



Notice is hereby given of the

Strategy & Policy Committee

Thursday 1 October 2026 at 10:00 am

Environment Southland Council Chamber, 220 North Road, Invercargill
26/SP/79

Committee Members

Cr Lyndal Ludlow - Chair

Cr Eric Roy

Cr Paul Evans

Cr Alastair Gibson

Mr Stewart Bull – Mana Whenua

Cr Jon Pemberton

Cr Maurice Rodway

Cr Geoffry Young

Cr Roger Hodson

Cr David Rose

Cr Ewen Mathieson

Cr Phil Morrison

Chair Jeremy McPhail (ex officio)

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 | Rautaki me Mahere

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

1. Provide governance oversight of the development, review, and proposed changes to regional and organisational Strategies, Policies, Plans, and By-laws, including new legislative and regulatory framework requirements and the Long-Term Plan;
2. Provide governance oversight into the monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of regional and organisational Strategies, Policies, Plans, and By-laws;
3. the appointment of hearing committees or panels to hear submissions on regional Policies, Plans and By-laws;
4. Provide governance oversight into consultation, engagement and partnership by the Council, including as related to regional and organisational Strategies, Policies, Plans and By-laws;
5. Provide governance oversight into science and monitoring activities and information/findings, including as used to inform Council positions at a governance level and as inputs to Council's Strategies, Policies, Plans and By-laws¹. This also includes the receipt, and if necessary, endorsement of, scientific studies/reports; receipt of SOE reports and/or score cards;
6. The compiling of submissions to Government and other entities as needed (if the Council timetable does not provide for same);
7. Oversee Climate Change and Hazards strategic direction and resulting Science and Strategy, Policy and Planning programme of work, including integration into the Long-Term Plan and implementation of the new legislative and regulatory framework; and
8. Receive regular reporting from the Integrated Catchment Management Committee and the Regulatory Committee to consider insights, feedback and views on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's Strategies, Policies, Plans and By-laws.
9. Provide regular reporting to the Finance and Performance Committee, Risk and Assurance Committee and the Council on the efficiency and effectiveness of the functions listed in 1-7 above, and provide insights, feedback and views as required on the same.

Chair: Lyndal Ludlow

Deputy Chair: Ewan Mathieson

Members: Cr Paul Evans, Cr Alastair Gibson, Cr Roger Hodson, Cr Ewan Mathieson, Cr Phil Morrison, Cr Jon Pemberton, Cr David Rose, Cr Eric Roy, Cr Geoffrey Young, Cr Maurice Rodway, Chair Jeremy McPhail (ex officio), Mana Whenua Representation

Quorum: Seven

Approved by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 9 February 2026.

¹ Noting that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee will have similar role, but with respect to science information related to operational activity

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 further 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 meeting held 20 August 2026

Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee - Rautaki me Mahere

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill

Thursday 20 August 2026 at 10:00 am

Present

Cr Lyndal Ludlow
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Alistair Gibson
Cr Roger Hodson
Chair Jeremy McPail (ex officio)
Cr Ewen Mathieson
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Maurice Rodway
Cr Eric Roy
Cr Geoffery Young
Mr Stewart Bull – Mana Whenua

Also Present:

Ms Hayley Fitchett – General Manager Strategy and Regulation
Mr Marcus Roy – Strategy & Policy Manager
Ms Liz Devery – Regional Planning Manager
Ms Helen Brown – Senior Regional Planner
Ms Shana Lee – Team Leader Policy
Ms Nicole White – Policy Analyst
Mr Bruce Halligan – Strategic Regulatory Advisor
Ms Nikki Blythe – TAMI
Mrs Rebekah Pankhurst - Meeting Secretary

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The Chair declared the meeting open and welcomed members to the Strategy & Policy Committee meeting for August.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

Resolved:

Moved Cr Young, seconded Cr Evans that apologies be accepted on behalf of Cr Jon Pemberton and Cr David Rose.

Carried

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest received at the meeting.

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

There were no public forum, petitions or deputations dealt with by the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Resolved:

Moved Cr Mathieson, seconded Chair McPhail that the minutes of the Strategy & Policy meeting held on 8 July 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

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

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

7 Questions I Patai

There were no questions asked by the meeting.

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

Cr Ludlow reported on her attendance at a seminar on New Zealand's National Ecosystem Typology (NET), a programme developing a nationally consistent framework for ecosystem mapping and classification.

She noted the current mapping provides a useful national overview but is not detailed enough for local planning or consenting. Future work will improve data quality, freshwater coverage, and mapping resolution. Environment Southland's local ecological data and expertise will remain essential in supporting planning, biodiversity management, and refining the national framework.

The NET is a positive step towards more consistent environmental reporting and ecosystem management across New Zealand, while still relying on regional knowledge and datasets for local decision-making.

Chair McPhail reported on his recent meetings in Wellington, where he had supported a South Island Regional Transport Committee initiative advocating for increased investment in South Island transport infrastructure. He noted the advocacy highlighted the importance of the South Island to New Zealand's economy and sought a funding approach that better reflects its contribution to road use and exports.

While in Wellington, the Chair also met with regional sector representatives, government officials and Ministers to discuss local government reforms and other emerging issues. In addition, he continued engagement with community groups across Southland, promoting Environment Southland's role and responsibilities and discussing matters affecting local communities.

Cr Gibson reported on his attendance at the opening of the Māruawai Centre in Gore. The centre highlights the history of Gore and the Hokonui region and he noted the opening was well attended by local government representatives and community leaders.

Cr Gibson noted he had also attended a focused session on benchmarking dairy farm performance and understanding how farming inputs relate to operational outcomes. The session was informative and provided useful insights, with Environment Southland staff also in attendance.

Southland District Council, to discuss concerns relating to the Domain flood banks. The discussion focused on unresolved remediation costs, ownership responsibilities, and the potential development of an agreement to clarify future ownership and maintenance arrangements. The Community Board has asked for information about what works have been done on the flood bank. Cr Mathieson also noted ongoing community interest in Meridian Energy's consent renewal process and upcoming discussions through the relevant working group.

Cr Rodway reported on his attendance, along with other councillors, at the Invercargill Home Show, where, along with Environment Southland staff, they had engaged with the public and gathered feedback on community priorities through an interactive survey. The event was well attended and provided a valuable opportunity to connect with residents and hear their views on future council priorities.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Young that Strategy & Policy committee receive the Chair and Councillor reports.

Carried

9 Reports

9.1 Discharge Deeds of Agreement Update

The purpose of this item was to provide an update on the process of replacing the Discharge Deeds of Agreement.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Mathieson, seconded Cr Young that the Strategy & Policy Committee:

- 1. receive the report.**
- 2. recommend that Council approve the Chief Executive Officer and Chair signing the replacement Discharge Deeds of Agreement on behalf of Council.**

Carried

9.2 Policy Monitor

The purpose of this paper was 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.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Hodson that Council receive the report – 2026 08 06 Policy Monitor.

Carried

9.3 Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update

The purpose of this item was to provide an update on the work being carried out by the strategy, policy and regional planning teams.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Mathieson, seconded Cr Hodson that Council receive the Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update Report.

Carried

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia Pakihi

There were no items of extraordinary or urgent business considered by the meeting.

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

There was no public excluded business considered by the meeting.

12 Termination

There being no further business, the chair closed the meeting at 11:48 am.

- 6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I
He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi**
- 7 Questions I Patai**
- 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 Climate Change and Community Resilience Portfolio update

Report by: Anke Habgood, Senior Advisor Strategy
Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation
Report Date: 16 September 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the progress being made by the Regional Climate Change Working Group (RCCWG), as part of the Climate Change and Community Resilience Portfolio.

Summary

This paper provides a recap regarding a recent letter from the governance RCCWG that was sent to each of the key partner agencies as a progress update, dated 14 July 2026.

It also provides an overview of the fourth RCCWG workshop for this triennium, held 27 August 2026. The RCCWG inter-agency workshop report – 27 August 2026 is attached as appendix 1.

Lastly this paper outlines the connection between this regional collaborative workstream and Environment Southland's current Long-Term Planning process (2027-2037).

Recommendation

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

- 1 Receive the report – Climate Change and Community Resilience.

Background

Following a regional climate change hui in July 2022, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama set up an inaugural Regional Climate Change Working Group (RCCWG) to progress a regional response to our changing climate. This group included representation from each of the territorial authorities.

Phase one was completed with the adoption and endorsement of the Regional Climate Change Strategy 2024. The strategy sets out the principles for how our agencies can work together to develop a regional response to our changing climate, as well as shared aspirations for coordinated, practical action.

Phase two was completed with the adoption and endorsement of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland in 2025. The Framework provides for the continuation of the RCCWG as an inter-agency group, collaborating across local government and Te Ao Mārama. Following the 2025 local government elections, the governance group was re-established for the current triennium.

RCCWG workshops earlier this year, introduced the group to the Local Government Climate Scenarios and the latest climate science. The current focus is on developing the first Murihiku Southland Climate Action Plan, aligned with councils' Long-Term Plans (2027-2037); as outlined in the Regional Framework for Action on Climate.

Letter from governance RCCWG

On 14 July 2026, the governance RCCWG wrote to each partner agency providing an update on progress developing a draft Climate Action Plan.

The letter outlined the consensus reached on several foundational components of a draft Climate Action Plan. This included the use of LGFA scenarios SSP2-4.5 and SSP3-7.0, regional climate projections informed by the 2026 Murihiku Southland Climate Impact Assessment, as well as draft climate planning assumptions derived from those projections. The governance RCCWG shared this material to support development of councils' 2027-2037 Long-term Plans and to seek early feedback while the Climate Action Plan remains under development.

The letter has so far been tabled at the following meetings:

- Environment Southland Council meeting 22 July 2026
- Southland District Council Finance & Assurance Committee meeting 12 August 2026
- Invercargill City Council Risk & Assurance Committee meeting 15 September 2026

It is understood that the letter is planned to be tabled at a Gore District Council meeting in September. Feedback received from these meetings will inform the continued development of a draft Climate Action Plan.

RCCWG workshop – 27 August 2026

The fourth Governance-RCCWG workshop of the current triennium was held on 27 August 2026. Building on the climate planning foundations established through previous workshops, the workshop focused on identifying and prioritising potential actions for inclusion in the draft Climate Action Plan, particularly where a coordinated regional approach would add value.

Consideration of ongoing legislative and policy reform highlighted the growing importance of climate adaptation planning within local government. While the reform programme continues to evolve, adaptation planning is expected to become an increasingly important responsibility for territorial authorities. This reinforces the need for a coordinated regional approach to identifying priority locations for adaptation planning and ensuring climate considerations are integrated into future regional spatial planning processes.

The workshop reinforced the importance of integrating climate considerations into future regional planning and adaptation processes. It also highlighted several areas where regional collaboration could strengthen long-term resilience, including development of a regional climate risk assessment, improved access to climate information and decision-support tools, and consideration of future water resilience needs.

The direction provided through the workshop will inform the next iteration of a draft Climate Action Plan and the refinement of potential actions. Actions identified as part of appendix 2 of Regional Framework for Action are in the process of being reconciled with emerging Climate Action Plan priorities; while considering opportunities to integrate actions into councils' Long-Term Plans and identifying initiatives that may require further investigation or collaborative investment.

An inter-agency workshop report has been prepared to capture workshop outcomes and regional progress **(refer to appendix 1)**.

Connection with LTP 2027-2037

An important focus of RCCWG workshop discussions is developing a draft Climate Action Plan to assist with informing councils' Long-Term Plans (2027-2037).

The Climate Action Plan provides an opportunity to identify where a coordinated regional approach can support individual council planning and community outcomes, while recognising that each organisation remains responsible for its own investment and statutory decision-making.

Actions/projects identified through the current phase of work will need clearly identified ownership, resourcing and delivery pathways. This will help ensure that future actions are aligned with organisational priorities, supported through Long-Term Plan processes, and appropriately resourced across participating agencies.

Next steps

- Reconciliation of resourced actions identified in Appendix 2 of the Regional Framework for Action on Climate, with the direction received from the G-RCCWG regarding potential actions that may be considered for inclusion in a draft Climate Action Plan.
- Working with partner agencies to identify the resourcing, funding and lead agency implications of potential Climate Action Plan actions; including the consideration of implications for the development of each agency's 2027-2037 Long-Term Plan.
- Considering opportunities for aligning what could be proposed as part of a draft Climate Action Plan, with the relevant ES LTP Activity Management Planning documents that are currently being prepared.
- Continuing to align the direction of the draft Climate Action Plan with Regional Spatial Planning and the evolving legislative environment.

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. 2026 08 27 - Governance RCCWG inter-agency joint report - workshop 27 August 2026 (4) [9.2.1 - 5 pages]



Regional Climate Change Working Group Report

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

Workshop Date: Thursday 27 August 2026

From: Staff Regional Climate Change Working Group

Purpose

This report provides all Councils and the Te Ao Mārama Board with an update on the recent governance Regional Climate Change Working Group (G-RCCWG) workshop, held on 27 August 2026.

Executive Summary

The focus of the governance workshop was:

1. Exploring the Climate Action Plan prototype developed to date.
2. Considering potential climate action pathways in the context of ongoing legislative reform, including local government reform, emerging Regional Spatial Planning and the Climate Change Response amendment bill.
3. Identifying potential recommendations to inform upcoming Long-Term Plan (LTP) processes.

The G-RCCWG continues to monitor progress against the Regional Framework for Action on Climate, while overseeing development of Murihiku Southland's first Climate Action Plan. The draft Climate Action Plan is intended to help inform councils' 2027-2037 Long-Term Plans.

Recommendation

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

Background

Establishment of inaugural working group

Following a regional climate change hui in July 2022, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama established the Regional Climate Change Working Group (RCCWG) to coordinate a regional response to climate change, comprising both governance and staff representatives from each of the territorial authorities, the regional council, and Te Ao Mārama.

2023-2025 Triennium

The RCCWG has since progressed two key phases: the adoption of the [Regional Climate Change Strategy](#) (RCCS) 2024, which sets shared principles and aspirations, and the [Regional Framework for Action on Climate](#) (RFfA) 2025, which establishes a coordinated programme of work, including continuation of the RCCWG.



2026-2028 Triennium

Following the 2025 local government elections, the governance RCCWG was re-established for the current triennium. Early workshops focused on establishing a common understanding of climate scenarios, projections, and the latest climate science. The group's current focus is on shaping the first draft Climate Action Plan and identifying priority actions to inform councils' 2027-2037 Long-Term Plans.

RCCWG workshop – 27 August 2026

Current Context

The first draft Climate Action Plan (Phase Three) is being developed during a period of significant change – including likely local government reform, resource management reform, regional spatial planning, the climate change response amendment bill, and emergency management reform.

Marcus Roy (Environment Southland) and Rochelle Francis (Southland District Council) provided an overview of the changing legislative and policy landscape and its implications. Discussion focused on the relationship between various requirements and the need to consider the impact of our changing climate across multiple planning processes. While climate adaptation planning responsibilities are expected to primarily sit with territorial authorities, the importance regional alignment, knowledge sharing and coordinated action was acknowledged.

The G-RCCWG discussed uncertainty regarding future funding arrangements for adaptation and resilience initiatives, particularly proactive adaptation measures. Proposed emergency management reforms reinforce the importance of infrastructure resilience, regional coordination and investment in risk reduction. A draft Climate Action Plan will need to remain flexible while aligning with emerging legislative requirements and regional planning processes.

Foundations for the Climate Action Plan

The G-RCCWG reflected on the aspirations, key focus areas and high-level actions identified through the RCCS and RfA to inform development of a draft Climate Action Plan. The group recognised the progress already made through the regional climate programme.

It is intended that potential Climate Action Plan actions build on this work and integrate it with related initiatives, such as the regional spatial planning process and future local adaptation processes. Opportunities to improve consistency across councils through shared approaches were also discussed, such as shared policy, governance tools, capability development and common climate messaging. It was acknowledged that successful implementation will require a balance between regional coordination and individual organisational responsibilities.

Potential Climate Action Plan actions

The G-RCCWG considered ten draft action proposals developed by the staff-RCCWG. The proposals were presented as a draft package to assist with workshop discussions.

A collective need was expressed, to progress a regional climate risk assessment to inform regional spatial planning and future adaptation planning and community engagement. The option was discussed to urgently progress a desktop climate risk assessment report to meet the needs of the regional spatial planning process; and then undertake a community engagement process as a second stage to enable the consideration of community values, priorities and acceptable levels of risk alongside scientific information.

There was also broad support for further consideration of actions relating to adaptation planning, regional water planning, improving the accessibility of climate information,



adaptation demonstration projects, assisting with identifying priority locations for adaptation planning; and ensuring emissions measurement is efficiently progressed.

Further work is now required to reflect on potential Climate Action Plan actions, including developing an understanding of what can be incorporated into existing projects and what might require an additional injection of funding.

RCCWG update on other key projects

Action 1.2: Review of RCCWG Governance Arrangements – Given ongoing local government reform, the group agreed to defer further consideration of the governance review until there is greater certainty regarding the future of local government arrangements.

Next steps

- Staff will prepare a revised set of draft potential actions, informed by feedback received during the workshop, for inclusion in the next draft Climate Action Plan prototype.
- Further work will be undertaken to refine, prioritise and identify potential lead agencies for proposed actions.
- Councils can consider potential Climate Action Plan actions through their Long-Term Plan processes, including potential resourcing and funding implications.

Key Messages

1. Significant legislative, policy and local government reform is continuing to shape the region's response to our changing climate.
2. While reform creates uncertainty, it may also create opportunities for stronger regional coordination and climate action.
3. Whatever future governance arrangements emerge, regional alignment will remain important to achieving better outcomes for communities.
4. The regional coordination function currently provided by the G-RCCWG remains important, even as future governance arrangements may change.
5. Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku leadership and partnership through Te Ao Mārama provide important continuity through potential local government change.
6. The Climate Action Plan and consideration of future adaptation planning will need to be closely aligned with emerging Regional Spatial Planning.
7. The progression of a regional climate risk assessment is an important foundation for regional spatial planning, future adaptation planning and other long-term decision-making.
8. Recent Climate Perceptions Survey findings indicate changing community awareness, concern and expectations that should inform the region's climate response.
9. Early "stress-testing" of proposed Climate Action Plan actions through Long-Term Plan processes will be important to understand priorities, affordability and delivery challenges, from the perspective of each partner agency.
10. Funding and affordability pressures reinforce the need for prioritisation, collaboration and strategic investment, including the provision of a sound evidence-base in support of decision making.
11. The Climate Action Plan and wider regional response will need to remain adaptable as climate risks, legislative requirements and community expectations evolve.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland – High-level progress monitoring: First Quarter July-December 2026 (as of 27 August 2026)

Appendix 1

Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland

High-level Progress Monitoring Document FY-Q1 Jul-Dec 2026 (as of 27 August 2026)

Progress Monitor (traffic light system)

Progressing well

At risk

Progress limited

Climate action	Q1	Update
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.		Phase 3 climate action planning remains on track, with partner agencies progressing a coordinated regional approach, assumptions, and evidence base through the RCCWG. Work is now focused on developing and refining actions for inclusion in the regional Climate Action Plan.
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.		The Te Whakahaere Āhuarangi Ltd report, summary paper and next steps document were tabled for governance RCCWG members at the 2 July workshop.
1.3 Collaborate to develop regional positions on climate related issues to advocate to central government on behalf of our region.		The RCCWG has identified climate-related advocacy as an important component of the regional Climate Action Plan at 2 July workshop. Further work will focus on integrating this role within existing planning and delivery frameworks while responding to an evolving policy environment.
1.4 Integrate climate change considerations across operations, including decisions, policies, projects, procurement and infrastructure.		ES is progressing the integration of climate change considerations through its Long-Term Plan and Activity Management Plan development processes supported by ongoing information sharing and collaboration through the regional climate action planning programme.
1.5 Measure organisational greenhouse gas emissions regularly (in accordance with Ministry for the Environment guidance and relevant ISO standards).		ES is continuing to strengthen its understanding and management of organisational greenhouse gas emissions, while also exploring climate-related funding and financing opportunities. This work will help support future Climate Action Plan initiatives and inform investment and operational decision-making.
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.		Te Ao Mārama, on behalf of Ngā Papatipu Rūnanga, has continued to contribute across council partner workstreams to support the integration of climate-related responses and considerations into decision-making. The nature of this action is ongoing and contribution spans across various work programs with Council partners. Future discussions with Te Ao Mārama will help inform how the Climate Action Plan can support collaboration with mana whenua and align with existing rūnanga climate priorities and initiatives.
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.		This action has not yet progressed and will be considered as part of the Phase 3 Climate Action Plan development process.
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.		ES has commenced work to better understand regional climate science needs, including those of partner agencies, to help inform long-term planning and future climate adaptation initiatives. This work will support the identification and prioritisation of actions for inclusion in the regional Climate Action Plan.
4.2 Publish a revised Southland climate change impact assessment.		This action is complete Work is underway to improve the accessibility and usability of the 2026 Murihiku Southland Climate Impact Assessment, supporting its application across regional planning and decision-making processes. This includes the development of updated catchment summaries to help agencies and communities better understand and use climate information.
4.3 Undertake a 'Regional Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment' to fully understand regional-scale hazards, including those relating to our changing climate.		The Regional Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment is paused while priority work continues on coastal flood modelling and tsunami Level 2 inundation modelling. The methods were completed in June and are being externally reviewed.
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.		Updated coastal flood modelling has progressed, with improved resolution and scenario flexibility across the Southland coastline, and next steps are to develop updated information and mapping tools.
5.2 Work with research partners and councils to define additional modelling needs (e.g., coastal inundation, drought, fire risk).		Work is underway to better understand regional climate science needs and priorities, helping to inform both ES planning processes and the development of the regional Climate Action Plan. This will support identifying opportunities for coordinated investment and action across partner agencies.
6 Investigating how nature-based solutions can support climate resilience		

6.1	Publish the findings of the 'Murihiku Slow the Flow' pilot project.		This action is now complete.
6.2	Consider the findings of the 'Murihiku Slow the Flow' pilot project when developing a regional floodplain management approach.		The findings from 'Murihiku Slow the Flow' will be captured in a Murihiku Southland Catchment Approach to Floodplain Management document. Murihiku Southland's catchment approach to floodplain management is a living document that will be revised and updated as it is applied to place.
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.		Work is underway to improve how climate change and natural hazards information is communicated and accessed across the region. Initial scoping is informing potential future tools and approaches that could support climate-informed planning and decision-making through the Climate Action Plan.
8	Engaging communities in shaping adaptation priorities		
8.1	Develop a best practice regional approach to climate engagement that embeds community values into the risk assessment and adaptation planning process.		Regional spatial planning initiatives continue to progress across Southland, with local authorities advancing community planning processes and ongoing discussions helping to strengthen alignment between related work programmes. This work will support a more coordinated approach to long-term planning, community engagement and climate adaptation across the region.
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).		A briefing meeting was held with EMS Group Manager/Group Controller Phil Mackay on 3 August, covering the climate change and community resilience portfolio, the natural hazards and adaptation portfolio, the RCCWG, and the inter-agency EMS Activity Management Plan process.
9.2	Improve inter-agency role clarity and systems to better support the Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery framework operating effectively in Southland.		A briefing meeting was held with EMS Group Manager/Group Controller Phil Mackay on 3 August, covering the climate change and community resilience portfolio, the natural hazards and adaptation portfolio, the RCCWG, and the inter-agency EMS Activity Management Plan process.
9.3	Develop a catchment approach to floodplain management, reflecting ki uta ki tai principles and working across territorial boundaries.		A catchment approach to floodplain management document is being drafted. The floodplain management document will become the agreed process for the Kanoa funded Mataura Project.
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.		Linked with Action 9.3 above – gravel will be an important consideration as part of developing a whole-of-catchment approach.
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.		No update
10.2	Support Great South to create a web-based regional emissions information tool.		A Net Zero Southland page has been developed within DISH. Future development could be considered alongside the potential establishment of a broader climate change web portal.
10.3	Continue to support Great South's existing Net Zero Southland decarbonisation programmes for businesses and community organisations.		Great South delivered decarbonization workshops in May 2026: the Future Proof Business Academy. No further progress has been reported since the previous quarter. The Environment Southland Strategy and Policy team is supporting progression of this action.
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.		Great South has advised that the <i>Net Zero Southland</i> report is nearing completion and is currently undergoing quality assurance, formatting, and design. RCCWG input is expected later in October-November 2026 once the draft report is available.
12	Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress towards our climate change outcomes		
12.1	Review the Regional Climate Change Strategy every three years.		Phase 3 climate action planning continues to progress through the RCCWG, with partner agencies maintaining alignment on the approach, assumptions and evidence base that will underpin the regional Climate Action Plan. The programme is now transitioning into the development and refinement of proposed climate actions to support a coordinated regional response
12.2	Track and maintain a record of the progress of resourced actions within the Regional Framework for Action on Climate.		A streamlined RFFA action reporting approach has been adopted to support clearer oversight and regular updates to both governance and staff forums. Ongoing reporting will help maintain visibility of progress.
12.3	Integrate monitoring and evaluation against climate change outcomes into climate change projects and work programmes.		ES is progressing initiatives to strengthen the integration of climate change considerations into organisational decision-making, including engagement with external partners on emerging funding and assurance requirements. Supporting tools and guidance are being developed to help embed climate considerations into council reports and plans.
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.		A Final Climate Perceptions Survey Report and has been uploaded on the ES website. Insights from this work will inform the development of the regional Climate Action Plan and support broader long-term planning and strategic initiatives.

9.2 Draft Feedback on National Wilding Conifer Management Strategy

Report by: Shana Lee, Team Leader Policy

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose

To advise Council on the key aspects of the proposed feedback to the Draft New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047 and receive formal approval to reply.

Summary

The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme Governance Group is inviting feedback on the draft of a refreshed Wilding Conifer Management Strategy. The proposed feedback supports the Strategy's long-term vision and national coordination, although refinements are sought to provide clearer accountability for identifiable seed sources, consideration of a landscape approach alongside prioritisation, greater clarity on definitions and stronger recognition of regional implementation challenges.

Recommendation

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

- 1 Receive the report – Draft Submission on Wilding Conifer Mana.
- 2 Approve the attached feedback on the Draft New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047 on the basis that the feedback will be finalised after incorporating any feedback from this meeting and making any necessary editorial refinements prior to sending.

Background

The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme Governance Group is inviting feedback from the wilding conifer control community and stakeholders on the draft of a refreshed national strategy for wilding conifer management in New Zealand. Feedback is open until 9 October. Details relating to the Draft Strategy can be viewed [here](#).

As well as setting the strategic direction for the programme, the Strategy will also inform Biosecurity New Zealand's (Ministry for Primary Industries) development of a National Pest Management Plan for Wilding Conifers.

The Strategy would set the direction for wilding conifer management in New Zealand over the next 20 years. It builds on the progress achieved to date and provides a framework for reducing spread, protecting valued landscapes, strengthening partnerships, and transitioning the primary role for long term protection of land cleared of wilding conifers to enduring stewardship. The Strategy is intended to guide the actions of all those involved in wilding conifer management, from individual land managers, community groups, iwi and hapū, to government agencies and the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme. It seeks to focus effort around a shared vision and goals and identifies the actions required to improve the effectiveness of wilding conifer management.

The proposed feedback, attached to this report, was developed with input from subject matter experts from multiple divisions, including Operational Delivery and Land Sustainability. While the Draft Strategy is supported in principle, key matters raised in the feedback include:

1. That the Strategy provide clearer accountability and expectations for identifiable seed sources.
2. Prioritisation is necessary but a longer-term landscape approach can ensure lower-priority areas do not become significant sources of wilding spread.
3. Provide greater clarity on definitions.

4. Include stronger recognition of the implementation challenges facing regional councils, particularly smaller councils with limited resources or funding to implement.

Following Council consideration, the proposed feedback will be finalised to incorporate any feedback from elected members and any necessary formatting, factual, or editorial amendments prior to reply.

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. 2026 09 16 ES Feedback Draft Conifer Management Strategy [9.3.1 - 5 pages]

Environment Southland feedback on the Draft New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047

Introduction

Environment Southland welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047.

Environment Southland supports the development of a long-term national strategy and recognises the significant environmental, economic, cultural and landscape impacts associated with unmanaged wilding conifers.

This feedback draws on operational experience delivering wilding conifer projects across Southland and focuses on areas where greater clarity, stronger direction and improved implementation support would strengthen the Strategy.

Overall Comments

Environment Southland supports the Strategy's long-term vision and continued national coordination. However, additional consideration should be given to how implementation responsibilities will be delivered at the regional level, particularly by smaller councils with limited resources.

The Strategy places a strong emphasis on prioritisation. While it is necessary to prioritise actions against a backdrop of limited funding, there is a risk that lower-priority infestations will continue to expand over the life of the Strategy and become significant future seed sources. Over a 20-year timeframe, untreated areas may become increasingly costly and difficult to manage.

Greater emphasis should be placed on managing seed sources, particularly where commercial forestry activities contribute to wilding spread. While the Strategy references seed source management, the proposed actions appear largely focused on collaborative approaches and may not be sufficiently strong where significant off-site impacts are occurring. Long-distance seed dispersal creates practical difficulties in identifying the source of infestations and assigning responsibility.

Additional consideration should be given to emerging management options associated with conifer species expanding into environments previously considered less vulnerable.

Recommendations

1. That the Strategy provide clearer accountability and expectations for identifiable seed sources.
2. Prioritisation is necessary but a longer-term landscape approach can ensure lower-priority areas do not become significant sources of wilding spread.
3. Provide greater clarity on definitions.
4. Include stronger recognition of the implementation challenges facing regional councils, particularly smaller councils with limited resources or funding to implement.

New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047

National Wilding Risk Map

There needs to be clarification on whether the risk mapping adequately reflects species such as Douglas fir that can establish in scrub and below canopy. Consideration should also be given to emerging species that may pose future risks.

Achievements

The Strategy could place greater emphasis on increased public awareness and behavioural change achieved since 2015. There could also be mention of the significant contributions through advocacy and community groups, landowners, industry bodies and organisations such as the Wilding Pine Network and Federated Farmers.

Lessons

Additional recognition should be given to the possibility that other species of conifer not currently considered high-risk may emerge as future management challenges. The distribution of Douglas fir expanding further than previously thought demonstrates that assumptions regarding species behaviour may change over time.

Current and Emerging Challenges

Additional challenges that should be recognised include:

- Funding fluctuations should be mentioned. For example, new funding not necessarily progressing management work but instead cleaning up what has grown back during the low funding years.
- Uncertainty regarding whether later generations (2nd, 3rd) of some wilding populations may exhibit increased adaptation to local environments and be stronger seeders. This is based on ad hoc observations (not proven in science).

National Pest Management Plan

Smaller councils may face challenges implementing additional responsibilities without corresponding proportionate support and resources.

Vision

“Where high risk conifer species are retained, those who benefit from them take responsibility for managing the risks they create.” With long distance spread it will be difficult to be able to trace those that need to take responsibility. For example, spread could be 20km away from seed source, but which seed source. The Vision could be amended to reflect this.

It is logical that those who benefit from high-risk conifer species should be responsible for managing associated risks.

Focus Areas

This section of the Strategy states that the National Operational Plan (required when the National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) is in place) will detail the required actions and work programmes. However, not all of the Focus Areas and their subsequent Actions would fit into an NPMP Operational Plan, in particular Fa3.

Focus Area 1: Prevention and risk reduction

- Regarding Measures and Action 1, there needs to be increased clarity regarding what "effective management" means in practice. It is unclear if there is "effective management" for high-risk seed sources that are Douglas fir plantations.
- Long distance spread is very difficult to monitor and track. There is still focus solely on high-priority areas but in the meantime, low-priority areas will continue to increase. Combined with long-distance spread, this will start impacting the high-priority areas.
- Regarding Action 2, the first paragraph uses the term "land managers" but this seems inconsistently used and the terms "land owners," "land managers" and "land occupiers" should be defined and used clearly throughout the Strategy. The use of these terms is critical when using the Biosecurity Act and also for understanding the motivations for each group. In addition, the second paragraph mentions the National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF) but does not state how the pre-2018 plantations that are causing wildlings are being addressed. Clarification here would be beneficial.
- Regarding Action 3, the second paragraph mentions "risk- and evidence-based approach to implementing mitigations." Risk and evidence are often difficult to prove as it is frequently difficult to conclusively state where wildlings have originated from. The actions suggested in the third paragraph will not solve some of the existing issues currently being faced but will hopefully be useful approaches for new plantations. Actions to identify exacerbators should be prioritised as the cost should not be passed onto others when companies are profiting from forestry.

Focus Area 2: Enduring stewardship and sustainable management

- Limiting intervention to priority landscapes may result in neighbouring areas continuing to generate seed sources that undermine investments elsewhere. Over the life of the Strategy, untreated lower-priority areas may become increasingly difficult to manage.
- Regarding Action 4, there remains a question as to how realistic it is to hold people or groups to account for long-term landscape management as the timeframes for this probably span into the decades. Also, more could be said as to how this can be incorporated into regional spatial planning as part of the upcoming changes to resource management reform.

Focus Area 3: Strong partnerships collective action and support

- Regarding measures, it would be useful to add a reduction in wilding prone plantings for forestry or shelter.
- Regarding Action 7, there needs to be a practical consideration acknowledging how stretched iwi and hapū resources are and if it is feasible for them to comment on or support every project.
- Regarding Action 8, there needs to be clarification if this is focussed on pre-2018 forests as well as NES-CF forests or if pre-2018 forests are now classed as "unmanaged legacy plantings." It is agreed that we should recognise and promote what foresters are doing but often this activity does not extend to neighbouring land which can be heavily suffering with wildlings. The wording encourages shared

responsibilities through voluntary initiatives. There needs to be stronger wording or a mandatory requirement to encourage greater responsibility towards the issue. An accord is a worthwhile action if exacerbators are willing to contribute in a meaningful way that reflects the impact their actions are having. Where significant seed sources are known and identifiable, it is difficult to aim for strengthening relationships and shared responsibility, when one side (the seed source) is profiting whilst the receiving side is facing a loss.

- Regarding Action 9, it should be acknowledged that some areas do not have communities close by -there could only be three or four farmers and Department of Conservation lands. There needs to be an assurance that priorities are followed, not necessarily just activity where the biggest community or political voice resides.
- Regarding Action 10, there needs to be clarification on how this will be achieved alongside forestry social licence.

Focus Area 4: Prioritisation, innovation and cost-effective delivery

- In general, whilst prioritisation is important, if the Strategy is considered over 20 years and some issues/areas are not being managed, there will be an end situation of neighbouring areas actively deteriorating or reaching a point of no return.
- Funding decisions can be influenced by political factors and confidence in the Strategy will depend on clear and objective prioritisation processes.
- Biocontrol could be a useful tool and as it could take ten to twenty years to see the results, it would be relevant across the life of the Strategy.
- Regarding Action 11, there needs to be a clarification if there is national consistency or an auditing of consistency across regions. For example, Southland may see transition is not possible due to significant seed sources, yet adjoining Otago may say this is possible but have significant seed sources, or seed sources in Southland which could be transported via wind. It is unclear how Douglas fir (and long-term seed sources) fit into this Action.
- Regarding Action 12, the system needs to cover all areas and flag when appropriate control/monitoring/surveillance has not occurred in a period of time. This would help prevent a reversal in progress in areas that have had control. There is a concern about the volume of work this entails, noting there is no additional support. Smaller councils in particular will struggle to keep pace.
- Regarding Action 13, decision making and management need to be nationally acceptable, but regionally applicable. For example, researching and trialling in Canterbury (such as grazing or drone trials) have limited usefulness if they are not applicable across the rest of New Zealand. Similarly, another example would be using merinos or drone operators in Canterbury that are not practical for use eight hours drive away. It may be possible for a wilding 101 to be created. For example, tackling seed sources or the wide-spread young when starting a project. The Contorta maintenance cycle is roughly three years whereas the Douglas fir maintenance cycle is roughly five years plus.
- Regarding Action 14, there is a need to ensure that there is adequate regional support across New Zealand. Smaller councils will struggle more than larger councils. Ensuring capability and capacity is developed and retained in the programme is essential. The programme is currently dependent on key people holding significant knowledge regarding areas and control operations. There should

be a clearer link between Actions 4 and 14. The review should consider broader outcomes as well as what is already referenced.

Strategy Implementation

The Ministry for Primary Industries is noted but the New Zealand Forest Service should also be listed as they are the key representation for a number of seed sources or future seed sources. Other industries that could assist and support wildings could be noted such as wood chip and oil.

It is agreed that communications and public engagement are critical, even during periods of success once trees have been removed, as otherwise complacency can hinder future management support.

Glossary

- There should be a definition of the forests that predate 2018 (1991-2018) and the NES-CF forests.
- The terms “land owners”, “land managers”, and “land occupiers” should be defined and used clearly throughout the strategy.
- “Sustained control” is mentioned earlier but is not defined here.

Conclusion

Environment Southland supports the overall direction of the Draft New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047. However, greater clarity is required regarding management of commercial forestry seed sources, treatment of pre-2018 forests, long-term funding certainty, regional implementation support, and the risks associated with an over-reliance on prioritisation.

Addressing these matters would strengthen the Strategy and improve its ability to achieve enduring national wilding conifer outcomes over the next 20 years.

9.3 Make Rule 24 of the Southland Water and Land Plan operative

Report by: Liz Devery, Regional Planning Manager

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose

To note that the Environment Court has issued its tenth interim decision confirming the drafting of Rule 24 of the Southland Water and Land Plan and for this committee to make a recommendation to Council to make that provision operative under Clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

Summary

The proposed Southland Water and Land Plan (the plan) provides the primary regulatory tool for Southland's land and water resources, with a particular emphasis on the management of activities that may adversely affect the quality of Southland's freshwater.

The plan has progressed through the Environment Court process since 2018 with ten interim decisions being issued since 2020. The tenth interim decision issued in July 2026 provided the final decision on Rule 24 – Incidental discharges from farming. This decision from the Environment Court resolves an appeal on the provision which permits the incidental discharges from specific farming activities where those activities are authorised under a relevant rule.

The appeal on Rule 24 was heard by the Environment Court, appealed to the High Court and further to the Court of Appeal and then referred to the Environment Court where a final decision on the provision has now been made. No further appeals were made on the Environment Courts tenth interim decision on Rule 24 and the provision is now able to be made operative under Clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the RMA. Updates on these legal proceedings have been provided to Council throughout the process and are not repeated here.

Recommendation

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

1. Receive the report – Make Rule 24 of the Southland Water and Land Plan operative.
2. Recommend to full Council to make Rule 24 of the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan operative on 2 November 2026 in accordance with Clause 20(1) of Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 and direct staff to take necessary steps to meet associated statutory requirements.

Making the plan operative

Schedule 1 of the RMA outlines the process for making a proposed plan operative (either wholly or in part). Clause 17(1) of Schedule 1 provides the Council with the power to approve the plan and then make the plan operative under Clause 20. The Regional Planning team will step through the Schedule 1 of the RMA process which specifies the public notification steps once a provision has been approved as operative by the Council.

Implications/risks

Next steps

An implementation plan will be actioned for staff to ensure all teams interacting with the Southland Water and Land Plan are knowledgeable on the status of the provision and the potential impacts of this formal step to consent holders as well as internal staff.

Below is a table setting out the proposed dates for the approval of Rule 24 and the subsequent public notification.

Date	Action
22 October 2026	Council approves Rule 24 of the Southland Water and Land Plan and resolves to make the provision operative on 26 October 2026. The latest version of the plan can be accessed at www.es.govt.nz/waterandland
24 October 2026	Council publishes notice in papers advising the public that: 1. Rule 24 of the Southland Water and Land Plan will become operative from 2 November 2026
2 November 2026	The Council seal is placed on the Southland Water and Land Plan. Rule 24 becomes operative. Updated copies of the Southland Water and Land Plan are distributed to internal and external stakeholders.
	Council website is updated to reflect the council decision and the change in status of Rule 24. Communications collateral is available on the Council website

Risks/Opportunities

This provision has been through a thorough regulatory process. The outcome aligns with the Council's position and the evidence Environment Southland presented before the Court. This appeal process has received significant public scrutiny. The provision is now treated as operative. The final step is an administrative one.

Views of affected parties

Making the provision operative concludes the formal RMA Schedule 1 process. This included the opportunity for the public to make submissions, and appeals to the Environment Court were constrained by the scope of the original submissions to ensure that parties were not impacted without the opportunity to be involved.

Fit with strategic framework

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

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

The Schedule 1 process of the RMA provided the public with the opportunity to make submissions on the plan and be involved in the hearing process. The final step in the Schedule 1 process is the public notification of the operative date of the plan.

Considerations

Financial implications

There are minor costs involved with publicly notifying the operative date and distributing copies of the document as required under clause 20(4) of Schedule 1 of the RMA. These costs are included in the existing planning budget.

Legal implications

The approval sought in this item is a procedural requirement set out in the Resource Management Act 1991.

Attachments

1. Appendix 1 - Rule 24 [9.4.1 - 1 page]

Appendix 1

Rule 24 – Incidental discharges from farming – Decisions Version

- (a) The discharge of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment or microbial contaminants onto or into land in circumstances that may result in a contaminant entering water that would otherwise contravene section 15(1) of the RMA is a permitted activity, provided the following conditions are met:
1. the land use activity associated with the discharge is authorised under Rules 20, 25, or 70 of this Plan; and
 2. any discharge of a contaminant resulting from any activity permitted by Rules 20, 25 or 70 is managed to ensure that after reasonable mixing it does not give rise to any of the following effects on receiving waters:
 - (1) any conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams, or floatable or suspended materials; or
 - (2) any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity; or
 - (3) the rendering of fresh water unsuitable for consumption by farm animals; or
 - (4) any significant adverse effects on aquatic life.
- (b) the discharge of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment or microbial contaminants onto or into land in circumstances that may result in a contaminant entering water that would otherwise contravene section 15(1) of the RMA and that does not meet one or more of the conditions of Rule 24(a) is a non-complying activity.

Rule 24 – Incidental discharges from farming – Version for approval

- (b) The discharge of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment or microbial contaminants onto or into land in circumstances that may result in a contaminant entering water that would otherwise contravene section 15(1) of the RMA is a permitted activity, provided the following conditions are met:
1. the land use activity associated with the discharge is authorised under Rules 20, 20A, 20B, 25, 35A, 35B or 70 of this Plan; and
 2. any discharge of a contaminant resulting from any activity authorised by Rules 20, 20A, 20B, 25, 35A, 35B or 70 is managed to ensure that after reasonable mixing it does not give rise to any conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams in the receiving waters.
- (c) The discharge of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment or microbial contaminants onto or into land in circumstances that may result in a contaminant entering water that would otherwise contravene section 15(1) of the RMA and that does not meet one or more of the conditions of Rule 24(a) is a non-complying activity.

9.4 Natural Hazards Science Update

Report by: John Drewry, Acting Science Integrated Catchment Management

Approved by: Karen Wilson, General Manager Science

Report Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose

This report provides an update on the natural hazard and climate adaptation science work programme as required by the Te Mahere Wā-Roa 2024-2034 Long Term Plan.

Summary

The Te Mahere Wā-Roa 2024-2034 Long Term Plan includes a level of service requirement for an annual report on the natural hazards and climate adaptation science and modelling to be submitted to Council by 30 September each year. Table 1 summarises the relevant projects carried out by the Science division in 2025/26.

Table 1: Summary of natural hazards and climate adaptation science projects for 2025/26

2025/26 Projects	Status
Regional climate change projections	Completed
Regional climate change data applications	Delayed
Snow pack monitoring site install	Completed
Snow melt forecast model for Waikaia catchment	Completed
Invercargill groundwater – sea level rise inundation	Completed
Natural hazards knowledge assessment	Delayed
Hydrodynamic coastal flood modelling	Delayed

Recommendation

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

- 1 Receive the report on natural hazard and climate adaptation science.

Background

The Te Mahere Wā-Roa 2024-2034 Long-term Plan (LTP, [click here](#)) includes a level of service to:

“Monitor and investigate natural hazards and changing climate to provide high quality and timely data and information to decision makers and community to improve their understanding of where the greatest areas of risks are and where further action is needed” (pg. 32).

This level of service includes Measure 16, which requires a report on the natural hazards and climate adaptation science and modelling programme to be submitted to Council by 30 September each year. This item provides a summary of the climate adaptation and natural hazards work programme being delivered by Environment Southland’s Science division in alignment with this requirement.

2025/26 Projects

Regional climate change projections and data applications

The National Institute of Water and Atmosphere (now Earth Sciences New Zealand) was contracted to produce a regional climate change projection assessment encompassing climate, hydrology (including cryosphere), coastal (including sea level rise) and marine domains using the following climate emission Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSP) scenarios: SSP2-4.5, SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5.

The original delivery date for this work was 30 June 2025, however, the project was delayed due to technical difficulties, including unforeseen high demand on the High Performance Computing Facility (or supercomputer), which was updated during the project duration, modelling data availability and data processing and coding issues.

Environment Southland publicly released the Murihiku Southland Climate Change Impact Assessment reports on April 15 2026, and these are available on our website. An extensive communications roll-out occurred following the completion of this work, including presentations to all Southland local government agencies and interested stakeholders.

The outputs from this project are now being transformed into user-friendly dashboards and tools to support understanding and practical use of the data.

Snowpack and snow melt

Snowmelt is a significant contributor to flood flows in Southland. Analysis of flood events in the Aparima, Oreti and Mataura catchments indicates that approximately one in eight flood events have more than 10% of their flow originating from snowmelt.

Prior to this project, Environment Southland's flood forecasting models did not explicitly account for snowmelt. This increased uncertainty around forecast peak flows and created a risk that flood peaks could be underestimated. The September 2023 flood provided a clear example, with snowmelt estimated to have contributed 17% of flow in the Waikaia River.

To address this gap, a snowmelt forecasting model has been developed for the Waikaia catchment and a snowpack monitoring station established at Hyde Rock in April 2026, providing real-time information on snow conditions and weather variables relevant to snowmelt.

An update on this project was reported to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee on 16 September 2026.

The project is now in its second phase which focuses on maintaining and troubleshooting the forecast system, incorporating the first season of real-time snowpack observations, calibrating the model against observed conditions and improving the reliability of forecast outputs. The first winter of data from Hyde Rock provides an important opportunity to test and refine the model under observed snow conditions. Over time, this work will be extended to other catchments.

In addition to enhancing the accuracy of flood forecasting, this work will provide valuable insights into long-term changes in the region's snowpack and their implications for water resource management.

Invercargill groundwater – sea level rise modelling

Earth Sciences New Zealand were contracted to undertake a preliminary assessment of groundwater impacts from climate change and sea level rise on Invercargill city and surrounds. This work assesses the risk of groundwater flooding to essential infrastructure in the low-lying city. The results indicate that most of Invercargill has a low likelihood of groundwater reaching the ground surface under current conditions. However, several areas are identified as more vulnerable, due to their slope, elevation, proximity to the sea and drainage characteristics. This study was completed in March 2026. The model outputs are being reprocessed by the Science division to make them more useable and informative. This study is also informing where groundwater sites should be located to monitor the long-term changes and risks to the city.

Natural hazards knowledge assessment

The Southland region has a diverse environment and experiences a range of biophysical natural hazards. The nature, frequency, and magnitude of these hazards vary across the region and have variable levels of science and knowledge underpinning them. This project is developing a framework to assess the quality of natural hazard information for the region, so it is clear to users how the information should and should not be used and is developing road map for addressing critical information gaps. This project is being undertaken collaboratively, drawing on information held by partners, stakeholders, and other agencies to compile a comprehensive stock take of information. A report on the methodology for assessing natural hazard data sets is currently being peer reviewed and is due to be released in 2026. A portal is being developed to improve access to the information captured in the stock take and is similarly due for complete soon. This project will provide a foundation for regional spatial planning and adaptive management.

Hydrodynamic coastal flood modelling

In preparation for this project, we worked with LINZ to increase the spatial coverage of the 2025/26 bathymetric survey to include key gap areas in Southland estuaries and harbours. This information has informed the modelling Earth Sciences New Zealand is undertaking to map the extent and depth of flooding by seawater during storms at different frequencies, and how these will change relative to sea level rise. The mapped area will include the entire South coast, Oban, and Milford Sound. This work was due to be completed in 2024/25 but has been extended due to technical issues. We are currently reviewing the scope of work to potentially include options on how the Titiroa flood gates and Waihopai flood bank are incorporated which will improve the use of these outputs in catchment operations planning.

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. S and P update for NH upload 16 Sept2026 [9.5.1 - 3 pages]

Regional climate change projections

The second phase of the regional climate change projections project involved transforming the modelled outputs into user-friendly dashboards and tools to support understanding and practical use of the data. This work was scheduled to begin once Earth Sciences New Zealand had delivered their final report and associated outputs.

The delivery date for the report was delayed due to technical difficulties, including unforeseen high demand on the High-Performance Computing Facility which was updated during the project duration, modelling data availability and data processing and coding issues. Earth Sciences New Zealand had also misinterpreted some of the hydrological site metrics which meant some key locations were missing from the summaries. This was addressed, but the actual delivery date of the report was not until 19 March 2026.

Environment Southland publicly released the Murihiku Southland Climate Change Impact Assessment Report on April 15, 2026 and work has begun on transforming the maps and data into user-friendly outputs. Communications are based around two of the three modelled scenarios:

- SSP 2-4.5 A “Middle of the Road” climate change scenario
- SSP 3-7.0 A high-emissions climate change scenario

Key Messaging

- Under these scenarios, annual and seasonal temperatures are projected to increase, with increased number of hot days and time spent in heatwave. There are substantial decreases in the number of cold nights.
- Annual rainfall will have modest increases and heavy rainfall indicators such as 1-day and 5-day totals increase. These increases translate to increases in flood metrics such as Mean Annual Flood and larger events.
- Higher temperatures and low summer recharge may lead to some water scarcity issues.

Snowpack monitoring

Snowmelt has been identified as a key contributor to flood magnitude and catchment recharge. Recent developments in satellite imaging have made it possible to monitor snow cover irrespective of cloud conditions. This has opened up opportunities to combine these observations with on-the-ground measurements to estimate snow cover and snowmelt potential within a catchment. The existing rain gauge site at Hyde Rock was identified as a good representative location for the Waikaia catchment with the addition of snow monitoring sensors at the site initially scheduled for completion in the 2024-2025 financial year. Snow conditions meant the site installation could not be attempted until summer 2025/2026 when the snow had melted.

The site installation was completed on 1 April 2026 with data logging commencing on 17 April. Recorded measurements include snow depth, snow water equivalent, solar radiation, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction and rainfall. These measurements are fed into snow cover and snowmelt models run by Rainfall.NZ. Environment Southland receives hourly snowmelt forecasts which are incorporated into our existing flood models. The snow cover and snowmelt models will require a period of calibration with observed imagery being compared to forecast snow cover and snowmelt.

Hazard Information Progress – Data

- **Bathymetry** – In preparation for hydrodynamic coastal flood modelling and tsunami modelling, LINZ was lobbied successfully to increase spatial coverage of 2025/26 bathymetric survey gaps for Southland estuaries/harbours. We investigated options and cost of filling data gaps in bathymetric data (Bluff) and elevation data (Deep Cove), and obtained existing bathymetric data for Bluff Harbour channel and New River Estuary.

- **Coastal Erosion and Flooding** – Investigated current state of shoreline change and wave energy data, and scoped monitoring programme options. Settled on a specialist coastal monitoring programme design contract 2026/27, in collaboration with the Science Investigations and Operations team. Approved projects for 2026/27 include a coastal monitoring needs assessment and programme design.

Hazard Information Improvements – Hazards Research and Tools

- **Coastal Flood Modelling** provides spatial modelling that estimates extent and depth of flooding by seawater during storms, and how these will change due to relative sea level rise. Mechanisms considered for additional flooding include storm tide and wave setup. This improves upon previous work done by both NIWA and Great South, giving one definitive source of coastal flooding information for the region. Areas covered are the South coast, Oban and Milford Sound. The modelling considers flooding by sea only - interaction with fluvial flooding is out-of-scope.
- **Tsunami hazard** - Emergency Management Southland and ES Science Integration team have identified current tsunami evacuation zones as inconsistent with national statutory direction and scientific evidence. A business case was prepared (and delivered to ELT in July 2026 for approval) for Tsunami inundation modelling for delineating improved evacuation zones, and Tsunami marine hazard modelling and recommendations for improving hazard information and risk treatment for maritime industries.
- **Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment** - The process design was a significant step, but to run the process for multiple hazards and flooding was time consuming. Achievements were hui with stakeholders on their priorities, hazards information inventory and methods design, and the process contracted and completed.

Community and External Organisation Engagement:

There was communication with stakeholders and the community, including:

- Frequent communication with and advice to EMS on tsunami hazard, emergency preparedness, response and resilience
- Natural hazard presentations for community boards at SDC spatial planning meetings, and the Murihiku Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment hui (Feb 2026)
- Frequent low-level collaboration with SDC on servicing hazards and climate-related information and advice needs.
- The Murihiku Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment hui solicited and subsequently analysed feedback from a wide range of key Southland council partners on natural hazard priorities, natural hazard information, and natural hazard information gaps

9.5 LTP Update

Report by: Rebekah Pankhurst, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose

To provide an update on the Council's Long Term Plan project

Summary

The 2027-37 LTP needs to be attuned to impending changes to the function and form of local government over the coming years. It is important that this LTP articulates the legal requirements associated with our regional council functions and how we intend to invest in delivering them.

This LTP we are developing Activity Management Plans (AMPs) to provide a strong evidential baseline of our work to ensure that we can understand how reform and a tighter fiscal operating environment will impact our functions.

Recommendation

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

- 1 Receive the report - LTP Update.

Background

This 2027-37 LTP is different because:

- Governance uncertainty and structural change impacting our horizon
- Reforms and system resets are occurring across most of our functions
- Affordability constraint and financial pressure are being applied
- Information on our changing climate and natural hazard risk is becoming clearer
- There are changes coming to our regulatory and compliance workloads
- Alternative delivery models, partnerships and co-investment opportunities need to be explored
- Public scrutiny is increasing while our social licence and trust are decreasing
- There is a change from local delivery towards a more centralized system

Accordingly, our next LTP needs to be:

- Transition ready
- Financially defensible
- Capacity realistic
- Deliver on our legal requirements
- Evidence-led and assurance-ready
- Social-licence anchored
- Reflect the direction by our governors

AMPs

AMPs have been developed in this LTP to clearly explain each activity we deliver, distinguish between non-negotiables and choices, show what is changing and why, identify key risks and pressures, support prioritisation and trade-offs, capture/preserve institutional knowledge and adapt with impending reform.

AMP development work has captured what we currently do at this point as an organisation baseline with existing financial and human resources. We have not developed them starting from a blank page with utopian view of what we could do. We recognise that we need to use our current operating envelope as a starting point and plan forward, as there is little political appetite for significant increases in staff numbers or budgets.

It is acknowledged that there are some areas of our work that will need an increase in staff and budget moving forward. It is intended that any proposals to increase resources will be captured in the AMPs that will enable Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and councillor trade-offs to be applied to additional resourcing requests. The collective AMPs will be able to assist with identifying opportunities to fund or defunding certain aspects relative to our existing financial envelope.

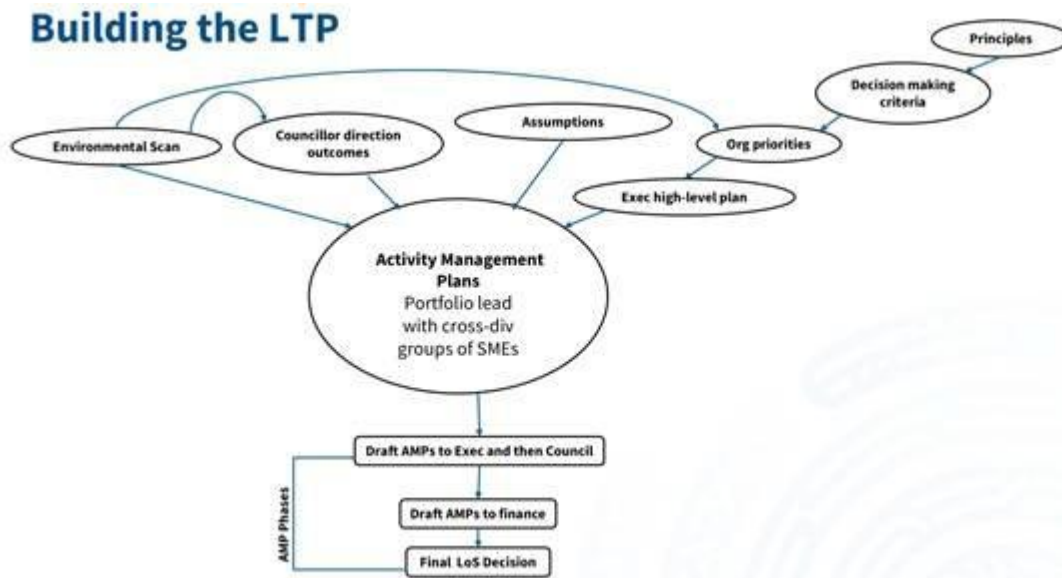
It is recognised that territorial authorities develop AMPs for their LTP processes so utilising a similar approach will ensure that our important Regional Council functions do not get lost when local government transitions into one or two new unitary authorities.

SLT assumptions

The following assumptions have been provided from SLT when developing AMPs:

- **Workforce:** No significant growth in overall staffing. Plan based on realistic workforce availability, not budgeted vacancies.
- **Funding:** No significant budget growth beyond inflation unless a strong business case can be made.
- **Service Levels:** Be realistic about what can be delivered and clearly identify the impacts of any service level changes.
- **Prioritisation:** Focus first on legislative compliance, then focus resources on activities that deliver the greatest value for Southland and Southlanders.
- **Efficiency & collaboration:** Actively identify opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce duplication and work across functions.
- **Future readiness:** Focus on core functions and capabilities that will remain important regardless of future organisational change.

Key strategic information all flows into the AMP development including strategic direction from SLT and elected members from workshops held in June and July 2026.



Pre engagement with Community

Our early engagement survey for the 2027 - 37 Long-term Plan has now closed. Some clear themes have emerged across the survey responses

Love the Water Down Here

Water was one of the strongest themes. Around 73% of respondents selected clean and healthy rivers, lakes and groundwater as an important future outcome. Improving water quality and reducing nitrate impacts was also the most frequently selected area for greater focus, chosen by 54%.

Love the Land Down Here

People want Southland's environment protected and communities prepared for the future. Around 47% selected resilience to flooding, natural hazards and a changing climate as an important outcome, while 42% selected thriving biodiversity, ecosystems and habitats.

Flood protection, river management, biosecurity and emergency preparedness also featured prominently.

Love the Life Down Here

Southland's lifestyle, environment and people are central to what respondents' value. Around 73% selected lifestyle and sense of place, 67% selected the natural environment and 56% selected people and communities.

Affordability was the most frequently identified future issue, selected by 55%. Healthy water, healthcare, housing and infrastructure also featured strongly.

Love the Air Down Here

Climate change, extreme weather and preparedness also came through in the feedback, reinforcing the importance of helping Southland remain healthy and resilient as conditions change.

How people want us to work

There was a strong message about working with others. Around 52% wanted closer work with communities, landowners and volunteers. A third supported stronger partnerships, and the same proportion wanted more shared services and closer work with other councils.

Views on future investment were more evenly spread. Around 30% supported a balanced approach, 30% favoured focusing on a smaller number of high-priority issues and 28% supported investing more now to address pressing challenges. This highlights the choices councillors will need to consider through the LTP.

We'll now complete a more detailed analysis of the survey and bring it together with feedback from community events, councillor conversations and other engagement.

The survey does not make the decisions for us. Councillors will be asked consider what people told us alongside evidence, risk, affordability, legislative responsibilities and the work required to maintain essential regional services.

The findings will feed into activity management and asset planning and help inform upcoming councillor workshops.

LTP Line of Sight

Within the LTP there will be a line of sight for from the top of the system (strategic direction) to each individual work programmes or initiatives within the annual business plans.

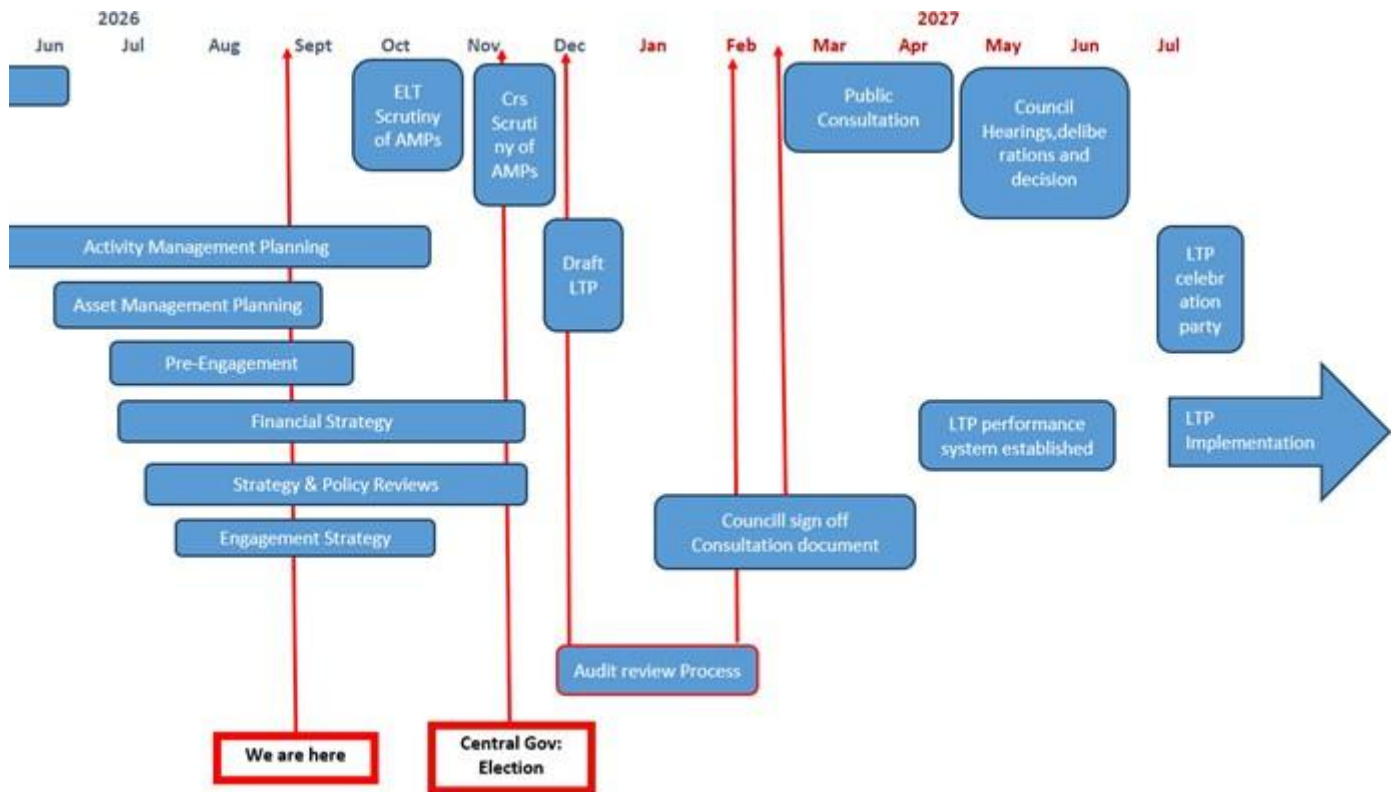
AMPs are a key part of providing line of sight as each AMP topic will have an outcome that we are striving to achieve and levels of service that will form part of our performance management system.

As our regulatory and functional systems change over the coming years of our LTP, the AMPs will be used as a starting point to acknowledge the shifts, expectations, impacts, existing priorities within each topic and assist with identifying how we will deliver in a coordinated and intentional way. It is intended that the AMPs will be kept up to date and used as a key tool for understanding and implementing regulatory changes.



Next major LTP milestones:

Staff are busy undertaking a large amount of work to pull together the LTP information into a succinct summary for an upcoming workshop with Councillors on 24 November. The workshop will provide sufficient detail for Councillors to understand our regional council function and provide substantive direction for the community consultation and broader LTP. Below is a high-level timeline of the next steps in the project.



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

9.6 Government Legislation & Policy Monitor Report

Report by: Nicole White, Policy Analyst

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

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

The key Central Government-driven policy developments that occurred since the last committee meeting include the following. Please refer to the Executive Summary and the relevant sections of the Policy Monitor for more details on each matter.

- RMA Replacement Legislation
- Illustrative National Policy Direction
- Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill
- Rates Capping Bill
- Emergency Management Bill

Recommendation

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

- 1 Receive the report – Policy 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. 2026 09 16 Policy Monitor - agenda version [9.6.1 - 22 pages]

Policy Monitor

Updated: 16 September 2026

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.

Executive Summary – Key Legislative and Policy Developments

RMA Replacement Legislation

The Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill have completed the Committee of the Whole House stage and are now awaiting their final Parliamentary stages. Enactment is expected before 23 September. As attention shifts from legislative development to implementation, Environment Southland is undertaking internal planning and discussions to prepare for the transition to the new planning system and its associated implementation requirements.

Illustrative National Policy Direction

The Government has launched consultation on an illustrative National Policy Direction for the new planning system. While not statutory or legally binding, the document provides an early indication of how national priorities relating to housing and development, infrastructure, primary production, resource use, and environmental values may be implemented under the new planning system. Feedback is open until 16 October 2026.

Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill

The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill is nearing enactment and includes a range of measures aimed at reducing pressure on rates, increasing council accountability and transparency, and refocusing local government on core services. Recent amendments would strengthen councils' ability to recover growth-related infrastructure costs arising from future Fast-track developments through development contributions. The Bill also restricts voting on council committees to elected members, while still allowing non-elected members to participate in an advisory capacity.

Rates Capping Bill

The Local Government (Rates Capping) Bill was introduced and has passed its first reading. The Bill proposes a rates-capping regime requiring councils to generally keep annual rates increases within an initial target range of 2-4 per cent. The target range would be subject to periodic review and may be adjusted over time. The regime would be supported by an independent regulator and limited exemption provisions. The Bill is currently before a select committee, with a report back expected in March 2027. Consultation is expected to be open until 1 December 2026.

Emergency Management Bill

The Emergency Management Bill passed its final reading on 28 August 2026, replacing the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 with a new legislative framework for emergency management. During its final stages, the Bill was amended to strengthen precautionary powers before emergencies are formally declared and to clarify roles, responsibilities, and emergency management functions across the system.

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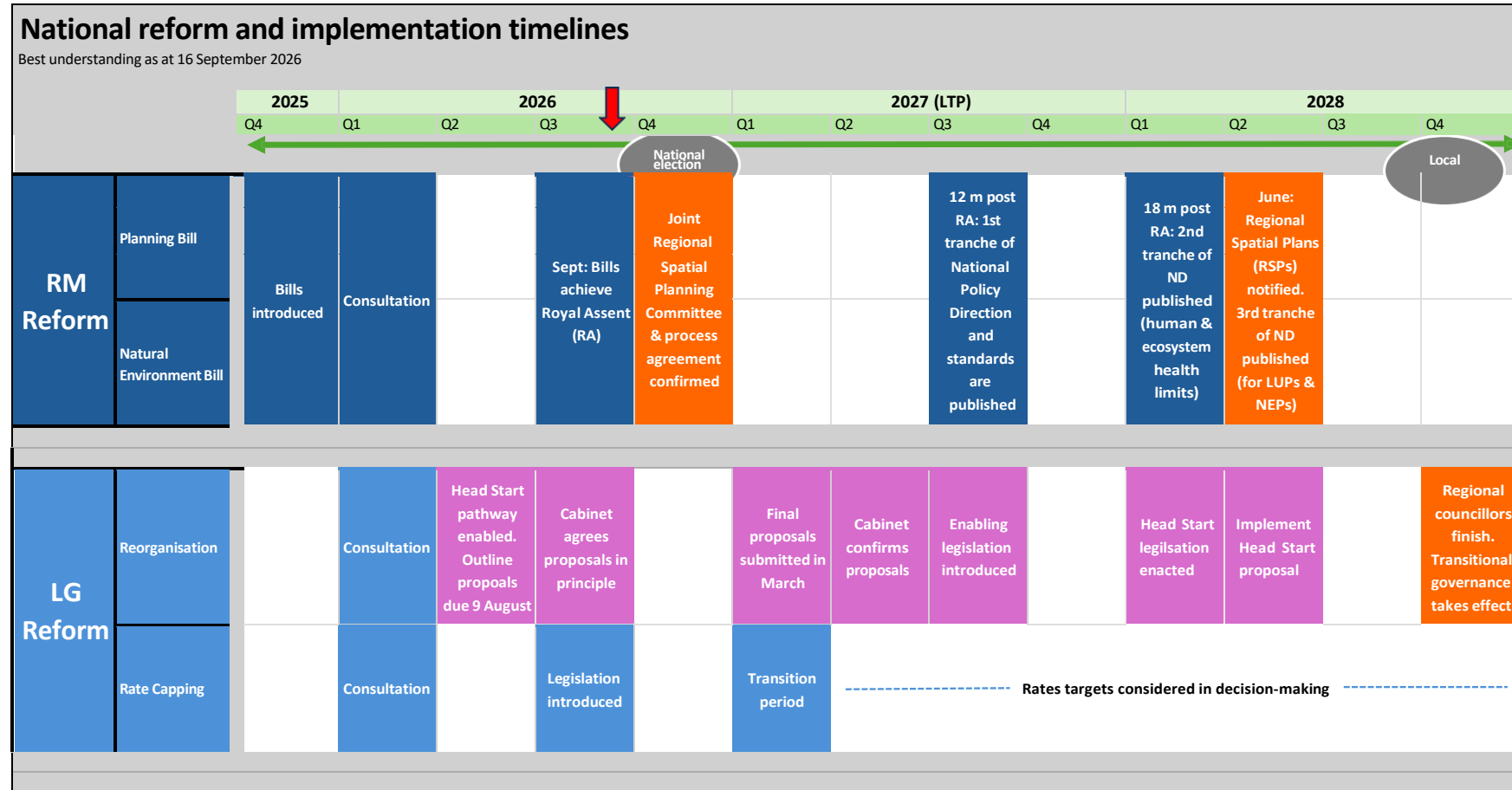
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The following colour coding is used throughout:

Resource Management /Coastal	Climate Change and Biosecurity	Transport and other Infrastructure
Primary Industries	Other topics	Te Tiriti/Te Ao Māori

The format is as follows:

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

Updates

Resource Management	
<i>RMA replacement legislation (Phase 3)</i> <i>Planning Bill</i> <i>Natural Environment Bill</i>	In December 2025, the Government introduced the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The Bills aim to simplify the planning system by consolidating more than 100 existing plans into 17 regional combined plans. The two Bills are expected to operate in tandem, with the Planning Bill focused on land use, urban development, and infrastructure, while the Natural Environment Bill governs environmental protection, resource management, and setting ecological limits. Enactment is expected in September 2026, with the first suite of national direction instruments expected within 12 months of enactment, with draft regional spatial plans to be notified within 21 months and draft natural and environment and land use plans to follow (likely around December 2029) as part of the transition to the new planning system. Below are the links to the various press releases relevant to this Bill: • Implementation/Transition • Infrastructure • Housing Growth • Economic Growth • Renewable Energy • System Overview See also here for the relevant press release to this Bill. The Bills, passed its first reading on 16 December 2025 and were referred to the Environment Committee. The relevant consultation closed on 13 February 2026. The Committee released an interim report on 29 January 2026 and reported the Bills back to Parliament on 20 July 2026. The Committee recommended a range of amendments while retaining the core architecture of the proposed planning system, including: • extending implementation timeframes • retaining first-in, first-served resource allocation • simplifying freshwater farm plan requirements, including reducing audit requirements for lower-risk farms • strengthening links between spatial planning and with climate adaptation planning under the Climate Change Response Act (CCRA)

	- confirming GHG emissions will be managed primarily through the CCRA and the NZ ETS, rather than the planning system - largely retaining existing responsibilities for environmental monitoring, consenting, compliance, and enforcement, while introducing some additional monitoring requirements. Following the select committee process, the Government progressed a number of Amendment Papers through the Committee of the Whole House stage. These amendments included further changes relating to implementation and transition arrangements, national policy direction, iwi and hapū interests, Fast-track approvals, and a range of technical and operational matters. The Bills completed the Committee of the Whole House stage on 25 August 2026. They are now in the final stages of the Parliamentary process and are awaiting their third readings and Royal Assent. The Government continues to signal its intention to enact the legislation before the 2026 General Election. The final content of the legislation will not be confirmed until the remaining Parliamentary stages have been completed. On 25 August 2026, the Government launched consultation on an illustrative National Policy Direction (NPD) for the new planning system. The illustrative NPD is not statutory or legally binding. Instead, it has been released to test the proposed structure and content of future national direction under the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill before formal consultation begins in 2027. The illustrative NPD outlines proposed national directives across themes including housing and development, infrastructure, primary production, resource use, and public values, and provides an early indication of how national priorities may be reflected in the new planning system. Feedback is open until 16 October 2026.
	The reforms introduced through these two Bills are expected to result in fundamental changes to New Zealand's resource management system and therefore all facets of Environment Southland's operations. Key shifts include the introduction of spatial planning, environmental limits, changes to the role of mana whenua, introduction of regulatory relief, reduced opportunities for public participation in some processes, and increased centralisation and standardisation of planning frameworks. Staff will assess the implications of the illustrative National Policy Direction consultation and future national direction proposed under the new planning system. With the Bills now nearing enactment, Environment Southland's focus is increasingly shifting toward implementation and transition planning. This includes monitoring the development of national instruments, assessing implications for Council functions and work programmes, and engaging with central government agencies and the regional sector on implementation requirements, funding arrangements and transition support. Environment Southland submitted on the bills (Objective ID: A1425408) and presented an oral submission to the select committee on 18 March 2026. Council's oral submission can be watched here.
<i>Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025</i>	Passed into law on 20 August 2025, this Act introduced targeted changes to the Resource Management 1991 ahead of its full replacement by two new Act expected later this year. See here for the Beehive release. Key changes include: - A temporary halt on council plan and policy development, (with limited exemptions) until the end of 2027. - New ministerial intervention powers, allow the Minister for the Environment to direct councils to prepare or amend planning documents or use specific process, where there is demonstrated non-compliance with a national policy statement. - Broadened discharge rule provisions under section 70 of the RMA, enabling councils to permit discharges that impact aquatic life, water clarity or colour, and stock drinking water, provided those effects already exist and the relevant plan will improve the within

	10 years. The requirement to consider the effects of floatable or suspended materials for permitted activities has been removed. Councils' ability to review marine farm consent conditions will also be constrained until September 2030. A summary of the Amendment Act, including changes introduced in the final stages of the process is available here. Also, the MfE has published a series of factsheets relating to the Act.
	Council provided a submission to the select committee (Objective ID: A1221000) and spoke to the committee during a formal hearing on 13 March 2025.
<i>National Direction Programme</i>	Since mid-2025, the Government has developed and introduced a range of changes to national direction under the Resource Management Act (RMA). Although these changes have been progressed under the existing RMA framework, the Government has signalled that many of the underlying policy approaches and substantive provisions are likely to be carried through into the reformed resource management system. In the meantime, the amended national direction instruments will remain operative under the RMA and are expected to continue applying until the new system replaces the RMA, which is currently anticipated to occur after December 2030. New national policy statements and national environmental standards include the following: June 2026 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga) Regulations 2026 December 2025 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Detached Minor Residential Units) Regulations 2025 National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025 National Policy Statement for Infrastructure 2025 Amended national direction instruments include the following: May 2026 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Amendment Regulations 2023 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020 April 2026 Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Amendment Regulations 2026 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Activities) Amendment Regulations 2026 December 2025 National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land Amendment 2025 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement Amendment 2025 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity Amendment 2025 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management Amendment 2025 Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Amendment Regulations 2025 National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation Amendment 2025 National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Amendment 2025 Freshwater-related changes are no longer expected to be advanced under the RMA. Instead, these are now anticipated to be progressed through the new planning system, once the two Bills replacing the RMA have been enacted.

	The Ministry for the Environment have the links to each of the national direction instruments, notices, and recommendations and decisions reports. The changes are intended to support infrastructure planning and delivery and enable growth in the primary sector.
	Staff have undertaken substantial work to assess the implications of the new and amended national direction instruments and to ensure Council is well positioned to comply with their requirements. This work continues to inform relevant work programmes and planning processes. Staff will continue to monitor any further national direction changes, including freshwater-related updates.
<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 2024, 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). On 18 May 2026, Cabinet announced a Southland-specific amendment to the Resource Management (Freshwater Farm Plan) Regulations, providing a further extension for certification of Farm Plans in the region. The certification deadline will now be November 2027. Through the Resource Management (Consenting and Other Matters) Amendment Act, the Select Committee has introduced 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. See here for more information. Freshwater Farm Plans would, however, remain within the system as a tool to manage environmental impacts. The Government has signalled a future direction for freshwater farm plans, including a proposed shift towards a more risk-based approach to certification and auditing requirements. The detailed interaction between the future national framework and existing regional requirements remains uncertain and will continue to be monitored as further information becomes available. The Ministry for the Environment is continuing to work with industry, sector groups, and councils to finalise the regulatory framework through the Government's wider resource management reform programme.
	Farm plans have long been a cornerstone of Southland's conceptual 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 carrying out activities that fall under the Freshwater Farm Plan provisions of the RMA have until November 2027 to get their farm plan certified. 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. Following amendments to the RMA, smaller farms (generally between 20-50ha) are now only managed through the SWLP and not the Order in Council. They are required to have a certified farm plan to retain permitted activity status under a number of provisions. The Ministry for the Environment has commissioned an investigation report under s360I of the RMA to consider modifying the Southland Water and Land Plan in relation to the certification timeframe requirements for these smaller land holdings. Consultation on the proposed amendment has now closed. Environment Southland provided feedback on the proposal, alongside other submitters. The feedback will be considered by the Minister Responsible for Resource Management Reform, who will decide whether to proceed to the regulation-making stage. 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. Our guidance materials are now developed and available for public use on the Environment Southland website. The Government has signalled a future direction for freshwater farm plans, including a proposed shift toward a more risk-based approach to certification and auditing requirements. Significant implementation detail remains under development and supporting regulations are still being drafted. MCERT has advised that Freshwater Farm Plan regulations are not expected to be gazetted before the 2026 General Election, with current indications suggesting gazettal may occur during 2027. However, timing and implementation arrangements remain subject to further policy and regulatory decisions. Staff are assessing the implications of these developments for the Southland Water and Land Plan and will continue to engage with central government, industry groups, practitioners, and landholders as further information becomes available.
<i>Fast-Track Approvals Act</i>	The Fast-track Approvals Act commenced on 23 December 2024, establishing a permanent fast-track regime for infrastructure and development projects of significant regional or national benefit. It replaced the temporary COVID-19 fast-track law with a permanent process combining approvals under key Acts like the RMA. The FTAA is a key element of the current government's "Going for Growth" agenda. Scope: • 149 projects appear in Schedule 2 of the Act and can apply directly to the Environment Protection Authority, as their inclusion removes the need for a ministerial referral. • The EPA began accepting substantive applications in early 2025, following commencement of the Act, see here. After initial slow progress, FTAA processes have accelerated significantly in the second half of the 2025 with a number of major projects approved. Southland Projects listed in the Act: • ICC – Awarua Alternate Water Supply Project • Sanford Ltd – Makarewa Hatchery Project • Ngāi Tahu Seafood – Hananui Aquaculture Project (open ocean) ◦ Approved through the Fast-Track process on 10 August 2026. • Impact Marine Bluff Ltd – Bluff Salmon Farm Project (land-based) • Contact Energy – Southland Wind Farm Project ◦ Approved through the Fast-Track process on 2 April 2026. Process notes: • Panels have discretion to decline or condition projects if their environmental impacts are considered too great or cannot be adequately mitigated. Details on the relevant process and projects are available here. More information: https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/ In addition, the Government introduced the Fast Track Approvals Amendment Bill on 3 November 2025, proposing a number of changes to the initial legislation, including a new fast-track consent option for new supermarkets that would improve grocery competition. The Bill was enacted on 16 December 2025.

	Fast-track processes continue to gain momentum nationally. On 10 August 2026, the Hananui Aquaculture Project off Rakiura/Stewart Island became the first aquaculture project approved through the Fast-track process. The Southland Wind Farm Project has also been approved through the Fast-track process. The EPA panel considering the Jericho wind farm application from Pioneer Energy Group partnership has called for submissions by 5 October 2026. A draft submission has been prepared for Council consideration on 23 September 2026. Timeframes for fast-track inputs are tight. While these have been met to date by Environment Southland, there has been some pressure on this relative to other workloads. Staff attended the EPA and MCERT Fast-track roadshow in Queenstown in August 2026 and participated in a national session with the EPA Panel Convenor in September 2026. These engagements provided further guidance on Fast-track processes and implementation expectations. Staff will continue to monitor existing Southland projects and any future Fast-track applications lodged within the region.
<i>Resource Management (Duration of Consents) Amendment Act</i>	On 9 December 2025, the Government introduced and passed this Bill under parliamentary urgency, enabling expedited passage without select committee review. Royal Assent was achieved on 16 December. The Bill extends the duration of existing or recently expired resource consents (excluding water and wastewater) until 31 December 2027. This measure is intended to provide certainty for consent holders during the transition to the new planning system. See here for the relevant press release.
	The extension is intended to reduce immediate pressure on councils and consent holders to reapply during the transition period. Councils will need to update consent registers and communicate changes to affected parties. Transitional planning is important to manage administrative processes and prepare for the new framework under the Planning and Natural Environment Bills. In the Southland region, 469 current authorisations issued under the Resource Management Act were affected.

Coastal

<i>Offshore Renewable Energy Act</i>	The Offshore Renewable Energy Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 9 July 2026, establishing NZ's first regulatory framework for offshore renewable energy developments, including offshore wind, solar, wave, and tidal projects. The legislation delivers on the Government's commitment under Electrify NZ to provide greater certainty for investment, enable the selection of developments that best serve NZ's national interests, and manage risks to Crown and the public arising from offshore renewable energy activities. The Act introduces a two-stage permitting regime. Developers must first obtain a feasibility permit to investigate a proposed site before applying for a commercial permit to construct and operate offshore renewable energy infrastructure. The framework also includes provisions for safety zones around developments and requires developers to decommission infrastructure at the end of its operational life. During the legislative process, the Government has amended the Bill in response to submissions from offshore wind developers, concerning seabed mining. The amendments enable designated marine space for offshore renewable projects while pausing new permit grants for seabed mining under the Crown's Mineral Act. The Government has indicated that officials will provide advice on the timing of the first permit tender round, which is expected to commence in the coming months.
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	MBIE is continuing to develop regulations that will support implementation of the new regime. Please refer to this link for an overview of the proposed regulatory regime . Further information is also available here .
	Offshore renewable electricity generation within the Southland region is likely to have a substantial impact on the management of marine resources within Southland's coastal waters, with implications for the 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.

Climate Change

<i>Climate Change Response Amendment Bill</i>	The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 15 July 2026 and is awaiting its first reading. The stated aim of the Bill is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Climate Change Response Act 2002 through targeted changes relating to climate adaptation planning, governance of the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS), industrial allocation settings, carbon removal activities, and other administrative and operational provisions. A key component of the Bill is the introduction of requirements for councils to prepare climate adaptation plans for priority locations that face significant climate-related natural hazard risks. The Bill also proposes changes to support the operation of the NZ ETS, including enhanced market governance arrangements, a mechanism to add new emissions sources and carbon removal activities to the scheme, and amendments intended to reduce duplication and complexity within the existing legislative framework. The Government has stated that the changes do not alter the core architecture of NZ's climate change framework or its statutory emissions reduction targets.
	These proposals have the potential to influence how Environment Southland plans for and responds to climate-related risks. Given the regional significance of these changes, staff are undertaking analysis of the Bill and are likely to prepare a submission during the select committee process. Consultation will open after the first reading of the Bill.
<i>Climate Change Response (Tort Liability) Amendment Bill</i>	The Climate Change Response (Tort Liability) Amendment Bill passed its final reading on 18 August 2026. The Bill amends the Climate Change Response Act 2002 to prevent findings of liability in tort for climate change damage or harm caused by greenhouse gas emissions in both current and future court proceedings. The Government stated that climate change obligations should continue to be addressed through New Zealand's statutory climate change framework, including the Climate Change

	Response Act and the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme, rather than through civil litigation.
	The Bill is not expected to have direct implications for Environment Southland's statutory functions. Staff will maintain a watching brief on any implications arising from implementation of the legislation.
<i>Emergency Management Bill (No 2)</i>	A comprehensive overhaul of its emergency management system is being progressed, 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. This Bill will be replacing the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. 21 policy proposals for the reform, as communicated in August 2025, are as follows: • Clarify who is in control during emergencies (particularly when undeclared) and clarify accountabilities at the local level. • Improve how Civil Defence Emergency Management Group plans are developed and with whose input, given they drive change on the ground. • Provide for representation of iwi Māori, rural communities and the wider community on Coordinating Executive Groups. • Expand the tools available to improve assurance of the system, e.g. through rules or Compliance Orders. • Expand the lifeline utilities/essential infrastructure providers that can be recognised under the legislation (e.g. certain digital services and solid waste). The Emergency Management Bill (No 2) was released on 9 December 2025 with the consultation by the select committee running until 3 February 2026. See here for more details. The select committee has released its final report to the House on 5 June 2026. The Committee proposed a number of changes in response to submissions, including: • enabling additional members with relevant skills and experiences to be co-opted onto Emergency Management Committees • introducing liability protections for precautionary actions taken prior to a formal declaration • strengthening links between regional emergency management plans and Long-Term Plans • requiring consideration of how functions under other legislation (e.g. RMA) support emergency management responsibilities • strengthening engagement requirements with iwi, Māori, rural communities, and disproportionately affected groups in national strategy development • clarifying roles, powers, and delegation arrangements within the system. During the Bill's final stages, the Government introduced additional amendments to strengthen pre-declaration powers. These amendments enable Emergency Management Committees to undertake precautionary actions, such as clearing debris and opening river mouths, before a state of emergency is declared. The amendments also provide the Director-General of Emergency Management with powers to direct local emergency management authorities where necessary to preserve life, prevent injury, or prevent serious property damage. The Bill passed its third reading on 28 August 2026 and now awaits Royal Assent. Most provisions are expected to come into force the day following Royal Assent, although some provisions have delayed commencement timeframes ranging from six months to two years. The Government has indicated that implementation will form part of the wider Strengthening Emergency Management Roadmap and associated operational improvement programme.

	Given Southland's exposure to multiple natural hazards including flooding, Environment Southland has a high stake in the reform of the system to ensure it is fit for purpose. Emergency Management Southland provided a written submission during the early public engagement in 2025, while participating in the development of a submission by the regional sector group (Objective ID: fA73336). Environment Southland has submitted on the Emergency Management Bill (Objective ID: A1425408) and presented an oral submission to the select committee on 25 February 2026. Staff have completed an initial assessment of the legislation and will continue to support implementation planning and assess operational implications as the new framework is brought into force.
<i>Amendments to Second Emissions Reduction Plan 2026-30 (ERP2)</i>	Final amended ERP2 and addendum were published on 29 January 2026. The Government confirmed it will not proceed with an on-farm agricultural emissions pricing system by 2030, instead opting for a technology-led approach to reducing agricultural emissions. 11 emissions reduction tools are expected to be rolled out by 2030. A discussion document was released in November 2025 to support consultation. The amended ERP2 forms the Government's primary strategy for meeting emissions budgets while aligning with revised biogenic methane targets and broader changes to ETS and forestry settings.
<i>Climate Change Response (2050 Target and Other Matters) Act</i>	In December 2025, the government enacted the Climate Change Response (2050 Target and Other Matters) Act, establishing a new biogenic methane target of 14-24% below 2017 levels by 2050. This replaced the previous target range of 24-47%. The revised target aligns with the Government's technology-led approach outlined in ERP2, with greater emphasis placed on research, innovation, measurement, and adoption of emissions-reduction technologies rather than emissions pricing mechanisms.
	Environment Southland has an interest in supporting an effective climate change response while maintaining the long-term resilience and productivity of Southland's rural economy. These policy changes collectively signal a shift toward technology-led emissions reduction, revised methane targets, and tighter controls on forestry conversions entering the ETS. Given Southland's significant agricultural sector and ongoing community interest in farm-to-forestry conversions, these changes have the potential to influence future land-use decisions across the region. Staff continue to monitor developments and work with territorial authorities through the Regional Climate Change Working Group to support regional planning, climate change responses, and broader strategic discussions relating to land use and emissions reduction.

Biodiversity & Biosecurity

<i>Amendments to the Biosecurity Act</i>	The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) ran a consultation on this matter in December 2024. More details are available here. While the Government previously signalled that a Biosecurity Amendment Bill would be introduced in 2026, no Bill has yet been introduced to Parliament. Staff will continue to monitor developments.
	Environment Southland's submission was provided to the Ministry within the consultation timeframe (Objective ID: A1208835). It is likely to be participating in the select committee's formal consultation process once the relevant bill becomes available.

<i>Conservation system reform</i> <i>Conservation Amendment Bill</i> <i>National Conservation Policy Statement</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 includes more details on the relevant proposals. The public submission closed on 28 February 2025. A relevant press release can be accessed here. The Conservation Amendment Bill has been introduced to Parliament on 7 May 2026 and the Environment Select Committee have opened for consultation until 2 July 2026. Key proposals: • clearer rules for granting concessions – certain activities would be pre-approved activities e.g. taking water samples for scientific research • develop a new document (a National Conservation Policy Statement) to manage all conservation land (replacing existing, separate management plans for conservation land and national parks) • introduce access fees for international visitors at a small number of highly visited sites (e.g. Milford Sound) • make it easier to exchange or dispose of public conservation land - over half of New Zealand conservation land will be eligible for land exchange and disposal under the new settings. Parallel consultation has opened on a National Conservation Policy Statement to sit under the amended Act once finalised, closing 10 August 2026. This will set national direction for conservation land through a new planning hierarchy, including visitor zoning, activity status (e.g., exempt and pre-approved activities), and standardised concession frameworks.
	Environment Southland's submissions were provided to the Department of Conservation in February 2025 (Objective ID: 1236427 and 1236547). The submissions for the Bill and the National Conservation Policy Statement were both lodged within their consultation timeframes (Objective ID: A1519995, A1506580) Furthermore, Environment Southland has been invited to speak to Select Committee regarding the Conservation Amendment Bill, scheduled on 17 September 2026.
<i>Implementing New Zealand's biodiversity Strategy 2025-2030</i>	The Department of Conservation led a public consultation on the next implementation plan for New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy, with submissions closed on 30 June 2025. The discussion documents and other supporting materials can be viewed here. Following consideration of submissions, a new implementation plan, Action for Nature, was developed and approved by Cabinet. The plan was publicly released by the Minister of Conservation. It sets out the Government's priorities and actions to restore biodiversity and support nature to recover over the coming period, and forms New Zealand's implementation plan under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
	Environment Southland's submission was provided to the Department of Conservation within the consultation timeframe (Objective ID: A1303998) in June 2025. Staff reported to the Strategy & Policy Committee regarding impact of submission on 3 June 2026.

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 2024, 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 third reading on 31 July 2025 and formally passed into law on 5 August 2025. Notably, the Act amends the decommissioning regime by introducing Ministerial discretion to assign liability to former permit holders or those who held an interest in a permit. More details are available here.
	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.

Te Tiriti & Te ao Māori legislation

References to Te Tiriti in legislation

The National-New Zealand First coalition agreement includes a commitment to review legislation, excluding Treaty settlement legislation, that contains references to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The review seeks to either repeal those references or replace them with more specific wording describing the relevance and application of the Treaty in individual Acts.

The Government began this process in 2025 through a review of Treaty references across 19 Acts administered by 11 government agencies. More information is available [here](#).

A letter dated 2 April 2026, signed by Ministers Paul Goldsmith and Shane Jones, outlined Cabinet's decisions to repeal, amend, or standardise Treaty references across a range of legislation.

References to be repealed:

1. Education and Training Act
2. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act
3. Land Transport Management Act
4. Organic Products and Production Act
5. Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act
6. Crown Pastoral Land Act
7. Plant Variety Rights Act

References to be amended:

8. Data and Statistics Act
9. Hazardous Substance and New Organisms Act

Cabinet also agreed that references to the Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi should be standardised where appropriate and that, in a number of Acts, Treaty-related obligations should generally not exceed a "take into account" threshold.

The Government has now introduced three Bills to implement these decisions:

- References to Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi (Repeals) Amendment Bill
- References to Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi (Strength of Legislative Obligations) Amendment Bill
- References to Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi (Standardisation) Amendment Bill

The Bills were introduced to Parliament in September 2026 and are progressing through their first reading stages. Collectively, they seek to repeal, amend, standardise, or clarify Treaty references across a range of legislation, while excluding Treaty settlement legislation. The Bills are [expected to be referred to select committee](#) following their first readings, providing an opportunity for public submissions.

The proposed changes are not expected to have direct implications for most of Environment Southland's statutory functions. However, amendments to legislation containing Treaty references may influence the broader policy and legislative environment in which councils operate. Staff will maintain a watching brief on the progression of the Bills.

Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) (Customary Marine Title) Amendment Act

This Act was passed into law on 24 October 2025.

It affirms that Coastal Marine Titles, which gives holders the power to refuse certain resource consents, should only be granted where continuous exclusive use since 1840 can be proven.

Key change include:

- Overturning the legal reasoning in *Re Edwards* decision
- Clarifications to section 58, defining "exclusive use and occupation" and "substantial interruption"
- Amending section 106 to reinforce the original evidentiary threshold (stricter threshold)

	Clarified interpretation of the Act's preamble, purpose, and Treaty sections to ensure section 58 is applied as originally intended. The changes will apply to judgments made after 25 July 2024 and all undecided applications in the Court of Crown engagement pathways. Up to \$15 million will support affected groups. See below for relevant Beehive Press releases: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/restoring-test-customary-marine-title
	Latest updates on identification of customary marine titles within Southland's coastal and marine areas are available on Environment Southland's website.

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 in 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 set 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 new national standards for wastewater and stormwater environmental performance among other things. This Bill was enacted in August 2025. More information on the water services legislation changes is published on the Taumata Arowai website.
	Environment Southland submitted on this matter (Objective ID: 1233315) and orally presented to the committee during a formal hearing in March 2025.
<i>Water Services (Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards) Regulations</i>	The Water Services Authority Taumata Arowai ran a public consultation on wastewater environmental performance standards in April 2025. The proposed standards are expected to: - improve consenting efficiency for wastewater treatment plants and support the upcoming wave of re-consenting - set consistent treatment expectations while balancing upgrade costs with public health and environmental outcomes - support national consistency and improved performance data to inform planning and community engagement The regulations are now in force, except for overflow and bypass requirements, which take effect from December 2028 to align with future stormwater and wastewater risk management plans. See here for the relevant press release.
	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).
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Transport	
<i>Transport Government Policy Statement (GPS)</i>	The Government Policy Statement (GPS) on land transport guides NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), KiwiRail and local authorities on land transport investment. The current GPS was released in June 2024. The current GPS prioritises economic growth and productivity, maintenance and resilience, safety, and value for money. It includes an expanded Roads of National Significance programme and places greater emphasis on infrastructure delivery and network performance. On 13 August 2026, the Minister of Transport released a Ministerial Statement on Land Transport to inform preparation of Long-Term Plans (LTPs) and Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs) ahead of the next GPS. The Government has indicated that a draft GPS 2027-37 will be released for public consultation in early 2027. The Ministerial Statement signals that the future GPS is likely to have an overarching focus on value for money, investment discipline, maintenance and renewals, resilience, transit-oriented development, economic growth and productivity, and safety.
	The South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group and the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees submitted on the current GPS with input from Environment Southland staff. Staff have undertaken the necessary modifications to align the Regional Land Transport Plan with the current GPS. The Ministerial Statement provides an early indication of likely priorities for GPS 2027-37 and assists preparation of the next Regional Land Transport Plan. As the RLTP must give effect to the GPS, the Regional Transport Committee will need to take account of emerging national priorities while retaining flexibility until the draft GPS is released for consultation in early 2027. NZTA has now released an initial draft Investment Prioritisation Method (IPM) 2027 to support development of continuous programme and improvement activity bids for the 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme. The draft IPM incorporates technical updates to the previous methodology and reflects the direction signalled in the Ministerial Statement, although it may be refined following release of the draft GPS 2027-37. NZTA has also advised that additional supporting documents, including a Draft State Highway Asset Management Plan and Draft State Highway Investment Proposal, will be released to support development of the 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme.
<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> a) Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendment Act b) Public Works Amendment Bill	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 passed into law in August 2025. It inserted a new Part 2A into the Public Works Act 1981, creating an accelerated land acquisition process for a limited class of projects. The Public Works Amendment Bill passed its first reading on 9 December 2025 and the Transport and Infrastructure Committee reported back to the House on 18 February. See here for the relevant press release. This Bill represents the next phase of reform, proposing broader and more structural changes, see here for more information.
	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 relevant developments.

Other Infrastructure

<i>National Infrastructure Plan</i>	The Infrastructure Commission released the final National Infrastructure Plan on 17 February 2026 following consultation on the draft in 2025. It appears that the Plan provides a system-wide assessment of infrastructure pressures and outlines a practical pathway for improving how NZ plans, funds, maintains and delivers infrastructure. Key themes include improving asset management, prioritising cost-effective projects, and strengthening resilience in response to demographic change, climate impacts and ageing infrastructure. See here for the beehive press release. Notably, the final plan places a much stronger emphasis on flood infrastructure compared with the draft plan. The Plan identifies 16 system-wide recommendations and 10 priority actions for the next decade. On 16 June 2026, the Government released its formal response, supporting all 16 recommendations (three in principle) and confirming action on all 10 priority areas identified by the Commission. The Government noted that 11 of the 16 recommendations align with work already underway, including:
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	• integrated spatial planning • implementation of the National Adaptation Framework • time-of-use pricing • road pricing reform • infrastructure investment improvements. In addition, the Government committed to four further actions: 1. reviewing the land transport funding system 2. legislating for departments and Crown entities to publish long-term investment plans and report on asset management 3. strengthening participation and data quality within the National Infrastructure Pipeline 4. improving public sector infrastructure project leadership and capability. The Government's response is available here.
	The national plan is expected to have a significant impact on the national infrastructure policy which would in turn affect Environment Southland's operations and the broader Southland region. Environment Southland's submission, provided to the Commission in August 2025, advocated for increasing focus on flood mitigation infrastructure amongst other things (Objective ID: A1314818). The Plan's focus on improved asset management, greater transparency, and long-term investment planning is expected to have implications for reporting, programme sequencing and funding expectations. Staff will continue to monitor implementation of the government's response to the Commission's recommendations.
<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 here.
	For Southland, the RIF co-investment scheme currently supports various projects across the region. - A suspensory loan of up to \$15.35m has been made available 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. More details are available here. Click here for the SDC webpage on Rakiura energy solutions. - \$14.9 million will support a new package of work designed to further reduce flood risk for Invercargill City, Gore and Mātaura, and for communities in the lower Ōreti catchment. More details can be found here. - It was announced on 14 November 2025 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 21 January 2026, the Government announced a \$3.1 million loan through the RIF to initiate an industrial subdivision near Gore. Construction is expected to commence in mid-2026. See here for more details. - On 12 August 2026, the Government announced a \$15 million Regional Infrastructure Fund investment to support the development of a \$31 million

	critical minerals and green hydrogen facility in Southland. The project is intended to support regional economic development, advanced manufacturing, and emerging energy technologies, with the RIF investment comprising a mix of loan and equity funding.
<i>Infrastructure Funding and Financing Amendment Act</i>	On 26 November 2025, the Government introduced this Bill as part of Pillar 2 of its Going for Housing Growth programme. The Bill amends the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act 2020 to broaden the scope of levy-funded projects beyond housing-related infrastructure to include transport and water services. It also removes barriers to levy use, enables levy deferrals to improve affordability, and streamlines approval processes to accelerate urban development. The Bill completed its passage through Parliament on 28 July 2026 and has received Royal assent. The Government has stated that the amendments will provide councils and infrastructure providers with greater flexibility to fund and finance infrastructure required to support housing growth and urban development, while reducing reliance on upfront rates funding and development contributions. Key changes include: • Broadening the range of infrastructure projects eligible for levy funding, including transport and water infrastructure. • Enabling levy deferrals to improve affordability for households. • Simplifying and streamlining the approval process for levy-funded projects. • Improving the flexibility and attractiveness of the Infrastructure Funding and Financing regime for councils, developers, and infrastructure providers.
	Environment Southland will continue to monitor implementation of the amendments.

Other Topics

<i>Simplifying Local Government proposal</i>	On 25 November 2025, the Government announced proposals to reform local government, including replacing regional councils with Combined Territorial Boards responsible for regional functions such as environmental management, transport planning, and emergency management. The reform programme includes the voluntary "Head Start" pathway, which allows groups of territorial authorities and/or unitary authorities to submit proposals for local government reorganisation before 9 August 2026. The proposals would represent a significant change to local government structures and the delivery of regional functions. Legislative pathways, governance arrangements, transition processes, and the future allocation of responsibilities remain under development. The Government's reform programme is occurring alongside the Local Government Commission's investigation into potential reorganisation of Southland's councils. The Head Start submission period closed on 9 August 2026. Two proposals were submitted for Southland: a one-unitary-authority model supported by Invercargill City Council, and a two-unitary-authority model supported by Southland District Council. Gore District Council subsequently withdrew its support for the Head Start proposals and instead resolved to continue participating in the Local Government Commission's investigation process. Environment Southland has publicly expressed support for Invercargill City Council's development of a one Southland-wide unitary authority. Government officials are currently assessing Head Start proposals, with Cabinet expected to consider proposals for progression to the detailed design phase during September 2026. The Government is
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	also continuing to consider arrangements for areas that do not proceed through the Head Start pathway.
	The Government's local government reform programme and the Local Government Commission's investigation into Southland local government reorganisation could have significant implications for governance arrangements and the future delivery of regional functions. Environment Southland lodged its submission on the Government's reform proposals on 20 February 2026 (Objective ID: A1563609) and continues to engage with territorial authorities, iwi partners, central government agencies, and the Local Government Commission. Environment Southland has publicly expressed support for Invercargill City Council's one Southland-wide unitary authority proposal. Staff will continue to monitor developments and provide advice to Council as decisions are made and the future reform pathway becomes clearer.
<i>Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill</i>	In April 2026, the Government introduced the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill, which proposes changes to how Crown pastoral lease land in the South Island High Country can be used. The Bill would allow pastoral leaseholders to continue farming while also undertaking a wider range of additional activities, such as farm shops, small-scale hospitality, horticulture and cropping, and renewable energy projects, subject to approvals. The Bill is intended to give leaseholders greater flexibility to diversify their income, streamline approval processes, and reduce compliance requirements, while maintaining or enhancing the inherent values of High Country land. The Bill has been introduced to Parliament and will proceed through the Select Committee process, including public submissions.
	Southland contains 13 active Crown pastoral leases. Staff will continue to assess the implications of the proposals for these lease areas and the wider region.
<i>Local Government (Rates Capping) Amendment Bill</i>	On 25 August 2026, the Government introduced the Local Government (Rates Capping) Bill. The Bill would establish a rates-capping regime under which councils would generally be required to keep annual rates increases within an initial target range of 2-4 per cent. Water services would be excluded from the regime and continue to be regulated separately. An independent regulator would be established to monitor compliance, assess exemption applications, provide implementation guidance, and advise on future target ranges. The Bill passed its first reading on 1 September 2026 and has opened for public consultation. The select committee is expected to report back to the House in March 2027. Councils will be required to have regard to the target range when preparing Long-Term Plans from 1 July 2027. The regime is proposed to become fully binding from 1 July 2029. The Bill includes time-bound exemptions for exceptional circumstances, such as natural disasters, and for situations where councils can demonstrate a justified need to operate outside the target range.
	The proposed regime has the potential to significantly influence Council's long-term financial planning and funding decisions. Councils will need to consider the target range when preparing future Long-Term Plans and may need to utilise exemption processes where circumstances justify rates increases outside the prescribed range. The interaction between the proposed rates cap, ongoing local government reform, resource management reform, and other regulatory changes will continue to be assessed as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

	Environment Southland submitted on the original proposal (Objective ID: A1417886) and will continue to monitor the Bill's progression and assess any implications for Council, including any opportunities to participate in the select committee process.
<i>Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill</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 Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill was introduced on 14 July 2025. Its first reading passed on 17 July 2025, and the Select Committee reported back in November 2025. The Bill passed its second reading on 30 June 2026 and has subsequently been amended through the Committee of the Whole House process. Proposed amendments include restricting voting rights on council committees to elected members, except where voting rights arise through statutory or Treaty settlement-based arrangements. This bill sought to reduce pressure on council rates by: • Refocusing the purpose of local government through removal of the four well-beings • New financial measuring and publicising council performance • Mandatory disclosure of contractor and consultant spending • Prioritising core services in council spending • Strengthening council accountability and transparency • Providing regulatory relief to councils. On 14 September 2026, the Government announced proposed amendments to infrastructure funding settings to improve councils' ability to recover growth-related infrastructure costs associated with future Fast-track developments. The changes would allow councils to amend Development Contribution policies in certain circumstances following a Fast-track approval and address situations where infrastructure impacts extend across council boundaries. The proposed amendments would not apply to developments that have already been approved or where a substantive Fast-track application has already been lodged. The changes are expected to be progressed through an Amendment Paper to the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill. The Government has indicated that the amendments respond to concerns raised by councils regarding the impact of Fast-track developments on existing and future infrastructure requirements and associated costs.
	Environment Southland's submission was provided to the Department on 27 August 2025 (Objective ID: A1321306) and orally presented to the Select Committee. The proposed development contribution changes may provide councils with additional tools to recover growth-related infrastructure costs arising from future Fast-track developments. While the direct impacts are likely to be greater for territorial authorities responsible for transport and water infrastructure, the changes are also relevant in the context of wider local government reform, infrastructure funding arrangements, and the proposed rates-capping regime. The Bill also restricts voting on council committees to elected members, while continuing to allow non-elected members to participate in an advisory capacity.

9.7 Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Group Update

Report by: Liz Devery, Regional Planning Manager

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

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 Strategy, Policy, and Regional Planning Update Report.

Background

The Strategy and Policy team is 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 is responsible for:

- Developing resource management and regional plan and policy development;
- 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 and Council meeting at the end of 2025 is outlined below.

National

Government reform

The Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill are expected to pass the third reading and get Royal Assent by the date of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting. Staff have been working to understand the implications of the legislative changes and particularly the transitional processes that need to be established to ensure that there is continuity of work between the RMA and the new system.

Rates capping legislation has been introduced to the house and has been referred to the Finance and Expenditure Committee. Environment Southland will be making a submission on this

The Policy Monitor paper on the agenda covers other legislative changes currently progressing through the house.

Regional

Navigation Safety Bylaw – Hearing progress

The Hearing on the Navigation Safety Bylaw has now been closed, with the final Hearing session being held on Tuesday 8 September. The Hearing panel are now developing their recommendation report with the intention of having recommendations to Council in the coming months.

Appeals to the Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan

Environment Southland has filed documentation with the Environment Court that seeks the resolution of the appeal matters on Rule 78 – Weed and Sediment Removal for Drainage Management, through a Court initiated Plan Change. We are awaiting directions from the Court. In the interim, the Regional Planning team is supporting the Catchment Operations team with a review of the Code of Practice for River Management to ensure that operational practice aligns with the direction set within the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan on these matters.

Plan Modification proposals

On 15 August, the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) shared their investigation report on potential modifications to the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan. As outlined in previous Committee meetings, the modifications were proposed by Environment Southland in a bid to progress work that had been highlighted through previous planning processes.

The investigation report found that modifications for farm plans and river management met the s360I criteria. However, it reached the conclusion that the suggested modifications relating to wetlands and other positive actions did not.

Following a briefing and public workshop with Councillors, feedback was provided to MCERT on the investigation report. This feedback was in support of the findings in relation to farm plans and river management (subject to minor amendments) and provided a position that countered the investigation report's stance in relation to wetlands and positive actions. The feedback will be brought to Full Council for retrospective approval at the next opportunity.

Natural Hazards and the Gore District Plan Review

Between the last Strategy and Policy Committee meeting and the drafting of this agenda (16 September 2026) the Regional Planning team have fielded 21 natural hazards related enquiries, with a total of 62 enquiries this financial year. This is an increase on the same period as last year. Some involve multiple follow up interactions, and some have required detail to address the Council's obligations under the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards. These enquiries were from members of the public and organisations seeking information to inform potential subdivision and building consents, or to answer questions people have received from insurance and finance companies.

There has been media attention on the Gore District Plan natural hazards provisions and the implications for building and developing in areas of the Gore District. Environment Southland's position as a regional council is to provide information that will support the community and the Gore District Council's decisions in relation to natural hazards.

Mediation on the Gore District Plan

The mediation for the Groundswell appeal on the Proposed Gore District Plan is scheduled for the week beginning 12 October. Environment Southland is participating on the mediation relating to the natural hazards rules. Due to this matter being "before the courts" and being subject to privilege this report isn't able to provide an update on Environment Southland's position or expected timeframe to resolution.

Regional Transport Planning – Stock Effluent Disposal Sites

The Regional Planning team is currently scoping a proposal to investigate options for a potential Southland-wide network of Stock Effluent Dump Sites (STEDs) to address the risk of livestock effluent discharges on roads associated with changing farming practices and stock transport patterns. This is in response to discussions earlier this year around resourcing an additional site in Southland, noting that there exists only the one public STED in Southland, being in Five Rivers.

At this stage, the work is exploratory only, with no decisions having been made on whether additional facilities will proceed, where they may be located, or how they would be funded and operated. Investigations are focused on understanding regional needs, assessing potential delivery models, engaging with NZTA/Waka Kotahi and industry stakeholders, and evaluating possible opportunities, including a potential pilot facility. Any future proposals would be subject to further analysis, funding considerations, and formal Council decision-making processes.

This step is the development of a strategy for Southland, which will be required should there be a future need for funding and inclusion in the National Land Transport Plan.

Regional Spatial Planning

The CE forum is meeting on 24 September to discuss the progress towards initiating a Regional Spatial Plan. A report has been prepared for this meeting which indicates that a Regional Spatial Plan is a statutory requirement of the new planning system. The report also indicates that a letter is being sent by the four councils to request support for this work from Te Ao Marama Incorporated on behalf of Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku. Additionally, a joint governance workshop for elected Local Government representatives and the Te Ao Marama Incorporated Board is planned for 8 December which will enable all agencies to meet collectively to discuss the regional approach to this work.

Partnership reporting

During 2025/26, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated continued to give effect to the Charter of Understanding, *He Huarahi mō Ngā Uri Whakatupu*, and the associated Partnership Protocol. A significant milestone was the signing of the updated Charter by Environment Southland in July 2025, alongside the other six signatory councils and papatipu rūnanga during the 2025/26 year. Environment Southland supported this collective process through its secretariat role for Te Rōpū Taiao, including coordinating the Charter review, governance hui and associated terms of reference.

The partnership work programme was also reviewed and refocused during the year in response to resource management and local government reform, while maintaining shared priorities across environmental policy, science and mātauranga, climate resilience and operational delivery. Mana whenua participation in Council governance continued through representation on standing committees. For the new triennium, Stewart Bull was appointed to the Strategy and Policy Committee and Evelyn Cook to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee, while mana whenua representatives and Te Ao Mārama Board members also participated in relevant Council workshops and strategic discussions throughout the year.

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

9.8 Update on Councillor Requests and Actions

Report by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation

Report Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose

This report captures Councillor requests and actions that have occurred during Strategy and Policy Committee meetings and provides an update on how these are being responded to.

Date	Councillor Request/Action	Update
August 2026	What was the total cost of securing the Rule 24 Environment Court Decision	Verbal Update will be given
August 2026	Who is going to lead follow-up work regarding ownership, maintenance responsibilities and potential MOU arrangements for the Tuatapere Domain Flood Banks?	Verbal Update will be given

Recommendation

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

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

Fit with strategic framework

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

Attachments

Nil

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

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

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 Waiau Council Direction on Approach**

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:

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUND UNDERS S.48(1)
11.1 Waiau Council Direction on Approach	To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)