Ministry for the Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Resource Management Act Reform Weekly Update

Whakanaketanga Whakarite Rawa Ahuarangi ā-Wiki

For the week ending 13 June 2025

Hon. Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for Resource Management Act Reform

Key Updates

Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill

The Environment Select Committee (the Committee) has now reported back to the House on the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill (the Bill)

- The Committee adopted the report by majority.
- The Committee's report and revised tracked version of the Bill (version 15) has been provided to your office.

Further advice on amendments to the Bill

- Following agreement with Minister Shane Jones on the amended scope of the regulation-making power, we have provided additional advice on the regulation-making power amendment. This advice also covers some further content on the plan stop proposal, and decisions required to progress the amendment to include thermal firming activities in the one-year consent timeframe policy.
- We require prompt decisions from you on these matters, so that we can draft the amendments in time for you to take a paper to LEG in July and enact the Bill in August.

Drafting the Government Amendment Paper to the Bill

- Now that decisions on the amendments have been confirmed by Cabinet, we are working to provide drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO).
- We have been advised by 9(2)(h) [redacted]
- We are working with PCO to agree a plan to complete the drafting of amendments to the Bill in the timeframes necessary to allow Auckland Council and Christchurch City Council to notify replacement housing planning instruments ahead of local government elections.
- We will update your office on the agreed timeframes early next week.
- If the drafting cannot be completed in time, we will provide you with options for alternatives, such as moving some proposals forward as a separate piece of legislation.

Business Group: Environmental Management and Adaptation
Owner: Pernelle Vari, 027 265 5915

Updates to infringement offences regulations under the RMA

We seek your agreement to align agreed updates to the Resource Management (Infringement Offences) Regulations 1999 (the Regulations) with the enactment of the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill (the Bill).

These Regulations prescribe 'instant fines' that councils can issue for minor contraventions of the RMA that do not warrant court action. The fine amounts have not been updated since 1999 and are now too low for the types of minor offending they are intended for. A review of the regulations was started in 2023, leading to Cabinet decisions to increase the fines, but these changes were not able to be gazetted before the 2024 Election.

You previously made substantive decisions to proceed with the amendments to the Regulations but indicated your preference that the amendments be in alignment with proposed updates to National Direction in the Phase 2 Package [BRF-4063, September 2024 refers].

However, we consider that the proposed increases to the instant fines are better aligned with the increases in court fines proposed in the Bill. We therefore propose the amendments to the regulations be included in the Bill Cabinet paper.

This approach would mean that the updated regulations will be in place sooner (August 2025) than if they were aligned with the National Direction Package (the timeline currently being most National Direction instruments gazetted by late 2025, and the remainder in early 2026).

We recommend that you:

- Direct officials to align the timeline for updating the infringement offences regulations with the Bill Package.

Yes | No

Business Group: Environmental Management and Adaptation
Owner: Pernelle Vari, 027 265 5915

Estimates 2025/26

The Environment Estimates Hearing is scheduled for 19 June at 10.00 to 11.00am.

You will attend this hearing alongside Ministers Simmonds and Hoggard.

Pre-hearing Written Deliverables
We provided your office with responses to 84 questions contained in the Supplementary Estimates Questionnaire (the Supplementary Questions) on 4 June. You had no feedback on these responses.

Late 11 June, we were made aware of 20 additional Supplementary Questions provided by the Environment Committee on 4 June that had not been forwarded to the Ministry for response.

We are working at pace alongside the Environmental Protection Authority and the Climate Change Commission to respond to these 20 questions. We will provide these responses to your office under the 'no surprises' principle as soon as we can.

We are seeking an extension from the Committee on the Supplementary Questions to allow sufficient time to respond to the 20 questions. This extension has not yet been confirmed.

The hearing and supporting collateral
Hearing collateral and an aide-memoire to support your attendance at the hearing has been provided to your office.

Your office has let us know you do not require preparation sessions with Ministry officials.

Business Group: Office of the Chief Executive
Owner: Chelsea Cooper - Acting Manager Ministerial Services, 027 555 4367

Update: Phase 2 National Direction engagement

There continues to be a lot of interest in this work.

Submissions

- At 2pm 10 June – 1,267 submissions have been received.
- Packages 1 and 2: Infrastructure and, Development and Primary Sector – 26 submissions. Currently granny flats and highly productive land are still the key topics in submissions received. We anticipate topics will change as people have time to absorb and understand the content in the discussion documents.
- Package 3: Freshwater – 1,241 submissions. Te Mana o te Wai continues to be a key topic in submissions received.
- It is usual for most submissions to be received in the last few days of consultation.

Webinars

- Four webinars have been held on Packages 1 and 2 – they were well attended.
- Recordings of two webinars will be provided on our website. Answers to questions posted in the webinars will be provided on our website.

Online Forums

- Seven online forums are being held to cover the National Direction instruments in more depth, with the first three being held next week.
- Three online forums are being held for post-settlement governance entities in early July.

Other meetings with key stakeholders have been organised. These meetings started this week and will run over the next six weeks.

We have also heard that other organisations are providing their own webinars or forums on these National Direction proposals. For example, the New Zealand Planning Institute is holding an update next week on these National Direction Packages. The Environmental Defence Society have also identified they intend to hold a Webinar on this topic in the future.

Package 4 is on track for public release next week on 18 June.

Business Group: Environmental Management and Adaptation
Owner: Jo Gascoigne, 0275317202

Update: Economic value of resource management data

We are preparing advice for your consideration on the economic value of improved resource management (environmental) data, following previous direction from joint Environment Ministers [CAB-25-MIN-0080.01 refers].

To support this advice, we commissioned independent economic analysis from Allen + Clarke to assess the potential value of an improved resource management data system. This builds on the recent Castalia economic impact analysis of proposed resource management reforms (February 2025) and has informed the recent MartinJenkins literature review on the *Economic Benefits of Effective Resource Management* (June 2025).

Key findings from the Allen + Clarke analysis on targeted investment into improving New Zealand's environmental data (as part of National Land Information generally) include:

- direct benefits of $1.3-1.9 billion over 30 years, 9(2)(f)(iv)

- support for realising the $14.8 billion in benefits projected from replacing the RMA, as outlined in the Castalia report
- potential indirect benefits of up to $1 billion per year, based on international experience, across sectors such as technology, property development, insurance and primary sector exports.

The MartinJenkins review identified high quality and accessible information as a key driver of economic benefit and highlighted gaps in understanding in the current system. It also assessed broader benefits, including:

- growing and well-functioning urban environments
- effective and affordable provision of infrastructure
- productive use of natural resources and natural capital growth
- efficient regulatory administration
- resilience to natural hazards
- competitive markets.

Together, these three reports will underpin a broader economic narrative supporting RMA replacement and productivity improvements.

Stakeholders across the primary and environmental sectors continue to express strong support for improved environmental data. They recognise its potential to reduce compliance costs, enhance transparency, and support long-term economic and environmental resilience. This was recently highlighted in the Newsroom article *Govt's data shakeup would answer farmer and conservationist pleas* (10 June 2025), which featured strong support from Federated Farmers, primary sector companies, and environmental groups. You can read the article on the Newsroom website at: https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/06/10/govts-data-shakeup-would-answer-farmer-and-conservationist-pleas/

We will provide a briefing to joint Environment Ministers in late July, including the full economic analysis. The briefing will outline a potential plan and options for improving resource management data, aligning closely with the Expert Advisory Group's vision for a national E-Plan and better performance monitoring, and builds on current work to improve adaptation and natural hazards data. It will also explore potential cost recovery mechanisms for both initial and ongoing government investment.

Subject to your direction, we will explore resource management data investment further 9(2)(f)(iv)

Business Group: Strategy, Stewardship and Performance
Owner: Jennifer Hutcheon, 027 283 3217

RMA Statutory Notifications to the Minister for the Environment

Type	From	Planning Instrument	Purpose	Date Received	Consultation Period or Statutory Timeframe	Response
9(2)(f)(iv)						

9(2)(f)(iv)

This information is included in the RMA Reform Weekly Update, in addition to Hon Simmonds Environment Weekly Update, in recognition of the correlation between the Environment and RMA Reform portfolios.

Intensification Planning Instrument Progress

Process step	Council	IPI progress	Finish date (notify decisions on IHP recommendations)
Recommendations referred to Minister	Waikato District Council	Council referred two rejected IHP recommendations to you for a final decision on 31 October 2024. We provided you with advice on 3 April 2025 (BRF-5555 refers), and you made your decisions on 14 April 2025. You accepted one of the IHP recommendations and deferred your decision on the other. You wrote to the Council on 17 April 2025, informing them of your decisions.	22 October 2024 (completed on time)
	Christchurch City Council (NPS-UD Policy 3 and 4 parts of PC14)	Council made decisions on the balance of IHP recommendations required to give effect to Policies 3 and 4 of the NPS-UD on 2 December 2024, rejecting 20 recommendations. Council referred the rejected recommendations to you on 24 February 2025. We provided you with advice on 12 May 2025. You made your decisions on 25 May 2025, and we have provided your office with a press release and an updated response letter to send to the Council. This is due to be sent on 6 June.	20 December 2024 (completed on time)
In progress	Waimakariri District Council	Council must make decisions on IHP recommendations by 30 June 2025 and notify these decisions by 14 July 2025. The IHP has held all scheduled hearings and is now moving into the deliberations stage.	14 July 2025
	Christchurch City Council (MDRS parts of PC14)	Council has deferred decisions on those parts of its IPI not subject to Policies 3 and 4 of the NPS-UD (i.e., MDRS components). Council has requested a further extension to make decisions on the balance of its IPI. We provided advice (BRF-6127 refers), and you declined the request. You wrote to the Mayor of Christchurch on 9 May 2025, informing him of your decision.	12 December 2025
	Auckland Council (rest of PC78, non-Policy 3(a))	Hearing on 'Metropolitan Centre Outstanding Matters' scheduled for 3 June 2025.	31 March 2026
Completed	Kāpiti Coast District Council	Completed.	20 August 2023
	Selwyn District Council	Completed.	20 August 2023

Process step	Council	IPI progress	Finish date (notify decisions on IHP recommendations)
	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	Completed (substantive IPI).	17 July 2024
	Waipā District Council	Nearly completed; Council to publicly notify your decisions on referred recommendations. Council staff have indicated this will be done by 1 July 2025.	30 August 2024
	Christchurch City Council	Partially completed (NPS-UD Policy 3 and 4 components, except for referred recommendations).	18 September 2024
	Tauranga City Council (Tauriko West)	Completed (Variation 1).	31 December 2025
	Hamilton City Council	Completed.	20 December 2024
	Auckland Council (Policy 3(a) parts of PC78)	Nearly completed; Council made decisions on IHP recommendations on 22 May, accepting all recommendations. Council to publicly notify its decisions on the city centre provisions, which will then become operative.	30 May 2025

Upcoming Briefings for Minister Bishop

Papers due to the Minister in the following 3 weeks
As at 1pm, 11 June 2025

Tracking Number	Title	Purpose	Responsible General Manager / Chief Advisor	Title Suitable for Proactive Release?	Date due to Minister
BRF-6283	Further advice on increasing development capacity in Auckland and options for RM Bill 2	Provides further advice on increasing development capacity in Auckland and options for amendments to RM Bill 2.	Jessica Ranger	Y/N	Sent 6 June
BRF-6327	Information on previous Natural and Built Environment Act provisions	Provides information requested by you regarding provisions in the (now repealed) Natural and Built Environment Act.	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	Sent 6 June
BRF-6335	Upcoming Estimates hearing 2025	Provides information about the upcoming Estimates hearing on 19 June and key messages to support attendance.	Martin Workman	Y/N	Sent 12 June
BRF-6226	Replacing the RMA - Plan-making, consenting and designations	Seeks decisions on number of planning elements, including designations, plan-making, consents and standardised zones.	Jessica Ranger	Y/N	12 June
BRF-6268	[redacted]	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	12 June
BRF-6337	Further advice on regulation making power, stop plan-making and thermal electricity firming for Bill 2	Provides further advice on the proposed regulation-making power, stop plan-making mechanism, and thermal electricity firming provisions for Bill 2, to inform final policy decisions.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	12 June
BRF-6038	Replacing the RMA - Allocation and Freshwater Rights and Interests	Seeks decisions on the approach to allocation of natural resources, and freshwater rights and interests.	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	16 June

BRF-6045	Replacing the RMA - Regulatory Takings and Justification Reports	Seeks decisions on regulatory takings and justification reports.	Jessica Ranger	Y/N	16 June
BRF-6341	Further advice on constraining council ability to review marine farm consents	Provides advice on amending policy on s128 for aquaculture for RM Bill 2.	Jo Gascoigne	Y/N	16 June
BRF-6300	[redacted]	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	19 June
BRF-6151	Replacing the RMA - Coastal marine area	Seeks decisions on aspects relating to the Coastal Marine Area.	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	19 June
BRF-6142	Replacing the RMA - Planning Tribunal	Seeks decisions on the establishment of a Planning Tribunal, including purpose and functions.	Jo Gascoigne	Y/N	19 June
BRF-6340	Meeting with Te Tai Kaha - 26 June 2025	Provides notes and talking points for meeting with Te Tai Kaha on freshwater allocation proposals.	Clare Maihi	Y	24 June
BRF-6109	Replacing the RMA - Heritage in the system	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Jo Gascoigne	Y/N	26 June
BRF-6246	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	26 June
BRF-6338	Replacing the RMA - Further Treaty decisions	Seeks remaining Treaty-related decisions required for drafting of replacement legislation.	Clare Maihi	Y/N	26 June
BRF-6119	Replacing the RMA – decisions on residual matters	Seeks decisions on the residual matters not decided in previous briefings.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	26 June
BRF-6116	Replacing the RMA – Implementation transition timing	Seeks decisions on the overarching approach to transition from the current Act to the two new Bills.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	26 June

Cabinet Papers

As at 1pm, 11 June 2025

Tracking Number	Title	Description	Committee	Responsible General Manager	Date due to Minister's Office	Lodgement Date	Date of Committee Meeting	Date of Cabinet Meeting
CAB-535	Te Awa Tupua | Whanganui River - Te Pou Tupua: APH documentation to confirm joint appointments	Provides documents for reappointments to the Office of Te Pou Tupua.	APH	Martin Workman	19 February (revised paper sent 11 June)	19 June	24 June	30 June

Ministerial Correspondence Update

As at 1pm, 11 June 2025

We are preparing responses to 36 pieces of correspondence on a wide range of topics including:

- concerns for Heritage listed buildings and areas
- concerns for recent decisions around Plan Change 78
- queries around land use and ownership of water and other resources
- issues with freshwater nitrate pollution
- a range of various resource consenting issues including about:
    - compliance costs
    - granny flats in future urban zones
    - rezoning of residential land
    - riverbed gravel extraction
    - solar farms
    - rural subdivisions
    - music venues.

Written Parliamentary Questions Update

As at 1pm, 11 June 2025

We are preparing responses to written parliamentary questions on verifications, background checks and criteria applied to projects, directors, companies and financial stability of listed Fast-track projects, numbers of staff and workstations in the head office of the Minister's responsible agencies, and advice received during week beginning 2 June 2025.