

Weekly Update

Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 13 July 2020

No Environment weekly meeting Monday 13 July

(next Environment weekly meeting Monday 20 July)

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1. Strategic priorities

1.1. Air quality hui

We recently engaged with iwi and hapū in Northland and Tauranga on the proposed amendments to the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NESAQ) and localised air quality issues.

For the Northland air quality hui on 7 July, we met with representatives of Ngā Puhi and Ngātiwai via video conference. They raised a range of local air quality issues, including dust from heavy truck movements on unsealed roads, odours from sewage treatment facilities and fuel storage facilities, and pollen from plantation pine forests. The proposed amendments to the NESAQ will not directly address these issues but we heard that the proposed woodburner standards may help to improve wintertime air quality in specific neighbourhoods in Whangarei, where households rely on older woodburners for home heating.

For the Tauranga air quality hui on 8 July, we met with representatives of Ngāi Te Rangi at the Ngāi Te Rangi Iwi Trust offices in Mt Maunganui. We discussed local air quality issues including industrial discharges, and whether they have explored Mana Whakahono ā Rohe for iwi to establish formal arrangements for decision making with their local authorities. We explained that the proposed particulate matter standards may help to improve air quality within the Mt Maunganui airshed, but acknowledged the most significant issue in this area relates to industrial emissions which are primarily managed through the Regional Air Plan and the consenting regime.

Air quality at Whareroa marae

On 8 July, we also attended hui with Whareroa marae community in Mt Maunganui to discuss the impacts of air pollution from nearby port and industrial activities. News media were also invited to the hui. Reporters from One News and Bay of Plenty Times newspaper attended and subsequently filed media reports.

Whareroa marae representatives reiterated the health and environmental impacts they have experienced and witnessed at the marae as a result of decades of exposure to pollutants from surrounding industry. They also stated their frustration at several matters including a lack of direct response from the Prime Minister to their letter of 19 August 2019.

The marae representatives set out several specific requests:

- a written response from the Prime Minister by 17 July 2020
- an immediate halt on all discharge consents currently being processed by the regional council
- better transparency around the interests of regional city and city councillors in Port of Tauranga and other industry in Mt Maunganui
- retreat of all industrial activities from Mt Maunganui within ten years.

We emphasised the roles of local government (regional authorities, as well as district and city councils) for managing land use and discharges. We explained our understanding that the Bay of Plenty Regional Council intends to progress changes to their Regional Air Plan setting out new rules for the Mt Maunganui airshed. We considered it is this process that should result in significant traction towards improving air quality at Whareroa marae.

As reported in the One News story, the community would still like an opportunity to speak with government Ministers about their concerns.

We have some questions to follow up on with the regional council and will then prepare a fuller briefing for you on the hui and their specific requests. We will discuss this further with you at our officials meeting on 20 July 2020.

2. Briefing notes

July 2020

Reference number and title	Lead agency	What this briefing covers	Date due to your office
2020-B-06924 Phase 2 report of the Urban Water Working Group Report	MfE	This briefing will provide advice on the phase 2 report of the Urban Water Working Group Report and seek your decisions on how to acknowledge the publication of this report.	10 July

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3. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper title	Agency	Committee and date due	Risk/issue/opportunity	MfE comments
Refreshed monitoring approach of Te Puni Kōkiri	TPK	MCR TBC	This paper reports on the implementation of the refreshed monitoring approach of Te Puni Kōkiri.	<p>The Ministry supports a monitoring approach that increases transparency in state sector performance for Māori.</p> <p>We agree the state sector must draw on evidence of what works for Māori and whānau, and at the same time be prepared to innovate, and partner with Māori.</p>
Substantial Alterations: Amendments to Earthquake-prone Buildings Regulations	MBIE	LEG TBC	This paper proposes to change the definition of a 'substantial' alteration to an earthquake prone building, to add a minimum dollar value of \$150,000, as the previous definition (25% of the building's dollar value) had a disproportionate impact on provincial and small towns with low value properties.	The Ministry is comfortable with the proposal and had no comments on this paper.
New form for determination applications under new building emergency management powers, and updated form to modernise current determination applications	MBIE	LEG TBC	The Building Amendment Act 2019 will implement a new system to improve the management of buildings that are damaged or at risk of damage after an emergency event. This paper seeks authorisation to give effect to policy decisions made in that Act regarding applications for determinations, and also makes minor and technical updates to the Building (Forms) Regulations 2004.	The Ministry is comfortable with the proposal and had no comments on this paper.

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Report back on proactive release of Cabinet material policy	SSC	GOV TBC	The paper notes that the policy is still embedding, but already producing results with regard to the number of papers released. § 9(2)(f)(iv)	The Ministry supports the paper and has been involved in cross agency discussions on the proposed reporting regime.
Building Consent Exemptions in Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004	MBIE	DEV TBC	This paper proposes amendments to Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 to include 12 additional exemptions for minor and low risk building work from the Building Consent process. The exemptions include short span bridges, carports, single storey detached pole sheds and hay barns, solar array panels, veranda, awnings, single storey detached buildings, pipe support structures and flexible water bladders. Guidance to TA's would also be updated.	The Ministry is comfortable with this paper and has provided comments to the MBIE.

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Data and Statistics Legislation: Paper 1 – Overview of policy decisions Paper 2 - Official statistics system Paper 3 – Research and Analysis Paper 4 – Obligations and sanctions	Statistics NZ	GOV TBC	New data and statistics legislation will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> modernise roles and responsibilities for the Minister and Government Statistician recognise the Māori-Crown relationship and what this means for Māori data and statistics acknowledge the role and responsibilities other agencies play in collecting and sharing data for production of official statistics recognise the variety of data sources for official statistics (surveys, administrative data, other data sources) enable Statistics NZ to continue sharing data collected for official statistics with other government agencies for specific purposes (e.g. joint collections) expand provisions that enable data access for research and analysis (e.g., reflecting tikanga framework developed by Statistics NZ in partnership with Māori) modernise obligations and sanctions with new lower level enforcement tools and sanctions for less serious breaches. 	The Ministry is generally comfortable with this paper and provided comments to Statistics NZ. We are discussing with Statistics NZ the operational implications proposed changes might have for data reuse (e.g. for Environmental Reporting or our policy work) and continuing the strength of the independence of the Government Statistician.
Mangatū Crown Forest Licenced land remedies inquiry: s 9(2)(j) [Redacted]	Te Arawhiti	MCR TBC	s 9(2)(j) [Redacted]	The Ministry does not have any comments on this paper at this stage.
Te Korowai O Wainuiārua: s 9(2)(j) [Redacted]	Te Arawhiti	MCR TBC	s 9(2)(j) [Redacted]	The Ministry supports the proposed changes in this paper.

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Substantial Alterations: Amendments to Earthquake-prone Buildings Regulations	MBIE	LEG TBC	This paper proposes to change the definition of a 'substantial' alteration to an earthquake prone building, to add a minimum dollar value of \$150,000, as the previous definition (25% of the building's dollar value) had a disproportionate impact on provincial and small towns with low value properties.	The Ministry is comfortable with the proposal and had no comments on this paper.

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