

29 May 2013

Media Release

EDS releases review of draft Auckland Unitary Plan

The Environmental Defence Society has released its comprehensive review of Auckland's draft Unitary Plan.

"Our feedback is as comprehensive as we can make it," said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

"We are generally supportive of the draft plan and have found it to be relatively easy to navigate. It is New Zealand's first fully online plan and we commend the Auckland Council for this innovation.

"We have focused on the plan as a whole and have looked at its proposed management of Auckland's natural environment including the marine area.

We have noted that it does not adequately protect Maui's dolphin, the world's rarest marine mammal. We have found that the plan establishes a good framework for delivering the vision for Auckland set out in the Auckland Plan. We are particularly supportive of the proposals to manage subdivision in the rural environment, directing it away from the Rural Coastal zone.

"There are however a number of matters that will need to be addressed before notification. These include the loss of local-scale planning provisions such as detail from the Swanson Structure Plan and the West Coast Rural Policy Area. We are also concerned about frequent use of vague wording which does not create a clear imperative for action. In order to be effective, the plan needs to state clearly what outcomes and action are required, to create clear direction for decision makers.

"On the issue of the rural – urban boundary, we think there is further thought required about the precise mix of green fields versus infill housing. In particular, housing needs to closely follow infrastructure capacity (roads, public transport, water and wastewater). Consideration will also need to be given to the aspirations of local communities.

"However the Plan is a draft and this is chance to make improvements to it prior to formal RMA processes getting underway.

"EDS's feedback amounts to some 71 pages. It is a very thorough and comprehensive review and we hope that the Council will find it useful," Mr Taylor concluded