

Government launches action plan for healthy waterways

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The Government has launched consultation on its proposed freshwater reform package. The freshwater reform package is intended to improve the current management of fresh water to ensure that New Zealanders can swim, fish and gather kai in New Zealand's fresh water as well as have access to drinking water and irrigation to support a sustainable economy.

The key proposals in the freshwater reform package include:

- A refreshed and updated National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
- Refreshed and updated National Environmental Standards for Sources of Human Drinking Water
- New National Environmental Standards for Fresh Water to provide interim controls on land intensification
- New National Environmental Standards for Wastewater
- New stock exclusion section 360 regulations
- Amendments to the RMA to provide an accelerated freshwater plan-making process.

The freshwater reform package proposes new requirements that seek to:

- Strengthen Te Mana o Te Wai as the framework for freshwater management
- Better provide for ecosystem health (water, fish and plant life)
- Better protect wetlands and estuaries
- Better manage stormwater and wastewater
- Better support the delivery of safe drinking water
- Control high-risk farming activities and limit agricultural intensification
- Improve farm management practices.

The Minister of the Environment Hon David Parker stated that "Our Action Plan for Healthy Waterways aims [to] stop the degradation of our rivers and lakes, achieve a noticeable improvement in five years and restore our waterways within a generation".

A [discussion document](#) has been prepared by the Ministry for the Environment titled Action for Healthy Waterways following the reports by four advisory groups. The Government is calling for submissions which are due by 17 October 2019.

Please feel free to contact a member of our [national environment and resource management team](#) if you wish to discuss the implications of this or would like assistance in preparing your submission.

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