

Notice is hereby given of the

Strategy and Policy Committee - Rautaki me Mahere

Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 10:00 am

Environment Southland Council chamber, 220 North Road, Invercargill
25/S&P/36

Committee Members

Cr Lyndal Ludlow (*Chair*)
Cr Neville Cook
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Alastair Gibson
Cr Robert Guyton
Cr Peter McDonald
Cr Jeremy McPhail

Cr Jon Pemberton
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Maurice Rodway (*Deputy*)
Cr Eric Roy
Chairman Nicol Horrell (*ex officio*)
Mr Stewart Bull (*Mana Whenua Representative*)
Ms Ann Wakefield (*Mana Whenua Representative*)

Agenda

*This meeting will be livestreamed through YouTube and will be available to view on our website.
<https://www.es.govt.nz/about-us/live-stream>*

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Hayley Fitchett

General Manager, Strategy & Regulation

RECOMMENDATIONS IN COUNCIL REPORTS ARE NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS COUNCIL POLICY UNTIL ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

Terms of Reference - Strategy and Policy Committee

Council assigns to the Committee responsibilities from time-to-time, and the Committee provides advice and reports back to Council on:

- the provision of governance oversight into the development and review of plans, policies, strategies and by-laws;
- the recommendation to notify proposed changes or variations to proposed plans, policies, strategies and by-laws;
- the governance oversight of consultation related to regional policies, plans and strategies;
- the appointment of hearing committees or panels to hear submissions on regional policies, plans and strategies;
- undertaking Water and Land Plan associated project work;
- the receipt, and if necessary endorsement of, scientific studies/reports; receipt of SOE reports and/or score cards;
- the compiling of submissions to Government as needed (if the Council timetable does not provide for same).

1 Welcome I Haere mai

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

At the time of the agenda closing, no apologies had been received for this meeting.

3 Declarations of interest

At the time of the agenda closing. No declarations of interest had been received for this meeting.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

At the time of the agenda closing, no public forum, petitions or deputations were received for the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Attached are the minutes from the Strategy and Policy meeting held on 21 May 2025.

Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee - Rautaki me Mahere

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 9:00 am



Present:

Cr Lyndal Ludlow (Chair)
Cr Neville Cook
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Alastair Gibson
Cr Robert Guyton
Cr Peter McDonald
Cr Jeremy McPhail
Cr Jon Pemberton
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Maurice Rodway (Deputy)
Cr Eric Roy
Chairman Nicol Horrell (ex officio)

Mrs Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation)
Mrs Rachael Millar (General Manager Strategy, Science and Engagement)
Ms Ali Flynn - Committee Advisor

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting for 21 May 2025 and opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

Stewart Bull and Ann Wakefield were an apology for this meeting.

Resolved:

Moved Cr McPhail, seconded Chairman Horrell that apologies be accepted on behalf of Stewart Bull and Ann Wakefield.

Carried

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made to this meeting.

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4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

There were no public forum, petitions or deputations presented at the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Gibson that the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 2 April be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaiia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

7 Questions I Patai

There were no questions asked by the councillors.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a- tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

Neither the chairperson nor any counsellors presented reports to the meeting.

9 Reports

9.1 Local Government Commission response

The purpose of this item was to assist Council to determine its response to a letter from the Local Government Commission (LGC), seeking Environment Southland's view on whether the LGC should investigate a Southland District Council (SDC) proposal to reorganise local government in the region.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Pemberton that Council notes in the response to the Local Government Commission that Council does not favour the Southland District Council proposal.

Carried

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**Resolved:**

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Morrison that Council approves option 2 (support investigation, start now) noting in the response to the Local Government Commission that Council does not favour the Southland District Council proposal.

Carried**Resolved:**

Moved Cr Cook, seconded Chairman Horrell that Council asks the Local Government Commission if it investigates the Southland District Council initiative, to consider alternative reorganisation proposals.

Carried

9.2 Plan Change 2025 to Southland Water and Land Plan

The purpose of this item was to seek a decision to delay a Plan Change to the Southland Water and Land Plan (SWLP) that was intended to be notified in the first half of 2025

Resolved:

Moved Cr Cook, seconded Cr Evans that Council:

- 1 receive the report - Plan Change 2025 to Southland Water and Land Plan.**
- 2 delay formal consultation and notification of any changes to the Southland Water and Land Plan, other than any that may arise out the existing Environment Court proceedings, until amendments to the freshwater national direction are confirmed**

Carried

9.3 Retrospective Approval for Submission on Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards

The purpose of this item was to seek formal endorsement of Environment Southland's submission on the proposed wastewater environmental performance standards to be made under regulation making powers of the Water Services Act 2021 (WSA).

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**Resolved:****Moved Cr Cook, seconded Cr Evans that Council:**

- 1 **Receive the report - Retrospective Approval for Submission on Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards.**
- 2 **Formally endorse Environment Southland's submission on the proposals for wastewater environmental performance standards.**

Carried**9.4 Update on Review of Regional Coastal Plan**

The purpose of this item was to provide an update of the current work underway for the Southland Regional Coastal Plan review.

Resolved:**Moved Chairman Horrell, seconded Cr Roy that Council:**

- 1 **Receive the report - Update on Review of Regional Coastal Plan.**

Carried**9.5 Government Policy and Legislation Monitor**

The purpose of this item was to provide a comprehensive overview of the current and upcoming national policy changes, with a focus on those expected to significantly impact on Environment Southland's operations and the Southland region.

Resolved:**Moved Chairman Horrell, seconded Cr Cook that Council:**

- 1 **Receive the report - Government Policy and Legislation Monitor.**

Carried

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9.6 Climate change and community resilience portfolio update

The purpose of this item was to provide an update of progress being made on the development of the regional Framework for Action.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Morrison that Council:

- 1 **Receive the report - Climate change and community resilience portfolio update.**

Carried

9.7 Update on Councillor Requests and Actions

The purpose of this item was to capture Councillor requests and actions that have occurred during Strategy and Policy Committee meetings and provides an update on how these are being responded to.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Morrison that Council:

- 1 **Receive the report - Update on Councillor Requests and Actions.**

Carried

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

11 Public excluded business I He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

Resolved:

Moved Chairman Horrell, seconded Cr Roy that In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

11.1 Update on Rule 78

11.2 Waiau Report

11.3 Kanoa Update

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below.

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GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUND UNDER S.48(1)
Update on Rule 78	To deliberate on matters relating to proceedings where: (i) a right of appeal lies to a court or tribunal against the final decision of the Council in those proceedings; or (ii) the Council is required, by an enactment, to make a recommendation in respect of the matter that is the subject of those proceedings.	S.48(1)(d)
Waiau report	To maintain professional legal privilege.	S.7(2)(g)
Kanoa report	to enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)

It also is agreed that Philip Maw (Council's legal advisor) be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of his knowledge of and ability to assist the meeting in speaking to legal issues affecting the management of the Waiau Catchment. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matter to be discussed is relevant to that matter because the Council has powers, duties and functions under the Resource Management Act 1991 in relation to the management of the Waiau Catchment.

Carried

12 Termination

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 12.10pm.

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaiā hei totoia pakihi

At the time of the agenda closing, no notifications of extraordinary or urgent business had been received for this meeting.

7 Questions I Patai

At the time of the agenda closing, no questions had been received for this meeting.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

At the time of the agenda closing, no Councillor Reports were received for the meeting.

9 Reports

9.1 Update on Review of Regional Coastal Plan

Report by: Liz Devery, Regional Planning Manager

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 2 July 2025

Purpose

Provide an update of the Regional Coastal Plan review, including overview of current workstreams

Summary

The review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Southland began in 2017, and significant work has been completed. In the May 2025 Strategy and Policy Committee it was noted that, due to impending changes to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and national direction, it did not make sense for final drafting and formal consultation to proceed in advance of the reform package.

The regional planning team have been working through a range of coastal related topics, as informal consultation and changes to the regulatory framework progress, in order to start developing the outline of a revised Regional Coastal Plan. Some areas of this assessment work are relatively well progressed. There are other topics that, due to their complexity or recent regulatory or industry developments, require further careful consideration and technical support. Within some of these topics there are a range of approaches that may result in longer-term, broader work beyond the scope of the Regional Coastal Plan itself.

Environment Southland continues to work with Te Ao Mārama Inc. on the Regional Coastal Plan review. Council have been previously briefed on the development of the cultural landscape methodology, Āpiti Hono Tātai Hono. Te Ao Mārama Inc (on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku) have prepared guidance relating to this approach in Southland and are using this to work alongside Environment Southland staff to ensure the Regional Coastal Plan review is developed in consideration of rūnanga aspirations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report - Update on Review of Regional Coastal Plan.

National Direction

The Ministry for the Environment has released proposed amendments to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement for formal consultation. Changes to other pieces of national direction also being consulted on, such as the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards and the National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture, will impact on the policy approaches used for the review of the Regional Coastal Plan. While there is work being undertaken in relation to potential submissions on these elements of the Resource Management Reform, we are also considering the potential implications for implementation.

Consultation

Outputs from community engagement held over the Summer are being collated to inform key objects and approaches for a revised Regional Coastal Plan. A summary of this feedback was provided in the agenda of the April 2025 Strategy and Policy Committee. One of the outcomes sought from this exercise was to raise awareness of the role that Environment Southland has in relation to the coastal environment and to get people engaged in conversations. The responses are an indication from the community of Southland of what areas and values are important to be managed and protected in the proposed Regional Coastal Plan. The

results from this community engagement will be used to sense-check the direction for the updated Regional Coastal plan currently being drafted, alongside other engagement and consultation information, such as the cultural values work undertaken by Te Ao Mārama Inc.

The engagement socialised 15 value statements for the coastal environment in Southland that fell within categories of: Recreation/Social values; Environmental Values; Economic Values; and Cultural Values. The value statements were confirmed as relevant by the community.

One of the questions asked of participants sought insight into what they thought were the greatest threats to Southland's coastal environments. 587 responses were received, with 182 different answers. 19% of participants did not provide a response. Responses were grouped into similar answers, maintaining any nuances provided and are outlined below:

Threat type	Number of responses
Rubbish & littering; dumping rubbish on beaches; rubbish in the water; plastic.	125
Changing climate: more intense storms; changes in sea temperature; ignorance of climate change; rising sea levels	52
People: human use/abuse; man's activities; misuse by the public; people not treating our country with the respect it deserves.	51
Loss of ecosystems, habitats & biodiversity; degradation of resources in both land and water; people not respecting the environment	35
Erosion: man-made erosion; erosion of landfill; land-fill contamination;	54
Vehicle damage to beaches: cars and motorbikes on the beach; cars burnt out on beach	30
Pests: exotic seaweeds, introduced pests	28
Overfishing; commercial fishing; abuse of local kai; aquaculture & industry pressure to weaken regulation; economic greed	35
Polluted freshwater/poor water quality; industrial discharges; sewerage discharges; wastewater	31
Development: protection from future development and commercial use; industry in areas where inappropriate; overdevelopment	21
Agriculture farming practices; farm run-off; fertilizer run-off; intensive farming	19
No response	86

Targeted Workstreams

Bluff Harbour Zone

Engagement has continued with South Port and New Zealand Aluminium Smelter operational staff to support the development of policy solutions that will fulfil legal and policy requirements. This includes the consideration of transitional arrangements between the operative Regional Coastal Plan and the completion of the formal Plan Review processes.

Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Within this topic, specific solutions will be needed to manage the protection of indigenous biodiversity including toheroa on Ōreti Beach. Staff are continuing to work with Te Ao Mārama Inc. and with the Department of Conservation to develop robust options for consideration. This is being carried out in consideration of technical support. Informal consultation with other stakeholders is proposed but has not yet commenced.

Fiordland

The approach to carrying capacity adopted by the Regional Planning team for Fiordland involves the layering of potential intrinsic, physical and experiential constraints and opportunities. The work involves elements of spatial planning and will be informed by technical work and community engagement. Work with a Fiordland working group, made up of stakeholders and mana whenua in the Fiordland area, has tested possible options to manage activities within Fiordland, including carrying capacity. Staff are also currently in discussions with Fiordland Marine Guardians on this as it has synergies with their strategic direction.

Aquaculture

The importance of aquaculture as a potential growth industry means a policy framework and complementary management options are being developed. There is a suite of national regulatory changes currently being proposed that will impact on the Regional Coastal Plan's approach to aquaculture.

Environment Southland staff are also working alongside Great South, who are developing a Regional Aquaculture Strategy to ensure that there is potential alignment between the two strategy policy documents. Most recently, staff assisted Great South in hosting drop-in sessions where interested members of the industry and the community had an opportunity ask questions and talk about aquaculture related matters.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	x		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	x		
Communities empowered and resilient	x		
Communities expressing their diversity	x		

Attachments

1. APPENDIX 1 Drafting topics [9.1.1 - 5 pages]

APPENDIX 1 - TABLE OF DRAFTING TOPICS

The majority of these topics have a specific discussion paper, however some ‘Targeted Workstreams (Shaded)’ cover elements of multiple discussion papers. Either partially or in entirety.

Discussion Papers/ Targeted Workstreams	Councillor and Mana Whenua Representative Direction Given	What next?
Tangata Whenua/ Mana Moana - Discussion paper was not finalised. - Development of the cultural landscape methodology, Āpiti Hono Tātai Hono. Te Ao Mārama (on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku) have compiled a report applying this approach in parts of Southland. This report aims to ensure the review aligns with rūnanga aspirations.	Council workshop Nov 2023: Co-management with Te Ao Mārama & mana whenua. Māori names for Fiordland/ sounds should be used. Council Workshop March 2024: need for a clear central purpose or vision in coastal planning, aligning activities with the four wellbeing principles and managing associated issues effectively. Council Workshop March 2025: The approach taken in developing the report and how the outcomes were to inform the Regional Coastal Plan process was presented to Council and Te Ao Mārama Inc Board.	The Āpiti Hono Tātai Hono Cultural Values Report is being used to inform the incorporation of Mana moana values throughout the drafting for a revised Regional Coastal Plan. This is an ongoing piece of work to ensure that the values are considered to be appropriate to be woven through the revised Plan.
Occupation and Public Access - Occupation of, and access to, the CMA. - Provisions relate to vehicle access to beaches, recreational activities, and occupation of space. - Does not address structures or consent activities within occupied space. Anticipation of a mean sea level rise of 1m over the next 100 years. - Modified status quo for aircraft use. - Ships used as base/accommodation facilities. - Occupation charging regime.	Response to discussion paper: Prioritising public access and use of coastal resources while also recognising the need for some level of exclusive sue under certain circumstances, all within a framework that ensures fairness and sustainability in coastal management.	Some initial draft provisions ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. Approaches to Coastal Occupation Charges is being reviewed for discussion. An update of the discussion paper is underway and will consider recent advances on how related matters are dealt with in other regional councils’ planning documents. This due by the end July 2025 in order to help inform Council’s review of approach to fees and charges more broadly.
Air Quality - Discharges from vessels. - South Port (Bluff Harbour) Discharge Agreement. - Tiwai Aluminium Smelter – NZAS resource consent - Bluff Port Zone - the Agreement manages the effects of minor discharges to air. Future management of this is discussed in ‘Infrastructure and Structures’. - Discharges from industrial or trade premises	Response to discussion paper: To improve air quality in areas where it is degraded and maintain high standards. Focus on safeguarding human health by addressing or mitigating adverse impacts and taking precautionary measures while promoting the adoption of best practices to continually enhance air quality.	Technical work to support the potential policy approach is being commissioned. This should be completed by the end of the third quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification.
Historic Heritage - Effects of climate change - Loss of knowledge - Activity-specific provisions (occupation, seabed and foreshore, and structures) - Southland Coastal Heritage Inventory Project (SCHIP) - risks of erosion and sea level rise; need for physical protection works (fencing, signage, and vegetation management). - Historic heritage provisions do not give full effect to the NZCPS and SRPS (required to be in the CE to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development).	Response to discussion paper: Identify and document the CMA’s historic heritage, safeguard it from inappropriate development, extend protection to unrecognized heritage, respect Māori cultural sites, acknowledge vulnerability to natural processes and climate change, and coordinate coastal heritage management with relevant stakeholders.	Awaiting outcomes of Resource Management Reform due to indications that approaches to heritage may be impacted. Visibility of proposed reform likely by the last quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification.

Resource Use • Dredging, excavation, drilling, tunnelling, drainage works. • Deposition. • Reclamation and impoundments. • Removal natural materials. • Shipwrecks. • Taking, using, damming, and diversion of water. • Oil and gas exploration. • Allows for appropriate level of oversight. • Broad application likely to capture all component activities. • Risk that Council is not seen to be managing these activities specifically.	Response to discussion paper: Manage the CMA as a public asset with clear limits on resource use, protecting significant natural and historical areas, promoting efficiency, and aligning with NZCPS guidelines on reclamation. Seek to improve policy usability without changing the direction, ensuring sustainable management balancing conservation and socio-economic interests.	Technical work being undertaken to support draft provisions. This should be completed by the end of the third quarter of 2025. Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to these activities. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification.
Infrastructure and Structures encompassing (Bluff Port Harbour Zone) • Nationally and regionally significant and critical infrastructure (incl. ports) • Other infrastructure (incl. cables, drains and pipelines) • Whitebait stands and maimai • Vessel-related structures (incl. moorings, jetties, wharves, boat ramps and sheds, navigations aids). • Development beyond existing Bluff Port Zone. • South Port and NZAS agreements and suggested consent framework. • Anchorages and moorings within Fiordland and Rakiura/Stewart Island.	Response to discussion paper: Manage the CMA by balancing conservation, development, and public use. Strategies include zoning for infrastructure to protect landscapes, integrating with national parks, accommodating necessary activities, consolidating development, enhancing public spaces, and promoting efficient land use for sustainability and community benefit. Council Workshop March 2024: need for a clear central purpose or vision in coastal planning, aligning activities with the four wellbeing principles and managing associated issues effectively.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to these activities. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. Work with South Port and NZAS is ongoing, reviewing Deed of Agreement approaches and interim approach to environmental management issues as we transition through the plan review process. Next meeting with South Port is set down for the end of July/start August 2025.
Fiordland encompassing Surface Water Activities (SWA) discussion paper • SWA within the CMA including commercial SWA, research ships, vessels undertaking statutory functions and cargo ships. • SWA can cause effects on visuals, water quality, biosecurity and indigenous ecosystems, etc. with the CE. • Commercial SWAs in ‘outstanding areas’ outside of Fiordland – a consenting framework including an objective, policy, and rule; a more permissive rule framework. • Commercial SWA in Fiordland – Automatic Identification System on vessels. • Recreational users in Fiordland – non-regulatory framework, e.g., a user’s code of practice. • Includes the content of Plan change 5 - surface water activities.	Response to Discussion paper: Conserving the CMA by avoiding harm to its outstanding natural character, features, and landscapes. Balancing the use of commercial activities and its adverse effects through strict thresholds and a precautionary approach. Prioritising existing operators to manage resources effectively. Maintaining public access while encouraging responsible recreation and ensure research activities for balanced environmental stewardship. Council workshop Nov 2023: Co-management with Te Ao Mārama & mana whenua. Māori names for Fiordland/ sounds should be used. The overall direction for managing Fiordland involves integrating environmental protection with sustainable economic development and community engagement. This approach includes clear regulations for tourism and maritime activities, robust measures for biodiversity conservation and biosecurity, and promoting local economic opportunities while preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage. Stakeholder involvement, scientific research, and adaptive management strategies will be critical in achieving a balance that ensures Fiordland remains a wilderness destination for future generations. Council Workshop March 2024: The direction is to enhance environmental stewardship and management in Fiordland's CMA. This involves regulating vessel sizes and emissions, promoting cleaner fuel technologies, and establishing clear guidelines for vessel navigation and mooring to protect the UNESCO-listed heritage area. Ensuring that the	Feedback on management options with the Fiordland working group (external stakeholders) received. The scope of activities is restricted to: Surface water activities (and associated aircraft); and Anchorages, moorings and other vessel associated structures. Next Working Group meetings scheduled for discussion on draft policy options in the last quarter of 2025 To engage with cruise ship agents on the future management of cruise ships. Engagement with Fiordland Users being scoped for consultation with an indicative timeframe of September/October 2025. Technical work underway to consider the environmental and intrinsic constraints and opportunities. Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects within the Fiordland

Fiordland encompassing Cruise Ships discussion paper • Cruise ship activity in the CMA • Adverse effects on the essential characteristics (e.g., values of remoteness, isolation, wilderness) • Visual impact – lighting • Cumulative adverse effects concerns • Consistency with NZCPS • Deed of Agreement – cruise ships.	Agreement aims to address cumulative environmental impacts and confirms responsible behaviour from vessel operators, while also managing access for both commercial and private vessels through strategic regulations and controls. Response to Discussion paper: Protecting the CMA by avoiding harm to its outstanding natural character and features, especially from cruise ships. Balancing conservation with economic needs, using precautionary measures to manage impacts responsibly and maintain environmental integrity. Council Workshop March 2024: proposed stricter controls on the number of cruise ships, enhanced compliance measures, and increased costs to mitigate environmental impacts and preserve cultural values.	environment. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. See above.
Natural Character, Features, and Landscapes • Preservation of natural character (NC) • Protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONF/ONL) • Meaning of ‘outstanding’. • Values are subjected. • Cross boundary issues. • Increasing pressures from e.g., tourism activities, aquaculture, and infrastructure, in the CE particularly in remote areas (Fiordland).	Response to discussion paper: Conserving natural character, landscapes, and features in the CE. Protect outstanding areas from development impacts, promotes restoration where needed, and recognise cultural landscapes' significance. This ensures compatibility with natural values in developed areas while adopting a precautionary approach, aiming for sustainable coastal management.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on these resources. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification.
Water Quality (including discharges) • Point source discharges (contaminants from a single or multiple fixed points, e.g., a pipe or drain from sewerage, factory, and stormwater outfalls). • In some cases, RCP considers non-point source discharges (contaminants through or across land, e.g., pasture and urban runoff). • Ki uta ki tai approach • Discharges from vessels usually controlled by Marine Pollution Regulation • Nutrients and sediments – New River and Jacobs River Estuary • Sewage from ships – discharges of black/grey water from ships use as a base/accommodation into confined and sensitive areas of the CMA is an emerging issue.	Response to discussion paper: Manage all discharges to protect water quality and ecosystems within the CMA. Ensuring that the smallest mixing zone necessary is used to achieve the required water quality, avoiding cross-contamination between sewerage and stormwater, and considering the effects on cultural values when discharging treated sewage. Ensuring stringent management of stormwater discharges and sewerage schemes to be designed and used in compliance with industry standards to maintain environmental sustainability.	Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. However, some parts are reliant on the intersect with the Southland Regional Water and Land Plan i.e. limit setting aspects as estuaries are in the Fresh Water Management Units. Technical work is being commissioned to determine potential approaches given delays to the freshwater plan changes. Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on water quality. Decisions on some national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. proposed approaches to freshwater related national direction is not likely to be seen in any detail until the last quarter of 2025.
Biodiversity and Ecosystems • Management of indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems • Biodiversity includes the variety of life and the diversity of ecosystems and their living and non-living components. • People and communities are a fundamental component of ecosystems.	Response to discussion paper: Protecting the CE by conserving significant ecosystems and biodiversity, restoring indigenous flora and fauna, and adopting a precautionary approach to uncertain impacts. Acknowledging climate change vulnerabilities and encouraging collaborative management with councils, DOC, Ngāi Tahu, and kaitiaki for effective conservation efforts, especially to enhance indigenous biodiversity.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on these resources. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025.

• Biogenic habitats – sensitive to environmental change and vulnerable to threats (overfishing, increased sedimentation, and pollution) • Ineffective provisions for indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems, and estuaries. • Climate change impacts – marine heat waves, ocean acidification, sea level rise and increased storm events. • Threats to Southland’s coastal indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems through land and sea activities, including Juvenile toheroa.	Council workshop June 2024: Consider making some areas prohibited for certain activities, it could be location and time. Perhaps based on calendar? Depends on good information basis to manage this. Also communication and education opportunities with this -more social awareness is needed on the Coastal space. Recurring topics also included funding and cost, occupation charges, infringement fees. Concentration on conservation of habitats rather than individual species as may be more effective. Acknowledgement that everything is connected. What happens on land is going to affect the species and coastal environment. Ki uta ki tai – need to connect with the Water and Land Plan. Coastal Plan is high priority for mana whenua.	Technical work is being commissioned to identify Marine Ecological Areas to inform appropriate policy approaches relating to biodiversity and ecosystems. The Fiordland specific technical work will also inform the policy approach to this topic. This will be underway by the end of the third quarter of 2025. Discussions with the Ōreti Beach Management group yet to be scheduled. Technical work is currently being reviewed to inform these conversations, which are likely to commence in the last quarter of 2025. Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. However, technical work is being reviewed to support potential approaches.
Biosecurity • Biosecurity Act 1993: exclusion, eradication, and effective management of pests and unwanted organisms • Development of regional pest plans, regional pathways management plans, and small-scale management programmes. • Options for gear movement – disinfection of gear; awareness campaigns • Structures and moorings – biofouling within resource consents; prohibit new structures/moorings within a pest infested area. • Miscellaneous - ongoing coastal occupation charging regime; aquaculture activities; marine farming species listed as pests; discretionary consent of harmful treatment discharge. • Vessel management – education and awareness; yearly vessel cleans; cleaning facilities on land; hull cleaning controls; biofouling discharge controls; performance standards.	Response to discussion paper: Coordinate national coastal management policies, focusing on integrating environmental protection, biosecurity measures, and cultural considerations, particularly emphasizing the management of pest species under the appropriate legislative frameworks. Highlighting the vulnerability of the coastal environment to biosecurity threats and acknowledging the importance of indigenous biodiversity and Māori cultural practices in protecting coastal ecosystems for future generations to come.	Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. However, technical work is being reviewed to support potential approaches. Working alongside the Biosecurity team to align where possible with the review of the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan. A report on progress with the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan is due to be on the Strategy and Policy Committee Agenda in August 2025.
Marine Aquaculture • General – water quality, seafloor, sea birds and marine mammals, natural character, and navigation safety. • Big Glory Bay – hydrodynamics may cause adverse effects on the water column and seabed. • Open ocean aquaculture – NZ King Salmon consent application • ONC and ONF and landscapes – operative Plan does not identify all these areas so cannot protect these from marine aquaculture. Marine aquaculture in the Bluff Port Zone – non-complying activity status for marine farming does not reflect its potential adverse environmental effects.	Response to discussion paper: Taking a cautious and protective stance on marine aquaculture by prohibiting aquaculture in sensitive and outstanding areas, aiming to preserve biodiversity. Advocating for careful consideration and assessment of environmental impacts in other areas where aquaculture may be permitted, emphasising financial assurances to cover potential environmental costs. Overall, balancing the benefits of aquaculture with the preservation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity. Council Workshop October 2024: Need for a spatial management approach to designate suitable areas for aquaculture, ensuring traditional rights and preventing unsuitable developments like issues seen in the dairy industry.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on these resources. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. Working alongside Great South to ensure alignment with the development of a Regional Aquaculture Strategy, which is due to be drafted in the middle of 2025. Some initial draft provisions are ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification.

Coastal Hazards • RMA – managing coastal hazards landward of the CMA. • NPS – broader coastal environment considerations. • Hard protection structures - NZCPS discourages the use and promotes alternative like natural defences. • Coastal erosion • Storm surge • Tsunami • Climate change and sea level rise • Rising sea-groundwater levels and impeded drainage • Saltwater intrusion (salination of freshwater) • Insufficient information • Climate change effects on coastal ecosystems	Response to discussion paper: Long-term management of coastal hazards, focusing on identifying vulnerable areas, anticipating sea level rise, and guiding development away from risky zones. Prioritising the protection of natural defences, avoiding activities that increase hazard risks, and taking a precautionary approach to minimize adverse effects. Also, indicating readiness to adjust strategies based on robust information, to ensure for informed planning to protect coastal environments for future generations.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction, such as the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards, to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on these resources. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. To undertake informal engagement with territorial authorities to ensure approach developed collectively addresses Natural Hazards for the Regional Policy Statement, Water and Land Plan and the Regional Coastal Plan. These conversations are likely to commence in detail the last quarter of 2025.
Miscellaneous • Environmental management concepts: functional need of activities; timing, frequency, duration and regularity of activities; multiple use; public value; consultation and info sharing; cumulative effects; social, economic and cultural issues. • Issues: amenity values; livestock in the CMA; navigation safety; recreational activities; surf break protection; shark cage diving; landfills within or near the CMA.	Response to discussion paper: The overall direction is to refine the RCP by emphasizing environmental conservation, respecting cultural values, and enhancing safety measures. The recommendations aim to optimise management strategies to better protect the coastal environment, manage cultural practices sensitively, and ensure effective safety protocols are in place.	Considering consultation documents on NZCPS and other national direction to determine impact on the approach to activities and their effects on these resources. Decisions on national direction are expected in the last quarter of 2025. Technical work is underway to support proposed approaches to some of these issues. Some reports are at final review stage, such as technical memos on shark cage diving. Other technical reports addressing issues, such as general noise provisions, will be developed once the outcomes of related research is determined. Some initial draft provisions ready to incorporate Mana moana values for draft provisions to be ready for review, consultation and pre-notification. However, technical work is being reviewed to support potential approaches.

9.2 Proposed Regional Framework for Action

Report by: Anke Habgood, Senior Advisor Strategy

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 2 July 2025

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee adopt the Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland.

Summary

The Regional Climate Change Working Group (RCCWG) was established to progress the development of an inter-agency regional approach to our changing climate in early 2023.

Phase one of its work concluded with the adoption of the Regional Climate Change Strategy in 2024. Phase two of its work is now nearing completion, with the Regional Framework for Action being proposed to each of the key partner agencies for consideration during July and August this year.

If adopted, the Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland will ensure the foundations are in place to enable purposeful, resilient, and regionally tailored climate action over the coming decades.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report – Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate.
- 2 Note the Community Engagement Insights Report – June 2025.
- 3 Adopt the Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland.

Background

Following a regional climate change hui in July 2022, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama have brought together a governance-level inter-agency regional climate change working group (RCCWG), supported by an inter-agency staff-level working group. The governance-level group is not a formal joint committee and does not have formal delegations.

These groups have held regular meetings and workshops throughout 2023 to develop a proposed Regional Climate Change Strategy – phase one of the RCCWG workplan. Phase one concluded with the adoption of the strategy by the Environment Southland Strategy and Policy Committee, 16 October 2024. This strategy has also been adopted by Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and endorsed by Te Ao Mārama.

Throughout 2024 and early 2025, the RCCWG has also been progressing phase two of its workplan aimed at setting out how the aspirations in the strategy could be achieved in the inter-agency space. Multiple RCCWG workshops were held to begin developing a draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

A report was provided to the Environment Southland Strategy and Policy Committee meeting for consideration on 24 February 2025. This report included an outline of the draft key components of a Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

The draft components introduced as part of this report included a draft purpose, draft regional outcomes, draft key focus areas for action, draft high-level actions/objectives as well as an introduction to the proposed ongoing climate action planning cycle and the collaboration continuum. Feedback from the

Environment Southland Strategy and Policy Committee was sought on these draft components as part of this meeting.

These draft key components were also discussed at meetings of our key partner agencies (SDC, TAMI, ICC and GDC) throughout March and April 2025.

Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate

Throughout early 2025, significant communications and engagement activity has been undertaken to inform the development of a draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate. This has included one-on-one conversations, specific events, attendance at some community board meetings and the Climate Collaboration Hui held 3 April 2025. A community engagement insights report, which summarises the key insights and themes arising from this engagement is attached as **appendix 1**.

A key focus of the most recent RCCWG workshops was for the RCCWG to reflect on what has been heard from these engagement activities to date. A writing sub-committee was then established, to fast-track progress on the development of the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

The RCCWG held their final workshop for the triennium, 19 June 2025. This workshop focused on RCCWG decision-making regarding the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate as the product of phase two. The RCCWG inter-agency report for this workshop is attached as **appendix 2**.

The RCCWG agreed that subject to some suggested changes, the draft is now ready to be proposed to each of the key partner agencies for consideration at meetings during July and August 2025. A letter of recommendation to the Chair of Environment Southland is attached in **appendix 3**. A one-page overview of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate, a request from the RCCWG to support the consideration process, is attached in **appendix 4**.

The Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland is attached in **appendix 5** and some key proposed components are outlined below.

Purpose of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate

1. Establish a structured and enduring process for regional planning and delivery to respond to our changing climate.
2. Define shared regional outcomes and focus areas to guide coordinated action across councils, mana whenua, agencies, sectors, and communities.
3. Improve visibility and alignment of planned actions, supporting more effective implementation.
4. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and priorities, including identifying opportunities for collaboration and joint delivery.
5. Foster a culture of learning and continuous improvement, supported by meaningful community engagement, reflection, and adaptation.

Ongoing Climate Action Planning Cycle

The proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate outlines how the RCCWG will continue its work by way of establishing an ongoing climate action planning cycle. This cycle will integrate climate action planning with the development of Regional Climate Action Plans on a three-yearly cycle, aligned with local government Long-Term Plans. It is intended that these Regional Climate Action Plans will take a ten-year outlook and ensure climate action is integrated into the region's strategic planning and investment decisions.

The endorsement of the ongoing climate action planning cycle will mean the RCCWG as an inter-agency forum continues to focus on developing collaborative recommendations for consideration by each agency, as they progress their Long-Term Plans.

Collaboration Continuum and Resourced Actions

A strength of the Regional Climate Change Working Group has been its collaborative and consensus decision-making approach; however, different actions require different levels of partnership and collaboration. Some actions can be led by an individual agency, supported by networking and information sharing. Other actions may require coordination, cooperation, or collaboration amongst partner agencies.

The proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate has included an adapted collaboration continuum to assist with assessing actions and how they may best be progressed.

The proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate outlines five key focus areas. Resourced actions have been included as a table in **appendix 1** to improve their visibility in the inter-agency space, clarify which agency is leading, show how these fit in relation to the collaboration continuum, as well as supporting alignment with other planned actions.

Next steps

Following the Environment Southland Strategy and Policy Committee meeting 2 July 2025, a letter of recommendation from the RCCWG will be sent to each of the key partner agencies requesting their consideration of the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate at the following meetings:

- Gore District Council – 14 July 2025
- Te Ao Mārama Board – 28 July 2025
- Invercargill City Council – 29 July 2025
- Southland District Council – 30 July 2025

The RCCWG recommendation to each of these key partner agencies is:

- That the letter of recommendation from the RCCWG be received
- That the Community Engagement Insights report be noted
- That the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland be adopted

Cr Morrison has been asked and has agreed to speak at each of the meetings of the key partner agencies to support the consideration of the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate at these meetings.

Following these meetings, an update will be provided to the Environment Southland Strategy and Policy Committee meeting in August 2025.

Risks/Opportunities

- The risks and implications of climate change are being felt across New Zealand, and failure to act represents a real risk to Environment Southland.
- The consideration of the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate is the product of significant collaborative efforts by the RCCWG. If adopted, it will be a key milestone and the conclusion of phase two of its work.
- The consideration of the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate by each of the key partner agencies at the conclusion of the current triennium ensures that phase two of this work is completed and this workstream is in the best possible place to be handed over to the new iteration of the RCCWG post-local government elections.
- A national direction package has recently been announced. However, it is considered that the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate has been designed to remain flexible and adaptive in the

context of ongoing reforms as well as any potential future changes to local government structures in Murihiku Southland.

Views of affected parties

The Community Engagement Insights report attached as **appendix 1** is a collation of key insights and themes arising from extensive community and stakeholder engagement undertaken in early 2025 to assist the development of the proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

While this report is based on ad hoc community responses and does not constitute formal research or statistical analysis, the insights presented reflect a diverse range of personal opinions, observations, and experiences shared by members of the community. Collating these community voices has been influential in the development of the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

It is intended that the views of affected parties will remain an ongoing process as this workstream continues to make progress. Strong partnerships with key stakeholders and sustained engagement with Murihiku Southland communities will continue to be essential.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

This workstream continues to comply with the Significance and Engagement Policy for Environment Southland.

Considerations

Financial implications

The financial implications will be worked through as part of implementing the ongoing climate action planning cycle, including through future annual planning and long-term planning processes.

Legal implications

New Zealand's national direction on climate change is guided by the Climate Change Response Act 2002. The National Adaptation Plan looks at the impacts of climate change and how we can adapt as a nation. A second emissions reduction plan has been released which sets out how we will meet our 2050 net zero target as a nation.

The Resource Management Act requires councils to consider the effects of climate change on their communities and incorporate climate change into existing frameworks, plans, projects and standard decision-making procedures.

A variety of legislative reforms are currently in progress and are likely to have implications for how local government responds to our changing climate.

Attachments

1. Appendix 1 - R Ff A Community Engagement Insights Summary Report - June 2025 [**9.2.1** - 14 pages]
2. Appendix 2 - Governance level RCCWG inter-agency joint report - workshop 19 June 2025 (v A 2296413) [**9.2.2** - 3 pages]
3. Appendix 3 - Letter to Chairman Horrell re- proposed R Ff A - June 2025 [**9.2.3** - 2 pages]
4. Appendix 4 - RCCWG - R Ff A draft Summary document - 23 June 2025 (v A 2297272) [**9.2.4** - 1 page]
5. Appendix 5 - R Ff AC 2025 Draft v 3 [**9.2.5** - 32 pages]



 **Climate change**
in Murihiku Southland

Draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate **Community Engagement Insights** **Report June 2025**





Community Engagement Insights Report – June 2025

Purpose

This report collates key insights and themes arising from extensive community and stakeholder engagement undertaken in early 2025 to assist with the development of Murihiku Southland's draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate.



Note: This report is based on ad hoc community responses and does not constitute formal research or statistical analysis. The insights presented reflect a diverse range of personal opinions, observations, and experiences shared by members of the community. While every effort has been made to identify common themes and trends, this report does not claim to be comprehensive, representative, or scientifically validated.

All tools have been used to assist in the analysis of qualitative data, including the identification of common themes, insights, and key topics across a large volume of community engagement feedback. The findings should be interpreted as a general snapshot of community perspectives rather than definitive conclusions on climate change impacts or policy effectiveness. For evidence-based decision-making, this report should be complemented with formal research, expert analysis, and consultation with relevant stakeholders.



Executive summary

The community engagement aimed to capture a diverse range of perspectives on the region's climate challenges, opportunities, and priorities to ensure the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate reflects local values and lived experience.

From January to May 2025, more than 350 people and organisations contributed their thoughts and opinions on how our changing climate is affecting them, what actions they're taking, and what more councils could do to support climate action.

Input was gathered through a series of structured community questions at public events, meetings with key stakeholders representing iwi, industry, community groups, local government, and the social services sector as well as a broader Regional Climate Collaboration Stakeholder Hui.

The feedback revealed widespread interest in taking meaningful climate action. While views varied regarding the best pathways forward, there was shared recognition of the need for urgent, collaborative, and locally tailored responses that balance ambition with practicality.

In terms of what our community are experiencing, people identified shifting seasons, flooding, changing weather patterns and ecological changes they had observed among other key themes.

The question around whether people were doing anything differently generated a wide range of answers such as changing farm practice and waste reduction and energy conservation, countered by some who felt overwhelmed or dis-engaged.

When it came to the question around what more Murihiku Southland councils could do in response to a changing climate, people touched on the need for balanced regulation, community empowerment and urgency vs. pragmatism.

People are looking for visible, decisive leadership. Some feel frustrated by slow processes, unclear roles across agencies, and limited opportunities to genuinely shape regional climate efforts. There's a strong appetite for collaboration - especially with rural communities, mana whenua, youth, and local businesses.

There is general support for emissions reduction, but many are unsure what this means in practice.

These insights are intended to help inform and give a crucial community voice to the draft Regional Framework for Action as Murihiku Southland responds to the ongoing challenges and opportunities of a changing climate.



Community engagement activities

Feedback gathered from community at various events and locations throughout early 2025:

- Gore A&P show: 1 February 2025
- SIT Orientation week: 26 February 2025
- Southland A&P show: 1 March 2025
- The Surf to City: 2 March 2025
- Invercargill Central pop-up booth: 21 March 2025
- Invercargill Multi-cultural Food Festival: 22 March 2025
- Riverton Harvest Festival: 29 March 2025
- Murihiku Marae Open Day: 13 April 2025
- Online feedback form



Three key prompt questions were used to promote conversations:

1. What changes in the climate have you noticed in your area?
2. Are you doing anything different because of our changing climate?
3. What council actions are needed to support our response to our climate change

There were approximately 350+ responses across all three questions and this report summarises the key themes arising from each of these questions.

Environment Southland staff also met with various stakeholders as opportunities arose. In addition, a Climate Collaboration stakeholder hui was held 3 April 2025, which was attended by 70-80 participants representing various stakeholders. The key themes arising from stakeholder conversations as well as from the hui are summarised in this report.

The insights and themes collated in this report have been an important component to ensure a community voice was considered as part of the development of a draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate, as Murihiku Southland responds to the ongoing challenges and opportunities of a changing climate.



Question 1 - What changes in the climate have you noticed in your area?

The key themes noted in response to question 1 were:

- **Seasonal Change:** Later summers, milder winters, shorter winters, shifting by a month, loss of seasonal identity
- **Temperature Increase:** Hotter summers, more intense heat, warming trend
- **Weather Extremes:** Flooding, heavier rain events, longer dry spells, droughts
- **Frost/Snow Decline:** Fewer frosts, “used to snow more,” milder winters, no ice scraping
- **Wind Changes:** Stronger wind, consistent wind, easterlies more common
- **Humidity and Rainfall:** More humid, unpredictable rain, intense rainfall in short periods
- **Ecological Change:** Bird migration, marine life shifts, altered garden productivity, new weed invasions
- **Flooding:** Noted in several towns – Mataura, Makarewa, Wairio/Nightcaps, Wyndham
- **Human Impact & Emotion:** Frustration, confusion, emotional fatigue, questioning political response, and cyclical beliefs

Residents in Southland are keenly aware of changing weather and climate conditions, especially around seasonality, temperature extremes, and changing rainfall/wind patterns. These observations are grounded in lived experience, and while some attribute changes to natural cycles, most responses reflect concern, uncertainty, and a need to adapt - particularly in relation to agriculture, coastal resilience, and community well-being.

Question 2 - Are you doing anything different because of our changing climate?

The key themes noted in response to question 2 were:

- **Home Adaptation:** Re-roofing, elevating gardens, heat pumps, staying indoors during heat or rain
- **Transport & Mobility:** Biking, walking, e-bikes, EV/hybrids, avoiding overseas travel
- **Energy Use:** Solar panels, power monitoring, LED lights, reduced kettle/plug use
- **Food & Consumption:** Composting, not eating animals, avoiding food waste, growing gardens
- **Waste & Plastics:** Recycling, reusable containers, homemade cleaning products, avoiding microplastics
- **Farming & Gardening:** Plant breeding, crop rotation, sheep instead of deer, late mowing, composting
- **Water Management:** Less watering, elevated gardens, concern about flooding & river pollution
- **Extreme Weather Preparation:** Emergency kits, flood adaptation, event flexibility due to unpredictable weather
- **Ecological Stewardship:** Tree planting, estuary cleanup, wetland regeneration, nature protection values



- **Barriers & Emotional Strain:** Feelings of helplessness, lack of knowledge, eco-fatigue, religious faith or dismissal

This data shows a community in various stages of climate adaptation, with responses ranging from concrete actions to uncertainty or disengagement. The responses reflect both practical adaptations to tangible changes and broader concerns about environmental sustainability and future impacts.

Southlanders are responding to climate change in practical, grounded ways - often tied to their environmental context (rural, coastal, flood-prone), personal values, and resources available. Many individuals are adapting daily habits - power use, waste reduction, transport choices - to respond to a changing climate. Adaptations range from small, everyday actions (e.g. cycling, composting) to large-scale investments (e.g. installing solar panels, re-roofing homes, buying EVs).



Question 3 - What council actions are needed to support our response to our climate change?

The key themes noted in response to question 3 were:

- **People want practical, visible council actions** – There's strong demand for tangible interventions like flood protection, native planting, clean rivers, and EV infrastructure.
- **Collaboration is critical** – Residents want to work with council, not be regulated from afar. There's a call for tailored, cooperative approaches especially with farmers.
- **Communication and education gaps exist** – People are confused by technical terms (like 1:100 flood events), and want clearer, more accessible information and training.
- **Community empowerment matters** – There's enthusiasm for citizen action (like tree planting, education) but people need support and resources from the council to do it well.
- **Stronger policy on land use and development** – Repeated concerns about building on floodplains, urban sprawl, stormwater overflows, and forestry impacts highlight the need for better planning rules.
- **Desire for long-term thinking** – A clear appetite for future-focused, intergenerational decisions around energy, infrastructure, and land.

The responses show a community with diverse perspectives on climate action, ranging from technical approaches to social initiatives. There's recognition of the complexity of climate challenges and the need for multi-faceted responses that address both adaptation (preparing for impacts) and mitigation (reducing emissions). The data reveals tensions between different priorities but also significant potential for collaborative approaches that engage all sectors of the community.



Stakeholder conversations

Various stakeholders: Governance members of each of the key partner agencies, Community Trust of Southland, Farmright, Fonterra, Thriving Southland, Rakiura Community Board, Bluff Community Board, Emergency Management Southland, Fiordland Community Board, Wastenet Advisory Group meeting, Beef and Lamb, Southland Conservation Board.

The Regional Climate Change Working Group is interested in continuing to extend these conversations with additional stakeholders. This report summarises what has been heard at the time of writing this report:

Opportunities (Based on Comments)

- **Knowledge Sharing Platform:** Development of a curated climate change information portal for sharing resources and coordinating messaging.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Multiple organisations expressed willingness to collaborate and integrate efforts.
- **Catchment-Based Approaches:** Moving toward catchment-scale approaches for regulation, land management, and adaptation investments; and integrating with spatial planning.
- **Market Incentives:** Building on existing incentive systems for climate-friendly practices, particularly in agriculture.
- **Leverage Circular Economy Models:** Developing waste-to-energy and other circular economy approaches that create economic opportunities.
- **Support Extension and Peer Learning Models:** Expanding the "extension conversation" approach to gradually build climate adaptation capacity.
- **Community-Specific Planning:** Developing tailored climate solutions for unique community contexts like Stewart Island and Bluff.
- **Youth Engagement:** Involving young people as drivers of climate action and bringing schools into the conversation.
- **Conservation in Retreat Areas:** Potential for conservation in locations where managed retreat becomes necessary.
- **Cultural Integration:** Incorporating te reo and cultural principles into climate frameworks.
- **Climate as an Opportunity:** Examples include waste recovery, energy innovation, future farming systems.
- **Develop Sector-Specific Guidance** for GHG accounting and mitigation.
- **Build Public-Private Partnerships** for energy transition and infrastructure resilience.
- **Clarify Role of Local Government** in supporting the market-led transition.
- **Strengthen Council Presence in Remote Areas** through regular visits and updates.



Issues and Challenges (Based on Comments)

- **Political Resistance:** Some Councillors actively oppose climate initiatives due to concerns about economic impacts.
- **Agricultural-Environmental Tension:** View that climate action positions farming as "dirty" and risks food production capacity.
- **Resource and Funding Limitations:** Financial barriers to implementing climate action and limited resources in the "reduction space"
- **Implementation vs. Planning Frustration:** Concerns about the pace of moving from planning to practical action.
- **Energy Transition Security:** Worries about reliability of renewable energy systems, particularly during winter or outages.
- **Economic Impact Concerns:** Fear that climate policies could drive away business and reduce economic opportunities.
- **Competing Global Priorities:** Challenge of building community buy-in when major global emitters appear less active.
- **Cost of Living Pressures:** Immediate economic concerns making climate conversations difficult to prioritize.
- **Balancing Infrastructure and Ecosystems:** Risk that climate resilience infrastructure could damage existing ecosystem services.
- **Short-term vs. Long-term Thinking:** Challenge moving conversations beyond immediate weather events to longer-term climate planning.
- **Knowledge and Capacity Gaps:** Need for education, extension support, and better modelling/forecasting.
- **Uneven Policy Readiness:** Concerns about rural impacts, unclear timelines for regulation, and governance alignment.
- **National vs Regional Target Debate:** Diverging views on the appropriate scale of climate targets.

Regional Climate Collaboration Stakeholder Hui – 3 April 2025

The purpose of the stakeholder hui was to expand stakeholder participation in regional climate action planning by fostering shared understanding, gathering insights on priorities and opportunities, and ensuring alignment of local government obligations with business and stakeholder needs and aspirations. The Regional Climate Change Working Group and Great South co-hosted this hui and were interested in understanding the needs of the attendees and how policies, processes and planning can help achieve attendee's Climate Change or decarbonisation goals.

Learning, collaboration, and clarity on direction are dominant reasons for attending. People were motivated by a mix of knowledge-seeking, community responsibility, and personal conviction. There was a collective desire to move from planning to doing, with urgency and inspiration at the core. Many participants were seeking cross-pollination between regions, groups, and sectors. Attendees also want to clarify roles and contribute to practical climate solutions.



There were three keynote speakers presenting at the hui:

- Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment: Simon Upton
- Professor James Renwick from Victoria University
- Mike Casey from Rewiring Aotearoa



A panel discussion was also held. Key takeaways and learnings were captured from each of these sessions.

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment: Simon Upton

- Need for integrated, accessible, and high-quality data that supports local decision-making
- Communities must be brought into the decision-making process early and meaningfully
- Early action lowers long-term costs - this must be communicated effectively
- Clear role definition and better inter-agency coordination needed
- Banks and insurers are becoming climate decision-makers - partnering with them is key
- Climate action must account for social equity and economic transition
- Siloed approaches are limiting progress - systems thinking and collaboration needed
- Data must be humanised - communicated clearly and framed around solutions
- Societal divides, blame, and fear are slowing momentum - need a unified narrative
- Framing around possibility, not just danger, is vital for sustained engagement
- Strong demand for a central, accessible data system with clear custodianship
- Need for clarity and alignment between central, local gov and others
- Frustration with short-termism; desire for multigenerational planning
- Cultural and institutional silos hinder needed partnerships
- Banks/insurers are major influencers - need aligned strategies with councils
- Calls for courage, clarity, and breaking institutional inertia
- Need for clear, accessible risk data and community-informed solutions
- Concern over community-wide impacts of forestry and land-use change
- Interest in broadening the toolkit (e.g. pests, natural systems)



Professor James Renwick from Victoria University

- Climate change is here now; mitigation and adaptation both matter
- Needs integrated strategies across mitigation, adaptation & engagement
- Denial and fear are real—climate action must address emotional stages of change
- Science must be translated into honest, local, empowering messages
- Inclusion is foundational co-design drives legitimacy and action
- Economic narratives help shift behaviour and justify investment
- Acknowledge tensions but move with urgency and clarity
- Communities want timely, aligned action
- Need transparency and focus
- Clear, consistent, trusted info is essential
- Bring action to the personal level
- Frame as opportunity; motivate with pride
- Acknowledge but don't let them stall action

Mike Casey from Rewiring Aotearoa

- NZ is positioned to lead; rural & small-scale systems are viable
- Public wants full lifecycle cost comparisons; upfront costs are a barrier
- Councils should remove barriers and educate through building/consenting
- Behaviour change hinges on accessible, motivating info
- Ensure fair distribution of costs and benefits
- Develop financing mechanisms that support equitable access
- Plan for decentralised systems, grid upgrades, and risk resilience
- Investigate electrified rail and BEV integration on legacy networks
- Promote agri-energy pilots and shared methane recovery systems
- Communicate lifecycle plans and material sustainability strategies
- Provide energy yield modelling and market integration data

At the hui, there was also a workshop session focused on 'How might we progress Regional Climate Strategy Aspiration 11' of the Regional Climate Change Strategy:

We build a regional community of learning, collectively and openly improving our understanding of the complexity of our changing climate and its implications for Murihiku Southland?

The key themes from this workshop session were:

- Build Shared Knowledge Through Data & Local Evidence
 - Regional data collection (e.g. water plans, land use maps) is crucial to understand climate impacts.
 - Combining scientific modelling with mātauranga Māori and citizen science builds trust and ownership.
 - Access to a shared, centralised knowledge base (e.g. hazard maps, rainfall models) empowers communities.



- Make Climate Communication Simple, Local & Action-Oriented
 - Shift the narrative from abstract threats to relatable benefits (economic, health, housing).
 - Use plain language, local stories, and case studies to show what's possible.
 - Schools, hands-on learning, and peer-to-peer sharing are powerful engagement tools.
- Engage Everyone – Equity and Inclusion Matter
 - Everyone must be included – rural residents, youth, elders, and mana whenua.
 - One-size-fits-all doesn't work; engagement must be tailored to specific communities and contexts.
 - Rangatahi can be leaders and influencers at home and in the community.
- Focus on What Motivates People
 - Economic savings, social well-being, and personal benefit often drive action more than climate framing.
 - Showing co-benefits (e.g. warm homes, cleaner water, lower energy bills) increases buy-in.
 - Practical examples and success stories help people visualise the value of acting.
- Empower Local Leadership and Collective Responsibility
 - Trust, shared responsibility, and clear roles across community, iwi, business, and council are vital.
 - People want to contribute but need to understand their role and impact.
 - Community-driven, council-facilitated models work best (e.g. predator-free approach).
- Provide Tools, Resources & Incentives
 - Tangible support like finance mechanisms (e.g. green loans), DIY resources, and rewards help people act.
 - Information must be accessible – both digitally and in traditional formats (newsletters, pamphlets).
 - Practical tools demystify complex problems and make solutions visible.
- Remove Barriers & Acknowledge Challenges
 - Red tape, burnout, digital exclusion, and lack of clarity on responsibilities are real obstacles.
 - People are frustrated by slow processes, lack of follow-up, and inaccessible language.
 - Momentum requires tackling institutional, political, and social frictions head-on.
- Plan for the Long Game – Start with Quick Wins
 - Create a roadmap: define goals, identify barriers, and prioritise achievable actions.
 - Quick wins build confidence and momentum while supporting long-term strategy.
 - Transparency, tracking progress, and celebrating achievements keeps people engaged.



Next steps

The key insights and themes collated in this report have been used to inform the Regional Climate Change Working Group as they progress the development of the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland (being phase two of the workplan to progress a regional response to our changing climate). It is intended that the learnings from the community engagement activities to date will assist in continuing to progress this work.







Regional Climate Change Working Group Report

To: Environment Southland
Te Ao Mārama Board
Gore District Council
Invercargill City Council
Southland District Council

Meeting Date: Wednesday 2 July 2025

From: Staff-level Regional Climate Change Working Group

Purpose

This report provides all Councils and the Te Ao Mārama Board with an update on the final governance-level Regional Climate Change Working Group workshop, held 19 June 2025.

Recommendation

That councils and the Te Ao Mārama Board receive the report "Regional Climate Change Working Group Report".

Background

Following a Regional Climate Change Hui in July 2022, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama brought together a staff-level regional climate change working group, which has met regularly since October 2022. A governance-level regional climate change working group (RCCWG) was established in February 2023.

The RCCWG met throughout 2023 to progress phase one of its work, to develop a Regional Climate Change Strategy. Phase one concluded with the adoption of the Regional Climate Change Strategy by all Councils and the endorsement by the Te Ao Mārama Board between August and October 2024.

Phase two of this work, to develop a Regional Framework for Action, was commenced by the RCCWG at the start of 2024.

The governance-level RCCWG is not a formal joint committee and does not have formal delegations. It is supported by the staff-level working group.

RCCWG workshop – 19 June

The focus of the RCCWG workshop was on decision making regarding the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate as the product of phase two. The detail



of what the RCCWG will be recommending to each of the key partner agencies in July 2025 was also worked through.

A refined version of the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate was presented to the RCCWG for their consideration. Subject to some suggested changes and refinements, the RCCWG endorsed the following:

- The purpose
- The ongoing climate action planning cycle
- The key focus areas for climate action
- The content of appendix 1

Subject to some suggested changes being made, the governance RCCWG endorsed the draft Regional Framework for Action to be recommended to each of the partner agencies for consideration in July. The proposed dates for this consideration are:

- Environment Southland Strategy & Policy Committee – 2 July
- Gore District Council – 14 July
- Te Ao Mārama Board – 28 July
- Invercargill City Council – 29 July
- Southland District Council – 30 July

The governance RCCWG agreed that the recommendation is:

- That the report from the RCCWG be received
- That the Community Engagement Insights Report be noted
- That the proposed Regional Framework for Action be adopted

RCCWG reflections

The RCCWG spent some time workshoping the journey to date. It was noted that there have been staff and governance changes since the first RCCWG workshop in February 2023, however there has been enough consistency to maintain momentum.

Some key reflections from the current group are:

- That things have moved from feeling siloed when this group first met, to a collaborative approach.
- That the work has not moved as quickly as the group initially anticipated.
- That while things have moved slower it had been a robust process to date and the foundations for ongoing work are in place.
- That the next version of the RCCWG is likely to be better placed to progress actions if the proposed Regional Framework for Action is adopted.
- That there are a few key recommendations that this group consider will be important to include in a document to handover to the new version of this group post elections so that they will not be starting work from scratch.

The RCCWG considered what might be required to ensure continuing collaborative regional climate action planning into the next triennium. Guidance was provided on key aspects that the current RCCWG would like to see included



as part of a handover package to the new RCCWG group once it is re-formed post local government elections.

Next steps

The 'writing sub-committee' was tasked with making the final suggested changes and refinements to the draft Regional Framework for Action on Climate. The document will then be graphically designed and provided as part of a package to each of the key partner agencies for their consideration in July and August 2025.

The reflections of the RCCWG will also be captured as part of a continuity package for the new version of this group to consider post-elections.

Key Messages

- Collating community voices have been valuable, reassuring, and influential in the development of the draft Regional Framework for Action.
- The governance RCCWG has reached a collaborative milestone, thanks to the staff input and effort, and collaboration from all agencies involved.
- A solid foundation has been created for future collaboration on this topic and there is optimism for continuity into the next triennium.
- The proposed Regional Framework for Action that has emerged is not a directive but an invitation to act – we are optimistic councils will recognise the opportunities and accept that invitation.

Our reference: A1292281

25 June 2025

Chairman N Horrell
Via email: Nicol.Horrell@es.govt.nz



Dear Nicol

Recommendation to adopt the Regional Framework for Action on Climate, for Murihiku Southland

On behalf of the Murihiku Southland Regional Climate Change Working Group, we are pleased to submit for your consideration the *proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland – Phase Two*.

This Framework represents the outcome of a careful, regionally grounded collaboration between the four Southland councils, Te Ao Mārama, and Great South. Its development has been shaped by respect for individual councils and local democratic processes. Each participating agency has had equal voice in this work—and that will remain the case moving forward.

We are now seeking the adoption of the Framework from each council, so that Southland can move forward with a shared yet flexible platform for regional climate action. This is not a binding plan or a prescriptive set of mandates. It is a practical tool to support relevant local responses, coordinate regional efforts, and ensure our communities are better prepared for the changes that lie ahead.

Why Now?

The impacts of our changing climate—whether gradual or sudden—present challenges to Southland’s people, infrastructure, environment, and economy. These challenges do not respect council boundaries. Whether it’s coastal flooding, stormwater system failures, landslips, or drought stress, the effects will be felt across our shared landscapes and supply chains.

As the Government shifts responsibility for adaptation to the regional and local level, the cost of inaction will fall squarely on councils and communities. This Framework positions us to take efficient, locally led, and coordinated actions—so that councils are not left to manage these challenges alone or in isolation.

Safeguarding Our Regional Prosperity

We are acutely aware that some have raised concerns that climate action may come at the cost of economic growth or that it targets particular sectors. This Framework recognises the central importance of Southland’s rural industries—particularly agriculture—to our economy, identity, and future. Southland is more dependent on its primary sector than any other region in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the viability of that sector is directly tied to how well we respond to climate variability and risk.

It supports the resilience of those industries and aligns with emerging trade, finance, and market expectations for credible regional action. By investing in flood resilience, water security, energy reliability, and land-use tools, we help sustain livelihoods and future-proof local enterprise.

What the Framework Does

The Framework:

- Introduces a **three-year regional climate action planning cycle**, aligned with council Long Term Plans;
- Defines five **shared outcomes**, including a just transition, economic resilience, and support for mana whenua partnership;
- Outlines a first tranche of **resourced actions** – actions that are already funded, and led primarily by Environment Southland;
- Establishes mechanisms to **track progress**, share learning, and adjust course as needed.

Importantly, the Framework does not override any council's autonomy. Each agency retains full decision-making power over which actions it supports and funds, and when. The Framework simply makes it easier to work together when shared challenges demand it.

The Framework also recognises the role of mana whenua in shaping our collective future, emphasising the importance of continued contributions from Te Ao Mārama and the papatipu rūnanga of Murihiku Southland.

Next Steps

We invite Environment Southland to formally adopt the Framework. This signals support for a shared regional approach—without binding the council to fund any new actions beyond those it chooses to include in its own Long Term Planning processes.

In the new triennium, we anticipate the Regional Climate Change Working Group will lead development of the first three-year Murihiku Southland Climate Action Plan, using this Framework as its guide. Again, any resourcing decisions will rest entirely with each individual agency.

We thank Environment Southland for its participation in this journey to date. We acknowledge that not all councillors have viewed this initiative the same way, and we welcome the opportunity to speak directly with you to answer questions, clarify intent, and address concerns.

This is a step forward, not a final destination. It's an invitation to continue working together, protect what we value, and strengthen our region—together.

Ngā mihi nui,



Cr Phil Morrison (ES)



Dean Whaanga (Te Ao Mārama)

Co-chairs of the Regional Climate Change Working Group

On behalf of members: Cr Keith Hovell (GDC), Cr Tom Campbell (ICC), Cr Matt Wilson (SDC), Cr Maurice Rodway (ES), Cr Paul McPhail (GDC), Cr Lesley Soper (ICC)

Attachments

For presentation to a meeting of your elected representatives:

- Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate Change for Murihiku Southland (A1290585)
- Community Engagement Insights Summary Report – June 2025 (A1289042)
- Proposed Regional Framework for Action Summary document (A1290723)

Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland

Overview



Shared climate outcomes

Five regional outcomes guide this Framework:

- 1. Regional climate leadership**
– Shared regional leadership to respond to challenges and opportunities.
- 2. Fair and equitable transition**
– An inclusive transition to a low-emissions, climate-resilient future.
- 3. Prosperous net-zero region**
– Economic wellbeing grows as we reduce emissions and embrace sustainable practices.
- 4. Flourishing natural environment**
– Te Mana o Te Ao Tūroa is upheld, supporting healthy ecosystems.
- 5. Resilient and adaptive communities**
– Communities are equipped to adapt, respond and thrive.

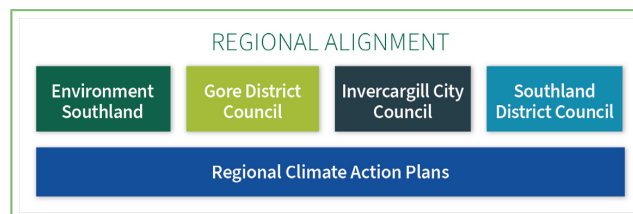


Coordinated, practical climate action

The *Regional Framework for Action on Climate* sets out how Murihiku Southland local government agencies will move from shared aspirations to coordinated, practical climate action.

Building on the *Regional Climate Change Strategy* (Phase One), this Framework (Phase Two) establishes a process, aligned with local government Long-Term Plan cycles, to develop regional climate action plans, updated every three years, each with a 10-year outlook.

Framework for Action



Ongoing mana whenua & community collaboration

Action pathways

The Framework identifies five focus areas for action. It outlines a summary of resourced climate actions that are already underway.



Enabling partnership and alignment

This Framework strengthens collaboration between councils, mana whenua, and communities through the Regional Climate Change Working Group. It aligns with national legislation, while providing for locally tailored solutions.

By working together today, Murihiku Southland is securing a fair and climate-resilient future – for all of us and the generations to come.

For further information visit the ES website es.govt.nz



 **Climate change**
in Murihiku Southland

Proposed **Regional** **Framework for Action on Climate** **for Murihiku Southland**





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Foreword

Murihiku Southland stands at a defining moment in its climate response journey. Building on the foundation laid by the Murihiku Southland Regional Climate Change Strategy (Phase One), this Regional Framework for Action on Climate (Phase Two) translates shared aspirations into practical, coordinated steps for real change.

Since the adoption of Phase One, our local government partners, Te Ao Mārama, and Great South have made real progress – determining how efforts can be aligned to deepen our understanding of regional climate risks and embed climate action into our work programmes.

A defining strength of this journey has been the spirit of willing collaboration – one that has not only enhanced the effectiveness of our work but also made

the process rewarding and energising. This foundation of trust and cooperation will be critical as we continue to move forward together.

Climate action is not a task for the future – it is a responsibility for today. This Framework describes the outcomes that will guide our actions: strengthening regional climate leadership, enabling a fair and equitable transition, enhancing economic resilience while reducing emissions, restoring and protecting the natural environment, and equipping communities with the knowledge and tools to adapt and thrive.

This Framework is not a one-off action plan. It establishes a structured and ongoing process for regional climate action – setting the foundation for a Murihiku Southland Climate Action Plan, refreshed every three years, reflecting a 10-year outlook.

This rolling cycle aligns with the established rhythm of local government Long-Term Plans, ensuring climate action remains woven into our region's strategic direction, while empowering local democracy.

Community feedback gathered over the summer has been both insightful and encouraging. It confirmed the need for

visible leadership, inclusive collaboration, and climate action that is both grounded in local realities and supported by clear, accountable progress.

This Framework represents a critical step in a longer-term journey, one that demands courage, innovation, and sustained commitment. By working together – across councils, communities, mana whenua, and industry – we can lead a just, prosperous, and climate-resilient transition.

We embark on this next phase with purpose and humility, ready to act, to adapt, and to learn – together, kotahitanga.

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei.

Environment Southland Councillor, Phil Morrison and Te Ao Mārama Kaupapa Taiao Manager, Dean Whaanga
Co-Chairs, Murihiku Southland Regional Climate Change Working Group



Cr Morrison



Dean Whaanga

Executive summary

Coordinated, practical climate action for Murihiku Southland

This *Regional Framework for Action on Climate* (see Figure 1) sets out how Murihiku Southland local government agencies will move from shared aspirations to coordinated, practical climate action. Building on the Regional Climate Change Strategy (Phase One),

this Framework (Phase Two) establishes a flexible enduring process, aligned with local government Long-Term Plan cycles, to develop regional climate action plans, updated every three years, each with a 10-year outlook.

Framework for Action

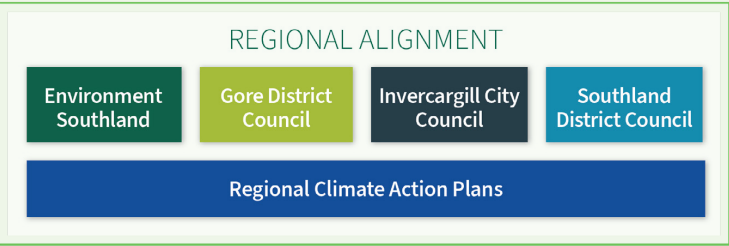


Figure 1: Regional Framework for Action on Climate

Shared climate outcomes

Five regional outcomes guide this Framework:

- 1. Regional climate leadership** – Shared regional leadership to respond to challenges and opportunities.
- 2. Fair and equitable transition** – An inclusive transition to a low-emissions, climate-resilient future.
- 3. Prosperous net-zero region** – Economic wellbeing grows as we reduce emissions and embrace sustainable practices.
- 4. Flourishing natural environment** – Te Mana o Te Ao Tūroa is upheld, supporting healthy ecosystems.
- 5. Resilient and adaptive communities** – Communities are equipped to adapt, respond and thrive.

Action pathways

The Framework identifies five focus areas for action – regional climate leadership, understanding climate science and risk, adaptation for our future, supporting regional net zero 2050, and monitoring and evaluation. It outlines a summary of resourced climate actions that are already underway.

Enabling partnership and alignment

This Framework strengthens collaboration between councils, mana whenua, and communities through the Regional Climate Change Working Group. It aligns with national legislation, while providing for locally tailored solutions.

By working together today, Murihiku Southland is securing a fair and climate-resilient future – for all of us and the generations to come.



Foundations for regional climate action

In response to international obligations, New Zealand's national direction on climate change is guided by the Climate Change Response Act 2002¹. The National Adaptation Plan looks at the impacts of climate change and how we can adapt as a nation. The second Emissions Reduction Plan sets out how we will meet our 2050 net zero commitment².

This **Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland (Phase Two)** sits within the international and national context and is part of a complementary suite of documents that guide regional climate change planning, action, and ongoing collaboration.

The **Regional Climate Change Strategy for Murihiku Southland (Phase One)**, adopted in 2024, established the region's shared principles and aspirations for its climate change response. The Strategy ensures that local government agencies are 'on the same page' and establishes a foundation for ongoing collaborative action.

This **Framework for Action** builds upon and strengthens that foundation. Applying the principles, it establishes

a structured and enduring process for regional climate planning and delivery, and defines regional outcomes and focus areas. It also highlights near-term, resourced actions that are already underway.

Enabled by this Framework, the next step will be the development of a **Regional Climate Action Plan for Murihiku Southland**. This plan will take a 10-year outlook, be updated every three years and align with local government Long-Term Plans (LTPs). This will ensure climate action is integrated in the region's strategic planning and investment decisions³.

Purpose of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland

1. Establish a structured and enduring process for regional planning and delivery to respond to our changing climate.
2. Define shared regional outcomes and focus areas to guide coordinated action across councils, mana whenua, agencies, sectors, and communities.
3. Improve visibility and alignment of planned actions, supporting more effective implementation.
4. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and priorities, including identifying opportunities for collaboration and joint delivery.
5. Foster a culture of learning and continuous improvement, supported by meaningful community engagement, reflection, and adaptation.

¹At the time of writing this document, a variety of legislative reforms are in progress that may have implications for local government climate change activities. However, no changes are proposed to New Zealand's international emissions reduction commitments.

²The [National Adaptation Plan](#) and [Emissions Reduction Plan](#) can be found on the Ministry for the Environment website [environment.govt.nz](#)

³This approach is designed to remain flexible and adaptive in the context of proposed Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms – particularly the likely introduction of joint regional spatial planning – and any future changes to local government structures in Murihiku Southland.

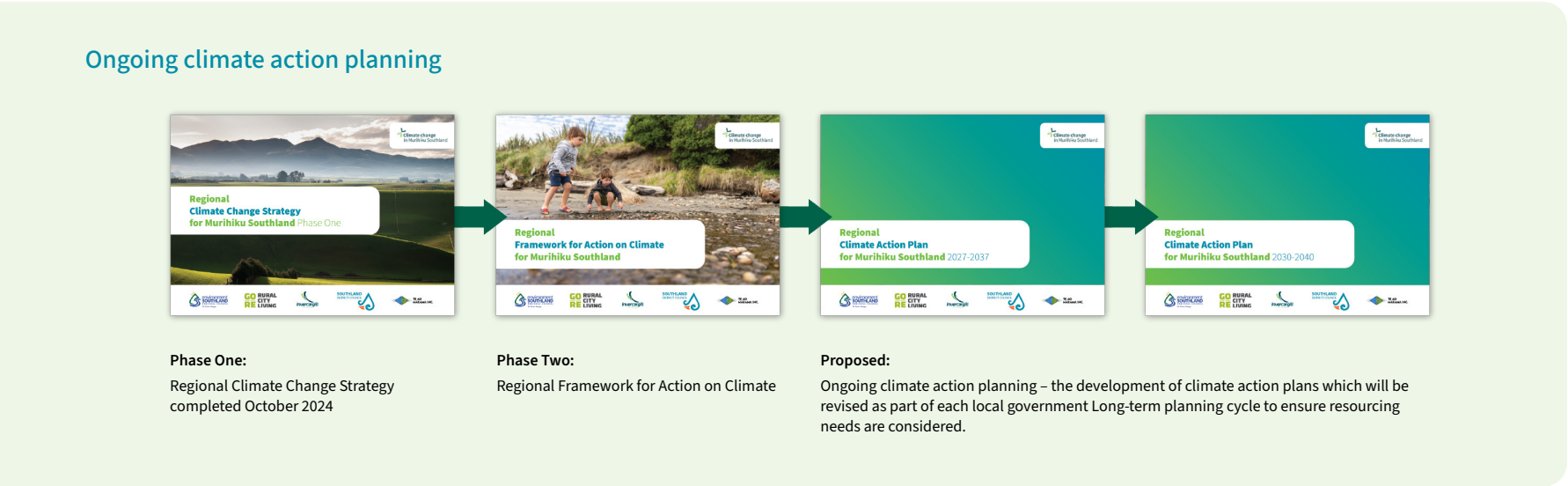


Figure 2: Ongoing climate action planning

The first **Regional Climate Action Plan** is expected to be finalised in 2027, alongside councils’ Long-Term Plans.

Future planning (see Figure 2) will need to consider social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions, and carefully evaluate the costs of both action and inaction.

In line with the guiding principle of “*doing what we can now, with what we have now,*” strong partnerships with key stakeholders and sustained engagement with Murihiku Southland communities will be essential.

Together, these elements form the foundations to enable purposeful, resilient, and regionally tailored climate action over the coming decades.

Regional Climate Change Strategy

The Strategy was adopted by all Southland local government agencies and endorsed by Te Ao Mārama in late 2024. It defines how our local government agencies will work together (principles – see Figure 3) and toward what outcomes that work will focus on (aspirations – see Figure 4).

The Strategy is the foundation and starting point for the Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

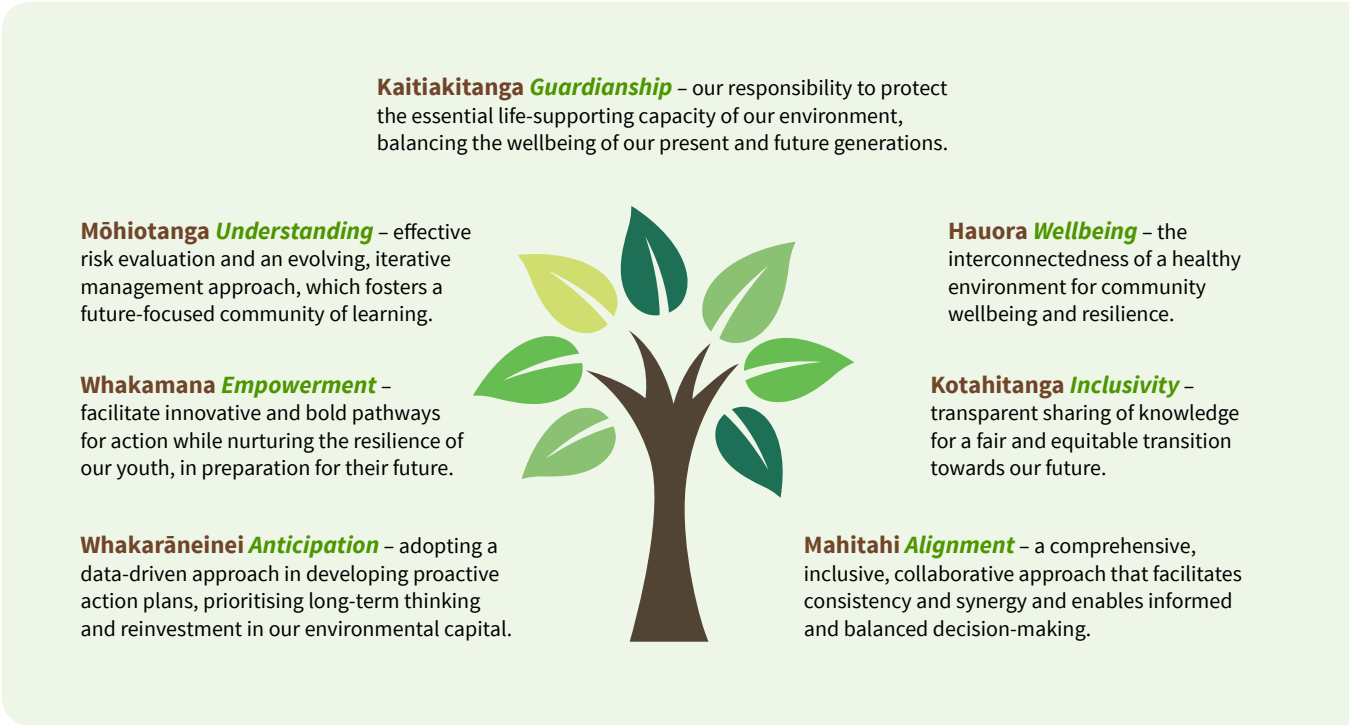


Figure 3: Regional Climate Change Strategy principles

Our aspirations

Guiding

- 1

Te Mana o Te Ao Tūroa - the mana of the environment is valued and respected enabling our people to be responsive as our climate changes.
- 2

Science and Mātauranga underpins our response to our changing climate in Murihiku Southland.
- 3

We understand the changes, challenges and opportunities associated with our changing climate and will act courageously, building resilience to respond and thrive.
- 4

We will create meaningful change within our generation and inspire future generations to continue this work.

Mitigation

- 5

Environment Southland, Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and Great South will be net zero* organisations by 2050 or earlier.
- 6

By June 2026**, all four Councils will measure their organisational greenhouse gas baseline and develop emissions reductions targets for progressive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions toward 2050.
- 7

Councils understand their role in enabling Murihiku Southland to become a net zero region by 2050.

** Net zero refers to the reduction of organisational greenhouse gas emissions to a net zero level.*

*** This date is being referenced to ensure the direction resulting from organisational baseline measuring of greenhouse gas emissions, can be incorporated into planning as part of the LTP cycle 2027-2037.*

Adaptation

- 8

We understand the risks and opportunities to our communities associated with the impact of our changing climate on Murihiku Southland.
- 9

Councils align on climate change scenarios to inform key regional decisions.*
- 10

We collaborate to create regional pathways for action**, acknowledging the inter-connectedness of specific issues.

** This is important as local government agencies collectively work towards planning for the LTP cycle 2027-2037, however it is also relevant for regional decisions in a broader sense as well.*

*** Examples are: carbon forestry, sustainable transport, water availability, waste management, biodiversity, nature-based solutions etc. The intention is that these RCCWG discussions will be ongoing and aligned pathways for action will be able to be incorporated into the planning for the LTP cycle 2027-2037 and beyond.*

Communications & engagement

- 11

We build a regional community of learning; collectively and openly improving our understanding of the complexity of our changing climate and its implications for Murihiku Southland.
- 12

We support individuals, businesses, community groups, and organisations to start and progress their journey responding to our changing climate.
- 13

We engage our children and young people to empower active participation in ongoing climate change conversations.

Figure 4: Regional Climate Change Strategy aspirations



Regional climate action outcomes

These outcomes describe the meaningful changes we aim to achieve through our regional response to our changing climate (see Figure 5). These link our short-term actions to our long-term aspirations by defining clear, measurable results that indicate we are making progress.

We will use these outcomes to develop metrics to monitor and evaluate whether our regional climate actions are delivering real results. This enables us to learn and adjust course when needed, and demonstrate progress to our communities in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.

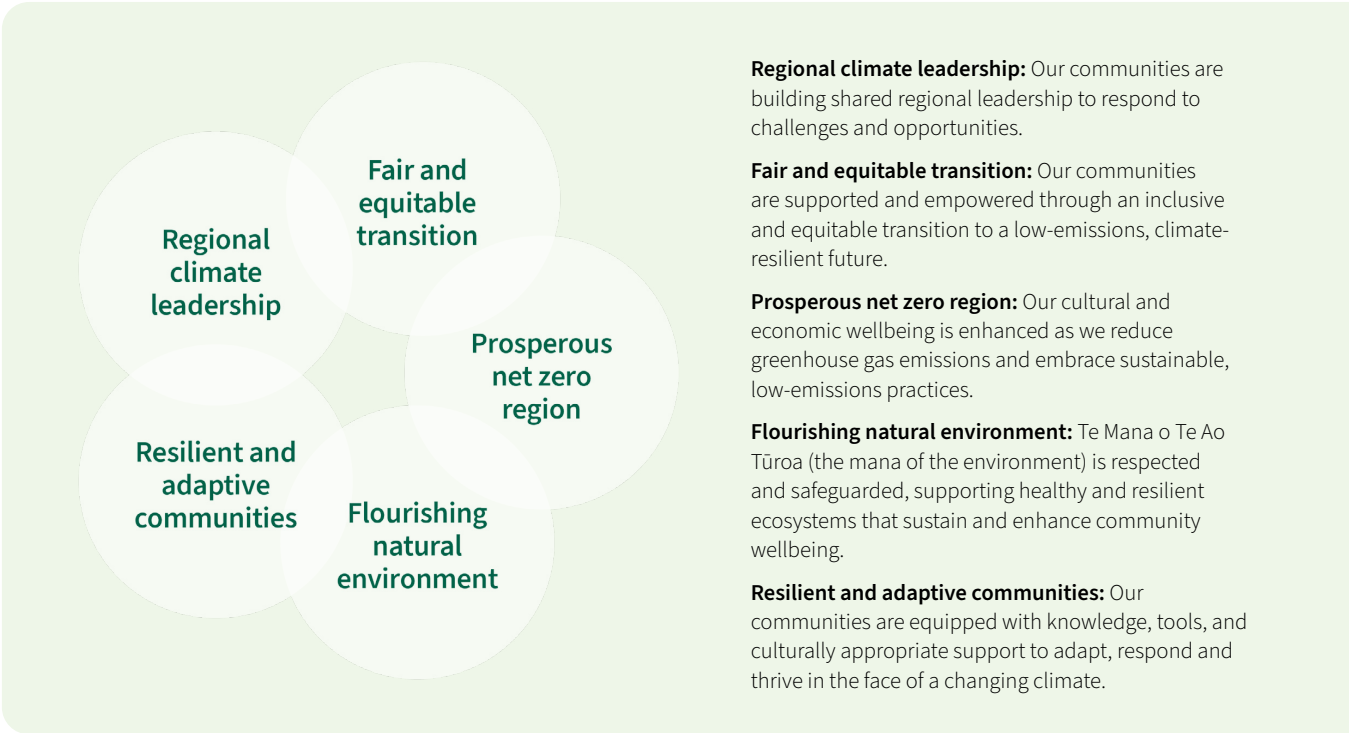


Figure 5: Regional climate action outcomes

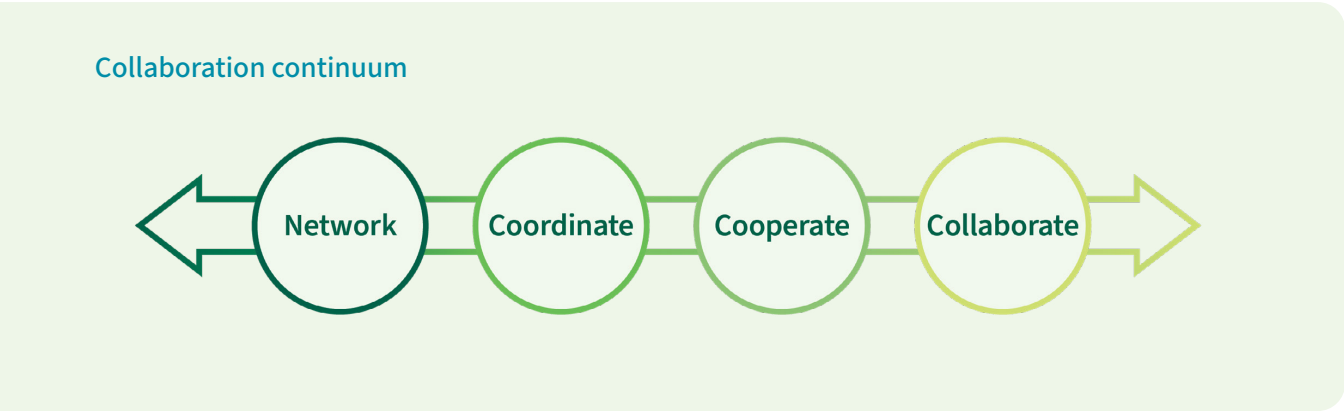


Figure 6: Collaboration continuum⁴

Collaboration as a continuum

A strength of the Regional Climate Change Working Group is its collaborative and consensus decision-making approach, which has generated potential actions for each agency to consider for resourcing and implementation.

Different actions will require different levels of partnership and collaboration (see Figure 6). Some actions can be led by an individual agency, supported by networking and information sharing. Other actions may require coordination, cooperation, or collaboration amongst partner agencies (for additional detail refer to Appendix 1).

⁴ Adapted from Himmelman, A.T., (2002) *Collaboration for a Change: Definitions, Decision-making Models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide*. Available at tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Himmelman-Collaboration-for-a-Change.pdf

Creating a Regional Framework for Action on Climate

Each agency is at various stages of its own journey developing its response to our changing climate in Murihiku Southland. After the development and endorsement of the Regional Climate Change Strategy in 2024, the Regional Climate Change Working Group have been engaging with communities on how to translate the strategy into action.

The process we followed

Community engagement for the Regional Framework for Action on Climate follows earlier consultation and engagement around our changing climate through the Murihiku Southland Climate Change Perception Survey in 2023, and the Regional Climate Change Strategy for Murihiku Southland, completed in 2024.

From January to May 2025, more than 350 people and organisations around Murihiku Southland contributed their thoughts and opinions on how our changing climate is affecting them, what actions they're taking, and what more councils could do to support climate action.

This community engagement has been a critical aspect of developing this Regional Framework for Action on Climate, helping to point the way toward what meaningful action could look like for the region.

The insights presented reflect a diverse range of personal opinions, observations,

and experiences shared by members of the community. The findings should be interpreted as a general snapshot of community perspectives rather than definitive conclusions on the impacts of our changing climate, or policy effectiveness.

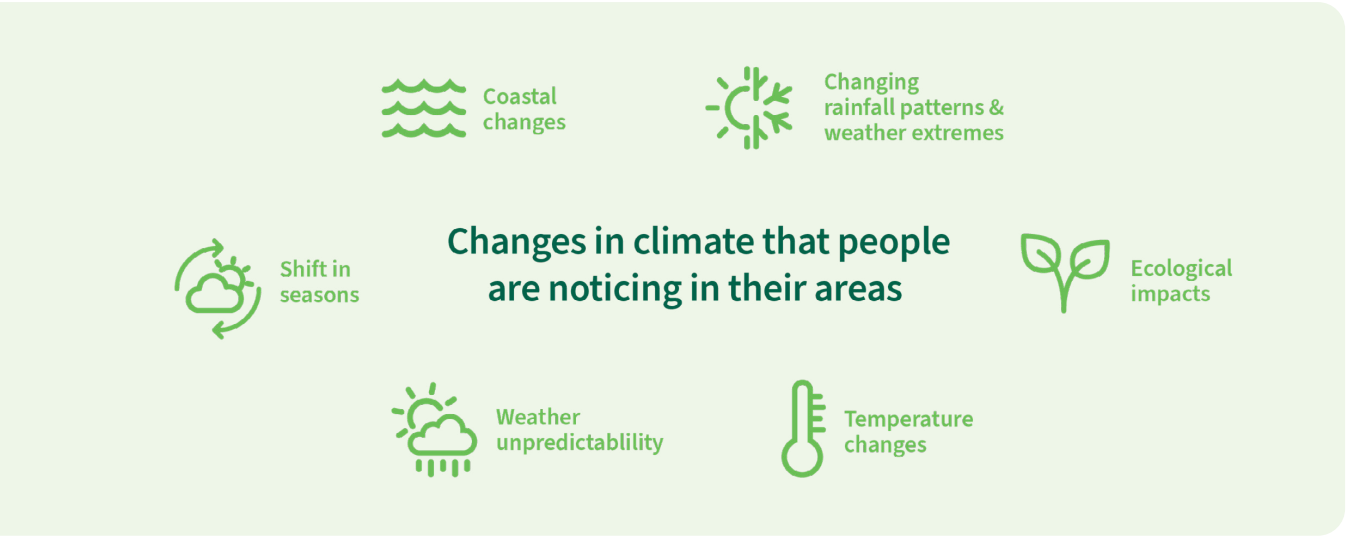
Council staff attended A&P Shows throughout the region, the Surf to City, SIT Orientation Week, Riverton Harvest Festival, Invercargill Central, Multi-Cultural Food Festival and the Murihiku Marae Open Day.

A stakeholder Climate Collaboration Hui was attended by about 70-80 people in Invercargill in April 2025. In addition, several individual stakeholder meetings were held to help build a picture of what people are thinking in relation to our changing climate.

Within each action area, key themes have been summarised that came through during community engagement.



Collecting feedback from people at SIT orientation week – 26 February 2025



What our communities are experiencing

People were asked about their experience of the climate in Murihiku Southland and to point to changes they have noticed during their lifetimes. Many people reported noticing shifting seasons, flooding, changing weather patterns and ecological changes among other key themes.

"Less frosts – used to be able to walk across Orauea River in Winter"

"Marlin caught at Deep Cove!"

"Weather extremes getting worse, more severe weather"

"Changes to the gardening season - potatoes and carrots don't grow as well, broccoli goes to seed faster, corn grows well outside"

"Muttonbirding – the birds are coming out later, not until early May."

"Frosts out of the norm – close to the coast"

"Changes in ecosystems, noticeable in local cultivated gardens, farmland, & natural wild habitats"

"More intense rainfall for longer"

"Getting way hotter and windier"

What our communities are already doing

The question around whether people were doing anything differently really got respondents thinking. There were a wide range of answers such as changing farm practice, recycling and energy conservation on one side of the ledger, countered by some who felt overwhelmed or dis-engaged.



"I try to use less energy – the power company sends me an email weekly about my energy use, and I try to reduce it each time"

"EVs and hybrids are good but what happened to the lithium batteries at end of life?"

"I don't plant anything in the garden that has to be watered"

Repurpose and get a second use from packaging"

"Reusable containers – avoid microplastics"

"Converted to sheep from deer because of muddy paddocks"

"Making sure the downstairs is kept clear in case of flooding"

"Lived experience of the Maitara floods – we have shifted away from the river to higher ground"



What our communities would like local government to do

People provided excellent thoughts and suggestions around what more Murihiku Southland councils can do to respond to climate change. Responses touched on balanced regulation, reinforcing environmental priorities, emerging ideas and technologies, and the need for ongoing community engagement and education.

- "We wish to see policy and rules that manage the lifecycle activities for exotic forestry plantation"
- "We need to be able to look up information about how our property might be affected by flooding/climate change"
- "Create a market for waste – bottle collection, refunds, servicing a purpose"
- "More resources into active transport, mātauranga Māori and taiao community initiatives"
- "Keep up the flood bank maintenance"
- "Invest in future proofing our infrastructure for extreme weather events"
- "Town and country need to work together better – look after farmers"

For more information on work and climate action in Murihiku Southland please go to es.govt.nz/environment/climate-change



How the Regional Framework for Action on Climate was developed

In a series of workshops held throughout 2024 and 2025, the Regional Climate Change Working Group identified and reflected on a broad range of potential actions that could be taken to progress the aspirations in the Regional Climate Change Strategy.

Several key considerations emerged that helped focus development of the Framework:

- **Impact** – Will this action significantly advance coordinated regional climate response?
- **Leadership** – Is there a clear and willing lead agency?
- **Feasibility** – Can this action be delivered within the time period (i.e. 24 months from July 2025 – June 2027)?
- **Resourcing** – Is funding or capacity already in place? If not, what is required?
- **Co-benefits** – Does this action provide added value (e.g., economic, health, biodiversity, disaster resilience)?
- **Risks and barriers** – Are there major political, legal, or technical challenges to implementation?
- **Communications and engagement** – Does feedback from our communities support this action?
- **Key metrics** – Are there reliable indicators to measure progress and success?

While not all questions were weighted equally, they collectively supported the identification of high-impact, feasible, and collaborative priorities. These considerations provide a transparent and repeatable approach for shaping future action phases, ensuring each step reflects both ambition and pragmatism.

Resourced climate actions

This Framework acknowledges that climate action is already underway across Murihiku Southland. To support transparency, confidence, and clarity, a summary of resourced actions is provided in Appendix 2.

These actions:

- Are already funded or otherwise resourced by one or more of the partner agencies.
- Have designated leadership (in most cases led by Environment Southland).
- Are aligned with the key focus areas of this Framework for Action.
- Represent the collective efforts that will be progressed over the next two years, ahead of the first Regional Climate Action Plan.

Each action has been assessed using the Collaboration Continuum model (see page 10) to indicate the level of partnership required between agencies – from information-sharing (networking) to joint decision-making and implementation (collaborating). This provides visibility into how agencies are working together and supports efficient resource use.

Looking ahead

Community engagement revealed a strong appetite across Murihiku Southland for forward-thinking, locally tailored solutions to our changing climate.

Many participants emphasised the importance of early planning, better access to trusted information, region-specific research, and more meaningful community involvement – particularly for younger generations and mana whenua. These insights reinforce the value of planning for next-phase actions now, even where resources are not yet secured.

The Regional Climate Change Working Group identified a range of important opportunities for strengthening Southland's climate response in future years, in addition to those resourced actions listed in Appendix 2.

Some examples are provided here to highlight the kinds of next-phase climate actions which could be considered in future planning cycles. They demonstrate a commitment to longer-term strategic thinking, while respecting the decision-making autonomy and democratic processes of each partner council.

To illustrate the nature and scope of these forward-looking opportunities, examples include:

- Undertake a 'Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment' to evaluate the potential impacts, vulnerability and risk of natural hazards, including those related to our changing climate.
- Engage with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku marae to explore a collective response to our changing climate.
- Investigate national and international models for community-led adaptation planning that may be suited to Murihiku Southland.
- Undertake an assessment of local government barriers and opportunities to regional emissions reduction.
- Scope the development of a regional climate change web portal that evaluates existing tools and brings together trusted sources, interactive tools, and locally relevant data.
- Consideration of local government organisational greenhouse gas emissions measurement being undertaken by one provider to improve alignment of the methodology across local government agencies in Murihiku Southland.

Focus areas for regional climate action

To achieve the regional outcomes, key focus areas provide structure for regional climate actions (see Figure 7). These reflect the aspirations in the Regional Climate Change Strategy and establish pathways for coordinated planning and delivery.

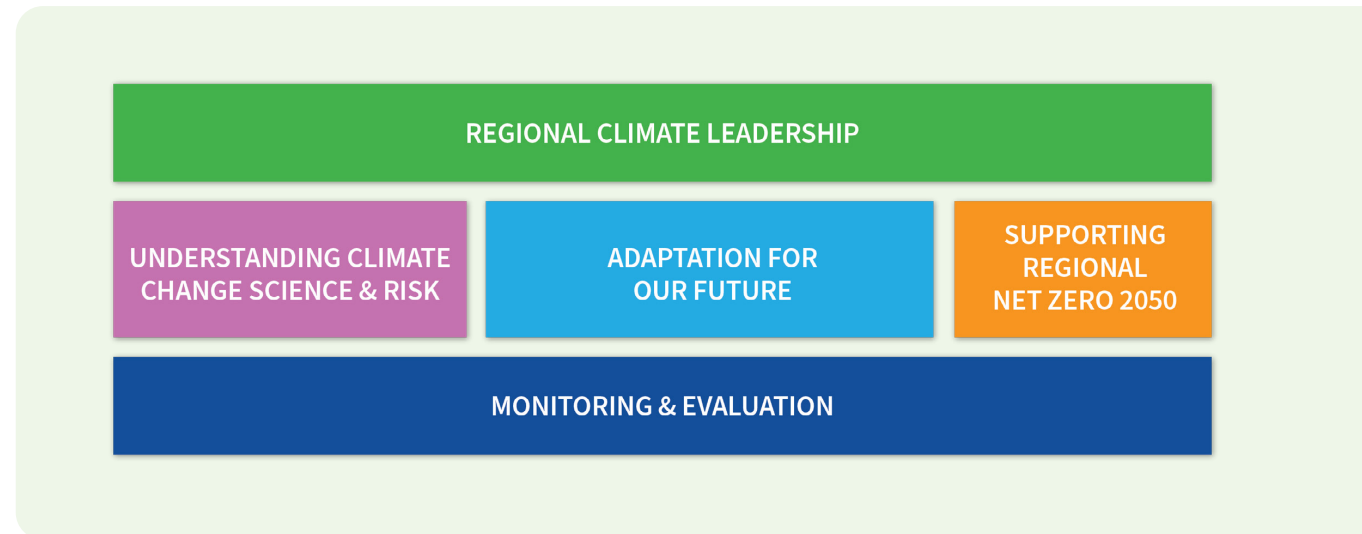


Figure 7: Focus areas for regional climate action

REGIONAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Regional climate leadership provides the foundation for all other focus areas. It is about more than decision-making. It is about enabling coordinated, inclusive, and responsive climate action across Murihiku Southland.

This focus area supports strong local government capability, respectful partnership with mana whenua, and open collaboration with communities, sectors, and stakeholders. Leadership is not about control—it's about convening, connecting, and enabling purposeful action.

What we heard

People are looking for visible, decisive leadership. Some feel frustrated by slow processes while others focused on the need for careful planning and strategic approaches. There were also comments that roles across agencies are unclear and that there are limited opportunities to genuinely shape regional climate efforts. There is a strong appetite for collaboration – especially with rural communities, mana whenua, youth, and local businesses.

What our community want

- Coordinated leadership from councils across the region
- Transparent governance with shared responsibility across iwi, government, business, and community
- Opportunities to contribute to decision-making, not just be consulted
- Stronger partnerships reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and local voices
- Practical, joined-up action – less talk, more doing

"Councils need to show leadership on climate and measure their footprints and 3rd party suppliers"

"A collaborative and transparent process that engages rural communities is essential"

What we will do

Enhance effective, inclusive partnership-working arrangements for regional climate change activities, including appropriate governance, mana whenua representation and community participation by:

1. Strengthening local government capability and organisational resilience.
2. Partnering with Papatipu Rūnanga to uphold mana whenua leadership and decision-making in climate initiatives.
3. Enabling inclusive participation in regional climate leadership.

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE AND RISK

Understanding our changing climate and its associated risks is fundamental to effective regional planning.

This focus area is about building trust in science, making complex information usable, and ensuring local relevance. It involves drawing on international and national expertise while tailoring insights for Murihiku Southland. This includes integrating mātauranga Māori, addressing community concerns about data transparency, and enabling informed adaptation across our region.

There is a large amount of international and national science that shows that changes in climate, such as more frequent and intense floods and sea level rise, are being caused by human activity. However, there are still gaps in our knowledge and work to be done to ensure we understand the potential implications of climate change for our region.

What we heard

People are overwhelmed by technical jargon and siloed information. There is a call for trustworthy, localised, and accessible data to help people understand the risks and inform decisions. Some community members distrust national models and want science grounded in local reality.

What our community want

- Local, easy-to-understand, locally relevant information about climate risks like flooding, drought, and sea-level rise
- Transparent, shared data systems and tools to support informed decision-making
- Recognition of mātauranga Māori alongside Western science
- More visibility and relevance of science to real community concerns

"Use data and evidence to better understand the climate change impacts on our community – know the problem to help find a solution"

"There's been an erosion of trust in science"

What we will do

Understand Murihiku Southland's climate science and risks to inform decision-making and enhance regional resilience by:

4. Developing a comprehensive understanding of key risks and opportunities.
5. Collaborating to obtain up-to-date science and modelling of climate hazards.
6. Investigating how nature-based solutions can support climate resilience.

ADAPTATION FOR OUR FUTURE

We want our communities to be able to adapt and thrive in the face of a changing climate. We will have to work together to understand how our changing climate is likely to impact different parts of our region and what our options are to respond.

The earlier we start planning for the future, the more opportunities will be available to us to target investment into climate resilience in things that matter most and will deliver the best outcomes and value for money. Decisions about climate adaptation need to be made collectively, which means that this work will involve a high level of community engagement and collaboration across agencies, stakeholders and the community.

What we heard

Many Southland residents have noticed changes in our climate. For some, shifting seasons and unpredictable weather is making it difficult to plan for their farming activities. There are concerns about flooding risk, extreme weather events, and what changes in climate might mean for their future, the economy, the natural environment and generations to come.

"We could probably be doing things as individuals, and it would all add up, but it is hard to know what to do"

What our community want

- Regional collaboration by local government with stakeholders and communities to adapt to our changing climate
- Improved access to good quality information about our changing climate and how it might affect them
- Honest and consistent communication from trusted sources
- Local government to facilitate community-led decision-making and planning for our changing climate that is inclusive and representative of our diverse communities
- More education about our changing climate, and access to tools and resources

What we will do

Develop a regional adaptation planning approach that works for Murihiku Southland communities by:

7. Improving accessibility of information and our collective understanding of local climate change impacts, risks and opportunities.
8. Engaging communities in shaping adaptation priorities.
9. Collaborating with partners to strengthen community climate resilience.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL NET ZERO 2050

New Zealand has committed to a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In Murihiku Southland the transition is an opportunity to protect access to export markets, to improve energy resilience, and to unlock co-benefits for homes, businesses, and communities.

Through this framework we are helping to build our local understanding that a sustainable approach is fundamental to the future success of our region.

Great South's support is instrumental in the region's efforts to meet the 2050 goals through a range of initiatives. Great South have been actively working with businesses to reduce emissions in the region since 2015. This began with the establishment of the Carbon Neutral Advantage programme in partnership with the Ministry for the Environment, the Tindall Foundation and the Energy

Efficiency & Conservation Authority. Since then, they have been measuring the region's emissions to track progress and identify further opportunities, and shares progress with regional leaders and the community.

Great South provides data and insights that enable decisions to be made, assisting the business and tourism sectors to reduce carbon emissions. They are also supporting the region to provide clean renewable energy with programmes.

The Government's commitment is to reach net zero emissions of long-lived gases by 2050, and to reduce biogenic methane emissions. A baseline emissions profile has been established for Southland showing the region contributes 9.7% to New Zealand's gross emissions. This equates to 8.9 mega-tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) of total emissions.

This focus area supports the development of a regionally relevant and inclusive transition, guided by practical action and grounded in local economic and community realities.

What we heard

There is general support for emissions reduction, but many are unsure what this means in practice. People are concerned about fairness and who bears the cost. Others are hopeful – seeing opportunities for cleaner energy, innovation, and community benefits

What our community want

- A fair, practical, and inclusive pathway to achieving net zero emissions
- Financial support and incentives for households, businesses, and farms to reduce emissions
- Emissions data connected to real-world solutions (e.g., solar, energy efficiency, land-based sequestration)
- Promotion of co-benefits – such as lower power bills, healthier homes, local job creation
- Local government leadership that makes net zero tangible and relevant across urban and rural contexts

"Is solar a good option? Alternative energy"

"Concerned that NZ is signing up to international agreements, but we can't make much difference"

What we will do

Local government will work collaboratively with communities and stakeholders to enable the Murihiku Southland region's net zero transition by:

10. Building community understanding of why net zero matters and how it can be achieved.
11. Supporting regional net zero initiatives and clarify local government's role in them.

MONITORING
& EVALUATION



Effective climate action depends not just on plans – but on follow-through, reflection, and transparent reporting. Monitoring and evaluation provide the foundation for adaptive governance by tracking what’s working, identifying where change is needed, and ensuring accountability to communities, partners, and funders.

This focus area supports a culture of learning, transparency, and continuous improvement across Murihiku Southland’s regional climate response to deliver real results for our communities.

This Framework describes five outcomes (see Figure 8) which will be used to check our progress by asking ourselves whether our actions are moving us closer to our desired future state.

Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting cycles ensure we are evaluating the effectiveness of our actions and maintaining accountability to funders, stakeholders, and communities.

We will regularly review our plans, identify opportunities for improvement, and adjust course as needed. It is a dynamic environment – both in terms of the changing climate and the legislative and policy context – meaning that we will need to be flexible and adaptive⁵.

By learning from our actions, we can proactively plan for the future to achieve the best outcomes for our people, natural environment, and economy.

⁵ At the time of writing this document, we anticipate that the government will release details of a new climate adaption framework later this year and there are a variety of legislative reforms in progress and likely to have implications for local government climate change activities. These changes may include requirements for local government in relation to risk assessment, monitoring adaptation progress, or similar. Our monitoring and evaluation framework will need to adapt in line with legislative and policy settings.



What we heard

Community members expressed frustration with limited follow-up after climate-related events or consultations. People want to see clear evidence of progress – not just plans. There's also a call for councils to take responsibility for their own emissions and lead by example.

"Mātauranga monitoring and citizen science – people building their own knowledge bases, ownership of issues and data"

What our community want

- Transparent reporting and regular public updates
- Clear, community-aligned indicators of success
- Independent oversight or citizen panels to monitor progress
- Councils to lead by example – tracking their own emissions and encourage improved supplier performance
- Flexibility to adapt strategies based on lessons learned

What we will do

Ensure that our regional climate change responses are delivering results for our community, by:

12. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress towards our climate change outcomes.
13. Seeking community feedback on our regional response to our changing climate.

Appendix 1: Collaboration continuum

The concept of a collaboration continuum (see Figure 9) supports analysis of the degree of coordination, cooperation, or collaboration required for an action or intervention to be delivered. As potential climate actions are identified and assessed, the collaboration continuum is helpful for project or programme design and determining appropriate resource sharing arrangements.

The collaboration continuum is a practical tool to support efficiency and the prudent use of resources. It prompts careful consideration of the level of partnership needed for an action. If networking or coordination is sufficient, there is no need

to invest extra resources in cooperation or collaboration. This ensures that energy and investment are directed where they will have the greatest impact.

As future climate action planning is undertaken, it is expected the Regional Climate Change Working Group will continue to utilise the collaboration continuum construct to analyse and design recommended actions, including identifying which agency may be the appropriate lead agency and communicating implementation implications to key stakeholders and the community.

- Moving from left to right on the collaboration continuum, each element builds upon the previous element as follows:
- a. **Network** – Develop mutual awareness by understanding each other’s roles, activities, and priorities. Share information and insights for mutual benefit, while maintaining independent goals and operations.
 - b. **Coordinate** – Align individual actions and schedules to reduce duplication and improve efficiency. Share knowledge and agree on common timelines or sequencing to support a shared purpose.
 - c. **Cooperate** – Pool selected resources (e.g., staff, space, funding, tools) to support aligned efforts. Build trust through practical joint efforts, while retaining autonomy over strategic decisions.
 - d. **Collaborate** – Actively learn from each other’s experiences to enhance each other’s capacity, co-create solutions, share risks and responsibilities, and make joint decisions to achieve shared goals.

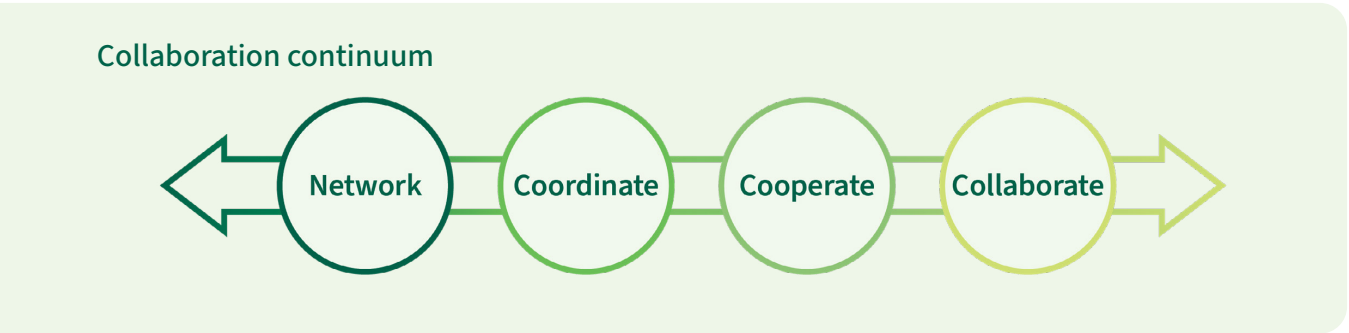


Figure 9: Collaboration continuum⁶

⁶Adapted from Himmelman, A.T., (2002) *Collaboration for a Change: Definitions, Decision-making Models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide*. Available at tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Himmelman-Collaboration-for-a-Change.pdf



Appendix 2: Resourced actions

There are already some existing projects and resourced workstreams contributing towards developing a regional response to our changing climate. A summary is listed here, in relation to each of the key focus areas of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland.

REGIONAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
1	Strengthening local government capability and organisational resilience							
1.1	Continue to participate in the Regional Climate Change Working Group as an inter-agency group collaborating across local government and Te Ao Mārama.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	The Regional Climate Change Working Group continues meeting five to six times per year in its current form.	Form and status may evolve in response to Action 1.2.
1.2	Review regional governance arrangements to consider how Murihiku Southland local government agencies can best coordinate, collaborate and advocate on local climate change responses.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	A report considering options for formal governance arrangements and recommending a preferred option to decision-makers.	To be initiated in August 2025, for a recommendation to councils by the Regional Climate Change Working Group no later than the first quarter of 2026.
1.3	Collaborate to develop regional positions on climate related issues to advocate to central government on behalf of our region.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Developed position statements as required.	
1.4	Integrate climate change considerations across operations, including decisions, policies, projects, procurement and infrastructure.	Network	Network	Network	Network	Network	Progressively revised internal strategies, policies, guidance documents and reporting templates.	Individual agencies are at various stages of resourcing this action over time.
1.5	Measure organisational greenhouse gas emissions regularly (in accordance with Ministry for the Environment guidance and relevant ISO standards).	Network	Network	Network	Network	Network	Regular organisational greenhouse gas emission inventory reports.	Individual agencies are at various stages of resourcing this action and the frequency of inventory measurement may vary between councils. There is opportunity to explore options that support improved consistency and efficiency for councils.

Proposed Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland 25

REGIONAL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP continued

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
2	Partnering with Papatipu Rūnanga to uphold mana whenua leadership and decision-making in climate initiatives							
2.1	Involve ngā Papatipu Rūnanga representatives in the design and implementation of collective climate change responses.	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Regional climate change responses that incorporate mana whenua perspectives.	
3	Enabling inclusive participation in regional climate leadership							
3.1	Host a regular Climate Collaboration Hui and use insights to inform Climate Action Plan updates.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Regular Regional Climate Collaboration Hui.	Similar to, but building upon, the Regional Climate Collaboration Hui of 3 April 2025.



UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE SCIENCE AND RISK

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
4	Developing a comprehensive understanding of key risks and opportunities							
4.1	Regularly review regional climate science needs, involving councils, mana whenua, research partners, and key stakeholders to inform annual planning and long-term planning processes.	Lead	Cooperate	Cooperate	Cooperate	Cooperate	The science and information adaptation pathway revised ahead of Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan process.	Links to Action 5.2 and will be for the benefit of the region.
4.2	Publish a revised Southland climate change impact assessment.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Report: Regional Climate, Hydrological and Marine Projections for Murihiku Southland 2025.	This report will be a revision and improvement of the 2018 'Southland Climate Change Impact Assessment'
4.3	Undertake a 'Regional Natural Hazards Assessment' to fully understand regional-scale hazards, including those relating to our changing climate.	Lead	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Regional Hazards Assessment Report 2026.	This project will inform Actions 4.1 and 5.2.
5	Collaborating to obtain up-to-date science and modelling of climate hazards							
5.1	Develop flood modelling projects in collaboration with key agencies to meet shared planning and community resilience needs.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Tier 4 flood risk models for key parts of all regional catchments.	
5.2	Work with research partners and councils to define additional modelling needs (e.g., coastal inundation, drought, fire risk).	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	The proposed science/modelling pathway broadening out beyond flood risk.	Links to Action 4.1.
6	Investigating how nature-based solutions can support climate resilience							
6.1	Publish the findings of the 'Murihiku Slow the Flow' pilot project.	Lead	Collaborate	Network	Network	Network	The Murihiku Slow the Flow project final report.	
6.2	Consider the findings of the 'Slow the Flow' pilot project when developing a regional floodplain management approach.	Lead	Collaborate	Network	Network	Network	The Murihiku Slow the Flow project final report.	

ADAPTATION FOR OUR FUTURE

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
7	Improving accessibility of information and our collective understanding of local climate change impacts, risks and opportunities							
7.1	Maintain and regularly update council websites with localised climate information and guidance.	Network	Network	Network	Network	Network	Council websites are current reflecting consistent up-to-date regional climate information.	Links to Action 10.2 and the work collaborating with Great South on the Data Insights Southland Hub (DISH).
8	Improving accessibility of information and our collective understanding of local climate change impacts, risks and opportunities							
8.1	Develop a best practice regional approach to climate engagement that embeds community values into the risk assessment and adaptation planning process.	Lead	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	A best practice engagement approach progressively evolves.	Links to Action 4.3.
9	Collaborating with partners to strengthen community climate resilience							
9.1	Partner with Emergency Management Southland to align adaptation planning with the 4Rs framework (Reduction, Readiness, Response, and Recovery).	Lead	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Improved alignment between each of the EMS response phases of the 4Rs framework.	
9.2	Improve inter-agency role clarity and systems to better support the Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery framework operating effectively in Southland.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Improved role clarity and stream-lining of how each agency works with EMS.	
9.3	Develop a catchment approach to floodplain management, reflecting ki uta ki tai principles and working across territorial boundaries.	Lead	Collaborate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Coordinate	Progressing the journey towards integrated catchment management.	Links to Action 4.1
9.4	Continue the development of a gravel management plan that enables flood risk management while aligning with biodiversity values, catchment planning, river management, infrastructure planning and wider community needs.	Lead	Collaborate	Network	Network	Network	A catchment approach to gravel management.	The initial drafting of the gravel management plan originated from a collaborative effort of the Gravel Working Group, from 2024.



SUPPORTING REGIONAL NET ZERO 2050

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
10	Building community understanding of why net zero matters and how it can be achieved							
10.1	Support Great South to continue regular measurement and reporting of Murihiku Southland’s regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Regular regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory.	The resourcing of these projects will need to be confirmed annually via the Great South Statement of Intent process.
10.2	Support Great South to create a web-based regional emissions information tool.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	A net zero page added to the Data Insights Southland Hub (DISH), 2025.	
10.3	Continue to support Great South’s existing Net Zero Southland decarbonisation programmes for businesses and community organisations.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Continuation of regional decarbonisation programmes.	
11	Supporting regional net zero initiatives and clarify local government’s role in them							
11.1	Obtain up-to-date regional transition risk and opportunities assessment, expanding to consider social, cultural and environmental impacts, to inform an equitable and inclusive transition to a low emissions region.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	A revised Net Zero Southland report, 2025.	Additional funding may be to be required to ensure the Great South review of the Net Zero Southland project meets LG needs (TBC via the Statement of Intent process)

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Climate action		Collaboration commitment					Output	Notes
		Environment Southland	Te Ao Mārama	Gore District Council	Invercargill City Council	Southland District Council		
12	Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress towards our climate change outcomes							
12.1	Review the Regional Climate Change Strategy every three years.	Lead	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Collaborate	Incorporate into the Climate Action Planning cycle triennially.	Next formal adoption anticipated in late 2026.
12.2	Track and maintain a record of the progress of resourced actions within the Regional Framework for Action on Climate.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Active stocktake of progress shared on a regional CC web portal.	
12.3	Integrate monitoring and evaluation against climate change outcomes into climate change projects and work programmes.	Network	Network	Network	Network	Network	Climate change outcomes are integrated into projects as they are scoped and procured.	
13	Seeking community feedback on our regional response to our changing climate							
13.1	Regularly repeat Environment Southland's regional climate change perceptions survey to track shifts in awareness, concern, and community expectations over time.	Lead	Network	Network	Network	Network	Climate Change Perceptions Survey Report.	The baseline survey was undertaken in 2023 and it is intended that this be undertaken biennially.



9.3 Government Policy and Legislation Monitor

Report by: Shana Lee, Policy Analyst

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 2 July 2025

Purpose

To provide an overview of the current and upcoming national policy changes, with a focus on those expected to have a significant impact on Environment Southland's operations and the Southland region.

Summary

Additions to the previous version of the Government Legislation and Policy Monitor have been marked in red for your convenience.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report - Government Policy and Legislation Monitor.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Attachments

1. 2025 06 24 Policy Monitor - final [9.3.1 - 21 pages]

Government Policy and Legislation Monitor

Updated: 24 June 2025

This monthly document monitors the most significant of the policy and legislation changes the coalition government is driving across various areas. All information is publicly available or received via formal channels such as letters from ministries and correspondence from LGNZ, Taituarā, and Te Uru Kahika. To make it easier to follow, updates to the previous version have been marked in red.

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The following colour coding is used throughout:

Resource Management
/Coastal

Climate Change
and Biosecurity

Te Tiriti/Te Ao Māori

Transport and other
Infrastructure

Primary Industries

Other topics

The format is as follows:

Policy area	
Legislation/policy name	Announcements, dates, and signals
	ES staff involvement, implications, and next steps

Updates

1. Resource Management

Overview of RMA reform programme

The Coalition Government has committed to a three-phase reform of the resource management system, as follows:

1

Repeal the Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) and Spatial Planning Act (SPA)

2

A) Progress the Fast-Track Approvals Bill
B) Progress targeted changes to RMA, and amend/ develop national direction instruments

3

Replace the current RMA

The ‘three phase’ language is a useful tool for understanding the components of the work programme. The impact and outlook for Environment Southland are outlined in separate discussions below. Phase 1 and 2A have been completed.

Fast-Track Approvals Act (Phase 2A)

The Fast-track Approvals Act commenced in December 2024 to provide a streamlined 'one stop shop' decision-making process to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The Act contains a list of 149 regional and national projects. Details on the relevant process and projects are available [here](#). The Ministry for the Environment has more information on their [website](#).

In Southland, there are four projects listed in the Act being:

	- Invercargill City Council – infrastructure project to establish an alternate water supply for the city - Sanford Limited – aquaculture project to establish a hatchery at Makarewa - Ngāi Tahu Seafood – Aquaculture project to develop the Hananui open ocean marine farm - Impact Marine Bluff – Aquaculture project to construct a land-based salmon farm in Bluff. On 13 March 2025, the ministers announced the first completed applications accepted by the EPA for consideration by expert panel.
	The Act is likely to have a significant impact on Environment Southland’s operations, and the Southland region’s future development. Large-scale development projects that would typically require resource consents may proceed more swiftly, while some projects that might not have been initiated otherwise could now move forward. Resourcing implications for Environment Southland could also be substantial, as it will have the responsibility to monitor and enforce the consents granted through the fast-track process. To date, the Consents team has been contacted regarding several of the current listed projects as part of the required preliminary consultation stage. It remains to be seen how many future large-scale projects will opt to utilise the FTA process compared to the standard resource consent process, for which ES would be the decision-maker.
<i>RM (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill</i> <i>(Phase 2B – RM Amendment Bill No.2)</i>	On 11 June 2025, the Environment Committee reported back to the Parliament on this Bill. The Bill is the second bill making targeted amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as part of Phase 2 of the government’s resource management reform programme. The Committee supported most of the proposed amendments but recommended some significant changes. The key recommendations have been listed below. • Section 70 (permitted discharge rules) – supported the proposal to enable the continued management of discharges through permitted activity rules, in circumstances where significant adverse effects on aquatic life exist. Recognising submitters’ concerns that the Bill lacks a specific timeframe for achieving a reduction in adverse effects on water quality, it recommended that proposed section 70(3)(c) is amended to require that the relevant council is satisfied that the standards contribute to a reduction in adverse effects on water quality within a 10-year time period. • Resource consent hearings - in response to substantial opposition to the proposal that a consent authority must not hold a hearing if it determined it had sufficient information to decide an application, those clauses are deleted. • Controlling fishing – Supported introduction of the requirement for regional councils to obtain ministerial approval before establishing policies to control fishing aimed at achieving biodiversity outcomes. • Ports – supported extending durations for coastal permits for Ports to 2046 • Consent durations - supported changes to enable a 35-year consent duration as the default presumption for long-lived infrastructure and renewable energy projects • Freshwater Farm Plans – supported changes to the national Freshwater Farm Plan system to enable industry organisations to undertake certification and audit processes. The Committee also recommended specifying the types of farms required to have the farm plans certified.

	Natural hazards - recognises submitters' concerns regarding the ability for a consent authority to refuse land use consent in certain circumstances concerning natural hazards and recommends that the refusal provision would not be applicable to land use consents connected to infrastructure and primary production activities. The Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill will have its second reading in the coming weeks and is expected to pass into law in mid-2025.  Source: Ministry for the Environment (Nov 2024)
	The proposals in the Bill, if enacted, are expected to significantly impact both Environment Southland's operations and the broader Southland region. Environment Southland's submission provided a submission to the committee (Objective ID: A1221000) and spoke to the select committee during a formal hearing on 13 March 2025.
National Direction Programme (Phase 2 B)	On 29 May 2025, the Ministry for the Environment released for consultation three packages of proposed changes to national direction under the RMA. These are: Package 1: Infrastructure and development - includes proposals for four new national direction instruments and amendments to four existing instruments, aimed at making it easier for councils to plan and deliver infrastructure. Package 2: Primary sector - includes proposals to amend eight existing national direction instruments, aimed at enabling growth in the primary sector. The proposals to prepare and amend national direction in Packages 1 and 2 are being consulted on under section 46A of the RMA. Package 3: Freshwater – seeks feedback on options to amend the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater, and on whether changes should be implemented under the existing RMA or under the replacement resource management legislation. Further consultation will be undertaken on exposure drafts of proposed new freshwater national direction later in the year. The Ministry for the Environment has published one discussion document per package, which outlines the proposed changes for each national direction instrument and poses consultation questions. The Package 1 and 2 discussion documents are each accompanied by a series of attachments, which have more information on the scope and indicative content proposed for each instrument. Interim regulatory impact statements are also available for Packages 1, 2 and 3, as well as Interim Treaty Impact Analysis for the freshwater package.

	Submissions on the Package 1, 2 and 3 discussion documents close on 27 July 2025. On 18 June 2025, the fourth package – Going for Housing Growth was released. It seeks feedback on how the proposals in the first pillar of the government's Going for Housing Growth programme could fit into the new resource management system (as part of Phase 3 of the resource management reforms). The package provides further detail on how the legislative changes proposed last year will operate in practice. The proposed legislative changes included: • The establishment of Housing Growth Targets for Tier 1 and 2 councils • New rules making it easier for cities to expand outwards at the urban fringe • A strengthening of the intensification provisions in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) • New rules requiring councils to enable a greater mixed-use zoning across our cities. • The abolition of minimum floor area and balcony requirements • New provisions making the Medium Density Residential Standards optional for councils. Consultation on package 4 will run from Wednesday 18 June until 17 August 2025. A range of Ministerial press releases on the national direction consultation are linked below: • Consultation opens on sweeping overhaul of primary sector regulations Beehive.govt.nz • Electrifying growth: Infrastructure and energy RMA national direction open for consultation Beehive.govt.nz • Enabling more housing: National direction on granny flats and papakāinga Beehive.govt.nz • Making it easier to consent quarries and mines Beehive.govt.nz • Government launches consultation on freshwater national direction Beehive.govt.nz • Government backs commercial forestry with practical rule changes Beehive.govt.nz
	The proposals outlined in the national direction programme are broad in scope and significant in impact. They are anticipated to substantially influence Environment Southland's core workstreams, including the management of freshwater, indigenous biodiversity, and coastal areas. Staff are currently preparing submissions, with input from governance and in collaboration with the regional sector and other relevant stakeholders.
<i>RMA replacement legislation (Phase 3)</i>	The final component of the Government's reform programme is a permanent replacement for the RMA with two new acts. On 24 March 2025, the Government announced further details of the reform, confirming that the Expert Advisory Group(EAG)'s report will serve as the foundation for the new system. The EAG was established in 2024 to prepare a blueprint to replace the RMA. EAG's report is available here. MFE's factsheet on the proposed reform, which compares the Cabinet's decision to EAG's recommendations, can be found here.

	Key features of the new system include: • Two Acts: A Planning Act regulating land use and a Natural Environment Act focused on protecting the environment. • Narrowed Effects Management: Based on "externalities," only effects impacting others or the environment will be regulated (e.g., interior layouts or private dwelling configurations are excluded). • Property Rights: Land use is presumed enabled unless it significantly impacts others or the environment. Existing rights and expansion of lawful uses are protected. Compensation may apply in some cases. • Simplified National Direction: National policy will guide local plans, covering urban development, infrastructure, and environmental matters like freshwater and biodiversity. • Environmental Limits: Clearer rules on environmental limits to balance development and protection. • Greater Standardisation: Nationally set standards and land use zones streamline the system while maintaining local decision-making on key issues. • Spatial Plans: Each region will have a plan identifying urban areas, public investment priorities, and infrastructure. • Streamlined Council Plans: A combined plan will cover spatial, environmental, and local planning needs. • Stronger Compliance Monitoring: A national regulator will oversee environmental compliance, improving current regional council efforts. The Government plans to release the bills for public consultation before the end of 2025.
	Replacing the RMA will significantly impact Environment Southland, as the RMA has provided the overarching framework for its operations. The specifics of the two new acts, along with the associated policies and standards, will shape the extent and nature of the required changes. These changes are expected to be far-reaching, affecting all operational areas of Environment Southland, including planning, consents, and compliance teams. It is anticipated that Environment Southland will continue to engage with MfE, and actively participate in the formal parliamentary procedures later in the year, working closely with other regional and local authorities, Te Uru Kahika, Taituarā and other stakeholders.

2. Broad National Direction

<i>Infrastructure and development</i>	The proposals in the package 1 of National Direction Programme have been chosen to better enable infrastructure and development where they are needed and can be developed safely, while appropriately managing effects on people and the environment. The proposals are intended to: - improve efficiencies and outcomes by supporting fit-for-purpose infrastructure, coordinated with development that meets the longer-term needs of people, communities and our environment
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	- enable opportunities and choice for housing to support a range of people and circumstances, including young people and seniors, and to support Māori living on ancestral land in papakāinga - support development in areas with a reduced risk to people, communities and property from natural hazards. The proposals include new and amended rules to clarify which activities would be permitted as of right, and which would need a consent in district, or regional plans. The proposals also provide more targeted national policy direction to support resource consent and plan-making processes, with a focus on better enabling infrastructure and development. The proposals are intended to complement other government initiatives such as the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 and other targeted amendments to the RMA. A full list of relevant national direction is shown below. • New National Policy Statement for Infrastructure • Amendments to National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 • Amendments to National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008 (proposed to be renamed National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks) • Amendments to Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009 (proposed to be renamed National Environmental Standards for Electricity Network Activities) • Amendments to Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations 2016 • New National Environmental Standards for Granny Flats (Minor Residential Units) • New National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga • New National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards
	The proposals are expected to significantly impact both Environment Southland's operations and the communities within Southland, a region with substantial potential for renewable energy projects due to its abundant natural resources. However, there is also a risk of adversely affecting areas of high environmental and cultural significance. Staff are currently analysing the proposals and intend to report to the Council in the near future.
<i>Farming and primary sector</i>	This package for national direction change is focussed on regulations that manage primary sector activities. The proposals include new and amended rules to enable activities, and clarify where consent is required in district, unitary or regional plans. They include targeted national policy direction to support resource consent and plan-making processes, with a focus on enabling the primary sector. The Government is inviting submissions on its proposals under section 46A of the RMA to amend and develop the: • Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020 (amending) • Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017 (amending) • New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (amending)

	• National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (amending) • Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Regulations 2020 (amending) Amendments to quarrying and mining provisions in the: – National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 – National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 – National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 – National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020.
	Staff are currently analysing the proposals and intend to report to the Council in the near future.
<i>Freshwater Farm Plans</i>	In October 2024, the Government paused the rollout of freshwater farm plans. With the withdrawal of the national regulation, regional rules took centre stage, requiring Southland farmers to have a certified Southland Farm Plan by 27 November 2024 (six months following the Southland Water and Land Plan becoming operative). On 21 November, the Government announced that it is applying an alternate national timeline in Southland, giving farmers further 18 months to comply with the Southland Water and Land Plan rule for certified Southland Farm Plans (until mid-2026). Through the Resource Management (Consenting and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, the Select Committee has introducing changes to reduce the number of farms required to have a Freshwater Farm Plan and to take a risk-based approach to the need for certification. Freshwater Farm Plans would, however, remain within the system as a tool to manage environmental impacts. The Ministry for the Environment are working with industry, sector groups and councils to finalise the changes through updated regulations, progressed through the government's RMA reform process and are expected to be in place by the end of the year. At this stage there is no indication that the Order in Council for Southland requiring certification of farm plans by May 2026 will be amended.
	Farm plans have long been a cornerstone of Southland's approach to managing environmental contamination risks associated with farming activities and are a key tool in the Southland Water and Land Plan. To comply with the plan, Southland farmers have until mid-2026 to get a certified farm plan. The outcome of the Government's review of national policies on farm plans could potentially affect the implementation of regional farm plan rules in Southland, depending on the specifics of the proposals. The message to the community remains that farm plans are seen as an important tool for managing the effects of activities on the region's waterways, and more specifically on the waterways within their catchments. Documenting what actions are proposed to address risks in our catchments is a valuable exercise. Rural landholders are encouraged to commence the development of their farm plan. There is catchment context information available on Environment Southland's website. Environment Southland staff have met with the existing approved certifiers to progress practical farm plan development and

	certification matters. Guidance material is being progressed, and staff are available to assist with questions. The interface between the government regulated freshwater farm plans and the Farm Environmental Management Plans required by the Southland Water and Land Plan is a matter that is at the forefront of staff's mind and will inform any feedback provided to the relevant Ministry.
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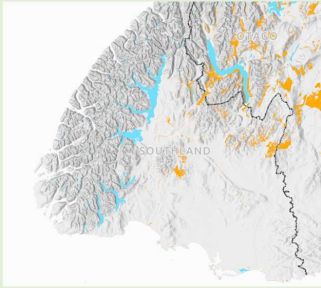
3. Coastal	
<i>Offshore Renewable Energy Bill</i>	This Bill was introduced to the Parliament in December 2025. The Transport and Infrastructure Committee presented the final report to the Parliament on 17 June 2025. The Bill delivers on the Government's commitment to introduce a regulatory regime for offshore renewable energy, as set out in Electrify NZ. It aims to: • give developers greater certainty to invest • allow the selection of developments that best meet New Zealand's national interests • manage the risks to the Crown and the public from offshore renewable energy developments. MBIE is currently developing regulations that will sit alongside the Bill. The aim is that the first tranche of regulations will be in place as soon as possible following the passing of the Bill, to enable the opening of the first offshore renewable energy feasibility permit round in late 2025. Please refer to this link for an overview of the proposed regulatory regime. Further information is also available here.
	This proposal is likely to have a substantial impact on the management of marine resources within Southland's coastal waters, with implications for the current review of the regional coastal plan. Environment Southland provided a written submission (Objective ID: A1230000) and delivered an oral submission to the Select Committee on 13 March 2025.
<i>New Zealand Aquaculture Development Plan 2025-2030</i>	A new plan to grow the aquaculture industry has been released by the Oceans and Fisheries Minister on 8 March 2025. The relevant announcement can be accessed here. The Aquaculture Development Plan is intended to be the roadmap for growing New Zealand's aquaculture industry to \$3 billion in annual revenue by 2035, as set by 2019 Government Aquaculture Strategy. The industry currently generates \$760 million in annual revenue and employs more than 3000 people.
	While aquaculture provides the potential to generate regional economic benefits, the relative lack of knowledge regarding the intricate dynamics within the ocean ecosystems, and the open nature of the ocean environment present significant environmental risks, which must be addressed early and

	effectively. While the Plan does not set out any requirements for Environment Southland, it is expected to inform the development of national policies impacting on aquaculture activities within Southland's coastal areas.
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4. Climate Change

<i>Climate Adaptation Bill</i>	In late 2023, the Environment Committee sought submissions on an inquiry into community-led retreat and climate adaptation funding. A related climate adaptation inquiry was opened by the Finance and Expenditure Committee in 2024 to develop guiding objectives and principles for the design of a climate adaptation framework for New Zealand. The Committee released its report on 1 October 2024. The 60-pages report provides a diagnosis of the current situation as well as a set of recommendations. The list is available here. On 29 January 2025, the Government published a response to the Report. In the response, it is noted the Government intends to introduce relevant legislation in 2025 to progress the adaptation framework. The Government will also deliver desired outcomes through; • National Risk and Resilience Framework (the timeframe is unclear) • RMA National Direction on natural hazards (part of National Direction Programme) • Regional Infrastructure Fund for flood resilience projects (\$200 million) • Emergency Management system reform and Emergency Management System Improvement Project (5-year work programme) The Government intends to introduce legislation in 2025 to progress the adaptation framework, potentially alongside amendments to existing legislation, regulations and other non-legislative elements.
	The proposals within this workstream are expected to significantly influence how adaptation initiatives are approached within Southland. Environment Southland staff will continue to keep a watching brief on this work.
<i>Review of biogenic methane targets</i>	The Government has released an independent review on New Zealand's biogenic methane science and target and will now consider the findings alongside the Climate Change Commission's review of the 2050 targets. Please refer to this for more detail on the independent panel's report. The panel's final report on the latest methane science finds: • In a scenario where the rest of the world rapidly increases its climate policies to meet the 1.5 degrees warming Paris goal, then reducing New Zealand's biogenic methane emissions by 24% by 2050 would satisfy the goal of achieving no additional warming on 2017 levels by 2050. • In scenarios where global emissions of greenhouse gasses do not reduce rapidly in the next couple of decades, a reduction in 2017 biogenic methane emission levels of around 14-15% by 2050 would satisfy the goal of achieving no additional warming on 2017 levels by 2050.

	It is expected that the Government will introduce a Bill to amend the Climate Change Response Act 2002, which specifies the biogenic methane reduction target as 10% by 2030 and 24-47% by 2050 compared to 2017 levels.
	Staff will keep watching brief on this matter and provide updates as developments occur.
<i>Limiting farm to forestry conversions entering the ETS</i>	On 10 June 2025, the Climate Change Response (Emissions Trading Scheme - Forestry Conversions) Amendment Bill was introduced to the Parliament to restrict wholesale conversions of farmland to exotic forestry. It is expected that the new restrictions will take effect from 4 December 2025. The law will: • Restrict farm conversions to exotic ETS forests on high-to-medium versatility farmland (LUC classes 1-6) • A limit of 15,000 hectares per year for exotic conversions on medium versatility farmland (LUC class 6) • The annual limit of 15,000 hectares for LUC 6 farmland will be allocated by a ballot process, including a reserved quota for small block holders, with the first ballot proposed to be held in mid-2026. • Allow for up to 25 per cent of a farm's LUC 1-6 land to still be planted in exotic forestry for the ETS, ensuring farmers retain flexibility and choice. • Protect specific categories of Māori-owned land, in line with Treaty obligations • The Bill proposes time-limited transitional exemptions in rare cases for people who were in the process of afforestation prior to these changes originally being announced on 4 December 2024. • To be eligible for a transitional exemption, applicants need to show sufficient evidence that they made a qualifying forestry investment between 1 January 2021 and 4 December 2024. • Transactions that commenced after this date will not be eligible to register in the ETS. • The applicant will need to demonstrate that the investment relates to the specific Land Use Capability (LUC) class 1–6 land they are applying to register in the ETS. • Registry of 25 per cent of LUC 1-6 land will be registered against the properties title to restrict further planting as a result of subdivision.
	Conversion of farmland to forestry is a topic of significant interest in Southland, with the community recognising both opportunities and risks associated with it. Environment Southland will likely participate in the formal consultation process to be led by a select committee.
<i>Partnering to plant trees on Crown-owned land</i>	Ministry for Primary Industries is requesting information to explore partnership opportunities to afforest (plant native or exotic trees) or promote native forest regeneration on Crown-owned land (excluding National Parks) that has low farming value and low conservation value. A relevant press released can be accessed here. An indicative map showing potential areas for planting has been provided below, with those areas marked in yellow. Objectives include contributing to climate change targets, spurring economic growth through a thriving forestry and wood processing sector, and improving native biodiversity and water quality. Commercial negotiations on a site-by-site basis with interested parties may take place in 2025. Any necessary changes to existing policy will be subject to further advice from officials and decision-making by Cabinet in 2025.

	
	Potential impact on Environment Southland's operations and the region will depend on how this initiative is managed. A robust legal framework addressing potential biosecurity issues, along with effective collaboration between the central and local governments, will be crucial to minimise negative environmental effects, including biosecurity threats. For example, increased planting of exotic species without the necessary revision of the legal framework could heighten the biosecurity threats Environment Southland is responsible for managing, resulting in increased costs for ratepayers.
Emergency Management Bill	The Government is progressing a comprehensive overhaul of its emergency management system, focusing on strengthening disaster resilience and improving response capabilities, based on the recommendations of the North Island Severe Weather Events Inquiry and other reviews. More details can be accessed here. A new Emergency Management Bill is expected to replace the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 during this term of Parliament. The National Emergency Management Agency led a public consultation on options to strengthen New Zealand's overarching emergency management legislation and inform the design of a new Emergency Management Bill.
	Given Southland's exposure to multiple natural hazards including flooding, Environment Southland has a high level of interest in the reform of the system to ensure it is fit for purpose. Emergency Management Southland provided a written submission, while participating in the development of a submission by the regional sector group.

5. Biodiversity & Biosecurity

<i>Amendments to the Biosecurity Act</i>	The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is currently reviewing the Biosecurity Act 1993 to modernise it. It undertook a consultation to collate feedback from the public to inform its advice to the Government on a potential amendment bill. More details are available here. The consultation closed on 13 December 2024. The summary of submissions is available here. The Ministry is planning
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	to provide final policy recommendations to the Minister for Biosecurity later this year.
	Environment Southland's submission was provided to the Ministry within the consultation timeframe (Objective ID: A1208835).
<i>Conservation system reform</i>	The Department of Conservation led a public consultation on proposals to explore charging for access to some public conservation land, and streamline concessions and planning processes and enable more flexibility around land exchange and disposals. The consultation web page include more details on the relevant proposals. The public submission closed on 28 February 2025. A relevant press release can be accessed here .
	Environment Southland's submissions were provided to the Department of Conservation within the consultation timeframe (Objective ID:1236427 and 1236547).
<i>Implementing New Zealand's biodiversity Strategy 2025-2030</i>	The Department of Conservation is leading a public consultation on the next implementation plan for New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy. Submissions closes on 30 June 2025. The discussion documents and other supporting materials can be viewed here. The submissions will inform the development of the next Biodiversity Strategy implementation plan. The plan will be publicly released by the Minister of Conservation after Cabinet approval and submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
	Environment Southland is contributing to the consultation by offering the Southland perspective in a written submission.
<i>Predator Free 2050 Strategy Review</i>	The Department of Conservation is also conducting a public consultation on the review of Predator Free 2050 strategy. Predator Free 2050 is an ambitious, nationwide goal to eradicate our most harmful predators from all of New Zealand. Submissions closes on 30 June 2025. The discussion documents and other supporting materials can be viewed here. The public input will inform the drafting of a refreshed Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2025-2030) that the Government will consider in late 2025.
	Environment Southland is contributing to the consultation by offering the Southland perspective in a written submission.
<i>Proposed wapiti Herd of Special Interest and amendment to the Game Animal Council Act 2013</i>	On 12 May 2025, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing announced his intention to commence consultation and engagement on formally designating a wapiti as a Herd of Special Interest (HOSI) in a specified area of Fiordland National Park. The proposal seeks to manage the Fiordland wapiti herd for hunting purposes, while ensuring conservation values continue to be protected. Under the GAC Act, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing can only designate a HOSI if they are satisfied that it is consistent with New Zealand's wider conservation framework. For herds in national parks, this means that

<i>Game Animal Council (Herds of Special Interest) Amendment Bill</i>	having a HOSI must be consistent with, among other things, the preservation of indigenous habitats and natural features and national park management plans. It is expected that Environment Southland will be invited to participate in the targeted engagement process led by the Department of Conservation. The second phase of engagement will involve a public notification and submissions process on the draft herd management plan. The Department of Conservation will publicly notify a draft herd management plan after engagement with key parties is complete. This is expected to take place in the fourth quarter of 2025. To support the wapiti HOSI, the Government has also introduced a bill to Parliament to clarify the designation of HOSI in national parks, through a small amendment to the Game Animal Council Act 2013. The bill will clarify that HOSI can be established in national parks. Once the Bill gets enacted, the requirement in the National Parks Act 1980 to exterminate introduced animals as far as possible (unless the New Zealand Conservation Authority otherwise determines) will not apply to herds of special interest.
	Environment Southland is likely to engage in this process to ensure that the proposed design does not pose unacceptable risks to the environmental values of Fiordland National Park. Participation in both targeted and public consultation processes is anticipated as opportunities arise.

6. Primary Industries

<i>Minerals Strategy for New Zealand to 2040</i>	The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment published Minerals Strategy for New Zealand to 2040 on 31 January 2025. The goal is specified as doubling the value of New Zealand's mineral exports to \$3 Billion by 2035.
	Policy changes on the extraction of minerals could potentially have a substantial impact on Southland's economy, environment as well as Environment Southland's operations. Regional safeguards could play a key role in ensuring that any economic gains from potential expansion of mining in Southland do not come at the disproportional cost in other areas.
<i>Amendment to the Crown Minerals Act 1991</i>	On 26 September 2025, the Government introduced a Bill encompassing a package of changes to the Crown Minerals Act 1991 to address gas security challenges and increase revenue from mining activities. The package includes the reverse of the 2018 ban on new petroleum exploration outside onshore Taranaki, changes to how petroleum exploration permits are allocated, streamlining of regulations for recreational gold mining, and other changes to signal to the international market that New Zealand is 'open for business'. The Bill passed its second reading on 5 November 2024. However, the Select Committee was unable to reach agreement on whether the bill should be passed. The third reading is yet to occur.

	The potential impact of the proposals on Southland and Environment Southland's operations remains unclear, as it will be influenced by multiple factors, including market demands, and the cost of production.
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7. Te Tiriti & Te ao Māori legislation

<i>References to Te Tiriti in legislation</i>	The National-NZ First coalition agreement promises to review all legislation, aside from Treaty settlements, that include reference to the "principles" of the Treaty of Waitangi. The agreement also includes a pledge to replace all such references with specific words relating to the relevance and application of the Treaty or repeal the references. It is not clear how this policy will be progressed or how it might interact with the Treaty Principles Bill.
	The proposed review of Treaty references in legislation is likely to significantly impact local government operations. Staff will monitor this matter closely with a view to facilitate Council feedback once the detail of the relevant Bill becomes available.

8. Water Services Infrastructure

<i>Local Water Done Well</i>	The first Bill of the Government's Local Water Done Well initiative repealed the legislation intended to introduce the three waters scheme. The second Bill, the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Bill, was passed into law on 27 August 2024. It provided the framework and transitional arrangements for the new water services system, including a requirement for local authorities to submit a water services delivery plan within 12 months. The third Bill, the Local Government (Water Services) Bill, is currently before the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee. It sets out details relating to the water services delivery system, economic regulation and consumer protection regime and changes to the water quality regulatory framework. It is significant for regional councils as it proposes to introduce a new single standard for wastewater and stormwater environmental performance among other things. Submissions closed in February 2025. The Select Committee is expected to report back to the Parliament on or around 4 July 2025 and the Bill is expected to be enacted in September 2025.
	Environment Southland's submission was lodged with the Committee within the consultation timeframe (Objective ID: 1233315).
<i>Wastewater Environmental</i>	The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai ran the consultation on wastewater environmental performance standards until 24 April 2025.

<i>Performance Standards</i>	It noted that the goal of wastewater standards is to put in place a clear regulatory framework to respond to this infrastructure challenge and to set clear expectations about the treatment of wastewater in a way that helps territorial authorities as they plan for and fund the necessary infrastructure upgrades, together with regional councils as part of the consenting process. The proposed standards are expected to: • result in significant cost and time efficiencies for consenting of wastewater treatment plants, in a way that responds to the bow wave of re consenting of wastewater infrastructure over the next decade • strike a balance between the cost of upgrading wastewater infrastructure while ensuring that public health and environmental outcomes are achieved • create national consistency to give councils the certainty needed to plan and fund the significant infrastructure upgrades that much of New Zealand's aging public wastewater networks require • set clear expectations about treatment quality to assist with community engagement about different options to manage wastewater • ensure that, as a sector, we have good quality wastewater performance data to identify what's working well as well as opportunities for improvement. The Authority plans to establish the standards by September 2025 following the enactment of the Local Government (Water Services) Act.
	The proposed standards are expected to have a significant impact on Environment Southland's operations as well as Southland's natural environment and communities. With the right settings, efficiency improvements and cost savings are achievable. However, depending on their final form, the proposals may lead to an overly simplified approach to managing wastewater treatment and discharge, potentially creating challenges for integrated water resource management, and increased disparities among different user groups. Environment Southland's submission outlining the regional regulator's perspective in detail was lodged with the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai on 24 April 2025 (Objective ID: A1265043).

9. Transport

<i>Transport Government Policy Statement (GPS)</i>	The Government Policy Statement (GPS) on land transport guides the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), KiwiRail and local authorities on land transport investment. A final GPS was released in June 2024. It prioritises roads – including an overhauled Roads of National Significance programme – and reduced funding in real terms for public and active transport. The GPS expects that local government will seek additional revenue from public transport fares and other third-party revenue.
	The South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group and the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees submitted on the draft GPS with input from Environment Southland staff. Staff have undertaken the

	necessary modifications to align the Regional Land Transport Plan with the final GPS.
<i>2024-2027 National Land Transport Programme</i>	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) released the 2024–27 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP), to meet the Government’s strategic priorities set out in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) 2024. The National Land Transport Programme is a three-year programme of prioritised activities with a 10-year forecast of revenue and expenditure. It is prepared by NZTA to give effect to the GPS and reflects a partnership between NZTA (which invests National Land Transport Fund funding on behalf of the Crown), and local government (which invests on behalf of ratepayers). Regional summaries are available of the NLTP forecast investment. Otago/Southland regional summary – NLTP 2024-27 [PDF, 142 KB]
<i>Amendments to the Public Works Act</i>	On 25 February 2025, Land Information Minister Chris Penk announced the reform of the Public Works Act (PWA), aiming to expedite infrastructure development in New Zealand. Key changes include delegating land acquisition to government agencies, enabling collaboration between agencies, simplifying the relocation of infrastructure, and clarifying the role of the Environment Court. Additionally, mediation will be required for compensation disputes, and Transpower will be allowed to acquire land more easily for energy infrastructure. A further announcement was made on 10 March 2025, advising that the PWA is being amended to accelerate the acquisition of land needed for the public projects that are listed in Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act, and the Roads of National Significance listed in the Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024. It is intended that amendments will come into force six months before wider PWA review amendments. The amended legislation will feature: - landowners who voluntarily sell their land before a Notice of Intention is issued will receive an additional premium payment equal to 15 percent of their land’s value, capped at \$150,000. - All landowners whose land is acquired under the accelerated process will receive a five percent recognition payment, capped at \$92,000. - Landowners who object to land acquisition for critical infrastructure projects will no longer go through the Environment Court. They will instead submit their objections directly to the relevant decision-maker, either the Minister for Land Information or the local authority, for faster resolution. Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendment Bill was introduced to the Parliament on 12 May and the Transport and Infrastructure Committee is currently considering the Bill. Wider PWA review amendments are likely to be introduced towards the end of 2025.

	As a public entity responsible for key public works such as flood risk management, Environment Southland is likely to be affected by the proposals. Staff will continue to monitor the situation closely.
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10. Other Infrastructure	
<i>National Infrastructure Plan</i>	New Zealand Infrastructure Commission is currently leading the development of the 30-year National Infrastructure Plan that will set out infrastructure priorities for New Zealand. It will outline infrastructure needs over the next 30 years, planned investments over the next 10-15 years, and recommendations on priority projects and reforms. The Commission received public feedback in the second half of 2024. It is expected that the findings will be shared in the second half of 2025 with the final Plan being presented to the Government in December 2025. Further details on the National Infrastructure Plan are available in the media release from the Beehive from August 2024. While the Plan is being developed, the Infrastructure Commission launched IPP website providing the public with opportunities to submit a proposal for infrastructure priorities. Proposals and project assessed as meeting the IPP criteria will be included within the National Infrastructure Plan. Public consultation on the National Infrastructure Plan is expected to occur before the end of June 2025.
	The national plan is expected to have a significant impact on Environment Southland's operations and the broader Southland region, as it is likely to influence the nature and scale of future infrastructure development in the area. Staff will closely monitor relevant developments and engage with relevant agencies to identify risks and opportunities.
<i>City/regional deals</i>	On 22 August, the Government released a strategic framework to establish Regional Deals between central and local government to drive economic growth and deliver the infrastructure. All regions are invited to propose a Regional Deal. These proposals will be considered by the Government before finalising New Zealand's first Regional Deal by December 2025. The Infrastructure and Investment Ministerial Group will be supported by the Department of Internal Affairs with support from relevant agencies as required. The National Infrastructure Agency is expected to play a key role in developing deals on behalf of Government.
	The implications of this initiative for Southland are currently unclear. Staff will closely monitor relevant developments and engage with relevant agencies to identify risks and opportunities.

<i>Regional Infrastructure Fund</i>	The RIF delivers on the Government's promise to address the regional infrastructure deficit. It will help boost the New Zealand economy, increase regional prosperity, and create jobs. The RIF, \$1.2 billion over three years, is administered by Kānoa – Regional, Economic Development & Investment Unit (Kānoa – RD). The RIF is a capital fund. Funding support is primarily provided through a mix of loan and equity investments. The RIF will invest specifically in regional infrastructure, making investments in projects that boost regional growth, resilience, and productivity. This includes building new infrastructure and improving existing structures to benefit regional businesses, organisations, and communities. More information is available on here.
	For Southland, the RIF co-investment scheme currently covers Aparima Catchment Flood Protection Scheme Upgrade, Ōreti River Catchment Flood Protection Upgrade Project, and Te Anau Basin Catchment Flood Management Project. Additionally, it was announced on 14 November that the Government is investing a \$2.2 million RIF funding loan towards the development of an aquaculture centre of excellence in Southland at the Ocean Beach site near Bluff. On 23 June 2025, it was also announced that a suspensory loan of up to \$15.35m will be provided to Southland District Council to build the first stage of a solar farm, and network upgrades to replace diesel-generated electricity for Rakiura/Stewart Island's 494 permanent electricity connections.

11. Other Topics	
<i>Local Government System Improvements</i>	On 7 February 2025, the Department of Internal Affairs proactively released a Cabinet paper on Local Government System Improvements, outlining the Government's next steps for progressing its 'back to basics' improvements for the local government system announced in December. The Government intends to introduce a bill to make changes to the Local Government Act 2002 and other related legislation in mid-2025 and enact in late 2025, soon after the local government elections.
	While the proposed initiative is expected to significantly impact Environment Southland's operations, the extent of that impact will depend on the details of the proposals. Staff will keep a close watching brief.
<i>Regulatory Standards bill</i>	On 19 May 2025, the Regulatory Standards Bill was introduced to the Parliament. The Finance and Expenditure Committee is currently considering the details of the Bill after receiving public submissions until 23 June 2025. The Committee is expected to report to the Parliament by 22 November 2025. The expressed intent of the bill is to support Parliament's scrutiny of legislation, and its oversight and control of the use of delegated powers to make legislation. The bill proposes to achieve these objectives through the measures listed below.

	• Introduce a set of regulatory principles that new and existing regulations would be measured against. These include the rule of law, personal liberties, taking of property, taxes, fees, and levies, and the role of courts. • Require responsible Ministers, administering agencies, and other makers of legislation to assess the consistency of proposed and existing legislation against the regulatory principles. Ministers, as well as makers of secondary legislation, would be required to publish or present to the House of Representatives the results of those assessments. • Establish a Regulatory Standards Board to consider the consistency of legislation with the principles. The members of the board would be appointed by the Minister for Regulation. The board would carry out inquiries into whether legislation is inconsistent with the principles following a complaint, at the direction of the Minister, or on its own accord. • Strengthen the regulatory oversight of the Ministry of Regulation by requiring the Ministry to report on the overall state of the regulatory management system. It would empower the Ministry for Regulation to require agencies to supply information as a part of its oversight of the regulatory management system. This would include public service agencies, makers and administrators of secondary legislation, and agencies and contractors that perform a statutory function.
	Environment Southland has a strong interest in this Bill, with concerns primarily focused on its potential to undermine the protection of public interests and weaken partnerships with mana whenua. Environment Southland submitted written feedback during both the initial consultation led by the Ministry of Regulation (Objective ID: A1207544) and the recent formal consultation conducted by the Select Committee (Objective ID: A1288251).
<i>Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-year Term) Legislation Amendment Bill</i>	The Justice Committee is currently considering Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-year Term) Legislation Amendment Bill with submissions closed on 17 April 2025. The relevant announcement is available here. The Bill, modelled on the ACT Party's draft Constitution (Enabling a 4-Year Term) Amendment, proposes a standard three-year term but allows for an extension to four years subject to certain criteria being met. The change would be contingent on the outcome of a binding referendum, which could be held alongside the 2026 General Election. A Referendums Framework Bill, outlining the process for conducting a referendum, will also be introduced to the Parliament soon.
	While the four-year term for Parliament doesn't directly affect regional councils, it could indirectly influence how they interact with central government, align with national policy cycles, or plan their activities to coordinate with national election timelines. Staff will be monitoring relevant progress.
<i>Overseas Investment Reform Bill</i>	It was announced during the Investment Summit on 13 March 2025 that the Government is undertaking a full review of our Overseas Investment Act to make New Zealand's investment regime more investor-friendly while ensuring New Zealand's long-term interests are protected. The new regime will operate with a presumption in favour of foreign investment, acknowledging the significant

	benefits it can bring to our economy. It is expected that the relevant Bill will be introduced in May and be passed into law by the end of the year.
	Given the potentially significant impact the increase in foreign investment can have on the Southland region, staff will keep a watching brief on this topic.

9.4 Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update

Report by: Liz Devery, Regional Planning Manager

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 2 July 2025

Purpose

This report is an update on the work being carried out by the strategy and policy, and regional planning teams.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report - Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update.

Background

The Strategy and Policy team are responsible for:

- Developing clear strategy, corporate plans and defined priorities
- Providing coordination and support for the management and successful performance of the organisation's key groups of activities/portfolios – air quality, biosecurity and biodiversity, climate change and community resilience, coast and marine, regional leadership, and water and land
- Leading the generation and reporting of data and insights
- Providing policy advice
- Monitoring plan effectiveness
- Managing the review of, and Council's response to, national direction and reform

The Regional Planning team are responsible for:

- Developing resource management and regional plan-making
- Providing drafting leadership

Matters of Interest

Information about national and regional matters of interest that have arisen since the last Strategy and Policy Committee meeting is outlined below.

National

Freshwater Farm Plan Announcement

On 16 April 2025, Agriculture Minister, Todd McClay and Associate Environment Minister, Andrew Hoggard announced that central government is in the process of delivering on its commitment to make freshwater farm plans "more practical and affordable".

The announcement indicated that they are considering changes to reduce the number of farms required to have a plan and to take a risk-based approach to the need for certification. Freshwater Farm Plans would, however, remain within the system as a tool to manage environmental impacts. The Ministry for the Environment are working with industry sector groups and councils to finalise the changes through updated regulations, progressed through the government's RMA reform process and are expected to be in place by the end of the year.

In June, with the release of the Select Committee Report on the Resource Management (Consenting and other Systems) Amendment Bill, changes to the threshold of who would be required to get a Freshwater Farm Plan were introduced, along with changes to the role of industry in the plan development and certification processes. The changes will be followed by changes to the supporting regulations. Environment

Southland staff are involved in conversations directly with officials from the Ministry for the Environment on the potential changes through avenues such as the Te Uru Kahika interest groups. The interface between the government regulated freshwater farm plans and the Farm Environmental Management Plans required by the Southland Water and Land Plan is a matter that is at the forefront of staff's minds and will inform any feedback provided.

The message to the community remains that farm plans are seen as an important tool for managing the effects of activities on the region's waterways, and more specifically on the waterways within their receiving catchments. Documenting what actions are proposed to address risks in our catchments is a valuable exercise. Rural landholders are encouraged to commence the development of their farm plan. There is catchment context information available on Environment Southland's website. Environment Southland staff have met with the existing approved certifiers to progress practical farm plan development and certification matters. Guidance material is being progressed, and staff are available to assist with questions.

National Direction

Government have released four packages of National Direction which are currently out for consultation. The National Direction is important for the work that we do as it will guide how regional councils work in the future. There are a significant number of high impact changes proposed to the current national policy statements and national environmental standards that are currently being assessed by the team.

Environment Southland will be lodging submissions on the national direction packages to clearly outline any regional implications and ensure that they are practical and will solve the problems identified.

Regional

Winter Grazing

Regional planning staff are involved in ongoing work on the implementation of winter grazing provisions through avenues such as an internal staff working group, and a Southland Winter Advisory Group. The winter grazing provisions in the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan have been operative since May 2024 and are the key environmental regulatory provisions for Southland. Fact Sheets, as well as other guidance resources, and an intensive communications and education programme for both Intensive Winter Grazing and Pasture Based grazing have been implemented. The information and supporting material/tools to support farmers is available on the Environment Southland website, under Land Management:

<https://www.es.govt.nz/environment/land-and-soil/land-management>

Environment Southland has also partnered with the Southland Ministry for Primary Industries On Farm Support Team to develop a [Smart Wintering In Southland](#) guidance document. Staff are available for support and guidance.

Bylaws

The Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw and Southland Navigation Safety Bylaws are currently under review. These review processes are both cross-organisation pieces of work. It is proposed that initial assessments of both will be brought to Council later in the year for formal approval to consult.

Policy positions

Council staff are in the process of developing Environment Southland position statements.

The position statements integrate our statutory responsibilities under multiple legislative frameworks while recognising local government's critical role in Southland's economic, environmental, cultural, and social wellbeing. They will serve as guidance material by providing clear expectations for managing activities and establishing the framework for a consistent organisational approach to a topic matter.

The position statements document will outline Environment Southland's current strategic and operational positions relating to topics, across all types and scales of operation. They will serve as our primary guidance framework for:

- Meaningful partnership with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku
- Policy submissions to central government
- Integration with regional development objectives
- Regulatory decisions and consent processing
- Industry engagement and partnership development

Whilst based in our legislative and regulatory mandate and underpinned by agreed Council policies, plans and projects, these are intended to be non-statutory documents developed outside of formal statutory processes and are not legally binding in and of themselves.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	x		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	x		
Communities empowered and resilient	x		
Communities expressing their diversity	x		

Attachments

Nil

10 Extraordinary/urgent business | Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

At the time of the agenda closing, no notifications of extraordinary or urgent business had been received for this meeting.

11 Public excluded business | He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

11.1 Confirmation of public excluded minutes - 21 May 2025

Section under the act	The grounds on which part of the Council or committee may be closed to the public are listed in s48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the act)
Sub-clause and reason	S.7(2)(j) - to prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or advantage.