



The Hon Chris Bishop MP
Private Bag 18888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

The Committee Secretariat
The Environment Select Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
En.Legislation@parliament.govt.nz

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Submission on the Natural Environment Bill

Lighting Council New Zealand (LCNZ) is the industry association for lighting equipment manufacturing, importing, and distribution companies in New Zealand, and associated lighting industry participants. Further information [Here](#)

LCNZ member company experts have deep technical and practical expertise in:

- Commercial building, road, street, public, sports, and urban lighting
- Urban design and obtrusive light effects
- Astronomical and dark sky effects
- Ecological and wildlife effects
- Economic and social impacts

And leadership positions in ISO, IEC, AS/NZS and NZS lighting technical standards

LCNZ has considered the provisions and implications of the Natural Environment Bill as they relate to the application and management of outdoor light at night and effects on the natural environment.

In general, LCNZ fully supports the purpose, goals, and principles of the Bill and wishes to provide specialist input on outdoor light at night to ensure appropriate, practical, and economically suitable outcomes of any resultant legislation and regulation.

A) The Natural Environment Bill – Lighting relevant extracts

LCNZ notes the following goals as stated in the Bill. These extracts are selected for their relevance to the application of outdoor lighting and the potential for impacts on the natural environment (verbatim excerpts from the Bill are in italics).

Page 1: General Policy Statement

The Natural Environment Bill establishes a framework for the use, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment.

The intention is that these objectives will be done while also -

- *safeguarding the natural environment and human health*

Page 2: General Policy Statement

The Bills address multiple problems with the current planning and environmental management system. Together, they are expected to help to -

- *safeguard the natural environment and human health by introducing an environmental limits framework covering air, water, land, soils, and indigenous biodiversity, and setting out a regime to manage resource use within these limits.*

Page 3: Purpose, goals, and principles

Purpose:

The purpose of the Bill is to establish a framework for the use, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment.

Goals:

The goals of the Bill are to -

- *safeguard the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems*
- *protect human health from harm caused by the discharge of contaminants*
- *achieve no net loss in indigenous biodiversity*

Page 4: Functions and powers of central and local government

Minister:

The Minister is responsible for -

- *recommending, making, and approving national instruments, including developing nationally standardised overlays, provisions, and methodologies, and monitoring their implementation and effect*
- *setting through national standards, limits to protect human health for freshwater coastal water, land and soil, and air and methodologies for regional councils to follow when setting ecosystem health limits through natural environment plans*
- *monitoring system performance and the effect and implementation of this Bill.*

The Minister has the power to specify minimum levels for ecosystem health limits.

Page 5/6: Functions and powers of central and local government

Regional councils:

Under the Bill, regional councils will have a general responsibility to enable and regulate the use, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment within their regions.

In undertaking their responsibilities, regional councils must regulate and manage -

- *the discharge of contaminants to land, air, or water*
- *indigenous biodiversity*

The functions of regional councils under the Bill are to -

- *jointly make and maintain a spatial plan for the region with territorial authorities*
- *set ecological health limits*

- *make, maintain, and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the natural environment plan for their region*
- *be the permit authority for their regions, will regulate and manage effects, and will undertake compliance monitoring and enforcement*

B) LCNZ Observations

As part of the proposed new policy framework the Bill/Act is likely to affect legislation and subsequent regulation for the control and environmental impact mitigation of light at night, including:

- Urban design and obtrusive light effects
- Astronomical and dark sky effects
- Ecological and wildlife effects

The scope of a new framework for the “use, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment” logically includes the effects of outdoor lighting.

The concept of “national standards” is used in the Bill and implies that these are new items which need to be established. For outdoor lighting, such publications already exist as Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand AS/NZS and AS publications and have been an important element in urban design planning processes and regulatory compliance for many decades. These are:

- AS/NZS 4282 - Obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting
- AS/NZS 1158 Series - Road and public lighting
- AS/NZS 1680.5 - Outdoor workplace lighting
- AS 2560 Series - Sports Lighting

These lighting standards include: terminology, design guidance, calculation rules, and quantitative limits for a range of Light Technical Parameters (LTPs). The scope includes requirements for urban and rural application, special regions such as Protected Natural Areas (PNAs), ecological sanctuaries, astronomical reserves and observatories.

These standards have historically not been widely understood in NZ (other than by lighting experts), have been inconsistently applied, and poorly monitored and enforced at the local government bylaw level. Harmonisation, tightening, and effective monitoring and communication of outdoor lighting planning processes is long overdue.

The relevant AS and NZS lighting standards committees are:

- AS/NZS Committee LG-010 Obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting
- AS/NZS Committee LG-002 Road and public lighting
- AS/NZS Committee LG-001 Outdoor workplace lighting
- AS Committee LG-009 Sports Lighting

When updates or extended topic guidance is needed environmental special-interest groups could use the recognised and validated AS/NZS and AS channel to nominate and finance relevant experts to participate in the multi-lateral consensus process and contribute to developing any future environmental protection technical standards that may be required.

C) LCNZ Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Explicit inclusion of outdoor lighting in the scope of the Bill/Act to provide a legislative platform that supports subsequent regional regulation for mitigation of the environmental impacts of light at night.
- 2) Incorporation of national standards into the Bill/Act by referencing AS/NZS and AS outdoor lighting standards, and citing relevant LTP requirements and limits.
- 3) Nomination of the AS/NZS and AS committee process as the authorised channel for subject experts to participate in developing future lighting related environmental standards.

LCNZ representatives would be most keen to provide face-to-face input directly to the Environment Select Committee to explain and expand on the topics proposed.

Yours faithfully,



Chris Byrne
Chair

Lighting Council New Zealand
PO Box 25-229 St Heliers
Auckland 1740
New Zealand
admin@lightingcouncil.org.nz

