

18 Minerals

18.1 Significant Issues

Mineral extraction can have adverse effects on the environment and can be constrained by conflicting land uses.

18.2 Overview

The management of mineral resources is divided between several pieces of legislation. Access to Crown-owned minerals is legislated under the Crown Minerals Act 1991, but the mining activity itself is managed under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Minerals are expressly excluded from 'sustainability' in section 5(2)(a) of the Resource Management Act 1991, in terms of sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the needs of future generations. However, by being included in section (2)(c), minerals are included in 'sustainability' as it applies to avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment. To this extent, the activity of exploration, quarrying, mining and any other disturbance of land would be covered by the Resource Management Act 1991, and can therefore be addressed and regulated in District plans.

The Whangarei District contains mineral deposits that may be of considerable social and economic importance to the District, and the nation generally, but that could be constrained by conflicting land uses. Mineral development, and associated land restoration, can provide an opportunity to enhance the land resource and landscape, and has done so in the past. However, the development of mineral resources has the potential to have significant adverse effects upon soil, water and air resources, and landscape heritage values, if not appropriately controlled.

18.3 Objectives

18.3.1

Exploration, extraction and processing of minerals occurs in a manner that avoids, remedies or mitigates any adverse effects on the environment and community, and on the relationship of tangata whenua with their ancestral lands, sites, water, waahi tapu and other taonga.

Explanation and Reasons: There is potential for the adverse effects of mineral extraction to impact on the well-being of people and communities, unless the effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

18.3.2

Subdivision, use and development of land should not compromise existing safe and efficient mineral extraction, or unduly constrain potential access to, and the development of, identified significant mineral resources.

Explanation and reasons: While the adverse effects of mineral extraction must be avoided, remedied or mitigated, it is also appropriate to ensure that activities that are sensitive to the effects of mineral extraction, such as housing, are not sited so as to prevent the managed extraction of mineral resources.

18.4 Policies

18.4.1 Adverse Effects

To avoid, remedy or mitigate to the extent practical, the adverse effects of mineral extraction on the ecological, landscape, heritage and amenity values of surrounding areas and on the amenity values of existing residential areas.

Explanation and Reasons: Possible effects of mining and exploration activities include noise, dust and air emissions, natural hazards, land subsidence, erosion and sedimentation, traffic, visual impact and hazardous substance storage. Some receiving environments, such as those in residential areas, are especially vulnerable to such effects. Conflicts with other land uses can be minimised by managing the effects of mineral extraction (for example, setting standards for noise and dust).

18.4.2 Incompatible Activities

To manage conflicts between the effects of mineral extraction activities and other land uses by ensuring that activities that are incompatible with the effects of mineral extraction activities are not established close to quarries or mines.

Explanation and Reasons: The previous policy provides for managing the effects of mineral extraction by performance standards. This policy provides for conflict prevention and management by keeping separated activities that are inherently incompatible, for example, residential activities and mineral extraction. It is recognised in this policy that mining must locate at the point that minerals occur, and therefore there is no location flexibility. Competing land use activities can have the effect of making a mineral resource unattainable.

18.4.3 Rehabilitation

To rehabilitate sites used for mineral exploration and extraction.

Explanation and Reasons: Rehabilitation of a site following exploration and mining activity helps to minimise potential adverse effects upon the environment (including ongoing visual effects) and to make the land available for other uses. To be most effective, it should occur sequentially with the mining operations. Rehabilitation can take numerous forms. The purpose is to restore the land to an alternative and useful purpose. For example, a former quarry could become a farm plantation or a recreational lake or indigenous wetland.

18.5 Methods

18.5.1 Regulatory Methods

- Environment rules relating to mineral extraction and effects of mining and exploration activities (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).

- Identification of Mineral Extraction Areas on the Planning Maps and the requirement to apply for a Plan Change to classify new areas of land as Mineral Extraction Areas (including extensions to existing Mineral Extraction Areas) (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Resource area rules, within such Mineral Extraction Areas, including providing and operating in accordance with a Mineral Extraction Management Plan (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Resource Area rules relating to earthworks (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Resource consent conditions (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Archaeological site surveys and/or an assessment of environmental effects by an appropriately qualified person, where activities may potentially lead to adverse effects on archaeological sites (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).

18.5.2 Other Plans and Legislation

- The Regional Policy Statement for Northland and Northland Regional Plans (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Iwi/Hapu Environmental Management Plans (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).

18.5.3 Information, Education and Advocacy

- Liaison with the Northland Regional Council (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).
- Liaison with other organisations involved in resource management, such as the Department of Conservation, New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero and industry and interest groups (Policies 18.4.1 to 18.4.3).

18.6 Anticipated Environmental Results

The following results are expected to be achieved by the foregoing Objectives, Policies and Methods. The means of monitoring whether the Plan achieves the expected outcomes are set out in the Whangarei District Council Monitoring Strategy.

- The efficient and safe extraction and processing of mineral resources for the economic benefit of the District.
- Adverse effects of mineral extraction and processing on natural, cultural and historic heritage are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- Effects of mineral extraction and processing on surrounding amenity values are controlled to a level compatible with the characteristic amenity values of the surrounding Environment.
- The extraction and processing of mineral resources is not hindered by future land use and development, particularly in Mineral Extraction Areas.

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