



Our environment, your say

Overview of consultations

Our towns, cities and rural areas, and our rivers, lakes and landscapes are where we live, work and play. They are part of our identity and way of life. They are our taonga. While we enjoy the benefits of our environment, the way we live is having a serious impact on it. If we act together we can solve our environmental challenges.

The Government is proposing some changes to rules and regulations to protect our environment and transition to a sustainable, low-emissions future.

These changes aim to support decisions and actions by us all – individuals, communities, iwi/Māori, business, the primary sector, local and central government.

The infographic and table on the opposite page describe the changes, the future they seek to create and how each proposal contributes – individually and together.

We want to hear from you

Consultation is a way for us to better understand a range of perspectives and knowledge on what will make these changes achieve the best outcomes for New Zealand.

Over the coming months we will be consulting on a number of proposed policies. This will allow us to test how they work as a whole to best support decisions, and to assess their combined impact.

We need your help. We want to understand your views and ideas.

Why these consultations matter

The way we live is having a serious impact on our environment.

Our state of the environment report [Environment Aotearoa 2019 \(EA2019\)](#) showed our environment is under pressure in many places – in our towns and cities, rivers and oceans. The proposed changes help to address the issues raised in EA2019.

EA2019 told us:

- ▶ Our native plants, animals and ecosystems are under threat.
- ▶ Changes to the vegetation on our land are degrading the soil and water.
- ▶ Urban growth is reducing versatile land and native biodiversity.
- ▶ Our waterways are polluted in farming areas.
- ▶ Our environment is polluted in urban areas.

- ▶ Taking water changes river flows which affects our freshwater ecosystems.
- ▶ The way we fish is affecting the health of our ocean environment.
- ▶ New Zealand has high greenhouse gas emissions per person.
- ▶ Climate change is already affecting Aotearoa New Zealand.

www.mfe.govt.nz/environment-aotearoa-2019-overview

The environment is fundamental to our wellbeing and our choices matter.

Changes to our environment can have ripple effects on our health, jobs and income, and cultural identity. For example, a change in land use near a river may lead to a change in water quality. This affects our access to clean drinking water, safe swimming and a healthy river that can support our communities.

Using our land and water well will be crucial to sustaining a thriving economy and resilient communities into the future, and providing choices about how and where we live.

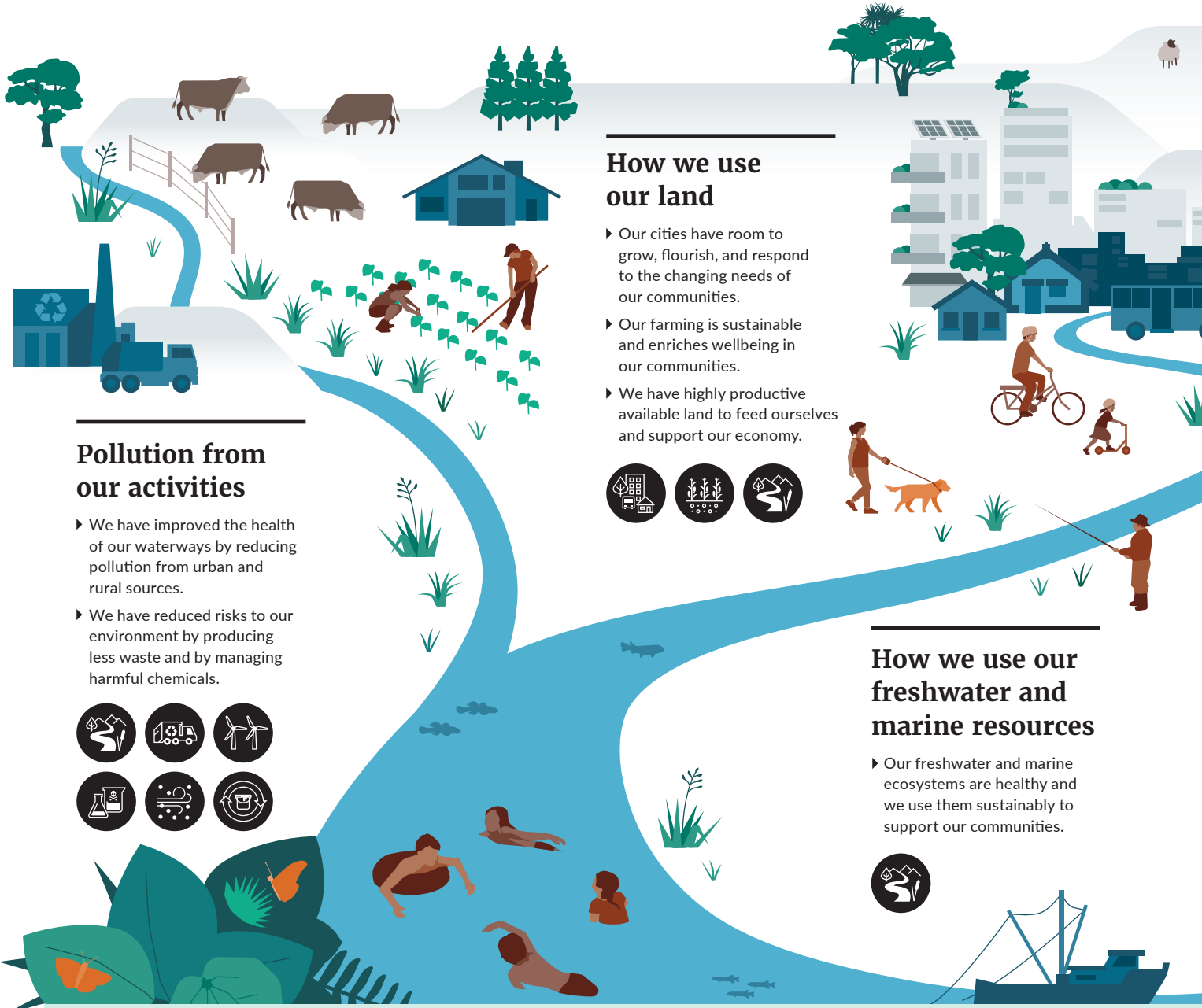


Questions you may like to think about

- ▶ If we want to protect our environment and transition to a sustainable, low-emissions future, what needs to change?
- ▶ What would make this easier?

There are also specific questions in each of the consultation discussion documents.

Shaping our future together



Pollution from our activities

- ▶ We have improved the health of our waterways by reducing pollution from urban and rural sources.
- ▶ We have reduced risks to our environment by producing less waste and by managing harmful chemicals.



How we use our land

- ▶ Our cities have room to grow, flourish, and respond to the changing needs of our communities.
- ▶ Our farming is sustainable and enriches wellbeing in our communities.
- ▶ We have highly productive available land to feed ourselves and support our economy.



How we use our freshwater and marine resources

- ▶ Our freshwater and marine ecosystems are healthy and we use them sustainably to support our communities.



Dates

Pre-October

Have your say



Consultation title

Action for healthy waterways:
A discussion document on national direction for our essential freshwater

Planning for successful cities:
A discussion document on a proposed national policy statement on urban development

Valuing highly productive land:
A discussion document on a proposed national policy statement for highly productive land

Consultation purpose

Stop further degradation and loss to our freshwater resources, and reverse past damage

When and how cities plan for growth, and how to do this well

How to identify and manage our highly productive land

This infographic describes the future the proposed changes seek to create and how each contributes.



Our changing climate

- ▶ We all play our part to reduce emissions and respond to the effects of climate change.
- ▶ All communities are supported in the transition to a low emissions economy.



Our ecosystems and biodiversity

- ▶ We all work together to protect and restore our biodiversity.
- ▶ We live on our land in a way that allows our indigenous species and ecosystems to thrive.



Post-October



Our Nature: A discussion document on the proposed national policy statement for indigenous biodiversity



Waste disposal levy expansion consultation



National environmental standard for air quality amendments consultation



New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS) Regulations consultation



Public discussion on addressing water allocation issues



Hazardous substances assessments: Improving decision-making: A discussion document on proposed improvements to the hazardous substances reassessment process

Make us better equipped to reduce harm from chemicals



Proposed priority products and priority product stewardship scheme guidelines: Consultation document

Minimise our waste from harmful waste products and help our economy make the most of its resources

Together these proposals will help us protect our environment and transition to a sustainable, low-emissions future by:

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- ▶ Recognising the health of our environment is essential for the health of our people and communities.
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- ▶ Providing more certainty and clarity about how some decisions will be made.
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- ▶ Making it is easier to take part in decisions that will shape what the future will look like.
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- ▶ Helping us all to be better informed about the impacts of our actions.
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- ▶ Helping us consider a greater range of values and needs, now and for the future, when making decisions.
 - ▶ So we better plan what we do and where we do it.
 - ▶ So we better manage our land and water across Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - ▶ So use of our natural resources is fair and sustainable.
 - ▶ So we minimise our pollution.
 - ▶ So we uphold Te Mana o te Wai – the mana of the water.
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How to get involved and have your say

You can have your say in a number of ways, including:

- ▶ attending public meetings and hui
- ▶ visiting our website
- ▶ writing to us
- ▶ posting on social media.

More information on each of the proposals and upcoming events can be found on our website: www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations

The discussion document for each proposal describes its purpose, options being considered and why, and asks specific questions you may wish to answer. It also has more detail on the submission process.



What happens next

What you tell us will inform how we develop the policies and the advice we give to ministers. Ministers make the final decisions, which are publicly announced. Once decisions are made the policies will be implemented. More information about next steps is available in the discussion documents.

A summary of submissions for every proposal will be publicly available.

Resource management in New Zealand

Resource Management Act and role of national direction

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) provides the regulatory framework for the sustainable management of our natural and physical resources.

Under the RMA, the Government is responsible for making regulations about matters it considers nationally important (eg, protecting the health of our freshwater ecosystems and the health of people). This includes 'national direction' – such as national policy statements and national environmental standards. These give councils specific instructions about how to carry out their functions under the RMA.

A current list of national direction can be found on our website available at www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/rma-legislative-tools.

How national direction is applied will vary locally based on different environmental conditions and local communities.

Interactions within national direction

It is important that national direction instruments are consistent and work with each other. We are seeking your feedback to ensure that existing and proposed national direction policies achieve this.

New approach to drafting national direction

We have been working to improve the quality of national direction and regulations – such as better explaining our policy intent and making regulations more consistent. We are interested in knowing how easy you find the national direction discussion documents to understand and comment on. These documents are available at www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations.

Other priority work

The consultations outlined on the previous page relate to broader government programmes, including:

Comprehensive review of the resource management system

The Government is conducting a comprehensive overhaul of our resource management system. It wants the RMA to support a more productive, sustainable and inclusive economy and be easier for New Zealanders to understand and participate in.

Urban Growth Agenda

The Urban Growth Agenda's goal is to ensure we respond better to growth, bring down the high cost of urban land to improve housing affordability, and support thriving communities.

The Urban Growth Agenda aims to:

- ▶ improve housing affordability, housing choice and access
- ▶ reduce emissions
- ▶ enable quality-built environments.

Climate Change Programme

The Government is developing a range of clear, stable climate change policies so that New Zealand plays our part in limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. These new policies will help us transition to a low-emissions, climate resilient economy and will encourage us all to play our part in taking action on climate change.