

## WHAT DOES THE MINISTRY DO?

**OUR VISION** is for a healthy environment that sustains nature and people – kia kaha to tātou tiaki i nga taonga tuku iho o Papatuanuku me Ranginui.

**OUR MISSION** is delivering the environment that New Zealanders expect and deserve – Te Whakarato i te taiao e tūmanakohia ana, e tika ana mā ngā tāngata o Aotearoa.



We advise the Government on New Zealand's environmental laws, policies, standards and guidelines, monitor how they are working in practice, and take any action needed to improve them. This includes making sure the Treaty of Waitangi is taken into account in environmental management.

The Environment Act defines 'environment' widely, including ecosystems, people and communities, and natural and physical resources. Therefore

the Ministry's interests and responsibilities cover the natural environment, the built environment and how people behave towards the environment.

In the short to medium term we aim to fix what is not working well and firm up the framework that protects our environment. In the longer term we see ourselves placing a stronger emphasis on action on sustainability – encouraging business and other sectors to perform better than they are required to.

We recognise that high standards of environmental and social performance are what society wants and increasingly expects of organisations in both the public and private sector. Strong partnerships with other government agencies and other key sectors are a feature of our way of working.

We work closely with local government, which is responsible for day-to-day environmental management, and with the Environmental Risk Management Authority and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

## GETTING IN TOUCH

Please get in touch if you want to learn more about our work. Contact the Ministry or check out our website, [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz), for:

- information about New Zealand's environment
- having your say on laws and policies as they are developed
- information about New Zealand's environmental laws
- information about our work programme
- government environmental strategies and policies
- international environmental conventions that affect New Zealand
- information about sources of funding for projects and participation
- information about what you can do for our environment.

Contact your council about local environmental issues and having your say on environmental policies in your community.

Contact bookshops selling government publications for copies of laws and regulations.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

The main environmental laws in New Zealand are:

- Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941
- Fisheries Act 1983
- Environment Act 1986
- Conservation Act 1987
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Crown Minerals Act 1991
- Biosecurity Act 1993
- Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
- Climate Change Response Act 2002
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000
- Aquaculture Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004.

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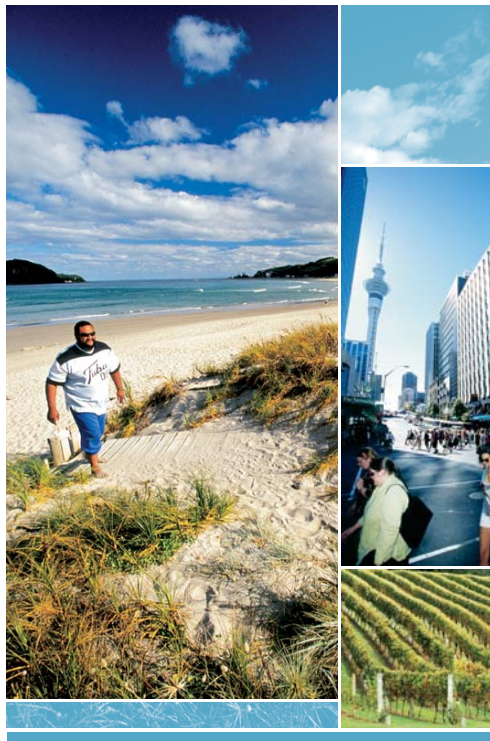
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Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

## Working for the Environment



# New Zealand's environment is a taonga – a treasure beyond price. It is our inheritance, our economic base, our playground and our home.

New Zealanders are committed to living in this environment in a way that meets our social, economic and environmental needs – now and in the future. The Ministry for the Environment has this target – a sustainable future.

Delivering the environment that New Zealanders expect and deserve is the Ministry's mission and our motivation. We believe we can do this by providing leadership on environmental issues; working in partnership with others to improve our environment; fixing problems that require central government intervention; and ensuring New Zealand has good environmental governance.



## OUR WORK GROUPS

We have over 250 staff from a range of professional, technical and scientific backgrounds, including resource management, law, engineering, science and communications. Many of our people have previously worked in local government, the private sector or other central government agencies.

### Working with Central Government

The Working with Central Government group is responsible for developing and maintaining the framework of environmental legislation (including the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996). It works on policy in the areas of marine issues and Treaty of Waitangi claims relating to natural resources. In addition, it undertakes work to improve environmental outcomes for Māori and to encourage Māori participation in the management and use of natural resources. Other key work areas are providing support for the Bioethics Council, managing relationships with Ministers, other government agencies and iwi, and monitoring the performance of the Environmental Risk Management Authority and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

### Working with Local Government

The Working with Local Government group manages the relationship with local government and works with local government in areas of collective interest. It also carries out statutory functions under the Resource Management Act, such as setting up processes for Water Conservation Orders. Key work areas include a review of water management through the Sustainable Development Programme of Action, and a review of how New Zealand manages flood risk and develops national environmental standards and other national instruments.



### Sustainable Industry and Climate Change

Sustainable Industry works with business and industry to promote sustainable business practices and to support innovation in environmental management. It works with targeted sectors to initiate improvements in environmental performance. Climate Change is responsible for leading the development, co-ordination and implementation of whole of government climate change policy. Climate Change's goal is to enable New Zealand to make significant greenhouse gas reductions and to manage risks and opportunities arising from the effects of climate change.



### Reporting and Review

The Reporting and Review group works to ensure that New Zealanders have credible environmental information to make good decisions and measure progress in maintaining a healthy environment; including our contribution to the global environmental effort. It monitors and reports on the effectiveness of policies and legislation; liaises with the science community to report on emerging environmental issues; informs policy decision-making; co-ordinates national, international, and other environmental reporting obligations; and works closely with local government to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, plans and decisions related to the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Ministry's other statutes.

### Urban

The Urban group provides leadership across central government for the Urban Affairs portfolio (as a specific additional responsibility of the Minister for the Environment). It is responsible for developing and implementing the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and is developing a Statement of Urban Affairs Priorities. The group works with other agencies and Auckland local authorities to deliver the sustainable cities work stream of the New Zealand Sustainable Development Programme of Action. The group also administers the Environmental Legal Assistance Fund.

### Corporate and Community

The Corporate and Community group promotes environmental awareness and action in the community, co-ordinates corporate communications, and manages relationships with the community. It also supports our activities through information management, legal advice, financial systems, human resources and administrative support.



## HAVE YOUR SAY

We welcome your input. You can find out about opportunities to have your say on what we're working on by checking our list of consultation at [www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/consultation.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/consultation.html) or in each issue of our free newsletter, *envirozz*.

We are grateful for the important contribution made to our work by many organisations and individuals through working groups, meetings, comments and submissions. Your contribution helps us develop policies and guidelines that are practical and effective.

We are keen to work with others so we can all make a difference for our environment. Partnerships with other organisations are often effective in identifying problems and priorities, looking at solutions, and putting them into practice.

In particular, we work closely with other government agencies and with local government. We have regular contact with iwi and research organisations. To help keep other sectors informed, we have regular liaison meetings with representatives of major business organisations, professional organisations with resource management interests, and environmental organisations.

## WHO LOOKS AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENT?

We are only one player in delivering the environment that New Zealanders expect and deserve. Our environment belongs to all of us and we all have to take responsibility for it. The organisations below have specific responsibilities.

**The Ministry for the Environment** is the Government's main adviser on our environment, and on national policies and laws necessary for good environmental management.

**Local government** is responsible for the day-to-day management of our environment under the Resource Management Act. Local government is:

- 12 regional councils that co-ordinate and set policy for resource management, water management, soil conservation and transport
- 70 district and city councils that deal with land development, water supply, waste disposal, sewerage, draining stormwater, and community facilities such as parks and reserves
- four unitary authorities that combine the functions of regional and district councils.

**The Department of Conservation** manages national parks and other protected areas such as marine reserves, inland waters, wild and scenic rivers, native forests, non-commercial fisheries and native wildlife conservation.

**The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment** is an officer of Parliament (not a government department) who gives independent advice about the agencies, laws, regulations and processes used to manage and protect natural resources.

**The Environmental Risk Management Authority** makes decisions about applications to introduce hazardous substances or new organisms (including genetically modified organisms) to New Zealand.

**The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority** works on building a sustainable energy future by changing the way New Zealanders think about and use energy through raising awareness of energy efficiency issues in the community and providing businesses and individuals with the tools to make changes.

**Other government departments** with some responsibilities for environmental management include the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Transport, and Ministry of Research, Science and Technology.

