# ENA submission to Amendments to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission

## National direction consultation – Package 1: Infrastructure and Development


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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Electricity Networks Aotearoa

Electricity Networks Aotearoa (ENA) represents the 29 electricity distribution businesses (EDBs) in New Zealand (see Appendix A), which provide local and regional electricity networks. EDBs employ 7,800 people, deliver energy to more than two million homes and businesses, and have spent or invested over $6 billion in the last five years.

EDBs operate in both urban and rural areas and face a diverse and complex range of planning environments. This has made consistent and enabling national direction for electricity distribution a longstanding priority for the sector.

Electricity distribution, alongside generation and transmission, is significantly impacted by the long timeframes and high costs associated with the current planning system. Electrifying Aotearoa requires enormous investment in renewable generation, transmission, and distribution, more than $40 billion by 2030. For Aotearoa to meet its climate change targets, our infrastructure planning system must evolve.

An efficient consenting scheme is critical to keeping the power system reliable, safe, and affordable for customers. In addition to directly powering communities, electricity underpins the operation of many other essential services (e.g. reticulated water supplies, mobile and fixed telecommunications infrastructure). ENA welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission on the proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (NPS-ET).

## 1.2 ENA's interest in the NPS-EN

ENA and its members welcome the introduction of the proposed National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (NPS-EN). Together with the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities (NES-ETA), this represents a long-awaited extension of national direction to electricity distribution networks. While existing national direction instruments (such as the NPS-ET and NES-ETA) have improved clarity for transmission, they have not extended to the electricity distribution network, despite its central role in enabling decarbonisation, resilience, and customer connections across urban and rural environments.

Extending national direction to electricity distribution networks is a critical milestone. EDBs operate across every region in New Zealand, face inconsistent consenting rules under more than 60 district plans, and are delivering the infrastructure needed to support rapid electrification. The NPS-EN begins to fill this longstanding gap by providing consistent direction on matters of national significance, particularly those tied to government objectives around climate change, emissions reduction, and infrastructure resilience.

The existing planning system has frequently obstructed necessary electricity infrastructure upgrades through unclear or inconsistent local planning provisions. For the distribution sector, this has led to delays, added costs, and unnecessary barriers to electrification.

The NPS-EN must help ensure that the resource management system is better equipped to support fit-for-purpose, future-focused electricity infrastructure, especially at the scale and pace now required. This is particularly important for EDBs given their direct interface with consumers, urban development, and other critical infrastructure sectors (e.g., water, transport, telecommunications). Ensuring a smoother and more consistent planning environment is essential not only for decarbonisation but for keeping electricity affordable, safe, and reliable for customers.

ENA recognises that these Phase 2 instruments (NPS-EN and NES-ENA) are interim measures, ahead of the new resource management legislation, the Natural and Built Environment Act and the Spatial Planning Act. We support the approach of embedding a stronger and more integrated national direction for energy infrastructure into that future framework. As Phase 3 progresses, it will be critical that the distinct operational context and distributed nature of electricity distribution networks are adequately provided for under the new legislative regime, alongside generation and transmission.

Finally, ENA appreciates the engagement to date by MfE officials and MBIE in the design of the NPS-EN. The intent and scope of this policy statement are sound, but as this submission outlines, we recommend several refinements to better align the NPS-EN with the operational realities of EDBs and the government's broader policy objectives, particularly around decarbonisation and resilience.

# 2 Executive overview

Distribution networks are essential to decarbonisation, regional development, and the delivery of core services such as water and telecommunications. For decades, electricity distribution infrastructure has operated under a fragmented planning framework that has hindered network investment, increased costs and delays, and failed to reflect the functional realities of EDB operations. In this context, ENA strongly supports the proposed expansion of the NPS-ET to include electricity distribution networks (EDNs). This change is long overdue and is a critical step toward providing consistent, enabling national direction that reflects the importance of electricity infrastructure in achieving New Zealand's energy, climate, and economic goals.

The proposed changes introduce important new recognition of the national, regional, and local benefits of EDNs, as well as the operational, locational and technical constraints faced by EDBs. ENA supports the general direction of the revised objective and policies, particularly the more directive drafting that clarifies the role of decision-makers in giving appropriate weight to the needs of electricity infrastructure. ENA also supports the explicit recognition that EDBs are best placed to determine the appropriate technical solutions, routes, and locations for their assets, as well as the inclusion of policy support for upgrading, replacing and removing infrastructure.

However, while the changes are broadly supported, ENA has identified several areas where further refinement would improve the clarity, usability, and workability of the NPS-ET in practice. These include:

- Clarifying definitions and terminology to ensure alignment with the Electricity Industry Act and to reflect current industry practice.
- Reducing unnecessary prescription or complexity in provisions that apply to routine, low-impact activities (e.g. maintenance, replacements, and minor upgrades).
- Recognising and enabling the role of emerging technologies that support network efficiency and resilience (e.g. battery storage, demand response devices, and communications equipment).
- Better reconciling the NPS-ET with other national direction instruments (e.g. NZCPS, NPS-IB, NES-Freshwater), particularly where conflicting or duplicative requirements may arise.
- Aligning activity statuses (e.g. for electromagnetic fields or non-compliance with standards) with practical consenting outcomes and existing district plan approaches.

We also note that EDBs operate in both urban and rural environments and face a highly diverse set of planning contexts. It is critical that the NPS-ET provides sufficient flexibility for implementation at the regional and district level, particularly given the scale of investment required in electricity infrastructure to support electrification. EDBs will need to build and upgrade thousands of kilometres

of lines and cables, integrate new generation, and support the uptake of electric vehicles and low-emissions technologies. Ensuring a fit-for-purpose consenting framework is essential to delivering this transformation efficiently and cost-effectively.

While the current amendments focus on improving national direction for distribution and transmission, ENA notes that further changes may be needed to ensure comprehensive corridor protection for EDNs, similar to the approach currently taken for transmission. This is a priority for some members and may be progressed as part of broader Phase 3 resource management reform.

ENA welcomes further engagement with the Ministry for the Environment and other agencies to support the development of a clear, consistent and enabling national direction framework that reflects the critical role of electricity distribution in a decarbonised and resilient energy future.

## 2.1 Key matters

1. **Scope and Coverage**
   ENA strongly supports the inclusion of electricity distribution networks (EDNs) within the NPS-ET. A single national policy statement that applies to both transmission and distribution is essential to enable consistent and efficient infrastructure planning. National direction must reflect the operational realities and critical role of EDNs across both rural and urban environments.
2. **Recognition of EDN Benefits and Constraints**
   ENA supports the proposed recognition of the national, regional, and local benefits of EDNs and the operational, locational, and technical constraints faced by EDBs. This alignment with the treatment of the National Grid is a long overdue and necessary correction. However, the NPS-ET must also preserve sufficient flexibility for local implementation.
3. **Objective and Policy Framework**
   ENA supports the shift to more directive policies that require decision-makers to provide for electricity infrastructure. In particular:
   - Objective 1 should be retained, with appropriate reference to electricity demand and decarbonisation.
   - Policy 1 should continue to require explicit recognition of the functional and operational needs of EDNs.
   - Policy 2 should clearly establish that electricity infrastructure should be enabled unless significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.
   - Policy 4 should clarify that EDBs are best placed to determine technical solutions and asset locations.
4. **Upgrades, Replacements, and Removal of Infrastructure**
   ENA supports new policy support for asset upgrades, replacements and removals. These activities are common and essential to maintain safety, reliability, and efficiency. Planning frameworks must not treat like-for-like replacements or minor upgrades as if they were new projects.
5. **Enabling New Technologies and Equipment**
   The NPS-ET should enable associated and ancillary EDN assets such as communications devices, control systems, and batteries. These assets are essential to the modern operation of electricity networks and must be recognised within policy support and definitions.

6. **Consistency and Terminology**
   Clear and consistent terminology is critical to usability and implementation. ENA seeks:
   - Alignment of definitions with the Electricity Industry Act 2010 and NES-ENA terminology.
   - Refinement of references to asset types, voltages, and network classes to avoid ambiguity.
   - Clarification of terms such as "appropriate operation, maintenance and minor upgrade" to support plan-making and consenting.
7. **Corridor Protection and Spatial Planning**
   ENA supports greater corridor protection for EDNs, particularly in urbanising and growth areas. The current NPS-ET provisions for transmission corridor protection should be extended to distribution corridors over time. Further work may be needed under Phase 3 resource management reforms to strengthen forward planning tools that anticipate future network needs.

## 2.2 Implementation

The proposed NPSEN does not currently provide direction on how implementation is to occur through regional and district plans. Given the enabling intent of the proposed policies, especially in relation to recognising the operational and functional needs of the EDN, and the directive language in some policies, this is a notable gap.

**Clear Implementation Pathway Needed**

It is critical that the final NPSEN includes implementation provisions that direct councils to give effect to the NPSEN in a timely and consistent manner. In practice, EDBs have observed that even when national direction is in place, implementation through plan changes can be slow, inconsistent, and highly resource-intensive. This undermines the purpose of having nationally significant infrastructure recognised and supported by national direction.

To address this, ENA recommends that the NPSEN include provisions that:

1. **Require plan changes within a specified timeframe**, with clear guidance for how councils are to give effect to the NPSEN;
2. **Enable insertion of standardised provisions directly into plans**, based on nationally consistent templates or drafting included in the NPSEN itself. This would reduce variation and delays, particularly for routine and minor EDN activities;
3. **Clarify transitional arrangements**, including how current plan provisions should be interpreted in light of the NPSEN until full implementation occurs. In particular, there should be clear guidance for decision-makers on how to apply the enabling policies of the NPSEN when assessing applications before relevant plan changes are made.

**Avoiding Local Inconsistency**

A key benefit of national direction is to avoid the situation where the same EDN activity is treated differently in different districts or regions. ENA notes that many current district and regional plans do not fully recognise or enable EDB activities, particularly where those activities occur in sensitive environments or involve infrastructure upgrades. The NPSEN represents a significant improvement, but it will not achieve its objectives unless implementation is uniform.

**Need for Direct Recognition of Routine Activities**

The NPSEN recognises that most EDB works are minor, low-impact, and essential for maintaining network reliability. These routine activities should be clearly enabled in district and regional plans without requiring extensive consenting or assessment.

**Engagement with EDBs in Plan Implementation**

Finally, ENA recommends that the NPSEN include a requirement for councils to engage with local EDBs when giving effect to the NPSEN in their plans. This is especially important when mapping assets (as noted in Policy P11) or determining how policies will apply in practice, given the diversity of EDB networks and local contexts.

# 3 ENA Response to Package 1: Infrastructure and Development: Discussion Document

The following table sets out ENA's responses to the consultation questions on the proposed NPS-EN.

| DISCUSSION DOCUMENT QUESTION | ENA SUBMISSION POINTS |
|---|---|
| 17. Do you support the inclusion of electricity distribution within the scope of the NPS-EN? | Yes. ENA strongly supports the inclusion of electricity distribution networks within the scope of the NPS-EN. This inclusion is a long overdue and critical step toward providing consistent, enabling national direction. It will help address planning inconsistencies and support the infrastructure investment needed to meet climate and electrification goals. |
| 18. Are there risks that have not been identified? | Yes. ENA notes implementation risks, such as slow or inconsistent uptake by councils. **ENA recommends** inclusion of clearer implementation requirements and transitional provisions to ensure effective application of the NPS-EN. There's also concern about overlap or conflict with other national direction instruments (e.g. NPS-FM, NZCPS). |
| 19. Do you support the proposed definitions in the NPS-EN? | Generally, yes. ENA supports most definitions. **ENA recommends** refinements to improve clarity and avoid uncertainty. Key suggestions include aligning with Electricity Industry Act definitions, removing ambiguous terms, and ensuring definitions are fit for emerging technologies. |
| 20. Are there any changes you recommend to the NPS-EN? | Yes. **ENA recommends** changes to:<br>• Implementation provisions (e.g. require timely plan updates and include model provisions)<br>• Definitions (as noted above)<br>• Policy wording to improve clarity and align with the enabling intent<br>• Better address operational realities, especially around routine activities and third-party effects |
| 21. Do you support the proposed objective? Why or why not? | Yes, with amendments. ENA supports the revised objective's recognition of national significance, resilience, and emissions reduction, but suggests more explicit reference to electrification outcomes and integration across the electricity system. |
| 22. Will the proposed policy improve the consideration of the benefits of electricity networks in decision making? | Yes. The policies provide more directive language that requires decision-makers to recognise the national, regional, and local benefits of the electricity network, including support for emissions reduction and resilience. |

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| 23. Does the proposed policy sufficiently provide for the operational and functional needs for electricity networks to be located in particular environments? | Largely yes. ENA supports policies that recognise these needs, including the functional and operational constraints of electricity networks. **ENA recommends** further refinements to ensure these are consistently interpreted and implemented. |
| 24. Do you support Transpower and electricity distribution businesses selecting the preferred route or sites for development of electricity networks? | Yes. ENA strongly supports the recognition that EDBs and Transpower are best placed to determine the technical solution, route, and site for their assets, given their expertise and operational responsibilities. |
| 25. Are there any other route or site selection considerations that have not been identified? | Yes. ENA suggests recognising that some district plans include overlays (e.g. ONLs, SNAs) over legal road corridors, which can complicate routine works. The NPS-EN should clarify that such policies do not apply within land transport corridors. |
| 26. Does the proposed policy adequately provide for the consideration of Māori interests in electricity networks? | Yes. ENA supports the inclusion of a dedicated policy addressing Māori interests, including engagement, support for Māori-led infrastructure, and managing effects on sites of significance to Māori. |
| 27. Do you support the proposed policy to enable development of electricity networks in areas not protected by section 6 of the RMA, or covered by other national direction? | Yes. ENA supports enabling policies for development outside of protected areas and notes the importance of providing a clear pathway in those locations to support efficient and cost-effective delivery. |
| 28. Do the proposals cover all the matters that decision-makers should evaluate when considering and managing the effects of electricity network activities? | Mostly. **ENA recommends** additional clarity is needed to ensure proportionate and cost-effective management of effects, and avoiding vague or overly prescriptive language that could hinder implementation. |
| 29. Do you support the proposed policy to enable routine works on existing electricity network infrastructure in any location or environment? | Yes, with qualifications. ENA supports enabling routine activities in all environments, provided effects are appropriately managed. ENA also proposes clearer guidance on how to resolve conflicts with other national direction instruments. |
| 30. What other practical refinements to Policy 8 of the NPS-EN could help avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value and amenity in rural environments? | **ENA recommends** clarifying that the policy does not apply within land transport corridors, defining "rural environments," and refining language to reduce ambiguity about amenity values and enable recognition of functional need. |
| 31. Do you support the proposed policy to enable sufficient on-site space for distribution assets? | Yes. ENA supports this provision. **ENA recommends** clarifying that consultation with EDBs should be required for developments involving three or more residential units to ensure effective infrastructure planning. |
| 32. Should developers be required to consult with electricity distribution providers before a resource consent for land development is granted? If not, what type or scale of works would merit such consultation? | Yes, for certain scales. **ENA recommends** that consultation be required for developments involving three or more residential units, which provides a practical threshold aligned with typical increases in electricity demand. |

The table below sets out the ENA submission on the proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (NPS-ET), as outlined in Package 1: Infrastructure and Development: Discussion Document.

| APPLICATION | PROPOSED PROVISIONS | MFE REASONS | ENA SUBMISSION POINTS |
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| **Where is it intended to apply?** | This NPS is proposed to continue to apply to the whole of New Zealand.<br>The scope of the NPS-ET is proposed to be expanded to include electricity distribution and will be renamed the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (NPS-EN). | Meeting New Zealand's climate and electrification targets through the efficient transmission and distribution of electricity is a nationally significant issue. | The proposal is to expand the scope of the NPS-ET to cover electricity distribution, which provides for the national significance of both transmission and distribution activities which must be applied in regional and district plans. ENA supports this. |

| DEFINITIONS/INTERPRETATION | PROPOSED PROVISIONS | MFE REASONS | ENA SUBMISSION POINTS |
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| **D1 Act** | *means the Resource Management Act 1991.* | This is an existing definition in the NPS-ET 2008 and is needed to avoid repetition of references to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). | ENA supports this. |
| **D2 Ancillary electricity network activities (ancillary EN activities)** | Introduce a definition for 'ancillary EN activities' that:<br>*means all supporting and subsidiary activities needed to provide the operation, maintenance and upgrading of the EN, including but not limited to vegetation clearance, tree trimming, earthworks, the construction, maintenance and upgrading of access tracks and accessways, power supply, and telecommunications.* | The intent of this definition is to ensure that all relevant ancillary activities are captured as part of the overall electricity network (EN) activity. | This does not cover ancillary activities that might be required for development of new infrastructure. **ENA recommends** amending this as follows 'to provide for the operation, maintenance ~~and~~, upgrading, and development of the EN…'<br><br>**ENA recommends** minor grammatical amendment to say '…to provide for the operation, maintenance, and upgrading of the EN….'<br><br>ENA prefers that this definition is less prescriptive than what is proposed, particularly to allow for changes in technology and for flexibility to trial emerging technologies. This would also remove the risk of activities being |

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| | | | omitted from the definition which should be included.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following drafting amendments:<br>*means all supporting and subsidiary activities needed to provide for the operation, maintenance, ~~and~~ upgrading, and development of the EN~~, including but not limited to vegetation clearance, tree trimming, earthworks, the construction, maintenance and upgrading of access tracks and accessways, power supply, and telecommunications.~~* |
| **D3 Customer Driven Projects** | Introduce a definition for 'customer driven projects' that:<br>*means ETN or EDN activities that a third party other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distribution business has requested be carried out, such as new connections to electricity generation or demand, or relocation or undergrounding of assets in order to enable urban or infrastructure development, excluding new connections to electricity generation that are managed under the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG).* | The intent is to exclude renewable energy generation (REG) connections managed under the NPS-REG, which will require assessment of the effects of the full REG project up to the point of connection to the electricity transmission network (ETN) or electricity distribution network (EDN). The exclusion of new REG connections clarifies the applicability of the NPS, rather than a decision-maker needing to apply both the NPS-REG and NPS-EN.<br>This definition also forms part of the definition of 'electricity network development activities'. | The definition of "customer-driven projects" should exclude subdivision in existing urban areas and domestic connections. These are routine activities that should not be captured as non-routine works, as doing so would inadvertently trigger unnecessary consent requirements and conflict with the enabling intent of the NPSEN and NES-ENA.<br><br>ENA supports Transpower's position that REG connections to the point of connection with the ETN should be managed under the NPS-REG. However, the drafting of the final sentence which excludes customer connections to electricity generation, could be interpreted as requiring REG connections that are owned or used by Transpower (e.g. where Transpower consents, constructs, owns, and operates the connection, or where Transpower owns the asset but the customer consents or constructs it) to be processed under the NPS-REG. ENA notes the same concern applies to the |

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| | | | electricity distribution network. Like Transpower, distribution businesses may own or operate connections to renewable electricity generation or be involved in their consenting or construction. Under the current drafting, these connections could also be incorrectly captured under the NPS-REG rather than the NPS-EN, despite being part of the electricity network. This creates unnecessary ambiguity and risks misalignment in how network-owned or network-facilitated connections to REG are treated across the sector.<br><br>**ENA recommends** that the drafting be clarified to ensure that where connections are owned or used by electricity networks (whether transmission or distribution) they are subject to the NPS-EN.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following amendments:<br>*ETN or EDN activities that a third party other than Transpower New Zealand Limited or an electricity distribution business has requested be carried out, such as new connections to electricity generation or demand, or relocation or undergrounding of assets in order to enable urban or infrastructure development, ~~excluding new connections to electricity generation that are managed under the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation,~~ and routine customer-initiated works such as subdivision within existing urban areas and new customer connections.* |

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| **D4 Decision-makers** | Amend the definition:<br>*means all those persons making planning decisions under this National Policy Statement.*<br><br>*Existing definition:*<br>*means all persons exercising functions and powers under the Act.* | This definition would not result in a material change from the definition in the current NPS-ET but would change how policies are framed to refer to decision-makers rather than planning decisions. | ENA can see this may result in more directive policy about the content of planning decisions and the outcome sought compared to the existing NPS-ET policy content. ENA supports this definition. |

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| **D5 Electricity distribution network (EDN)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means any part of the electricity network that is controlled by a person or body who is both an electricity distributor and an electricity operator because those terms are defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992; and does not include the electricity transmission network (as defined below).* | This definition proposes to introduce the EDN into the NPS, recognising the importance of the EDN for electrification (eg, new lines supporting electrification of industry rather than fossil fuel use). | ENA sees that this definition is necessary to ensure EDBs and their operations are recognised within the NPS and are distinct from Transpower's activities.<br><br>However, we note the existing definition of 'electricity transmission network' lists the assets that form part of the network. We consider the definition of the distribution network would benefit in taking the same approach.<br><br>We also note the reference to section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992. **ENA recommends** this be amended to state '*who is both an electricity distributor and an electricity operator ~~because those terms are~~ as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992.*<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following wording:<br>*means any part of the electricity network that:*<br>*a) comprises the network of distribution lines, cables (aerial and underground), switching stations, support structures, substations, transformers, kiosks, cabinets, facilities and works, connections to grid exit points, customer connections, and all ancillary activities and other works used to distribute electricity from the National Grid to homes and businesses, and*<br>*b) is controlled by a person or body who is both an electricity distributor and* |

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| | | | *an electricity operator ~~because those terms are~~ as defined in section 2 of the Electricity Act 1992; and does not include the electricity transmission network (as defined below).*<br><br>**ENA recommends** the NPS explicitly provide for emerging technologies within its definitions, particularly where assets are to be listed. This ensures that the framework remains future-proof and does not exclude new or evolving electricity distribution infrastructure. It will also allow for an easier 'lift and shift' into the new resource management system that emerges under Phase three of the resource management reforms. |
| **D6 Electricity network (EN)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the electricity transmission network and the electricity distribution network.* | The proposed definition is inclusive of both the ETN and EDN and is needed to interpret policy applying to both parts of the electricity network. | This definition is appropriate as it ensures electricity distribution is covered by this 'umbrella term' which is used throughout the proposed/amended provisions. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D7 Electricity transmission network (ETN)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means all parts of the National Grid of electricity transmission that:*<br>*a) comprise the network of transmission lines, and cables (aerial, underground, and submarine, including the high-voltage direct current link), stations, and substations, facilities and works, and all ancillary activities, and other works used to connect grid injection points and grid exit points to convey electricity;*<br>*b) is owned or used by Transpower New Zealand Limited; and*<br>*c) is commonly known as the National Grid.* | The proposed definition of 'National Grid' is more specific than the definition in the current NPS-ET about the assets and infrastructure it includes. It is proposed to include ancillary activities (see definition D2) essential to enabling necessary work on Transpower New Zealand's assets. | This only relates to the National Grid so it is not relevant for EDBs. |

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| **D8 Electricity network activities (EN activities)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the construction, operation, maintenance, development, upgrade, replacement, decommissioning or removal of electricity network assets and all ancillary activities, unless otherwise specified.* | The proposed definition for electricity network activities will be more specific about the activities and infrastructure it includes than the definition in the current NPS-ET. The intent is to be more inclusive and recognise activities associated with the lifecycle of the EN including access associated with routine maintenance activities. | The definition is generally appropriate as it ensures the lifecycle of electricity distribution activities are covered, not just transmission activities as is the case under the current NPS-ET. However, we consider the phrase 'unless otherwise specified' will likely create uncertainty and may encourage inconsistent application across councils or decision-makers. It undermines the purpose of a clear national direction intended to streamline and enable network development and maintenance.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following amendments to this definition:<br>*means the construction, operation, maintenance, development, upgrade, replacement, decommissioning or removal of electricity network assets and all ancillary activities~~, unless otherwise specified~~.* |
| **D9 Electricity network assets (EN assets)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the physical components of EN and all ancillary activities, such as access tracks.* | This definition is proposed to be more specific about the assets and infrastructure included as part of the EN. | While the intent is to include a definition that is specific about the assets and infrastructure included as part of the electricity network, we note this term is not used in any of the subsequent provisions, although it is used in the definition of D9 'Electricity network activities (EN activities)'.<br><br>An amendment to this definition is needed to provide scope for future technology changes.<br><br>**ENA recommends:**<br>*means the physical components of EN and all ancillary activities, such as access tracks, required for the operation of the network.* |

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| **D10 Electricity network development activities (EN development activities)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means*<br>*a) the construction of new EN assets that is not carried out on or related to EN lines, or cables, or at substation sites, that exist at the time of construction; or*<br>*b) customer driven projects.* | The intent of this definition is to help distinguish 'routine activities' and 'non-routine activities', and to clarify that 'development activities' relate to new lines or assets. This is specifically relevant for the interpretation of policies 5, 7 and 9. | The definition clarifies that development activities are where new assets are to be added to the network, unrelated to existing assets. It also includes customer driven projects. ENA supports this definition in principle. |
| **D11 Electricity network line (EN line)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means EN assets used for, or associated with, the overhead, underground or submarine transmission or distribution of electricity in the EN and:*<br>*a) includes transmission line support structures, telecommunication cables, and telecommunication devices; but*<br>*b) does not include an EN substation.* | This definition is proposed to clarify terminology used in the definition of EN development activities. | **ENA recommends** this definition be amended to include reference to 'distribution line support structures' in clause (a):<br>*means EN assets used for, or associated with, the overhead, underground or submarine transmission or distribution of electricity in the EN and:*<br>*a) includes transmission line and distribution line support structures, telecommunication cables, and telecommunication devices; but*<br>*b) does not include an EN substation.* |
| **D12 Functional need** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the need for a proposal or activity to traverse, locate or operate in a particular environment because the activity can only occur in that environment.* | This is the same definition as in the NPS-ET, and is included for ease of reference. | This definition aligns with the definition of functional need in the National Planning Standards and other national direction e.g. NPS-FM. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D13 Non-routine electricity network activities (non-routine EN activities)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the upgrade, rebuilding or replacement of, or changes to, EN assets, or other EN activities, where the upgrade, rebuilding, replacement or change, or activity is not defined as a routine EN activity.* | This definition reflects the policy intent to distinguish between activities carried out regularly as part of the life cycle of the EN, which usually have less than minor effects, and activities that may result in more substantial effects and changes to the EN.<br>The intent is that:<br>• 'non-routine' EN activities cover larger upgrades with more than minor adverse effects and policy 7 applies | ENA has concerns about this definition, and related definitions (e.g. routine activities, development activities, upgrading) and the complexity this will likely create in applying the NPS.<br>This definition appears to cover activities that are not new assets (which are covered by the EN development activities definition) but are substantial changes to the existing |

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| | | • 'routine' covers more minor or common upgrade activities and these are subject to more enabling policy direction in policy 6. | network/assets. We are unclear what upgrades might be considered 'non-routine'.<br><br>The definition works in tandem with the definition of D18 'routine activities' which we have commented on further below. This definition is suitable provided the amendments suggested to 'routine activities' are made to more clearly distinguish between upgrades that are routine vs non-routine. Without this clear threshold, routine status may unnecessarily be escalated to non-routine, increasing consent applications and administrative cost for EDBs.<br><br>The phrase 'changes to assets' is vague without any qualifier around the extent of changes i.e. there is no threshold or similar measure of these changes so a strict interpretation could be any change, thereby triggering an unnecessarily onerous regulatory process. We have made a similar comment in relation to routine activities below. We suggest a simpler definition could be provided by removing the ambiguous reference to 'changes to assets' and aligning with our suggested amendments to the 'routine activities' definition below.<br><br>Similarly, we consider the reference to 'other EN activities' is vague and potentially confusing as EN activities would cover upgrades and new assets, but there is no clarity about what the extent of 'new' is. The reference will make it difficult for EDBs to confidently plan and deliver routine maintenance and upgrades. We suggest deletion of this reference.<br>**ENA recommends** the following amendments: |

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| | | | *means the upgrade, rebuilding or replacement of~~, or changes to,~~ EN assets, ~~or other EN activities~~, where the upgrade, rebuilding, replacement ~~or change~~, or activity is not defined as a routine EN activity.* |
| **D14 NZECP 34:2001** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (2001)* | This definition would introduce a hook for electrical safety standards. We are seeking feedback on whether the RMA is the best means to enforce these provisions and the appropriateness of referring to compliance with all or some of the third-party code in the proposed National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities (NES-ENA). | This relates to the proposed new Policy 10 (Managing the effects of third parties on the electricity network) which requires local authorities to engage with the operator of the EDN to identify an appropriate buffer corridor for the EDN within which third party buildings, subdivision and earthworks activities must comply with NZECP34.<br><br>The inclusion of this definition supports new Policy 10 and is useful in this regard. ENA sees a reference to 'any subsequent versions' would be a useful addition to this definition, given the age of the existing NZECP document (2001).<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following amendment**:**<br>*means the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (2001)<u>, and any subsequent versions</u>* |
| **D15 Operational need** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the need for a proposal or activity to traverse, locate or operate in a particular environment because of technical, logistical or operational characteristics or constraints (National Planning Standards definition).* | It is the same definition as in the National Planning Standards, included for ease of reference and used in policy 2 and policy 4. | The definition is necessary to support the policies. Using the planning standards definition ensures consistency across national direction instruments and in district and regional plans. This supports consistency of interpretation in consenting processes. This definition is useful for EDBs because it explicitly recognises the technical, logistical, and operational constraints that often dictate where and how electricity network assets must be located or routed, supporting realistic and |

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| | | | practicable planning outcomes. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D16 Planning decision** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means a decision on any of the following:*<br>*a) a regional policy statement or proposed regional policy statement;*<br>*b) a regional plan or proposed regional plan;*<br>*c) a district plan or proposed district plan;*<br>*d) a resource consent;*<br>*e) a designation;*<br>*f) a heritage order;*<br>*g) a water conservation order;*<br>*h) a change to a plan requested under Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Act.* | This definition is intended to clarify what planning decisions the decision-maker has authority over. | The definition supports amendments to existing or proposed policies by distinguishing between what a decision-maker must consider and what the planning decision must include, enable, or manage. It clarifies the types of approvals and processes that constitute a planning decision, helping to differentiate the decision-maker's process and considerations from the substantive content of the planning decision.<br><br>The way this is drafted will be useful for EDBs because it clearly and comprehensively sets out the types of planning decisions covered, reducing ambiguity about the scope of decision-making. This provides certainty for EDBs by clarifying the meaning of "planning decision," which aids in navigating consent pathways and understanding when and how decisions impact their network projects. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D17 Electricity network resilience (EN resilience)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the capacity of infrastructure to absorb a shock, including from natural hazards, recover from the disruption, adapt to changing conditions, including climate change, and retain an appropriate level of service, even if that means delivering an infrastructure service in a new or different way, or at a reduced level of service.* | The intent of this definition is to clarify the meaning of 'resilience' to assist with implementing the NPS-EN objective, and policy 1 and policy 2. It is intended to be aligned with the definition proposed in the NPS-REG, proposed National Policy Statement for Infrastructure and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet work on critical infrastructure. | The inclusion of this definition supports references to 'resilience' in other definitions, such as routine activities and upgrading. Its alignment with other national direction instruments will promote consistent interpretation and implementation at both the plan-making and consenting stages.<br><br>The way this is drafted will be useful for EDBs because it acknowledges that resilience involves not only recovering from disruption but also adapting to long-term changes such as |

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| | | | climate impacts and evolving service needs, reflecting how EDBs already plan and invest. It also recognises that resilience may involve delivering services in a different way, or at a reduced level, which aligns with existing EDB approaches under AMP frameworks. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D18 Routine electricity network activities (routine EN activities)** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means that:*<br>*a) activities required for, or associated with, the operation or maintenance of existing EN assets or;*<br>*b) implements the modern equivalent, substitute, or replacement of the existing EN assets that may not be 'like for like'; or*<br>*c) maintenance and upgrades of existing EN assets necessary to continue to deliver the same or a similar level of service or to improve resilience; or*<br>*d) other upgrades of existing EN assets where the upgrade or other change will, once the activity is complete, have no more than minor adverse effects on the environment; or*<br>*e) the removal, decommissioning or dismantling of EN assets; and*<br>*f) all relevant ancillary activities, such as vegetation clearance, tree trimming, and creating, maintaining and improving access tracks and accessways to EN assets; and*<br>*g) includes all activities regulated by the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities NES-ENA, including replacing structures, reconductoring,* | The policy intent is to enable routine ETN activities on existing assets to occur in a timely and efficient way without restriction, while still ensuring Transpower and electricity distribution businesses (EDBs) take appropriate steps to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects to the extent practicable. Transpower and EDBs have well-established industry standards and operating procedures for routine operation, maintenance and upgrade activities developed with input from ecologists and other environmental experts.<br>Provides a link to make clear that the definition includes all activities regulated under the proposed NES-ENA. | ENA considers there is potential for unsatisfactory outcomes because of this definition, and the related definition at D13 for 'non-routine' activities (see our comments above on the latter). In our view these definitions make it unclear as to how these different activities will be considered in a consenting process. Clause (d) is problematic because the assessment of effects is a determination of the consent planner/decision-maker and presumably the intent is these new terms would be carried through into regional and district plans. This introduces significant uncertainty at the front end of project planning.<br><br>ENA sees that it is inappropriate for a definition to require an assessment of effects to determine the regulatory (or activity) status for a proposed activity. It creates difficulty because an EDB may apply for a consent on the basis it is a 'routine activity', or alternatively it is a permitted activity, and is subsequently assessed to have more than minor effects. This could create many unnecessary project delays.<br><br>The assessment of effects should only apply where a consent is required, not in a definition |

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| | *earthworks, altering or relocating of structures and undergrounding.* | | so EN operators have certainty about whether their activity is routine or not.<br><br>The drafting may also be problematic if these definitions are carried through into district and regional plans. If so, planners will be required to interpret effects thresholds at the definition stage, rather than through clear activity status rules, increasing variation between councils and undermining the consistency the NPS-EN and NES-ENA aim to achieve.<br><br>ENA is also concerned about the reference to 'or other change'. This creates uncertainty in our view, particularly as there is a definition of 'upgrading' proposed. We note there is no reference in this definition to the scale of activity change allowed, other than in clause (b) in relation to implementing a modern equivalent an asset and in clause (c) in relation to upgrades for resilience purposes. Clause (d) could also be amended to be clearer that it provides for upgrades that do not result in a material change in scale.<br><br>'…or other change' could unintentionally capture minor operational adjustments, reconfigurations, or layout changes that are functionally routine but could be interpreted as non-routine under a strict reading.<br><br>In reflection of the above comments, **ENA recommends** the following drafting amendments:<br>*means that:* |

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| | | | *a) activities required for, or associated with, the operation or maintenance of existing EN assets or;*<br>*b) implements the modern equivalent, substitute, or replacement of the existing EN assets that may not be 'like for like'; or*<br>*c) maintenance and upgrades of existing EN assets necessary to continue to deliver the same or a similar level of service or to improve resilience; or*<br>*d) other upgrades of existing EN assets where the upgrade ~~or other change~~ does not result in a change to the scale of the activity, other than that provided for in clauses b) and c) ~~will, once the activity is complete, have no more than minor adverse effects on the environment~~; or*<br>*e) the removal, decommissioning or dismantling of EN assets; and*<br>*f) all relevant ancillary activities, such as vegetation clearance, tree trimming, and creating, maintaining and improving access tracks and accessways to EN assets; and*<br>*g) includes all activities regulated by the National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities ~~NES-ENA~~, including replacing structures, reconductoring, earthworks, altering or relocating of structures and undergrounding.* |

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| **D19 Sensitive activities** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*includes residential unit (including visitor accommodation and retirement accommodation), care facilities, childcare facilities, schools, hospitals, custodial or supervised accommodation where residents are detained on site, marae, or place of worship.* | This definition assists with interpretation of policy 11, seeking to manage the effects of third parties on the EN. The existing NPS-ET definition has been expanded to make it clear what the definition includes and align with terms used in the National Planning Standards. | The definition is suitable given it aligns with the National Planning Standards, which are already being implemented in recent planning documents. This promotes consistency across plans and in implementation. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D20 Upgrading** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means improving the capacity, level of service, efficiency, safety, security, resilience, effectiveness or longevity of existing EN assets and includes the replacement, renewal, addition, expansion and intensification of existing infrastructure.* | The intent of this definition is that it is broad and captures all types of upgrades and can help to streamline drafting. This includes both minor (routine) upgrades and larger upgrades (non-routine). | This definition is considered suitable and reflects our understanding of what constitutes upgrading in current practice. While this is broadly defined, when used in the context of routine and non-routine activities we consider the definition, and its use is appropriate. It supports future-focused investment in resilience and longevity, reduces uncertainty in consenting processes, and enables consistent interpretation across policies by avoiding subjective or effects-based language. ENA supports this definition. |
| **D21 Well-being** | Introduce a definition that:<br>*means the environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being of people and communities, and includes their health and safety.* | The intent is to assist with interpretation of the objective, policy 1 and policy 3 of the proposed NPS-EN. | ENA considers it would be unprecedented to introduce a definition of "well-being" in a document prepared to support RMA implementation, as it is a commonly used term that already exists within section 5 of the Act. No other national direction instrument defines the term. The proposed definition does not add interpretive clarity or value and instead risks creating confusion. The use of the term "well-being" within the definition of "well-being" is circular and unhelpful, and its inclusion could unintentionally introduce divergence from the meaning of section 5.<br><br>This may lead to uncertainty in planning or consenting contexts about whether "well- |

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| | | | being" under the NPS-EN is broader or narrower than under the Act. Including such a definition may also set an unhelpful precedent for redefining core RMA concepts unnecessarily. **ENA recommends** this definition is deleted**.** |

| PART 2: OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES | | | | |
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| **OBJECTIVES** | **EXISTING PROVISIONS** | **PROPOSED PROVISIONS** | **REASONS** | **ENA SUBMISSION POINTS** |
| **OB1** | Existing objective:<br>To recognise the national significant of the electricity transmission network by facilitating the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the existing transmission network and the establishment of new transmission resources to meet the needs of present and future generations, while:<br>• managing the adverse environmental effects of the network; and managing the adverse effects of other activities on the network. | Amend the objective as follows:<br>1) The EN is developed, operated, maintained, upgraded, and protected in a manner that:<br>*a) recognises and provides for its national significance;*<br>*b) secures the resilience of the EN, including in relation to the effects of natural hazards and climate change;*<br>*c) provides for the well-being and needs of present and future generations, including by increasing and improving the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;*<br>*d) recognises and provides for the role of the EN in achieving New Zealand's emissions reduction and renewable energy targets, and associated commitments in any relevant plan prepared under the Climate Change Response Act 2002;*<br>*e) manages adverse effects on the environment in a proportionate and cost-effective way; and* | The objective in the current NPS-ET is outdated and was developed before New Zealand's targets for reducing emissions became law. Electrification of the economy is the most important enabler for decarbonising New Zealand's energy system.<br>The intent of the proposed objectives is to:<br>• strengthen the objective to recognise the importance of the EN and its role in decarbonisation and electrification of the economy<br>• emphasise the beneficial outcomes of EN while recognising the need to expand and upgrade it to meet targets and future demand<br>• highlight that increasing and improving capacity must be done in a way that also | This objective appears to generally capture the role and benefits of electricity networks and is an improvement on the existing NPS-ET objective.<br>The objective is not explicit about the outcome of increasing electrification to support NZ's renewable energy targets, rather this appears to be implicit in clause (d) and we note is more explicit in Policy 1. There is a risk that the critical aspects needed to achieve this more strategic outcome are lost resulting in inconsistent interpretation of this clause or insufficient recognition of activities that are necessary to achieve this outcome. ENA consider an amendment is required to more explicitly identify the outcome of electrifying NZ as shown below.<br>Similarly, we consider there is insufficient recognition of the critical links between different parts of the EN and the need to enable integration between generation, transmission and distribution activities. ENA suggests a new |

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| | | *f) protects the EN from the adverse effects of other activities.* | manages adverse effects on the environment<br>• extend application of provisions to provide national direction for electricity distribution. | clause immediately following clause (a), as shown below.<br><br>We also consider clause (b), in regard to resilience, could be strengthened to recognise the role of the EN as critical infrastructure and a lifeline utility, and for planning for future natural hazard events/climate change risks, supporting the continuity of supply. The reference to 'secures the resilience' suggests there is an end point, but ENA recommends this is framed to support the ongoing planning of the network and the ability to respond when an event occurs. ENA recommends an amendment to this clause as shown below.<br><br>Clause (e) allows for a scaled consideration of adverse effects and the approach to managing those effects, including the costs of doing so. This is missing in the existing NPSET objective, and we consider its inclusion is appropriate.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following drafting amendments to this definition:<br>*1) The EN is developed, operated, maintained, upgraded, and protected in a manner that:*<br>*a) recognises and provides for its national significance;*<br>*b) ~~secures~~ enables proactive upgrades to and maintenance of the electricity network to support the long-term ~~the~~ resilience of the EN, including in relation to the effects of natural hazards and climate change;*<br>*c) provides for the well-being and needs of present and future generations, including by* |

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| | | | | *increasing and improving the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;*<br>*d) recognises and provides for the role of the EN in achieving New Zealand's emissions reduction and renewable energy targets, and associated commitments in any relevant plan prepared under the Climate Change Response Act 2002;*<br>*e) manages adverse effects on the environment in a proportionate and cost-effective way; and*<br>*f) protects the EN from the adverse effects of other activities.*<br>*g) enables an increase in the capacity of the electricity network to support a transition from non-renewable to renewable electricity generation activities*<br>*h) recognises the interconnected nature of the EN and provides for its integration with renewable electricity generation.* |

| POLICIES | EXISTING PROVISIONS | PROPOSED PROVISIONS | REASONS | ENA SUBMISSION POINTS |
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| **P1 National significance and benefits of the electricity network** | *Existing Policy 1:*<br>***Recognition of the national benefits of transmission***<br>*In achieving the purpose of the Act, decision-makers must recognise and provide for the national, regional and local benefits of sustainable, secure and efficient electricity transmission. The benefits of sustainable, secure and efficient electricity transmission. The benefits relevant to any particular project* | Amend policy 1 as follows:<br>*1) Decision-makers on EN activities must recognise and provide for the national significance and benefits of the EN to be realised at national, regional and local scale.*<br>*2) Decision-makers must recognise that the benefits of the EN include, but are not limited to:*<br>*a) providing for the well-being of people and communities to meet the needs of present and future generations;* | This amends policy 1 of the current NPS-ET.<br>Many of the existing policies in the NPS-ET are not directive enough to achieve the amended NPS objective. The proposed amendments are intended to:<br>• strengthen the requirement for decision-makers to consider the national significance of the entire electricity network and enable the full range of | This policy expands on existing Policy 1 of the NPSET. ENA considers the policy is appropriate, subject to the inclusion of the amendments to the objective noted above – those amendments are required to ensure there is sufficient recognition within the objective of the matters this policy seeks to achieve.<br><br>A reference to the role of the EDN as a lifeline utility, supporting the continuity of supply would be a useful addition in this policy. This addition would not only reflect the critical infrastructure status of EDBs but also reinforce the need for |

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| | *or development of the electricity transmission network may include:*<br>*i) maintained or improved security of supply or electricity; or*<br>*ii) efficient transfer of energy through a reduction of transmission losses; or*<br>*iii) the facilitation of the use and development of new electricity generation, including renewable generation which assists in the management of the effects of climate change; or*<br>*iv) enhanced supply of electricity through the removal of points of congestion.*<br>*The above list of benefits is not intended to be exhaustive and a particular policy, plan, project or development may have or recognise other benefits.* | *b) providing services that are essential to support human life and the development, growth, and functioning of districts, regions, New Zealand, and the economy;*<br>*c) providing safe, secure, reliable, and resilient electricity supply that is responsive to demand from homes, communities, and businesses at local, regional, and national levels;*<br>*d) efficient storage and transfer of electricity;*<br>*e) supporting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the electrification of the economy, including by:*<br>*i. facilitating new renewable electricity generation;*<br>*ii. increasing network capacity; and*<br>*iii. providing direct connections for industry;*<br>*f) enhancing supply of electricity through the ETN through removing points of congestion.*<br>*The above list of benefits is not intended to be exhaustive and a particular project or development may have other benefits.* | national, regional and local benefits.<br>• give greater recognition to the critical role the EN has in New Zealand's economy and in meeting emissions targets and budgets. | robust planning and operational measures that safeguard communities and economic activity throughout New Zealand – particularly in the face of increasing climate risks, emergency events, and the growing reliance on electricity to power essential services, homes, and industry.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following drafting amendment:<br>1) *Decision-makers on EN activities must recognise and provide for the national significance and benefits of the EN to be realised at national, regional and local scale.*<br>2) *Decision-makers must recognise that the benefits of the EN include, but are not limited to:*<br>*a) providing for the well-being of people and communities to meet the needs of present and future generations;*<br>*b) providing services that are essential to support human life and the development, growth, and functioning of districts, regions, New Zealand, and the economy;*<br>*c) providing safe, secure, reliable, and resilient electricity supply that is responsive to demand from homes, communities, and businesses at local, regional, and national levels;*<br>*d) efficient storage and transfer of electricity;*<br>*e) supporting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the electrification of the economy, including by:* |

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| | | | | i. *facilitating new renewable electricity generation;*<br>ii. *increasing network capacity; and*<br>iii. *providing direct connections for industry;*<br>f) *enhancing supply of electricity through the ETN through removing points of congestion.*<br>g) *providing a lifeline utility (as defined in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002) and supporting the continuity of electricity supply*<br>*The above list of benefits is not intended to be exhaustive and a particular project or development may have other benefits.* |
| **P2 Operational need or functional need for EN activities to be in particular locations and environments** | Existing Policy 3:<br>When considering measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects of transmission activities, decision-makers must consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by the technical and operational requirements of the network. | Includes a new policy 2 as follows:<br>1) *Planning decisions must recognise and provide for EN activities that have an operational need or functional need to be in particular environments, including in areas with section 6 RMA values, with unavoidable adverse effects on those environments.*<br>2) *Decision-makers shall recognise that the operational or functional need of EN activities may include:*<br>a) *the need for EN assets to convey electricity over long distances and in all locations and environments, including:*<br>i. *within and across urban and rural environments;* | This is proposed to amend policy 3 of the NPS-ET.<br>The intent is to recognise the specific technical, operational and functional needs of the electricity network, incorporating some of the current NPS-ET preamble into clear policy direction. | ENA considers this policy warrants amendments to clause 1) so that the EN is provided for within the areas with section 6 values. The wording currently implies that activities within these areas will always have unavoidable adverse effects, or that this type of effect is needed in order to be recognised and provided for. Consent authorities might interpret this as needing to demonstrate that no mitigation is possible. It may force EDBs to over-design necessary work even when effects can be appropriately managed.<br><br>We also consider clause 2)a.ii should include reference to freshwater bodies, as well as the CMA, as currently these are not referenced which implies they are excluded from consideration, and more restrictive policies in the NPS-FM and/or regional plans may apply. |

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| | | ii. *within the coastal environment, including the coastal marine area;*<br>iii. *across jurisdictional boundaries within and across districts and regions; and*<br>b) *the need for the EN to operate effectively and efficiently as an interconnected system across New Zealand;*<br>c) *the requirement for regular maintenance and upgrading of the EN due to its age, the need to improve resilience, and the need to increase capacity to meet increasing demand; and*<br>d) *the need for the EN to connect to electricity generation, and to respond to demand, wherever located.* | | It would also be beneficial to add 'replacement' into clause 2(c) to ensure this is covered by the policy as there is the potential for debate about whether 'replacement' is considered 'maintenance' or not. This addition provides greater certainty for EDBs that the policy provides for this routine activity.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following drafting amendments:<br>*1) Planning decisions must recognise and provide for EN activities that have an operational need or functional need to be in particular environments, including in areas with section 6 RMA values~~, with unavoidable adverse effects on those environments~~.*<br>*2) Decision-makers shall recognise that the operational or functional need of EN activities may include:*<br>*a) the need for EN assets to convey electricity over long distances and in all locations and environments, including:*<br>*i. within and across urban and rural environments;*<br>*ii. within the coastal environment, including the coastal marine area, wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins;*<br>*iii. across jurisdictional boundaries within and across districts and regions; and*<br>*b) the need for the EN to operate effectively and efficiently as an interconnected system across New Zealand;* |

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| | | | | *c) the requirement for regular maintenance, replacement, and upgrading of the EN due to its age, the need to improve resilience, and the need to increase capacity to meet increasing demand; and*<br>*d) the need for the EN to connect to electricity generation, and to respond to demand, wherever located.* |
| **P3 Policies relating to Māori rights and interests** | N/A | Include a new policy 3 as follows:<br>*1) Decision-makers (and applicants, as appropriate) must recognise and provide for Māori interests in relation to EN activities, including by:*<br>*a) taking into account the outcomes of any engagement with tangata whenua on a resource consent, notice of requirement, or request for a private plan change, including through the site, route and method selection process;*<br>*b) recognising the opportunities tangata whenua may have in developing and operating their own distribution infrastructure at any scale or in partnership;*<br>*c) avoiding, where practicable, or otherwise mitigating, the adverse effects of EN activities on sites of significance to Māori;*<br>*d) operating in a way that is consistent with iwi participation legislation.* | This is a new policy proposal.<br>The proposed amendments are based on the current NPS Urban Development, with modifications to reflect linear network planning processes and constraints.<br>The intent is to recognise and provide for Māori interests by supporting early and meaningful engagement with tangata whenua, particularly in the route and site selection process where adverse effects can be best addressed.<br>Policy d) does not exclude participation under the Marine and Coastal Areas Act 2011 or in Mana Whakahono ā Rohe. Policies 4(a)–(c) apply to decision-makers and only policy 4(d) applies to applicants. | ENA sees that this policy is appropriate and addresses a gap in the existing NPSET. ENA supports this policy. |

| SUBPART 2: POLICIES FOR ENABLING ELECTRICITY NETWORK ACTIVITIES WHILE MANAGING ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT | | | | ENA SUBMISSION POINTS |
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| **P4 Identifying the location for EN activities and managing adverse effects through the route, site, and method selection process** | Existing Policy 4:<br>When considering the environmental effects of new transmission infrastructure or major upgrades of existing transmission infrastructure, decision-makers must have regard to the extent to which any adverse effects have been avoided, remedied or mitigated by the route, site and method selection. | Amend policy 4 as follows:<br>*1) Decision-makers must:*<br>*a) recognise that it is the role of Transpower and the EDN provider to:*<br>*i. determine the purpose, scope, required capacity, and technical solution for a proposed EN activity; and*<br>*ii. consider sites, routes, and methods where appropriate and identify the preferred site, route, and method for EN activities and assets;*<br>*b) recognise and provide for the operational need or functional need of EN activities to be in particular environments as directed by policy 2 in this National Policy Statement;*<br>*c) have regard to the extent to which any adverse effects have been avoided, remedied or mitigated by the route, site, and method selection;*<br>*d) recognise that there will be unavoidable adverse effects on some values regardless of the route, site, and method chosen.* | This amends policy 4 of the current NPS-ET.<br>The NPS-ET provides no policy direction on how to manage conflicts between EN and environmental values. This has created complexity for decision-makers, who must interpret conflicting national direction, and uncertainty for EN developers.<br>Proposed policy 4 and policy 5 in the NPS-EN provide general direction on how to manage the potential adverse effects that EN activities could have on the environment. The intent is to clarify the role of EN providers in route and method selection processes and that adverse effects on values may be unavoidable, given the bulk and scale of the EN, particularly the ET infrastructure. | ENA appreciates that this policy recognises EDBs have the technical skills and expertise to determine technical solutions, sites, routes etc. for their activities. By explicitly recognising the operational and functional needs of EN activities, the policy appropriately balances infrastructure requirements with environmental considerations. This is critical given the scale and complexity of electricity networks, where alternative routing or site options may be limited or non-existent.<br><br>The acknowledgement that some adverse effects will be unavoidable is realistic and necessary to avoid protracted disputes or overly cautious consent decisions that could unnecessarily delay vital network upgrades or maintenance. Without this, EDBs risk being held to impractical standards that do not reflect operational realities. ENA supports this policy. |
| **P5 General considerations when considering and managing the** | Existing Policy 3:<br>When considering measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects of transmission activities, | Include a new policy 5 as follows:<br>*1) When considering the environmental effects of EN activities and measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse* | This is a new policy that incorporates some of the current NPS-ET preamble and existing policy 3 into clear policy direction. | ENA sees that this policy is generally enabling and will support a wide range of EN activities. There is the potential for sub-clause (d) to be applied broadly by a consenting authority, creating debate about what standards should be |

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| **environmental effects of EN activities** | decision-makers must consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by the technical and operational requirements of the network. | *effects on the environment, decision-makers must also:*<br>*a) consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by the technical and operational requirements of the EN;*<br>*b) recognise that EN activities are needed to increase and improve the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;*<br>*c) recognise that changes in amenity from EN activities are unavoidable and necessary to achieve an effective, efficient, safe, secure, reliable, and resilient EN;*<br>*d) adopt relevant international and national standards and recognised best practice standards and methodologies to assess and manage adverse effects; and*<br>*e) consider the financial and timing implications of mitigation measures and any consent conditions to ensure these are proportionate and cost-effective.* | Read in conjunction with policy 4, proposed policy 5 provides more general direction about the management of environmental effects, ensuring that conditions are proportionate and cost-effective. It also recognises that an increase in EN activities is required and some changes in amenity values may be unavoidable. | considered. However, this degree of prescription may be unhelpful. ENA recommends an amendment to reference to 'good industry practice' and suitable wording that recognises this industry practice may, by necessity, vary depending on the local context, the nature of the distribution assets, and different approaches of EDBs where there is variation in the equipment and methods that are used.<br><br>There is considerable variation among EDBs in equipment and methods used, influenced by factors such as network age, geography, and customer density. For instance, some use overhead wooden poles while others rely on underground cables; construction methods vary from helicopter-assisted to ground crews and vegetation management ranges from manual trimming to using a tree-trimming saw suspended below a helicopter. This diversity means that referencing 'good industry practice' would allow flexibility to suit local context.<br><br>ENA also notes the proposed NPS Infrastructure includes policy direction related to providing flexibility for infrastructure providers to use new or emerging technologies and methods to improve the delivery of infrastructure services. ENA recommends that similar direction should be provided in the |

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| | | | | NPSEN. Providing flexibility for EDBs to use new and emerging technologies in the NPS-EN would enable them to improve network resilience, efficiency, and environmental outcomes without facing unnecessary regulatory barriers to innovation.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following drafting amendment:<br>1) *When considering the environmental effects of EN activities and measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment, decision-makers must also:*<br>*a) consider the constraints imposed on achieving those measures by the technical and operational requirements of the EN;*<br>*b) recognise that EN activities are needed to increase and improve the capacity and delivery of the EN over time;*<br>*c) recognise that changes in amenity from EN activities are unavoidable and necessary to achieve an effective, efficient, safe, secure, reliable, and resilient EN;*<br>*d) adopt ~~relevant international and national standards and recognised best~~ good industry practice ~~standards and methodologies~~ to assess and* |

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| | | | | *manage adverse effects as relevant to the location and nature of the distribution assets; and*<br>*e) consider the financial and timing implications of mitigation measures and any consent conditions to ensure these are proportionate and cost-effective.*<br>*f) provide flexibility for operators of the EN to use new or innovative technologies and methods to improve the delivery of electricity and/or improve environmental outcomes* |
| **P6 Enabling routine EN activities** | Existing Policy 2:<br>In achieving the purpose of this Act, decision makers must recognise and provide for the effective operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of the electricity network. | Include a new policy 6 as follows:<br>*1) Decision-makers must enable routine EN activities to occur in all locations and environments, provided adverse effects on the environment are avoided where practicable, remedied where practicable, or mitigated where practicable, acknowledging the existing nature of the assets.* | This amends policy 2 of the current NPS-ET.<br>This proposed amendment references the proposed NES-ENA works category definition and is intended to be an enabling policy that allows routine EN activities on existing infrastructure in all locations, with no threshold of adverse effects to be avoided.<br>The intent is to enable routine EN activities to occur in a timely and efficient way without restriction, while still ensuring Transpower and EDBs take appropriate steps to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects to the extent practicable using industry standards and operating procedures (eg, as directed by policy 5 above). Transpower and EDBs have well-established industry standards and operating procedures for routine | ENA considers that if the intent is to ensure EN operators are using best practice management, this should be referenced in the policy. As currently worded, the measure for assessing whether adverse effects are appropriately managed appears to rely solely on the context of the specific asset and surrounding environment, without recognising the role of industry standards and best practice approaches. Referencing best practice management in the policy gives EDBs clear, consistent benchmarks to follow, helping ensure environmental effects are managed effectively while providing certainty and flexibility tailored to the specific characteristics of their assets and local environments. |

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| | | | operation, maintenance and upgrade activities developed with input from ecologists and other environmental experts.<br><br>In some situations, this policy will need to be considered alongside a more restrictive policy in other national direction instruments, for example, provisions in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 for the coastal environment and in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management for natural inland wetlands.<br><br>We are seeking feedback on whether the direction for work on existing infrastructure in 'all environments' needs to be modified to avoid conflicts with other national direction. | **ENA recommends** the following drafting amendment:<br><br>*1) Decision-makers must enable routine EN activities to occur in all locations and environments, provided adverse effects on the environment are avoided where practicable, remedied where practicable, or mitigated where practicable, acknowledging the local context, existing nature of the assets, and the use of good industry practice.*<br><br>ENA can see that the enabling nature of the policy does have the potential to create a conflict with other national direction, in particular the NPS-FM and NZCPS. To resolve the concern noted by MfE, the approach to specified infrastructure in the NPS-FM which we understand captures the EN as a lifeline utility (as defined under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002). The NPS-FM carve out for specified infrastructure covers works in natural inland wetlands and rivers where the effects management hierarchy is required to be applied rather than a strict avoidance.<br><br>A pragmatic approach to resolve in this NPS conflict with other national direction instruments might be to amend the policy so that where the activities are located within areas protected by other national direction instruments, the 'resolution process' is prescribed in this |

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| | | | | NPS-EN. This will assist in defining the process to adopt when conflicts between this and other instruments could arise.<br><br>Providing a clear, prescribed resolution process within the NPS-EN for situations where its provisions conflict with other national direction instruments, like the NPS-FM and NZCPS, would significantly benefit EDBs because these overlaps currently create legal and procedural uncertainty. Without such guidance, EDBs face the risk of inconsistent interpretations and delays during consenting, especially in ecologically sensitive areas such as natural inland wetlands and rivers where multiple regulations apply. This uncertainty can increase project costs and timelines, complicate planning and investment decisions.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following wording:<br>*1) In locations and environments with values protected by the NZCPS or NPSFM, decision-makers must provide for routine EN activities where the activity provides significant national or regional benefit and there is a functional or operational need for the EN activity in that location through the application of the effects management hierarchy to manage the adverse effects of the activity (including cumulative effects and* |

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| | | | | *loss of potential value), by applying the following steps:*<br>*(a) give preference to avoiding activities locating within areas with the values protected by the NZCPS or NPSFM, then*<br>*(b) where it is not practicable to meet (a) because of functional need or operational need, avoid, remedy or mitigate significant adverse effects to the extent practicable.*<br>*2) Provided the steps in 1) have been undertaken and where electricity distribution or electricity transmission activities may cause adverse effects on the values protected by the NZCPS or NPS-FM, then resource consent for such activities may be sought where:*<br>*(a) the proposed work is required for the safe and efficient operation of the electricity network, and*<br>*(b) the adverse effects from the operation or development are established to be the minimum necessary to achieve the safe and efficient operation for the electricity network.* |
| **P7 EN development and non-routine activities** | Existing Policy 8:<br>In rural environments, planning and development of the transmission system should seek to avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural landscapes, areas of high natural character and areas of | Include a new policy 7 as follows:<br>*1) In rural environments, planning and development of the EN should seek to avoid adverse effects on outstanding natural landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value and amenity.* | This amends policy 8 in the current NPS-ET so that it only applies to EN development activities and non-routine EN activities (routine EN activities are covered by policy 6), to expand coverage to the EDN and remove reference to sensitive activities, which are covered in Part 3.3 of the proposed NPS-EN below. | ENA sees that there should be recognition of operational and functional need to provide consistency with the other policies. This will also assist with providing for assets within the road reserve. It is important to note that adverse effects are always in addition to the existing environment. |

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| | high recreation value and amenity and existing sensitive activities. | | The policy applies to EN development and non-routine EN activities with likely larger scale effects. The existing policy 8 in the NPS-ET, which addresses effects management on a subset of section 6 RMA values, has largely been retained for consistency. The intent is that this does not change how existing NPS-ET policy 8 is being interpreted and implemented nationally, including existing National Grid policies in lower order plans, which apply to a wider range of section 6 values than those specifically listed in the policy. This policy would continue to be read together with existing national direction (with the exception of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity for electricity transmission). | This is particularly important because some district plans apply overlays, such as Significant Natural Areas (SNAs), outstanding natural landscapes (ONLs), or historic heritage overlays over legal road, which creates compliance challenges for routine works that must occur within the road reserve. For example, under proposed Regulation R10A, new lines located within a land transport corridor are a permitted activity even where they pass through SNAs or mapped heritage areas.<br><br>However, under proposed Regulation R10B, new cabinets within a natural area or heritage overlay would require restricted discretionary consent, even if located within the legal road. This creates inconsistency between asset types and adds avoidable regulatory friction for otherwise routine activities.<br><br>We consider that our proposed amendments to Regulation R10B (as outlined in our submission on the NES-ENA) help resolve this issue. However, it is equally important that the NPS-EN policies clearly signal that the policy applies to activities outside the land transport corridor. This will reinforce the permissive intent of the regulations and reduce the risk of over-regulation through district plans. |

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| | | | | To support this clarity, we recommend the inclusion of the following definition of 'land transport corridor' within the NPS-EN. A definition is proposed to be included in the NES-ENA which we consider is appropriate.<br><br>The reference to 'amenity' also creates uncertainty as these values are typically not specifically identified in district and regional plans, and are reliant on an assessment by the planner/decision-maker and/or relevant specialists such as urban designers. ENA recommends this reference be deleted, so that the policy focusses on identified high value areas.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following amendments:<br>1) *In rural environments, planning and development of the EN in areas with outstanding natural landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value identified within the relevant plan and excluding areas within the land transport corridor should seek to avoid significant adverse effects ~~on outstanding natural landscapes, areas of high natural character, and areas of high recreation value and~~* |

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| | | | | ~~*amenity*~~ *and avoid, remedy or mitigate all other adverse effects, while recognising the operational or functional need of the EN* .<br><br>**ENA recommends** including the following definition which is proposed to be included in the NESETA/NESENA:<br>*means land within the legal boundary of any road, motorway, or railway land.*<br><br>We also consider the term 'rural environments' is likely to create uncertainty, particularly with the addition of the 'urban environment' terminology in Policy P9.<br><br>**ENA recommends** a definition is provided for this term, based on the National Planning Standards Zones:<br>*Rural environment: means a contiguous area, outside an urban environment, with one or more of the following zones from the National Planning Standards 2019, and subsequent versions (or equivalent zoning):*<br>• *General rural zone*<br>• *Rural production zone*<br>• *Rural lifestyle zone*<br>• *Settlement zone* |
| **P8 Reducing existing adverse effects of EN** | Existing Policy 6: | Include a new policy 8 as follows: | This amends policy 6 of the current NPS-ET. | To ensure this policy is not interpreted as requiring the undergrounding of existing overhead lines, **ENA** |

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| **assets when considering upgrades** | Substantial upgrades of transmission infrastructure should be used as an opportunity to reduce existing adverse effects of transmission including such effects on sensitive activities where appropriate. | 1) *Decision-makers must consider practicable opportunities and measures to reduce the existing adverse effects of EN assets when considering non-routine EN activities, taking into account the technical and operational requirements of the EN and the financial implications of any measures to reduce adverse effects.* | The proposed policy 8 is intended to support decision-makers when considering substantial upgrades on existing EN infrastructure, and would not be applied to all upgrades. It would also provide some degree of certainty to network operators on selection of their project option.<br>Existing direction on sensitive activities in NPS-ET policy 6 is now included in Part 3.3 NPS-EN. | **recommends** this policy includes clear wording that refers to "practicable opportunities and measures" and explicitly requires decision-makers to consider financial implications.<br><br>This would provide sufficient scope to demonstrate, in any given consenting scenario, that undergrounding is not appropriate or feasible. Explicitly requiring decision-makers to consider the financial feasibility of measures (e.g., undergrounding lines) ensures upgrades remain cost-effective and do not impose unreasonable economic burdens on EDBs or consumers. This balances environmental improvements with the need for affordable, reliable electricity supply.<br><br>ENA also sees benefit in greater alignment with existing NPS-ET Policy 6, which refers to "substantial upgrades". This reference has not been carried through to the current policy, likely due to the introduction of the terms "routine" and "non-routine activities". As outlined in our comments on the proposed definitions, these terms are currently too vague and risk inconsistent application across planning processes.<br><br>**ENA recommends** that the definition of "non-routine activities" be amended to include explicit reference to "substantial upgrades." This will help ensure |

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| | | | | continuity with existing national direction and reduce ambiguity around the types of works that require assessment under this policy. Given that the current policy relies on the "non-routine" definition to trigger its application, addressing this issue is essential to ensure that the policy functions as intended. |

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| **P9 EN activities within urban environments and servicing new development** | N/A | Include a new policy 9 as follows:<br>1) *Decision-makers on EN activities within urban environments must:*<br>a) *recognise that the EN forms an essential part of well-functioning urban environments that must be provided for;*<br>b) *allow for changes in amenity associated with routine EN activities;*<br>c) *recognise that it is not practicable to avoid all adverse effects of EN activities; and*<br>d) *recognise that the effective and efficient development, operation, maintenance, and upgrade of the EN may be appropriate use and development when protecting historic heritage.*<br>2) *Planning decisions within urban environments must:*<br>a) *ensure that, where development will result in an increase in demand for electricity, sufficient on-site space is provided for EDN assets to meet demand; and*<br>b) *recognise that determining whether there is sufficient on-site space for EDN assets to meet demand will require consultation with the EDN provider.* | This is a new policy.<br>Proposed policy 9 is intended to provide direction in urban environments, recognising that this is often a particular issue for EN activities to be able to expand the electricity system to meet and support existing and anticipated electricity demand. It would also guide decision-makers to consider whether new developments have appropriately considered EN activities. | ENA considers this policy is generally suitable and enabling for EN activities. It addresses a gap in the current policy framework in relation to provision of the EN in urban environments.<br><br>Clause 2(b) should be amended to include a clear threshold that triggers consultation with the electricity distribution network (EDN) provider, to ensure the provision is implemented efficiently and does not lead to unnecessary consultation for minor developments.<br><br>ENA has some concern with clause 2)b) which directs consultation with the EDN provider to ensure sufficient on-site space for EDN assets to meet demand and the need for a threshold to trigger consultation in order to efficiently manage requests for consultation. These thresholds should be determined at the local level in the plan development phase via engagement between the territorial authority and the EDB.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following additional clause be inserted in the policy after 2 b):<br>*c) engage with the EDN operator to determine an appropriate means for determining when EDN assets are required to meet that demand.*<br><br>We note the term 'well-functioning urban environments' is not proposed to be a defined term. It would aid |

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| | | | | interpretation and consistency of approach across planning documents to provide a definition based on the definition in Policy 1 of the NPS-UD.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following definition for "well-functioning urban environment" be inserted:<br>*means urban environments that, as a minimum:*<br>*(a) have or enable a variety of homes; and*<br>*(b) have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and*<br>*(c) have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and*<br>*(d) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.* |

| SUBPART 3: POLICIES FOR PROTECTION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE ELECTRICITY NETWORK | | | | |
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| **CLAUSES** | **EXISTING PROVISIONS** | **PROPOSED PROVISIONS** | **REASONS** | **ENA SUBMISSION POINTS** |
| **P10 Managing the effects of third parties on the electricity network** | Existing Policy 10:<br>In achieving the purpose of the Act, decision-makers must to the extent reasonably possible manage activities to avoid reverse sensitivity effects on the electricity transmission | Include a new policy 10 as follows:<br>1) *Decision-makers must avoid the adverse effects of third parties on the EN, including by:*<br>a) *avoiding direct and reverse sensitivity effects on the EN to the extent reasonably possible; and* | This amends and expands policy 10 and policy 11 in the current NPS-ET.<br>The intent of policy 10 is to clearly set out how third party effects on the EN are to be managed, recognising the significance of the EN. The policy includes the National Grid Yard rules, | **ENA recommends** that clause 1) be better phrased as *'Decision-makers must manage third party activities to avoid adverse effects on the EN…'*<br><br>The inclusion of reference to both direct and indirect reverse sensitivity |

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| | network and to ensure that operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of the electricity transmission network is not compromised.<br><br>Existing Policy 11:<br>Local authorities must consult with the operator of the national grid, to identify an appropriate buffer corridor within which it can be expected that sensitive activities will generally not be provided for in plans and/or given resource consent. To assist local authorities to identify these corridors, they may request the operator of the national grid to provide local authorities with its medium to long-term plans for the alteration or upgrading of each affected section of the national grid (so as to facilitate the long-term strategic planning of the grid) | *b) ensuring that the effective operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of the EN is not compromised.*<br>2) *In order to avoid the adverse effects of third parties on the EN, local authorities must:*<br>*a) identify EN assets within their district, whether or not these are designated;*<br>*b) engage with the operator of the ETN to implement the buffer corridor provided for in NES-ENA, within which it can be expected that sensitive activities, buildings, earthworks, and other activities that have the potential to compromise the EN, are to be generally avoided or controlled; and*<br>*c) engage with the operators of the EDN to identify an appropriate buffer corridor for the EDN, within which buildings, subdivision, and earthwork activities must comply with NZECP34; and*<br>*d) require buildings, structures, earthworks, and activities to avoid adverse effects on the EN, including reverse sensitivity effects, and to be designed and located to maintain safe distances from, and allow sufficient space for access to, and maintenance, construction, development, and upgrading of, EN assets;*<br>*e) manage subdivision to avoid adverse effects on the EN while providing for ongoing and efficient construction,* | National Grid Subdivision Corridor rules, and rules to protect EDN from third parties in the amended NES-ENA.<br>The option presented includes more directive policy to 'avoid' adverse effects of third parties on the EN. This protects the investment in the EN and enables it to be maximised.<br>Further considerations on this proposal are as follows.<br>• Should the direction to identify EDN assets be limited to critical assets or some threshold of asset so that all parts of the network do not need to be identified?<br>• Should the NPS-EN set out some minimum requirements on the EDN assets that must be identified (eg, 33 kV lines and above)?<br>• Should the buffer corridor provisions for ETN be extended to the high-voltage (eg, 110 kV) EDN lines owned and/or operated by EDB (note this is different from the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP compliance rules proposed in the NES-ENA). | effects provides helpful clarification on the full range of effects that must be considered, addressing a gap in the current Policy 10, which refers only to 'reverse sensitivity effects'.<br><br>However, ENA recommends that direct effects and reverse sensitivity effects be addressed in separate clauses, to better reflect their distinct nature and management responses.<br><br>Direct effects should be avoided as they present immediate effects on the network. Reverse sensitivity effects should then be avoided to the extent reasonably practicable (rather than where 'possible').<br><br>This approach maintains the benefit of the updated language, by capturing both direct and indirect effects, while ensuring clarity in how each type of effect is addressed in consenting and plan-making decisions.<br><br>The requirement in clause 2)a) for local authorities to identify EN assets is very broad as it would apply to any asset. We suspect this could be a significant exercise for councils. District plan maps already have many layers which are generally tied to specific provisions. However, there is likely to be value in mapping key assets/larger assets needing |

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| | | *operation, maintenance, development, and upgrade of the EN;*<br>*f) ensure the nature and location of any proposed trees or vegetation to be planted around the EN does not compromise its function and operation.* | | protection from third party activities, as suggested in MfE's comments here i.e. 33kV lines or higher, substations etc.<br><br>There is variation across EDBs in terms of the data that is available and able to be included in district plans. This variation is due to differences in network age, data systems, and resourcing, with some still transitioning from legacy records or lacking precise asset location data. Smaller or rural EDBs may also have limited capacity to support detailed mapping for planning purposes. However, many EDBs are actively working to improve the quality and accessibility of their data, including making it more compatible with third-party systems. Therefore, ENA recommends an amendment to clause 2)a) to enable EDBs to determine what assets are mapped.<br><br>ENA is not seeking the application of buffer corridor provisions to electricity distribution networks EDNs given the early stage of development of corridor identification and associated spatial tools for the distribution sector. However, this remains a relevant future consideration. ENA considers buffer corridors a useful tool to support the long-term planning and protection of |

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| | | | | EDNs, and considers this be explored further in Phase 3 of resource management reform.<br><br>**ENA recommends** the following amendments and additions in relation to this policy:<br>*1) ~~Decision-makers must avoid the adverse effects of third parties on the EN~~ Decision-makers must manage third party activities to avoid adverse effects on the EN, including by:*<br>*a) avoiding direct effects on the EN, and*<br>*b) avoiding reverse sensitivity effects on the EN to the extent reasonably ~~possible~~ practicable; and*<br>*c) ensuring that the effective operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of the EN is not compromised.*<br>*2) In order to avoid the adverse effects of third parties on the EN, local authorities must:*<br>*a) engage with the EDN provider to identify EN assets within their district, whether or not these are designated;*<br>*b) engage with the operator of the ETN to implement the buffer corridor provided for in NES-ENA, within* |

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| | | | | *which it can be expected that sensitive activities, buildings, earthworks, and other activities that have the potential to compromise the EN, are to be generally avoided; and*<br>*c) engage with the operators of the EDN to identify an appropriate buffer corridor for the EDN, within which buildings, subdivision, and earthwork activities must comply with NZECP34; and*<br>*d) require buildings, structures, earthworks, and activities to avoid adverse effects on the EN, including reverse sensitivity effects, and to be designed and located to maintain safe distances from, and allow sufficient space for access to, and maintenance, construction, development, and upgrading of, EN assets;*<br>*e) manage subdivision to avoid adverse effects on the EN while providing for ongoing and efficient construction, operation, maintenance, development, and upgrade of the EN;* |

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| | | | | *f) ensure the nature and location of any proposed trees or vegetation to be planted around the EN does not compromise its function and operation.* |
| **P11 Long-term strategic planning for the EN** | Existing Policy 12:<br>Territorial authorities must identify the electricity transmission network on their relevant planning maps whether or not the network is designated.<br><br>Existing Policy 13:<br>Decision-makers must recognise that the designation process can facilitate long-term planning for the development, operation and maintenance of electricity transmission infrastructure.<br><br>Existing Policy 14:<br>Regional councils must include objectives, policies and methods to facilitate long-term planning for investment in transmission infrastructure and its integration with land uses. | Include a new policy 11 as follows:<br>*1) Local authorities must:*<br>*a) engage with the operators of the EN to facilitate the medium to long-term strategic planning for the construction, operation, maintenance, and upgrade of the EN; and*<br>*b) recognise that the designation process can facilitate long-term planning for construction, operation, maintenance, and upgrade and development of the EN.* | This amends policies 12, 13 and 14 of the existing NPS-ET. This policy seeks to ensure future development strategies and other spatial planning documents consider the potential for bulk electricity distribution infrastructure, particularly in existing urban areas identified for medium to high intensity development. This reflects the difficulty of the sector to find appropriate sites in rapidly intensifying urban areas and that electricity supply is crucial to redevelopment. Application of this policy could include proactive engagement by urban regeneration agencies (such as Eke Panuku Development Auckland), facilitating land availability (via commercial agreement) where large areas are being redeveloped in bulk. | This policy supports future planning for the EN and integration of the EN strategic planning with wider strategic planning exercises undertaken by local authorities. ENA is supportive of the directive nature of this policy in that it ensures EN operators have a seat at the table when strategic planning is undertaken. This is something that is currently inconsistent depending on the local authority.<br><br>We note the proposed NPS Infrastructure includes policy direction to consider 'relevant spatial plans and master plans prepared by the infrastructure provider' (Policy P3).<br><br>**ENA recommends** the inclusion of similar wording in Policy 11 here, as follows:<br>*c) consider relevant asset management plans, spatial plans, and master plans prepared by the operators of the EN* |

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| **P12 Electric and magnetic fields** | Existing Policy 9:<br><br>Provisions dealing with electric and magnetic fields associated with the electricity transmission network must be based on the International Commission on Non-ioninsing Radiation Protection *Guidelines for limiting exposure to time varying electric magnetic fields (up to 300 GHz)* (Health Physics, 1998, 74(4): 494-522) and recommendations from the World Health Organisation monograph *Environment Health Criteria* (No 238, June 2007) or revisions thereof and any applicable New Zealand standards or national environmental standards. | Include a new policy 12 as follows:<br><br>1) *Local authorities must include provisions in their district plans to manage electric or magnetic fields associated with the EN that are based on recommendations from the World Health Organization monograph Environmental Health Criteria (No 238, Extremely low frequency fields) and International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection 'Guidelines for limiting exposure to time-varying electric and magnetic fields (1 Hz to 100 kHz)' (*Health Physics *99(6): 818–836; 2010) (ICNIRP Guidelines) or their revisions, or any other applicable New Zealand standards.* | This amends policy 9 of the NPS-ET, which references outdated 1998 ICNIRP Guidelines and is inconsistent with NES-ETA. The 2010 ICNIRP Guidelines are the most current international recommendations for managing electric and magnetic fields.<br><br>The ICNIRP establishes limits for public exposures to electric and magnetic fields based on the health science. The World Health Organization recommendations are to take low-cost measures to limit exposures to electric and magnetic fields when constructing new facilities or making changes to existing sources of the fields. This approach is also supported by the Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand**.** | This change updates the existing policy to reflect updates to the ICNIRP Guidelines. ENA supports this policy. |

# 4. Appendix A

Electricity Networks Aotearoa makes this submission along with the support of its members, listed below.

- Alpine Energy
- Aurora Energy
- Buller Electricity
- Centralines
- Counties Energy
- Firstlight Network
- Electra
- EA Networks
- Horizon Networks
- Mainpower
- Marlborough Lines
- Nelson Electricity
- Network Tasman
- Network Waitaki
- Northpower
- Orion New Zealand
- Powerco
- PowerNet ( which manages The Power Company, Electricity Invercargill, OtagoNet and Lakeland Network)
- Scanpower
- Top Energy
- The Lines Company
- Unison Networks
- Vector
- Waipa Networks
- WEL Networks
- Wellington Electricity
- Westpower