



22 AUG 2024

Tēnā koe,

Re: Next steps for national direction on natural hazards under the RMA

I am writing to update you on proposed national direction on how to manage risks from floods, landslides and other natural hazards when planning for new development under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The Government will use a single regulatory instrument to provide direction to councils on how to identify potential natural hazards, assess the risk they pose, and respond to that risk.

The previous government sought public feedback on a proposed National Policy Statement for Natural Hazard Decision-making (NPS-NHD) last year. At the time this was intended to be a first step in a two-step national direction process, with the NPS-NHD providing interim guidance while detailed and comprehensive national direction on natural hazards was developed.

Through the public engagement process, 102 submissions were received from a wide range of organisations and individuals, including local government. Many submitters considered that the national direction would be more effective if advanced as a single instrument, as it is more workable to make changes once rather than repeatedly.

The Government has therefore decided to progress national direction for natural hazards through a single instrument, to be in place by mid-2025. This process allows for better alignment with the RMA reform programme, as the proposals are complementary. The national direction will be advanced through phase two of our RMA reform programme, which includes changes to national direction instruments.

The new National Direction for Natural Hazards will provide direction to councils on how to identify natural hazards, assess the risk they pose now and in the future, and how to respond to that risk through planning controls such as directing development away from high natural hazard risk areas, or providing appropriate mitigation of that risk.

It will include requirements to identify and map natural hazards in regions and districts. This will improve council data on natural hazards, improve transparency, and allow people to know where hazards are. The process will include testing proposals with local government stakeholders and incorporating their feedback.

In the meantime, I note that councils hold statutory powers that they may use to manage risks from natural hazards and to ensure that it is considered in planning and resource consent processes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bishop'.

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister Responsible for RMA Reform