



Newsletter 9 – August '08

RASNZ Dark Skies Group



Welcome

Welcome to the ninth newsletter of the Dark Skies Group of the RASNZ.

Important Opportunity:

There is a very important opportunity for you to make your DarkSkies opinions known to New Zealand's policy makers.

The Ministry for the Environment is currently seeking input into the scope of a National Policy Statement on Urban Design.

New Zealand is a highly urbanised nation with around 87 percent (over 3 million) of our population living in towns and cities. The design of these places affects almost every aspect of our lives. To ensure we maintain healthy and sustainable lifestyles emphasis needs to be placed on creating towns and cities that meet people needs and aspirations, today and in the future.

Please help us all make a difference to the way our night environment is valued and protected. Follow the links in the passage below to download a background paper that explains the proposed National Policy Statement.

A [National Policy Statement on Urban Design](#) is to be developed by the [Ministry for the Environment](#).

It follows publication by the Ministry in 2005 of the [NZ Urban Design Protocol](#) and a research paper, [The Value of Urban Design: The economic, environmental and social benefits of urban design](#), which identified and summarised international and local evidence on the relationship between urban design and social/cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.

MfE is now seeking submissions on -

- The scope of the NPS, including issues, objectives and policies that should or should not be considered
- Alternatives to improve the quality of design in towns and cities,
- The direction of the NPS, including the level of direction and detail that could be included in a national policy statement
- The scale, identifying the spatial scale that objectives and policies might be

pitched at (e.g., regional, city, neighbourhood)

- Any risks and consequences of acting or not acting.

The MfE invite you to comment on anything else that you consider to be relevant.

Submissions close on 30 September.

Contact: Greg Vossler - 04 439 7400;
greg.vossler@mfe.govt.nz.

Related Links

The following links may help you when writing your submission.

Ecology:

<http://www.lifeshearwaterproject.org.nz/uploads/items/117.pdf>

<http://www.urbanwildlands.org/ecanbook.html>

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/FNR/FNR-FAQ-17.pdf>

Health:

<http://jnci.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/93/20/1563>

<http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/msnbc/sections/TVNews/Today%20show/PDF/PV0106LITE.pdf>

<http://data.nextrionet.com/site/idsa/breastcancersteven.s.pdf>

<http://www.homer Glen.org/Environment/Lighting/BreatCancerAndLightPollution.pdf>

<http://www.israelrsa.org.il/meeting/Cancer%20incidence.ppt>

Urban Design:

http://www.toronto.ca/lightout/pdf/development_guidelines.pdf

http://www.qldc.govt.nz/Documents/ContentDocuments/parks_and_reserves/Southern%20Light%20-%20Lighting%20Strategy.pdf

International Leadership:

<http://www.starlight2007.net/pdf/StarlightDeclarationEN.pdf>

http://www.iau.org/public_press/themes/light_pollution/

<http://www.astronomy2009.org/cornerstone-projects-mainmenu-80/dark-skies-awareness-mainmenu-87.html>

Energy Efficiency:

<http://www.electricitycommission.govt.nz/pdfs/advisorygroups/pjtteam/LESG/ELS.pdf>

http://www.iea.org/Textbase/publications/free_new_De.sc.asp?PUBS_ID=1695

<http://www.eup4light.net/assets/pdffiles/Final/VITOEuPStreetLightingFinal.pdf>

My feeling is that while we should be highlighting our use of the night environment and how lighting interferes with that, further impacts of artificial lighting can be included. Relate how the sky has changed over the last decade, how you need to travel to dark sky sites, and how you can't see the stars as you introduce urban people to the night sky.

The RASNZ are signatories to the NZ Urban Design Protocol mentioned above. One of the seven key urban design qualities described is "Custodianship"

"Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure, and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as good or better condition. Stewardship of our towns includes the concept of kaitiakitanga. It creates enjoyable, safe public spaces, a quality environment that is cared for, and a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors.

Quality urban design:

- **protects landscapes, ecological systems and cultural heritage values**
- **manages the use of resources carefully, through environmentally responsive and sustainable design solutions**
- manages land wisely
- utilises 'green' technology in the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure

- incorporates renewable energy sources and passive solar gain
- creates buildings, spaces, places and transport networks that are safer, with less crime and fear of crime
- **avoids or mitigates the effects of natural and man-made hazards**
- considers the ongoing care and maintenance of buildings, spaces, places and networks
- **uses design to improve the environmental performance of infrastructure**
- **considers the impact of design on people's health."**

We need to call for improved lighting design and application.

I am more than happy to help you with your submissions and would appreciate a copy for my records and interest.

Submissions close on 30 September.

Contact: Greg Vossler - 04 439 7400; greg.vossler@mfe.govt.nz. or send to: Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143

Thank you for helping.

Best regards,

Steve Butler
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<http://rasnz.org.nz/darkskies/>



Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand
Signatory to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol
Supporter of the International Dark-Sky Association

