Ministry for the Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Resource Management Act Reform Weekly Update

Whakanaketanga Whakarite Rawa Ahuarangi ā-Wiki

For the week ending 23 May 2025

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

Key Updates

Science, Innovation and Technology reform update

We will look to engage with the new board chairs for the Earth Science Institute and the Bioeconomy Science Institute

The Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, Hon Dr Shane Reti, has announced David Smol (current GNS Science Chair) as Chair for the Earth Science Institute and Barry Harris (current NIWA Chair) as the Chair for the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

Crown Research Institute (CRI) mergers are expected to be complete by 1 July. This is a legal change, with merged CRIs to continue to operate existing capability and science services until the transition to Public Research Organisations (PRO) in mid-2026. Our senior officials will look to engage with the new board chairs to discuss ongoing delivery of services we rely on in the period of transitioning to PRO, as well as opportunities for delivering Government priorities in the new system.

Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor and Science, Innovation and Technology Advisory Council (PMSITAC) announced

On 7 May, the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, announced that Dr John Roche (former Chief Science Advisor at the Ministry for Primary Industries) will be the new Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (PMCSA). Dr Roche will be Deputy Chair of the PMSITAC. The other members are:

- Sir Peter Gluckman - the first PMCSA, current President of the International Science Council, current chair of the Science System Advisory Group.
- Craig Piggott – founder of agritech company, Halter.
- Professor Merryn Tawhai - leads research at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute in applied computational physiology of the respiratory system.
- Komal Mistry-Mehta - Chief Innovation and Brand Officer at Fonterra.
- Malcolm Johns – Chief Executive of Genesis Energy.

Minister Reti will chair the PMSITAC. The first meeting is expected to take place in June. Our senior officials will work closely with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the new PMCSA, and Sir Peter Gluckman (with whom we have existing relationships), to determine how best to support the PMSITAC's work and ensure strong connections across the science system. We will also engage with MBIE to explore how the Forum of Chief Science Advisors might contribute a coordinated Government voice to the PMSITAC.

Business Group: Strategy, Stewardship and Performance
Owner: Lauren Long, 027 248 2684

RM (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill

Select Committee consideration of the Bill continues

The Environment Select Committee (the Committee) finished its consideration of the RT version of the RM (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill (the Bill) and draft commentary on 22 May. The Committee will report back to the House on 17 June.

9(2)(f)(iv)



9(2)(f)(iv)

Cabinet paper seeking policy approvals for amendments to the Bill
You received a draft Cabinet paper to send for Ministerial consultation on 21 May. The timeline for this paper is:

- Ministerial consultation started - 22 May
- Ministerial consultation ends – 27 May
- Paper lodged for ECO - 29 May
- Paper considered by ECO – 4 June
- Decisions confirmed by Cabinet - 9 June

This paper included a recommendation that you (and other specified Ministers) are authorised to make further policy decisions and issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to implement the recommendations. Further briefings on these additional policy decisions will be provided prior to taking the revised Bill text to the LEG Committee in July.

Supporting materials for the Bill's remaining stages in the House
We are preparing supporting materials for you and your office, including:

- Speeches for second and third reading,
- Key messages, and questions and answers for the Bill as whole,
- A debate guide to support you at Committee of the Whole House, providing an explanation of clauses, where amendments have been made via amendment paper, and questions and proposed answers to questions you are likely to receive in the chair.

Preparation for implementing the Bill
Where policy decisions have been taken, we have developed factsheets to support implementation of the policies in the Bill and are scoping further implementation support required. We are also working with Auckland Council and Christchurch City Council to ensure they can implement the processes set out in the Bill for withdrawing their Intensification Planning Instruments and for Auckland Council to notify its replacement plan change.

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

9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(f)(iv)



Estimates 2025/26

The Environment Estimates Hearing is scheduled for 19 June and will be attended by Hon Penny Simmonds, Minister for the Environment, and officials from both the Ministry for the Environment and the Environmental Protection Authority.

Pre-hearing Written Deliverables
We provided the final SEQ to your office on 22 May. Minister Simmonds, as Vote Environment Minister, will lodge the SEQ with the Finance and Expenditure Committee by 1pm 23 May.

We received the final versions of the Supplementary Estimates Questions (the Supplementary Questions) last week. We'll provide your office with draft answers to these questions in the first week of June for review and feedback.

Minister Simmonds, as Vote Environment Minister, will lodge the Supplementary Questions with the Environment Committee on 12 June (one week prior to the hearing).

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

Auckland Council decisions on the city centre parts of Plan Change 78 (PC78)

On 22 May, at an extraordinary meeting of the Policy and Planning Committee, Auckland Council (the Council) voted to accept the recommendations of the Independent Hearings Panel (IHP) on the city centre parts of Plan Change 78, with one abstention and no votes opposed. No decisions have been referred to you.

This vote was consistent with the recommendation by council staff that the Council accept all 36 of the IHP recommendations (including 15 recommendations related to Qualifying Matters) as set out in the IHP Recommendation Report.

9(2)(f)(iv)

Throughout the submissions process, key areas of debate were the application of qualifying matters across the perimeter of the city centre, and the impact of retaining the heritage protections along parts of Karangahape Road. While the IHP's recommendations were accepted by councillors, that same debate was reflected in the committee meeting.

We will continue to observe and report back on the Council's progress on developing a replacement plan change for the outstanding parts of PC78, and the results of the additional modelling work.

Business Group: Environmental Management and Adaptation
Owner: Jessica Ranger, 027 248 8617

RMA Statutory Notifications to the Minister for the Environment

Type	From	Planning Instrument	Purpose	Date Received	Consultation Period or Statutory Timeframe	Response
Notification (Clause 5, Schedule 1)	Waipā District Council	Plan Change 33 (Private) to the Waipā District Plan	To rezone approximately 16.3 hectares of the Hautapu Structure Plan – from Deferred Industrial to Industrial.	14 May 2025	15 May 2025 to 13 June 2025	Further advice can be prepared on request.

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.	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, until 16 September 2026. We provided advice (BRF-6127 refers), and you have agreed to decline the request. You wrote to the Mayor of Christchurch on 9 May 2025, informing him of your decision.	12 December 2025
	Auckland Council (Policy 3(a) parts of PC78)	On 10 March 2025 you directed Auckland Council to notify its decisions on the IHP's recommendations on the parts of PC78 subject to Policy 3(a) of the NPS-UD (city centre intensification) by 30 May 2025.	30 May 2025
	Auckland Council (rest of PC78, non-Policy 3(a))	Hearings on 'Metropolitan Centre Outstanding Matters' deferred until June 2025, following direction above.	31 March 2026

Process step	Council	IPI progress	Finish date (notify decisions on IHP recommendations)
Completed	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	Completed (substantive IPI).	17 July 2024
	Waipā District Council	Nearly completed; Council to publicly notify your decisions on referred recommendations and make their IPI fully operative. Council staff have indicated this will be done on 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

Upcoming Briefings for Minister Bishop

Papers due to the Minister in the following 3 weeks

As at 1pm, 21 May 2025

Tracking Number	Title	Purpose	Responsible General Manager / Chief Advisor	Title Suitable for Proactive Release?	Date due to Minister
BRF-6141	Minister Bishop - Portfolio Status Dashboard Q4 2025	Provides an overview and status of your programmes.	Nadeine Dommisse	Y/N	Sent 20 May
BRF-6261	Resource management reform - Systems Overview	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	22 May
BRF-6258	Meeting with Te Tai Kaha DATE TBC	Provides background information and talking points in advance of meeting with Te Tai Kaha on RM Reform.	Gina Rangi	Y/N	23 May
BRF-6187	National Adaptation Framework: Prioritising Local Adaptation Planning	Seeks delegated decisions on detailed aspects of adaptation planning requirements under the adaptation framework.	Katherine Wilson	Y/N	27 May
BRF-6188	Resource management reform - Compliance and enforcement	Seeks decisions on compliance and enforcement.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	29 May
BRF-6217	Resource management reform - Central Government's role in Spatial Plan decision making	Seeks decisions on central Government's role in spatial plan decision making.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	29 May
BRF-6226	Resource management reform - Plan-making, consenting and designations	Seeks decisions on number of planning elements, including designations, plan-making, consents and standardised zones.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	29 May
BRF-6200	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]	Hemi Smiler	Y/N	5 June

	the Resource Management Act 1991				
BRF-6142	Resource management reform - Planning Tribunal	Defines purpose, function and duties of the Planning Tribunal.	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	5 June
BRF-6117	Resource management reform - Systems funding and cost recovery	9(2)(f)(iv)	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	5 June
BRF-6246	9(2)(f)(iv)	9(2)(f)(iv)	Martyn Pinckard	Y/N	5 June
BRF-6109	Resource management reform - Heritage in the system	9(2)(f)(iv)	Jo Gascoigne	Y/N	12 June
BRF-6045	Resource management reform - Regulatory takings and justification reports	Seeks decisions on regulatory takings and justification reports.	Rhedyn Law	Y/N	12 June
BRF-6038	Resource management reform - 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	12 June

Cabinet Papers

As at 1pm, 21 May 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
	Further Policy Decisions for Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill	Seeks agreement to make changes to the Bill via an Amendment Paper.	ECO	Jess Ranger	21 May	29 May	4 June	9 June
	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	TBC	TBC	TBC

Official Information Act Requests for Minister Bishop

As at 1pm, 21 May 2025

Tracking Number	MO Tracking Number	Request	Correspondent	Organisation	Date due to Minister's Office	Date due to Requestor
OIAM-801	OIA25-CB109	Regulatory takings RMA reform	Genevieve Toop	Greenpeace	11 June	18 June

Ministerial Correspondence Update

As at 1pm, 21 May 2025

We are preparing responses to 30 pieces of correspondence on a wide range of topics including concerns about Environment Canterbury's review of catchment planning, requests for updates on Christchurch City Council's Plan Change 14, concerns about the impact of Auckland Council's Plan Change 78 (PC78) on the city's heritage identity, concerns about the value of submitting on PC78 when so many decisions on the plan change are yet to be made, concerns around the costs of resource consenting, issues with granny flat policy and consenting, upholding Treaty settlements and Te Tiriti obligations, and concerns around areas of significant Māori interest in the Hutt Council District Plan.

Written Parliamentary Questions Update

As at 1pm, 21 May 2025

There were no written parliamentary question responses in progress as at 1pm, 21 May.