



## Factsheets for Estimates 2019/2020

# Environmental reporting

This is part of a series of fact sheets prepared for the Environment Committee’s 2019/20 Estimates examination of Vote Environment.

## **Environment Aotearoa 2019 was published in April 2019**

The publication of *Environment Aotearoa 2019* concluded the first full cycle of environmental domain reports.

The report outlines nine priority issues, across five broad areas that need our attention. These issues will inform the Ministry’s strategic goals and budget.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment will review how the system has performed, reporting on this in October 2019.

Our changing climate	How we use our freshwater and marine resources	Pollution from our activities	How we use our land	Our ecosystems and biodiversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand has high greenhouse gas emissions per person</li> <li>• Climate change is already affecting Aotearoa New Zealand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking water changes flows which affects our freshwater ecosystems</li> <li>• The way we fish is affecting the health of our ocean environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our waterways are polluted in farming areas</li> <li>• Our environment is polluted in urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the vegetation on our land are degrading the soil and water</li> <li>• Urban growth is reducing versatile land and native biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our native plants, animals and ecosystems are under threat</li> </ul>

## Completion of reporting cycle and review

The Ministry for the Environment, in partnership with StatsNZ, has completed the first full cycle of six monthly environmental reports under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015. Six reports have been delivered: five individual domain reports, and one synthesis report – *Environment Aotearoa 2019*.

A team of internationally recognised scientists provided guidance throughout the scoping, writing and review process of *Environment Aotearoa 2019*.

The reports continue with an update on our marine environment due in October 2019. Continuing the reporting cycle is important to monitor change over time.

## Purpose and use of the reports

The reports provide robust and trustworthy information about the environment to support better decision-making. A variety of information is being produced to reach a wide and diverse audience.

The Ministry's current work programme is influenced and informed by the reporting which is reflected in *Environment Aotearoa*, including looking at:

- the better protection of native species and ecosystems through contributing to the Department of Conservation's work on biodiversity strategy and developing a national policy statement on indigenous biodiversity
- how to provide for urban development and protect our environment, including through work on a National Policy Statement for highly productive land
- limiting pollution of freshwater through the Essential Freshwater work programme
- improving how freshwater and marine resources are used
- reducing climate change emissions through such initiatives as the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill, reforms of the Emission Trading Scheme and assisting to establish the Climate Change Commission
- system-wide improvements, such as through reform of the Resource Management Act.

## The data challenge

Good progress has been made on understanding particular aspects of our environment, but many gaps remain. *Environment Aotearoa* highlights data gaps and areas where our knowledge is incomplete.

Taking opportunities to align data collection and analysis across the knowledge and reporting system would enable New Zealand to be better equipped to understand the effect our actions are having on the environment. It would also help us decide what our response should be. We anticipate the Commissioner's review will include recommendations about greater system alignment and investment in data.

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Aotearoa - he whenua mana kura mō te tangata