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Media Release

EDS Submission on Productivity Commission report focused on urban planning issues

The Environmental Defence Society has released its submission on the Productivity Commission's draft Report *Better Urban Planning* today. The submission acknowledges the valuable contribution of the Commission's work, but urges against kneejerk changes to the legislation in response. It is available [here](#).

"Overall the Report raises many useful questions but we contend there should be much more rigorous analysis and a national conversation on the options, taking into account the impacts of reform on the wider environment, not just cities," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"The Commission's terms of reference were tightly focused on urban planning but resource management embraces important natural resources outside of cities. It is crucial that we don't rush to reform without a much broader consideration of the issues and implications of change.

The Report identifies a range of issues and potential solutions, some of which we concur with, others which we most certainly oppose. In particular, limiting standing and restricting the role of the Environment Court are moves we strongly disagree with.

"EDS released its own report yesterday that shows that the Resource Management Act is not delivering good outcomes for the environment. That's mostly to do with poor implementation but there are clearly areas of the Act and its accompanying institutional arrangements and linkages that need improvement.

"It's also clear that we have not yet deployed all the available tools to the resource management task. There is a strong relationship between some of the issues identified in our report and the solutions flagged in the Commission's report. This synergy is useful.

"Both reports point to the need for a conversation about the future of resource management in New Zealand. EDS is open to that conversation. But it should be based on a comprehensive analysis that also takes account of rural and marine areas. It should examine all the environmental domains, be evidence based, free of ideological positioning and as far as possible represent a consensus on the way forward.

"Any wide-ranging reform of the resource management system, including the administrative arrangements, should proceed as far as possible with cross-party support. Such reform has quasi-constitutional implications and would be well suited to a Royal Commission of Inquiry process.

"If we proceed with this conversation it needs to be transparent and be set up in a way that attracts high levels of public trust and confidence.

"Further tinkering with the RMA is not the preferred way forward," Mr Taylor concluded.