

Upcoming Resource Management Reform

Central government | September 2023

What is happening with changes to national direction?

The Government is introducing a broad suite of resource management changes before the end of 2024 in November/December. These changes will include:

- Amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA),
- Seven new national direction instruments (national policy statements and national environmental standards), and
- Amendments to fourteen existing national direction instruments.

These changes will be passed into law or made operative in mid-2025. HortNZ will be submitting on these changes, and the Environmental Policy Team is seeking evidence to support our submissions in advance of consultation opening.

How can product groups and district associations support this work?

As the HortNZ Environmental Policy Team prepares to respond to this massive suite of changes, we could use your help developing a strong evidence base and ensuring that we have a robust sense of the issues for our sector.

As soon as possible and throughout the coming weeks, please share with our team:

- Forward-looking risks or opportunities for horticulture in these policy areas,
- Evidence or research to support our policy positions (conducted by your organisation or that you've found useful),
- Any contacts that you think we should reach out to in developing our positions.

Our team will seek to keep you informed, share drafts and meet to discuss questions and concerns specific to your industries as needed.

What amendments will be made?

Changes to the RMA and national direction will be made in five categories. The specific changes that are relevant to the horticulture sector are outlined at a high level, and then with detail, below.

Infrastructure and energy

- Enabling new infrastructure and renewable energy

Housing

- Enabling rapid housing growth, including at urban-rural fringe

Farming and primary sector

- Freshwater
- Water storage
- Enabling vegetable growing

Emergencies and natural hazards

- Conditions for land-use based on risk

System improvements and other

- Cost recovery
- Compliance and enforcement

What are the details of the upcoming changes?

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

- New: NPS-Infrastructure
- Amend: NPS-Renewable Electricity Generation
- Amend: NPS-Electricity Transmission
- Speed up resource consenting and extend consent duration for infrastructure, especially renewable energy
- Enabling new electricity connections

HOUSING

- Amend: NPS-Urban Development
 - To support housing development in line with Government's [Going for Housing Growth programme](#)
- Amend: NPS-Highly Productive Land
 - Remove LUC 3 from the default definition of highly productive land
 - Allow greenhouses, intensive indoor primary production (e.g. piggeries, poultry, mushrooms), and new specified infrastructure (e.g. solar farms) on highly productive land
- New: direction for housing targets, granny flats
- Provide for rapid housing growth, including greenfield development and banning rural-urban boundary lines in council plans

FARMING AND PRIMARY SECTOR

- Freshwater farm plan changes
 - Roll-out paused
 - Industry assurance pathway
- Review and replace NPSFM 2020
 - It is unclear whether this is happening on the same timeframe as the rest of these reforms.
- **Enable vegetable growing**
 - We've advocated for a permitted activity standard and heard promising signals from Government to this end.
 - We don't know what form this will take yet.
- Enable on-farm water storage
 - *Evidence and views sought, in particular*
- Amend drinking water standards
- Indigenous biodiversity
 - Amendments to remove "undue" restrictions on land-use

EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL HAZARDS

- New: NPS-Natural Hazard Decision-making
- Ability to decline or place conditions on resource consents based on natural hazard risk

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS

- Cost recovery
- Compliance and enforcement

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Government press releases:
 - [Overview of reforms](#)
 - [Primary sector reforms](#)
 - [Freshwater Farm Plan pause](#)
- Ministry for the Environment [RM Reform newsletter](#)
- For feedback or questions, reach out to Emily Levenson, HortNZ Environmental Policy Advisor (emily.levenson@hortnz.co.nz)