



Infrastructure and development fact sheet – national direction

The Government is consulting on four national direction packages which propose to amend 12 existing instruments and introduce four new national direction instruments. These changes impact local decision-making under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

- Package 1: Infrastructure and development (this fact sheet)
- Package 2: Primary sector
- Package 3: Freshwater
- Package 4: Housing

About national direction

There are over 20 existing national direction instruments under the RMA 1991. These include national policy statements, environmental standards, planning standards, and section 360 regulations.

Infrastructure and development notification

The Government's proposals have been chosen to enable infrastructure and development, while managing its effects on people and the environment. They are aimed at providing for housing, and support development in areas that reduce risks from natural hazards.

The proposals include new and amended rules to clarify where consent is required in district, unitary or regional plans, as well as targeted national policy direction to support resource consent and plan-making processes.

The Government is inviting submissions on its proposals under section 46A of the RMA to amend and develop:

- a new National Policy Statement for Infrastructure
- amendments to the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011
- amendments to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008
- amendments to the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009
- amendments to the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations 2016
- new National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units)
- new National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga
- a new National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards.

Submissions on the Infrastructure and development package can be made until 11.59pm on 27 July 2025, through the [Ministry for the Environment's website](#).

National Policy Statement for Infrastructure

A new National Policy Statement for Infrastructure aims to:

- enable a more streamlined and efficient system that supports infrastructure delivery
- enable longer-term planning for infrastructure needs and simplify consenting and reconsementing processes
- reduce costs and speed up delivery of New Zealand's infrastructure networks.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011

The Government has committed to doubling renewable energy generation by 2050.

While the current National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG) helps achieve this goal, more policy is proposed to reduce consenting costs and achieve rapid renewable energy growth to achieve electrification, security of supply, and emissions reduction targets.

The proposals will strengthen the directiveness of the NPS-REG policies so that decision-makers considering consent applications will be required to give greater weight to the NPS policies than local planning instruments.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- new policies to enable renewable electricity generation and protect existing assets, while managing effects on the environment
- new policy to recognise and provide for Māori interests
- 18 new and amended definitions to support the proposed policies.

National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008

The Government is committed to safeguarding New Zealand's energy security and improving affordability. Increasing efficiency of electricity network delivery is key to this.

Amending the existing National Policy Statement is aimed at broadening its scope to include electricity distribution, in addition to electricity transmission, and renaming it to the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (NPS-EN).

The amendments propose enabling policies for the electricity network, aimed at reducing costs, speeding up consenting, while improving the electricity network.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- amended objectives to recognise and provide for the national significance and benefits of the electricity and electricity distribution networks
- new policies to support the operational and functional needs of the electricity network, route selection processes and management of environmental interests
- a new policy on recognising and providing for Māori interests
- amended policy to provide greater protection of the electricity network
- an update to the electric and magnetic fields international standard (1998) that's currently part of the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (and to replace it with a reference to the 2010 guidelines in the NPS-EN)
- 21 new and amended definitions to support the proposed policies, which align with the National Environment Standards for Electricity Network Activities.

National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities Regulations 2009

This is an amendment to an existing National Environmental Standards, complementing changes made to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission, by including electricity distribution in addition to electricity transmission and renaming it to the National Environment Standards for Electricity Network Activities (NES-ENA).

The proposed NES-ENA also includes provisions to improve consistency in how electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure is managed, which supports the aims of Electrify New Zealand.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- a change to the title to reflect the widened scope to include electricity distribution
- enabling more routine work on the electricity transmission network, in all environments
- introducing new rules to establish the National Grid Yard and Subdivision Corridor to protect the transmission network
- introducing new permitted activity rules for the distribution network
- introducing new permitted activity rules for EV charging infrastructure
- 41 new and amended definitions to support the interpretation of the proposed NPS-EN policies; and deletion of nine existing definitions.

National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities Regulations 2016

Telecommunications networks are critical national infrastructure that are essential for business and to deliver key services.

This is an amendment to existing National Environmental Standards to enable greater efficiency in the deployment of telecommunications infrastructure. This would enable more modern and resilient telecommunication services to meet the connectivity needs of New Zealand households and businesses.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- updating the existing permitted activity standards relating to telecommunication poles, headframes, cabinets and antennas
- expanding the scope of existing permitted activity standards (ie, permitting new poles in more zones and removing restrictions in the road reserve)
- creating a new permitted activity rule for renewable electricity generators for telecommunication facilities
- creating a new permitted activity rule for temporary telecommunications facilities creating a new permitted activity rule for customer connection lines to heritage buildings
- other minor technical updates to modernise the National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities (NES-TF)
- new and amended definitions to support the proposed NES-TF policies.

National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units)

The Government has committed to making it easier to build granny flats to assist with housing affordability and supply.

These are new national environmental standards, that aim to enable granny flats in district plans as a permitted activity, subject to a set of permitted activity standards. This proposal gives effect to the Government's commitment to amend the Building Act 2004 and regulation under the RMA to make it easier to build granny flats.

This consultation only relates to the national environmental standards proposal. They will be consistent with other proposed Building Act 2004 changes that are being progressed through a separate legislative process.

Key proposal

The proposal to change this instrument is to:

- enable one small (up to 70 square metres), detached, self-contained, single storey house (minor residential unit as defined in National Planning Standards) per site for residential use as a permitted activity (ie, no resource consent required) in residential, rural, mixed use and Māori purpose zones subject to meeting identified permitted activity standards.

Submissions from the 2024 consultation, *Making it easier to build granny flats* will also be considered alongside new submissions, when preparing the report and recommendations to the Minister for Housing on the submissions and the subject matter of the proposal.

National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga

Current resource management rules can be a barrier for Māori to build papakāinga housing on ancestral land.

These are new national environmental standards, that aim to more consistently enable landowners to develop papakāinga housing and related activities on identified Māori land.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- permit a limited scale of papakāinga development (up to 10 homes) on certain types of land in rural zones, residential zones, and Māori purpose zones subject to meeting identified standards
- permit certain ancillary activities associated with papakāinga including commercial activities of up to 100 square metres, conservation activities, visitor accommodation up to eight guests, education and health facilities, sports/recreation activities, marae, urupā and māra kai
- provide for papakāinga development of between 11 – 30 homes as a restricted discretionary activity
- provide for larger scale papakāinga development (more than 30 units) as a discretionary activity
- enable district plan rules for papakāinga to be more lenient than the National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga.

National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards

New Zealand faces many risks from natural hazards, and some communities have been built in risky areas, without appropriate measures to manage this risk.

This is a new national policy statement, that aims to ensure local authorities take a risk-based approach when managing natural hazards and respond proportionately to that risk in RMA decision-making on new development.

Key proposals

Key proposals to change this instrument include:

- the policy will apply to new subdivisions, use and development in all environments and zones including coastal environments
- the policy will apply to seven hazards (flooding, landslips, coastal erosion, coastal inundation, active faults, liquefaction and tsunami) but this will not stop local authorities from applying the same approach to other hazards
- policy that will direct councils to take a risk-based approach to natural hazard risks, which means assessing the risk based on likelihood and consequence
- a definition of 'significant risk' using a risk matrix
- policy directing councils to take a proportionate response to managing risks
- policy directing councils use best available information when making decisions.

