

Natural Resources Working Party

Wednesday 6 August 2025 at 10am

AGENDA

Natural Resources Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Wednesday 6 August 2025, commencing at 10am

Please note: working parties and working groups carry NO formal decision-making delegations from council. The purpose of the working party/group is to carry out preparatory work and discussions prior to taking matters to the full council for formal consideration and decision-making. Working party/group meetings are open to the public to attend (unless there are specific grounds under LGOIMA for the public to be excluded).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES WORKING PARTY

Chairperson, NRC Deputy Chair Tui Shortland
TTMAC Representative, Geraldine Baker
Ex-Officio Geoff Crawford (Ex-Officio)
Councillor Amy Macdonald
Te Ruarangi Representative, Mira Norris
Councillor Marty Robinson
Councillor Rick Stolwerk
Te Ruarangi representative, Lynette Wharerau

KARAKIA

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Opening Karakia

Whakataka te hau ki te uru,
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga.
Kia mākinakina ki uta,
Kia mātaratara ki tai.
E hī ake ana te atākura he tio,
he huka, he hauhunga.
Tuturu whakamaua kia Tina (Tina)
Haumi e! Hui e! Tāiki e!

Closing Karakia

Unuhia, unuhia
Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui
Kia wātea, kia māmā, te ngākau, te tinana, te wairua i
te ara tangata
Koia rā e Rongo, whakairia ake ki runga
Kia tina! TINA! Hui e! TĀIKI E!



TITLE: **Record of Actions – 21 May 2025**

From: Sandra Harris, Personal Assistant - Pou Tiakai Taiao

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 30 July 2025
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Record of Actions of the last meeting (attached) held on 21 May 2025 for review by the meeting.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Record of Actions - 21 May 2025 [↓](#) 

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21 May 2025

Natural Resources Working Party Record of Actions

Meeting held online
on Wednesday 21 May 2025, commencing at 9:30 am

Secretariat note: Endorsement for Cr Robinson advised request to chair meeting from NRWP Chair

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, NRC Deputy Chair Tui Shortland
Ex-Officio Geoff Crawford (Ex-Officio)
Te Ruarangi Representative, Mira Norris
Councillor Marty Robinson
Councillor Amy Macdonald
Councillor Rick Stolwerk

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Pou Tiaki Taiao | GM Environmental Services
Secretariat Personal Assistant Pou Tiaki Taiao
Strategic Policy Manager
Monitoring Manager
Resource Scientist - Air
Kaitātari Kaupapa Wai Māori
Freshwater Policy Analyst
Strategic Policy Specialist
Policy Specialist
Lucy Evans | Beef & Lamb | PSLG
Carina Ross | DairyNZ | PSLG
Mark Forsyth | MPI | PSLG
Chevon Horsford | TWWAG
Troy Brockbank | TWWAG
Sheila Taylor | TWWAG
Rebecca Fletcher | TWWAG
Ursula Buckingham | PSLG
Delaraine Armstrong | TWWAG
Richard Allen | Fonterra | PSLG

The meeting commenced at 9.30am with karakia by Cr Shortland and mihi to all present.

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Te Ruarangi representative, Lynette Wharerau; Te Ruarangi Representative, Geraldine Baker.

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Record of Actions – 12 March 2025 (Item 4.1)

Presented by: Cr Robinson

Agreed action points:

- Working Party members agreed that the record of actions was an accurate reflection of the meeting

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 4.2)

Presented by: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao

Discussion and Agreed action points:

- Outstanding actions to be presented as part of agenda today.

Freshwater Plan Change Workstream (Item 4.3)

Presented by: Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager; Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist; Alison Newell, Policy Specialist and Megha Sethi, Freshwater Policy Analyst

Discussion and Agreed action points:

Secretariat note: Elected members informed of Tangata Whenua Advisory Group and Primary Sector Liaison Group in attendance as part of clarification on work being undertaken.

- **Noted:** Six meetings have been held by the working groups, focusing on developing shared visions around key topics such as Mapping Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Stock Exclusion from water bodies. While progress has been made in these areas, gaps remain in effectively addressing sediment and E.coli contamination under the current regulatory framework.
- **Noted:** Staff are working to reduce regulatory complexity of overlapping rules while awaiting final direction from Central Government.
- **Noted:** Direction from the NRWP is sufficient for staff to continue progressing endorsed workstreams and make operational decisions on resource investment.
- **Noted:** The Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Group (TWWAG) and the Primary Sector Liaison Group both valued the collaborative nature of their joint work, particularly the relationship-building and practical insights gained through on-farm visits. While TWWAG highlighted consistent engagement and a commitment to advocating for Māori values, the Primary Sector Liaison Group appreciated being included and supported continuing the group's work in a scaled-back form. Both groups expressed concern about the uncertainty of upcoming government policy changes and emphasised the importance of aligning future efforts with national policy and RMA reforms.
- **Direction:** Working party members expressed support for **Option 3**, which proposes continuing with a more limited work programme. This focused approach prioritises completing discussions on stock access, determining the most effective use of the updated Highly Erodible Land (HEL) maps currently in development, and addressing Farm Dairy Effluent (FDE) discharge rules. It was agreed that work on earthworks, vegetation clearance, and afforestation will not be progressed under this option. '

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- Noted: The Council has budgeted for freshwater plan change implementation, including legal processes, within the Long-Term Plan. While funding is in place for upcoming years, uncertainty around government direction and timing means specific implementation requirements are still unknown. The Council will remain flexible and may revisit implementation options once further guidance is provided.
- Action: Schedule and conduct a workshop with Council in June to present current understanding of implementation requirements and associated budgetary implications. This session will provide an early indication of expected costs and inform future planning decisions.

Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions

1. Note the progress on the Freshwater Plan Change Workstreams;
2. Recognise the significant contribution the Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Group and the Primary Sector Liaison Group members on the Working Group have made in developing agreed principles around how stock exclusion rules should operate in Te Tai Tokerau; and
3. Provide direction on next step options around the Freshwater Plan Change Workstreams in the context of the Resource Management reforms, changes to Freshwater Farm Plans and the imminent arrival of the National Directions Package.

Northland's Dusty Roads (Item 4.4)

Presented by: Obi Khanal, Resource Scientist

Discussion and Agreed action points:

- Action: Presentation to be sent to Working Party members
- Action: Report on current compliance monitoring outcomes based on existing budget and activities. This initial reporting will establish a baseline of what is currently being delivered. If further insights or expanded monitoring are desired, Council can consider this in future decision-making regarding resourcing and the scope of compliance monitoring.

Catchment Business Case Update (Item 4.5)

Presented by: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao

Discussion and Agreed action points:

- Noted: The Taumarere Catchment Business Case is in development and is expected to be completed by August. Once adopted by Council, it will provide a foundation for guiding investment decisions in the catchment and support engagement with central government for funding and partnership opportunities.
- Noted: The Taumarere Business Case has progressed ahead of the Hokianga Harbour Business Case due to limited capacity, making it unfeasible to deliver both simultaneously.
- Noted: The development of the business case for the Hokianga catchment is anticipated to be complex due to the dynamic nature of the catchment and the need for extensive collaboration with multiple partners. To ensure a coordinated and effective approach,

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this work is scheduled to commence following the completion of the Taumarere Business Case.

Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions

1. That the report be received by the Working Party.
2. That the Working Party be kept up to date on progress with the business case.

Councillor Information Package on the Freshwater Plan Change and other Freshwater Management by NRC (Item 4.6)

Presented by: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao

Discussion and Agreed action points:

- Noted Action: Working Party endorsed the recommended action. Pack to be finalised and shared with councillors

Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working Party endorses the draft Councillor Info Pack, and/or provide staff with further direction on its content.

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 11.35 with closing karakia by Interim Chair Cr Robinson.

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Sandra Harris, Personal Assistant - Pou Tiakai Taiao

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 30 July 2025
Group Manager/s:


Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to enable the meeting to receive the current action sheet.

Nga mahi tutohutia / Recommendation

That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Receipt of Action Sheet [!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901_img.jpg\)](#) 

Natural Resources Working Party– Schedule of Actions

Meeting date	Item	NRWP action	Responsible staff	Status	Notes
12 March 2025	Coastal State of the Environment Report (4.5)	To report back to the Working Party at future date and how engagement with communities is shared around data	Jason Donaghy	In progress	The campaign plan is currently in progress, with partners contributing to the collation of materials intended to support forthcoming engagement activities.
		To report back to the Working Party a map that indicates where all source tracking sites are located	Jason Donaghy	Complete	PCR data for key markers compiled; analysis done on all FIB samples since 2019 using site-specific triggers. PCR is the sole MST method used.
21 May 2025	Northland's Dusty Roads (item 4.4)	Report on current compliance monitoring outcomes based on existing budget and activities. This initial reporting will establish a baseline of what is currently being delivered.	Colin Dall / Jason Donaghy	In Progress	

TITLE: Freshwater Farm Plans Update

From: Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 30 July 2025
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations were introduced in June 2023.

In late 2023, the government announced its intention to review the Freshwater Farm Plan framework to make them more practical, cost-effective, and tailored to environmental risks.

Some changes were made as part of the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill.

Further changes are anticipated late in 2025.

Current advice is that all regulations will be in place by early 2026.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of progress around the changes and on-going work by NRC to prepare for roll out of Freshwater farm Plans from mid-2026.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

That the Natural Resources Working Party note:

1. Changes to the Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations to date and that more changes are still to come later in 2025.
2. On-going work by NRC, while we await the full suite of changes, to ensure Te Taitokerau is well placed to commence roll out of Freshwater Farm Plans from mid-2026.

Background/Tuhinga

The Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations were introduced in June 2023.

In August 2023, NRC initiated the Freshwater Farm Plan (FWFP) Implementation to ensure that it was ready to roll out implementation of the Regulations across Te Taitokerau from 1 August 2024. At that time NRC also agreed on the phasing across the regions 13 Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) to manage resources. The phasing envisaged implemented across each FMUs every 2-3 months over an 18 -24-month period.

In late 2023, the government announced its intention to review the Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations (the Regulations).

As a result, much of the NRC preparation work for implementing Freshwater Farm Plans was paused.

The government has however continued to reinforce that Freshwater Farm Plans will be a key tool to achieve freshwater outcomes within catchments.

NRC has therefore continued to progress some work to ensure the region will be well placed to roll out FWFPs following government changes to the framework. This work has primarily focused on the development of Catchment Context, Challenges and Values (CCCVs) as these are a key part of the framework and contain information to support farms with identifying risks, then on-farm actions.

NRC on-going work to support Freshwater Farm Plan implementation

The following work has continued to ensure the region was well placed to roll out FWFPs following changes:

- Development of Catchment Context, Challenges and Values (CCCV) information for the first four FMUs – Northern Wairoa, Poutō, Doubtless Bay and Whangaroa Freshwater Management Units (FMU).
- External testing of the Northern Wairoa CCCV information and ArcGIS map tool with farmers, KMR farm advisors and primary industry sector representatives.
- Pilot engagement of the iwi in the Northern Wairoa FMU, in partnership with Auckland Council.
- Early initiation of engagement with the remaining iwi in Te Taitokerau.
- Identification of a forward programme for developing the remaining 9 FMUs CCCVs.
- Updating the qualifying farm GIS data set to reflect Select Committee's recommendations on the size triggers for qualifying farms.
- Discussions on the measurement framework to track progress on implementation.

Pilot iwi engagement on the CCCVs for the Northern Wairoa

As part of the development of the Northern Wairoa CCCVs, a pilot engagement process was initiated with iwi who had areas of interest in the Northern Wairoa FMU (Te Uri o Hau, Ngāti Whātua, Te Roroa, Ngātiwai, Ngāpuhi, Patuharakeke and Ngāti Hine).

Part of that pilot was undertaken with Auckland Council whose boundaries take in the southern catchments of Kaipara Moana so that 3 of the iwi (Te Uri o Hau, Ngāti Whātua, Ngātiwai) did not need to repeat their input for each council separately. Work with these iwi is still underway using the below approach.

- Both AC and NRC CCCV information will contain high level information on freshwater quality values that can be applicable to all iwi in an FMU with links to individual iwi websites which will contain a story map detailing more specifically the information currently required by the Regulations (freshwater values, sites and species of significance, traditional names for freshwater bodies, information on any iwi planning documents) that the relevant iwi wishes to make publicly available.
- Each iwi will only need to produce one story map for their areas of interest so an iwi with interest in more than one FMU area will only have to produce one story map e.g., Te Roroa story map will also provide information relevant to the Poutō FMU area (as well as several other FMUs).
- By having the story map on their own websites, iwi can ensure that they are comfortable with what information is publicly provided and can update/improve that information over time.
- If the amended Regulations change the current content of CCCVs, both NRC and AC officers consider the current information from iwi is still relevant and important to help farmers identify their on-farm freshwater risks. If the amended Regulations require additional information that can be added over time.

Using the lessons learnt from the pilot, NRC staff have now started to work with the remaining iwi to for input into the catchment context. It should be noted that in the long term the intension is to develop catchment contexts at with hapū and ongoing programme of work will be developed to support this as part of the long term implementation of the farm plan system.

Government changes to FWFP framework

Proposed amendments to Part 9A of the RMA (Freshwater Farm Plans) were included in the recent Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill.

The Select Committee (the Committee) process on that Bill is completed with the Committee forwarding its recommendations to Parliament for consideration and passing of the amended Bill into law (due to occur before the end of this year).

The Select Committee recommended that:

- The size for when farms must prepare FWFPs be increased from 20+ hectares to 50+ hectares for pastoral, arable, viticulture, orcharding and mixed-use farming.
- The size for other horticulture remains the same (5 or more hectares).
- The Regulations can additionally prescribe land use activities or areas of farms where freshwater farm plans are required.
- All farms with a Dairy Supply number must have a FWFP.
- Not all FWFP must be certified. Certification only needs to take place if the farmer is undertaking activities identified in activity-based criteria prescribed in regulations; or the farm is in a catchment prescribed in regulations; or the operator is required to submit the FWFP for certification to meet other regulatory requirements.
- Primary Industry sector organisations can apply to the Minister to be approved industry FWFP certifiers and auditors.
- Regional Councils will be responsible for monitoring the performance of any Primary Sector organisation approved to certify and audit FWFP.

MfE and MPI have indicated that proposed amendments to the FWFP Regulations are on track to being notified in September/October this year with the intention that the Regulations are law in early 2026.

Council's role in implementation of the FWFP system

The role of regional councils in the implementation of the original FWFP provisions in Part 9A of the RMA and in the Regulations covered the following functions

- Providing contextual information on landforms, soils, climate, freshwater quality and freshwater bodies, contaminants, sites of significance to community and significant species or ecosystems within a catchment (CCCV)
- Providing advice on risks to freshwater quality that on-farm activities might pose, and actions that could be used to avoid, mitigate or reduce that risk.
- Providing regional training to FWFP certifiers and auditors.
- Appointing FWFP certifiers and auditors
- Monitoring compliance with certified FWFP actions
- Maintaining certain data and information required by the Regulations and taking enforcement action if required

In addition to the above, to ensure good uptake of FWFPs, NRC was planning to:

- Investigate actions, including incentives, that would increase awareness of risks to freshwater quality and would support uptake of FWFPs amongst farmers.
- Work more closely with those primary industry sector organisations already focussing on improvements to freshwater quality and look to provide focussed support to those farmers not covered by those organisations.
- Leave the actual development of FWFP to the market where there are several providers already providing that service.

Implications of the current changes on NRCs role

The recommended amendments to Part 9A have not significantly altered the above functions of NRC.

The increase in several of the land use thresholds will reduce to some extent how many farms will require a FWFP but how large that reduction will be is unknown until the amended Regulations set out additional prescribed activities and catchments.

The amendments give the MfE the ability to approve primary sector organisations as certifiers and auditors of FWFPs. This may reduce the number of certifiers and auditors that the regional councils must appoint but at this stage it is not clear on who will provide training to primary sector certifiers and auditors. This change will require integrated advice and communications from NRC and those primary industry sector organisations who become approved certifiers and auditors of FWFPs. It will also impose more work on NRC's compliance monitoring work programme as regional councils will need to also monitor the performance of those primary industry sector certifiers and auditors.

The amendments include changes where FWFPs will only need to be certified if:

- the farm is undertaking an activity prescribed by the Regulations; or
- the farm is in a catchment prescribed by the Regulations, or
- a certified FWFP is a pre-requisite for compliance with another regulatory mechanism (e.g., a rule in a regional plan).

Consideration will also therefore need to be given to whether any high-risk catchments in the region, not captured by the Regulations, should be included and if future freshwater plan rules should also require certified FWFPs to be prepared for certain areas or activities.

Until the amended Regulations are notified later this year, much of the detail on prescribed activities, the certification and audit process, the training responsibilities for certifiers and auditors, and the enforcement processes, is unknown.

Primary Sector and Tangata Whenua Engagement

There has been strong support to date to work together collaboratively to roll out FWFPs well in Te Taitokerau.

Through freshwater planning engagement (primarily to date focused on the management of stock access to waterbodies) with the Primary Sector Liaison and the Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Groups, we also know there is strong support for the use of FWFPs to help achieve water quality outcomes in Te Taitokerau as part of the regions package of actions. The working group also envisaged more use of FWFPs in the regional plan and as an alternative to resource consents. Although the government has placed freshwater planning on hold, this provides a strong collective vision of the role FWFP can play in achieving water quality outcomes and supporting farms to identify risks and their on-farm actions in Te Taitokerau.

Next steps

Government has signalled that the FWFP legislation (Part 9A RMA and the FWFP Regulations) will be effective from early 2026.

Prior to early 2026, NRC will be requested to provide information to MfE if it wishes to have any high-risk (to freshwater quality) catchments listed in the Regulations.

NRC will need to decide whether there are any high-risk catchments where certification of FWFPs, for farms in addition to activities listed in the regulations, would help achieve catchment water quality outcomes. Prior to then staff will engage with tangata whenua technical advisors and the Primary Sector Liaison Group to seek their views.

After the legislation comes into effect, it is not yet clear whether it will be phased across the country as previously envisaged or whether regions will have a greater say in the timing of that rollout. That information should be clear in any amendments to the Regulations in early 2016.

The government has however signalled that rollout across the country in whatever form will recommence from mid-2026.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: **Resource Management Reform**

From: Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager and Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 30 July 2025

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The New Zealand Government is undertaking a major reform of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991.

The reform seeks to enable economic growth, streamline planning, support infrastructure and housing, and better protect natural resources.

The reform has involved several bills to change the RMA, the introduction of the Fast Track Approvals Act, new and revised national direction and two new acts to replace the RMA.

The reform is currently in progress, with completion expected by mid-2026.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of progress around the reforms and key implications.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

That the Natural Resources Working Party note:

1. The governments progress around the resource management reforms.
2. Key implications of the changes.

Background/Tuhinga

The government is currently undertaking major reforms to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

The main goals of the reform are to enable economic growth and make it easier to plan for, and deliver, infrastructure and housing, while protecting the environment.

Other goals include establishing a system that is more nationally consistent; is less costly and complex than the current regime; is easier for a range of users to access; sets clearer limits for using natural resources and gives more certainty about how land and resources are used for development.

Resource Management Reform

Attachment 1 provides an overview of the elements to the reform. This includes:

- Changes the RMA, prior to its replacement, to support the governments goals.
- The introduction of the Fast Track Approvals Act.
- New and revised national direction (national policy statements and national environmental standards).
- Two new Acts to replace the RMA:
 - Natural Environment Act – Focuses on the protection, use, and enhancement of natural resources including land, air, freshwater, coastal and marine areas.

- Planning Act – Focuses on land-use planning to support development and infrastructure.

The reform is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

Reform Progress

Past, current and planned progress includes:

- The Resource Management Amendment Act (Freshwater) being enacted in October 2024.
- The Fast Track Approvals Act being enacted in December 2024.
- The Resource Management Amendment Bill (Consenting and Other System Changes) has been through the select committee process, had its second reading, is now with the Committee of the Whole House and expected to be enacted shortly.
- Current public consultation is being undertaken on proposed changes to national direction instruments under the current RMA. This includes packages on infrastructure, the primary sector, freshwater, and housing growth.
- Late 2025: Legislation to replace the RMA is expected to be introduced to Parliament.
- Mid-2026: The new legislation—the Natural Environment Act and the Planning Act—is expected to be enacted and come into force.
- 1st half of 2027: Implementation of the new legislation commences.


Key Implications of the Reform for NRC and Te Taitokerau

Once all reforms are in place they will have significant implications for how natural and physical resources are managed in the region.

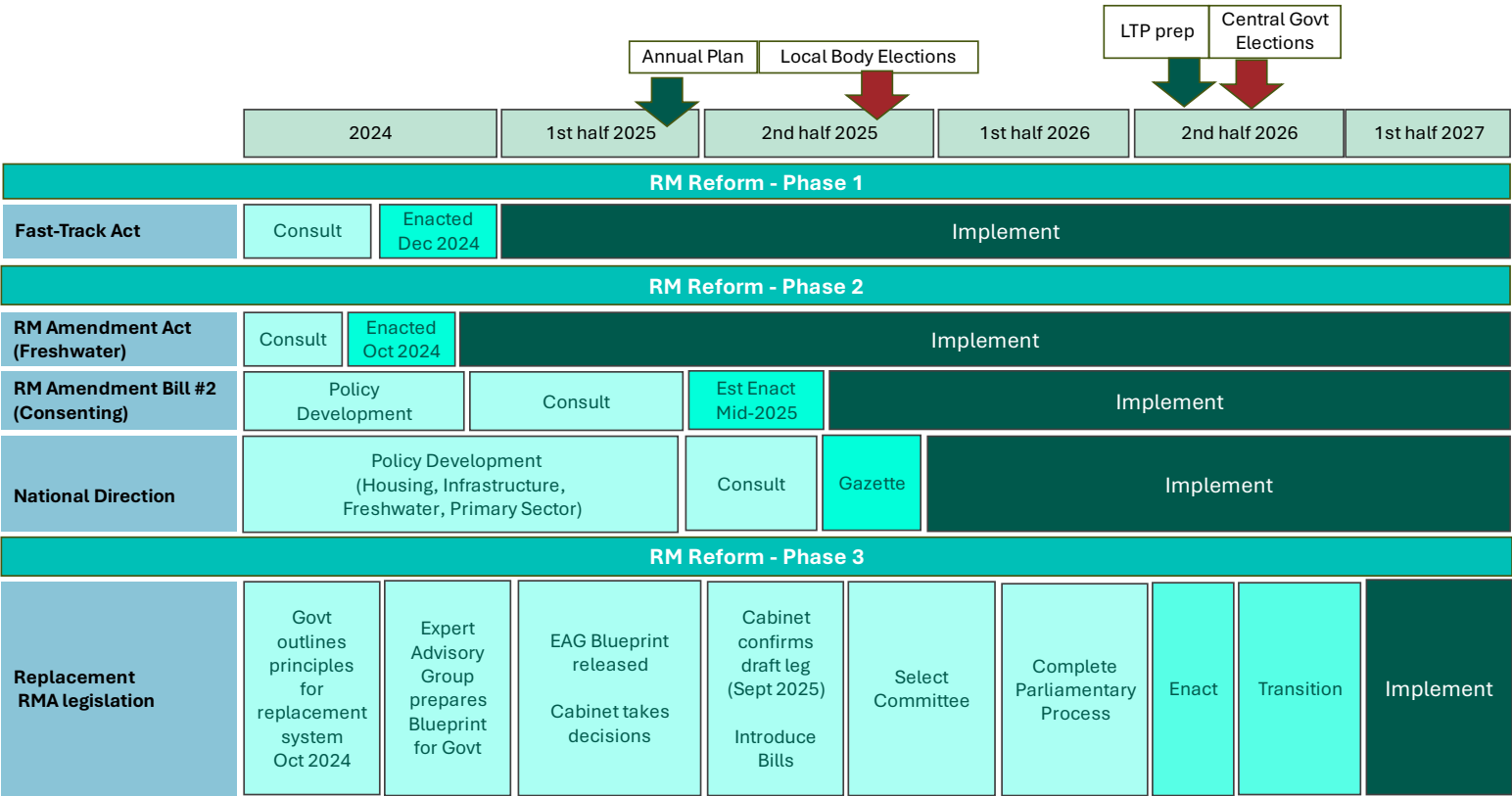
There are also key implications for council policy development in the short to medium term with the 'pause' on freshwater planning likely to be extended to 2027, along with the recently announced restriction on progressing other RMA plan changes, until the new acts are in place.

Implementation of the new acts is however proposed to commence from 2027. Little detail exists around how implementation will roll out. We however anticipate the first step will be to create the regional spatial plan, followed by the content of the plans under the new acts. Significant capacity is likely to be required for both implementation steps.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Overview of Resource Management Reform [↓](#) 

Attachment 1: Overview of Resource Management Reforms



TITLE: Future strategic focus areas

From: Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 30 July 2025
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report sets out potential areas of focus for the Natural Resources Working Party, or a future similar governance arrangement, over the short to medium term in the context of central government reforms to the resource management and national policy direction. The purpose of the paper is to enable the working party to endorse potential focus areas so that there is some continuity with the working party between now and after the local government elections.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Working Party receive the report
2. That the Natural Resources Working Party endorse the potential areas of focus outlined in the report.
3. That staff report back to the Natural Resources Working Party on this topic at its next meeting following the 2025 local government elections.

Background/Tuhinga

The government has embarked on an ambitious programme of legislative and policy reforms of the resource management system (for more detail see item on Resource Management reform). This includes replacing the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) with two new acts (a planning act and natural environment act) and changes to a suite of national policy instruments. It has also signalled its intention to halt district and regional plan reviews and plan changes (with some exceptions) through an amendment to the RMA while these reforms are progressed.

Once enacted, the reforms will have significant implications for how natural and physical resources are managed in Aotearoa NZ. There are also implications for council policy development in the short to medium term (E.g. the 'pause' on freshwater planning mandated by government late 2024 is likely to be extended to 2027 pending revision of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater management 2020 and development of the new resource management regime). The restrictions on progressing RMA plan reviews and plan changes also means no regulatory proposals (e.g. changes to the regional plan or policy statement) can be progressed.

This does not mean council must cease all resource management related programmes but suggests more of a focus on elements that will either be of material benefit to the environment or Northlanders or there is confidence they will be included in the new resource management regime. These are likely to include:

- Continuing to strengthen partnerships with iwi and hapu.
- non-regulatory initiatives (such as targeted catchment scale advocacy and support for improving the state of fresh and coastal waters).
- implementation of operative regional plan provisions, with a focus on those where non-compliance has risks, compliance has been an issue in the past or where stakeholder awareness is likely to be low.

- Supporting implementation of national instruments that are likely to be retained in new resource management regime (e.g. Freshwater Farm Plans which have been supported by this and the previous government as a means to improve freshwater
- Developing evidence and data to improve our understanding of the state of and the pressures on our natural resources, including building the evidence base to implement initiatives that we are confident will form part of the new planning system (such as spatial planning¹) and as required to implement the above.
- Input into and advice on key climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives

The Terms of Reference for the Natural Resources Working Party set out the objective of the working party is to provide oversight and assistance to the Chief Executive on council's natural resource related strategic activities. With that in mind, it is recommended that the above topics are strategic focus areas for the Natural Resources Working Party as part of the next council triennium. (at least in the short – medium term). More detail is provided below:

Non-regulatory strategies/programmes

- Catchment planning initiatives and priorities for improving the state of fresh and coastal waters and associated implementation programmes.
- development of non-regulatory strategies (e.g. soil conservation).

Regional plan implementation

- Regional Plan implementation (including priority areas for increased education, awareness and support for improving compliance)

Freshwater Farm Plan implementation

- Oversight of council programmes to support implementation of Freshwater Farm Plans (and associated programmes to monitor FWFP uptake and effectiveness)

Science and data

- Receive updates on key trends in SOE monitoring and recommendations to council in response to any significant degrading trends or current state.
- Briefings on environmental investigations/reports commissioned or related initiatives (e.g. public release of updated wetland mapping) and advice on any proposed next steps.

Central government legislative / policy reforms

- Receive briefings on key government proposals for legislative and/or policy reforms relating to the roles and functions of the Working Party
- Provide Working Party's views on government proposals and any recommended submission points/evidence to inform council submissions/feedback (where timeframes allow).

The suggested areas of focus outlined above are considered to be consistent with the current Terms of Reference for the Working Party. Feedback from the Working Party on the potential areas of focus outlined above is sought.

¹ Both this government and the previous government have signaled that spatial planning at the regional scale would be a key part of a reformed resource management regime.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil