

Legal alert - Resource Legislation Amendment Bill passed its third reading

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Yesterday the Government announced that the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill passed its third reading. This means that the Bill has been subject to a final debate and vote by the House of Representatives. The Bill proposes significant changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), Reserves Act 1977, Public Works Act 1981 (PWA), Conservation Act 1987 and Exclusive Economic Zone (Environmental Effects) Act 2012.

The Bill will become law when it receives the Royal assent, which generally takes about a week. Amendments which come into effect the day after the Bill receives Royal assent include:

- More generous compensation for land acquired under the PWA
- Adding a function for regional councils to establish, implement and review plan provisions to ensure there is sufficient development capacity for housing and business land to meet the expected demand
- Provision for streamlined planning processes to improve responsiveness
- Provision for collaborative planning processes to encourage community-led solutions
- Provision for establishing national planning standards aimed at improving efficiency
- Changes to improve Māori participation arrangements.

On 1 June 2017, amendments to the Exclusive Economic Zone (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 take effect including a requirement to include a decommissioning plan to cover the decommissioning of offshore petroleum installations. Six months after the Bill receives Royal assent, changes to the Conservation Act 1987 and a number of changes to the RMA come into effect, including:

- Changes to the notification requirements for resource consent applications
- The introduction of a fast-track consent application process
- Providing councils with a discretion to exempt some activities from requiring resource consent.

Five years after Royal assent is given, the financial contributions provisions of the RMA will be removed.

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