

## Weekly Update – Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 3 December 2018

### Environment weekly meeting 12.00pm – 12.30pm, Monday 3 December

Attendees: Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

Vicky Robertson, Secretary for the Environment

James Walker, Deputy Secretary, Partnerships and Customers

Amanda Moran, Deputy Secretary, Natural and Built System

Glenn Wigley, Director, Natural and Built System

Shaun Lewis, Director, Investments and Partnerships

Neil Hurley, Deputy Secretary, Organisational Performance

Nick Davis, Analyst, Finance

	Agenda Item	Lead	Paper / verbal update	Mins
1.	Discuss Weekly Update	James Walker	Verbal update	5
2.	Budget bids	Neil Hurley / Nick Davis	Verbal update	10
3.	Work programme	James Walker	Verbal update	10
4.	Australian Ministers' meeting	Shaun Lewis	Verbal update	5

# 1. Actions and decisions

## 1.1. Environmental innovation by enterprises

We hosted key players in New Zealand's environmental innovation system last week. The purpose of the session was to bring together established players who are trying to foster environmental innovation through enterprise in New Zealand.

Present were representatives from:

- Sustainable Business Network (SBN)
- Akina Foundation
- Callaghan Innovation
- MacDiarmid Institute
- Scion
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Brief overview of current activity:

- Callaghan and WWF intend to launch new environmental innovation programmes in 2019. Both have ambitions for New Zealand to be world leaders in environmental innovation through business.
- We are working with s9(2)(b)(ii) [redacted], and will host a Pacific Summit on circular economy and indigeneity in April. (Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) application is underway).
- The MacDiarmid Institute is re-focussing their materials science on sustainability solutions, and are working on solar, batteries and conductors.
- Akina is working on developing social enterprise capability in nine regions, along with the Department of Internal Affairs and PGF support. They have built an impact investment fund of \$9 million (but have only made one investment to date).
- SBN supports sustainability practice in business, as well as running an annual awards which showcases innovation in New Zealand.

The discussion demonstrated that a key challenge facing entrepreneurs and business is navigating the pipeline from idea generation through to commercial development. There is a lot of support available, including capital. However the system is difficult to navigate and innovators don't always have the capability to access it.

This group will focus its attention on helping innovators understand and access a pipeline of support. The sector is looking to the Government for leadership, including the Ministry for the Environment. The group would like to brief Ministers on opportunities and challenges facing environmental innovation in New Zealand.

We have also briefed New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise about these discussions.

*Are you interested in a session in the New Year with the environmental innovation sector group; to hear more about the impact they are having and their thoughts on how the Government can assist?*

**Yes/No**

## 1.2. Sea Cleaners meeting

We met with Sea Cleaners on 16 November. The meeting was constructive, giving Sea Cleaners an opportunity to share more about their operation, background and strategic vision.

Four boats are currently operated by a full time crew of six and supported by volunteers, primarily focusing on the Auckland and Northland regions. A crew of this size reported being able to collect 18 cubic metres of rubbish per day in 2017. Over their 15 years of operation 5.6 million litres of rubbish have been removed from the coast and 223 shipping containers filled with loose plastic marine litter. By 2020, Sea Cleaners' goal is to have ten boats operating across New Zealand, with a long term goal of deploying a further ten boats around the Pacific.

Education is also a key focus for Sea Cleaners, with a long term strategy to educate, particularly young people, on ways to reduce waste.

We considered how we may support each other and work together going forward including:

- possible funding through the Waste Minimisation Fund
- mobilising our partnerships, particularly focusing on youth
- opportunities through the Provincial Growth Fund (it was noted that Minister Jones had met with Sea Cleaners last week)
- strengthening shared relationships with Iwi

Currently, Sea Cleaners are reliant on donations, particularly from local business, and council funding. Northland Regional Council has committed \$25,000 per year, over the next ten years, as part of their Long Term Plan.

Sea Cleaners already have strong informal relationships with local iwi, businesses and a number of environmental organisations. We both agreed we would continue to consider ways we could further work together, with an interest to meet again in the new year.

*Are you interested in officials to arranging a time for you to meet with Sea Cleaners in the new year?*

Yes/No

## 2. Updates for noting

### 2.1. Advice on the EPA's quarter one performance report

The EPA provided its performance report for quarter one to you earlier this month and for the first time, proactively released it on their website on 30 November. We reviewed the report and noted no issues that require your attention or action. Board Chair Julie Hardaker has advised that she and the new EPA Board members are settling in well.

As at 30 September, the EPA has reported an actual deficit of \$198,000 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$658,000. Therefore, the EPA underspent by \$460,000 in quarter one. This difference is driven by extra revenue from increased Hazardous Substances and New Organisms 1996 applications received before the increased fees came into effect on 1 October, personnel vacancies and lower external contractors, and computing and telecommunications costs. As discussed with Minister Sage on 2 July and acknowledged in your correspondence, the EPA will continue to use its deficit budget model over 2018/19 to fund its Programme of Work projects from its accumulated cash reserves.

## **2.2. Successful Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquake Recovery Waste Project**

The Hurunui/Kaikōura Earthquake Recovery Waste Project established in response to the Kaikōura earthquake has delivered on the majority of objectives in its deed. Waste management and minimisation infrastructure in Hurunui is now better than prior to the earthquake. Significant quantities (23 tonnes) of hazardous waste have been collected, and 446 homes tested for asbestos.

Underspend against projections for hazardous waste collection and personnel costs have allowed for an additional \$200,000 of infrastructure spend, to further increase capacity for waste diversion.

Communities in Hurunui have expressed their gratitude for the support of the Waste Minimisation Fund. Kaikōura is still undertaking infrastructure works, which are expected to be completed in March 2019 (this will bring the project to a close). There will be an opportunity for you to open the repaired and upgraded waste facility in Kaikōura.

## **2.3. Summer Waste Campaign**

Recent research by Colmar Brunton (commissioned by the Ministry) indicated that the majority of New Zealanders are deeply concerned about the issue of waste, but many are not aware of the full range of actions they can take to prevent or reduce their waste. There is also considerable confusion about how to recycle right and around specific issues such as whether or not to buy biodegradable plastics.

We plan to run a digital campaign over summer, in which we will release a series of short, light-hearted videos on social media to engage people on circular economy solutions to prevent or reduce waste. The videos will feature New Zealand kids out and about in summer looking out for nature, and making sure their friends/families are preventing waste or recycling right, reusing items and putting rubbish in the right place. The tone is local, outdoors, and humorous to get cut through on social media.

The videos will encourage people to click through to a 'Waste Free Future' campaign hub on our website, which will feature articles, and infographics with tips and information on how to reduce waste. Content will be based on four key points:

- prevent waste
- recycle right
- choose to reuse
- shop smart.

The campaign will run for 10 weeks, from 17 December to 24 February 2019. We will use this to inform our future public information campaigns on circular economy and National Resource Recovery response.

### 3. Briefing notes

3 December -14 December

Issue or event	Lead agency	Further information	Date due to your office
Community Environment Fund: Future Funding for Environment Centres and Future Funding Rounds	MfE	Provides options for the future funding of environment centres and possibilities for a potential funding round for the Community Environment Fund.	3 December
Agreeing to the 2019 EPA Board Appointments Process	MfE	This briefing seeks initial decisions on three membership vacancies coming up in 2019 for the Environmental Protection Authority Board, as well as agreement to the appointments process to be run.	5 December
Appointments to be made in 2019	MfE	An overview of all upcoming appointments and expected appointments to be made in 2019. This information is to be provided to the Cabinet office.	12 December

### 4. Cabinet material

3 December - 14 December

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
Ozone Layer Protection Amendment Regulations 2018	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	Seeks Cabinet approval of amendments to the Ozone Layer Protection Regulations 1996 required to implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, to phase down hydrofluorocarbons in New Zealand.	<b>Due to LEG Committee:</b> 6 December <b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 10 December
Listing Chemicals in the schedules of Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 and the Imports and Exports Order to comply with international obligations under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	Proposes that New Zealand formally accept the listings by amending legislation and notifying the convention secretariat.	<b>Due to LEG Committee:</b> 6 December <b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 10 December
Waste Minimisation (Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	LEG paper for regulations to phase out single-use plastic shopping bags.	<b>Due to lodge:</b> 6 December <b>Due to LEG Committee:</b> 13 December <b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 17 December
s9(2)(f)(iv)			

## 5. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee and timeframe	Our advice on the paper
Proposed approach to the Queenstown Partnership	Department of Internal Affairs	Economic Development Committee – 12 December	<p>Informs Cabinet of a central government partnership with Queenstown Lakes District Council being developed to address significant tourism and growth-related pressures in the district.</p> <p>Our advice on the paper focussed on the linkages with MfE-led work on Queenstown's Future Development Strategy under the National Policy Statement – Urban Development Capacity, and the spatial planning work stream of the Urban Growth Agenda.</p>

## 6. Official Information Act requests

### 6.1. Ministerial

Request	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
<p>I would like to get a copy of this work, which is referred to below in the minister's letter :</p> <p>"The Government's task force on China's National Sword initiative is presently assessing the issue of resource recovery at a national scale. This includes how paper and cardboard are being recycled. The taskforce is actively working with local government, and with industry and international experts on this issue. I am expecting its assessment and recommended long term strategy in October."</p>	s9(2)(a) Fairfax	18-O-02430	27 November	4 December

### 6.2. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
<p>1/ A copy of Envirofert Limited's Waste Minimization Funding Application in it's entirety.</p> <p>2/ A copy of MfEs decision on the above.</p> <p>3/ Any changes that Envirofert Limited have notified MfE of in regards to how the funding is to be spent.</p>	s9(2)(a)	18-D-02493	12 December

## Weekly Update – Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 10 December 2018

### Environment weekly meeting 12.00pm – 12.30pm, Monday 10 December

Attendees: Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

Vicky Robertson, Secretary for the Environment

Shaun Lewis, Acting Deputy Secretary, Partnerships and Customers

Amanda Moran, Deputy Secretary, Natural and Built System

Glenn Wigley, Director, Natural and Built System

Liz Moncrieff, Manager, Natural and Built System

Apologies: James Walker, Deputy Secretary, Partnerships and Customers

	Agenda Item	Lead	Paper / verbal update	Mins
1.	Discuss Weekly Update	Vicky Robertson	Verbal update	10
2.	Planning Standards update	Glenn Wigley / Liz Moncrieff	Verbal update	10

## 1. Actions and decisions

1.1. s9(2)(j)



### 1.2. Feedback sought on planning standards briefing notes

Working closely with our Department of Conservation (DOC) counterparts, we have delivered three briefings to your office since September. A fourth briefing is due with your office this week. These briefings provide our analysis of submissions on issues that we need direction from you and Minister Parker on before we finalise our recommendations report. The fourth briefing has information relating to our proposed approach for how coastal issues are provided for in the structure of plans.

We are working to a deadline in mid-February of delivering our final recommendations report along with the revised set of planning standards. Staying on track with that deadline will help to ensure we also gazette the planning standards by the deadline imposed in the Resource Management Act (ie, 18 April 2019).

*Do you wish to meet with MfE/DOC officials to discuss any of the Planning Standards briefings prior to Christmas?*

**Yes/No**

## 2. Updates for noting

2.1. s9(2)(j)



### 2.2. National Resource Recovery (NRR)

Following discussions on 26 November the team has considered a work plan that ensures that the three identified workstreams can be delivered in a timely way.

The team acknowledges your comment on making the work into a coherent strategic package and ensuring effective stakeholder engagement and community education.

**Workstream One** (short to medium term): Addressing immediate issues and impacts

This workstream aims to improve council collection services and processing, with a focus on existing and new contractual obligations. Building onshore capability through the improvement of infrastructure and services is also a focus. This will be delivered through improvements to collections (kerbside and commercial) and primary processing (Material Resource Facility) to ensure quality and volume.

This workstream includes the following activity:

- a) develop model contracts: a suite of model contract, specification and supporting documents for waste management and resource recovery services (eg. gate fee variations, introduction of contamination bands, commodity price risk-sharing).
- b) conduct an infrastructure and services stocktake/database (includes domestic re-processors) to inform the future waste minimisation investment approach
- c) review domestic kerbside and commercial collections – types of collection and development of key messages, for use by a range of organisations, to reduce contamination.

**Workstream Two (medium term): Building a more resilient resource recovery sector in New Zealand.**

This workstream includes:

- a) investigate feasibility of increasing domestic fibre mill capacity and plastic reprocessing
- b) investigate feasibility of low value plastics' (grades three to seven) transition to high value packaging.

**Workstream Three (long-term): Enabling system change**

This workstream includes:

- a) examine the role of product stewardship for packaging
- b) investigate feasibility of packaging content and recyclability regulations
- c) work with the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment to progress a positive procurement policy; local government, central government and business.

The following timeline outlines delivery dates on these eight initiatives:

Description	Forecast completion date
Briefing note regarding further detail on the scope, size and estimated costs of the NRR options for Workstreams One and Two	31 March 2019
Briefing note seeking approval to fund Workstreams One and Two projects under section 38 of the WMF Act	31 August 2019
Finalise Deeds for initial Workstreams One and two initiatives and manage delivery	October 2019
Briefing note regarding further detail on the scope, size and estimated costs of the NRR options for the Workstream Three project streams	January 2020
Briefing Note seeking approval to fund Workstream Three projects under section 38 of the WMF Act	June 2020
Finalise Deeds for Workstream Three and manage delivery	August 2020
Ongoing management of initiatives	Ongoing

Adequate funding is included in the Budget Bid 2019/23 to provide the internal resources to undertake this workplan in accordance with the above timeline.

An application will be made under section 38 of the WMA to fund the delivery of the individual projects.

2.3.

s9(2)(f)(iv)



Proactively released

### 3. Briefing notes

10 December – 1 February

Title	Lead agency	Further information	Date due to your office
Community Environment Fund: future funding for environment centres and future funding rounds	MfE	Provides options for the future funding of environment centres and possibilities for a potential funding round for the Community Environment Fund.	10 December
National Planning Standards - main briefing to confirm drafting	MfE	Seeks in-principle agreement on the approach to the remaining substantive matters raised in submissions, to support the final stages of drafting the National Planning Standards. The briefing will also summarise the range of changes being considered to improve the Standards clarity, consistency and workability.	11 December
Appointments to be made in 2019	MfE	An overview of all upcoming appointments and expected appointments to be made in 2019. This information is to be provided to the Cabinet office.	12 December

### 4. Cabinet material

10 December – 1 February

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
Ozone Layer Protection Amendment Regulations 2018	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	Seeks Cabinet approval of amendments to the Ozone Layer Protection Regulations 1996 required to implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, to phase down hydrofluorocarbons in New Zealand.	<b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 10 December
Listing chemicals in the schedules of Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 and the Imports and Exports Order to comply with international obligations under the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	Proposes that New Zealand formally accept the listings by amending legislation and notifying the convention secretariat.	<b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 10 December
Waste Minimisation (Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018	(LEG) Cabinet Legislation Committee	LEG paper for regulations to phase out single-use plastic shopping bags.	<b>Due to LEG Committee:</b> 13 December <b>Due to Cabinet:</b> 17 December
s9(2)(f)(iv)			

## 5. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee and timeframe	Our advice on the paper
s9(2)(f)(iv)			

## 6. Official Information Act requests

### 6.1. Ministerial

Request	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
1. Meeting note – Minister Sage and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton (ref WQ 28203)	s9(2)(a) National Party	18-O-02550	11 January	18 January
2. Proposed process and timeline for mandatory product stewardship – Wed 25 July (ref WQ 28206-2018)				
3. Copy of The EPA in 5 to 10 Years PowerPoint – Tuesday 28 August (Ref WQ 28200-2018)				
4. Copy of Methyl Bromide and Forestry Implications Letter – Thursday 20 Sep (Ref WQ 28195-2018)				
5. Copy of 9 July Supporting New Zealand's Transition to a circular economy (ref WQ 28180 (2018))				

<p>I request you provide the number of media interview requests you received in 2018 as Minister for the Environment.</p> <p>I also request the number of media interview requests you agreed to in 2018 as Minister for the Environment.</p> <p>I am particularly interested in searches relating to your particular portfolio responsibilities.</p>	<p>s9(2)(a) National Party</p>	<p>18-O-02583</p>	<p>15 January</p>	<p>22 January</p>
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## 6.2. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
<p>1/ A copy of s9(2)(a) Waste Minimization Funding Application in it's entirety.</p> <p>2/ A copy of MfEs decision on the above.</p> <p>3/ Any changes that s9(2)(a) have notified MfE of in regards to how the funding is to be spent.</p>	<p>s9(2)(a)</p>	<p>18-D-02493</p>	<p>12 December</p>

Proactively released

## Weekly Update – Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 17 December 2018

### Environment weekly meeting 4.00pm – 4.30pm, Wednesday 19 December

Attendees: Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment  
 Vicky Robertson, Secretary for the Environment  
 James Walker, Deputy Secretary, Partnerships and Customers  
 Amanda Moran, Deputy Secretary, Natural and Built System  
 Glenn Wigley, Director, Natural and Built System  
 Shaun Lewis, Director Investments and Partnerships

	Agenda Item	Lead	Paper / verbal update	Mins
1.	Discuss Weekly Update	James Walker	Verbal update	10
2.	Mandatory Product Stewardship	James Walker / Shaun Lewis	Verbal update	10
3.	Soft plastics recycling	James Walker	Verbal update	10

## 1. Updates for noting

### 1.1. Reclassifying five organisms as “not new” under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act)

On 28 November we provided you with a briefing and draft Cabinet paper (Briefing 2018-04672 *Reclassifying five organisms as “not new” under the HSNO Act*).

You sought further information on the benefits outlined in paragraph 23 of the Cabinet paper, which states:

“The [Environmental Protection Authority] EPA advises that, whilst the risks outlined in Scion’s submission theoretically exist, they are outweighed by the potential benefits of reclassification of the three insect species. The EPA considers the potential benefits to be:

- further research into the three insects, including research to enable better control or management of the negative effects of these organisms
- facilitating the potential use of the three insect species as biocontrol agents (because an approval from the EPA would not be needed prior to such use), which would potentially decrease the use of pesticides and lead to more options for integrated pest management strategies.”

The EPA has clarified that reclassification would enable research by removing regulatory barriers. The insects are considered “new organisms” under the HSNO Act. Therefore, no research on them is possible in New Zealand without undergoing a rigorous approval process, which may be seen as unreasonable given these species are established here. However, if the insects are reclassified, scientists will be able to study their ecology and understand their interaction with New Zealand’s environments, without requiring further EPA approval.

### 1.2. Fireworks incidents in November 2018

On 25 October we briefed you on the use of fireworks in 2017 and earlier years (Briefing 2018-B-04948; *Annual update on use of fireworks in New Zealand*). Your office asked for further information on what happened over the Guy Fawkes period this year. We have obtained information from Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and the New Zealand Police (Police).

The data from FENZ (set out below) indicate that there has not been an increase in fireworks incidents compared to recent years. However, there has been a reasonable amount of interest from the public, including 74 emails about fireworks to your office between mid-October 2018 and now.

Auckland Council recently undertook public consultation on whether it should ask central government to introduce legislation banning the sale of fireworks to the general public. This consultation has now closed but we have not yet seen the results.

#### *Fire and Emergency New Zealand data*

FENZ noted that there were 81 incidents in November where the “cause”, “heat source” or “object ignited” was attributed to fireworks. This compares to 130 such incidents in November 2017 and 118 in November 2016. There has been one casualty in November in each of the past 3 years.

FENZ also provided information on “additional incidents where fireworks [were] mentioned in message logs” – which excludes the data on cause, heat source and object ignited. The additional incidents were 112 for November 2018, compared to 123 in 2017, and 95 in 2016. There were no casualties from such incidents in any of these years. We cannot tell with certainty how many of these incidents were caused by fireworks.

#### *Information provided by the Police*

The role of the Police in the management of fireworks is both proactive and reactive. Police receive and respond to telephone calls from the public. From this year the Police were responsible for enforcement in relation to the retail sale of fireworks.

- *Calls received by Police communications centres*

Police received 366 fireworks-related calls from 2 to 5 November (the retail sale period), 42 percent of which were on Guy Fawkes Day. 313 further calls were received from 6 to 19 November.

Fireworks-related calls are identified under categories such as disorder, wilful damage, and breach of the peace. These results may not be a full representation of fireworks-related calls, as calls may have been recorded under other less obvious categories.

- *Enforcement of the retail sale of fireworks*

The Police completed a range of proactive work with regard to the enforcement of the retail sale of fireworks. Over 50 checks were made across the country. In Dunedin, where plain clothes observations were carried out, no breaches were detected. In the Wairarapa a controlled purchase operation was carried out with four attempted purchases made. In all four cases identification was asked for and no sale was completed. The above results are not a full representation of the proactive work carried out by the Police, but reflect feedback provided from those particular areas.

## 2. Briefing notes

17 December – 1 February

Title	Lead agency	What this briefing covers	Date due to your office
Productivity Commission's Final Report on Low-Emissions Economy - Waste chapter recommendations	MfE	This briefing summarises the recommendations of chapter 15 (Waste) of the Productivity Commission's Low-Emissions Economy final report. The briefing proposes Government responses to each recommendation, and seeks your feedback on each proposed response.	19 December 2018

## 3. Official Information Act requests

### 3.1. Ministerial

Request	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
1. Meeting note – Minister Sage and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton (ref WQ 28203)	s9(2)(a) National Party	18-O-02550	11 January	18 January
2. Proposed process and timeline for mandatory product stewardship – Wed 25 July (ref WQ 28206-2018)				
3. Copy of The EPA in 5 to 10 Years PowerPoint – Tuesday 28 August (Ref WQ 28200-2018)				
4. Copy of 9 July Supporting New Zealand's Transition to a circular economy (ref WQ 28180 (2018))				