



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao



*Making Aotearoa New Zealand
the most liveable place in the world*
Aotearoa – he whenua mana kura mō te tangata

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

For the week starting 4 February 2019

Proactively released

1. Updates for noting

1.1. Sustainable Development Goals – Voluntary National Review

In 2015, all United Nations member states, including New Zealand, adopted the 2030 Agenda. This is a blueprint for sustainable development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs serve as a global action plan to end poverty, promote peace and prosperity, and protect the planet. New Zealand is scheduled to present its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the United Nations in July 2019 on its progress implementing the SDGs. This will be an opportunity to showcase New Zealand's commitment to global sustainable development goals. Domestically, the report will provide context as to how the SDGs fit alongside New Zealand Government policy and the wellbeing agenda.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is leading the coordination of the VNR. The Ministry for the Environment is responsible for reporting against two key SDG goals: clean water and sanitation, and climate action. The other environmental goals are assigned to other lead agencies. Draft content on these two goals was submitted to MFAT on Friday 1 February. Public consultation and stakeholder engagement on the draft report will take place in March/April this year. Governance of the report's production sits with the Deputy Chief Executives Measuring Progress Steering Group. The final report will be signed off by Cabinet ahead of a submission to the United Nations in June 2019.

1.2. 'Right to Repair' legislation

You requested a brief update on 'right to repair' legislation. Right to repair laws encourage repair of goods that might otherwise need to be replaced, as well as improving competition in repair services and increasing the durability of goods to reduce waste. They include measures to:

- require manufacturers to design products to be repairable
- provide third-party repair services (and sometimes consumers) with technical information and tools needed to repair goods.

This is a relatively new area of policy. A number of overseas jurisdictions have introduced, or are in the process of developing, right to repair legislation. For example:

- the European Commission has been looking to incorporate right to repair-type requirements into its Ecodesign Regulations
- eighteen US states are developing right to repair laws for electronic goods.

Such legislation is generally supported by consumer groups and community repair movements. Some manufacturers overseas have expressed concern that proposed laws could expose industry secrets and create safety and security risks for consumers, as well as restricting innovation in product design.

This topic relates to both your portfolio (as Associate Minister for the Environment), and also the Commerce and Consumer Affairs portfolio. Right to repair laws may help to reduce waste, conserve energy and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and avoid repeated purchase costs for consumers. Such laws could support the shift towards a more circular economy by facilitating repair and re-use instead of disposal.

As yet, New Zealand has not considered right to repair legislation. However, the Minister for Commerce and Consumer Affairs has received a few enquiries on the topic from media and the public. These include suggestions to introduce such laws in New Zealand. In responding to enquiries, the Minister has noted the potential relevance of the Consumer Guarantees Act 1993 and the Commerce Act 1986.

There is a linkage with our product stewardship framework which also aims to reduce the environmental impacts of certain products. There may be opportunities to facilitate right to repair outcomes in future product stewardship schemes through ministerial guidelines (via section 12 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008).

We will keep an eye on international developments.

1.3. Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Board appointments update

We are currently seeking applications for two upcoming vacancies on the EPA Board. We have shared the jobs.govt.nz advertisement on our social media platforms and with nominating agencies (eg, The Treasury, and the Ministry for Women) as well as with executive leaders across local government and the natural resources sector. To increase our reach, we have put up an additional advertisement with the Institute of Directors. Applications are due by 25 February, after which we will assess and shortlist the candidates.

Proactively released

2. Briefing notes

4 February – 1 March

Title	Lead agency	Further information	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.	8 February
Advice on fly tipping in relation to the Litter (Increased Infringement Fee) Amendment Bill	MfE	The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with advice on the issue of fly tipping in relation to the Litter (Increased Infringement Fee) Amendment Bill. You requested background information on the issue and how it is currently being controlled.	8 February

3. Cabinet material

4 February – 1 March

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our suggested timeframes
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
Implementation plan for the Waste Minimisation (Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018	ENV	Talking points for oral item outlining the implementation plan for the Waste Minimisation (Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018 [CAB-18-MIN-0635.01].	For ENV meeting on 14 March

4. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee	Our advice on the paper
Building system legislative reform programme: release of discussion paper	MBIE	DEV	<p>The paper seeks agreement to undertake public consultation on proposed changes to the building regulatory system. MfE comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported a proposed cap on the liability of building consent authorities, and requirement for improved building product information and certification. These proposals may assist councils to support the innovation needed in the building sector to build at pace and scale, and limit risk averse behaviour suggested that building product information requirements should also include information on the environmental impacts of the products. <p>More broadly we commented on future opportunities to improve the Building Act. These included for example, the need to address building performance and ensure the Act takes the impact of climate change into account, and the need to consider any gaps between RMA and Building Act regulation.</p>

5. Official Information Act requests

5.1. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
Regarding OIA 18-D-00080 of 2018, was any more money spent during the year in regards to MfE and Iwi leaders?	s9(2)(a) Reporter, TVNZ	19-D-00011	20 February

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

For the week starting 11 February 2019

Environment weekly meeting 12 – 12.30pm, Monday 11 February 2019

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

Brian Hallinan, Manager Risk and Innovation

	Agenda Item	Lead	Paper / verbal update	Mins
1.	Discuss Weekly Update	Vicky Robertson	Verbal update	10
2.	Environmental Protection Authority	Glenn Wigley	Verbal update	5

1. Actions and decisions

1.1. s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

2. Updates for noting

2.1. Waste Minimisation Fund – May 2018 projects in Deed

We are expecting all 49 projects approved in the May 2018 Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF) round to be in Deed by the end of March. Below is some additional information about the projects that have recently come in to Deed. Announcements for these projects will be organised during the fortnightly communications meetings with your office.

Agrecovery Foundation

A Deed of Funding was signed on 18 December 2018 with Agrecovery Foundation for its project entitled 'Rural Waste 'One-stop Shop' Strategy Implementation Project'. With a WMF contribution of \$381,800, this two year project will implement the 'one-stop shop' pop up waste collection model that was considered to offer the best prospect for addressing rural waste in the New Zealand Rural Waste Minimisation Project. The project will also investigate mandatory product stewardship for agrichemicals and their containers.

The announcement for this project is being organised to take place at the Kirwee Show between 27-29 March.

Mint Innovation

A Deed of Funding was signed on 25 January 2019 with Mint Innovation Limited for its project entitled 'Building a NZ Plant to recover valuable metals from electronic waste'. The one year project received a WMF contribution of \$600,000 to enable the build of core processes for a pre-commercial demonstration scale plant. The plant will extract valuable metals by processing one tonne of scrap printed circuit boards per day (electronic waste). This project builds on the previous WMF 2017 project entitled 'Feasibility study for recovering valuable metals from electronic waste'. The announcement date for this project is pending.

Refrigerant Recovery

A Deed of Funding was signed on 29 January 2019 with Refrigerant Recovery NZ Limited for its project entitled 'Maximising Effectiveness of Product Stewardship for Refrigerants to inform industry request for Minister to consider declaration of refrigerants as a priority product'. This project has a WMF contribution of \$137,004 for a one year project to conduct research into a potential mandatory product stewardship scheme for the safe collection and disposal of refrigerants and other hazardous gases. The project will also develop a scope and design course outline for industry credentials to set the benchmark for industry installation best practice. This will address health and safety concerns that have been identified as an issue for the industry. The announcement date for this project is pending.

Agpac Limited

The first of two approved projects with Agpac (trading as Plasback) was signed on 25 January 2019. The project entitled 'Boosting farmer participation in rural recycling' received a WMF contribution of \$104,400 for a one year project providing subsidised recycling bins for farmers to take part in the Plasback recycling scheme. This is a Product Stewardship scheme where farmers are able to have their soft plastic (silage wrap, fertiliser bags etc) collected and recycled into building and farming materials. The announcement date for this project is pending.

2.2. Update on Auckland Joint Work Programme – bus tour of South Auckland urban growth area

On 7 February Auckland Deputy Mayor, Bill Cashmore, Mayor Phil Goff and Councillor Chris Darby hosted Ministers Twyford and Salesa, and senior officials, on a bus tour of the major South Auckland growth areas. This was to support the proposed Auckland Council and Government Joint Work Programme on Housing and Urban Growth.

Sites visited were:

- Paerata Rise. This is a 300 hectare development, and will be part of a future 528 hectare development planned to produce 4,500 homes near the current Wesley College site
- Auranga near Drury. Here 167 hectares are currently being developed to supply 2,700 homes, and ultimately up to 7,000 homes, by 2020
- Drury South Crossing. This is attached to Stevenson's Quarry, and is a 360 hectare master-planned business park.

Auckland Deputy Mayor Cashmore selected these projects to illustrate the significant scale of development going on in South Auckland, their dependence on good transport

links – to rail and via Mill Road in particular, and the best practice being employed to ensure that the development can be built and maintained sustainably.

We will provide you with details of the whole proposed work programme, terms of reference, and next steps by 25 February.

2.3 Environmental Choice – construction and demolition waste label

Environmental Choice New Zealand is the Government’s ecolabel. The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust, which administer the label on the Government’s behalf, have secured funding to develop an ecolabel checklist (called a specification) for construction and demolition waste services.

Around 500,000-600,000 tonnes of construction and demolition material from new house or office builds, renovations or factory demolition, is disposed of each year in Auckland. A typical new house build generates around five tonnes of waste, which equates to about \$30,000 in value.

Waste management organisations using the specification can prove their waste disposal processes are environmentally preferable. Organisations buying construction and demolition waste services will be able to differentiate between service providers and recognise top performers.

The eco label is intended to be available by the end of 2019.

3. Briefing notes

11 February – 8 March

Issue or event	Lead agency	Further information	Date due to your office
Talking points for your appearance at the EPA Board Strategy Day, 13 February	MfE	We will be providing meeting notes and talking points to support your appearance at the EPA Board Strategy Day.	11 February

4. Cabinet material

11 February – 8 March

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
s9(2)(f)(iv)			

5. Official Information Act requests

5.1. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
Regarding OIA 18-D-00080 of 2018, was any more money spent during the year in regards to MfE and Iwi leaders?	s9(2)(a) Reporter, TVNZ	19-D-00011	20 February

Proactively released

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

For the week starting 18 February 2019

Environment weekly meeting 1.00pm – 1.30pm, Monday 18 February

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

Jo Gascoigne, Director, Natural and Built System

Simon King, Manager, RM Strategy

	Agenda Item	Lead	Paper / verbal update	Mins
1.	Discuss Weekly Update	Vicky Robertson	Verbal update	10
2.	Methyl bromide	Glenn Wigley	Verbal update	5
3.	RM reform	Jo Gascoigne	Verbal update	10

1. Actions and decisions

1.1. Announcement opportunity for Waste Minimisation Fund Kaikoura Earthquake Recovery Project

As highlighted in a previous weekly update, there is an opportunity for you to announce the completion of the new transfer station and waste diversion facilities in Kaikoura and Hurunui districts. These works are in the final stages of completion and will be ready for you to announce between 18 and 29 March. Depending on the time you have available, you could either attend one announcement for the completion of the whole project in Kaikoura, or visit a site in each of the two districts and announce their completion separately. Rowan Latham, Senior Science Advisor – Environment Canterbury, is the project manager for this project.

2. Updates for noting

2.1. Wet wipes

You requested initial advice on addressing the problem of wet wipes being inappropriately labelled 'flushable'. The issue was raised with you in a letter from the Mayor of Tauranga City Council (which you replied to on 12 November 2018). You raised the issue with Hon Kris Faafoi, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. In December, Water New Zealand wrote to you about the same issue.

We discussed this with the Ministry's Water Directorate. They agree with Hon Kris Faafoi's suggestion to the Mayor that the matter could be brought to the attention of the Commerce Commission, noting that section 10 of the Fair Trading Act 1986 prohibits misleading and deceptive conduct in relation to goods.

The Ministry supports Water New Zealand's work with Australian counterparts, to develop a new flushability joint standard. Other policy options could be looked at when the joint standard is in place. If the joint standard needs regulatory support to be effective, then it would be possible to prescribe labelling requirements using section 23(1)(f) of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.

We will keep you informed of developments.

2.2. Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor work on rethinking plastics in Aotearoa

You requested an update on the Ministry's meetings with the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (PMCSA). Ministry for the Environment officials have met several times with the PMCSA and staff to provide input into developing the scope of their work. Discussions have focused on key issues the Ministry is experiencing regarding plastic waste and marine pollution, genetic modification, and our planned approach to addressing the issues. We have also talked about how the PMCSA's work can support our action plan for plastics. We have agreed to keep in contact with the PMCSA.

Ministry officials have also met with the Royal Society which is undertaking research summarising existing international and local literature on plastic. It plans to produce a factsheet to raise public awareness and understanding of the creation, use, and persistence of plastics in the environment.

2.3. Ellen MacArthur Foundation Pacific Summit – agenda, invitations, background note for invitations

We are currently finalising the agenda, guest speakers, and invitations for the Summit in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) and the Summit advisory group. Invitation letters have been prepared and are going through internal approval processes. We are waiting on supporting material from the EMF to accompany the invitation to the Prime Minister. We have confirmation of attendance from Kosi Latu, Director General Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

We anticipate the Summit advisory group will shortly invite you to speak on a panel with Kosi Latu in the Manifesto section of the event. This section of the Summit will focus on the impacts of plastics and related shared issues and opportunities for future collaboration, in response to local, national, and regional circular economy action and implementation in the Pacific.

2.4. Commonwealth Ocean Acidification workshop and New Zealand Ocean Acidification Community workshop

The Ministry for the Environment will attend the Commonwealth Ocean Acidification workshop and the New Zealand Ocean Acidification Community workshop in Dunedin from 17 to 22 February.

The Commonwealth Ocean Acidification workshop, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, brings international experts and Commonwealth government officials together under the banner of the Commonwealth Blue Charter. Heads of Government signed up to this Charter at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting last year. Participants will explore ways to address the adverse impacts of ocean acidification on marine life and ecosystems (these include the potential flow-on effects for economies that depend on fisheries, aquaculture and marine tourism, and for coastal communities that rely on coral reefs for protection). The 45 experts and officials represent the Commonwealth Secretariat, USA, UK, and Australia, as well as Commonwealth countries in the Pacific, Africa, and the Caribbean. Collaborators include the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry for Primary Industries, the New Zealand Ocean Acidification Community, Otago University, and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. A communications plan is in place to address media interest, which is likely given the close link between ocean acidification and climate change.

The New Zealand Ocean Acidification Community workshop will enable scientists and central and local government officials to discuss the latest research in ocean acidification, the potential implications for New Zealand, and to co-ordinate management tools and approaches. The Ministry for the Environment will attend in our capacity as the New Zealand representative on the Executive Committee of the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance). New Zealand signed up to the OA Alliance in 2017. The OA Alliance supports members through scientific information exchange, sharing mitigation and adaption strategies, and providing support for development of action plans.

We will update you on any significant outcomes from the meetings.

2.5. Environment Aotearoa 2019

Preparation is underway for the release of Environment Aotearoa 2019 (EA 2019). This is the three-yearly report that focuses on the environment as a whole, drawing on the previous five domain reports. You will be given a copy of the report and a briefing 24

hours prior to the release of the report, in line with environmental reporting protocols. Given the cross cutting nature of the report, it will have relevance across many ministerial portfolios. Therefore, we intend to invite a number of your colleagues to the briefing.

At 11am on 16 April, Vicky Robertson and Liz MacPherson, Chief Statistician, will release the report together via a media conference. That evening the Ministry will host a stakeholder event to raise awareness of the report's findings and start the conversation about what collective action is needed to address the challenges presented.

2.6. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's commentary on the Our Air 2018 report

Following the release of the Our Air 2018 report in October 2018, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), Simon Upton, wrote to the Secretary for the Environment and the Government Statistician regarding his comments on the report. Under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015, the PCE has discretion to review environmental reports' content and processes.

The PCE took the opportunity to acknowledge the review Minister Mahuta announced of the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality. He provided some comments on the scope of the review. The key areas he suggested be included in the review are the:

- development of an annual and daily standard for PM2.5
- development of an annual average nitrogen dioxide standard
- realignment of the current national standards for sulphur dioxide with the World Health Organisation guidelines
- consideration of developing a black carbon standard.

The letter also highlighted key knowledge gaps that need to be addressed. This includes building the evidence base for indoor air quality and its interaction with the quality of air outdoors, and the scarcity of data on key air emission sources. The PCE intends to write to you to suggest consideration of the establishment of a pollutant register for New Zealand to address data gaps on emission sources.

Prior to the release of the Our Air 2018 report, we provided Minister Mahuta with interim advice [2018-B-04893] on likely policy responses to the findings of the report. We have provided this advice to the Environmental Reporting team for inclusion in the Ministry response, which we will provide to Minister Mahuta's office in the coming week.

3. Briefing notes

18 February – 15 March

Issue or event	Lead agency	Further information	Date due to your office
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
Event note: Opening of Waiheke Sustainability Centre	MfE	This paper provides you with background information on the Waiheke Sustainability Centre and Waiheke Resources Trust. It also provides talking points for the opening speech, and a draft press release.	20 February

4. Cabinet material

18 February – 15 March

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
s9(2)(f)(iv)			

5. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee	Our advice on the paper
Dam safety regulations: Release of discussion paper	MBIE	DEV	<p>This paper seeks agreement to undertake public consultation on a regulatory regime for post-construction dam safety under the Building Act.</p> <p>MfE has asked that the discussion document is edited to clarify how the effects of climate change will be addressed in managing dam safety. Provided these changes are made we think you should support this paper.</p> <p>The paper is proposed to be considered at DEV on 6 March.</p>

6. Official Information Act requests

6.1. Ministerial

Request	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
Minister's forward work programme as at 31 January 2019	s9(2)(a) Office of Erica Stanford MP	19-O-00143	25 February	4 March

6.2. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
Regarding OIA 18-D-00080 of 2018, was any more money spent during the year in regards to MfE and Iwi leaders?	s9(2)(a) Reporter, TVNZ	19-D-00011	20 February

6.3. Ombudsman Complaint

Request	Correspondent	Reference	At your office	Due to send
Complaint that OIA request for information regarding the National Sword policy was withheld in full.	s9(2)(a)	492680	20 February	5 March

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

For the week starting 25 February 2018

Next environment weekly meeting, Monday 4 March, 1 – 1.30pm

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	Vicky Robertson	Verbal update	10
2.	Ouvea Pre-mix	Shaun Lewis	Verbal update	5

Proactively released

1. Strategic priorities

1.1. National Resource Recovery project update

The National Resource Recovery (NRR) taskforce is holding workshops with the council working group on 6 March and the Industry Working Group on 7 March to consider the three key NRR workstreams approved in November 2018. In particular, this series of workshops will consider the short to medium term responses to address the China National Sword policy and the changes required to improve recyclability and reduce waste in New Zealand.

You have agreed to attend these workshops in early March.

It is expected that the output from these discussions will inform the briefing note due on 31 March that outlines the scope, timelines and costs of each initiative, and seeks approval of the projects as a Minister-initiated application. Please note that this is not budget dependant. It will be funded from the Waste Minimisation Fund.

The Ministry intends to share with the workshop participants redacted copies of the following NRR related documents:

- Eunomia Report: (National Resource Recovery Project – Situational Analysis Report, September 2018)
- Mike Ritchie & Associates (MRA) Report: (Proposals for Short to Medium Term Responses to National Sword Report, September 2018)
- Copy of the briefing note to Minister Sage providing recommendations.

At the same time as we release these documents to workshop participants, we intend to make them available on the Ministry's external website. We have received an Official Information Act request to release the reports, and we will pass the redacted copies to the requestor.

1.2. Our youth work programme and future options for Community Environment Funding

You recently asked about the Ministry's youth programme and opportunities to invest \$1 million of Community Environment Funding in the next fiscal year (2019/20) to support environmental education initiatives, such as the EnviroSchools programme.

The Ministry's stewardship role compels us to engage with and for our young people. Our current youth engagement work programme includes:

- enabling avenues for young people to provide their views into the Ministry's work programme
- providing funding support to the Toimata Foundation to deliver the EnviroSchools programme
- partnering with the Sir Peter Blake Trust to deliver the annual youth EnviroLeaders' Forum – a leadership development adventure for 15 to 18 year olds, passionate about the environment, and
- providing internship opportunities for young people.

We are currently drafting a Youth Strategy to further guide the Ministry's work with our rangitahi. The Strategy will align with the cross-government Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy. This was developed 18 months ago by the Ministry for the

Environment, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and the Ministry of Education (MoE).

We are exploring options for where the \$1 million of the Community Environment Fund can be best used in 2019/20 to have the greatest impact for environmental education. This will include collaborating with DOC and MoE to explore options to implement the Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy with this funding, including expansion of the EnviroSchools Programme. It will build off work we are progressing with DOC to undertake a stocktake of New Zealand's environmental education landscape to identify opportunities and gaps. We will brief you on options and seek your decision in May/June.

2. Updates for noting

2.1. Update from meeting with Plastics NZ

On 18 February 2019 Ministry officials met with Plastics NZ (Ken Sowman, CEO; and Rachel Barker, CEO Designate).

The meeting included a broad discussion about Plastics NZ and the Ministry's respective work programmes. We anticipate having an ongoing dialogue with Plastics NZ, particularly in regard to potential applications to the Waste Minimisation Fund, mandatory product stewardship, and the Plastics Action Plan.

Plastics NZ have their annual conference from 16-17 May, which you have agreed to speak at. We will work with your office regarding this over the coming months.

2.2. Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 reassessments programme update

We are continuing to work with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) on proposals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the current chemicals reassessments process under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act). We are looking to improve the use of decisions by international regulators (a concept known as 'trusted regulator'), information requirements for applicants, data protection measures, and a range of other options to improve the reassessment process.

To date, the Ministry and the EPA have been working together on the initial policy phase, determining the scope of the policy problems and the approach for early consultation. Early engagement with iwi partners, stakeholders and other government agencies will take place in late February to early March. We will provide you with further advice as the programme develops. We are aiming for a Cabinet paper in June seeking approval to release a discussion paper for submissions, with final policy decisions in December.

2.3. Update on your ministerial correspondence

The Ministry for the Environment has cleared nearly all of the backlog of outstanding ministerial correspondence you received in 2018, a total of 407 items. A considerable amount of this was about plastic bags, indicating the public interest in this topic.

We are working to provide you with quality, timely draft replies to your correspondence. Ministry staff have 15 working days (from the receipt of a piece of correspondence) in

which to provide your office with a draft reply. The expectation is that this timeframe will be met.

3. Briefing notes

25 February – 22 March

Issue or event	Lead agency	Further information	Date due to your office
Monthly PFAS Situation Update	MfE	This briefing updates you and other interested Ministers on the All of Government National PFAS Programme.	25 February
Changes to Waste Minimisation Fund Assessment criteria	MfE	Waste Minimisation Fund changes as recommended by the Waste Advisory Board.	28 February

4. Cabinet material

25 February – 22 March

Paper name	Committee	What this paper covers	Our Suggested timeframes
Update on the waste and resource efficiency work programme	DEV	Updates Cabinet on the waste and resource efficiency work programme [CAB-18-MIN-0577], including plastic bags implementation [CAB-18-MIN-0635.01].	Due to lodge: 7 March Due to DEV: 13 March Due to Cabinet: 18 March

5. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper name	Agency	Committee	Our advice on the paper
Dam safety regulations: Release of discussion paper	MBIE	DEV	<p>This paper seeks agreement to undertake public consultation on a regulatory regime for post-construction dam safety under the Building Act.</p> <p>MfE has asked that the discussion document is edited to clarify how the effects of climate change will be addressed in managing dam safety. Provided these changes are made, we think you should support this paper.</p> <p>The paper is proposed to be considered at DEV on 6 March.</p>
Enhancing our Conformance System	MBIE	DEV	<p>This paper seeks agreement to the Conformance Strategic Work Programme which is designed to enhance our conformance system.</p> <p>MFE comments included asking for a link to be made to our circular economy goals. We noted that a wider range of industry standards and conformance systems</p>

			will be needed to help achieve New Zealand's waste minimisation goals.
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6. Official Information Act requests

6.1. Ministerial

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due at your office	Due to send
Formal advice concerning the decision to ban single use plastic shopping bags in New Zealand (Waste Minimisation (Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018).	s9(2)(a)	19-O-00276	4 March	15 March

6.2. Departmental

Request	Correspondent	Reference	Due to send
A copy of the 2015 application Pacific rubber submitted to the Waste Minimisation Fund before it changed its name to Waste Management NZ. From this application they were granted funds of 3.8 million.	s9(2)(a)	19-D-00268	15 March

Proactively released