

WHY: The current NPS requires councils to have plans by 2025 – but most can't achieve that. Planning is costly, time consuming, often litigious and highly variable. Need a planning process that allows the transition to start as soon as possible, and is more responsive to change.

1. Accelerated planning process (RM Bill) – already approved

- Use specialist panel to consider Councils' proposed plans
- Where Councils reject panel's recommendations – the council's proposals can be appealed.
- Otherwise no de novo appeals
- Makes it possible for councils to have Plans that reflect the new NPS-FM in place by 2025 to start the transition
- Reduces costs and litigation
- Increases capability / specialisation of plan development and improves national consistency
- Reduces risk of capture by vested interests

WHY: Councils have always had responsibility to protect waterways, but many have failed for a variety of reasons to do so. Also many don't collect all the information needed to fully understand outcomes, and don't set longer term objectives with their communities about what they want for their local waterways

2. Raising the bar on ecosystem health through a new NPS and NES

- Central Government directs Councils under RMA
- Requires a long term vision for waterbodies applying Te Mana o te Wai framework
- Sets new bottom lines for water quality and ecosystem health
- Protects wetlands and streams
- Councils must develop plans in certain ways – consult Māori and communities, identify values, set objectives
- Councils must set limits and/or implement action plans to achieve values and objectives
- Compulsory value – Mahinga Kai
- Councils must monitor certain things in certain ways
- Councils set timeframes for achieving freshwater outcomes – could take a generation

WHY: Until councils get plans in place (see 1 and 2 above) intensification can continue, creating more degradation and making it even harder and more expensive to fix waterways in future.

3. 'Holding the line' and interim controls on intensification (NES)

- Protection for wetlands and streams
- Interim controls on intensification:
 - Dairy conversions
 - Forestry to pasture
 - Irrigation expansion
 - Winter grazing expansion
 - Vegetable growing expansion
- In all cases the interim controls are not absolute (not a ban) – but allow flexibility for development that doesn't create more harm

WHY: big improvements possible with good practice, but many farms don't meet this. Some practices are very risky.

4. Practice standards for agriculture (NES and Regulations)

- National level regulation of:
 - Stock exclusion (preferred option of national regulation for lakes, rivers >1m and wetlands. Small streams and drains addressed in FW-FPs)
 - Winter grazing (consult on two options – national regulation and industry-set minimum standards)
 - Limiting excessive use of nitrogen (consult on two options – national regulation or managed within FW-FPs) or fertiliser controls
 - Stock holding areas (and sacrifice paddocks will be required to be 50m from waterways)
 - Feedlots
- Freshwater Module in Farm Environment Plans (FW-FPs) (mandatory option preferred, but options presented)

WHY: many operators are not at good practice, not reporting performance and not meeting consent conditions. Effluent discharges to beaches and streams.

5. Practice standards for Urban (NES)

- Mandatory Environment Management Plans for wastewater and storm water operators
- Regulated standards for Waste water treatment plants
- New reporting requirements on wastewater and storm water operators
- Urban design requirements

WHY: to improve outcomes with least cost and most co-benefit, need to accelerate dissemination of good practice, innovation and technologies. Need to provide policy certainty and make decision-support tools fit for purpose. Opportunity to mobilise community resources and better coordinate government support.

6. Support for Productive and Sustainable Land Use

Budget 19 Support Package

- Farm extension services and direct assistance to consider new farm systems
- Development of Māori owned farms
- Developing practice standards and guidance for use in farm plans
- Developing decision support tools and information like Overseer, S-Map
- Support for councils and others to implement NPS-FM in Plans by 2025
- At place investment – supporting community led action e.g. riparian planting, fencing
- Developing policy on allocation and Māori Rights and Interests

Other programmes

- One Billion Trees programme, Highly Productive Soils NPS, Biodiversity NPS, NPS Urban Development

