

Mangrove management in the General Coastal Zone

To: Unitary Plan Political Working Party
From: Office of the Chief Planning Officer

Summary

To provide greater certainty and reduce costs to groups seeking to manage mangroves while managing environmental risk the following two-stage approach is proposed.

Stage 1

1. Make changes to the framework in the Unitary Plan to provide increased clarity and more permissive regime by retaining existing permitted activities and in addition permitting without resource consent:
 - mangrove seedling removal using hand held mechanical tools
 - mangrove removal in areas that were free of mangroves in 1996
2. Refine the matters considered by council and applicants in the event that a consent is required.

Stage 2

Undertake a mapping exercise to identify 'areas of interest' for mangrove removal where the environmental risk of removal is low and where removal can be permitted without resource consent. This process would:

1. engage Local Board boards to identify and prioritise 'areas of interest'
2. gather existing available information in prioritised areas of interest and identify information gaps
3. fill information gaps using internal experts and external consultants
4. make a variation to the Unitary Plan to permit removal in 'areas of interest' where environmental risk is low.

It is expected that this process would be completed and incorporated into the Unitary Plan by variation, prior to it taking full operative effect.

The current approach

Currently no consent is required to:

- Maintain existing infrastructure and assets (e.g. outfalls, boat ramp access etc.)
- Remove seedlings by hand

Clearance beyond this requires a Restricted Discretionary activity resource consent. This means that the matters council and applicants consider in the consent process is confined to certain matters, however consent can be declined.