



National direction

Phase two of resource management reform

National direction supports local decision-making under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). It is provided by national policy statements, national environmental standards, national planning standards and section 360 regulations. There are over 20 existing national direction instruments under the RMA.

In 2024, the Government proposed a suite of targeted changes to the RMA through:

- the Resource Management (Freshwater and other matters) Amendment Act
- the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill
- a significant package of national direction proposals under the RMA.

Resource management reform and national direction programme

On 24 March 2025, Cabinet reconfirmed the scope of Phase 2 national direction proposals under the RMA. The proposed changes to national direction instruments will be progressed in 2025. These proposals are intended to have immediate effect on the resource management system, while the new resource management system is developed and implemented.

Subject to further Cabinet decisions, the Government will consult on targeted changes to national direction in mid-2025 that will include:

Rescoped Phase 2 package	Instruments being developed/amended
Freshwater	Freshwater package (includes National Policy Statement (NPS) for Freshwater Management, National Environmental Standards (NES) for Freshwater, Stock Exclusion regulations, drinking water proposals, and enabling vegetable growing and water storage)

Rescoped Phase 2 package	Instruments being developed/amended
<p>National Environmental Standards (NES) proposals</p> <p>Progress NESs as they have immediate effect on consenting</p>	<p>NES-Granny Flats</p> <p>NES-Electricity Transmission Activities (included electric vehicle charging)</p> <p>NES-Telecommunications Facilities</p> <p>NES-Marine Aquaculture</p> <p>NES-Commercial Forestry</p> <p>NES-Papakāinga</p>
<p>National Policy Statement proposals</p> <p>Progress policy proposals that can influence consenting processes immediately</p>	<p>More enabling policies/objectives in the NPS-Infrastructure, NPS-Renewable Electricity Generation, and NPS-Electricity Transmission</p> <p>More enabling policies in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)</p> <p>Quarrying and mining consistency changes across NPS-Freshwater Management, NPS-Indigenous Biodiversity and NPS-Highly Productive Land</p> <p>Remove Land Use Capability (LUC) class 3 from the definition of highly productive land</p> <p>National direction on managing natural hazard risk</p>
<p>Urban Development</p> <p>Consult on an urban development and housing policy package including how it will transition into Phase 3</p>	<p>The Government has announced several intended changes to the NPS-Urban Development.</p> <p>The Government will consult on an urban development and housing policy package to incorporate into the new system, including by making use of new system tools such as standardised zones and spatial planning.</p>

These targeted changes are being progressed for their immediate impact on the resource management system. The policy intent of all of Phase 2 proposals is intended to flow through into the new resource management system.

The Government also expects to consult on housing policies as part of this Phase 2 process, to provide an early indication of how some Phase 2 proposals will be incorporated into the new resource management system.

