

TOPIC – Amenity Values	TRMP Chapter 5
<b>ISSUES</b>	
<p>Chapter 5 is concerned with maintaining and enhancing amenity values. Amenity values are the natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes. The content in this chapter is wide-ranging and eclectic.</p> <p>The chapter includes policies on (a) site amenity (e.g. privacy &amp; sunlight); (b) discharges (e.g. wastewater, noise, dust, odour); (c) shelterbelts and boundary plantings; (d) coastal values; (e) convenience and amenity in commercial areas; (f) natural and heritage features; (g) signs; (h) aesthetic character of special localities; (i) urban rural interface; (j) community activities in residential locations; and (k) fire and hazardous substances.</p> <p>Generally, amenity values in Tasman are reasonably well protected. However, the following issues and outcomes should be noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The TRMP has good rules for the control of noise, but there is a large gap in the policies that guide resource consent decision-making on noise issues.</li> <li>2. Boundary plantings (whether shelter-belts or amenity plantings) are an issue that causes conflict between neighbours.</li> <li>3. Signs are a highly visible activity. The policies work well, but there is a substantial history of complaints and disputes. Policies are relatively permissive at present, but with increasing population and commercial activity signage will increase.</li> <li>4. There is one set of provisions to “<i>maintain and enhance the visual and aesthetic character of localities</i>”. In other words, to improve the special look and feel of certain places in Tasman. However, these places are not identified and there are no rules to achieve these outcomes, making the outcome difficult to achieve. In fact, many of the policies in this section are a “grab-bag” of matters from rural and urban environments.</li> <li>5. The existing policy that supports community activities (health care, child care etc) in residential areas is appropriate and should be retained.</li> <li>6. Health and safety policies are –variously – incomplete, dated and obsolete.</li> </ol> <p>There are also structural difficulties. In practice the policies of Chapter 5 are often regarded as awkward add-on provisions – difficult to assess and enforce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. The content overlaps with other chapters (e.g. urban, rural, coastal). This has resulted in significant &amp; unnecessary repetition of policies across the TRMP.</li> <li>8. Because Chapter 5 provisions apply broadly across the district, they are worded in a very general and non-specific way. Sometimes this is appropriate, but in many cases they are unhelpful and do not contribute much to planning or decision making processes.</li> </ol>	
<b>MANDATORY STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS</b>	
<p>Section 7(c) of the RMA requires that particular regard shall be had to amenity values when undertaking the Act’s functions or making decisions. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement includes the protection of amenity values in several policies.</p> <p>Until 2017, the functions of regional councils included “the prevention or mitigation of any adverse effects of the storage, use [etc] of hazardous substances”. An amendment to the Act removed these functions as they overlapped with the HSNO Act. It is now optional to include provisions for hazardous substances.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain the important amenity outcomes that are valued by the community, and at the same time improve the focus of the provisions specifically in urban, rural, commercial, industrial etc locations.</li> <li>2. Policies that deal with cross-boundary amenity effects (e.g. shading, discharges etc) are generally appropriate and should be retained, noting they will be relocated and integrated into the new structure.</li> <li>3. Develop a comprehensive policy framework for addressing the effects of noise to provide decision-making guidance.</li> <li>4. Review the policies and rules that relate to boundary plantings and the effect they have on amenity values.</li> <li>5. Reconsider the permissiveness of signage policy. The policy settings (particularly in residential and rural areas) should be tested with the community.</li> <li>6. Replace “<i>visual and aesthetic character</i>” provisions with provisions that identify the character of localities, and support either retention or change (as appropriate) of that character.</li> <li>7. The policies that deal with residential activities and community facilities are appropriate, but should be relocated and integrated with the urban policies.</li> <li>8. Comprehensively review health and safety provisions and integrate as appropriate into other chapters.</li> <li>9. Obtain legal and technical advice as to what hazardous substance policies and rules should / should not be included in regional plans.</li> </ol>	

