

## Government launches action plan for healthy waterways

David Allen, David Randal, Jennifer Caldwell, Paul Beverley, Vanessa Evitt, Cedric Carranceja, Frances Wedde, Jenna Silcock, Mathew Gribben, Thaddeus Ryan, Victoria Brunton

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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.

### 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

