

What is an assessment of environmental effects (AEE)?

An AEE is a report that explains the effects a proposed activity might have on neighbours and/or the wider environment. If an AEE is not provided, Council cannot assess the application.

The amount of detail provided must reflect the scale and nature of the effects. For a small development, such as building a garage within a required setback from a side boundary, only a short and less detailed AEE is necessary. In comparison, a subdivision which has a 'discretionary' or 'non-complying' activity status will require a more detailed AEE.

Your AEE must describe all ways that your proposal may affect neighbouring properties and the surrounding area. Effects can be positive or negative and may include:

- visual effects
- noise
- shading of properties
- reductions in privacy
- increased traffic
- traffic safety effects
- effects on neighbourhood character
- effects on plants or animals
- any risk to neighbouring areas, the wider community or the environment arising from natural hazards or the use of hazardous substances

The environment is very broadly defined in the Resource Management Act 1991; it includes air, land, water, ecosystems, people and communities.

How do I prepare an AEE?

1. The Taupō District Plan includes 'assessment criteria', which are lists of matters which must be considered in relation to each planning rule or standard in the Plan. Look at the assessment criteria relating to the standard or rule which your proposal cannot comply with – they will help you to identify the type of effects that should be considered when preparing your AEE.
2. Accurately describe the site and its surroundings. Include a description of all buildings, what activities occur on the site, the slope of the ground, existing vegetation, and any other features such as easements, covenants, protected trees etc.
3. Detail how water, wastewater and stormwater services will be connected to future houses and describe how vehicle access will be provided for.
4. Assess any actual or potential environmental effects of the activity. Include both positive and negative effects. You will need to describe any effects on neighbours and the surrounding area – will your proposal reduce neighbours privacy or outlook? Will it shade neighbouring properties? Will it result in any effects on traffic safety or efficiency? How does it affect neighbouring character? Will traffic safety or movement be changed?
5. Identify how you propose to mitigate (reduce or lessen) these effects. For example, if earthworks are proposed, detail how you will control sediment to avoid runoff to other properties or Council drains.
6. Identify who may be affected by the proposal. State where written approval of neighbours has been provided and outline any consultation that has been undertaken (whether or not written approval was given).

If you are uncertain about what to do, please ask for assistance from Council's duty planner or engage a consultant to prepare an AEE for you.