

A Memorandum  
for Ministers

PEOPLE  
FUTURE  
PLANNING AND  
THE REGIONS  
PARTICIPATION  
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# PLANNING AND THE REGIONS

## A MEMORANDUM FOR MINISTERS

NZPC No. 15  
New Zealand Planning Council  
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## **The Cover**

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Like the cover, the design for regional planning is still taking shape. Recent legislation has provided the cornerstones on which to build but the detailed structures are not yet finalised.

The cover design uses some of the keywords associated with regional planning as its building bricks; they are linked through the interaction of their common elements. Good interaction is important if the potential of the regional planning process is to be realised.

# Contents

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	<i>Page</i>
Foreword ... ..	5
Introduction ... ..	7
<b>Part One: The Background Brief:</b>	
<hr/>	
The Planning Process ... ..	9
Aspects of Regional Policy ... ..	16
References ... ..	27
<b>Part Two: The Submission:</b>	
<hr/>	
Government and the Regions ... ..	29
Annex ... ..	42

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The Task Force thanks:

All those whose individual perceptions have contributed the quotations to sharpen the edge of the debate.

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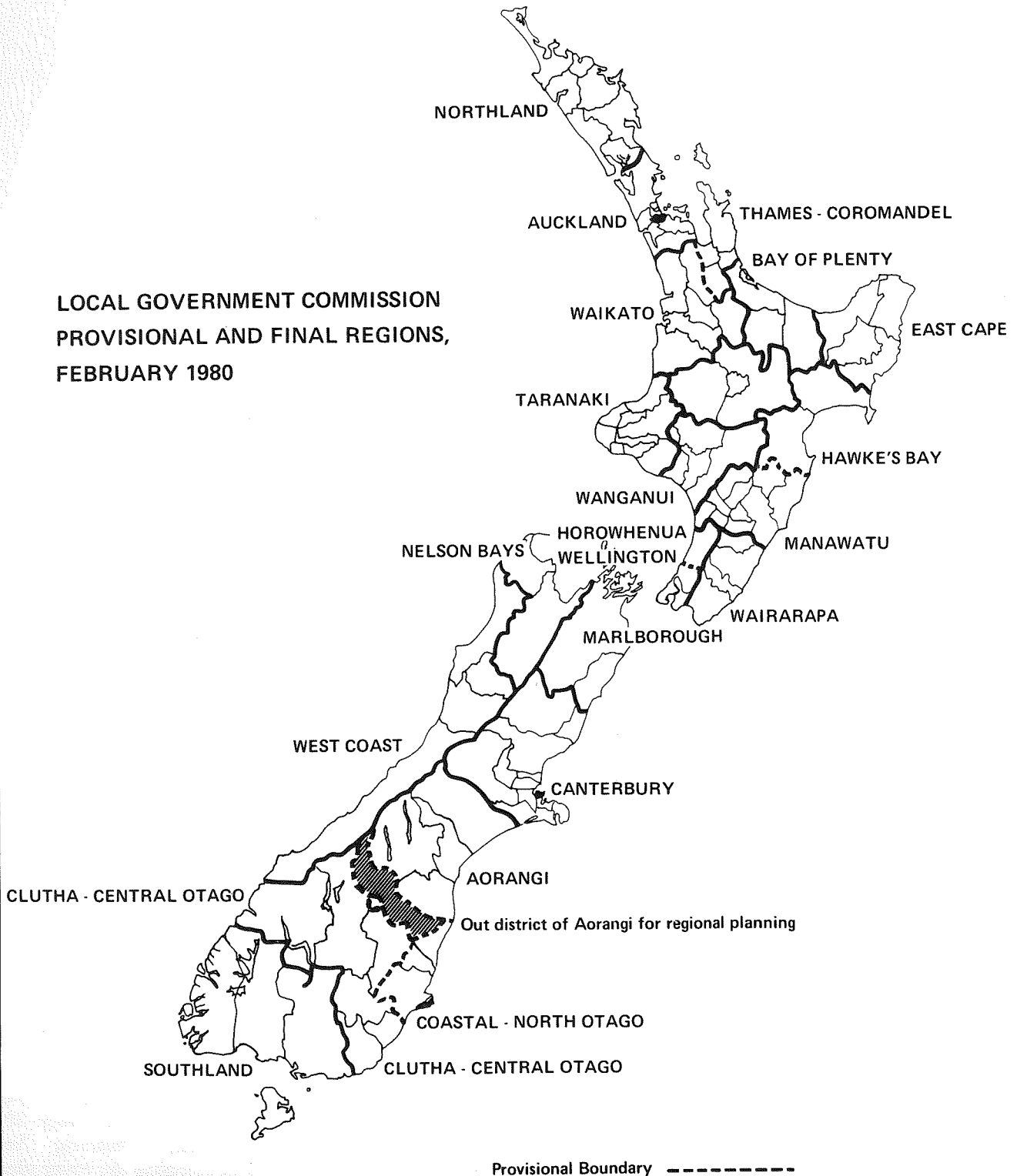
National Publicity Studios for the photographs of Dunedin, Mount Taranaki, and Mangaweka (page 8); and of Akaroa, Mount Cook, and Auckland (page 28).

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION  
PROVISIONAL AND FINAL REGIONS,  
FEBRUARY 1980**



# Foreword

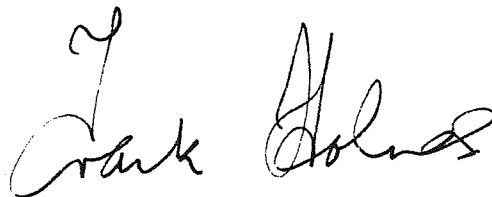
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When the Planning Council was established 3 years ago, the present legislation governing regional planning had not been finally enacted. The Council, nevertheless, was given the responsibility to advise the Government on links between national and regional planning.

Since that time the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 has been passed and the Local Government Act 1974 has been amended. Beginnings have been made on regional planning schemes and many of the regional bodies provided for under the local government legislation have been set up. But there is uncertainty about what regional planning encompasses and about the futures and functions of the united councils primarily responsible for regional planning. Regional development and national development remain separate functions of central government and their relationships with planning have yet to be satisfactorily defined.

Members of the Planning Council are not immune from the uncertainties and concern which these changes have created. They are not united in their views about the advantages of a regional approach to planning and development. Nevertheless, they believe that the potential of the regional planning process needs to be recognised and the obstacles in the way of more effective planning identified, together with the changes which might need to be made to overcome them.

In publishing this report the Council, therefore, is not only exploring the links between national and regional planning and the ways to make them more effective, but also fulfilling another of its functions—"to publish documents on planning topics which in the view of the Council merit wide consideration and public debate". Such consideration and debate are vital if we are to ensure that the new regional initiatives do not become exercises in frustration, but rather the basis for constructive planning in both the national and the local interest.



Frank Holmes, Chairman.

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# Introduction

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*Planning and the Regions* is the culmination of widespread consultation by a Council Steering Committee during 1977 and 1978 and a Regional Task Force in 1979. Both groups were able to gain insights into the unique features and distinctive viewpoints of the different regions. The process served also to identify points of concern, conflict, and common interest.

The Steering Committee produced an interim paper entitled *Regional Options* in 1977. This was used to elicit further responses on regional issues from different levels of government.

Present legislative requirements have established a general framework for regional planning. The Council in fulfilling its statutory obligation to advise the Government on links between national and regional planning has therefore needed to focus on what is required of all participants to make this system work well.

Piecing the jigsaw together is not easy. The different pieces will not function effectively on their own. The regional approach explored in this paper is a new one for New Zealand and is a major challenge to the status quo.

The document is in two parts. Part II contains the Council's advice to Cabinet Ministers. But for those less familiar with the evolution of regional planning, Part I provides a background. It outlines the historical development, describes the present situation, and discusses some of the issues that must be resolved if regional planning is to broaden our options as a nation, and not narrow them.

Part II focuses on the links between regional and national planning and contains the Council's recommendations. It has been designed as a self-contained unit for the busy Cabinet Minister. Inevitably, therefore, there is some repetition of information contained in Part I. For politicians, administrators, or technicians involved in regional planning, the Council's proposals summarised in the recapitulation on page 40 will no doubt be of immediate interest.

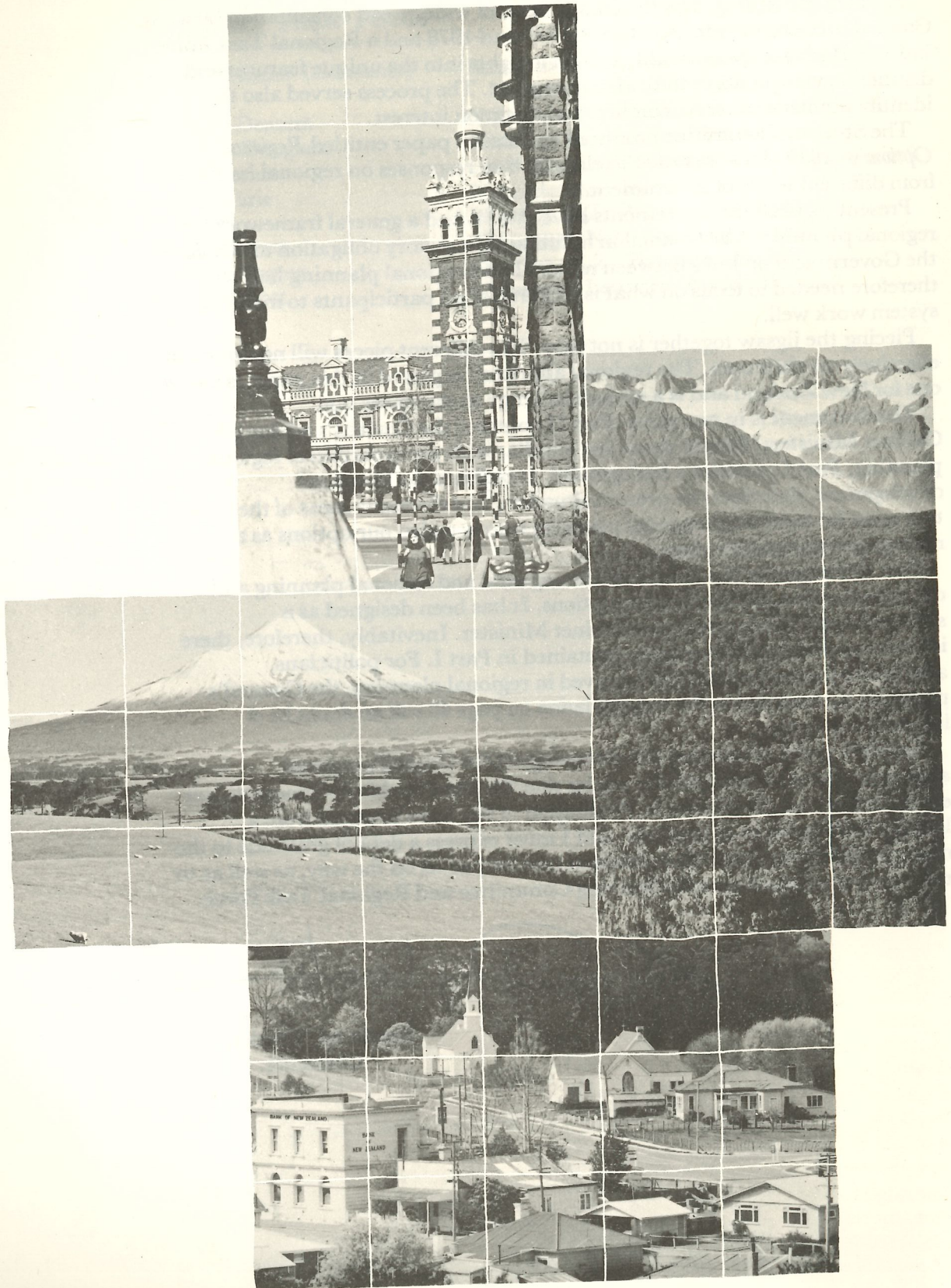
Attached to the submission is a chronology of the Council's regional activities; this is to convince the reader that the ideas in this document do not emanate from an office block in Wellington. They have emerged from a lengthy immersion in the regions, and I must express a debt of gratitude to the many people throughout New Zealand who helped us on the way, as well as to the members of the Council's Steering Committee and Regional Task Force.



Kerrin M. Vautier,  
Convener.

# Part I: The Background Brief

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# The Planning Process

## The Legislative Framework

The Local Government Act 1974 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 provide the means to develop a new regional approach to administration and planning in New Zealand.

The Local Government Act and its subsequent amendments create the framework to establish regional administrative units (regional and united councils) which will be responsible for regional planning and civil defence.

The Town and Country Planning Act defines the scope of planning activities—regional, district, and maritime. The comprehensive approach of this Act, encompassing social, economic, and environmental aspects of planning, is new. It creates an opportunity to use regional planning as the focus for a range of activities which have previously been separate.

## Centralism and Regionalism

Historically New Zealand has always had a centralised administration. Even the provincial system of government which operated last century was controlled at the centre. The provincial councils were dependent on central government revenues, and they could be overridden by both the General Assembly and the Governor (and thus ultimately by Westminster). The local-government system which replaced the provincial administration was not strong enough to have powers delegated to it to any extent. Since then, the bargaining position of territorial local authorities has generally remained weak.

Despite the growth of the central administration and the unifying events of this century—two world wars, the Depression, the rise of the welfare state, and improved communications—there have been persistent cross currents. More people believe it is desirable to bring decision-making “closer to home”. New Zealanders have accepted and live day to day with many kinds of “formal” regional organisation, and recognise many other kinds of “informal” regional association.

Over the years many boundaries have been drawn to define various kinds of formal regional organisation, such as for statistical or electoral purposes. A well-established system of territorial local authorities exists side by side with a variety of regionally-oriented ad hoc (special purpose) bodies such as education boards, district roads councils, hospital boards, arts councils, and catchment authorities. In the past there have been various attempts to reduce the large number of single-purpose regional units. The establishment of the Auckland Regional Authority in 1963, which absorbed a wide range of functions from ad hoc authorities, is one such example.

The informal regions are not necessarily defined by any administrative body. They reflect the way people are unified around a common experience or interest: be it the local landscape (see page 8), a Maori tribal area, or a provincial rugby union. The social diversity of our human settlements affects those who live in a particular place. Towns and cities, coasts and valleys each develop a special atmosphere. (See page 28.) But whereas people readily identify with these informal regions they may find it difficult to give their loyalty to a formal region drawn up under an Act of Parliament.

**Regionalism is a move with a direct and tremendously important impact on local and central government relationships and it is a development which is gaining momentum whether we like it or not.**

K. M. Comber, M.P.,  
October 1979

## Redrawing the Boundaries

Under the Local Government Act the Local Government Commission has been given the task of defining a new set of regional boundaries so that regional or united councils can be set up. (See page 4.) This task can be seen as a continuation of a process which started with the abolition of the provinces. Since then, six local government commissions have been responsible for various kinds of reform and amalgamation of local-government units, including ad hoc authorities.

Because of the multiplicity of existing boundaries the Commission's present task has been likened to unravelling a plate of spaghetti. It recognises that different parts of New Zealand have different resources, aspirations, and local-body structures. It has tried to be sufficiently flexible to recognise these differences. For regional planning and civil defence the local bodies will be grouped into 22 proposed regional units administered mostly by united councils. The new boundaries will not satisfy everyone but they provide the foundations for a new regional structure.

## The Thin End of the Wedge?

There is a great deal of confusion about what regional administration means, what regional planning is, and how regional development fits in. In some areas there have been vigorous, even bitter, arguments about regional issues. Small local bodies fear they will be taken over by their more powerful urban neighbours. Some people fear that planners will dominate local-body politicians. Some have doubts about the value of planning. Some suspect that a regional administration for planning is merely the thin end of the wedge, and that a wide-ranging regional bureaucracy will absorb existing local-body functions.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion, and at times active resistance, we need to be sure that planning does have benefits which outweigh costs. Good planning is an efficient means of coping with change. We cannot operate in a modern society without having some goals, and without working out practical ways to achieve them. If the planning process is closer to the people affected by the

# United council probe confuses hospital board

The Taranaki United Council should not be poking its nose into the province's present health services.

"This is one area where it shouldn't poke its nose," said Mrs J. I. Crowley yesterday. "It's just looking for work to try and justify its existence."

have the experience of board members," she said. "I am deeply concerned that they should say how health services should be run."

### Disputed

Her view was disputed by board and committee chairman, Mr P. J. Smith. Mr Robson and Mr A. C. Dannefaerd who all stated their

it was not interested in making submissions and that health services were at present being reviewed by the department and Government.

He also urged that the council be made aware of the trial scheme in Northland under which a health district was operating in place of a board.

This was the support of

officer, Mr G. James, who asked for a clear definition of intention.

I can't tell what our future programme is as it changes so often. A formal plan or idea is not possible," he said.

The superintendent-in-chief, Mr D. H. King, questioned why the council plan should cover health services.

"No other council covers

The Taranaki Daily News, New Plymouth, 12 December 1979

decisions it will become more responsive to their needs.

The resistance to the new approach is partly a problem of definition. The word "planning" means different things to different people. For some it means regulations, red tape, and restrictions. For others it means setting targets and moving along a predetermined path to achieve them. But for most planners (both in the public and private sectors) planning is a process through which people try to anticipate and manage change. It is a forward-looking and continuing process which:

- sets goals and objectives;
- designs broad strategies to achieve them;
- formulates more specific policies and programmes to put the strategies into effect;
- evaluates the costs and benefits of alternative programmes;
- monitors the effectiveness of programmes and the relevance of the original goals in the light of changing circumstances and changing attitudes.

## A Broader Perspective

Planning should be comprehensive in the sense that all aspects of the human environment (social, economic, and cultural) and their interrelationships with the physical environment are included. The concept of regional planning as outlined in the Town and Country Planning Act reflects this approach. Suddenly politicians and planners have to come to grips with planning as a means of identifying important issues for the future, deciding local or regional priorities for development, and managing change. At the national level the deep-seated nature of the problems facing New Zealand has made the atmosphere more receptive to this broader approach to planning.

# Agencies Should Be Involved In Planning

**Government and ad hoc agencies must be involved in every step in the preparation of a regional plan, according to the Wanganui regional planner Mr E.C. Fox.**

He and the United Council's principal officer, Mr G.E. Tyler, attended a regional planning seminar organised by the Ministry of Works and Development in Wellington earlier in the month.

"The Ministry of Works and Development has a fairly big task in front of it to educate other Government departments in the meaning of regional planning," Mr Fox said.

Representatives from the various Government agencies learned a lot more about regional planning than the planners learned about their particular roles," he said.

At his suggestion, the committee will recommend that the council advertise its intention to prepare a regional plan.

Though the investigations are well in hand, this formal move will invite submissions from the host of organisations to be affected by regional planning.

Mr E.S. Charrott (District Commissioner of Works) said the communication between Government departments and the united council often could be handled directly and not through him as the principal Crown representative.

In the energy field, for instance, the council could hear from a Ministry of Energy official on the possibility of Wanganui "spin off" from Maui development in Taranaki.

Mr Charrott also called for participation by organisations such as the Wanganui Power Board and Wanganui Hospital Board — "drawing the threads together for a broad overview".

*The Wanganui Herald, 27 October 1979*

In the past planning in New Zealand has been fragmented. It has been carried out at different levels often quite unrelated to each other. At the local and regional levels, land-use controls have dominated planning. The large number of single-purpose authorities, such as hospital boards and power boards, in addition to territorial local authorities and regional planning authorities (whose responsibilities have until now been only advisory), has meant that the plans of different organisations within a region have often not been integrated with one another.

At the national level planning has also been fragmented. This is partly because of the way individual Government departments are organised. On the one hand their single-purpose focus is a strength. But

**National will continue to give high priority to regional planning, and will ensure that a cohesive relationship and administrative framework exists so that regional and national planning objectives can be co-ordinated.**

National Party  
Manifesto, 1978

... any government also runs serious risks if it continues to allow single-purpose departments, ad hoc bodies, industry and developers to carve the motorways, dam the valleys, reclaim the bays, misuse the energy, pollute the air and water, and clear-fell the forests... New consultative methods have to be designed...

J. Lello, 1979

on the other hand this does not produce the integration needed to make the best use of resources, and to have an effective development strategy. For instance, planning for power supply, forestry, or transport is rarely viewed as part of an overall national plan. Apart from the Cabinet and the various inter-departmental committees, there is no way to reconcile the conflicts which may arise among the national policies for different sectors. There is little opportunity to assess their social and economic impacts at a regional level. At times, the deciding factor in ranking national development priorities has been the relative strength of Government departments.

Although the new comprehensive approach to regional planning will provide the mechanisms to resolve cross-sectoral conflicts at the regional level, we do not yet have a similar mechanism at the national level. There is no executive organisation with a comprehensive approach. The Planning Council is mainly an advisory agency and is not a substitute for such a body.

There are problems for regional planners, politicians, and the public generally in understanding how regional planning works. Regional planning is essentially about trade-offs within regions and between regions and the centre. It is a process of negotiations among governments (central, regional, and local), private enterprise, and other agencies; although aimed towards a future chosen by most of a region's people it is carried out within the wider framework of the country's resource availability and development objectives.

Some planners seem disconcerted by the breadth and complexity of what may be included in a regional scheme and opt for one or two strategic issues for the future. But others, according to some local-body politicians, see the First Schedule of the Town and Country Planning Act as giving planners the chance to fulfil their dreams of utopia. Many local and regional politicians find the language and concepts used by planners difficult to understand; they feel they are being led through piles of paper to a

## Everyone is picking on the Regional Planning Authority

Kaikōhe Whangarei City, Whangarei County, the Northland Harbour Board, the Minister of Works, and local M.P. John Elliott have all unmercifully clobbered the N.R.P.A.'s grand plans to direct the land and lives of Northlanders, as outlined in the now much maligned Northland's Direction publication.

Kaikōhe has used a financial sledgehammer to express its objections. The City, County, and Harbour Board joined forces to express their total rejection of the sentiments and goals expressed in the Authority's 'discussion document'. Mr John Elliott, has

already indicated a willingness to promote a bill restricting the activities of the Authority until a United Council has been formed—maybe he knew the Minister of Works was going to request the same thing, or perhaps he influenced the Minister to take that stance.

Whatever the political maneuvering, John Elliott has certainly declared his strong objections to the "growing powers of the Northland Regional Planning Authority."

### POWER BID

While accepting that "the Town & Country Planning Act has given

the planning authorities wide powers and tremendous scope for dealing in its scheme with much more than just land use planning," Mr Elliott believes that if the Northland Authority is allowed to press its power to the limit it will end up virtually controlling the lives of every Northlander.

"This document appears to assume that the people of Northland will accept direction as far as their spirituality, their employment, their housing, their lifestyles and almost every other facet of their daily lives is concerned. This is going too far," writes Mr Elliott. "Quite apart from the

fact most of it (Northland's Direction) is verbal nonsense, snippets of poetry and catch phrases from everybody from Shakespeare to Chief Dan George, an Indian chief, of more concern are the detailed policy options which the Planning Authority says it will undertake.

### NO RIGHT

"In my judgement," claims Mr Elliott, "it has no right to get itself so deeply involved in questions of agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism, housing, education, health and many other subjects covered in the document."

"The Authority appears to believe it will get Government money to finance its plans. I know it will not and already the Minister of Works & Development has turned down a request from the Authority for \$20,000 to help in the preparation of the document.

### OVERPLANNED

"The local bodies of Northland have had enough and are not prepared to see further developments in an area where we are already being overplanned. Planning for the reasonably foreseeable future need and must have a

Overplanning into the next century we do not," records Mr Elliott.

For its part, the Whangarei County, in a strongly worded submission presented at last week's executive meeting, states the County as having resolved: "That the Council rejects the entire document for what it implies and advises the Authority that the only merit in the document is that pertaining to clauses 14 and 15 on page 13." Those clauses meant that the N.R.P.A. should confine its scheme to matters of regional importance for Northland and that it would prepare a scheme in such a way

that it creates as little conflict as possible between regional and district schemes.

### PRESTIGE

The council claims, among other things, the

Everyone is Picking on the Northland Regional Planning Authority  
Weekend Magazine, Whangarei, 21 July 1979

promised land they will never reach because of the tremendous costs of getting there. Rather than creating broad regional strategies to guide the more specific directions of district planning, the regional planning scheme, with its binding of district planning schemes, is seen by some politicians as imposing an unwanted straitjacket. Ratepayers and taxpayers are beginning to resist the growth of public sector activity and what they perceive as new and unnecessary bureaucracies.

## Advantages of Regional Planning

Regional planning provides for a comprehensive approach to the development of a region. Social, environmental, and economic factors can be considered in relation to each other. An integrated plan for the future can then be developed within this framework.

Regional planning provides for the representatives of the people of a region, after widespread consultation, to identify important regional issues and decide on priorities for development. If decisions can be made closer to the people who will be affected by them planning should be more efficient. This does not mean that regional authorities are doing all the planning and decision-making. They should be seen as catalysts in a wider process which assists individuals and firms to plan more effectively.

The regional planning process brings out the importance of the social dimension, so that the social needs of a region are studied and provision is made for facilities and support services most needed. The inclusion of a social development component would focus on aspects like housing and the needs of special groups. It would then become an integral part of the planning process to cater for early

childhood education, the aged, solo parents, and so on.

The regional planning process identifies regional resources and the constraints on their development. This evaluation is not confined to the physical resources of the land for the development of farming, forestry, or manufacturing, or for conservation or recreational use. It also includes the region's human resources and skills, the infrastructure (roading, transport services, utilities), and financial resources. It therefore helps create the environment in which business enterprises are able to plan their activities and seek opportunities for development. Moreover, actual money savings can be made.

made are confusing, inefficient or incomplete. We should be doing everything to avoid bureaucracy."

Mr Latham defined the catalyst role as "regionalism of a different style . . . alongside local government, not above it . . . and being able to manage tasks on the region's behalf. Partnership, communication and co-ordination are the key words. The ARA is the catalyst for change and development, not the provider. It does less, yet accomplishes more." He said the ARA currently showed elements of all three categories.

The move away from doing things into helping others had good implications for the ARA structure.

"We could do with less staff. We could help improve the share of investment contributed by the private sector. We could be smaller, more manoeuvrable, yet more active and effective. Efficiency could be enhanced, bureaucracy diminished."

**Change or Stagnate—ARA planner's warning**  
*The Auckland Star,*  
3 September 1979

The regional planning process provides for better links between regional and national planning and a stronger partnership between central government and regional bodies. The financial commitment, as well as the policy support, of central government to regional planning is critical. Central government and local authorities are legally bound to adhere to the

**Applying the Manawatu and Christchurch findings it is crudely estimated that savings of \$60 million per annum could be achieved nationally if regional planning were able to direct urban growth away from high cost sites and programme development in an orderly fashion.**

G. A. Town, 1977

provisions of regional planning schemes once they are finalised, though it is understood that planning must adapt to changing circumstances.

Any MP has a double set of obligations. First and foremost is his obligation to the wellbeing of the country, and, a close second, to the wellbeing of the region.

Where an M.P.'s priorities should lie

*The Evening Post*, Wellington,  
2 October 1979

Regional planning creates opportunities for politicians, planners, and people generally. It provides an interface between national planning and policy makers and local and regional planning and policy makers. Regional interests can then be judged against the national interest (and vice versa) in a regional setting. Thus the regional planning process creates a framework to recognise and resolve conflicts between regional policies (which reflect the view of development held by local and regional communities) and national policies (which may not always take into account differing regional aspirations, resources, and impacts).

The regional planning process demands community involvement (and as a public process contributes to open government). This is provided for in the legislation. Laws, however, do not guarantee widespread participation. Nor do they ensure that involvement is dominated by anything other than self-interest. Many people, however, are becoming more and more uneasy about the growth of central bureaucracy. They feel it monopolises information and policy formation, favours single-model solutions which ignore the diversity of viewpoints and resources, inhibits flexibility, and stifles new ideas. The regional planning process allows those who wish to help plan their regional futures to become involved, for example in

setting regional housing priorities. Indirectly, therefore, it can help stimulate greater community cohesion.

## The Interdependence of National and Regional Planning

Regional planning and national planning are not separate unconnected processes. They are interdependent. Working out the interrelationships between regional and national policies will be limited however if regional policies are formulated in a vacuum. Broad national strategies are essential to provide national guidelines for regional planning in the same way as regional strategies need to create the environment within which district planning can be developed. In discussions with regional planning officials, for example, the Task Force has been constantly reminded of the importance of a national framework within which regional policies and programmes can be set. Because this framework does not exist, the Wellington Regional Planning Authority used the Planning Council's *Economic Strategy 1979* as a basis for formulating its regional development priorities. To provide clearer guidelines on what the Government itself will do a strategy adopted by the Government is needed.

The importance of these interrelationships becomes more obvious when questions of regional and national development, and the best use of the country's resources are considered. Development alternatives are an integral part of the planning process. As a matter of national economic and social policy it may be decided that special assistance should be accorded to development in some regions and not in others. Regional development should not be seen simply as a series of hand-outs to

**The quality of participation is generally low but this could be significantly improved if a sound process of town and country planning can be developed through collaboration and partnership.**

W. A. Robertson,  
February 1979

**Why do M.P.s make policies which suit the Pakeha, but don't suit me—the Maori?**

Rangi Mete-Kingi,  
December 1979



regions. It is an essential part of the regional planning process. Like planning, different levels of development need to be integrated, and development at a regional level has to be dovetailed into the country's national development strategy.

Some national policies can actually conflict with specifically regional ones, for example in transport or energy. One example of this is given in *The King Country: A Regional Resource Survey*,<sup>1</sup> which points to the financial strain experienced by many small-scale road carriers in the King Country as a result of increased road-user charges. The same report drew attention to the rural depopulation trends which have characterised the area in recent decades. Other commentators have linked the withdrawal of rural carriers both with this process and with declining prospects for growth in agricultural output in the region.

Until recently the central government's regional development policies mainly promoted manufacturing. This revealed the pitfalls in trying indiscriminately to blend national and regional development objectives. Extending the policies to include agriculture and

horticulture as part of a resource-based policy, indicates an increased awareness of the needs and potential of the different regions of New Zealand.

Planning for resource-based development however requires more than a detailed knowledge of regional resources and their potential. It requires that land-use or other conflicts be identified. The acceptability of development proposals has to be measured in both regional and national terms. So planning for economic development and for social needs must reflect local knowledge and expertise. These are best harnessed on the regional meeting ground, where both private and public sector contributions can be included.

Planning is also concerned with allocating financial resources. There are, and will continue to be, financial constraints on New Zealand's ability to see all desirable projects (especially from a region's point of view) come to fruition. Not all regions can have container ports, universities, and major airports. Some unevenness in the pattern of future development is unavoidable. Inter-regional choices will have to be made. A regional focus in national planning and financial allocations could provide a much more informed basis for making such choices, and conflicts can be highlighted. Moreover, such an emphasis would provide a needed complement to the present largely sectoral approach to determining public expenditure priorities.

**... no one region can be dealt with fully in isolation. New Zealand is a small country and it could well be that a form of tug-of-war will develop for securing uncommitted resources ... there will be heavy demands on capital in other parts of New Zealand ... and this region may have to wait its turn.**

M. J. Conway, June 1978

A recommendation was passed that the committee would endorse the work of the employment strategy group.

"In the absence of a national employment strategy we have to do it ourselves. It's a case of swim or sink," Porirua's community co-ordinator, Mr Mathew Nolan, told the committee.

The report stated that the ESG believed it unlikely there would be sufficient expansion within New Zealand to create the number of new jobs needed in Porirua

**Plan to create jobs in Porirua**  
*The Evening Post*, Wellington,  
5 February 1980

# ASPECTS OF REGIONAL POLICY

## Local Government Legislation

Successive governments have recognised the importance of the region as a focus for debate and policy-making in New Zealand. This is reflected most recently in the Local Government Act 1974. The Act required the Local Government Commission to draw up schemes to create united or regional councils which would absorb many ad hoc authorities and become responsible for regional planning and other functions. These new bodies were seen as one layer in a four-tier system of government—central, regional, district, and community. Provision was made for direct elections at each stage except in the case of united councils. Members of a regional council were to be directly elected, and the councils to have direct rating powers. Members of a united council were to be appointed from constituent territorial local authorities, and the councils financed through levies on these authorities.

The 1974 Act was later amended. As a result, for most of New Zealand the regional tier will now comprise united councils of nominated members from constituent territorial local authorities. These bodies will have two mandatory functions—regional planning and civil defence. Ad hoc authorities will not be voting members unless they choose to join a united council though they may be represented on specific committees (such as the regional planning committee). The degree of rationalisation which the original legislation intended has therefore been reduced. Nevertheless, the present Government has indicated that it will encourage close association of ad hoc bodies with united councils and although “existing ad hoc authorities will not be interfered with . . . new forms of ad hoc authorities are to be

discouraged in favour of regionalism”.<sup>2</sup> United councils will have to work hard to create strong links with all the organisations (hospital boards, Government departments, catchment authorities, and so on) if regional planning is to be effective.

I still believe that the setting up of united or regional councils by the Local Government Commission is of much lesser importance in local government reform than the amalgamation of some of our small, often inefficient and costly, territorial and ad hoc authorities.

### Efficient

All we seem to be doing is forming new units of local government with paid chairmen and members and more officers and clerks, instead of eliminating the weak ones and making our local government structure stronger and more efficient.

**A Step in the Right Direction**  
*Sunday News, Auckland,*  
22 July 1979

Central government has reassessed the regional functions. It has also removed a unanimity clause which required agreement of all council members to the acceptance of new functions. Individual councils can now opt out of any proposed regional function. If this occurs, the particular functional responsibility will not encompass the whole region.

With these changes, central government seems to be encouraging the development of regionalism in New Zealand. The Minister of Local Government, for example, has stated that the establishment of united councils marks a genuine attempt:

- to make sure planning at a regional level is workable;

- to allow a region to be responsible for functions which are important to its development and the well-being of its people;
- to enable a genuine regional viewpoint to be expressed;
- to make sure that local authorities in a region work together.<sup>3</sup>

The Minister and his Under-Secretary appear as strong advocates for regionalism. The Minister has talked about regional government and the Government's philosophy on devolution,<sup>4</sup> and other spokesmen have suggested additional functions may be taken up by the new regional bodies.<sup>5</sup> But there is some ambivalence. They have not spelt out how they view devolution—the delegation of power by central government to local or regional administration. Nor have they indicated how new regional functions might be financed. The Minister has suggested that regional and united councils should become “the instruments for a redistribution of political power and political decision-making in New Zealand”.<sup>6</sup> But, for this to happen, the questions of which functions are to be devolved and how these will be paid for need to be answered.

## What Functions?

So far, functions given to united councils are those previously carried out by local government rather than central government. The 1979 Amendment to the Local Government Act 1974 introduces provisions for united and regional councils to undertake regional water supply, drainage, refuse disposal, regional energy supply, and afforestation. It also provides new powers in relation to recreation, community development, and transport.

This Amendment allows, rather than requires, councils to take on more functions. Nevertheless, it has created concern in some areas of New Zealand. A number of local-government politicians, planners, and the Local Government Commission believe that the new councils should be given time to establish themselves and their mandatory functions (regional planning and civil defence) before they take on others. The new possibilities introduce a further element of uncertainty into an already uncertain situation.

**A suggestion that the Kingston Flyer be taken over and operated by an organization such as the Southland United Council may sound like clutching at straws, but the idea is not as illogical as it may at first seem. Some local authorities already operate passenger bus services. Why not, then, a railway passenger service? The idea is at least worth investigating.**

### **A local flyer?**

*The Southland Times, Invercargill, 15 October 1979*

The Planning Council believes no single mix of functions will suit all regions. Each region must define these largely for itself according to its circumstances. The Wanganui United Council, for example, has shown interest in handling forestry, but it may not be appropriate for some regional bodies to take on additional functions. In certain regions, particularly major urban areas, it may be desirable to regionalise other functions. Given the existing legislation and the published local government schemes, most united councils will depend on the local authority administering them for servicing; this will influence their willingness to assume new functions.

The establishment of regional councils is more complex. These are likely to be located only in Auckland and Wellington where the greater

**United and regional councils are in the best position to initiate consultations, including consultations with existing energy distribution organisations, with the aim of reaching agreement on the forms of reticulated energy distribution best suited to a particular area.**

Minister of Energy,  
October 1979

responsibilities of urban management will demand technical and managerial expertise to support decision-making. In view of the concern being expressed by ratepayers toward expensive functions such as public transport, taking on additional functions is likely to be strongly resisted unless adequate financial support is available. Opposition to the new Urban Transport Bill indicates the possible extent of this resistance.

### **Bus-train bill to be fought**

AUCKLAND, Feb 7 (PA). — Aucklanders in the city and region will have to pay about \$3,000,000 extra in rates if the Urban Transport Bill comes into effect, the Mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, warned today.

Sir Dove-Myer labelled the legislation "the greatest disaster to hit Auckland."

The Bill proposes the establishment of five Urban Transport Authorities under a central council, and Sir Dove-Myer said it would split the country because it was selectively aimed at the five major centres — Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

"Mr Muldoon will just count the members of Parliament," he said.

Auckland civic leaders say they plan to fight the legislation because it increases central control of urban transport and enables the Government to pass the cost of rail passenger services onto the ratepayers.

*The Evening Post*, Wellington,  
8 February 1980

### **Stop or Go?**

It has been suggested that the effective performance of united central government's attitudes towards devolution and the allocation of funds to regional bodies. Central government may resist major changes in allocating resources until local

authorities can show they are able to co-operate in the wider interest of their regions. But if they do not seek stronger regional government (because of the perceived threat this poses), then there is likely to be a major hiatus during which no further progress is made toward genuine regional expression. Regional bodies could be established with little inclination and few resources to carry out even the mandatory functions. Central government could remain unwilling to transfer functions or provide extra finance. If this happened, further development of regional units would be effectively stifled. This problem could be partly overcome by an act of faith by central government to increase funds for regional planning and thus increase the scope of regional authorities.

A closely related issue is the scope for financial arrangements which would allow regions a greater say in determining their own priorities. If grants-in-aid are made by central government for roading, recreation, and small-scale hydro development, it is likely local projects will reflect this irrespective of need or cost. However, if the same amount of money was distributed according to locally or regionally determined priorities, there would be a chance of giving real purpose to the planning process.

This sort of thinking may have been behind the Local Authority Finance Committee's recommendation in its 1977 report.<sup>7</sup> It recommended that central government's specific-purpose grants to local authorities should gradually evolve into general-purpose grants. This would increase local authority discretion on how these grants are spent. Other recommendations pointed to the need for a revenue source more broadly based and listed possible alternatives. More recently, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Local Government floated some

**It is doubtful that regional councils will be effective in stopping the trend to centralisation of powers and if certain Government responsibilities are to be devolved to the regions, central government funds will need to be made available as well as the income from rating allowed under present legislation. If this is not done, the cost of regional councils will fall unfairly on the unwilling local ratepayers.**

Manawatu Catchment Board, August 1979.

additional suggestions. For example, local government stock might be more attractive if it were issued in larger and less frequent parcels on a regional basis. Another possibility is that regional bodies might have some responsibility in loan raising machinery.<sup>8</sup>

Spokesmen of both Municipal and Counties Associations who support the present approach to regional planning, have also focused on finance as the key to central government's commitment to regionalism.<sup>9</sup> Ratepayers are resisting further rate increases. Inflation is placing constraints on local authorities—it is hard for them to carry out their present responsibilities let alone take on new ones. Porirua City Council, for example, is having difficulties in maintaining the Temporary Employment Programme because the Department of Labour subsidies, which are a necessary part of the Programme, are slow in being paid over. Further growth of regional functions will be quite unrealistic without changes to the present distribution of finance within the public sector. This need not imply an overall growth of public sector expenditure.

## Sharing National Resources

The Town and Country Planning Act 1977 goes far beyond the traditional land-use planning emphasis. A regional planning scheme may now indicate the "scale, sequence, timing, and relative priority of development", the levels of service, and "the amount, type, and source of financial and other resources necessary". It may also identify the agencies responsible for carrying through the defined programmes. The scheme provides the opportunity for local and regional priorities for change to be identified, for conflicts to be defined and possibly resolved, and for programmes to be developed and evaluated in the light of available resources and costs.

As the Act states, a regional scheme may include the items listed in the First Schedule. It is not obligatory for regional planning bodies to incorporate all these matters. Different ways of viewing this Schedule will inevitably create some teething problems for regional planners and politicians.

**11. Preparation of draft regional planning scheme—**  
... (2) **The scheme shall include a statement of the objectives and policies for the future development of the region, and of the means by which they can be implemented, having regard to national, regional, and local interests, and to the resources available. The scheme shall make provision for such of the matters referred to in the First Schedule to this Act as are appropriate to the circumstances and to the needs of the region.**

Town and Country Planning Act, 1977

said the Government should give more than lip service to regional government.

That, of course, implies the provision of money, and Mr Ardell's idea is that the Government should contribute the equivalent of petrol tax paid to local bodies as its share towards the cost of regional government. Since the future of petrol is uncertain, it would be better if the Government decided, at last, to take notice of the proposal made for years by local bodies that they should receive a small percentage of the income tax collected in their area. That seems preferable to the complicated formula that has been proposed as a basis for sharing the cost of regional government — without explaining clearly how the money is to be found.

### Regional Thinking Required

*The Southland Times*, Invercargill, 13 September 1979

## SCHEDULES

### FIRST SCHEDULE

Section 11 (2), (4)

#### MATTERS TO BE DEALT WITH IN REGIONAL SCHEMES

##### 1. Social—

Provision for social and economic opportunities appropriate to the employment, housing, and welfare needs of the people of the region.

##### 2. Economic—

Development of the regional economy, including growth of and balance between primary and other basic industries and service industries.

##### 3. Natural resources and environment—

The identification, preservation, and development of the region's natural resources, including water, soil, air, and other natural systems, farmlands, forests, fisheries, mineral (including sand, metal, and gravel), and areas of value for the enjoyment of nature and the landscape.

##### 4. Type and general location of development—

- (a) The regional pattern and general form of urban and rural development.
- (b) General identification of areas for urban growth including urban expansion, new urban growth, urban renewal, and areas for comprehensive planning, and of land to be acquired for any of those purposes. Determination of programmes for land assembly, development, and disposal.
- (c) General identification of areas to be excluded from future urban development, including land of high productive capability, land subject to hazards such as flooding and earth movement, land with high aesthetic or recreational value, and land to separate and to enhance the appearance and setting of cities and towns.
- (d) General identification of the regional pattern of industrial and commercial employment centres.

##### 5. Public works, utilities, and facilities—

Regional needs for the provision and protection of—

- (a) Drainage and sewerage facilities;
- (b) Water supply, including catchment areas;
- (c) Production and distribution of power and fuel;
- (d) Health and educational facilities;
- (e) Air, road, sea, and rail transport facilities; and
- (f) Other public utilities and public works.

##### 6. Recreation—

Regional needs for land and water based recreation.

##### 7. Communications and transport—

Provision for communications and transport to structure and support the regional pattern of development and provide access to the resources, employment, housing, shopping, and commercial areas, and the community and recreational facilities within, and outside, the region.

FIRST SCHEDULE—*continued***8. Community facilities—**

Regional needs for—

- (a) Civic and commercial facilities, including conference centres and halls; and
- (b) Refuse disposal sites and systems.

**9. Cultural facilities and amenities—**

Regional needs for—

- (a) Cultural facilities, including libraries, auditoriums, museums, art galleries, theatres, cinemas, and public halls;
- (b) Tourist resort areas, camps and sporting facilities, including sports stadia and racecourses;
- (c) Zoological and botanic gardens; and
- (d) Marae and ancillary uses, urupa reserves, pa, and other traditional and cultural Maori uses.

**10. Regional programming—**

In presenting policies and strategies on any of the matters listed in clauses 1 to 9 of this Schedule the scheme may indicate the scale, sequence, timing, and relative priority of development.

**11. Implementation—**

In presenting regional policies the scheme may indicate such of the following as may be appropriate:

- (a) Levels of service and operating policies for public utilities, services, and facilities;
- (b) Amount, type, and source of financial and other resources necessary;
- (c) Identification of the bodies or agencies responsible for implementation.

Despite differences in interpretation, the role for central government is clear. It should help make the most of the regional planning process and of the scheme, which should be regarded as a contractual basis for action by all participants in the planning process.

The present arrangements by which finance is allocated by central government are in many respects an obstacle to the inclusion of a regional dimension. Procedures of the Committee on Public Expenditure (COPE) allocate finance along functional lines on a purely national basis. The preparation of public expenditure proposals in a way which

brought in a regional approach would allow regions to influence the mix and range of services provided in their areas. Regional expenditure breakdowns are available for a few categories, such as regional development assistance. Very little, however, is known about the regional implications of national expenditure in certain sectors, for example, transport or energy. These may in fact have considerable economic, social, and environmental impacts within particular regions.

Various proposals have been made for a sub-committee of COPE to be established to review grants and subsidies. It would consult with local-government representatives

**The Joint ARA/MWD report called for better co-ordination of public expenditure. What it meant but did not say was more cost-effectiveness in public expenditure. The real need is the development of an agreed, systematic, and competitive analysis year by year, programme by programme, of all public expenditure proposals.**

M. M. B. Latham,  
November 1978

before reporting to the Ministers of Works and Development, Local Government, and Finance. The Local Authority Finance Committee considered it important to establish this committee so that levels of local-government financial assistance could be assessed each year before decisions on departmental allocations were taken. In the absence of such a mechanism, a joint study between the Ministry of Works and Development and the Auckland Regional Authority on the costs of growth<sup>10</sup> in the Auckland Region set a useful precedent. Subsequently a regional forum (APEX) was established to provide a continuing means of monitoring and co-ordinating public investment in the Auckland Region.

These and other techniques could be used to achieve a measure of regional co-ordination by central government. There are certain clear advantages which would arise if the sharing of public monies could be influenced in this way.

- Forward planning could be introduced into a wider area of public sector financing.
- A greater rationalisation of expenditure within the regional context and between the various levels of government should be achieved.
- Local and regional bodies (including ad hoc bodies such as harbour and hospital boards) would have to evaluate their programmes and resources in relation to each other so that some ranking of priorities by the regional community could be achieved.
- A regional focus in national investment decisions would give a broader overview of needs that the present system of sectoral allocations can achieve.
- It would provide a better mechanism for sorting out regional financial needs in relation to national priorities and total resources.

## The Structure?

Debate will continue about the best type of regional organisation for identifying and realising regional aspirations. The Planning Council, like many other groups of New Zealanders, has not found it easy to agree on a single solution. It envisages that in this area, as in others, there could be a variety of solutions. Some Council members have doubts about the effectiveness of united councils, particularly as they cannot have financial accountability to a regional electorate. For that reason the Council in 1977 in *Planning Perspectives*, expressed a preference for regional councils.

At this stage, however, on balance the Council believes that it is essential to build on the present laws, and on the structures in prospect. The aim in

**THERE seems to be little chance of a united council for the Wellington region, despite Lower Hutt's change of stance on the issue last week.**

At their council meeting they made a surprise decision reversing their support from regional to united councils, joining with Upper Hutt and Hutt County.

The support of both Petone and Eastbourne boroughs is needed to force the Local Government Commission to reconsider its substitute provisional scheme of regional government.

But both groups on the Petone Borough Council appear firmly behind the Mayor (Mr George Gee) on the issue.

**Regional Council in peril, but not dead**  
*The Evening Post*, Wellington,  
5 March 1980



1980 and beyond is to ensure they work as well as possible. It is not the nature of the regional body so much as the degree of leadership and unity of purpose among the politicians that will decide whether regional organisations of either type can be effective.

### *United By Name ... Or Nature*

THE PROTRACTED disagreement between the Wallace County Council and the Riverton Borough Council over membership of the Southland United Council was settled this week.

First stage of the settlement came with the ruling of three arbitrators that the three members to jointly represent the two authorities should come from Wallace County.

And the second stage followed when the Riverton council endorsed the nomination of three Wallace County councillors as united council members.

Although the dispute is over, resentment remains.

Riverton feels it has lost out. Its forthright Mayor, Mr Noel Andrews, said the outcome "stinks".

While his statistics on the number of members to the urban and rural population may be astray, he has a valid point, and reason to feel wronged.

At the same time, some of his councillors appear to misunderstand the role of united council members, who represent the province and not sectional interests.

That's in theory, of course, because in Southland there are strong rivalries between local authorities, notably in the county sector.

Is it too much to hope for a united council which is united by nature as well as by name?

*The Southland Times,  
Invercargill, 27 October 1979*

Some of the councils already established are showing enthusiasm and cohesiveness in their regional planning activities. Many of them are already developing policies on important issues for their regions (such as energy in both Northland and Taranaki). The Westland United Council, for example, has "worked

with a sense of urgency to prepare a 'draft section one' of the regional planning scheme". The council was able to move quickly because the local authorities had "a firm idea of what they want" and also because of the close relationship with the regional development council.<sup>11</sup> Others with less sense of purpose are making little progress so far.

Central government through its officials can help to make united councils and other regional bodies effective. The way officials view questions like devolution and the role they play in the regional planning process are crucial. They can influence (and will be influenced by) the extent to which Government adopts policies of decentralisation. Present policy shows some commitment to moving decision-making away from Wellington. The 1978 National Party manifesto stated "that where practicable and appropriate Government departmental administration will be located in the regions rather than Wellington". The Labour Party has also supported decentralisation, and in its most recent manifesto, emphasised the employment opportunities which this process generates.

In recent years there has been some decentralisation notably by the Department of Statistics, Lands and Survey, and the Post Office. The Ministry of Works and Development, which already has the best developed network of all Government departments, is strengthening aspects of its district office activity. This should be encouraged in all the larger departments.

Decentralisation (the wide geographic distribution of central government activity outside Wellington) in itself cannot improve the planning process. Without delegation it creates uncertainty and frustration for district office staff and can adversely affect their efficiency and commitment. This is not the end

of the story. If the process of decentralisation is accompanied by devolution of functions from central to regional and local government, it should be possible to arrange exchanges of staff among the different levels of government and perhaps eventually to move to a common public service. These various objectives would be assisted, moreover, by a common set of geographic boundaries for planning purposes.

But what do we have with the new Canterbury? River boundaries top and bottom—the old, simple, lazy way of drawing the most obvious boundary for administration according to area. When one sees the substantial Rakaia as the southern boundary, it brings home how far the Commission has downgraded the civil defence function and the river development function postulated by the legislation. Every time a major river is split between two adjoining authorities, old attitudes survive, and new ones are stifled at birth. It was the old attitudes which produced such a jumble of local body responsibility at the last Clutha floods and, indeed, in virtually everything to do with river administration.

One of the strongest expressions of opinion presented in our survey on Otago prospects was the need to give unified attention to the Clutha and Waitaki river basins. Fortunately, the Clutha is not significantly used as a land boundary, and its basin should be able to be incorporated into a single region. Waitaki, on the other hand, has for so long been an accepted land boundary that it would take a considerable effort of imagination to bring the basin into a single region. The fate of the Rakaia has ominous overtones for the Waitaki.

What seems to be happening, in fact, is that regional boundaries are being decided on export harbour catchments. It might make sense: it might be what many people want. But it is not the concept drafted out in the legislation. We should not be parcelling out small kingdoms for uncrowned administrators: we should be developing the harmony of land-water relationships needed to support a prosperous life in each region.

#### **Regional Concepts**

*The Otago Daily Times, Dunedin, 16 July 1979*

## **The Link with Development**

For the past decade much of the regional debate has focused on regional development. This was sparked off in the 1960s by a concern that the distribution of population and economic activity was becoming too concentrated. A study by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) published in 1969, recommended that central government intervention in industrial location decisions was not warranted. The regional development subcommittee of the National Development Council did not agree. It suggested that social and cultural reasons, as well as economic analysis, could justify intervention of this sort.

The general views of the subcommittee were incorporated into policy in the early 1970s when concern was expressed at the rapid growth in Auckland and Wellington, and the high net social costs which were perceived to accompany this. A need to promote the slower growing areas, particularly those in the South Island, was recognised. Developing the resources of these areas would allow them to compete better on the national market. A further justification for regional assistance was the apparent underutilisation of resources and the social problems associated with net outward migration.

Regional development councils were established in designated "slow growth" regions. They were appointed by the Minister of Regional Development and their task was to process requests for assistance. At first the philosophy behind the regional development programmes was broadly based. Later, however, manufacturing activity in these slow growth regions was emphasised and this tended to obscure the original aims of the programmes.

Concern about regional imbalances seems to be widespread. But neither the framework used by policymakers nor the data available are adequate to assess the problem or to help decide the best ways to solve it.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) views the crux of the problem in the following terms:

"The chief objective of regional policy is to strive for a 'proper' or 'better' regional balance . . . But what 'better' and 'proper' mean is rarely defined by governments, and this lack of clarity in the definition of objectives explains in part the persistence of regional imbalances, the apparent failure of measures that have been in force for decades, and the inability of governments to devise new policies which offer a greater hope of success . . ." <sup>12</sup>

This lack of clarity means that such policies are often dominated by political considerations. To encourage clearer definition the Planning Council commissioned Dr Claudia Scott to carry out research. Her report *Regional Development Objectives and Policies: an Appraisal* is published as a companion volume to this report. This contains a more detailed historical discussion of regional development (including an analysis of the NZIER report) than has been possible in this paper.

Not only are the framework and data for evaluation insufficient, the mechanisms for responding to perceived regional development needs are also inadequate. An Officials Co-ordinating Committee for Regional Development (OCCRD) was set up so that Government departments could examine national and sectoral implications of regional development proposals. The Committee was unable to reconcile conflicting objectives or co-ordinate policies because broad strategies were lacking. It operated largely as a forum for declaring departmental interests and its

subsequent demise was inevitable.

This leaves no means within central government to produce broadly based assessments of regional development proposals. The Department of Trade and Industry retains primary responsibility in this area.

There is still no comprehensive study of the advantages of dispersal as against the concentration of economic and social activity in New Zealand. But the Council believes that we cannot afford to accept fire-brigade solutions to development; the country is going through major changes and is likely to face more in the future. The present Government has suggested to regional development councils that they draw up strategies for the development of their regions. There is as yet, however, no explicit link with the regional planning process. Regional development assistance has been broadened out and is available for horticulture, forestry, fishing, tourism and mining, as well as manufacturing.

In some areas these councils are becoming much more involved with broad issues concerning economic and social development. For example, the Wanganui Regional Development Council has consistently pressed for the establishment of a community college in its region and has now indicated its interest in developing regional health and welfare policies. The Wairarapa Regional Development Council has participated in seminars focusing on social as well as economic development needs in its area. Close relationships are already forming between some regional development councils and united councils. This is important in the light of the need to get close working contacts between the business community and local government.

But only the so-called slow-growth regions have regional development councils. If development activities are to be brought together, then all

**As has become something of a familiar pattern in New Zealand, political decisions about regional development have already been taken long before any real understanding of the issues involved is possible. As a consequence the policies themselves lack precise and detailed objectives and largely beg the real questions raised by the regional development issue.**

J. W. Wood, 1979

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regions—both fast and slow growing—need to be part of the process. Any move to contain the growth of Auckland, for example, should be reconciled with growth strategies for other regions of New Zealand.

Many of the underlying concerns of individual regions reflect national problems such as inadequate returns to the agricultural sector. These can be helped through a general strategy rather than detailed intervention. Adequate profitability in farming is fundamental to this strategy. There is also a need to ensure that policies in other areas (for example, in the provision of social services to rural districts) do not pull in the opposite direction. The creation of a programme like the livestock incentive scheme which is aimed at increasing stocking ratios on farms may be indirectly undermined by the effects of public expenditure reductions on the closing of rural schools and hospitals. Steady farm employment depends as much on availability of social services as on wages and work. If regional bodies could be sure that a national strategy for agriculture really would be adopted as a key part of economic planning, then regional strategies could in turn give impetus to this aspect of national development.

At the same time there is no doubt that individual regions will have particular problems; for example, in the availability of jobs. This concern is reflected in current regional planning schemes for Auckland and Wellington. These and other examples demonstrate the interdependence of planning and development at all levels. It is unlikely that resources can be made available to enable everyone to have equal opportunities and access to services, regardless of where they live. In this situation the role of the regional planning process as a trade-off mechanism between regional aspirations and national resource availability becomes crucial.

**National will encourage the formation of regional development councils in non-priority areas, but their financing will be the responsibility of the appropriate united or regional council.**

National Party  
Manifesto, 1978

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# PART II: THE SUBMISSION

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# Government and the Regions

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## Background

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Under the New Zealand Planning Act (1977) the Planning Council is required to advise the Government on the links between regional and national planning. The Council has since its inception devoted a considerable amount of attention to issues of regional policy. Ministers with portfolios which have a strong regional content will already be familiar with the Council's work and with the process of consultation which it has undertaken with interested groups around New Zealand and at all levels of Government. The purpose of Part I of this document was to bring together the tentative conclusions which have emerged. Part II is intended to draw the attention of Cabinet to certain changes which are needed in the machinery of government in order to achieve the objectives of recent changes to the Town and Country Planning Act and the Local Government Act.



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

## Policy Objectives

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Because of the continuing uncertainty which exists over the purpose of regional planning, Cabinet may wish to endorse a set of broad objectives for regional planning as part of an improved process of planning for national development. The following are suggested:

- To help ensure that effective use is made of human and physical resources for the benefit of the people of each region and of New Zealand as a whole.
- To help promote an efficient public sector by planning for the most effective organisation and delivery of public services.
- To help resolve a greater proportion of conflicts (such as over land use and allocation of other resources) at the local and regional, rather than at the national levels.
- To provide for constructive partnership among different arms of government, private enterprise, and other groups in dealing with regional and national issues.
- To assist decisions on any special measures deemed necessary to change the balance of development among different regions.
- To enable individuals to be better informed on, and more closely involved in decisions about issues which affect them and their regions.

The Council believes that recent legislative changes, and the new regional apparatus being established, offer great opportunities for Government to give a positive lead towards achieving these objectives, which represent a summary of goals enunciated in successive manifestos and in major policy statements by Ministers.

The move away from traditional forms of central intervention and control seems to be occurring within democratic government almost everywhere. This reflects recognition of the difficulties facing a central administration in dealing effectively with deep-seated issues in a period of rapid change, and of the desirability of devolution to involve more people who are close to the action in developing the plans which they must make work.

Both in private sector management and in the exercise of public policy this has created a marked trend away from centralist control towards a measure of dispersal, either geographically or within hierarchies, so that power and

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responsibility are not solely concentrated at one point in the system. It is a paradox that central governments may increase their effective influence by decreasing their direct involvement and detailed control.

To do what is proposed in this paper will not require any new legislation. What is envisaged is the better deployment of existing effort, including some redistribution of staff, and the creation of a framework which makes the responsibilities of different planners and policy-makers clear (and within which policy conflicts at all levels can be identified and resolved). Beyond this, the Council lays emphasis on public participation and draws attention to the educative effects of this—which would spill over into other areas of Government policy.

Where choices have to be made between alternative techniques, these should be seen, therefore, as having a direct bearing on the way in which our democratic system evolves. The advocates of open government have argued that the same policy if arrived at behind closed doors will be less effective than if the process of debate is a public one. The problem for Government has been the threat of delay or wider dissension which is inherent in a public process. As the Council sees it, the better integration of regional and national planning is by its nature one area in which theory can be put to the test without diminishing in any way the ultimate responsibility and accountability of Ministers, individually or collectively. The Council's own advice on the topic is being presented as a public document and this will enable Ministers to make their own assessment of the scope which exists for "open government" in this particular sphere.

### **A Commitment to Planning and Partnership**

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The basic requirement for effective regional planning is a commitment by central government to improve its own planning and to participate as a partner with local and regional authorities in regional planning. Setting up mechanisms for planning and co-ordination is not enough. Co-ordination achieves nothing if there is nothing to co-ordinate. Planning in a vacuum cannot excite much interest. The Council's recommendations have been tailored to convey the required sense of commitment; they rest on the following general principles.

In the first place, there is room for improved planning at all levels of government. It would help greatly if there were more systematic medium-term planning of central government expenditure, with objectives and plans made available to the public or at least to local and regional authorities. The adoption of a programme for capital works expenditure on its own is not sufficient. Some indication of the likely growth and pattern of expenditure generally would be very helpful to those planning for economic and social development in the regions. It would be even better if Government departments could work towards more specific assessments of the regional allocation of their expenditures. This would enable the Treasury, the Ministry of Works and Development, or any designated agency to bring the information together in a form which would be helpful to regional planners. In addition, more systematic consultative planning by

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departments, involving extensive public participation as envisaged for energy, would greatly improve the basis for regional and national planning. We consider below the concept of bringing the threads of government planning together into guidelines which will help local and regional authorities and the private sector.

Secondly, provision needs to be made within central government for national policies to be considered in relation to each other for their national and regional impacts. The lack of a national planning mechanism to do this is a major drawback to effective regional/national planning. The Planning Council, which has the statutory responsibility to advise Government on different aspects of planning, is primarily an advisory body—a catalyst, without executive power. The Town and Country Planning legislation nominates the Minister of Works and Development as having primary responsibility for assessing regional planning schemes in the light of actual Government policies, about which the Minister receives comment from all the relevant Government departments. But there is no centrally placed executive mechanism entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating one policy in relation to others at the national level, or of analysing national policies for their regional effects. Moreover, the concerns of individual Government departments are primarily with short-term, single-sector policies rather than with medium or long-term integrated strategies.

Thirdly, there needs to be a more positive attitude by central government on the one hand, and by local government on the other, to use regional planning as an effective vehicle for the concept of “partnership”. At present something of a vicious circle operates. Central government will not take regional planning seriously if it believes that it is ineffective and lacks support from constituent local authorities. It is also unlikely to devolve administrative functions, now performed by central government agencies, to a regional level unless it believes that the regional authority is administratively competent. It is reluctant to make large financial allocations to regional bodies from revenues which it raises and for which it is held accountable by the electorate. On the other hand, local bodies will take regional planning more seriously if they can see that central government is actively committed to it as a stage in its own decision-making. They are also likely to co-operate more effectively in providing a competent regional administration, and in working together regionally to carry out functions which are suited to such an approach, if the problems of financing the developments are eased. This could come either by allocations from central government, or by granting permission to the local or regional authorities to raise finance by means other than rates.

At present, attitudes in many parts of New Zealand are not conducive to taking full advantage of the potential of regional planning. The negative attitudes of some local authorities, especially rural ones, to united councils; the lack of a regional consciousness among locally appointed representatives with local loyalties (and no sense of accountability to a regional electorate); the perceived danger of a further tier of government in a country which many believe suffers already from a surfeit of planners and bureaucrats; and concern at the lack of a secure revenue base—these all add up to obstacles to the achievement of effective regional planning.

The Council has consulted widely on this set of issues and has concluded that if regions were assured that their planning efforts were relevant to national planning and policy-making, this would in itself help generate the enthusiasm and effort, and the sense of regional identity, which are prerequisites if the mechanisms suggested below are to work. Many people are aware that the new



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

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legislation embodies a concept of planning which is more dynamic and more positive than the former emphasis on land-use controls. If planning is to be concerned with developing the full potential of a region, rather than imposing restrictions of one sort or another, it follows that there will be much greater scope for initiatives which come up from the local and regional level. United and regional councils will clearly have to work hard to dispel the attitude which sees planning as a straitjacket, but ultimately the common sense view is bound to shift towards lending them greater support. This is because the new concepts of planning see a greater number of decisions being made closer to the people who are affected. Having unleashed this new potential, it is unlikely that central government will wish to thwart the initiatives which come forward as a result.

Nevertheless, many of those consulted in local bodies and regional authorities see current Government attitudes to regional planning and regional policy as ambivalent. A positive interest is implicit in the Town and Country Planning Act and the Local Government Act, and in the encouragement which Government has given to the Local Government Commission to proceed expeditiously with the definition of regional boundaries and the establishment of united and regional councils throughout the country. Individual Ministers have emphasised the potential of the regional approach in helping to make more effective use of resources, giving citizens more say in their own destinies, and strengthening partnership between central government and local bodies. Some have sought a regional approach to the organisation of transport and energy distribution.

There is in fact real doubt about Government's willingness to match its rhetoric with positive action. This doubt is fostered by what is seen by many as a derisory financial contribution by the Government to regional planning, and the inability, under present organisational and financial practices, for many departments to participate effectively in discussions on regional priorities and the implementation of regional plans. The Council believes that these doubts could readily be dispelled by changes of the kind which we suggest below.

### **Partnership and the National Development Act**


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The workability of a partnership between central authorities and the different agencies of local government was one of the questions which came to the surface with the introduction of the National Development Bill. There was some concern by local-body politicians and other groups in the community that not enough opportunity would be given to local and regional bodies to take part in decisions relating to national development. They argued that Government needed to show its practical commitment to regional decision-making in all relevant legislation, not just selective Acts such as the Town and Country Planning or Local Government legislation. Otherwise regional bodies would become disenchanted with a partnership they suspect will remain one-sided. These reservations were recognised in the amendments which were made before the National Development Act became law.

Over a period of time, any mechanism which created a fully effective linkage between regional planning and national strategy would meet the situation which the National Development Act was designed to cope with (namely, delays in the

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planning process). As the regional schemes became operative, they would in themselves speed and assist approvals for major projects. In cases where there was a consensus in favour of development, many of the minor conflicts could probably be resolved at the regional level. Moreover the procedures would overcome a gap which now exists for those projects which do not qualify for fast-track treatment. This gap was referred to in the Council's submission to the Select Committee on Lands and Agriculture. It will be recalled that the Council placed emphasis on the need for reform on a wider front in order to speed up the planning process and enable balanced decisions to be made on minor development projects (which in total make a very sizeable contribution to national development) as well as the major ones.



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

## **Central Government Organisation for Regional Planning**

If central government is to play an effective role as a partner in regional planning some changes will need to be made in the present functions and responsibilities of Ministers and departments. Several options are possible, of which we shall suggest a few. The creation of a better regional/national link is however a must, and it is not an option to leave things as they are. For one thing, Ministers and departments will need to accord higher priority to planning, for without this it will be impossible to provide useful guidelines for regional planning (or national planning, for that matter).

Each major department, and particularly those responsible for co-ordination, will want to develop a regional focus in their planning and policy-making. The development of regional planning will allow a more effective two-way exchange between national and regional planning.

## **Ministerial Responsibilities**

At various times in the past, some of the portfolios with a direct bearing on the interface between regional and national development have been combined under one Minister. It would not be practicable to bring together even the more important of the portfolios which have a strong regional component. It is noted, however, that joint ministerial action has in the past been judged appropriate as in the case of the statement by several Ministers about regional planning in December 1978.

As indicated, all Ministers must be concerned with the regional impacts of their policies. At present, the Minister of Works and Development has the main statutory responsibility for regional planning. It is his task, for example, to draw the issues arising in the regional planning cycle to the attention of his colleagues, either formally as an item for Cabinet, or informally in the context of day-to-day transactions. The Ministers of Regional Development and Internal Affairs also have defined responsibilities for aspects of regional development and regional government. The Minister of National Development's responsibilities are not clearly defined, but his portfolio makes it inevitable that he be broadly concerned with planning for development, including regional planning. As a member of the

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New Zealand Planning Council he shares with colleagues responsibility for advising Government on links between national and regional planning. As indicated below persuasive arguments could be advanced for combining some of these portfolios. However, whatever the allocation, the planning process must involve Cabinet as a whole so that important policy areas (like transport and agriculture) with crucial regional implications are included as well as the specifically "regional" portfolios.

There are limits to the extent to which a special Cabinet Committee could meet the need for collective Ministerial action. Although the Cabinet Committee on Works looks at regional planning proposals it has a heavy agenda and does not automatically bring the right Ministers together. Under the procedures outlined below there would need to be a full Cabinet discussion of the broader issues at least once each year. Groups of Ministers could be brought together informally to determine linkages between national and regional priorities.

The practice whereby ad hoc groups of Ministers convene to consider special issues is well established. This has the added advantage, moreover, that backbenchers can be brought into consultations which concern a given region. (The opportunities for Members of Parliament to become involved in the planning process at regional levels are discussed below.)

## **Departmental Responsibilities**

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We are making the assumption in this report that, at least in the short term, the Government does not wish to create a new department. In the longer term, it could be desirable (especially if they were any major review of government structures) to look at a possible reallocation of functions among departments. If there were, for example, a move to combine departments with related and overlapping functions by setting up a Ministry of Foreign Relations and Trade, a Department of Industry and Employment, a Ministry of Social Affairs, etc., it would make sense to look at a Ministry of National Development and Community Affairs. This could incorporate the regional planning functions of the Ministry of Works and Development and the regional development branch of Trade and Industry, as well as the local government, community, and cultural development interests of the Department of Internal Affairs (and the latter would disappear as a separate entity). In an extensive reshuffle of this type, there would be some justification for separating the two main functions reflected in the present title of the Ministry of Works and Development.

Experience has shown that such regroupings take time. An option advocated by some is therefore to continue with the present structure and concentrate on better inter-departmental and regional/national liaison. Others would suggest relatively minor changes in the system, such as the use of task forces or special committees. Since it is important not to reduce the effectiveness of recent initiatives in regional planning and administration it would certainly seem desirable to agree on the aims of any changes. The Council suggests the following set of aims:

- To achieve better working linkages between national and regional planning.
- To provide a forum for identifying potential areas of conflict in national policy making and between regional and national policies.

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- To evaluate the regional impacts of national policies.
  - To incorporate a medium-term dimension into national policy making.
  - To draw up national planning guidelines (for example on employment strategies or industrialisation policies) for national and regional planners.
  - To assure a continuous input from regional planning into national planning.
  - To reconcile conflicts which arise when different regions compete for national resources.

In consultation in Wellington and in other parts of New Zealand, Council representatives have canvassed the extent to which formal changes in institutions are desirable to achieve a better co-ordination between national and regional planning. There is a clear divergence of opinion on this issue. Regional planners, whether employed by local authorities or at district offices of Government departments, stress the need for an effective national planning mechanism. In general, central government representatives in Wellington do not advocate this (although they would see such a mechanism growing out of an expansion of the functions of their own department).

Within the present departmental structure, the Council recommends two changes which would markedly improve the degree of integration between national and regional planning, and which would be relevant to other areas such as transport, social issues, and business planning.


The first change is for all departments to introduce a medium-term focus to their work by establishing planning units to look at objectives, programmes, and forward planning. How each department does this is over to managers in the public service. The Council has, however, repeatedly argued that planning should enjoy the same importance in departmental organisation as the preparation and justification of annual expenditure. As stated in a paper presented by the Chairman and Director to a conference (jointly sponsored by the New Zealand Institute of Public Administration and the Planning Council in 1979) on the future of the state services, "the commitment to medium-term planning is growing but is still something short of epidemic proportions".

The second change would be to create a way of co-ordinating the output of the planning units to identify potential conflict areas and to synthesise national planning guidelines. In practical terms these would assist in the preparation of regional planning strategies. Reactions to the First Schedule of the Town and Country Planning Act show that some sort of interpretative brief is required. Such a brief should be articulated in terms of the overall strategy adopted by the Government. While indicating the broad priorities in national policy, it should leave room for regional variations in interpretation. To quote one example, employment may be a high national priority, but it may be less important in relation to other issues in certain regions.

## **A Focus for National Planning**

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As experience with the now defunct Officials Co-ordinating Committee on Regional Development (OCCRD) showed, the inter-departmental committee is not a successful technique for co-ordination. In the absence of national and sectoral strategies, OCCRD lacked the necessary framework for evaluating regional proposals. The Committee showed no ability to reconcile conflicting objectives nor to co-ordinate policies, and simply operated as a forum for



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

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declaring departmental interests. A more effective measure, and one which could be achieved in the relatively near future, would be to establish a core group as a catalyst, with responsibility to advise a Minister, and through him the Cabinet. Such a group could work closely with the Planning Council, which has advisory responsibilities in planning, and could provide the operation link between regional and national planning.

As far as location is concerned, such a group would need to be responsible to a senior Minister, either directly or as part of a departmental structure. If the aims outlined above are being met, it would on occasion run the risk of some unpopularity. Without a sort of "umbrella" the core group could quickly be squeezed out by the interplay of conflicting pressures.

One strong department which is well placed to prevent this happening is the Ministry of Works and Development. It is already heavily involved in creating better liaison with regional planning activities, and has expanded its work on regional economic analysis to meet the new situation. It has a good reputation for working at district level and its branch structure would provide an immediate network for the core group to use.

Another possible location is in Treasury. The responsibility for expenditure through the whole public sector (and a considerable involvement with the private sector) make this a good focal point for such a group to use. Treasury has had the experience before of providing a home for a secretariat with interests in regional and national planning (when it serviced the National Development Conference and some of its working groups). It has a section concerned with medium-term economic development, and has developed a tradition of including broader factors of national interest in its assessment of major initiatives.

The fact is however that a core group would face problems working in a strong department. The nature of its task would call for a multi-disciplinary approach, in which the national interest is judged in a broad framework. The Ministry of Works and Development, the Treasury, and other departments have developed a strong ethic which gives priority to their main role. This is reflected in staffing policy and in the allocation of time and other resources. There are not many professional officers who understand the social, environmental, and other considerations which are important under the Town and Country Planning Act. This expertise would have to be recruited. The notion of a group which includes members on contract or on secondment from outside the State Services does not, however, sit easily with present departmental structures. The implications for career prospects of departmental officers would be seen by some as adverse. Wider resistance could come from other public servants (and possibly from the Public Service Association).

A different solution would be to set up a Planning Advisory Group in the office of the Minister of National Development, whose broad responsibilities have already been alluded to, but who has no servicing department. The team would reflect the concept of the core group; it would be multi-disciplinary and include people with experience in the private and public sectors, in regional planning, and in rural issues. A system of secondments and contracts could be used to make sure regional bodies could have an input. Its success would depend heavily on its remaining small and being seen to co-ordinate, rather than take over, the planning work of other departments and advisory agencies.

It would seem a logical development for this group, in evaluating the impact of national policies at the regional level, also to have a central role in the tasks of

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monitoring the regional planning process, co-ordinating departmental responses to regional schemes in the early stages of their formation, assessing national policies for their regional impacts, and creating a framework for inter-regional discussion. Initially, this option may appear to have serious drawbacks. The major ones would be the impact of staff increases on public sector expenditure (though some people would merely be transferred or seconded from other departments), and some doubt about how far co-operation would be extended by other departments and their planning units.

Among the group's functions would be the preparation and regular review of planning guidelines. These would be indicative only, but would be designed to reflect national planning priorities—this would then provide regional planners with something to work to. The Council has frequently been told that the absence of such guidance is creating real problems at the operational level.

To ensure that the review is a two-way process the group would make a point, in its travels to the regions, of finding out how the national guidelines are seen at the regional level. Over time, this should ensure that the guidelines would reflect the real issues as seen in the regions.


In the longer term, the changes suggested above, and in particular the proposed operations of either the core group in a department or the Planning Advisory Group, would make it necessary to review departmental operations and eliminate possible duplication. The Ministry of Works, in particular, would need to adapt its role to the new planning environment which would develop. If national development priorities are to be pursued across a broad front, and if the linkage with regional planning is to be fully utilised, it is inevitable that there should be some re-arrangement, and possibly merging, of departmental activities. The creation of a Ministry of National Development and Community Affairs has already been noted as one possible outcome.

## **Regional Mechanisms**

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The changes suggested in the organisation of central government would need to be reflected in new techniques at the regional level. One requirement is to bring the Members of Parliament who represent the people of the region directly into the regional planning process. The Council has sensed that many backbenchers are at present uncertain about the force to be given to regional planning and how this might affect their role as the direct link between the constituent and the arms of central government. Each regional or united council should be able to resolve this problem by using some sort of informal "college", bringing in members of the Regional Development Council (where one exists) and others with an important planning function, such as harbour boards and hospital boards. In theory, the regional planning process already provides for this type of consultation. In practice, it may be haphazard or may not be done at all. The use of a college would help create a habit of consultation.

By far the most important requirement however is for a direct effort by departments to become involved in the regional phase of planning. The significant feature of the Town and Country Planning Act is the way in which it binds the Crown. Section 17(1) states: "The Crown and every local authority and public authority shall adhere to the provisions of an approved regional planning scheme."



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

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The potential which can be released through the regional planning concept will not be realised unless all agencies of Government can gear themselves to harmonise their own internal planning and administrative techniques at the regional level. In practice, this will call for some comprehensive changes, including the possibility in some cases of preparing budgetary forecasts on a regional basis. The Council will be looking further at this aspect in its work on public sector planning.

To be credible the process of planning has to be seen to have an effect on policies and on the allocation of resources. That is what the concept of linking regional and national planning is all about. Changes will therefore be needed in the way departments are organised and in the way in which senior officials with responsibility for a given area or region are allowed to participate in planning discussions. The steps which have been taken by the Ministry of Works could serve as a model for the sort of delegation and decentralisation which other departments could follow.

Another possible model is based on the French practice of appointing a "prefect" as the focal point for the co-ordination of central government activities in a given region. In the New Zealand setting, a prefect would have no legislative authority, but could serve an indispensable role in ensuring that Government departments made their proper contribution to the regional planning process. By facilitating contacts between the regional or united council and the machinery of central government, through the college and by actively promoting public discussion at the regional level of the guidelines and other planning issues, this officer could repay the investment of a salary and basic office support. The Council recommends that this concept be further investigated by the State Services Commission.

In the absence of such official machinery, use should be made of the existing functions of the district commissioners of works. These officials are already active in promoting a degree of co-ordination at the regional level and have responsibilities under the Town and Country Planning Act as members of regional planning committees. The proposed core group would create an additional link with the machinery of central government. The aim of departmental activity at the regional level should be summarised as follows:

- The right hand of Government needs to know what the left hand is doing.
- Departmental officials in the regions and the planning units in head office should maintain a two-way exchange so that the implications of particular elements of regional planning schemes are understood in Wellington, as are national decisions in the regions.
- Departmental officials in the regions should be organised to promote good communication with local and regional bodies.

## **Inter-Regional Consultation**

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In addition to creating better links between national and regional planning, the procedures suggested would also assist in ensuring that the plans of one region take account of the implications for neighbouring regions. Regional plans should be evaluated, not only in relation to any national guidelines but also alongside the plans of other regions. The regional or united councils will, we hope, initiate


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consultation among themselves. However, when the inevitable conflicts arise, it will be necessary to have central government as a final arbiter.

It is important that the people in the region concerned and the private sector interests make their contribution at an early stage of the regional planning process. This is particularly so in the case of the ad hoc authorities, some of which have in the past been at arms length from the regional planning process. The harbour boards are a case in point. The Council has recently been informed about the planning activities of the Auckland Harbour Board and the need which that Board has recognised to consult with both the Northland Harbour Board and the Tauranga Harbour Board before carrying their forward planning to a definitive stage. Such inter-regional consultations, particularly in the field of transport, or in the case of major forestry or energy proposals, need to extend well beyond the ad hoc authorities themselves and it is in this area that the regional planning process could come into its own.

Sometimes inter-regional consultation might extend beyond three or four regions and involve, for example, the whole of the South Island. It would also assist if these phases of the planning process could be given some public exposure in view of the educative function of planning.



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

## **The Role of the Planning Council**

The New Zealand Planning Act requires the Planning Council, among other things, to advise the Government on planning, to assist the Government to co-ordinate planning, to act as a focal point for consultation about planning for New Zealand's medium-term development, and to advise Government on links between national and regional planning. In carrying out these functions, it provides a source of expertise and experience in planning which can, and should, be drawn upon by the core group, and by Government generally. However, it cannot be a substitute for the core group as a co-ordinating mechanism within Government or in ensuring that broad strategies are translated into Government policies and action programmes.

More specifically, so far as regional planning is concerned, the Planning Council's activities since its inception have enabled it to develop a useful set of contacts and a new perspective on aspects of the regional planning process. (A chronology of its consultations is attached as an annex.) It does not, and should not, have the resources to carry out the functions envisaged in the previous section of this report for the core group and/or the Ministry of Works and Development in co-ordinating departmental responses to regional schemes, monitoring the progress of regional plans, and so on. It can be expected to maintain good contacts with the regional planning bodies, and to assess the state of regional planning from time to time; particularly (as the Planning Act suggests) the effectiveness of the links between national and regional planning.

The Planning Council was constituted in a manner which was designed to enable it to offer independent advice, to both Government and the public. In contrast to Government departments, it publishes all its reports. It can thus expose for debate important issues in planning for development which might be buried if it were subject to political control or to undue influence by pressure groups. It has a unique role to play, from its independent and non-partisan

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position, in educating the general public on crucial issues confronting the country, and in promoting constructive consultation on the most effective and acceptable means of coping with them.

In short, while the Planning Council can undoubtedly help Government considerably in developing its work on planning, this should be a supporting, rather than a dominant role. If planning is to be effective, a major aim must be to have a higher proportion of departmental time devoted to developing strategies, guidelines, and action programmes which reflect Government's priorities for the medium term. This will give the country the sense of direction which is being so widely called for.

In a period of restraint on public expenditure and public employment, this must mean a reallocation of time involving more planning and less detailed regulation and control. Given the general scarcity of people with planning skills, it must also mean close co-operation between departments and the Planning Council, so that effective use is made of the planning work done throughout the country and unnecessary duplication of effort is avoided.

## **Recapitulation**

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Certain steps are needed if Government is to achieve the objectives of regional planning. The first requirement is a commitment by Government to improve its own planning and to participate as a partner in planning with local and regional authorities.

If central government is to play an effective role as a partner in regional planning, some changes will need to be made in the present functions and responsibilities of Ministers and departments. Several options are possible, of which we suggest a few. Whichever options are chosen, central government will have to accord higher priority to planning, for without this it will be impossible to provide useful national guidelines for regional planning. Moreover, each major department will have to develop a regional, as well as a national, focus in its planning and policy-making.

At this stage, we see the Minister of National Development and the Minister of Works and Development sharing primary responsibility for advising the Government on regional planning generally, and ensuring that the broader objectives of national planning are reflected in regional planning schemes. But all Ministers must ensure that their departments are in a position to contribute to national planning and to regional schemes. Rather than use a special Cabinet Committee on regional planning, ad hoc meetings of appropriate Ministers for particular purposes, and occasional discussions at Cabinet, are envisaged.

We recommend two basic changes in departmental organisation and practice to improve integration between national and regional planning.

- All departments should establish small planning units to formulate objectives, plans, and programmes for the medium term.
  - A "core group", responsible to a Minister and through him to Cabinet, should be established to co-ordinate work of the planning units, formulate national planning guidelines, and help integrate relationships with those responsible for regional planning.
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The core group could take the form of a Planning Advisory Group in the office of the Minister of National Development, or it could be located in the Treasury or in the Ministry of Works and Development. It would bring together the work of the departmental planning units, prepare guidelines to assist planning in local and regional authorities and in the private sector, and help ensure that plans were translated into policies and programmes and frequently reviewed. It would prepare for publication guidelines for regional planning which would be widely discussed before endorsement by Cabinet. It would play a central role in co-ordinating central government's links with regional schemes. In carrying out its functions, it would work closely with the Planning Council and utilise fully the expertise and regional links of all departments.


The core group would keep in close touch with regional planners so that it could keep Government aware of the thrust of regional schemes and examine national policies from the standpoint of their impact on the regions.

In the regions, we envisage the improvement of existing links between Government and local and regional authorities in several ways:

- By convening a consultative "college", including local M.P.s and the private sector. The purpose of the college would be to establish the habit of consultation prior to the finalising of regional planning schemes.
- By greater delegation and decentralisation in Government departments, along the lines already developed by the Ministry of Works, so that they can play a more constructive part in regional planning.
- By either broadening the role of district commissioners of works or appointing a "prefect" to provide for better co-ordination of central government activities in the region, facilitate contacts with the regional authority, help citizens in their daily dealings with all levels of government, and promote public discussion of regional issues in a national context.

This process offers an inexpensive improvement in an area where there is at present no specific procedure, either for central government or for the agencies involved in planning at the regional level. The brave ambitions in recent legislation will not be achieved in the Council's view unless some such re-organisation of the links between public authorities at the regional and national levels is undertaken.

Longer term, probably in the context of a more general review of the structure of government, there is a case for considering the creation of a Ministry of National Development and Community Affairs, in order to make one department responsible for issues of national and regional planning and development. It is recommended that this possibility, and the idea of appointing a prefect, be the subject of further study by an ad hoc committee of Ministers, including the Minister of State Services.



A Memorandum  
for Ministers

# ANNEX

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## Chronology of Consultations

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The following list gives some indication of the range of consultations on issues of regional importance carried out by members and secretariat of the New Zealand Planning Council since its establishment in March 1977. Consultations have been in Wellington and in the regions and have covered not only regional planning, development, and government, on which *Planning and the Regions* focuses in particular, but also different views on employment, social services, and environmental issues.

### 1977

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#### May

Inaugural meeting NZPC Steering Committee on Regional Planning and Development (Steering Committee IV).  
N.Z. Planning Institute Conference, Hamilton.

#### June

Meeting of Officials Co-ordinating Committee on Regional Development (OCCRD) to discuss The Regional Setting chapter of Report of Task Force on Economic and Social Planning.  
National Travel Association Meeting, Invercargill.  
Forest Service Seminar, West Coast.  
Visit to Cawthron Institute, Nelson.  
East Coast Planning Council Seminar, Gisborne.  
Meeting with Chairman, Southland Catchment Board, Invercargill.  
Meeting with representatives of Palmerston North City Council.

#### July

Meeting of Steering Committee IV in Auckland.  
Meeting with members of Hamilton Regional Planning Authority (RPA) and Minister of National Development, Wellington.  
Wairarapa Community Action seminar, A Living Community, Tukurumuri.  
Lake Weed Symposium, Hamilton.  
Meeting with representatives of Hamilton City Council, Hamilton.  
Meeting with representatives of South Canterbury Regional Development Council (RDC), Wellington.

#### August

OCCRD meeting.  
Meetings with the Government Caucus Committee on Regional Development and Minister of National Development in connection with Town and Country Planning Bill.  
Meeting with South Canterbury RDC, Timaru.  
Meeting of Southland territorial local authorities to discuss regional government, Invercargill.  
Meeting with representatives of Canterbury RPA, Christchurch.  
Visit to Wellington by representatives of Otago Council.

#### September

Release of NZPC discussion document *The Town and Country Planning Bill*.  
Public meeting between Steering Committee IV, Northland RPA, and Northland RDC, Whangarei.  
Visits to Wellington by General Manager Whangarei City Council, Executive Officer East Coast Planning Council, and Chief Executive Otago Council.

#### October

Meeting of Wairarapa RDC, Masterton.

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Meeting of Marlborough RDC,  
Blenheim.  
Open Forum in Christchurch to  
discuss *Regional Options* discussion  
paper produced by Steering  
Committee IV.  
Meeting with Canterbury RPA  
Executive Committee,  
Christchurch.

*November*

Visit to Wellington by members  
Wairarapa RDC.  
Meeting between Steering Committee  
IV and the Chairmen of the  
Municipal Association of N.Z., and  
N.Z. Counties' Association,  
Wellington.  
Meeting between Steering Committee  
IV and Local Government  
Commission, Wellington.

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**1978**

*February*

Chairman, NZPC, speaks to  
Municipal Association of N.Z.,  
Wellington.

*March*

Media briefing in Rotorua to launch  
*Planning Perspectives*—emphasis on  
regional aspects.

*April*

Chairman NZPC, meets Wanganui  
RDC.  
Meeting with King Country RDC, Te  
Kuiti.  
Seminar on future development of  
Wairarapa, Masterton.

*May*

Paper on regional implications  
presented to Transport 1984—  
Planning Implications of the Energy  
Crisis Seminar, Wellington.  
N.Z. Planning Institute Conference,  
Dunedin.

Rural depopulation seminar,  
Eketahuna.  
Meeting with Oamaru Chamber of  
Commerce.

*June*

East Coast Planning Council Seminar.  
N.Z. Counties Association  
Conference, Dunedin.

*July*

Meeting with Palmerston North City  
Council Social Planning  
Sub-committee, Palmerston North.  
Meeting with East and West Coast  
Planners, Palmerston North.  
Meeting with Wanganui RDC,  
Wanganui.  
Visits to Maori Land Incorporations,  
Wanganui area.  
Meeting with Local Government  
Commission, Wellington.

*August*

Seminar on *Planning Perspectives*, South  
Canterbury Council for Adult  
Education, Timaru.  
Secretariat 4-day visit to Auckland.

*September*

Meeting with Dannevirke  
Development Council, Dannevirke.  
Meeting with Urban Affairs  
Committee, Environmental  
Council, Wellington.  
Te Araroa Development Seminar, Te  
Araroa.

*October*

Meeting with Executive Committee,  
Municipal Association of N.Z.,  
Wellington.  
Meeting in Napier to discuss Hawke's  
Bay 'Year of our Future'  
programme.  
Yesterday's Housing Tomorrow  
exhibition, Wellington.

*November*

Seminar on the future of Oamaru and North Otago, Oamaru.  
Community Development Seminar, Wellington.

*August*

Discussions on regional/national planning with planners at ARA, Wellington RPA, Canterbury RPA, Ministry of Works and Development, Hamilton, Auckland, and Wellington.  
Presentation on rural depopulation and development to N.Z. Institute of Agricultural Science conference, Lincoln.

**1979**

*February*

Seminar on unemployment, Dunedin.  
Meeting with Hamilton RPA, Hamilton.

*October*

Chairman NZPC, speech to Canterbury Farming Forum.  
Regional Planning Seminar of United Council representatives, Wellington.  
Visit to Napier—social and community development.  
Meeting with Northland RPA, Kawakawa, on integration of regional and national planning.  
Attendance at Waitangi National Marae—presentation of Maori submissions on Northland Regional Planning Scheme.  
Community Development Seminar, Wellington.  
Consultations with Ministers and Permanent Heads on links between regional and national planning.

*March*

Harbour Boards' Association Conference, Picton.

*April*

Hui for 'Year of our Future', Dannevirke.

*May*

Discussions with planners at Auckland Regional Authority (ARA).  
Unemployment seminar, Palmerston North.  
Urban Development Association Seminar on Regional Government, Christchurch.  
Visit to Nelson, West Coast, and Canterbury.  
Workshop on population change and rural development, Hawarden.

*November*

Consultations with Local Government Commission and Territorial Local Government Council on national/regional planning strategies.

*June*

N.Z. Planning Institute Conference, Rotorua.  
N.Z. Institute of County Clerks' Conference, Rotorua.

*December*

Seminar on Peri-urban Land Use, Hamilton.

*July*

Meeting with Northland RPA, Whangarei.  
Rangitikei Rural Development Seminar, Hunterville.

SOCIAL MEETING  
DECONOMIC NEEDS  
VOL V ACTION  
T U E DEMOCRATIC  
I N A P R I O R I  
N W A G S N  
L A N D G R E G I O N A L  
U S E T R E G I O N A L  
R U R A L U R B A N  
I C  
E N V I R O N M E N T S

