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Media Statement

EDS calls for submissions on its submission on resource bill

EDS has released a draft of its proposed submissions on the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill and is calling for comment from experts.

“The Bill is long, complicated and somewhat opaque,” said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

“We are posting our draft submission to the Local Government and Environment Committee on our website for two reasons: first, to assist others in the preparation of their responses to the Bill; and secondly to seek expert feedback from members of the resource management professions to help us fine-tune our final version.

“The Bill avoids the earlier contentious changes to the purposes and principles of the Resource Management Act and seeks instead to improve the processes of plan-making and consenting. It achieves some improvements but as with most resource management amendments in recent years, goes too far.

“The Bill effectively compromises environmental bottom lines by enabling the Minister to create a National Planning Template that can extend beyond matters of plan structure and framing and include policies and rules that can be inserted in all plans nationally. The template can conflict with other national instruments.

“This gives vastly increased powers to the Minister to the Environment with few checks and balances. It is likely to lead to confusion as to which national policies are to be followed.

“At the same time as the Minister is getting new override powers, including a special fast planning track, there are further reductions in public rights to engage in decision-making coupled with limits on appeal rights.

“A number of the fast-track provisions are clearly aimed at dealing with urban growth pressures but those provisions apply across the board. Thus the urban provisions of the Bill are contaminating the rest of resource management practice. The solution here is for the Bill to be redrafted to create bespoke urban planning provisions that are limited to that function.

“Overall we consider that the problems can be fixed via the select committee process but time will need to be made available to dive into the detail. If key stakeholders are limited to the usual 10 or 20 minutes we could well end up with suboptimal law.

“EDS would welcome any informed critique of our draft submission which is on our website.

“We want to make sure we have understood the issues properly in this sometimes unclear and challenging bill,” Mr Taylor concluded.