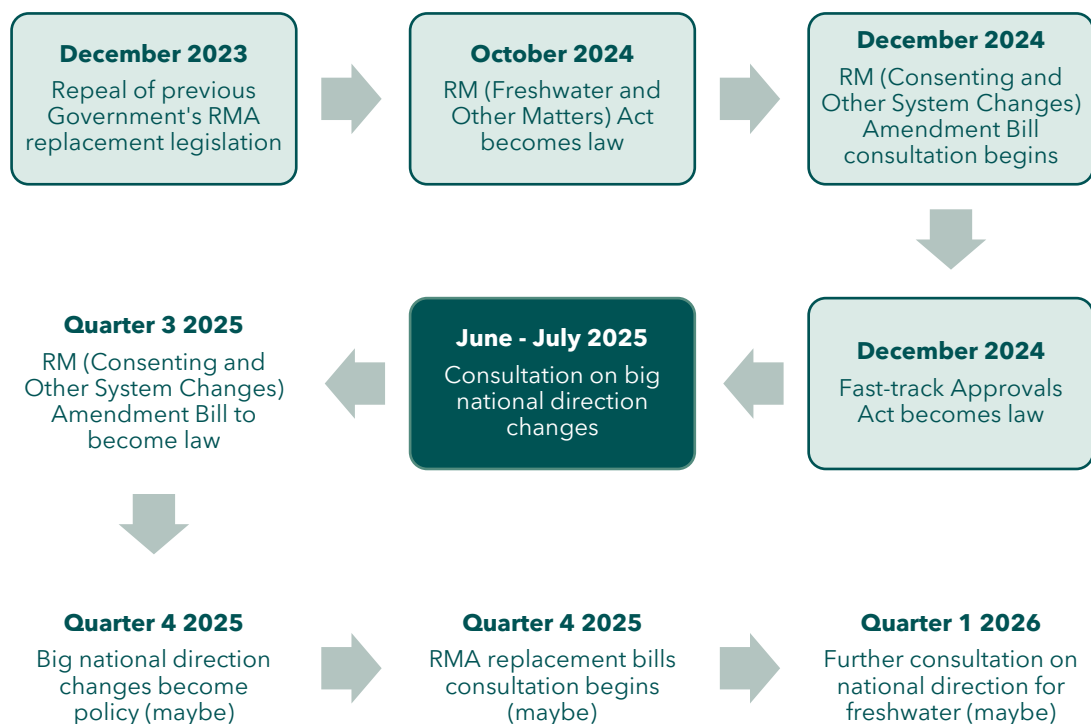


# Resource Management Reforms

Central government | July 2025

## What's happening in the resource management reform space?

At the end of July, public consultation closed on a number of changes to national direction ranging from freshwater to highly productive land to electricity transmission. These proposals are part of a sweeping overhaul of how planning works in New Zealand. This process will include fully replacing the Resource Management Act (the RMA), the law which determines how all planning and resource management in New Zealand works. The diagram below shows where this consultation fits (in dark blue) within the longer timeline of resource management changes.



## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Ministry for the Environment website](#)
- Read the submissions [on HortNZ's website](#)
- Contact HortNZ: [info@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:info@hortnz.co.nz)

## What was included in this consultation?

HortNZ submitted on the following pieces of national direction in July 2025:

Topic	Government's proposals	HortNZ's main points
Water storage <a href="#">HortNZ submission</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Environmental Standard making off-stream water storage a permitted activity</li><li>• An objective in national direction for freshwater directing councils to consider water security for climate change resilience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water storage for the horticulture industry will need policy support community-scale collective schemes, including managed aquifer recharge.</li><li>• The objective should recognise other economic, social and environmental benefits of water storage in addition to climate change adaptation.</li></ul>
National direction for vegetables <a href="#">HortNZ submission</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National permitted activity for commercial vegetable production</li><li>• An objective in national direction for freshwater directing councils to enable commercial vegetable production and crop rotation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We seek a National Environmental Standard making vegetable production a permitted activity with minimum standards and certified and audited farm plans.</li><li>• We provided lots of technical evidence to support a national permitted activity for vegetables.</li><li>• Crop rotation needs to be enabled at a sufficiently large scale.</li></ul>

Topic	Government's proposals	HortNZ's main points
<p>Freshwater (general)</p> <p><a href="#">HortNZ submission</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebalancing freshwater objectives to safeguard the environment, provide for human health and provide for a productive economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We support making sure objectives for the environment, human health and the economy are held in balance.</li> <li>We support the option retaining Te Mana o te Wai with more guidance about how to achieve that balance.</li> <li>Frameworks to improve the health of waterbodies should be achievable and take an action plan approach, looking at the best improvements over a whole catchment, not just property-scale.</li> </ul>
<p>Highly productive land</p> <p><a href="#">HortNZ submission</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove LUC 3 from the definition of highly productive land</li> <li>Introduce Special Agricultural Areas in key horticultural areas where LUC 3 is still protected from housing development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The definition of highly productive land should be based on all of the factors that make land productive – not just soil type and climate.</li> <li>We support the idea of Special Agricultural Areas and seek that they come with actual enabling of horticulture in those areas.</li> <li>We seek an interim Special Agricultural Area on the Heretaunga Plains in Hawke's Bay</li> <li>Regional and district councils should be directed to enable primary production on highly productive land.</li> </ul>

Topic	Government's proposals	HortNZ's main points
Natural hazards <a href="#">HortNZ submission</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new risk accounting framework for natural hazards</li> <li>• The rules won't apply to primary production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support the exclusion of primary production.</li> <li>• Workers' accommodation will still be subject to these rules, so the need for workers' accommodation to be on or near farms and orchards (even in hazard areas) should be considered, especially since they're often not allowed in other areas.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure <a href="#">HortNZ submission</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New national policy directing councils to prioritise and plan for infrastructure</li> <li>• 'Social infrastructure' like hospitals and schools are included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood protection and water storage should be included</li> <li>• Some areas are more appropriate than others for schools and hospitals – for example, the working rural production zone is not an appropriate location for a new school.</li> <li>• Policies are needed to manage the reverse sensitivity effects caused by these activities.</li> </ul>
Granny flats (minor residential units) <a href="#">HortNZ submission</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New national permitted activity for minor residential units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setbacks are needed to manage the reverse sensitivity effects caused by these activities in rural areas.</li> </ul>

Topic	Government's proposals	HortNZ's main points
<p>Electricity</p> <p><a href="#">HortNZ submission on NES</a></p> <p><a href="#">HortNZ submission on NPS</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendments to the NPS Electricity Networks and NES Electricity Network Activities to enable electricity infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity infrastructure should only be placed on highly productive land where there is a strong need to do so.</li> <li>• Policy should consider the cumulative effects of electricity network infrastructure on primary production because it can affect how growers can use their land.</li> <li>• National Grid Yard provisions that apply to transmission lines should not be extended to electricity distribution networks. Activities that can take place under these provisions are managed under national standards (NZECP 34:2001 – New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances).</li> </ul>