

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008

Amended December 2025

[Previously National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008]

Authority

This National Policy Statement was approved by the Governor-General under section 52(2) of the Resource Management Act 1991 on 10 March 2008, and is published by the Minister for the Environment under section 52(3) of that Act.

This version of the National Policy Statement incorporates the following amendments:

1. amendments made by the Minister for the Environment under section 53(1) of the Resource Management Act 1991 regarding the title, objective and policies.

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Part 1: Preliminary provisions

1.1 Title

- (1) This is the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008 (previously named National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008).

1.2 Commencement

- (1) This National Policy Statement came into force on 10 April 2008.
- (2) See [Part 3](#) for timeframes for giving effect to this National Policy Statement.

1.3 Application

- (1) This National Policy Statement applies to electricity network activities, including all electricity transmission and distribution networks and ancillary electricity network activities.
- (2) This National Policy Statement applies across the whole of New Zealand.

1.4 Interpretation

- (1) In this National Policy Statement:

Act means the Resource Management Act 1991

ancillary electricity network activities (ancillary EN activities) mean all supporting and subsidiary activities necessary to provide for the EN and EN assets, including, but not limited to:

- (a) vegetation clearance and tree trimming;
- (b) earthworks and land disturbance;
- (c) construction, maintenance, repair and upgrading of access tracks, accessways, bridges and culverts; and
- (d) construction, maintenance, repair and upgrading of power supply, telecommunication cables and devices

decision-maker means any person exercising functions or powers under the Act

electricity distribution network (EDN) means all assets and activities that provide electricity distribution and that:

- (a) is owned or used by a person or body who is both an electricity distributor and an electricity operator;
- (b) comprise the network of distribution lines, cables (overhead, underground or submarine), switching stations, support structures, substations, transformers, kiosks, cabinets, connections to grid exit points, customer connections, and works used to distribute electricity from the electricity transmission network or generation activities; and
- (c) includes ancillary EN activities

The EDN does not include the electricity transmission network (ETN).

electricity distribution network provider (EDN provider) means an electricity distributor and/or electricity operator

electricity distributor as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992

electricity network (EN) means the electricity transmission network (ETN) and the electricity distribution network (EDN)

electricity network activities (EN activities) means the construction, operation, maintenance, development, upgrading, replacement, decommissioning or removal of electricity network assets, and includes ancillary EN activities

electricity network assets (EN assets) means the physical components of the EN and any physical components of ancillary EN activities that support operation of the EN

electricity network line (EN line) means EN assets in the form of lines or cables that are used for, or associated with, the overhead, underground or submarine transmission or distribution of electricity, including where attached to a structure or bridge, but does not include an EN substation

electricity network resilience (EN resilience) means the capacity of the EN to absorb and recover from a shock or disruption, or adapt to changing conditions, while retaining an appropriate level of service as determined by the EN provider

electricity operator as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992

electricity transmission network (ETN) means all assets and activities that provide electricity transmission and that:

- (a) comprise the network of transmission lines, and cables (overhead, underground and submarine, including the high-voltage direct current link), stations and substations, support structures, facilities and works;
- (b) includes ancillary EN activities;
- (c) includes other works necessary to connect grid injection points and grid exit points to convey electricity;
- (d) is owned or used by Transpower New Zealand Limited; and
- (e) is commonly known as the National Grid

The ETN does not include the electricity distribution network (EDN).

functional need has the meaning set out in the National Planning Standards 2019

local authority has the meaning set out in the Act

national environmental standard means a standard prescribed by regulations made under the Act

non-routine electricity network activities (non-routine EN activities) means:

- (a) the upgrading, rebuilding or replacement of, or changes to, EN assets or EN activities that are not defined as routine EN activities; or

- (b) the construction of new EN assets not carried out on or related to EN lines, or at an EN substation, that exist at the time of construction; or
- (c) new connections to electricity generation or demand activities upon request of a third party (other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distributor); or
- (d) relocation or undergrounding of assets to enable urban or infrastructure development upon request of a third party (other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distributor)

operational need has the meaning set out in the National Planning Standards 2019

routine electricity network activities (routine EN activities) mean:

- (a) activities required for, or associated with, the operation of existing EN assets; or
- (b) activities that replace an existing EN asset with a modern equivalent or substitute, where the replacement will not result in an increase in the nature, scale or intensity of the activity; or
- (c) maintenance, repair and upgrading of existing EN assets necessary to continue to deliver the same or a similar level of service; or
- (d) upgrading of existing EN assets necessary to improve resilience, where the upgrade will not result in an increase in the nature, scale or intensity of the activity; or
- (e) the removal, decommissioning or dismantling of EN assets; or
- (f) all activities identified as a permitted or controlled activity in any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards; and
- (g) related ancillary EN activities to (a)–(f)

sensitive activities mean activities that are susceptible to actual or potential adverse effects (such as noise, vibration, odour, glare or emissions) generated by adjacent or nearby activities. In relation to the EN, this means residential units (including visitor accommodation and retirement accommodation), care facilities, childcare facilities, schools, hospitals, custodial or supervised accommodation where residents are detained on site, papakāinga, marae or place of worship

upgrading means improving the capacity, level of service, efficiency, safety, security, resilience, effectiveness or longevity of existing EN assets and includes the replacement, renewal, addition, expansion and intensification of existing EN assets.

1.5 Incorporation by reference

- (1) Clause 2(1) of Schedule 1AA of the Act does not apply to any material incorporated by reference in this National Policy Statement.

Part 2: Objectives and policies

2.1 Objective

- (1) The national significance of the electricity network is recognised, protected and provided for, so that the network:
 - (a) is upgraded, improved and resilient to provide for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of present and future generations and their health and safety;
 - (b) is developed and operated in a timely, efficient and ongoing manner while managing adverse effects from or on the EN; and
 - (c) supports achievement of New Zealand's climate change mitigation and renewable energy targets.

2.2 Policies

National significance and benefits of the EN

Policy 1

- (1) Decision-makers on EN activities must:
 - (a) recognise and provide for the national significance of the EN; and
 - (b) provide for the ongoing benefits of the EN to be realised at national, regional and local scales, relative to any localised adverse effects.

Policy 2

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise that the benefits of the EN include:
 - (a) providing for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people and communities to meet the needs of present and future generations and their health and safety;
 - (b) providing services that are essential to support human life and the development, growth and functioning of districts, regions, New Zealand and the economy;
 - (c) providing safe, secure, reliable and resilient electricity supply that is responsive to demand from homes, communities and businesses at a local, regional and national scale;
 - (d) efficient storage and transfer of electricity;
 - (e) supporting climate change mitigation and the electrification of the economy, including by:
 - (i) supporting new, expanded or increased renewable electricity generation;
 - (ii) increasing and improving network capacity; and
 - (iii) providing direct connections for industry and commercial development; and
 - (f) enhancing supply of electricity through the ETN by removing points of congestion.

Māori interests

Policy 3

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise and provide for Māori interests in relation to EN activities, including by:
 - (a) taking into account the outcomes of any engagement with tangata whenua on any relevant resource consent, notice of requirement or private plan change;
 - (b) recognising the opportunities tangata whenua may have in developing and operating their own EDN assets at any scale or in partnership;
 - (c) avoiding, where practicable, or otherwise mitigating, the adverse effects of EN activities on sites of significance to Māori; and
 - (d) local authorities:
 - (i) providing opportunities for tangata whenua involvement where EN activities may affect a site of significance or issue of cultural significance to Māori; and
 - (ii) operating in a way that is consistent with any relevant iwi participation legislation or Mana Whakahono ā Rohe.

Site, route and method selection for EN activities

Policy 4

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise that it is the role of Transpower New Zealand Limited or the EDN provider to:
 - (a) determine the purpose, scope, required capacity and technical solution for proposed EN activities; and
 - (b) consider sites, routes and methods, where appropriate, and identify the preferred site, route and method for EN activities, ancillary EN activities and EN assets.

Providing for EN activities and managing the effects of proposed EN activities on the environment

Policy 5

- (1) Decision-makers must provide for routine EN activities to occur in all locations and environments, provided adverse effects on the environment are, where practicable, avoided, remedied or mitigated, while acknowledging the existing nature of the assets.

Policy 6

- (1) In rural environments, decision-makers should ensure that non-routine EN activities seek to avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value and amenity.

Policy 7

- (1) Decision-makers must recognise and provide for the operational need or functional need of the EN to operate in, be located in, or traverse environments, including:
 - (a) the need for EN assets to convey electricity over long distances and in all locations and environments, including:

- (i) within and across urban and rural environments;
- (ii) within the coastal environment, including the coastal marine area; and
- (iii) across jurisdictional boundaries within and across districts and regions; and
- (b) the need for the EN to operate effectively and efficiently as an interconnected system across New Zealand;
- (c) recognition that the ETN and EDN are separate networks that have differing functional needs and operational needs;
- (d) the requirement for regular maintenance and upgrading of the EN due to its age, the need to improve EN resilience, and the need to increase and improve capacity to meet changing demand and supply;
- (e) the need for the EN to connect to electricity generation, and to respond to demand, wherever located; and
- (f) the functional need for the EN to locate in areas at risk from natural hazards, where Transpower New Zealand Limited or the EDN provider have considered and managed potential natural hazard risks.

Policy 8

- (1) When considering the environmental effects of EN activities and ancillary EN activities, including measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment, decision-makers must:
 - (a) have regard to the extent to which any adverse effects have been avoided, remedied or mitigated through the selection of route, site or method of undertaking the work;
 - (b) recognise that there may be unavoidable adverse effects, regardless of the route, site and method chosen, with adverse effects reduced as far as practicable;
 - (c) provide for EN activities that have an operational need or functional need to be in particular locations and environments, including in areas where section 6 matters apply, even where there may be unavoidable adverse effects on those environments;
 - (d) consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by any operational need of the EN;
 - (e) recognise that development, upgrading and improvement of the EN will be necessary to maintain and improve the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;
 - (f) recognise that EN activities may result in changes in amenity that are unavoidable and necessary to achieve an effective, efficient, safe, secure, reliable and resilient EN, and that such changes may not constitute adverse effects under the Act;
 - (g) adopt relevant international standards (that have been adopted for use in New Zealand), national standards, and recognised best practice standards and methodologies to assess and manage adverse effects; and
 - (h) consider the financial and timing implications of mitigation measures and any consent conditions to ensure these are proportionate to the adverse effects of the EN or particular EN activities.

Policy 9

(1) In urban environments:

- (a) decision-makers must recognise that the EN forms an essential part of well-functioning urban environments that must be provided for;
- (b) decision-makers must recognise that the effective and efficient development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of the EN may be appropriate use and development when protecting historic heritage;
- (c) decision-makers must ensure, wherever practicable, that new EDN lines are placed underground, particularly within new subdivisions, while recognising the financial and technical constraints of undergrounding;
- (d) decision-makers must ensure that, where development will result in an increase in demand for electricity, sufficient on-site space is provided for EDN assets to meet demand; and
- (e) local authorities must consult with EDN providers to determine an appropriate method or means for identifying when EDN assets are required to meet increasing demand.

Policy 10

(1) Transpower or the EDN provider must consider practicable opportunities and measures to reduce the existing adverse effects of EN assets when considering non-routine EN activities, taking into account the functional need, operational need and the financial implications of any measures to reduce adverse effects.

Managing the effects of third parties on the EN

Policy 11

(1) Decision-makers and local authorities must manage adverse effects of activities undertaken by third parties on the EN, including by:

- (a) avoiding direct effects on the EN;
- (b) avoiding reverse sensitivity effects on the EN, to the extent reasonably possible; and
- (c) ensuring that the effective operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the EN is not compromised.

Policy 12

(1) To manage adverse effects of activities undertaken by third parties on the EN:

- (a) local authorities must identify and map the ETN and other EN assets of national or regional significance within their district, whether or not these are designated;
- (b) decision-makers, as relevant, must engage with the operator of the ETN to implement the buffer corridors, provided in any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards, within which it can be expected that sensitive activities, buildings, earthworks, subdivision and other activities that have the potential to compromise the ETN are to be generally avoided;
- (c) decision-makers, as relevant, must engage with EDN providers to implement the provisions of any national environmental standards for electricity networks or similar standards that protect the EDN from adverse effects of third parties;

- (d) decision-makers must ensure that buildings, structures, earthworks, subdivision and land use activities are designed and located to maintain safe distances from, and allow sufficient space for access to, and maintenance, construction, development and upgrading of EN assets; and
- (e) decision-makers must ensure the nature and location of any proposed trees or vegetation to be planted around the EN do not compromise its function and operation.

Long-term spatial and strategic planning for the EN

Policy 13

- (1) When undertaking long-term spatial and strategic planning:
 - (a) local authorities must engage with EN operators to facilitate the medium- to long-term strategic planning for the construction, operation, maintenance and upgrading of the EN;
 - (b) local authorities should utilise regional and district spatial plans and future development strategies as tools to identify existing and future EN asset needs and to make provision for sufficient space for EN assets to be developed as far as practicable;
 - (c) local authorities and decision-makers, as relevant, must recognise that the designation process can facilitate long-term planning for construction, operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the EN; and
 - (d) local authorities must recognise that not all EN activities and EN assets can be spatially identified in advance.

Electric and magnetic fields

Policy 14

- (1) Local authorities must manage electric or magnetic fields associated with the EN based on recommendations from the World Health Organization monograph Environmental Health Criteria (No 238, Extremely low frequency fields) and International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection ‘Guidelines for limiting exposure to time-varying electric and magnetic fields (1 Hz to 100 kHz)’ (*Health Physics* 99(6): 818–836; 2010) (ICNIRP Guidelines) or their revisions, or any other applicable New Zealand standards.

Part 3: Timing

3.1 Timing

- (1) Decision-makers must give effect to this National Policy Statement on and from the commencement date.

Made at Wellington on 15 December 2025.

Hon Chris Bishop
For the Minister for the Environment

Explanatory note

This note is not part of the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks but is intended to indicate its general effect.

This National Policy Statement amends the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008.

This National Policy Statement recognises the electricity network as a matter of national significance under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act).

New Zealand needs to invest in electricity networks to support growth of the economy, support new housing development, provide for the wellbeing of people and communities, improve resilience and achieve better environmental outcomes, including support for achievement of climate change and renewable energy targets.

This National Policy Statement applies to all decisions made under the Act affecting the development of new electricity networks and the operation, maintenance, renewal and upgrade of existing electricity networks, including all electricity transmission and distribution networks.

This National Policy Statement acts in parallel with the National Policy Statement for Infrastructure 2025 and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011, which have interfaces with, but do not overlap with, this statement.

The National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 does not apply to the development, operation, maintenance or upgrade of electricity transmission network assets and activities.

No national policy statement overrides another. Each national policy statement must be applied to the relevant decision-making process.

In relation to managing the effects of EN activities, this national policy statement must be read alongside other national direction and local authority planning documents that govern RMA section 6 matters. The protection of section 6 RMA matters is achieved through Policy 6 ‘seek to avoid’ and Policy 7(1) ‘functional and operational need’ which set a high bar for EN activities to be located in section 6 environments. However, this NPS acknowledges that for linear network infrastructure required to connect to demand and supply, avoidance of all section 6 values along the length of a route is not always possible.

This National Policy Statement is to be applied by all persons exercising powers and functions under the Act. The objective and policies are intended to guide decision-makers in making decisions on the determination of resource consent applications, in considering a requirement for a designation or a heritage order, in considering an application for a water conservation

order and when exercising other relevant powers as required by the Act. The objective and policies will also provide guidance for local authorities in relation to plan making.

In applying this National Policy Statement, local authorities should be aware of their obligations with regard to other legislation, including Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, the Local Government Act 2002, Treaty settlement legislation, iwi participation legislation and the Treaty of Waitangi. Local authorities should also be aware of their obligations in any Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreement they may have with relevant hapū and iwi.

In August 2025, the Government passed an amendment to the Act that introduced a requirement to stop most plan making under the Act, unless it was subject to an exemption. This ‘plan stop’ amendment suspends the requirement to review plans and policy statements and prevents notification of new plan or policy statement changes or variations until the end of 2027, when the new resource management system will be in effect.

Due to the plan stop amendment, plans and policy statements will not be updated to give effect to this amendment (unless a relevant exemption applies).

For the avoidance of doubt, plan and policy statement content that implements the original National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission does not require amendment.

This is secondary legislation issued under the authority of the [Legislation Act 2019](#).

Title	National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008
Principal or amendment	N/A
Consolidated version	Yes
Empowering Act and provisions	Resource Management Act 1991, section 52(2)
Replacement empowering Act and provisions	N/A
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