leaves continued uncertainty over where these wetlands are located and requires the applicant to undertake costly work to identify or rule out wetlands for each project.

Discussion Document Questions		Transpower Response
21.	What else is needed to support farmers and others to do things that benefit the environment or improve water quality?	In relation to wetlands, Transpower notes that there is a need to recognise that the National Grid (as specified infrastructure) has a functional need and/or operational need to establish and operate across wide areas where interaction with wetlands is inevitable. Supporting Transpower to make informed decisions

		on upgrades and new grid development can be assisted with open sharing of information on the location of important waterbodies, including wetlands.
23.	What will be the impact of removing the requirement to map wetlands by 2030?	<p>The removal of the mapping requirement will have a considerable impact on Transpower's decision making processes as it will lead to uncertainty in the location and identification of wetlands. From a practical point of view, Transpower cannot 'avoid' what it doesn't know about. Given the scale of Transpower's existing assets, and that it does not own or always have access to property for new planning new assets, the lack of identification of wetlands has significant time and cost implications. In addition to this, the lack of certainty undermines the 'avoid' policy in the NPS-FW.</p> <p>It is unreasonable to not undertake this work in a timely fashion and make it available for public understanding.</p>
24.	Could the current permitted activity conditions in the NES-F be made clearer or more workable?	<p>As discussed later in Section 6 of this submission, Transpower has concerns with the current framing of operation and maintenance within the NES-FW and, by default, that upgrades are considered 'construction'. Within this context, Transpower seeks that Regulations 46(4)(b), 46(4)(c) and 46(4)(d) of the NES-F do not apply in relation to altering, relocation and replacing support structures, transmission line removal, tree trimming and earthworks.</p> <p>Regulation 46(4)(b) of the NES-F prevents works which increase the size of, or replace part of, specified infrastructure, and therefore prevents Transpower carrying out routine works that increase the size of National Grid infrastructure. Examples of these works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation works, which often only involve minor earthworks as part of 'routine activities' but the activity will still be considered a restricted discretionary activity, or possibly a discretionary activity under the NES-F, despite the effects on a natural wetland being minor, less than minor or transitory/negligible. • Construction of a new access track in close proximity to a wetland to replace an existing access track located within an existing wetland. There would be a positive ecological outcome by removing an existing access track from a wetland, yet the activity will still be subject to an onerous consenting pathway under the NES-F. In such circumstances, the construction of an access track should be permitted to recognise that constructing a new access track <i>outside</i> of the existing wetland is a better ecological outcome. <p>Regulation 46(4)(c) requires that the activity must not form new pathways or other accessways. This regulation creates an unnecessary barrier for earthworks relating to access tracks that are required to maintain the ability to access the National</p>

		<p>Grid to carry out routine activities to ensure a secure, safe supply of electricity.</p> <p>Regulation 46(4)(d) relates to vegetation clearance, earthworks or land disturbance in a wetland. Transpower has vegetation clearance activities that need to be undertaken in order to comply with the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations and to access structures. The NES-F provisions create unnecessary barriers to earthworks and the trimming and felling of trees and vegetation where required for the safe operation and maintenance (including access) of the National Grid.</p> <p>In undertaking the above activities Transpower adopts best practice to manage adverse environmental effects. Should resource consent be required under the NES-ENA, the prescribed matters of control or discretion provide an appropriate framework in which to both assess and manage the effects.</p>
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5.0 Policies and other proposed changes

Transpower notes the other provisions included within this package and provides high level comments on some issues below:

Discussion Document Questions		Transpower Response
5.	What will a change in NPS-FM objectives mean for your region and regional plan process?	Transpower recognises that Te Mana o te Wai is an important concept to include in considerations of freshwater management and should not be lost completely from the national direction. It is appropriate to recognise Māori values and approaches as part of supporting wider Māori interests and involvement. Transpower considers that the proposed change in the approach to place this concept alongside other important factors would be appropriate as it would provide better balancing of the wide-ranging considerations relevant to freshwater management.
6.	Do you think that Te Mana o te Wai should sit within the NPS-FM's objectives, separate from the NPS-FM's objectives, or outside the NPS-FM altogether – and why?	Transpower considers that placing this issue within a wider balanced set of objectives would be best.
7.	How will the proposed rebalancing of Te Mana o te Wai affect the variability with which it has been	Transpower considers that providing clear direction on where and how to apply Te Mana o te Wai concepts would assist to ensure more consistent implementation. It is noted however that there still

	interpreted to date? Will it ensure consistent implementation?	may be some variation across the country recognising different iwi situations and different freshwater environments.
31.	Do you think that requiring regional councils to map SWRMAs for applicable drinking water supplies in their regions will improve drinking water safety? Should councils be required to publish SWRMAs?	<p>Transpower notes that where areas need to be protected it is necessary that these areas are robustly identified, mapped and made publicly available. This can then lead to good decision making to apply risk-based rules to ensure protection as well as ensuring that there is good information about where risks lie and how they can be managed. That said, mapping of these areas (and the associated policy framework) needs to be cognisant of nationally significant infrastructure which is located within them and not impose onerous provisions on that infrastructure.</p> <p>While a regional mapping approach may have a cost to Councils, this is a one-off cost rather than repeated costs to applicants and landowners.</p>

6.0 Broader concerns with the NPS-FM and NES-F

In addition to the specific matters addressed in this submission, Transpower has the following broader concerns with the NPS-FM and NES-F, noting that a number of these concerns were identified in Transpower's 2022 submission¹ on the *'Exposure draft of proposed changes to the NPS-FM and NES-F (including wetland regulations)'*.

- Upgrades:** Upgrades of National Grid infrastructure are captured as part of construction activities under Regulation 45 of the NES (and clause 3.22(1)(b) of the NPS), rather than as part of operation and maintenance activities, and are therefore subject to the effects management hierarchy. This is not appropriate where the relevant upgrades are routine and being undertaken as part of the operation and maintenance of the National Grid. Upgrades may occur, for example, to replace equipment on a like-for-like basis where the asset being replaced is obsolete in its original form and the best alternative is slightly different in size or character. Transpower is cognisant of the new terminology proposed in the NPS-EN and NES-ENA relating to 'routine' and 'non-routine' activities and there will need to be alignment in the terminology used across the various national direction.
- Specified infrastructure ancillary activities:** The type of works Transpower may undertake within or adjacent to natural wetlands includes routine work on access tracks, vegetation clearance, and support structure foundation works, all to enable the ongoing operation, maintenance, and upgrade of the National Grid. While these works are generally of limited scale, infrequent, of short duration, and are generally associated with established assets accessed via a network of established access tracks,

¹ [20220710 Final submission on the exposure draft changes to the NPS-FM and NES-F.pdf](#)

they need to be enabled under the RMA so the National Grid can be effectively operated, maintained, developed and upgraded as recognised by the NPSET (and the NPS-EN). Transpower requests clause 3.22 of the NPS-FM is amended to make it clear that specified infrastructure activities include ancillary activities.

- **Stringent rules:** Under clause 3.1(2)(a) of the NPS-FM a local authority may adopt more stringent measures than required by the NPS-FM. This is a significant concern for Transpower as the way the NPS-FM can be implemented by local authorities is uncertain. It is extremely important to Transpower that the implementation of the NPS-FM by local authorities is consistent, given Transpower's assets traverse New Zealand. Transpower would support amendment to Clause 3.1(2)(a) to state a local authority cannot adopt more stringent measures than required by the NPS-FM.
- **Offsetting and Compensation principles:** Transpower also has some concerns with the requirements under Appendix 6 and 7, including where they are not appropriate, and other provisions. Transpower would support amendment including that they only apply to the construction of new infrastructure, thereby recognising the nature of existing National Grid assets.
- **Regulation 55 (General conditions on natural inland wetland activities):** Regulation 55 of the NES Freshwater is highly prescriptive and frequently necessitates consents for ETN activities that could otherwise be permitted. Key challenges include the restrictive nature of sediment placement in 'dry' wetlands, difficulties with work in areas at high risk of flooding (given operational constraints), and onerous requirements for bed profile restoration. Furthermore, Transpower notes redundant clauses concerning temporary damming/diversion and historic heritage, often duplicating regional rules. Overall, the current regulations create unnecessary hurdles and compliance issues, hindering essential transmission activities, particularly regarding asset upgrades and new access, where the more permissive NES-ENA provisions would be appropriate.

Appendix A

To assist officials in understanding the relief sought in the Transpower submission on the various national direction instruments, the following provides a general summary of the submissions and amendments requested.

Package 1 Infrastructure and development

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks - NPS-EN

Transpower is generally supportive of the NPS-EN and in particular the 'benefits' and 'consideration/recognition' policies and the introduction of P10 for the protection of the electricity network ('EN'). However, it has concerns with the lack of reconciliation of matters subject to Section 6 of the RMA and other national direction in the interim, until the Phase 3 changes are enacted and the transition to the new system is complete. Transpower supports in principle the inclusion of the electricity distribution network.

The primary points and amendments requested by Transpower are:

- Clear implementation requirements and inclusion of 'readymade' provisions for inclusion in plans.
- Confined refinement to definitions for *Customer driven projects*, *Decision makers*, *EN assets*, *EN line*, *Routine EN activities*, *Sensitive activities*, and *Upgrading*, and inclusion of a definition of *Transmission line or distribution line*).
- Support for the objective, with confined amendment requested to clause b. and e. and rewording of clause f.
- P1 - amendment to clause 2) e) i) to recognise expanded or increased REG, and inclusion of reference to the broader issue of climate change mitigation.
- P2 - amendment to clause 2) b) to recognise the different needs, technical requirements and therefore scale of the EDN and ETN, and a new clause to recognise the need for EN to locate in hazard areas.
- P3 – confirmation as to how clause a) will be given effect to.
- P4 and P5 – support with minor amendments.
- P6 – amendment to apply the policy to significant adverse effects, and amendment to the avoid, remedy or mitigate where practicable policy directive.
- P8 – amendment to the chapeau to replace 'upgrades' with 'non-routine', and insertion of 'where appropriate' at the start of the policy.
- P9 – support
- P10 – confined amendments to clause 1) to refer to activities.
- P11 – amendment to refer to strategic planning documents.
- P12 – amendment to broaden application ('Electric and magnetic fields' policy).
- Significant amendments are requested to P7 to provide a complete policy framework for non-routine and new development ET activities that would apply to all environments, including matters subject to Section 6 and other national direction.

National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities - NES-EN

Transpower supports the amendment and updating of the NESETA to respond to the increasing challenges of enabling electrification.

The primary points and amendments requested by Transpower are:

- Refinement and correction to some definitions, including ensuring consistency with the NPS-EN.
- Reframing of Regulation 4 to reflect requested amendments and clarify application of the NES-ENA.
- Refinement of the noise standards within Regulations 6 and 10, and inclusion of a definition for Assessment point.
- Expansion of Regulation 23 to permit signage within the bed of a lake, river, stream or coastal marine area.
- Amendment to Regulations 30-32 relating to Trimming, felling, and removing trees and vegetation.
- Amendment to Regulations 33-35 relating to earthworks, including removing the exclusion of regional earthworks rules within Regulation 4.
- Amendment to Regulation 36 to manage soil disturbance on contaminated land, and removing the application of the NES-CS.
- Inclusion of regional rules for Waterway Crossings, Groundwater take and use, dewatering; Structures and works in the coastal marine area; and Works within the bed of a lake or river.
- Minor amendments (corrections) to the Part 4 Rules for the National Grid Yard and Corridor, and insertion of inclusion of the yard and corridor provisions from the AUP.

National Policy Statement for Infrastructure - NPS-I

Noting the NPS-I does not apply to the ETN, Transpower generally supports the proposed direction outlined in the NPS-I. Notwithstanding the general support, Transpower prefers the wording within the NPS-EN in so far as the application of any policies to the ETN. As with the NPS-EN, a principal concern of Transpower is the lack of reconciliation between the enabling provisions of the NPS-I and other 'protective' forms of national direction (and Section 6 RMA matters in general).

The primary points and amendments requested by Transpower are:

- Refinement and correction to some definitions, including ensuring consistency with the NPS-EN.
- Amendment to clause f) of the objective to reflect the 'proportionate' approach under the NPS-EN.
- Support for policies, with amendment to policies P1, P3, P6 and P7.
- Significant amendments are requested to P8 to provide clear guidance on the expectations for management of effects, particularly in relation to Section 6 RMA values such as for landscapes, indigenous biodiversity and historic heritage.
- Concerns if P9 and P10 were applied to the ETN.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation - NPS-REG

While Transpower's main role is to ensure the reliable supply of electricity to the country, Transpower is also responsible for managing the power system in real time, a role referred to as the 'System Operator'. As part of this role, Transpower operates the electricity market to ensure electricity transmitted through the Grid is delivered whenever and wherever it is needed, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In this way, we balance electricity demand and supply. To ensure this balance, Transpower is responsible for providing information and forecasting to the industry about security of electricity supply.

Transpower is cognisant that while it has a strong interest in the NPS-REG, its actual application to the ETN is limited. As such Transpower recognises that the electricity generators are best placed to comment on specific wording and concerns with the NPS-REG. At a high level, Transpower is concerned that the intent of the amendments to the NPS-REG will not address the problems articulated in the discussion document. On this basis, Transpower has requested limited amendments to the NPS, with those sought confined to refinement and correction to the definitions of *REG activities* and *REG assets*.

National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities - NES-TF

Noting Transpower's confined use and interaction with the NES-TF, in principle Transpower is supportive of the proposed changes to the NES in so far as it applies to the ETN, acknowledging that other users of the NES may have broader concerns. In particular Transpower supports the new state of emergency provisions. Transpower requested clarification as whether the NES-ENA or NES-TF manage Optical Ground Wires ('OPGW'), with specific wording requested to address the issue.

National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats - NES-GF

Transpower is neutral on the overall objective and the majority of provisions in the NES-GF. However, Transpower requests clarity on the relationship to the NES-ENA. It is requested that the NES-GF is amended by adding reference to Part 4 of the NES-ENA (the corridor provisions).

National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga - NES-P

Transpower is neutral on the overall objective and the majority of provisions in the NES-P. However, Transpower requests clarity on the relationship to the NES-ENA (noting ET is not included within *PAS3 Applicable rules of the underlying zone*). It is requested that the NES-P is amended by adding reference to Part 4 of the NES-ENA (the corridor provisions).

National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards - NPS-NH

Transpower supports the NPS-NH not applying to infrastructure. However, despite this exclusion, the NPS-NH states this NPS does not limit local authorities from managing natural hazard risk beyond the application of the NPS. Transpower is concerned this non-limitation could mean local authorities could apply provisions for infrastructure (including the National Grid) despite the specific exclusion in the NPS-NH. Transpower seeks this non-limitation be clarified/confined.

Package 2 and 3 - Primary Sector, and Freshwater

National Policy Statement for Freshwater and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater

Acknowledging the confined scope of the proposed amendments within Package 2, Transpower has provided general comments on the discussion points for Package 3, including concerns with any delay in the identification of wetlands; that Regulations 46(4)(b), 46(4)(c) and 46(4)(d) of the NES-F not apply in relation to altering, relocation and replacing support structures, transmission line removal, tree trimming and earthworks; and that 'operational need' be included for specified infrastructure (as is proposed for quarries as part of Package 2). Other matters to be addressed relate to how upgrading is managed within the NES, the lack of provision for Specified Infrastructure ancillary activities, the ability for councils to impose more stringent rules, and the offsetting and compensation principles when applied to existing electricity transmission assets.

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement - NZCPS

Transpower supports the amendments to Policy 6, and specifically the amendment to recognise that electricity transmission (as a priority activity) may have an operational need to locate in the coastal marine area. Notwithstanding its support and the proposed changes to Policy 6, Transpower is cognisant the NZCPS requires the avoidance of all adverse effects in valued areas, and the avoidance of significant adverse effects in all other areas (referred to as the 'protection policies' within the discussion document). The amendments proposed to the NZCPS and in the NPS-EN neither recognise or reconcile these tensions, or provide a policy pathway for recognised activities when read alongside protective NZCPS policies, despite the recognition of 'operational need' within the NZCPS or how 'enabling' the NPSET/NPS-EN policies are expressed to be. While Transpower understands that reconciliation of the major tensions will occur as part of the replacement of the RMA in Phase 3 of the reform, and therefore the policy 'gap' and tensions are an interim issue, given the significance of the issue and need to enable electricity transmission (and renewable electricity generation) as soon as possible, Transpower would support the policy gap being addressed in the interim to provide certainty. Suggested additional wording to Policy 6 is requested in the Transpower submission.