

Housing – Christchurch City Council Bespoke Process

Changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 following the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025

These changes, which passed into law on 20 August 2025, belong to a wider programme of resource management reform. Visit the Ministry for the Environment's [webpage about the new Amendment Act](#) for more information.

Context

What is the bespoke process for Christchurch City Council?

The bespoke process for Christchurch City Council will enable it to apply to the Minister for the Environment (the Minister) to withdraw its intensification planning instrument (IPI), also known as Plan Change 14 (PC14). The Minister may approve the request to withdraw if the Christchurch district plan meets criteria set out in the Act.

Previous system

Changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) in 2021 required specified territorial authorities to introduce the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS). These standards support the development of three homes up to three storeys on each site, without the need for resource consent.

The MDRS changes sought to increase development opportunities in existing urban areas. However, some concerns have been raised that the MDRS provides insufficient flexibility for councils and communities. As a result, the MDRS will not be a feature of the new resource management system that will replace the RMA.

Most councils have given effect to the MDRS and National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD). There are two councils still progressing plan changes to give effect to both the MDRS and NPS-UD, one of which is Christchurch City Council.

Christchurch City Council has made parts of PC14 operative, including the aspects that implement the NPS-UD, and has completed its hearings on all of PC14.

A bespoke process for Christchurch City Council means it will only be required to make decisions on PC14 to the extent necessary to provide for 30 years of housing growth. Following these decisions, it may apply to withdraw any remaining parts of PC14.

Key changes

- Section 18A of the Amendment Act adds new section 77G to the RMA.
- Section 21A of the Amendment Act adds new section 80DA to the RMA.
- Section 23 of the Amendment Act amends section 80G of the RMA.
- Section 70A of Schedule 1 of the Amendment Act inserts new Schedule 3C into the RMA.
- Schedule 1 of the Amendment Act adds new clauses 10 to 14 of Schedule 3C to the RMA.

Withdrawal of Plan Change 14

The Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025 (the Amendment Act) enables Christchurch City Council to apply to the Minister to withdraw PC14 if it meets the key requirement that the Christchurch operative district plan has enough feasible housing capacity to meet 30 years of adjusted demand.

If the Minister approves the withdrawal of PC14, the Council may withdraw all or part of PC14, and may withdraw different parts of PC14 at different times.

If the Minister is not satisfied the Council meets the criteria, then the Minister must, in writing, notify the Council why they are declining the request to withdraw. There is no limit to the number of requests the Council can make to the Minister to withdraw.

The Council is required to decide on PC14 by December 2025, unless it meets the criteria and withdraws before then.

Interpretations

30 years of adjusted demand means:

- the expected demand for housing in Christchurch over a 30-year period, based on
 - the most recent high-growth household growth projections for Christchurch City published by Statistics New Zealand; and
 - any reasonable extrapolations necessary to reflect a 30-year period; and
- an additional 20% of demand, over and above the expected demand.

Feasible means:

- for the short and medium term, commercially viable for a developer based on the current relationship between costs and revenue; and
- for the long term, commercially viable for a developer based on the current relationship between costs and revenue or on any reasonable adjustment to that relationship.

Long term means between 10 and 30 years.

Short and medium term means within the next 10 years.

Implementation considerations

A request to the Minister from Christchurch City Council to withdraw PC14 must set out how it meets the key requirement.

No additional consultation is required under this process, given the withdrawal is subject to Ministerial approval and is based on clear housing capacity criteria.

The Council's supporting information will be provided to the Minister in a transparent way.

The Council must give public notice of any withdrawal, with reasons for withdrawal and must continue to progress any parts of its IPI that are not withdrawn.

