



## *Factsheets for Estimates 2019/2020*

### **Review of the Air Quality National Environmental Standard (NES)**

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

### **Work is underway to amend the Air Quality National Environmental Standard (NES)**

There have been improvements since the NES came into force in 2005 – the total number of exceedances of the daily PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter) standard per year has decreased by 54 per cent from 2010 to 2017. However, air pollution is still a serious problem in some parts of New Zealand, affecting people's health and well-being.

#### **What progress is being made on the review of the Air Quality NES?**

The Ministry plans to publicly consult on proposed amendments to the Air Quality NES in the latter part of 2019. A revised NES could be in place by June 2020.

In 2018/19 Associate Minister for the Environment, Hon Nanaia Mahuta, directed officials to proceed with work to amend the Air Quality NES. The Ministry undertook initial policy analysis to identify gaps in the existing Air Quality NES relating to the management of particulate matter. The Ministry engaged with a number of iwi and key stakeholders to seek feedback on the review. This work continued in the first half of the 2019/20 financial year.

#### **What is the scope of the review?**

##### **There are three key drivers for amending the Air Quality NES:**

- To align the Air Quality NES with current scientific findings on the health impacts of particulate pollution, in particular to update the NES to include the measurement of fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).  
  
PM<sub>10</sub> is currently measured, which includes fine particles as well as coarse particles mainly generated from naturally occurring processes (eg, sea salt, pollen, and dust). Scientific findings since the last review of the Air Quality NES have confirmed the stronger link between fine particle exposure and health impacts, so it's important we measure this.
- To ensure that the regulatory framework to manage air quality remains fit for purpose and considers a balance in achieving clean air (and the impacts of home heating) while achieving healthy home outcomes.

- Although significant progress has been made, non-compliance with the daily PM<sub>10</sub> standard remains high. Future measures to manage pollution should be based on the best indicator of adverse impacts on health.
- Economic impacts on vulnerable households need to be considered.
- The need to take an integrated approach to managing the factors leading to emissions from home heating:
  - cross-agency collaboration on managing various sources of air pollution and addressing related issues (eg, fuel poverty)
  - home heating standards currently only cover wood burners and do not include other solid fuel burners, such as coal fires which can emit over four times more particulate matter than wood burners
  - user operation, fuel quality, and burner design integrity is not managed.

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