

## Weekly Update

**Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for the Environment**

**For the week starting 7 September 2020**

**No environment weekly meeting for Monday 7 September**

Released under the provisions of  
the Official Information Act 1982

## 1. Updates for noting

### 1.1. Exceptional circumstances decisions on air quality exceedances now published online

Earlier this year, you considered five applications under regulation 16A of the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality for exceedances of the ambient air quality standards that occurred under exceptional circumstances. The applications were from the following councils:

- Auckland
- Bay of Plenty Regional
- Tasman District and
- Waikato Regional

These applications related to exceedances of the daily average PM10 standard that occurred during the accidental fire at the New Zealand International Convention Centre construction site in Auckland in October 2019, and during the Australian dust storms and bushfires in December 2019.

We have now published the applications and your decisions on the Ministry's website: <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/air/air-regulations/national-environmental-standards-air-quality/exceptional-circumstances-and>

Since regulation 16A came into effect on 1 June 2011, we have processed 16 applications for exceedances (including the five applications referred to above). Of these applications, 15 were granted and one was declined. The application that was declined pertained to the Auckland Urban Airshed and the evidence showed the exceedance was caused by a large fireworks event that took place as part of the Auckland Arts Festival in 2013. The smoke from the fireworks was carried by wind towards the Khyber Pass monitoring station located close by.

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## 2. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

Paper title	Agency	Committee and date due	Risk/issue/opportunity	MfE comments
Marine mammal sanctuary and Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha/Karkōura whale sanctuary proposals decisions - following public consultation	Department of Conservation	Cabinet 24 August	This paper concerns proposals to extend the range of the West Coast North Island and the Bank Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuaries, and would prohibit seismic surveying and seabed mining within them (with some exceptions). Based on feedback received (marine researchers and offshore wind and petroleum industry), a new exemption will be created for 'Level 3' seismic surveys, which are low impact and low risk to marine mammals.	The Ministry remains supportive of the non-fishing measures being taken to protect the nationally critical and nationally vulnerable Māui and Hector's dolphins.

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## Weekly Update

**Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for the Environment**

**For the week starting 21 September 2020**

**The next meeting will be on 28 September**

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## 1. Updates for noting

### 1.1. Update on Ministry work on the use of exhaust gas cleaning systems (scrubbers) by ships in New Zealand waters

New air emission limits have applied to most visiting ships since 1 January 2020 due to requirements of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Ships can comply with these limits by using compliant fuels or by using scrubbers that remove gases from ship exhaust. Some ships then discharge the scrubber washwater back into the ocean.

The Ministry is assessing the environmental risk of these discharges to inform how we manage scrubbers after we have implemented Annex VI of MARPOL (planned for early 2022). The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) has delivered a draft report that identifies approaches to assessing the environmental risks posed by the discharge of scrubber washwater from ships.

To support NIWA's proposed risk assessment approach, we are seeking further information from the states that send the most ships to New Zealand and talking to industry and Harbourmasters. We expect to finalise a contract for the scrubber environmental risk assessment in October, using the information obtained from states and stakeholder discussions.

### 1.2. *Our atmosphere and climate 2020* report release

The environmental domain report *Our atmosphere and climate 2020* is due for public release on 15 October. The date of release is determined under the Environmental Reporting Act.

The day before the report is released (14 October), we will provide you with an outline and a copy of the embargoed report. A Ministry official will contact your office to arrange a time for you and other relevant Ministers to be briefed on the report that day.

Selected stakeholders and media will also be provided with copies of the embargoed report at the same time as you receive it. In the briefing we will also provide you with information detailing the process for release of the report.

This week Stats NZ intend to publish online the list of environmental reporting indicators that will be used in the *Our atmosphere and climate 2020*. The list will be available under the Methods section of the Stats NZ website: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/>. We will also inform our stakeholders about the list.

## 2. Briefing notes

September 2020

Reference number and title	Lead agency	What this briefing covers	Date due to your office
2020-B-07050 Joint briefing from Ministry for the Environment and Statistics NZ on the upcoming OAC2020 report	MfE	On 15th October, the next state of the environment report, Our atmosphere and climate 2020, will be released. The day before, relevant Ministers will receive a briefing on the report. This briefing note provides information where possible on the report.	1 October

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### 3. Cabinet material we have been consulted on

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