

Legal alert - Freshwater consultation document

[Paul Beverley](#), [Jennifer Caldwell](#), [David Allen](#), [David Randal](#), [Cedric Carranceja](#), [Vanessa Evitt](#), [Thaddeus Ryan](#), [Mathew Gribben](#)

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Over the weekend, the Ministry for the Environment released a consultation document called *Next steps for fresh water*. This document outlines the Government's 23 initiatives to improve the management of fresh water in New Zealand. A series of public meetings and hui will be held in March and April, and members of the public may make submissions on the document until 22 April 2016.

The Minister for the Environment, Hon Dr Nick Smith, and the Minister for Primary Industries, Hon Nathan Guy, say the Government's objectives are *"better environmental outcomes, enabling sustainable economic growth to support new jobs and exports, and improving Māori involvement in freshwater decision-making."*

One of the key initiatives is to create a nationally consistent approach to the exclusion of stock from water bodies, rather than allowing each regional council to make its own rules. Iwi involvement in the protection and management of water bodies is also listed as a priority, with one of the initiatives providing for iwi to enter agreements with councils on how Māori can better participate in decisions around fresh water management. The other initiatives relate to the economic use of freshwater, and strengthening the requirements for improved water quality under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. Additionally, the consultation document proposes an investment of \$100 million to improve water quality in New Zealand's lakes, rivers, and aquifers.

The Ministers' press release and a copy of the consultation document are available to download [here](#).

If you would like to discuss the consultation document and its specific proposals, please get in touch with one of our team members.

Auckland

188 Quay Street
Auckland 1010

PO Box 1433
Auckland 1140
New Zealand

P: +64 9 358 2555
F: +64 9 358 2055

Wellington

Aon Centre
1 Willis Street
Wellington 6011

PO Box 2694
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

P: +64 4 499 4242
F: +64 4 499 4141

Christchurch

83 Victoria Street
Christchurch 8013

PO Box 322
Christchurch 8140
New Zealand

P: +64 3 379 1747
F: +64 3 379 5659