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Media release

EDS releases second working paper in Phase 2 of its Resource Management Reform project

EDS has released its second working paper as part of Phase 2 of its Resource Management Law Reform Project. The project is taking a first-principles look at how New Zealand's resource management system could be improved.

Phase 1 of the project outlined three potential models for what a future system could look like. Phase 2 is now looking at designing a single preferred model.

"This working paper describes the core features of what we think an ambitious future system could look like," said senior researcher Dr Greg Severinsen.

"We start by adopting a set of high-level criteria to drive reform choices, and describe the system we currently have. That's our starting point for change. We then consider the future of the Resource Management Act – whether or not it should be split, what we should do with Part 2, and how to approach central and local government planning. We see an integrated RMA –with significant changes and perhaps even renamed – as remaining at the heart of a future system that protects the environment and supports wellbeing.

"But the RMA isn't everything. In the paper we also explore the notion of having a dedicated Oceans Act, embedding climate change in the system, changes to how we approach aspects of urban and infrastructure development, and an overarching piece of legislation under which we would have meaningful strategic and spatial planning.

"From an institutional perspective, we are also floating the idea of an independent "Futures Commission" to have key roles under the RMA and other legislation.

"There are other key areas we are continuing to examine including funding and better integration. We envisage substantial change that will need to happen in a staggered and planned way over the next several years.

"We are looking forward to seeing the government's independent review panel on system reform also ruminating on these types of questions. Now is certainly the time to grasp the nettle," concluded Dr Severinsen.

The project is being supported by the New Zealand Law Foundation, the Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation, the Employers & Manufacturers Association (Northern), Property Council New Zealand and Infrastructure New Zealand. Further work focusing on urban issues will follow in 2020.

Feedback is being sought on the working paper, which can be sent to RMProject@eds.org.nz. A final synthesis report is to be launched later in the year. For more information on the project, and to download the report and working papers, see [RM Reform Project](#).