



**Embargoed until 6.00 pm Wednesday 11 December 2019**

## **Media release**

### **EDS proposes transformational Resource Management Reform**

The Minister for the Environment, Hon David Parker, has this evening launched EDS's final report on its Resource Management Law Reform Project at a function in Wellington. The project took a first-principles look at how New Zealand's resource management system could be improved.

The earlier phase of the project outlined three potential models for a future system. The phase 2 report now presents a proposed model for change, and steps to get there.

"We have now reached a point where environmental and resource management law reform needs to be about more than just further tinkering with the Resource Management Act" said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

"Instead we need to be thinking about a much wider range of laws, institutions, processes and financial and behavioural incentives. The importance of that bigger picture view is what the project seeks to highlight."

"This report looks at the different legislative frameworks that could form the core of a future system," continued senior researcher Dr Greg Severinsen.

"It starts with the Resource Management Act – whether or not it should be split, how its purpose and principles could be approached differently, and how central and local government planning and processes could be revised. It proposes keeping an integrated RMA – with significant changes and perhaps even renamed – as remaining at the heart of a future system that protects the environment and supports wellbeing.

"But the RMA isn't everything. The report also explores reforming oceans management, embedding climate change considerations in the system, and changes to urban and infrastructure development. It also proposes of an overarching piece of legislation under which we would deploy strategic and spatial planning. That would be crucial to manage urban growth pressures."

"Furthermore, we emphasise that reform needs to look beyond just legislation, and consider underlying funding and institutional arrangements. The system needs to be more future focused and strategic, and less siloed. It needs to be more agile. The report proposes the creation of an independent Futures Commission to provide independent oversight and future focus, so we anticipate needs instead of simply reacting to them.

"We are encouraged by the government's establishment, earlier this year, of an independent resource management system review panel. The panel, which includes EDS's policy director Raewyn Peart, is due to report back in mid-2020.

"We hope that the EDS report will assist the panel in its deliberations and look forward to an ongoing conversation about this important topic," concluded Dr Severinsen.

The project has been supported by the New Zealand Law Foundation, the Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation, the Employers & Manufacturers Association (Northern), Property Council New Zealand, Infrastructure New Zealand and Watercare. Further work focusing on urban issues and oceans reform will follow in 2020.

The report was launched at a function at Bell Gully, Wellington.

For more information on the project, and to download the report and working papers, see [RM Reform Project](#).

To view the summary version of the latest report, click [here](#).