



Environmental Policy Newsletter

RMA update

What's in this edition: RMA stop plan - what does that mean for Tasman and community supports natural hazards risk-based approach.

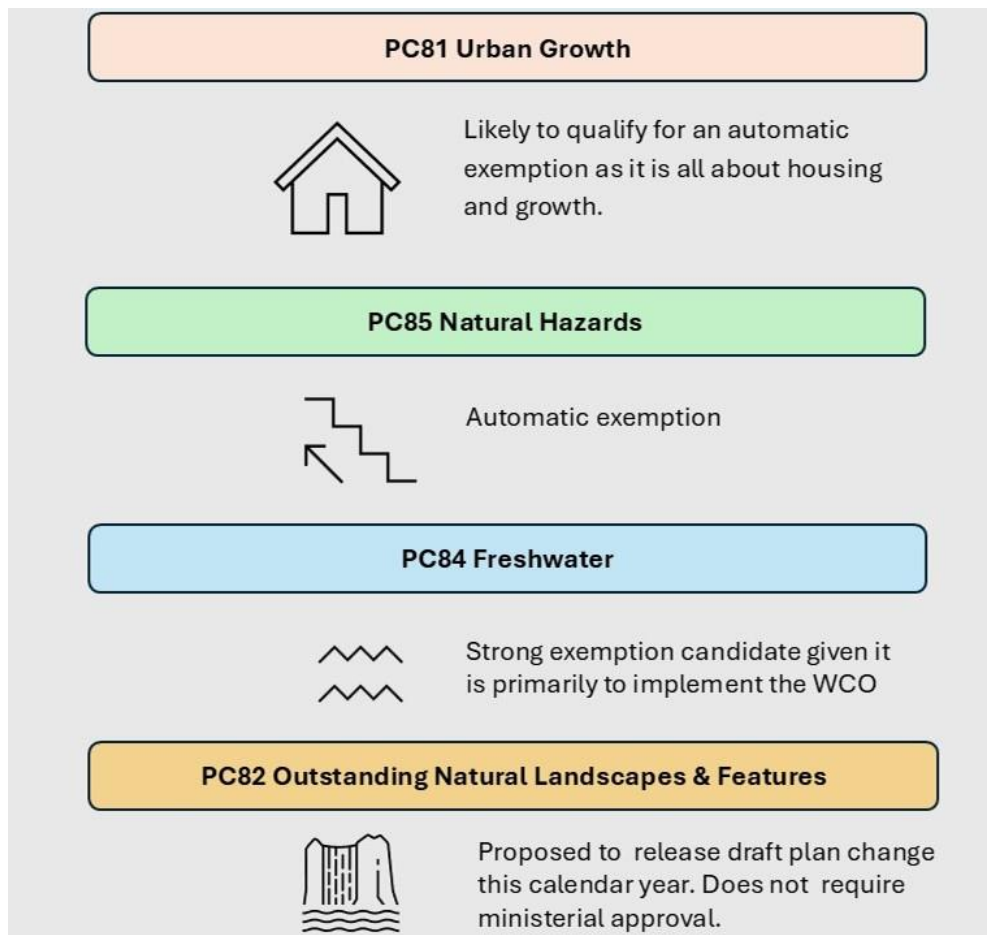


The significant rainfall covered nearly all of the Motueka watershed, and it is for that reason that the flood was so large.



"Rather than let these pricey, pointless planning and policy processes play out, we will be giving councils clarity on where to focus their efforts while they await the new planning system," Resource Management Act (RMA) Reform Minister Chris Bishop.

RMA stop plan - what does that mean for Tasman?



A sweeping pause announced last week on local councils' plan changes aims to stem costly and protracted planning processes until a new, overhauled resource management system takes effect.

The government's intention to halt council plan changes and reviews that have yet to reach the hearing stage was announced by Chris Bishop, the Minister for Resource Management Act (RMA) reform.

The move, encapsulated in a forthcoming amendment to the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill, is expected to become law by the end of August.

The legislation will compel councils to cease progressing many plan changes, allowing a 90-day window for them to withdraw proposals or seek ministerial exemptions to continue work deemed necessary.

The government's approach reportedly balances the need to avoid wasted resources on soon-to-be obsolete planning work while preserving pathways to progress reforms in critical sectors such as housing and environmental management.

While some details remain in flux, as the government finalises exemption criteria and operational guidelines next month, the policy signals a decisive shift to realign planning efforts with imminent legislative transformations of New Zealand's environmental regulation landscape.

Automatic exemptions will be granted for plan changes addressing housing growth, urban development, natural hazard management, and private plan changes initiated by developers or landowners.

Speaking at the recent Local Government New Zealand conference, Minister Bishop framed the policy as a pragmatic intervention to ease the burden on councils currently engaged in expensive and arguably redundant planning work under the outgoing RMA framework.

“There is little point in progressing long and costly hearings on a plan change that will be incompatible with the new planning system or probably won’t even be complete by the time the new system is switched on.”

We are now assessing our active plan changes in light of the new directive: proposals touching on urban growth and natural hazards are likely exempt, while others, such as freshwater management and outstanding natural landscapes, may require ministerial approval.



Plan Change 85: community feedback informs Tasman's natural hazard planning

Participants to the April community engagement on Plan Change 85 identified improved transparency, consistency, and certainty through better mapping, a risk-based approach and clearer policies to meet the challenges from natural hazards.

There's a clear desire to move beyond the status quo, favouring updated hazard overlays, strengthened provisions, and a greater focus on resilience including the effects of climate change.

Feedback also highlighted the importance of enabling future-

proofed development, and the promotion of nature-based and community-led solutions.

The feedback from community engagement will inform the next phase of work on Plan Change 85, focusing on translating identified issues and options into a detailed policy framework for managing natural hazards within the Tasman Resource Management Plan (TRMP).

Download the [summary of feedback](#) for Plan Change 85 Natural Hazard Issues and Options.



Tasman Resource Management Plan [online here.](#)

Draft Change 1 to the Tasman Regional Policy Statement and Plan Change 81 to the Tasman Resource Management Plan Summary of Public [feedback summary.](#)

Meet the Planners for PC 81 Urban Growth and PC 85 Natural Hazards [view webinar here](#).

Natural Hazards [map viewer](#). Access a [YouTube how-to video](#).

Weather Radar for Tasman [read story](#)

Tasman Rural Hub is the place for everything rural. [Check it out here](#)

Te Waikoropupū Springs WCO [information and data](#).

Te Waikoropupū Springs Monitoring Review presentation by Murray Close in Tākaka Tuesday, 15 April 2025. [View here](#).

Avian Bird Flu threat updates [read here](#).

Podcasting. [PodBean](#) or [Apple Podcasts](#), search "Click to Play TDC Environmental Policy".

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