Ministry for the Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Resource Management Act Reform Weekly Update

Whakanaketanga Whakarite Rawa Ahuarangi ā-Wiki

For the week ending 27 June 2025

Hon. Chris Bishop, Minister for Resource Management Act Reform

Key Updates

Update on intensification planning instruments (IPI)

Christchurch has notified your decisions on referred recommendations

- On 19 June 2025, Christchurch City Council publicly notified your decisions on the recommendations referred to you on its IPI, Plan Change 14 (PC14).
- These decisions are now fully operative, meaning that the Council has completed those parts of PC14 subject to Policies 3 and 4 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

Waimakariri has voted to accept all Independent Hearings Panel (IHP) recommendations on its IPI

- On 24 June 2025, Waimakariri District Council decided to accept all the Independent Hearings Panel's recommendations on its IPI, Variation 1: Housing Intensification (Variation 1). No recommendations will be referred to you for a decision.
- The next step is for the Council to publicly notify these decisions and make them fully operative. Council staff have indicated this will be done by the required timeframe (14 July 2025).
- The Council also accepted the IHP's recommendations on the remained of its Proposed District Plan (PDP and Variation 2: Financial Contributions), which it has been progressing alongside Variation 1.
- The Mayor has indicated that the new District Plan, including Variation 1, will provide land for up to 17,000 houses over the next 30 years.

Business Group: Environmental Management and Adaptation
Owner: Stephanie Gard'ner, 022 764 490

Update: Phase 2 National Direction (ND) engagement

We are half-way through the consultation period for Packages 1-3 and engagement is continuing across the teams. Package 4 was notified on 18 June. Engagement is being run out of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Online Forums

- The Forum Series finished this week, with the last forum being held on Thursday.
- The first three forums (Infrastructure, Energy and Coastal Marine) went well, with approximately 100 attendees at each forum.
- An email was sent to approximately 400 PSGEs on Wednesday 18 June, inviting them to register for the upcoming PSGE forums which start in the week of 30 June.
- Attendees have been really engaged at these forums, asking detailed questions. We anticipate this will translate into detailed submissions.

Other meetings with key stakeholders are continuing.

- Local Government
    - Councils are engaged in this programme, although they are finding it a stretch with the breadth of engagement across government this year. They have been significant participants in the Forums, and there have been meetings on particular proposals e.g. Marine Aquaculture with Councils in North part of South Island, and for Highly Productive Land amendments.
    - Questions have focused around the intersect of the ND with other programmes (e.g. Local Water Done Well planning), impacts of and discretion with implementation, the mapping deadline of HPL, how we intend to manage unintended consequences, and what is happening to the 2027 Freshwater deadline.

- Infrastructure sector
- Infrastructure proposals have involved meetings with sector groups including the Electricity Sector Environment Group (ESEG). 9(2)(g)(i) The two-stage consultation for freshwater means they will likely submit to loosen freshwater and wetland provisions that relate to electricity infrastructure to be included in the next round.
    - Feedback to date on the infrastructure proposals generally indicates that are in the right direction, with technical questions about the applicability of policies and definitions, for example what infrastructure is covered and why.
- Farming sector
    - For Aquaculture, questions focused on what activities would be considered as "trials", and how permitted activities relate to Treaty Settlements and Aquaculture Settlement Areas (ASAs).
- Forestry sector
    - Forum had a significant number of local government attendees.
    - Independent meetings have tended to have a wider focus than the amendments proposed (e.g. "how to map").
- Māori landowners
    - Te Puni Kōkiri have had three hui with iwi about the Papakāinga proposal.
    - They have been generally positive and interested to provide feedback on implications in their rohe.
    - Hui will start in the regions this week.
- ENGO
    - Other than Freshwater, there has not been a lot of feedback on particular proposals.
    - There is real interest in how this ND will transition in Phase 3 reforms.
- NZPI & RMLA
    - The engagements we are providing are appreciated.
- 9(2)(g)(i)
    - The message that the ND package has been designed to not require plan changes is clearly understood and appreciated.
    - The joint NZPI, RMLA, papa poumanu webinar on Packages 1 & 2 had over 250 attendees and was high level.
    - They are looking to set up another webinar on freshwater and Going for Housing Growth.
- PSGE – 3 PGSE forums will be held next week.
    - Questions have been raised in all forums about intersects with Treaty Settlement obligations and legislation.

<u>Submissions</u>

- As of 23 June – 1,437 submissions had been received.
- Packages 1 and 2: Infrastructure and, Development and Primary Sector – 41 submissions.
- Package 3: Freshwater – 1,396 submissions.
- Our conversations and questions in meetings indicate that we should expect detailed submissions, as people are thinking about how the proposals will work in practice, and how the packages will work together.
- We have approved the first request for lodging late submission, which is needed to get governance sign-off of the formal submission.

2024/25 Performance Plan process updates

Performance Plans are a key tool for setting and tracking agency performance and value delivery. Ministers are expected to engage with these plans to ensure alignment with government priorities and to support financial and performance discipline.

We submitted our first version of the 2024/25 Performance Plan in November 2024. As noted in BRF-5950, this received a red rating—primarily due to the (now partially addressed) RM3 funding gap, alongside issues related to the ETS Register and EPA fiscal sustainability (also partially addressed).

There are two upcoming update processes for the Vote Environment's Performance Plan:

30 June Update

- This will be a technical, informal update, with Chief Executive sign off as discussed with Minister Simmonds last week.

July–September Substantive Update

- A more comprehensive update process will begin in early July and will be informed by our recent Business Planning process. You and your colleagues will be given the opportunity to be actively involved in the development of this update.
- This second iteration will include expectations for demonstratable improvement to value and performance and increasing visibility of Crown entities.

We will provide you with visibility of the updated 30 June version as a starting point for the July–September process.

Business Group: Strategy, Stewardship and Performance
Owner: Charlotte Wood – Principal Advisor Strategy, Planning and Performance, 027 539 2699

RMA Statutory Notifications to the Minister for the Environment

Type	From	Planning Instrument	Purpose	Date Received	Consultation Period or Statutory Timeframe	Response
Consultation request (Clause 9 of the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery (KiwiRail Holdings Limited) Order 2023 (SWERO))	Horizons Regional Council	Resource consent	KiwiRail have undertaken remedial works under the emergency works provisions of section 330A of the Resource Management Act 1991, and as required have retrospectively applied for resource consent to authorise the works using the SWERO process.	9 June 2025	16 June 2025 – 24 June 2025	Further advice can be prepared on request.
9(2)(f)(iv)						
Notification (Clause 5, Schedule 1)	Manawatū District Council	Proposed Plan Change B to the Manawatū District Plan	To replace the existing General Residential Zone chapter of the plan. Key changes include: • Simplifying the bulk and location standards for new buildings. • Allowing for higher density housing and smaller outdoor living areas. • Better management of stormwater and hard surfaces.	19 June 2025	19 June 2025 – 18 July 2025	Further advice can be prepared on request.

			• More enabling of subdivision for medium density housing. Noise insulation requirements for new homes near railways.			
Notification (Clause 5, Schedule 1)	Manawatū District Council	Proposed Plan Change E to the Manawatū District Plan	To replace the existing Town Centre Zone and Mixed-Use Zone chapters. Key changes include: • Creation of a smaller Town Centre Zone but a larger Mixed-Use Zone. • Enabling more housing to be built within the Town Centre Zone and Mixed-Use Zone. • Increasing the permitted building height. • Permitting large format retail stores to be established anywhere within the Mixed-Use Zone. • Removal of the automatic requirement for a resource consent for new buildings in the Town Centre Zone. Noise insulation requirements for sensitive activities near railways.	19 June 2025	19 June 2025 – 18 July 2025	Further advice can be prepared on request.
Consultation request (Clause 9 of the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery (KiwiRail Holdings Limited) Order 2023 (SWERO))	Horizons Regional Council	Resource consent	KiwiRail have undertaken remedial works under the emergency works provisions of section 330A of the Resource Management Act 1991, and as required have retrospectively applied for resource consent to authorise the works using the SWERO process.	9 June 2025	16 June 2025 – 24 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	Required to finish by
In progress	Christchurch City Council (MDRS parts of PC14)	Council has completed NPS-UD Policy 3 and 4 parts of its IPI but deferred decisions on the balance of its IPI (ie, MDRS parts) until late 2025. Council requested a further extension for making decisions on the balance of its IPI in April 2025. 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))	RM Bill 2 will allow the Council to withdraw uncompleted parts of PC78 and notify a replacement plan change by 10 October 2025.	31 March 2026
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)
Awaiting public notification of decisions	Waipā District Council	Council to publicly notify your decisions on referred recommendations. Council staff have indicated this will be done by 1 July 2025.	30 August 2024 (decisions made on time)
	Waimakariri District Council	Council voted to accept all IHP recommendations on 24 June 2025. Council will publicly notify you its decisions, and staff have indicated this will be done by 14 July 2025.	14 July 2025 (decisions made on time)
Complete	Kāpiti Coast District Council	Complete.	20 August 2023
	Selwyn District Council	Complete.	20 August 2023
	Hutt City Council	Complete.	22 September 2023
	Porirua City Council	Complete.	14 December 2023
	Upper Hutt City Council	Complete.	20 December 2023

Process step	Council	IPI progress	Required to finish by
	Western Bay of Plenty District Council	Complete.	1 March 2024
	Wellington City Council	Complete.	20 March 2024
	Rotorua District Council	Complete.	31 March 2024
	Tauranga City Council	Complete (substantive IPI).	17 July 2024
	Auckland Council (Policy 3(a) parts of PC78)	Complete. Council publicly notified its decisions on 29 May 2025, and they became operative on 6 June 2025.	30 May 2025
	Tauranga City Council (Tauriko West)	Complete (Variation 1).	31 December 2025
	Hamilton City Council	Complete.	20 December 2024
	Christchurch City Council (NPS-UD Policy 3 and 4 parts of PC14)	Complete. Council publicly notified your decisions on referred recommendations, and they became operative, on 19 June 2025.	20 December 2024

Upcoming Briefings for Minister Bishop

Papers due to the Minister in the following 3 weeks
As at 1pm, 25 June 2025

Tracking Number	Title	Purpose	Responsible General Manager / Chief Advisor	Title Suitable for Proactive Release?	Date due to Minister
BRF-6353	9(2)(f)(iv)	9(2)(f)(iv)	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	Sent 24 June
BRF-6151	Replacing the RMA - Coastal marine area	Seeks decisions on aspects relating to the Coastal Marine Area.	Hayden Johnston	Y/N	Sent 25 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/N	Sent 25 June
BRF-6109	Replacing the RMA - Heritage in the system	9(2)(f)(iv)	Jessica Ranger	Y/N	26 June
BRF-6246	9(2)(f)(iv)	9(2)(f)(iv)	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-6402	Quarterly meeting with LGNZ	Provides meeting notes and talking points to support discussions with LGNZ.	Chloe Groser	Y/N	30 June

BRF-6362	Advice on the correspondence from the New Zealand Institute regarding regulatory barriers to the entry of new grocery retailers	Provides a response to the draft report by the New Zealand Institute on the regulatory barriers for entry to the market.	Jo Gascoigne	Y/N	2 July

Cabinet Papers

As at 1pm, 25 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
CAB-577	Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill: Approval of Amendment Paper for printing	Provides documents for LEG Committee and Cabinet approval of the Amendment Paper.	LEG	Jessica Ranger	15 June	15 June	7 August	11 August

Official Information Act Requests for Minister Bishop

As at 1pm, 25 June 2025

Tracking Number	MO Tracking Number	Request	Correspondent	Organisation	Date due to Minister's Office	Date due to Requestor
OIAM-811	OIA-TBC	Information relating to Resource Management Act Reform	Debbie NGAREWA-PACKER	Te Pāti Māori	10 July	17 July
OIAM-814	OIA-TBC	Papers relating to Resource Management Act since Jan 2025.	Debbie NGAREWA-PACKER	Te Pāti Māori	11 July	18 July

Ministerial Correspondence Update

As at 1pm, 25 June 2025

We are preparing responses to 51 pieces of correspondence on a wide range of topics. New correspondence in the last week includes:

- Concerns for legislation changes around commercial vegetable production
- Queries around land use and ownership of water and other resources
- Development delays due to SNA and heritage property issues
- Concerns about impact of Medium Density Residential Standards
- Resource Management reforms and freshwater policies
- General feedback on the RMA, potential impacts and proposed changes
- Information request for urban planning and housing affordability as mentioned in Chamber of Commerce speech
- a range of various resource consenting issues about:
    - Medivac emergency helipad in Marlborough Sounds
    - Auckland Council resource consenting issues
    - Residential swimming pools
    - Wetland rules for moss farming
    - Complaints from GWRC and requests to rebuild Gordon Wilson flats

Written Parliamentary Questions Update

As at 1pm, 25 June 2025

We are preparing responses to written parliamentary questions on advice received and taken to Cabinet during week beginning 16 June 2025.