



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

2024/25 Estimates Debate

**Fact sheets to support Ministers' participation in
the Vote Environment Estimates Debate on 18
September**

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for RMA Reform

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

Hon Andrew Hoggard
Associate Minister for the Environment

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Multiple portfolios

Refreshing the Ministry's strategic framework

Responsible Minister	<p>Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Simon Watts, Minister for Climate Change Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment</p>
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is well underway in refreshing its strategic framework to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ better reflect the priorities of this Government ○ align with our new operating model, which prioritises our focus on being a strategy-led and evidence-informed organisation ○ inform sharper prioritisation and decision-making about the work programme and future capability as a result of our fiscal constraints. • As part of this refresh, the Ministry has focused down and reframed its strategic priorities from seven outcome areas to the four key systems that fall within its core remit. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource management ○ Climate mitigation ○ Climate adaptation ○ Waste. • The refresh also introduces priorities for how the Ministry will operate, aligned to its new operating model, which brings together strategy, planning, and performance functions under one business group. These priorities include focusing on activities that will have the greatest impact, providing evidence-led advice, and supporting partners, communities and stakeholders to act. This will bring a greater focus on performance monitoring and continuous improvement.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry's current Strategic Intentions 2023-27 reflects the previous Government's policy priorities and needs to be updated as soon as practicable under Treasury's guidelines • Back-office project and programme support for delivery will reduce by approximately 35% to align with fiscal savings imperatives. New ways of working are being introduced to balance the impact of reductions.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry intends to publish a new Strategic Intentions document by the end of 2024, which will be tabled in the House shortly after. • In parallel, it is developing its first Performance Plan for Vote Environment (due 7 November). This will include identifying key impact areas, current performance, and how it plans to improve performance. • In 2025, the Ministry will continue to implement a strategy-led approach throughout its work to enable well-informed and disciplined prioritisation and resource allocation decisions through our planning and performance processes (e.g. quarterly performance and planning). As part of this, the Ministry will also undertake work to develop a detailed performance framework to measure progress against stated outcomes and targeted areas for improvement.
Responsible manager	<p>Adie Gray, General Manager – Strategy</p>

Future reductions in the Ministry's budget from 2023/24 to 2027/28

Responsible Minister	<p>Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform</p> <p>Hon Simon Watts, Minister for Climate Change</p> <p>Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment</p> <p>Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment</p>
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/24 was always the Ministry's departmental funding peak (\$244m). Prior to the change of Government, the Ministry was preparing for the baseline to reduce as time-limited funding expired and the new RM system bedded in. • The Ministry is committed to supporting the Government's priorities and fiscal responsibility programme. The decisions taken through the 2023 Mini Budget and Budget 24 have delivered total net savings for the Crown from Vote Environment of \$617.8m over four years (2024/25 to 2027/28) – 21 percent of the eligible baseline. This includes new funding provided for the Government's resource management reforms. • When broken down by portfolio this equates to the following savings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment: – \$323.1m ○ Resource Management: – \$209.4m ○ Climate Change: – \$85.4m. • As a result, total departmental funding declines by 39 percent by 2027/28 (from our 2023/24 peak), and non-departmental funding (Crown, excluding ETS) falls 59 percent. • The Ministry has already put in place measures to reduce spending and guide the Ministry towards becoming a smaller and more efficient organisation and is going through a change process to restructure the workforce to align with new budget and priorities. The new structure will take effect from 1 November 2024. • Funding continues to be available so the Ministry can provide advice and services to deliver on the Government's priorities and our stewardship responsibilities in resource management, climate change, waste, freshwater and other areas.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry's reducing baseline requires significant reprioritisation, which affects the work programme and staffing levels. These reductions are in the areas of back-office functions, evidence and data, partnerships and engagement, climate change, resource management implementation, freshwater and waste. There is also a reduction in third-party funding for community, freshwater, climate and environment groups. • Over the last 18 months the Ministry has been taking steps to become a smaller more fit-for-purpose organisation. In December 2023, the Ministry introduced a new operating model to ensure it has the capability needed to deliver on the Government's priorities and stewardship responsibilities. The scale of downsizing resulting from the 2023 Mini Budget and Budget 24 decisions has amplified the challenges the Ministry is facing. • The Ministry has agreed its 2024/25 business plan with Ministers, which sets out the work programme, including the statutory responsibilities and international reporting obligations that must be resourced and delivered, as well as showing what work will be deprioritised because of reduced funding.

- The Ministry is undergoing a change process that has impacts on the number and types of roles and on organisational structure. The scale of change during this June to November 2024 period is significant and the change process itself is resource intensive as the Ministry transitions to a much smaller organisation.
- While the reductions in funding are substantial, significant funding remains so the Ministry can deliver on the Government's priorities in resource management, climate change, waste, freshwater and other areas.

What next?

- The Ministry's business plan will continue to be refreshed on a quarterly basis.
- The new structure with a much smaller workforce will be in place by 1 November 2024.
- The Ministry is working with Ministers to develop the Vote Environment Performance Plan which will set out how the Ministry and its crown entities will manage within their baselines over the medium term. We will contribute to any additional fiscal sustainability requirements ahead of Budget 25.

The evidence:

Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured

Vote Environment savings Budget 2024 summary

Budget 24 breakdown for Vote (as per Treasury documentation):

	Budget 2024 Operating Average (\$m)	Operating Total (\$m)	Capital Total (\$m)
Budget breakdown for Vote			
Cost pressures and cost escalations			
Government commitments	23.059	92.235	-
Savings and revenue	(102.116)	(408.465)	-
Total	(79.058)	(316.230)	-

Budget 24 total net savings for the Crown from Vote Environment is \$316.2m over four years or 12 percent of the Ministry's eligible baseline. This includes:

- 7.5 percent savings from the eligible baseline (\$196.4m)
- Additional targeted savings from expanding the scope of the waste levy (\$177.8m)
- Additional savings from the return of the tagged contingency for ETS Market Governance work (\$34.3 million)
- Offset by an additional \$92.2 million to fund work on RM replacement.

Combined Budget 2024 and 2023 Mini Budget MfE impact summary:

When the Mini Budget is included, total net savings for the Crown from Vote Environment (since December 2023) is \$617.8m over four years or 21 percent of the eligible baseline. This comprises:

- 2023 Mini Budget savings: \$301.6 million was returned for the implementation of the previous government's resource management reforms that are no longer going ahead
- 7.5 percent savings from the eligible baseline (\$196.4m)
- additional targeted savings from expanding the scope of the waste levy (\$177.8m)

- additional savings from the return of the tagged contingency for ETS Market Governance work (\$34.3 million)
- offset by an additional \$92.2 million to fund work on RM replacement.

Vote Environment 2017/18 to 2027/28

- The table below shows Vote Environment Operating Expenditure between 2017/18 and 2027/28 (actual and forecast). Source is BEFU 2024. Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) non-cash-related appropriations are excluded due to their size and the fact these are outside the control of the Ministry.

\$m	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	2026/ 27	2027/ 28
Departmental output appropriations	68.1	72.1	91.7	118.7	166.4	222.0	244.2	184.3	157.5	155.0	149.3
Non-departmental appropriations (Crown excl ETS)*	59.3	57.0	76.0	117.1	127.2	142.6	159.4	145.6	71.0	60.5	65.3
Non-departmental appropriations (Third-party funded)	30.1	34.0	30.4	28.8	46.3	65.2	146.3	347.2	393.5	406.4	442.9
Total appropriations (excl ETS)	157.5	163.0	198.1	264.7	339.8	429.7	549.9	677.1	622.0	621.9	657.4

- The Ministry's funding was smaller in 2017/18 because it performed fewer functions, had a smaller work programme, and due to the effects of inflation.
- Departmental funding peaks at \$244.2m in 2023/24. The Ministry's baseline will decline by 39 percent by 2027/28, due to the end of time-limited funding, and net savings from Budget 2024 and the 2023 Mini Budget.
- Non-departmental funding (Crown, excluding ETS) falls 59 percent from 2023/24 to 2027/28. This is mainly due to the time-limited funding for freshwater initiatives coming to an end (linked to the Jobs for Nature Programme), and B24 reductions in funding for crown entities and communities (for example, the closure of the Environmental Legal Assistance Fund and the Community Environment Fund).

- Non-departmental funding (third-party funded) increases by 203%. The waste disposal levy and product stewardship were already forecast to grow as scheduled increases to levy rates were implemented and the Tyrewise scheme came online. Waste levy forecasts have grown further following additional levy rate increases made by Budget 24 legislation, which also expanded the scope of the waste levy so it can fund a broader range of activities including some previously funded by the Crown. This enables these activities to continue whilst offsetting some existing expenditure within Vote Environment, thereby creating net savings for the Crown.

Impact of funding decline on environmental outcomes

- The Ministry recognises there are a range of ways to achieve environmental outcomes. It is our role to advise Ministers on options and what can be delivered within the funding available.
- The Ministry is working to deliver the Government’s priorities including renewable energy, climate adaptation, fast-track consenting, and RMA reform. We continue to talk to Ministers about their priorities and what this means for how the Ministry reprioritises the work programme to deliver with the resources available.
- The Ministry aims to continue to enable communities, councils and Iwi / Māori to take action that achieves real outcomes on the ground.

Appropriations view

Funding can be broken out into Environment and Climate Change appropriations.

Environment appropriations:

\$m	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	2026/ 27	2027/ 28
Departmental output appropriations	51.7	47.9	63.8	93.7	137.6	171.6	186.1	131.3	103.8	100.2	97.2
Non-departmental appropriations (excl ETS)*	82.6	84.1	96.0	129.3	154.0	184.8	278.8	461.7	432.9	445.2	486.5
Total appropriations (excl ETS)	134.3	132.1	159.8	223.1	291.6	356.4	464.9	593.0	536.7	545.4	583.7

Climate appropriations:

\$m	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	2026/ 27	2027/ 28
Departmental output appropriations	16.5	24.1	27.8	25.0	28.8	50.4	58.1	52.9	53.7	54.8	52.0
Non-departmental appropriations (excl ETS)*	6.8	6.9	10.5	16.7	19.5	23.0	26.9	31.2	31.6	21.6	21.6
Total appropriations (excl ETS)	23.3	31.0	38.3	41.7	48.2	73.4	85.0	84.1	85.3	76.4	73.7

*Items excluded are ETS non-cash appropriation

Budget / Mini Budget savings by portfolio

Environment portfolio

Portfolio Budget 24 savings (no Mini Budget implications) were **\$323.1m over four years:**

The savings package includes reductions in funding for the Ministry's work programmes (funded by departmental appropriations in Vote Environment) and third-party funding. These include:

- Back-office functions and services (-\$22.3m) – including reduced spending on contractors / consultants, and services relating to ICT, accommodation, business and administrative support, programme and project management, legal, risk and assurance, finance, people and capability, executive support, and procurement. This also includes reduced funding for staff travel, and learning and development. These savings span the climate and environment appropriations.
- Waste minimisation savings (-\$9.7m). This includes a reduction in non-levy funding for waste minimisation activities.
- Waste levy-related savings (-\$220m). This enables savings to the Crown by reallocating waste disposal levy revenue so it can be used for a wider range of waste and environmental activities, including the Ministry's work. This provides an alternative source of funding for the Ministry's waste and hazardous substances work, enabling it to continue.
- Evidence and data (-\$9.7m). Savings achieved by reducing spending on consultants, external agencies, and external and internal specialists that supply a range of evidence and data services, including updates to environmental standards, monitoring, reporting, policy work, and science assurance. These savings span the climate and environment appropriations.
- Freshwater (-\$23.6m). This sees funding reduced for freshwater work programmes including for the Jobs for Nature Secretariat and freshwater investment and funding for third parties.

- Partnerships and engagement (-\$37.8m). Funding and capacity is reduced for communication, engagement and partnership activities and funding for third parties. These savings span the climate and environment appropriations.
- Environmental Protection Authority (no savings). No savings were sought from the EPA to contribute to the overall fiscal savings target, as the agency has been operating a deficit since 2017/18, which is no longer sustainable. A 'break even' budget is its contribution to the savings exercise this year.

Resource management portfolio

Net resource management portfolio savings, including new Budget 24 funding offset by the Mini Budget savings, were -\$209.4m over four years.

New funding for RM reform replacement:

- The Budget provides \$92.2m of new funding for resource management reform replacement.
- This new operating funding enables the Ministry to retain specialist knowledge and capability among staff needed to deliver the reforms.
- It will be used to deliver the Government's resource management reforms, including fast-track consenting legislation, RMA amendments, updates to national direction, and RMA replacement legislation.
- It also provides funding in outyears for the ongoing operation of the RM system to support system change.
- This funding includes \$2m over four years for the EPA to support its functions in relation to fast-track consenting.

Return of RM implementation funding in December 2023 Mini Budget

- In the December 2023 Mini Budget, \$301.6m in funding was returned for the implementation of the previous Government's RM reforms. This followed the repeal of the Natural and Built Environment Act and the Spatial Planning Act (2023).

Climate change portfolio

Climate portfolio savings from Budget 2024 (no Mini Budget impact) including from the Climate Change Commission, were \$85.4m* over four years.

See also the key messages section below.

- Climate Change Commission: savings result from returning funding previously provided to establish an agricultural emissions pricing function, along with a 7.5 percent reduction in baseline from 25/26 (-\$15.6m).
- Climate change programmes (-\$35.5m) made up of:
 - departmental climate change savings: includes staff and non-staff related reductions in the Ministry's climate work programme, along with reduced funding for the Climate Change Chief Executives Board in line with the overall 7.5 percent savings target. (-\$14.3m)
 - non-departmental funding for climate change initiatives, including reduced funding for Māori climate resilience initiatives and the Climate Change Development Fund (-\$21.2m).

- NZETS Market Governance Tagged Contingency: returned funding previously held in tagged contingency (-\$34.3m).
*Does not include climate savings captured in the Environment portfolio above.

Waste-related savings – key messages

- Waste-related savings to the Crown are achieved in two main ways. First, by returning funding for specific waste-minimisation activities; and second, through changes to the waste disposal levy.
- By amending the Waste Minimisation Act (2008), the levy can be changed to allow it to fund a broader range of initiatives, including some of the Ministry’s programmes and environmental activities that were previously funded by the Crown.
- This change enables \$220m in savings to the Crown, including providing an alternative funding source for some of the Ministry’s waste and hazardous substance work.
- In addition, Ministers have chosen to increase the rate of the waste disposal levy over the next three years. This will increase the cost of waste disposal for households and businesses and comes on top of the planned levy increase for 1 July 2024.

Responsible general manager

Arun Patel, General Manager – Finance and Procurement

Upholding Treaty settlements and other arrangements

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Simon Watts, Minister of Climate Change Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is committed to upholding Treaty settlements and related arrangements (for example, customary rights recognised under Takutai Moana legislation). • Many Treaty settlements and related agreements provide iwi with input into environmental, climate, resource management and natural resources decision-making processes, making Treaty settlements an important feature of our work. • Recently, the government has introduced legislation (for example, the Fast-Track Approvals Bill) with specific provisions to protect Treaty settlements, including an overarching requirement of decision-makers to act consistently with Treaty settlements. • The Ministry will continue to work with PSGEs and other groups to ensure Treaty settlements and other arrangements can be upheld through our work.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious timeframes for reform can reduce the ability to engage meaningfully with PSGEs on the substance of policy proposals before decisions are taken, increasing the risk that PSGEs will perceive final decisions taken as not adequately upholding settlements. • Breadth of work programmes that may have significant impacts on Treaty settlement arrangements has the potential to undermine confidence in the Government's commitment to settlement durability, if care is not taken to work through this with PSGEs appropriately. • Some reform may necessitate amendments to Treaty settlements, which in turn requires amendments to deeds of settlement and settlement legislation. Such amendments can only take place with the agreement of PSGEs and the process of reaching that agreement may require significant engagement. As a general principle, such amendments should not include the provision of additional redress or the re-negotiation of any settlement, respecting their full and final nature.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has dedicated resource in place to ensure that Treaty settlements and related arrangements continue to be upheld as the government continues to progress its work programmes.
Responsible manager	general Clare Maihi, General Manager – Te Tiriti and Te Ao Māori

Treaty obligations – upholding statutory and Treaty settlement responsibilities

Responsible Minister	<p>Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment</p>
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Crown and Government have a range of Treaty responsibilities within the Environment portfolio. These include supporting relationships with Māori with diverse interests as kaitiaki, business owners and operators, landowners, holding mātauranga at place, in governance and roles established via Treaty settlements or under other statutory frameworks. • The Environment Act requires the Ministry to provide advice taking ‘full and balanced account of Treaty principles’. • Through Treaty settlements, the Crown has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ apologised for Tiriti breaches prior to 1992 and committed to new relationships based in te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles ○ developed accords and relationship agreements for ways of working together on environmental matters including annual hui, work programmes and early engagement ○ acknowledged Iwi and hapū rights and interests within freshwater and geothermal resources ○ amended decision-making for planning and consenting in resource management. • The Ministry has commitments in relationship agreements and accords with Iwi relating to building their capacity and capability to participate in resource management processes.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is not delivering on all its commitments, which poses legal, relationship and reputational risk. • The pace of the 100-day plan and continuing work has put additional pressure on identifying the impact on Treaty settlements and the ability to give effect to Te Tiriti and uphold Māori rights and interests.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry will review or align settlement commitment delivery within revised envelope for Ministry work programmes. • The Ministry will ensure policy development is consistent with Treaty settlement commitments including early engagement. • The Ministry will carry out ongoing monitoring of commitments against delivery including commitments within Te Haeata (the Crown-wide settlement portal) and annual reporting.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<p>Percentage of the Ministry’s Treaty settlement commitments that have been delivered on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of 31 March 2024, the Ministry has 220 Treaty settlement commitments recorded in Te Haeata (online all-of-government portal of Treaty settlement commitments). 62 percent are either complete, on-track, or yet to start (due to a timing or event outside of the Ministry’s control). The status of these commitments will be updated before 1 July 2024. <p>Why they have not all been delivered on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has identified the need to establish and strengthen systems for monitoring and reporting on Treaty settlement commitments. Ministry-wide monitoring and reporting now occurs with Treaty settlement commitments within Te Haeata, the Crown-wide settlement commitment portal. The status of these commitments goes live to all PSGEs on 1 July 2024. <p>What settlements have key precedence with legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Treaty settlements are enshrined in legislation and Deeds of Settlement.

- The Minister and Ministry have specific functions or commitments set out in several Treaty settlements. This includes commitments on matters such as appointments to co-governance entities and boards of inquiries; review of co-governance entities and their strategy documents; requirements to consider a document, value or status when exercising powers; and facilitating PSGE-council discussions.

Many settlements also have specific legislative requirements for how Ministers and statutory decision-makers develop policy:

- Under the Waikato River legislation, the vision and strategy prevails over any inconsistent provisions in national policy statements under the RMA.
- Under Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, Te Pa Auroa (the Te Awa Tupua Framework) is a relevant consideration in the exercise of all statutory functions/powers/duties in relation to the Whanganui River and for non-plan/policy statements making functions under the RMA. National policy development must accommodate these provisions.

Examples of capacity and capability settlement commitment delivery:

- The Ministry has commitments in relationship agreements and accords with settled Iwi relating to building their capacity and capability to participate in resource management processes.
- One commitment is to provide technical support for developing Iwi management plans. To meet this, the Ministry is delivering a series of workshops on Iwi management plan development to 18 Iwi, alongside 60 hours access to Iwi management plan practitioners via an 'access to experts' model.
- Another commitment, Resource Management Act training, must be provided annually to four of the Waikato River Iwi. This is being delivered to the three that requested this.
- Ten Iwi have a commitment relating to Making Good Decisions training, and two courses for forty people have been delivered. The value of delivering on these commitments is around \$588,000.

Responsible Manager	General	Hakarangi Tichborne, General Manager – Tumatakokiri
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National direction work programme – phase 2

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 21 Resource Management Act 1990 (RMA) national direction instruments are planned to be developed or amended (ND changes) as part of Phase 2 of the Government’s resource management reforms. The ND changes are intended to be completed and in effect by mid-2025. • This represents most of the existing national direction suite and covers a wide range of topics. The topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ freshwater ○ housing ○ infrastructure ○ renewable energy ○ indigenous biodiversity ○ highly productive land ○ natural hazards • The ND changes are key to achieving several Government priorities including Electrify NZ, Going for Housing Growth and Getting Back to Farming. • s 9(2)(g)(i) • The proposed scope of ND change is ambitious and will be resource intensive for the Ministry, other agencies, and partners and stakeholders. • In July, Cabinet agreed to the broad scope of national direction work programme and Ministerial delegations for detailed policy decisions
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work programme is ambitious in the timeframes available. Success will rely on efficient and coordinated decision-making. • The biggest constraint is agency capacity to complete the policy work within the available time. • s 9(2)(g)(i) • There is a high degree of interdependency across the instruments and maintaining policy coherence across the suite will be a challenge. • This work programme will require significant time and resource to deliver and risks considerable duplication of effort from central government, Treaty partners, local government and other stakeholders.
What next?	Policy development and engagement are ongoing current timeframes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy development for proposals, including any engagement, complete by October 2024. • final Cabinet decisions on policy proposals and approval to publicly consult in December 2024. • formal public consultation to begin in February 2025 • final Cabinet decisions on policy proposals followed by gazettal of national direction in mid-2025.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary outcome sought is for a range of national direction instruments (including National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards and regulations) that deliver on Government priorities to be progressed in time for gazettal mid-2025. • Combining what would otherwise be multiple processes into a single work programme will be important to help ensure policy coherence. • It will also help manage the burden on Treaty partners, public and stakeholders by minimising the amount of processes on which they need to spend time and resource.

<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 21 national direction instruments to be worked on in total, comprising seven new instruments and amendments to 15 existing. • Outcome will be measured by whether the instruments are developed or amended in line with Ministerial direction within agreed timeframes.
<p>Responsible general manager</p>	<p>Jo Gascoigne, General Manager – Resource Management System</p>

Improving environmental and climate information – reporting and decision-making

Responsible Minister/s	<p>Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Simon Watts, Minister for Climate Change Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment</p>
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has an independent statutory role to report on environment and climate under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015 (ERA) and the Climate Change Response Act (CCRA) 2002. • The Ministry supports decision-making through accessible environment and climate information. Key initiatives underway include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ independent reporting to meet New Zealand’s international commitments, including under the Paris Agreement ○ improving the effectiveness of Environmental Reporting Act 2015 ○ developing environmental indicators to show environmental change and inform development of standards for timely and consistent data and environmental monitoring and modelling methods ○ delivering the Climate Data Initiative, an all-of-government investment to improve impact and accessibility of climate data, including the Climate Adaptation Framework and reporting on Target 9 ○ providing science support to policy areas such as national direction and waste minimisation ○ collecting information under the National Monitoring System (NMS) on council performance of RMA implementation to inform the Ministry’s understanding of how the current resource management system has been working and will help inform future changes to the resource management system. <p>Note: This information is connected to the information ‘Hot Topics at the Science-Policy Interface’.</p>
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current ERA is inefficient and the current reporting schedule is out of step with rates of change in the environment, reducing the impact of reporting. • The current NMS system is labour intensive for the Ministry and reporting councils. Furthermore, the collection of data is on an annual basis, meaning the data is not made available in a timely manner to help inform decision makers. • The individual purposes for collecting or generating environmental data are wide ranging and not strategically aligned, with many data sets incomplete or variable, and benefit often not aligned with effort. • The lack of coherence in the system is limiting the ability for timely, informed and effective decisions: monitoring is fragmented across local, regional and national scales, and lacks dedicated and consistent investment, standards and protocols. • Fiscal savings programmes have impacted science and data capabilities across the science and data system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduced capacity and reprioritisation across Government agencies and Crown Research Institutions risks reducing ability to support delivery of Government climate and environmental priorities and ability to engage effectively in international obligations (eg, at UNFCCC). For example, DOC is reviewing its commitment to the shared vegetation carbon monitoring data collection programme, which could impact the evidence base for the Government’s policy objectives for non-forest carbon sequestration. ○ Low investment and capability to use technology to improve efficiency of data analysis and reporting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To reduce this risk MfE has allocated \$10m for data, science and evidence from its FY24/25 operational budget.
<p>What next?</p>	<p>Reporting initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ public release of the consolidated Targets report (Sept) ○ localised climate projections for New Zealand released; emissions tracking dashboard (Sept) ○ Our Air 2024 published (Oct) ○ Biennial Transparency Report completed, publication date to be determined (Nov) • 2025 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introduction of ERA Bill (subject to Cabinet decisions) ○ planned methods improvements for New Zealand’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990-2023 published (Feb) ○ Annual New Zealand’s New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Inventory published (Apr) ○ Environment Aotearoa 2025 published (Apr). <p>Improving environmental information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is developing strategic options to improve the environmental data system in support of the Government’s priorities. This includes establishing core indicators and complementary standards for monitoring methodologies and environmental data, developed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ partnering with central and local government, CRIs and the private sector (where relevant) ○ investigating the use of new technology like models and AI to improve efficiency and reduce costs of monitoring. • Continue to progress the cross-Government Climate Data Initiative to ensure a robust and evidence-informed approach to the Climate Adaptation Framework, statutory responsibilities (such as reporting under Climate Change Response Act 2002) and Ministerial priorities (such as Climate Target 9).
<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<p>Public release of localised climate projections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will be available to people, communities, organisations (eg, banking and insurance), asset managers, and local and central government to support better risk planning and decision-making. • The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) developed the projections based on global climate model data and science. • The first releases of the Climate Data Initiative are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an emission reporting dashboard (to support Target 9 oversight) ○ climate data releases that enable users to understand what New Zealand’s future climate and weather may look like under different emissions scenarios ○ the release of an open-source data access mechanism for downscaled climate projection datasets. • These are critical datasets for adaptation planning and delivers on NAP Action 3.1. Making climate information easier to access is part of the Government’s wider climate strategy and is expected to be a focus for the adaptation framework currently under development.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and</p>	<p>New Zealand’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory 2024 cost around \$4.6m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the publication of the report in April 2024, there have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6108 website views; ○ 1274 downloads; and

<p>how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 17,624 impressions via social media channels for the period 18 April to 20 May 2024. • The inventory is a key data source for tracking New Zealand’s domestic and international emissions targets. • It provides critical data input into the Climate Change Commission’s monitoring obligations; development of emissions projections; other reporting (eg, Biennial Transparency Reports, Climate Economic Fiscal Assessments); generation of emissions statistics (ie, Stats NZ’s System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and the environmental indicator programme); development of emission calculators for businesses; and is the evidence base for policy development such as Emissions Reduction Plans. • In 2022/23, 37,996 applications for new resource consents were processed by the 78 New Zealand councils. Of the 37,996 applications, 36,158 (95%) were approved. <p>Indicators, environmental data system and science-based policy in FY23/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in science and data at the Ministry will deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ proposed framework for core indicators and selecting indicators ○ an initial set of core national environmental indicators ○ options to Ministers for progressing Environmental Reporting Act amendments in FY24/25
<p>Responsible general managers</p>	<p>Jon Ryan, General Manager – Data, Evidence and Insights Clare Barton, General Manager – Science and Data Systems</p>

Hot Topics at the science policy interface

Responsible Minister	<p>Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Simon Watts, Minister for Climate Change Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment</p>
Key message(s)	<p>Providing high-quality, evidence-informed advice and decisions depends on using science and evidence in a way that builds trust and confidence. Science, data and evidence are critical to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting statutory responsibilities (e.g., under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015, Climate Change Response Act 2002, and Public Service Act 2020) and Ministerial priorities such as Climate Target 9 • ensure a robust and evidence-informed Climate Adaptation Framework, including climate projections for New Zealand and risk modelling • support future National Direction work, including integrated national direction, changes to specific national policy statements, and new national direction commitments • inform investment and infrastructure choices (eg. RM reform objectives, Fast Track Consenting, spatial planning, housing targets, the Major Infrastructure Priorities, 30-year infrastructure plans, and city and regional deals), and Waste Minimisation Fund grants • monitoring progress towards targets and against indicators to inform policy choices by decision-makers • measuring effectiveness of policy initiatives such as those to support waste reduction, understand material life cycles and landfill compositions.
Known risks/issues	<p>The Ministry's work programme is focused around addressing key policy risks in science, data, and evidence provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of research models into policy that have not been appropriately translated, quality-assured or peer reviewed can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lose trust and confidence in the evidence informing our work ○ affect our ability to understand our rapidly changing climate ○ affect our understanding of the impact of interventions. • poor central coordination and oversight (within the Ministry and across Government) of correct use of science and evidence can result in differing or conflicting science advice on similar issues, especially through 'cherry-picking' evidence to fit policy.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is developing options to improve the environmental data system in support of the Government's priorities, including working with relevant agencies (including LINZ, DOC, MPI, Infrastructure Commission, PCE, NEMA) • Reviewing reports from the PCE (FW modelling), strengthening our internal capability and establishing a community of practice in modelling, and exploring use of technologies (such as AI and machine learning) including consistency of practice across these technologies/innovations. • Establishing a science assurance function to improve consistency of practice in science quality assurance and peer review (consistent application of the four principles for good evidence synthesis for policy: rigorous, transparent, inclusive and accessible). • Engaging closely with MBIE and Sir Peter Gluckman, who is leading the Science System Advisory Group (SSAG) to improve the effectiveness of the SIT system, including for policy support and stewardship research (data, monitoring etc.). This includes institutional design, investment mechanisms and the role of government in influencing research direction.

<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<p>Examples where the Ministry has established science assurance processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed an independent review of the Overseer model to address concerns and developed a new programme and advice to help councils apply the model. • The Environmental Reporting Programme follows a structured and documented approach, with internal and external expert advice and peer review throughout, and uses official indicators produced by Stats NZ adhering to the Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics. • The Ministry's science principles (rigorous, transparent, inclusive and accessible) inform how we procure and manage science. Assurance includes a designated science SME lead for procurements, peer reviews by internal SMEs, and senior leader risk assessment on political context and value for money during the procurement stage and prior to publication.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$700k allocated in FY 23/24 to resolving key gaps between environmental monitoring and policy analysis, such as identifying thresholds in estuaries, and a special monitoring framework to assess impact of flooding in Hawkes Bay. • Climate Data Initiative – delivery of the first tranche of data to improve impact and accessibility of climate data and enable informed decisions to better manage risks • Internal science investment target – \$4.5m allocated for foundational/critical data and evidence in 23/24 to support multiple work programmes. • The Ministry supports local government through governance, development and implementation of National Environmental Monitoring Standards (NEMS) (\$400,000 to end June 2025 plus additional funding as agreed for new NEMS). The NEMS project drives provision of consistent, high-quality and robust environmental datasets for local, regional and national use.
<p>Responsible general manager</p>	<p>Jon Ryan, General Manager – Data, Evidence and Insights Clare Barton, General Manager – Science and Data Systems</p>

Environment portfolio – Hon Penny Simmonds

Change proposal and consultation process

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry consulted on a new structure in June 2024 to meet its FTE targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and deliver on its Strategic Intentions. • Phase one was completed in 2023/24 resulting in a realignment of the Ministry's structure, and changes to tier 2 and 3 roles. No redundancy was paid out as permanent affected kamahi were redeployed. • The new structure sees a reduction in FTE in 2024/25 and further reductions into 2025/26. The new structure takes effect 1 November 2024.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a range of employment, reputational and work delivery risks expected throughout the change process, which the Ministry's executive leadership team will manage.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is currently completing selection and recruitment processes to place staff in the new structure. Given we are reducing in size, it may not be possible to place all permanent staff into roles. • Permanent staff who are not placed in the new structure will receive redundancy entitlements in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment agreement.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new structure is designed to retain key capabilities as the Ministry continues to deliver a significant work programme for New Zealand.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry anticipates redundancy payments, severance or other termination packages in 2024/25. As the change process is still underway, this amount is not available. • FTE is trending downwards since its peak of 1,068 in November 2023. Under the new structure, FTE will reduce to 836 for FY24/25 and 714 for FY25/26. • The Ministry recently concluded a second round of voluntary redundancy that resulted in 111 redundancies. This is on top of 44 redundancies from the first round held in June 2024. These employees are expected to leave the Ministry between now and 1 November 2024.
Responsible general manager	Tracey Kaio, General Manager – People and Capability

Science reforms

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has some internal science capability but is mostly a user and interpreter of science and data that is produced and funded by other parts of the science, innovation and technology (SIT) system. • The Ministry has limited budget for science and data procurements (less than one percent of environment and climate science investment across the system) and is therefore reliant on the SIT system to deliver its science and evidence needs. • The current SIT system has well-documented challenges, including misalignment between research investment and Government priorities, a lack of collaboration across research organisations, and poor visibility of the effectiveness of investments. <p>The Ministry is working to address system issues by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proactively working with DOC and MPI to agree agency research priorities connected to Government outcomes, and mechanisms for coordinated science investments across our agencies • building relationships with the science sector and regional councils to seek efficiency and co-fund science investments • centralising Ministry investment in data and evidence that have broad benefit to multiple work programmes, with high re-use value.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Science System Advisory Group (SSAG) will provide advice to Government on strengthening the SIT system. Until the group provides final recommendations in October, it is unclear how systemic SIT issues will be addressed. • Budget 24 cost savings impacted resourcing available for environmental data, science and evidence. To address this risk and leverage maximum impact from partner agencies, MfE has allocated \$10m for data, science and evidence from its 2024/25 operational budget. • Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) hold much of the capability for research the Ministry requires (freshwater, land use, climate modelling, social and Māori evidence); and more specific and intermittently needed areas (such as air quality and behavioural science). This capability, data and peer-review expertise is essential to inform policy and support legislation. However, current funding models can encourage competition and impede collaboration and sharing of information and expertise.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is working with DOC and MPI to look for co-funding opportunities to ensure disciplined and effective investment including the ‘critical data asset’ investments. • The Ministry will work with MBIE and Sir Peter Gluckman on any future science system reforms to ensure the Ministry, and the wider environmental sector, has access to the information it needs. We expect opportunities will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enabling wider central government agency input and direction into Crown Research Institute research and funding ○ supporting greater collaboration across agencies and research providers, with research connected to Government priorities ○ balancing funding of open data access and public good research with commercially valuable research.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Critical data asset’ work example: The Land Cover Database 6 update (co-funding across DOC, MPI and the Ministry toward a foundational land cover data set that has multi-use benefit for national and international reporting requirements as well as use in policy advice).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System-wide investment in datasets and monitoring example: Cyclone Gabrielle (the second most costly natural disaster to New Zealand after the Christchurch earthquake), showed the importance of linking research and evidence investment to government priorities (e.g. the availability of evidence to prepare for and respond to extreme weather events). Related to the fact sheet on improving environmental data, the uncoordinated, fragmented and poor data sharing in the SIT system resulted in a slower response to the event due to a lack of existing and accessible baseline remote sensing data (e.g., satellite, LiDAR and aerial imagery) and prior monitoring. This impeded the ability to pre-empt risks and identify potential landslips. • System-wide investment in applied research for Government decision-making example: The Ministry recently published updated guidance for local government on adapting to coastal hazards and climate change, particularly sea-level rise. This incorporates the NZ SeaRise 2022 sea-level rise projections, including satellite measures of vertical land movement (VLM) to provide relative sea level rise estimates around the New Zealand coast. This is a new approach, and improvement of VLM estimates will enhance confidence for decision-makers.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIT system work: Secondments to MBIE in FY20/21 and 22/23. Ongoing engagement with MBIE and input to science system policy direction and drafting submissions. • Working in partnership with DOC and MPI to develop long-term research priorities and opportunities for coordination of investment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FY21/22 \$0.42m ○ FY22/23 \$0.94m ○ FY23/24 – no budget; staff time. • Critical data asset investment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FY23/24 \$3.35m across 23 investments for multiple work programmes and foundational datasets.
<p>Responsible manager</p>	<p>Clare Barton, General Manager – Science and Data Systems</p>

Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government removed the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill from the Order Paper on 28 March 2024 and has stopped work on the proposed sanctuary. • In June 2023, iwi fisheries organisations voted overwhelmingly to reject a proposal (from the last government) to amend the Bill • Opposition by iwi to the Bill reflected concerns about the lack of engagement with iwi prior to its introduction, and that enactment of the Bill would result in the inability to make use of fishing rights under the 1992 Fisheries Deed of Settlement and the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 provided as redress to Iwi/Māori in settlement of their commercial fishing claims.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing the Bill and stopping work on the proposed sanctuary poses limited risk to the marine environment. • Few activities (including fishing) happen in the area given the logistics associated with the distance from mainland New Zealand. • Existing protections remain in place. This includes a marine reserve around the Kermadec Islands that extends out to 12 nautical miles, and restrictions on the use of bottom-impacting fishing methods.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new marine protection proposals specific to the Kermadec area are being considered. • The Government will be taking advice this year on how best New Zealand could contribute to the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
Responsible manager	general Hayden Johnston, General Manager – Natural Environment Policy

Waste work programme, including WMA amendment

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry's waste work programme involves a range of policy measures and levers including regulatory, economic, investment, guidance and compliance monitoring and enforcement. • s 9(2)(f)(iv) • The Ministry plans to discuss proposals to amend the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA) and Litter Act 1979 to better align local and central government investment in waste infrastructure and initiatives; modernise waste and recycling regulations; and improve waste data collection. Amendments could include a modern compliance regime, improved levy administration and a framework for extended producer responsibility (which could also support a beverage container return scheme). • In May, the Government passed targeted amendments to the WMA, which enable the central government allocation of the levy to be spent on a broader range of environmental outcomes in addition to waste minimisation. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ activities that reduce environmental harm or increase environmental benefits (examples include catchment remediation works, and funding to support the management of waterways) ○ costs associated with managing waste generated by an emergency, including supporting repair/replacement of infrastructure damaged by an emergency ○ projects that provide for the remediation of contaminated sites, including landfills vulnerable to severe weather impacts ○ funding more of the Ministry's responsibilities in relation to waste management and minimisation and hazardous substances ○ increasing levy rates over three years (2025/26 to 2027/28), creating a stronger disincentive for waste disposal ○ making other minor legislative amendments to support changes noted above (e.g., broadening the levy waiver provision, defining terms).
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulatory framework (Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and Litter Act 1979) is aging and has a range of limitations. Both Acts need amendment to assist with making more effective use of the waste levy, improve the compliance tools, and ensure they are in line with modern legislation internationally. • Some stakeholders disagree with some aspects of recent WMA amendments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ levy rate increases being applied without consultation and a full assessment of likely impacts (eg, on different waste streams and landfill classes, populations groups, and potential for levy avoidance behaviour) ○ use of levy funds for functions and activities other than waste minimisation.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s 9(2)(f)(iv) • The Ministry is preparing options for the wider waste legislative reform programme for discussion • The Ministry is implementing recent WMA amendments, including funding priorities (e.g., Contaminated Sites and Vulnerable Landfills fund, which will open in October; the Waste Minimisation Fund will also open in October with broader investment signals reflecting government priorities process for managing levy waiver applications).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet has invited me to report back on the performance of Government spending funded by the levy. Cabinet also invited me to independently review the process for making investment decisions using the levy and the Ministry's back-office functions relating to the levy with a focus on value for money. Both pieces of work are underway.
<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<p>Examples of a broader range of environmental outcomes supported through WMA amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation of a greater number of high-risk vulnerable landfills and contaminated sites, thereby reducing environmental harm. This will substantially increase activities previously funded by the Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund (previously funded via \$2.63 million annual appropriation). • Contributing to the costs of waste management activities following emergency events, which can be significant, particularly as the scale and frequency of emergencies increases. • Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme, the largest landscape programme underway in New Zealand, which works with Kaipara Moana catchment landowners to restore the health and mauri of the Kaipara Moana through activities such as fencing and native planting to reduce sediment and erosion and improve water quality. • Freshwater Improvement Fund, which supports the management of lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater and wetlands. Outcomes include pest control, ecosystem restoration, remediation of fish passages, planting and freshwater restoration.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry has a data improvement program underway, yet still don't have data on the composition of waste stream and recycling rates. New waste data regulations that took effect in July 2024, which includes collecting additional data on waste and recycling from councils and waste sites such as landfills. • Based on Ministry forecasting, further levy increases will generate additional revenue of \$171 million (between 2024/25 and 2027/28 compared to scheduled levy rates). The WMA amendments and additional re-prioritisation of levy revenue will enable around \$220 million in Crown savings over four years (from FY2024/25). Potential for further savings will be explored for Budget 2025. • Impact of levy increase on households will be minimal: an increase of \$5.07 per household per annum, based on average waste volumes (6.5kg bag for kerbside collection per week). • Based on estimates of how much waste is produced during construction of a new-build house, levy costs for waste disposal could increase by around \$46 per house, while levy costs for disposal of materials from a typical house demolition could increase by around \$206.
<p>Responsible general manager</p>	<p>Glenn Wigley, General Manager – Waste and HSNO Policy.</p>

Product stewardship scheme – Tyres

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 6.5 million tyres (~72,000 tonnes) reach their end of life each year in New Zealand. Historically, tyres have been sent to landfill, illegally dumped, or left in storage or stockpiles as there have been limited options for disposing of them in an environmentally friendly way. • Stored tyres pose a risk of fire, toxic emissions and leaching. Large tyre fires have occurred in New Zealand presenting risks to environmental and human health. • Tyres were one of six priority products declared as a priority product under the WMA in July 2020. The other products are farm plastics, agrichemicals and their containers, refrigerants and other synthetic gases, electrical and electronic products (e-waste including batteries) and plastic packaging. • The regulated tyres product stewardship scheme became fully operational on 1 September 2024 when the second tranche of regulation came into effect.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMA product stewardship provisions aren't adequate to achieve the best possible outcomes and result in some constraints. • Since Tranche 1 of the tyres regulations came into force in March 2024, stakeholders have raised two key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exported new tyres are not eligible for a refund of the tyre fee (around 21 businesses are impacted, and a relatively small proportion of tyres) ○ limitations of the tariff categories for outlier tyre categories • Officials are working across agencies and with stakeholders to find solutions to these issues.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry is transitioning from implementation to business-as-usual operations for the tyre product stewardship scheme following the commencement of full scheme operations on 1 September 2024. • Two applications for priority product stewardship scheme accreditation have been received and are currently being assessed § 9(2)(f)(iv) • The other schemes are at various stages of development. They will be progressed in a measured way to ensure the schemes are well considered and unintended consequences in particular cost of living impacts are limited.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	Key industries, like the tyre industry support and benefit from a regulated product stewardship schemes which can be developed under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA). Product stewardship schemes help level the playing field and significantly improve recycling outcomes for key industries, products and resources.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tyres scheme allocates a regulated fee to help fund best practise collection of end-of-life tyres and provide 'incentive payments' to processors and manufacturers to pull end-of-life tyres through to increase recovery and recycling. The tyre scheme fee replaces an existing ad-hoc disposal fee charged by retailers at a similar price level and guarantees a positive environmental outcome. • If New Zealand can use its bank of end-of-life tyres as a valuable resource, instead of seeing them as a waste to discard, both the environment and the economy will benefit.
Responsible general manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaun Lewis, General Manager – Waste Systems

Container return scheme

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A container return scheme (CRS) is a recycling scheme and form of product stewardship that targets away-from-home consumption of beverages and incentivises the return of beverage containers for a refundable deposit (eg, 10 or 20 cents). • A CRS shifts the costs of recycling beverage containers away from councils and ratepayers to the responsible supply chain (producers, retailers and consumers). • The core principle underpinning a CRS is the use of the deposit incentive to encourage return of the containers to enable a high level of container-to-container recycling and significantly change New Zealand's littering behaviours. The refundable deposit financial incentive combined with the accessibility of the return network are the key drivers of CRS performance internationally.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CRS could be introduced under the existing product stewardship framework in the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. However, there are limitations to this approach including limited compliance, monitoring and enforcement provisions to ensure the success of a scheme. • Depending on the Government's preference for scheme design, a CRS may benefit from new producer responsibility legislation, either through amending the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, or through separate bespoke legislation.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials have provided initial background information to Ministers and can provide more in-depth advice on the different scheme options and merits (including financial modelling and cost benefit analysis), legislative pathways, and alternative options (to address beverage containers or containers more broadly).
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRS are on the rise globally including in the UK, Europe, Asia, the USA, Canada and Australia. All Australian states have, or have committed to, a scheme. High-performing schemes (mostly in Europe) typically achieve beverage container recovery rates of more than 90 percent.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In New Zealand, less than half (45 per cent by weight) of the estimated 2.57 billion beverages sold in 2020/2021 were recovered for recycling. As a result, an estimated 1.7 billion beverage containers were stockpiled, littered, or landfilled. • Depending on characteristics of a scheme, a CRS could increase recovery of beverage containers from around 45 per cent (by weight), to 85-90 percent after five years. This would mean recovery rates of more than 2 billion beverage containers every year (an increase in over 1 billion containers per year) and a decrease in beverage container litter of at least 60 per cent. • This would also mean an increase in the amount of recycled material able to be used in products, reducing the overall reliance on virgin materials.
Responsible general manager	Shaun Lewis, General Manager – Waste Systems

Kerbside standardisation

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1 February 2024, all council-managed kerbside recycling collections must accept the same set of standard materials. • Councils and recyclers advocated for standardisation for several years and are broadly supportive. To comply, most councils had to either stop or begin collecting specific materials. Many of the materials now excluded from kerbside collection are materials that were previously not recycled, even if collected. • The Ministry recently established a Recycling Leadership Forum, bringing together sector representatives from across the system. The forum will explore challenging kerbside issues, including investigating solutions for materials excluded from kerbside collection. • This is part of a broader kerbside policy package. In March 2023, five kerbside policies were announced, including the kerbside standard materials policy. The Government is considering the remaining four kerbside policies and whether to progress them, amend them or discard them. Cabinet decisions will be required. The outstanding kerbside policies are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ requiring recycling collections in all urban areas by 2027 ○ requiring food scraps collections in all urban areas by 2030 ○ introducing minimum kerbside diversion targets ○ reporting requirements for private kerbside collection companies.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes to recycling rules mean some food and grocery products have outdated recyclability labelling. The lead time to change labelling is around two years, which creates risk for brands subject to the Fair-Trading Act 1986. The Ministry is working with the Commerce Commission to provide guidance to brand owners. • For the broader kerbside policy package, implementation timeframes are at risk if the policies are progressed. Councils are deprioritising investment in establishing new food scraps or recycling services due to uncertainty over Government policy and increasing pressure on rates and cost of living.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry expects to deliver a Cabinet paper on the four remaining kerbside policies in the third quarter of this year. The current economic situation, waste minimisation outcomes, emissions reduction potential and local government planning cycles are key considerations.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have generally received the standard materials requirement positively. For example, Auckland Council has encouraged compliance and stated that the items now excluded from their collections make up only 1 percent of all Auckland recycling. The standard materials policy aims to reduce contamination, which currently costs Auckland around \$3 million per year.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kerbside standard materials policy is expected to recover an additional 36,000 tonnes of recyclable material per year. Contamination rates in council-managed kerbside collections will be monitored through council data reporting requirements, in force since 1 July 2024. At this stage it is too early to determine the standard materials policy's impact on contamination rates. • The overall kerbside policy package, would divert an extra 53,000 tonnes of recycling and 83,000 tonnes of food waste per year, resulting in a reduction of methane emissions by 45,000 tonnes CO₂e per year by 2035.
Responsible general manager	Shaun Lewis, General Manager – Waste Systems

Hazardous substances work programme

Responsible Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is committed to easing the burden on food producers. Improvements to our hazardous substances regime, including legislative amendments, will implement commitments in the Primary Sector Growth Plan to streamline approvals under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act) for pesticides, fertilisers and other chemicals used in horticulture. • Industry feedback and various reports have highlighted improvements that could be made to New Zealand's chemical management system and officials are working on potential solutions.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry has indicated they are facing significant and increasing processing wait times for the assessment of new chemicals and the reassessment of chemicals already in use. • Assessing these applications is a complex task which requires advanced technical skills and data to identify and mitigate the risks of a given product. Improvements to the system will require a package of improvements including regulatory measures, practice, and funding.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials are working on a package of improvements and will be giving policy advice over the coming months on the range of options including on the scope of any legislative improvements. • This advice would include consideration of any recommendations that result from the agricultural and horticultural products regulatory review led by Minister Seymour.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers, growers and industry need rapid access to the latest chemicals to remain competitive and meet the requirements of demanding markets. • New Zealand would benefit from less harmful chemicals, and a system that enables the faster introduction of improved conventional and softer chemistry, and the rapid removal of harmful and damaging chemicals.
Responsible general manager	Glenn Wigley , General Manager – Waste and HSNO Policy

Agricultural and Horticultural Products Regulatory Review

Responsible Minister	The Hon David Seymour, Minister for Regulation; supported by the Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment and Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister of Food Safety.
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry for Regulations is leading a regulatory review of the approval processes for agricultural and horticultural products. This includes both the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996. • The review is governed by a joint ministers group consisting of myself, Minister Seymour (as Minister for Regulation) and Minister Hoggard (as Minister for Food Safety). • The Government is committed to easing the burden on food producers. This review will implement commitments in the Primary Sector Growth Plan to streamline approvals under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act) for pesticides, fertilisers and other chemicals used in horticulture. • This work is closely related to work the Ministry for the Environment is undertaking on wider changes to the HSNO Act.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry has indicated they are facing significant and increasing processing wait times for the assessment of new chemicals and the reassessment of chemicals already in use. • Farmers, growers and industry need rapid access to the latest products to remain competitive and meet the requirements of demanding markets.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry for Regulations is seeking views from industry and beginning to formulate potential solutions. A report will be produced in December 2024, and Cabinet decisions on recommended improvements will be sought early 2025. • The Ministry for Regulation review team is receiving significant assistance from the Ministry for the Environment, Environmental Protection Authority, and Food Safety NZ.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers, growers and industry need rapid access to the latest products to remain competitive and meet the requirements of demanding markets. • New Zealand would benefit from less harmful chemicals, and a system that enables the faster introduction of improved conventional and softer chemistry, and the rapid removal of harmful and damaging chemicals.
Responsible general manager	Glenn Wigley , General Manager – Waste and HSNO Policy

Environment portfolio - Hon Andrew Hoggard

Jobs for Nature funding going forward

Responsible Minister	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The \$1.2 billion Jobs for Nature (J4N) programme was established as a time-limited investment in mid-2020 as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery. All funding is fully allocated, and no further funding will be available through the programme. • Funding recipients and their projects are spread across rural and urban New Zealand, and include councils, Iwi, catchment groups, charitable trusts, government organisations and private companies. • The programme is funding nature-based work activities, including planting for freshwater/biodiversity restoration, fencing waterways, animal and plant pest control (including wallabies and wilding conifers), fish passage remediation, building capability and capacity in freshwater management, and skills training to support career development. • Projects funded through J4N have completion dates set out in their individual contracts. Most projects are due to complete by June 2025, with a small number continuing in outyears. • While it is still too soon to predict the size and scale of the programme impact beyond the life of the investment, benefits can already be seen through employment, environmental improvements, improved mental health and wellbeing, and increased skills and capabilities. • To promote the long-term legacy of the investment in people and the environment, J4N delivery agencies are implementing a programme-wide Transition Strategy that aims to support people and projects involved to achieve ongoing benefits beyond the life of funding.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the funding is time-limited, some projects will require further resources to help maintain long-term outcomes (e.g., pest control to achieve conservation and biosecurity outcomes). • Funded projects differ in scale, environments, objectives, operation and governance arrangements, resulting in varied requirements for ensuring outputs delivered result in long-term outcomes.
What next?	<p>In the current fiscal environment, there is a need for central government to find other ways to support community and on the ground action, in lieu of direct grants.</p> <p>In the short-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery agencies are engaging with their project delivery partners to understand needs, opportunities and provide tailored support. Due to the range in types of activities and entities funded through J4N, there is no single approach that will be appropriate for projects to transition beyond this funding. • The J4N Secretariat is working with agencies to launch a nationwide online collaborative platform, enabling delivery partners to connect, share resources and best practice, and provide visibility of transition opportunities. • Some of the agency-led programmes that were part of the wider J4N programme have baseline funding beyond J4N – in particular Biosecurity New Zealand’s National Wilding Conifer and Wallaby Control programmes. <p>Over the medium-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic regulatory and non-regulatory shifts could help stimulate and promote greater private investment and philanthropic funding into the environment. • Several work areas across Government aim to better understand and facilitate increased private funding towards environmental restoration. This work is

	<p>broader in scope than J4N but presents leveraging opportunities to help maintain gains delivered from the programme, for example work looking at how to increase the scale and impact of the voluntary biodiversity credit market.</p>
<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to a wide range of funded work, there are different needs to ‘maintain the gains’ across the programme. Some outputs, such as the construction of physical assets, require little to no maintenance to sustain long-term project outcomes. • Planting work generally requires some level of maintenance for a few years after planting (eg, releasing weeds and controlling browsing pest species), to ensure new plantings survive to maturity when they become self-sustaining. • Pest control at landscape scale (such as through PF2050) requires sustained effort to suppress or eliminate pests and/or prevent incursion or reinvasion of cleared land. Wider work to attract funding will be critical to support these endeavours.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<p>The programme comprises various funds totalling around \$1.2 billion, administered across five different government agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Conservation – \$485.3 million • Ministry for the Environment – \$444.5 million • Ministry for Primary Industries – \$188.1 million • Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment – \$40.9 million • Land Information New Zealand – \$40 million <p>The funding has achieved (as at the last quarter up to 31 March 2024):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14,606 people employed • 10.7 million hours worked in nature-based projects • 10.9 million plants in the ground • 2.1 million hectares controlled for wilding conifers • 2.5 million hectares controlled for animal pests <p>Of the total 519 projects funded, 119 have now reported as concluded. A further 97 projects are forecast to have concluded by the end of this financial year (30 June 2024), with most of the remainder through 2025 (and a smaller number in outyears).</p> <p>By assessing the programme against core objectives, a multi-staged programme evaluation framework is supporting the improvement of current and potential future investment programmes. An independent economic impacts assessment valued the sum of benefits delivered through the programme at \$2.147 billion, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 2.46.</p>
<p>Responsible general manager</p>	<p>Ilana Miller, Programme Director – Jobs for Nature</p>

Biodiversity credits

Responsible Minister	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A voluntary biodiversity credit market (BCM) is emerging internationally, largely as an extension of the voluntary carbon market (VCM). • A successful market in New Zealand could help to channel private investment to finance and incentivise private efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity. • To achieve scale and impact, the market needs to be trusted by investors, accessible for landowners, and relevant to New Zealand. • Public consultation last year highlighted significant interest in the market from a broad range of stakeholders, and support for a government role in assuring its integrity and credibility. • The Ministry is scoping work to achieve scale and impact in the biodiversity credit market.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emerging market faces risks such as greenwashing, double counting and units of questionable validity being sold, which could undermine investor confidence in the market. • Perceptions of risks and complexity are likely to stifle investment in the market, representing a missed opportunity for improving conservation outcomes.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers have agreed work should proceed on a biodiversity credit system. The Ministry is scoping next steps for this work, which includes targeted engagement on what is needed for market assurance.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<p>Part of the work is looking at models emerging internationally, involving differing degrees of market governance, which have features that could be potentially emulated in New Zealand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia's Nature Repair Market framework, which provides project certification and market rules such as information disclosure • UK peatlands and woodlands codes, nested in international best practice (IUCN), but designed for UK environmental priorities and landowner accessibility. <p>The overarching emphasis of emerging international models is to provide market credibility and accessibility, so that the markets are straight-forward for investors and landowners.</p>
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<p>Facts/figures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 75 percent of our indigenous species are at risk of extinction or are at risk of becoming threatened. Many at-risk species and habitats are on private land. • A major part of the challenge is a big funding and incentive gap for private landowners. To illustrate this gap, the Climate Change Commission estimates a cost of \$5 to \$15 billion to 2035 to restore 300,000 ha of native forests. • ETS is driving major land use change (eg, 180,000ha of whole sheep and beef farms were sold into mostly pine forestry between 2019 and 2022), and there is a need to level up incentives for native ecosystem protection and restoration. <p>Amounts invested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultation on a biodiversity credit system involved four FTE across the Ministry and DOC over the course of a year, and around \$75k in consultancy. Recently, it has been managed by ~1 MFE FTE. <p>Tangible outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Economic Forum estimates that global demand for voluntary biodiversity credits could reach US\$2bn in 2030 and US\$69bn by 2050, providing there is effective progress on governance and the markets are trusted.
Responsible general manager	Hayden Johnston , General Manager – Natural Environment Policy

Review of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

Responsible Minister	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government made a commitment to pause the identification of new Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) under the NPSIB and review their operation. Provisions pausing the identification of new SNAs are included in the Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill (the Bill). The Bill seeks to reduce regulatory burden by making targeted, time-critical amendments to the Resource Management system. The Bill suspends for three years local authority obligations under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPSIB) to identify new Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and include them in district plans A review of the NPSIB is underway. The review will focus on consideration of criteria for identifying SNAs, the process of assessing and identifying, and the management of land subject to SNAs. Any changes to the NPS-IB will be progressed as part of the Government's resource management reforms, which will include changes to national direction. Cabinet will likely make final decisions on national direction changes in mid-2025.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pausing the requirements to map new SNAs in the NPSIB does not remove councils' obligations under the RMA to identify and protect areas of significant biodiversity. Many councils have already mapped SNAs or have processes in place to do so under the RMA, which is creating some lack of clarity.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers will consider options for amending the NPSIB as part of the Government's resource management reforms, which will include changes to national direction.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The criteria for identifying new SNAs within the NPSIB were developed to ensure national consistency and to encourage councils to work with landowners and tangata whenua to identify and protect the most important areas of biodiversity. However, some are concerned the approach to identifying new SNAs may be too broad, capture areas with less significant native biodiversity, and overly restrict land use. The goal is to make it simpler and more cost effective for landowners to support conservation on their land. If farmers, growers, and other landowners are given the right incentives, they'll make conservation happen and many already are.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<p>Facts/figures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils are at different stages of giving effect to their RMA and NPSIB requirements. Some regional councils such as Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago already have SNA identification criteria within their plans and policy statements to meet their RMA obligations. A number of councils have also used criteria similar to those in the NPSIB in their plans and policy statements – including Auckland, Waipa, South Waikato, Taupō, Whakatane, Kāpiti, Porirua and Gore. It will be important to give councils certainty about their obligations under the NPSIB as soon as possible.
Responsible general manager	Hayden Johnston , General Manager – Natural Environment Policy

Freshwater Farm Plans

Responsible Minister	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for the Environment
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government wants to improve freshwater farm plans to build a pragmatic and cost-effective system. • The Ministry is looking at how to integrate existing farm environment plans and industry assurance programmes into the system. • As part of a more risk-based approach, the Ministry is exploring how this could be applied by the likely level of impact of the farming activity on the environment. • It's important that councils and community have confidence in the robustness of the freshwater farm plan system as an alternative to local rules and consents. • Freshwater farm plans need to be cost effective, provide farmers with greater flexibility, enable solutions at a catchment level, reduce duplication, and fit within existing things farmers and growers are already doing such as farm environment plans and industry assurance programmes.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived as too costly and complicated by the farming sector. • Lack of clarity for councils on what needs to be done. • Criticism or pushback from some stakeholders about the proposed changes. For example, time taken to make changes. • Industry Pathways are yet to be recognised in current regulations (causes duplicated costs for many farmers) • s 9(2)(g)(i)
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be engaging with key stakeholders over the coming months on how best to improve freshwater farm plans. • We are also currently exploring whether the roll out of freshwater farm plans in those regions that where the regulations live could be paused while improvements are made.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is essential that FW-FPs are a practical tool that supports farmers and growers to reduce the impact of their farming operation on their local freshwater environment. • It is important that councils and communities retain confidence in the robustness of FW-FPs; otherwise they will not deliver as an effective alternative to rules and consents.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality in New Zealand is good by world standards, but there is evidence that some rivers and lakes are deteriorating due to pollution. Freshwater farm plans are a key tool to improve water quality outcomes. • FW-FPs work – science by Our Land and Water shows that where farmers think about their farming activity and the vulnerability of their catchment; and select and implement actions relevant to their catchment, they will improve water quality. • The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report Going with the grain on land use change in New Zealand noted that FW-FPs has the potential to be a promising way forward in reducing the potential impact of farming on freshwater • Under current settings around 34,000 farms would need a FWFP (likely to change if decision taken i.e. change in thresholds) • We estimate that the cost of developing a low complexity FWFP would likely cost between \$1,400 - \$2,600 (where a farm already has some type of existing plan.) This cost will likely be higher for larger and more complex farms, or farms without some sort of existing industry plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of having a low complexity farm plan certified is likely to be between \$1,100 and \$2,300 in most circumstances. Again, these costs will likely be higher for a larger, more complex farm.
Responsible manager	general Sara Clarke, General Manager – System Enablement

RMA Reform Portfolio

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill (RMA Bill 1)

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<p>The Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill (the Bill) seeks to reduce regulatory burden by making targeted, time-critical amendments to the Resource Management system. The Bill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excludes the hierarchy of obligations within the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM) from resource consenting while a review and replacement of the NPS-FM is undertaken • aligns the consent pathway for coal mining with other mineral extraction activities across national direction • suspends for three years local authority obligations under the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPSIB) to identify new Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and include them in district plans • removes the low-slope map and associated requirements from stock exclusion regulations¹, reducing costs for farmers • repeals the permitted and restricted discretionary activity regulations and associated conditions for intensive winter grazing from the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater² (NES-F) • streamlines the process to prepare or amend national direction under the RMA.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was limited time or scope to engage with stakeholders or iwi/Māori on the proposals prior to introducing the Bill. Communities have had an opportunity to provide input at the Select Committee stage. • There was insufficient time for officials to complete a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the proposals to align the pathway for coal mining and streamline national direction. Instead, Supplementary Analysis Reports (SAR) were completed in line with Cabinet's impact analysis requirements. • The proposal to amend the NPSIB to suspend the requirement to identify new SNAs for three years was exempt from Cabinet's impact analysis requirements as it was a 100-day plan initiative. So, there is no associated RIS or SAR.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill had its first reading on 28 May and has been sent to the Primary Production Select Committee for consideration. • The submissions period on the Bill has closed, and the Committee is due to report back to House on 30 September. • If passed, the Bill would be enacted by the end of 2024.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals in the Bill deliver on a range of coalition commitments. • The Bill makes targeted changes to the resource management system that can take effect quickly to give certainty to councils and consent applicants and reduce regulatory burden. • Changes to the hierarchy of obligations for resource consenting processes will reduce burden, and provide more clarity of process, for consent applicants and decision-makers. • Changes to align pathways for coal mining with other mineral extraction, mean new coal mines will be able to access a consent pathway and the changes also remove the sunset clause on consent pathway for thermal coal. • The Bill pauses NPSIB direction regarding identification of new SNAs, while a review of the NPSIB is undertaken.

¹ Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Regulations 2020

² Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the stock exclusion and intensive winter grazing regulations represent a move away from national regulations towards more catchment-specific approaches. Effective non-regulatory measures are already in place, providing a more cost-effective and pragmatic approach. • Changes to the process to prepare or amend national direction will streamline the current processes required under the RMA.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some councils have required individual resource consent applicants to demonstrate how their activity adheres to the Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy of obligations in the NPS-FM. This may not result in the outcomes that local communities consider reasonable. • The changes to the coal mining provisions align them with other mining activities, which can have similar localised impacts to coal mining (e.g., earthworks and vegetation clearance). • The three-year suspension of the provisions requiring councils to identify new SNAs will allow for a review, and potential changes to be progressed, before the existing regulation is locked in through council decisions. • Regarding stock exclusion, the amount farmers spend on fencing waterbodies outweighs the environmental benefits in some cases (e.g., the total costs for the map of low slope land area came to \$239.1 million). In flood-prone areas, alternatives to fencing may produce the desired outcomes more cost-effectively. • Key regions that account for most intensive winter grazing (Canterbury, Otago and Southland) already have regional plans containing rules to manage the activity. They were collectively estimated to account for 86 percent of the total land area used for intensive winter grazing in 2021. • Right now, the process to make or change national direction is typically a two-year plus process. This process is considered onerous and costly and there are opportunities to streamline it.
<p>Responsible manager</p>	<p>general Hayden Johnston, General Manager – Natural Environment Policy</p>

Amendments to stock exclusion and intensive winter grazing regulation through RMA Bill 1

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMA Bill 1 removes the map of low-slope land and requirements to exclude stock in the Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Regulations 2020. The map and requirements are a one-size-fits-all approach, which will impose significant costs on lower intensity beef and deer farmers for limited environmental benefit. Bill 1 also repeals the permitted and restricted discretionary activity regulations and associated conditions for intensive winter grazing from the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-F). Conditions relating to maximum slope leave many farmers with no compliance pathway except to apply for a resource consent, resulting in unnecessary costs. Regional councils, farm planning and good practice will instead determine how these activities are managed. They will be able to factor in individual circumstances and risk to the environment. The activities will not go unmanaged. Other parts of the stock exclusion regulations remain unchanged (eg, those applying to dairy cattle, or intensively grazed beef cattle and deer). Key Southern regions where most intensive winter grazing occurs have regional plans with rules to manage the activity.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some concern about the regulatory gap removing these regulations leaves (e.g. that the activities might go unmanaged for a time). The majority of councils support the proposals on the basis that they are more appropriately managed through a regional approach. Other requirements to exclude stock (i.e. dairy, other intensively grazed stock) will continue to apply. Key regions in the South Island where intensive winter grazing is most prevalent either have operative or draft plan rules to manage the activity (Southland, Otago), or indicated they intend to explore options for addressing regulatory gaps (Canterbury).
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments will be progressed through RM Bill 1, which is expected to be passed before the end of this year.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed changes represent a move away from national-level regulations, and towards more catchment-focussed approaches. Non-regulatory measures are already in place, providing a cost-effective and pragmatic approach.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021 Rural Decision Makers Survey indicates that stock are excluded from many major streams on sheep and beef farms, and dairy farmers are fencing nearly all the wetlands on their properties. In Taranaki, Southland and Northland, 95 percent or more of the extent of wetlands on farms is fenced. In 2022, using costs for two wire electric fencing and deer fencing, it was estimated that the total fencing costs for the map of low-slope land area came to \$239.1 million. These costs are attributable to the stock exclusion regulations. 278 resource consents were issued across five key regions (Canterbury, Otago, Southland, Waikato and Manawatū/Whanganui) for the 2023 intensive winter grazing season. Regions that account for most intensive winter grazing (Canterbury, Otago and Southland) account for 86 percent of the total land area used for intensive winter grazing in 2021.
Responsible general manager	Hayden Johnston, General Manager – Natural Environment Policy

RMA Bill 2

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is taking a phased approach to the reform of the resource management system. • Phase 1 repealed the Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) and Spatial Planning Act (SPA). This is complete. • Phase 2 is currently under way and consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a fast-track consenting regime, which has been introduced and expected to pass from bill into law by the end of this year ○ targeted legislative changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) via two amendment bills focused on relieving the most significant resource management issues in the short term. Bill 1 is currently before select committee and will speed up and simplify the process for preparing and amending national direction. Bill 2 is expected to be introduced before the end of the year (and passed into law mid-2025) ○ a national direction package for most of the proposed improvements to national direction instruments. Formal consultation is expected in early 2025, with final decisions being made in mid-2025. • Phase 3 will replace the current RMA with new resource management legislation based on the enjoyment of property rights, with a focus on taking resource management back to basics. <p>Bill 2 objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 2 will make changes to the RMA to streamline and simplify its operation until the legislation is replaced in Phase 3. Bill 2 aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ unlock development and investment in infrastructure, housing and primary industries ○ streamline the consenting system ○ ensure the protection of the environment and uphold Treaty of Waitangi/Tiriti o Waitangi settlements.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has focused on making targeted time critical changes to the RMA that can have an immediate impact. The broad approach to determining the scope of the Bill was based on the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ priority: alignment with Government priorities ○ urgency: an issue that needs to be urgently resolved ○ impact: have an immediate impact to deliver change on the ground and not require another regulatory tool for implementation ○ complexity: have low drafting complexity and advanced policy development. • Recommendations for complex or fundamental changes to the system (such as amending Part 2 of the RMA) are not being progressed through Bill 2 and will be considered as part of Phase 3. • A high degree of public interest in Bill 2 and short timeframes for progressing the legislation means that engagement with Treaty partners, sector stakeholders and the public will require a focused effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ officials are conducting targeted engagement in advance of Bill 2 being introduced to House ○ there will be an opportunity for broader public consultation through the Select Committee process ○ officials will provide advice to the Select Committee on submissions received.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 2 may have implications for upholding Treaty Settlement commitments. Officials will work with relevant Post Settlement Governance Entities and other relevant entities to identify and address any impact on Treaty Settlements. • Work on Bill 2 through to enactment will be funded from departmental budget baselines. As part of the policy development process, officials will provide further advice on the wider financial implications for the resource management system (including implementation).
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final decisions on the policy proposals for Bill 2 are still being made. Subject to ministerial and Cabinet approvals, Bill 2 is likely to be introduced towards the end of 2024.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has signalled Bill 2 will include measures to increase renewable energy by amending the consenting process. • Bill 2 will also make the Medium Density Residential Standards optional rather than mandatory for councils and require councils to meet 30-year targets for housing growth.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulatory impact assessment process for Bill 2 will draw on evidence to assess the impact of the proposed legislative changes on key stakeholders and their overall net benefit. Performance indicators will be established to support the ongoing evaluation of the resource management system and the success of the RMA reforms. • Under the current RMA, local authorities are responsible for monitoring to ensure activities meet requirements under the RMA, plan rules and resource consents. Each year, the Ministry collects information from local authorities on their implementation of the RMA through the National Monitoring System. This information is used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inform the development of resource management policy and practice by national and local government ○ confirm local authorities are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities under the RMA ○ promote examples of RMA implementation best practice ○ test common perceptions of the performance of the RMA system ○ measure the success of RMA reforms.
Responsible manager	general Liz Moncrieff, General Manager – Urban and Infrastructure Policy

RMA Reform Phase 3 – replacing the RMA

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has committed to a three-phase work programme for to improve the resource management system. • Phase three of the programme will replace the RMA with new resource management legislation based on the enjoyment of property rights. • The work in phase three will consider a range of matters, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ how resource management laws can more clearly separate urban and spatial planning from environmental protection ○ the greater use of national standards to permit activities, particularly for infrastructure ○ the role of a legislative framework for spatial planning to enable longer term, integrated planning ○ how the plan-making and consenting system can be reset to reduce the number of plans, speed up processes, and reduce the need for consents. • The Government has committed to upholding Treaty of Waitangi settlements and other arrangements as part of its work to replace the RMA. • The Government intends to establish an Expert Ministerial Advisory Group to work alongside the Ministry and other agencies to develop options for the legislation to replace the RMA. A report from the EAG is due at the end of 2024. • The Government aims to introduce a bill with replacement legislation in mid-2025, and have the bill passed by the end of 2025. However, the time required for policy decisions and drafting will depend on the scale and extent of legislative change proposed and advice from the expert advisory panel.
Known risks/issues	<p>Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are choices about the scope and scale of the legislation to replace the RMA. Options will have different implications for policy work required, time and resources, the alignment with phase two of resource management reform, transition timeframes, and impacts on Treaty of Waitangi settlements. <p>Resources and timing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing the RMA will be a large undertaking. Current timeframes are ambitious.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the Expert Ministerial Advisory Group and working with them to develop a “blueprint” for reform
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two broad objectives to the work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to make it easier to get things done by unlocking development capacity for housing and business growth, enabling delivery of high-quality infrastructure for the future, and enabling primary sector growth and development (including aquaculture, forestry, pastoral, horticulture, and mining). ○ to safeguard the environment and human health, adapt to the effects of climate change, improve regulatory quality in the resource management system, and uphold Treaty of Waitangi settlements and other related arrangements. • To achieve the objectives, the new system must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ be clear on its purpose and more targeted on areas it can address and influence ○ have balanced purpose that provides rights to basic human needs (eg, housing) alongside environmental protection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ have alignment between the scale of problems and solutions, eg, catchment level problems should be managed by catchment-level solutions
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<p>The regulatory impact assessment process for replacing the RMA will draw on the available evidence to assess the impact of the proposed legislative changes and their overall net benefit. Performance indicators will be established to support the ongoing evaluation of the resource management system and the success of the new system.</p>
<p>Responsible manager</p>	<p>Liz Moncrieff, General Manager – Urban and Infrastructure Policy</p>

Going for Housing Growth, urban work programme including granny flats

Responsible Minister Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

- Key message(s)**
- Policies in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) support well-functioning urban environments and enable greater housing supply.
 - There is a significant programme of work to support and implement the Government's Going for Housing Growth (GfHG) programme. This includes working with other agencies, particularly the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to provide analysis and advice on potential changes to the NPS-UD and making the medium density residential standards optional. This work is progressing through RM Bill 2 and the national direction work program.
 - The Ministry and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have work underway to enable granny flats up to 60 square metres under the building and resource management systems. Consultation on the *Making it easier to build granny flats* discussion document closed on 12 August 2024. Close to 2000 submissions were received. Officials will provide advice on the outcomes of submissions at the end of September. The proposed RMA national environmental standard for granny flats will progress through the national direction work program and will be in place mid-2025. Concurrently MBIE will make changes to the Building Act.
 - The Ministry works to ensure that urban policy requirements in the NPS-UD and Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) are implemented as intended. This includes working closely with councils and other agencies to understand and resolve implementation issues as they arise.
 - The Ministry provides advice on statutory RMA processes that require ministerial decisions, such as requests for timeframe extensions for decisions on Intensification Planning Instruments (IPIs) and referred recommendations on IPIs where councils reject the recommendations of Independent Hearing Panels (IHP). This work is expected to continue into 2025/26.

Summary of NPS-UD implementation

Tier 1 councils and Rotorua District Council	Intensification Streamlined Planning Process progress	Completion date
Kāpiti Coast District Council	Completed	20 August 2023
Selwyn District Council	Completed	20 August 2023
Hutt City Council	Completed	22 September 2023
Porirua City Council	Completed	14 December 2023
Upper Hutt City Council	Completed	20 December 2023
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	Completed	1 March 2024
Wellington City Council	Completed	20 March 2024
Rotorua District Council	Completed	31 March 2024
Tauranga City Council (substantive IPI)	Completed	30 June 2024
Waipā District Council	Four rejected IHP recommendations to be	30 August 2024

		referred to the Minister for his decision.	
	Waikato District Council	Hearings complete IHP recommendations report released 22 March 2024	22 October 2024
	Waimakariri District Council	Hearings yet to commence	17 December 2024
	Hamilton City Council	Hearings scheduled to commence 4 September 2024	20 December 2024
	Christchurch City Council	Hearings complete. IHP recommendations report released 30 July 2024	12 September 2024 (NPS-UD) 12 December 2025 (MDRS)
	Tauranga City Council (Tauriko West)	Public submissions period has closed. Hearings scheduled for late 2024/early 2025	31 December 2025
	Auckland Council	Hearings paused	31 March 2026
	Tier 2 councils	NPS-UD Policy 5 progress	
	Whangārei District Council	Plan change complete	
	New Plymouth District Council	Plan change complete	
	Napier City Council	Plan change notified in September 2023. Hearings will be held November 2024 - July 2025	
	Hastings District Council	Plan change notified in October 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2024	
	Palmerston North City Council	Plan change to be notified in October 2024	
	Nelson City Council	Plan change notified in August 2023 and is expected to be completed in 2025	
	Tasman District Council	Plan changes in progress.	
	Queenstown Lakes District Council	Plan change notified in August 2023. Hearings are expected to be held in 2025	
	Dunedin City Council	Plan change complete	
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals to make the medium density residential standards (MDRS) optional have led to some tier 1 councils requesting to pause their IPIs, which are the housing intensification plan changes that implement the NPS-UD and MDRS, until there is more certainty around policy changes. Delays or changes to IPIs may impact on the availability of development capacity, potentially dampen developer and infrastructure provider confidence and provide uncertainty for communities. 		
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2024, Cabinet made decisions on the first stage of the GfHG programme, including: 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introducing Housing Growth Targets ○ making the MDRS optional for councils, subject to compliance with Housing Growth Targets ○ enabling greenfield development and exploring changes to the NPS-UD responsiveness planning policies and Future Development Strategies ○ introducing requirements to ensure councils enable appropriate levels of intensification in their urban areas ○ introducing new direction on mixed-use development ○ removing the ability to set minimum floor area and balcony requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engagement with councils, partners and key stakeholders will occur during detailed policy development and public consultation on RM Bill 2 and national direction program changes. This consultation is anticipated for early 2025 with legislation and changes expected to be in place by mid-2025.
<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The GfHG work programme will enable development opportunities in urban areas. ● Officials have provided advice to Ministers where three councils had rejected recommendations of their IHP. For example, in March 2024, Wellington City Council rejected 20 recommendations of their IHP on matters such as heritage listings, application of walkable catchments, and the extent of the City Centre Zone. Following advice from officials, I made decisions that increased the overall development potential in Wellington City. This is now the subject of judicial review proceedings. ● Some of the IHP recommendations rejected by Council were based on interpretations that differed from the intent of the NPS-UD. ● As part of the GfHG programme, the Ministry is considering how to reduce the level of subjectivity and debate on technical matters to allow for the intended outcomes to be achieved through a more efficient process. For example, there has been debate on how to define walkable catchments and rapid transit services, with multiple changes over the course of the process.
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over half of the tier 1 councils (including Rotorua Lakes District Council) have completed their IPI, incorporating the MDRS and giving effect to the intensification provisions of the NPS-UD. ● We have yet to see the full effect of these intensification plan changes, as there will be a lag between resource content settings and houses built. 80 percent of tier 2 councils have notified a plan change to give effect to the NPS-UD. ● Of the 17 self-identified tier 3 councils, three have notified plan changes and six are working on draft plan changes.
<p>Responsible general manager</p>	<p>Liz Moncrieff, General Manager – Urban and Infrastructure</p>

Fast Track Approvals Bill

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fast-track Approvals Bill was introduced to the House on 7 March 2024 as one of the Government's 100-day deliverables. It is currently before the Environment Committee. • The Bill builds on previous fast-track consenting regimes under the COVID-19 Recovery FTC ACT 2020 and the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023. The fast-track process consolidates and speeds up multiple consenting and permissions processes that are typically required for large or complex projects. Projects may include infrastructure, housing, resource extraction, aquaculture, agriculture, and other developments. • Approvals available under the Bill include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ resource consents, notices of requirement, and certificates of compliance under the Resource Management Act 1991 ○ concessions under the Conservation Act 1987 ○ authority to do anything otherwise prohibited under the Wildlife Act 1953 ○ approvals under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 ○ concessions and other permissions under the Reserves Act 1977 ○ archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 ○ marine consents under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 ○ land access arrangements (sections 61 or 61B) under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 ○ aquaculture activity approvals under the Fisheries Act 1996. • The Bill also makes a change to Environment Court processes under the Public Works Act 1981 for projects dealt with under the Bill. • Projects can access the fast-track process either by applying to be referred to an expert panel by the Minister for Infrastructure (in consultation with the Minister for the Environment and relevant portfolio Ministers), or through inclusion in schedule 2 to the Bill ("listed projects"). • Eligibility criteria includes if the project has regional or national significance or would benefit from the fast-track process, and how it may address matters like housing demand and environmental issues. • Final decisions on projects will be made by the expert panel. <p><i>Listed projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegated Ministers agreed the introduced version of the Bill would include an empty schedule 2, and that projects would be added later in the legislative process. A process is currently underway to identify projects to be included in the Bill when enacted. • For a project to be included in Schedule 2 Part B it only needs to demonstrate that it will be regionally or nationally significant. Projects in Schedule 2 Part A must meet the purpose of the Bill, and demonstrate they meet the eligibility criteria in Clause 17 and that they do not trigger any ineligibility criteria in Clause 18. • Applications for projects to be included on Schedule 2 have been considered by an independent Advisory Group, who provided their recommendations to Ministers on 2 August.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori have a range of rights and interests in natural resources, which have repeatedly been recognised as very significant. The Bill will be significant for Māori in terms of how these rights and interests are recognised and protected.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bill has been developed at pace. It contains some errors, misalignments and gaps that would have been picked up during a longer period of development. These are being corrected through the select committee and further legislative phases. s 9(2)(g)(i) Balancing environmental protections against the need for development will require careful assessment by expert panels.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials have analysed submissions and delivered the departmental report with recommendations to the Environment Committee, which is expected to report back to the House in in mid-October 2024. The Second Reading for the Fast-track Approvals Bill is expected by the end of the year. Ministers will recommend the list of projects to be included on Schedules 2 Part A and Part B for Cabinet approval, and for inclusion in the Bill via an Amendment Paper.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Fast-track Approvals Bill is intended to provide a more efficient and certain process for projects with significant regional or national benefits. The key difference between this Fast-track Bill and the other regimes is that this is a one-stop-shop that encompasses more than just consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). A broad range of projects will be able to access the fast-track process including infrastructure, housing, resource extraction, aquaculture and other developments, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga estimates that current consenting processes cost infrastructure projects \$1.29 billion every year, and the time taken to get a resource consent for key projects has nearly doubled within a recent five-year period. Efficiencies are sought through coordinating and combining approvals across multiple statutes. The Bill is expected to benefit major project developers and communities by reducing the infrastructure deficit, and contributing to more affordable quality housing. <p><i>Listed projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 390 applications received Applications received for all regions of NZ and cover a wide range of sectors including aquaculture, mining, solar, wind, residential, commercial, hydro power.
Responsible general manager	Jo Gascoigne , General Manager – Resource Management System Ilana Miller , Programme Director – Partnership, Investments and Enablement

Freshwater Work Programme

Responsible Minister	Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to replace the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM) has begun and is expected to take 18 to 24 months. • Aside from targeted changes being made this year through RM Bill 1, the Government is yet to take policy decisions on changes to the NPS-FM • Changes to the NPS-FM and other freshwater regulations will be delivered through the Government's National Direction work programme, RMA reform phase 2.
Known risks/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing NPS-FM has become extremely complex and expensive to implement and will not deliver the outcomes for freshwater that New Zealanders expect.
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted changes being progressed through RM Bill 1 this year that relate to freshwater are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ clarify resource consent applicants no longer need to demonstrate their proposed activities follow the Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy of obligations ○ amend stock exclusion regulations in relation to sloped land ○ repeal intensive winter grazing regulations ○ align the consenting pathway for coal mining with the pathway for other mining activities. • Cabinet has also agreed to clarify discharge consenting provisions in the Resource Management Act by through amendments to section 107 of the RMA. • Further changes to freshwater policy will be finalised by mid-2025 as part of the National Direction work programme under RMA reform phase 2. Public consultation on proposals is expected to take place in early 2025.
Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is committed to improving freshwater quality for the benefit of all New Zealanders by ensuring a sustainable and balanced approach, that works towards improving the environmental outcomes for our waterways.
The evidence: Facts, figures, amounts invested and how the outcome will be measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Te Uru Kahika's Briefing to Incoming Ministers: • "Regional government has invested heavily in substantial work programmes aimed at improving freshwater quality. We have been guided by national instruments on freshwater but regular changes to these have left councils in a cycle of planning resulting in high costs, uncertainty for communities and delayed policy implementation."
Responsible general manager	Hayden Johnston , General Manager – Natural Environment Policy

Infrastructure and Renewable Energy / Electrify NZ

Responsible Minister	<p>Minister for Infrastructure and RMA Reform, Hon Chris Bishop</p> <p>Minister for Energy, Simeon Brown</p>
Key Message(s)	<p>In support of the Government's commitment to better enable infrastructure, we are undertaking work to consider what changes are needed to support two outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the certainty that resource management plans and decisions will sufficiently enable infrastructure and protect it from reverse sensitivity, while managing its effects, both on the natural environment and in urban areas. • Reducing the costs and delays associated with consenting infrastructure (while ensuring its environmental effects are managed). <p>Most recently, with the Government's focus on significantly increasing renewable electricity generation and other coalition agreements including <i>Electrify NZ</i>, the Ministry are prioritising work to advance renewable energy policy, and improve national direction and consenting processes. The Ministry is also developing national direction to enable electricity transmission and distribution.</p> <p>Work is well underway to update the national policy statements on renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission to be consulted on in early 2025 as part of the wider suite of national direction changes. The Ministry is also progressing work on a regulatory system for enabling offshore wind energy.</p> <p>Changes to the consenting framework that will make it easier and more certain to consent renewable energy projects will be included in RMA Bill 2.</p> <p>The Ministry works with partner agencies MBIE, DOC and Infracom / Te Waihangā.</p>
Known risks/issues	<p>To enable access to infrastructure services to all New Zealanders, infrastructure may sometimes have to be built in areas where there's potential for conflict with other outcomes (both in relation to natural and urban environments). A key part of the proposed national direction for infrastructure will be to provide direction on how to manage conflict, and to provide direction on how to manage any adverse effects associated with infrastructure.</p> <p>The current renewable energy work is broad ranging and complex, involving potential changes to legislation, national direction, national standards, consenting processes, and implementation.</p> <p>Balancing how to advance and prioritise renewable electricity delivery at pace while appropriately managing potential impacts on other nationally important matters is an ongoing challenge.</p> <p>The Ministry is working with partner agencies (particularly MBIE) and sector stakeholders to ensure that renewable electricity generation and electricity transmission is well integrated with national direction on matters of national importance.</p>
What next?	<p>Changes to the consenting process, including decision time frames, reconsenting, and lapse periods, are included in Bill 2.</p> <p>The next steps for changes to national direction include policy decisions on changes to existing national direction due to be consulted on in early 2025, before being adopted in mid 2025.</p>

<p>Short anecdote or specific example of outcomes sought</p>	<p>National direction can provide policies and rules on how to assess effects, how to manage conflict, and activity status that would support a more streamlined consenting process for both existing and new infrastructure.</p> <p>Prioritising renewable energy and reducing consenting hurdles will help ensure a significant increase in renewable electricity generation for NZ. This includes striking the right balance to enable development of renewable electricity generation assets, and transmission of that electricity to the national grid, in areas that include significant environmental values.</p> <p>For example, a Mackenzie Basin solar farm was recently declined because the site was classified as an outstanding natural landscape, and commissioners found the proposal would have potentially significant adverse effects on significant biodiversity values. Including policies for recognising and providing for the benefits of REG activities, and more clearly identifying consenting pathways through high value areas, in the updated National Policy Statements for Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Transmission, would assist both applicants and decision-makers when considering consent applications.</p>
<p>The evidence:</p> <p>Facts, figures, amounts invested & how the outcome will be measured</p>	<p>It is well accepted that there are high costs and delays for advancing new infrastructure projects in NZ. For example, Infrastructure Commission research has found the costs of obtaining resource consents for infrastructure projects has increased in recent years. Consenting costs are on average 5.5% of total project costs, and for smaller projects 16% on average.</p> <p>Renewable electricity generation providers advise that consent applications for renewable electricity generation are slow, costly and uncertain. There is a lack of complete information / data (including spatial data) on the extent to which protection of environmental values represents a barrier to consenting.</p>
<p>Responsible Manager</p>	<p>General Liz Moncrieff – General Manager Urban and Infrastructure Policy</p>