

AGENDA

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting Monday, 7 April 2025

Date Monday, 7 April 2025

Time 1:00 pm

Location Council Chamber, Council Building, King George
Place, Timaru

File Reference 1749562

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Building, King George Place, Timaru, on Monday 7 April 2025, at 1:00 pm.

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Members

Suzanne Eddington, John Henry, Glen Smith (Chairperson), Bailey Lissington, Chris Konings (Deputy Chairperson), Michelle Pye, Deon Swiggs, Phillipa Guerin and Sharyn Cain

Quorum – no less than 5 members

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- 1 Opening Karakia**
- 2 Apologies**
- 3 Public Forum**
- 4 Identification of Items of Urgent Business**
- 5 Identification of Matters of a Minor Nature**
- 6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
- 7 Chairperson's Report**

8 Confirmation of Minutes

8.1 Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2024

Author: Jessica Kavanaugh, Team Leader Governance

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting and that the Chairperson's electronic signature be attached.

Attachments

- 1. Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2024**

MINUTES

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting Monday, 4 November 2024

**Minutes of Timaru District Council
Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting
Held in the Council Chamber, Council Building, King George Place, Timaru
on Monday, 4 November 2024 at 1pm**

Present: Suzanne Eddington, John Henry, Glen Smith (Chairperson), Chris Konings (Deputy Chairperson), Clr Michelle Pye, Clr Deon Swiggs, Sharyn Cain

In Attendance: Nigel Bowen, Trudy Heath

1 Opening Karakia

Performed by Dave Moore

2 Apologies

2.1 Apologies Received

Resolution 2024/21

Moved: Clr Michelle Pye

Seconded: Chris Konings

That the apologies of Bailey Lissington and John Henry be received and accepted

Carried

3 Public Forum

There were no public forum items.

4 Identification of Items of Urgent Business

Recent oil spill in Saltwater Creek.

5 Identification of Matters of a Minor Nature

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

7 Chairperson's Report

7.1 Chairperson's Report

The Chairperson's report included:

Attendance at an ECan workshop to support better catchment groups.

Attendance at An online meeting with Chris Konings (CK) for an update on the review of Zone Committees with ECan. A working group with Mayor Nigel Bowen, Mayor Munro of the MacKenzie District and three rūnanga representatives has now been formed.

Query (CK) - Asked if funding had been confirmed for this year?

Response (Chair) – Funding for current year is confirmed.

Resolution 2024/22

Moved: Glen Smith

Seconded: Chris Konings

The Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee receive and accept the Chairperson's report as presented.

Carried

8 Confirmation of Minutes

8.1 Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 2 September 2024

Resolution 2024/23

Moved: Suzanne Eddington

Seconded: Cllr Michelle Pye

That the Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 2 September 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting and that the Chairperson's electronic signature be attached.

Carried

9.1 Action Plan Fund Applicant Presentations

There were five applications presented for funds to be allocated to, details of the applications are included in the Agenda.

- i. Craigmore Station Site planting
- ii. Normanby Lagoon Native Planting
- iii. Strathconan Stream Restoration Project
- iv. Tengawai River Plantings
- v. Kakahu Robinson Wetland Restoration Project

Clr Michelle Pye noted that the Agenda stated that the Recommendation references the “Zone Committee” and that they should reference the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee

Resolution 2024/24

Moved: Clr Michelle Pye

Seconded: Glen Smith

That the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee receives the applicants’ presentations

Carried

9.2 Consideration of Action Plan Funding applications

The Chair confirmed that the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee had the authority on its own cognisance to recommend allocation of up to \$50,000 to the applications as it felt appropriate.

Query (Deon Swiggs (DS)) – Asked if there was a staff recommendation

Response (DM) – Confirmed that there was no staff recommendation

General discussion around the allocation of the funds available, debating the merits of each case and their relevance to the published stated aims of the committee

Discussions centred around the value of each project: the likelihood of whether they would continue with/without funding; the cost and value for money to the ratepayer & local community; the long-term maintenance requirements; stakeholder engagement and benefit to the local area.

A number of options were discussed, and it was noted that the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee members were not comfortable providing funding for labour

Support for all of the applications was voiced

Concern noted at the lack of a proper quote for the price of plants within the application from the Normanby Lagoon Application, and it was agreed to offer funding subject to a suitable quote being received, and this would be reflected in a revised recommendation.

Resolution 2024/25

Moved: Clr Michelle Pye

Seconded: Chris Konings

That the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee receives the applications, and supports each project being recommended for funding as follows:

1. \$5,000.00 – Craigmores Station Site planting
2. \$23,725.00 – Normanby Lagoon Native Planting (subject to the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee receiving quotation to back up the planting plans presented)

3. \$10,164.00 – Strathconan Stream Restoration Project
4. \$6,111.00 – Tengawai River plantings
5. \$5,000.00 – Kakahu Robinson Wetland Restoration project (subject to provision of an acceptable detailed quote for the plants)

Carried

9.3 OTOP Water Zone Committee Update

The Chair invited DM to speak to the Report, and he noted the \$1,000.00 for the Rock Art Tour, which he attended, along with 18 other people (19 in total).

Spoke to PC8, and noted that the rules had changed, and the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee will be notified about this later this calendar year.

Query (DS) – Asked about impact of Resource Management Act (RMA) Changes

Response (DM) – Noted that the Wetlands Construction might go through , as change doesn't touch on FM22

Comment (Clr Michelle Pye) – noted serious flaws and deficiencies around proposed new rules regarding Dairy Farms and dairy support

Comment (Chair) – Noted that Council Officers Report had noted the proposal was contrary to council policy of dealing with effects rather than specific activities

DM spoke to the Water Allocation Report, and noted that they were trying to get responses back in time for the meeting of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee on the 25th November for clarification

Comment (Clr Michelle Pye) – Spoke to allocation as a major concern, felt that the focus should be on usage, not on allocation

Response (DS) – Noted that ECan were happy to look at one river as an example to prepare a report on usage, and would take the Waihi River as that example.

Comment (Chair) – Noted that the data was there, but the quality of the data was poor

Comment (DS) – Noted that ECan were looking at the monitoring side

Comment (DM) – Confirmed that he would source a simple report to be presented to the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee; ideally a snapshot of the reality of usage

Comment (CK) – Noted the dynamic nature of water supply and subsequent issues with reporting.

Query (SE) – Raised the issue of Gravel extraction by industry

General discussion around the impacts of gravel extraction, and it was noted that there was a new Working and Steering Group to look at this which is going through the Council and ECan to develop a strategy.

Comment (DS) – Recommended getting ECan to report to the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee on the matter of Gravel Extraction

Comment (SE) – Noted that the effects at the river mouth and along the coast should also be considered

Comment (DS) – Noted that there were very strict ecological responsibilities, but some extraction is required for flood control purposes.

General discussion about the need for Water meters on Downlands Supply, and noted that meters were in the Timaru District Council (TDC) Long Term Plan (LTP).

Comment (DS) – Noted that Ecan had just released the monitoring results around Water Quality, and suggested that a report be presented to the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee, specific to the areas that were covered.

Comment (Clr Michelle Pye) – Noted that if Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee was still in place, this could affect funding and knowing of any hotspots would be useful.

Resolution 2024/26

Moved: Clr Michelle Pye

Seconded: Glen Smith

That the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee receives this report and provides feedback.

Carried

10 Consideration of Urgent Business Items

10.1 Oil Spill in Saltwater Creek

Query (Suzanne Eddington (SE)) – Was this the same cause as the previous leak from the metal recyclers, or due to the lack of spend on the pump house?

Response (Paul Cooper (PC)) – Noted that the leak is not the same as the leak from the recyclers a couple of years ago; it is being investigated, and remedial work is being done. Further noted that there is no definitive conclusion about what is being done about the earlier leak.

11 Consideration of Minor Nature Matters

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

12 Closure Karakia

Performed by Dave Moore

The Meeting closed at 3.10pm.

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Chairperson

8.2 Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 3 February 2025

Author: Jessica Kavanaugh, Team Leader Governance

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 3 February 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting and that the Chairperson's electronic signature be attached.

Attachments

- 1. Minutes of the Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting held on 3 February 2025**

MINUTES

Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting Monday, 3 February 2025

**Minutes of Timaru District Council
Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Water Zone Committee Meeting
Held in the Council Chamber, Council Building, King George Place, Timaru
on Monday, 3 February 2025 at 1.05 pm**

Present: Glen Smith (Chairperson), Chris Konings (Deputy Chairperson), Suzanne Eddington, Deon Swiggs, Phillipa Guerin

In Attendance: Mayor Nigel Bowen, Dave Moore (Zone Facilitator, Environment Canterbury), Jessica Kavanaugh (Team Leader Governance), Paul Cooper (Group Manager Environmental Services)

1 Opening Karakia

Dave Moore conducted the opening Karakia

2 Apologies

2.1 Apologies Received

Resolution 2025/1

Moved: Suzanne Eddington

Seconded: Cllr Phillipa Guerin

That the apology of Bailey Lissington, John Henry, Sharyn Cain and Michelle Pye is received and accepted.

Carried

3 Public Forum

There were no public forum items.

4 Identification of Items of Urgent Business

- Over allocated rivers in the district – Sue Eddington

5 Identification of Matters of a Minor Nature

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

7 Chairperson's Report**7.1 Presentation of Chairperson's Report****Resolution 2025/2**

Moved: Glen Smith

Seconded: Chris Konings

The Chairperson attended an online meeting on the Zone Committee review with Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Zone Committees.

Carried

8 Reports**8.1 Zone Committee Action Plan Budget Funding Projects**

Dave Moore (Zone Facilitator, Environment Canterbury) spoke to the report to update the Zone Committee on progress with implementing their Action Plan Budget for FY2024/25.

Resolution 2025/3

Moved: Glen Smith

Seconded: Cllr Deon Swiggs

That the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Water Zone Committee receives the Action Plan Funding.

Carried

8.2 Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Water Zone Committee Work Plan

Dave Moore (Zone Facilitator, Environment Canterbury) spoke to the report update the Zone Committee on progress with CWMS Zone Committee Review and agree a work plan through to June 2025.

Discussion included the importance of community representatives on the Zone Committees, the makeup of the representation and how the committee can feed into Environment Canterbury.

It was requested to have the science data presented to Zone Committees, helping to identify next steps, collective understanding and accountability.

Further discussion included what the Zone Committee can do in the interim and the purpose of the Zone Committee, including connection with communities. It is requested to have presentations from Environment Canterbury on regulatory changes and policies.

It is agreed to cancel the 10 March 2025 meeting and hold a field trip on the 17 March 2025, with possible sights being Waitarakao, Opuha Water and Normanby.

Resolution 2025/4

Moved: Glen Smith

Seconded: Chris Konings

That the Zone Committee receives the update and agrees work plan through to June 2025.

Carried

8.3 Our Waitarakao Project Update

Deputy Chairperson Chris Konings spoke to the report to share with the Zone Committee the Our Waitarakao end of year round up.

It was confirmed a promotional video of Waitarakao has been completed due to be circulated once it is approved. Discussion included the large amount of botulism in the bird life.

There were questions raised around the Seadown drain, water level, land allocation and the ability for the working group to inform future decisions.

Further discussion included the future access to the site with the sale of the Smithfield freezing works.

After the Waitarakao Project update the Zone Committee gave known updates around the projects that have been funded via the Zone Committee.

Resolution 2025/5

Moved: Chris Konings

Seconded: Suzanne Eddington

That the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Water Zone Committee receives the update.

Carried

9 Consideration of Urgent Business Items

- Discussion was had in item 9.2 regarding the allocation of water and requesting Environment Canterbury Scientists to present to the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Water Zone Committee at the 07 April 2025 meeting.

10 Consideration of Minor Nature Matters

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

11 Closure Karakia

Dave Moore conducted the closing Karakia

The Meeting closed at 2.03pm.

.....
Glen Smith
Chairperson

9 Reports

9.1 OTOP Water Abstraction data

Author: Dave Moore, Zone Facilitator

Authoriser:

Recommendation

That the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Zone Committee receives this report.

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update the Committee on Water Abstraction from the Opihi Catchment

Discussion

- 2 At the 2 September 2024, OTOP Water Zone Committee meeting the Committee requested actual usage data, over a period of time for one catchment, with the suggestion to focus on the Opihi catchment.
- 3 Environment Canterbury staff have recently completed the Canterbury Region Water Abstraction Report, which can be found here: [New report reveals extent of water abstraction in Canterbury | Environment Canterbury www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2025/new-report-reveals-extent-of-water-abstraction-in-canterbury/](https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2025/new-report-reveals-extent-of-water-abstraction-in-canterbury/)
- 4 This report details the standardised methodology developed for the processing and cleansing of water abstraction data, Water Permit (S14) data, and allocation information. It also outlines the limitations and assumptions made during this process and how the resulting datasets were integrated into an analytics tool allowing us to combine information from different sources and visualise and interact with the results.
- 5 Staff will present a summary of the Canterbury Region Water Abstraction Report. They will also provide a summary of actual water abstraction from the Opihi catchment with data from 2014 – 2024. This will include how water abstraction data compares with total catchment allocations.

Background

- 6 In the time leading up to the OTOP Zone Implementation Programme Addendum (finalised in 2018) the quality and quantity of available water abstraction data was limited.
- 7 Over the last 10 years or so, a number of regulatory and legislative changes have been implemented, resulting in a significant increase in the number of water takes reporting high-resolution data (now more than 5,500 takes). While these data are in various states of quality and completeness, they are invaluable for understanding water abstraction in Canterbury and how that relates to consented allocations.

Attachments

Nil

9.2 Committee Update

Author: Dave Moore, Zone Facilitator

Authoriser:

Recommendation

That the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora Zone Committee receives this report and provides feedback

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update the Committee on actions from the previous meeting, relevant information and upcoming engagement opportunities.

Discussion

- 2 At the 3 February OTOP Zone Committee meeting, the Committee requested presentations from Environment Canterbury on regulatory changes and policies.
- 3 Currently, Environment Canterbury's Strategy team produces "Policy Signals", a monthly publication which goes to external parties as well as internal subscribers and Councillors. The March edition is shown below. **If members would like to be added to the Policy Signals distribution list, please advise the Facilitator.**
- 4 The team also produces the Central Govt update which goes to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting (first week of month) and is publicly available. The March version here <https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5577390> page 86.

Policy Signals

Kia ora

An update sent to you by the Environment Canterbury Strategic Policy Team, jointly undertaken with the Strategic Team at Waikato Regional Council.

In this edition

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Public Works Act review amendments

In June 2024, Government initiated a review of the Public Works Act (PWA). An expert panel was convened from July to September 2024 and since late 2024, proposed amendments have been progressing through Cabinet. In the last month Government have made a couple of announcements following Cabinet decisions, these are:

- an [announcement](#) on 9 March that Government intends to make targeted amendments to the PWA to enable critical infrastructure projects ahead of a wider overhaul of the PWA. The changes announced will apply to certain major infrastructure projects listed on Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act that are public works, and the Roads of National Significance identified in the Government Policy on Land Transport 2024. A draft bill signaled to be introduced in May 2025 will include changes to:
 - introduce new incentive payments for landowners to agree to their land being sold
 - streamline the process for objection to land acquisition - landowners who object to land acquisition for critical infrastructure projects will no longer go through the Environment Court but instead submit their objections directly to the relevant decision-maker, either the Minister for Land Information or the local authority.
- an [announcement](#) on 25 February that the PWA will be amended to remove barriers to building infrastructure. The key changes announced include:
 - empower NZTA to enter into acquisition agreements with landowners. The Minister for Land Information remains responsible for compulsory acquisition by the Crown
 - allow government agencies to coordinate land acquisition for connected public works projects, rather than each agency acquiring land separately
 - allow government and local authorities to acquire land when they need to move assets (like powerlines or pipes) that are in the way of new public works

- clarify what the Environment Court can consider when reviewing objections to acquisitions, removing overlap with the RMA
 - require that parties try to resolve compensation disputes through mediation or alternative resolution before going to the Land Valuation Tribunal
 - give Transpower the ability to use the Public Works Act to acquire land directly.
- an [announcement](#) on 5 February on changes to the treatment of Māori freehold land under the PWA to:
 - require that Māori freehold land is valued at the same level as general land where it is acquired for a public works project
 - compensate landowners for all separately owned dwellings on a parcel of Māori freehold land
 - where protected Māori land is subject to compulsory acquisition, require joint decision-making by the Minister for Land Information and the relevant Māori portfolio minister.

The Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendment Bill is expected to be introduced in May with the intent that amendments will come into force six months before wider PWA review amendments. Another Bill is expected to be introduced mid-2025.

Updates on the Public Works Act review can be found on [LINZ's website](#).

New Infrastructure funding and financing tools

The Government plan to make [five key changes to New Zealand's funding and financing toolkit](#) that will support urban growth, under pillar 2 of the Going for Housing Growth programme. These changes are:

- replacing Development Contributions with a Development Levy system, which enables councils and other infrastructure providers to charge developers a proportionate amount of the total cost of capital expenditure necessary to service growth over the long term. Separate levies will be maintained for each infrastructure service, with levy zones expected to cover a pre-defined urban area. Levies will be calculated based on overall growth costs and expected levels of growth.
- establishing regulatory oversight of Development Levies to ensure charges are fair and appropriate by restricting local authority discretion about various matters, such as setting the methodology used to allocate project costs.
- increasing the flexibility of targeted rates by allowing councils to set targeted rates that only apply to new developments, and enabling targeted rates and levies to be used together where projects benefit existing residents and provide for growth.

- improving the effectiveness of the Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) Act, particularly for developer-led projects. This work is being led by Parliamentary Under-Secretary Simon Court.
- broadening existing tools to support value capture and cost recovery by enabling the IFF Act to be used for major transport projects (such as those led by NZTA).

Detailed design work around the new system is underway now and there will be engagement by government officials with councils and developers in advance of legislation being introduced to Parliament in the second half of 2025. Government's aim is to enact the legislation in mid-2026 for the new system to begin in 2027.

More information and updates can be found on [DIA's local government policy current projects webpage](#) under Going for Housing Growth.



Observations of OAG's audits of 2024-34 Long-Term Plans

On 20 February 2025, the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) released their [Observations from our audits of councils' 2024-34 long-term plans](#). The report describes the audit results and trends from the 58 long-term plans that councils adopted between June and October 2024.

The report noted that Councils prepared their 2024-34 long-term plans during a time of significant change and uncertainty and that most Councils responded well to this uncertainty.

[Trends in infrastructure and financial strategies](#) are discussed in the report. OAG noted that rising operating costs and the need to increase capital expenditure are putting pressure on many councils. In response, councils are increasing rates at historically high levels. To pay for much-needed investment in infrastructure, councils are also increasing their debt to some of the highest levels in decades. As a result, some councils are close to or exceeding their self-imposed debt limits. These factors create risks to councils' long-term financial sustainability and to their ability to respond to unforeseen events such as earthquakes or severe weather.

The report also concluded that the changing operating context for local government highlights the importance of a strong strategic and agile approach to long-term planning.

The 2024-34 long-term plans at a glance



Financial forecasts from the long-term plans

Revenue to increase by **47%**



Operating expenditure to increase by **43%**

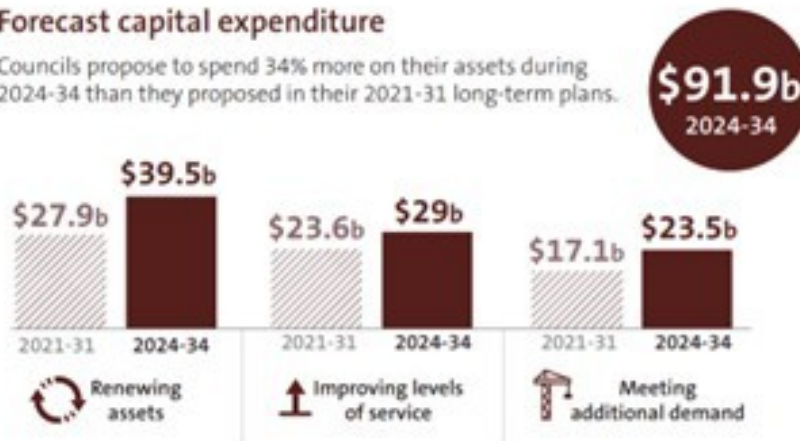


Debt to increase



Forecast capital expenditure

Councils propose to spend 34% more on their assets during 2024-34 than they proposed in their 2021-31 long-term plans.



Comparisons between the 2021-31 and 2024-34 long-term plans are between the same 58 councils that completed the 2024-34 long-term plans.

Government's waste and resource efficiency strategy

On 7 March 2025, Government released their [new strategy and work plan to deal with New Zealand's waste](#).

The [Waste and resource efficiency strategy](#) outlines five outcomes (below), and five ways they will achieve those outcomes.



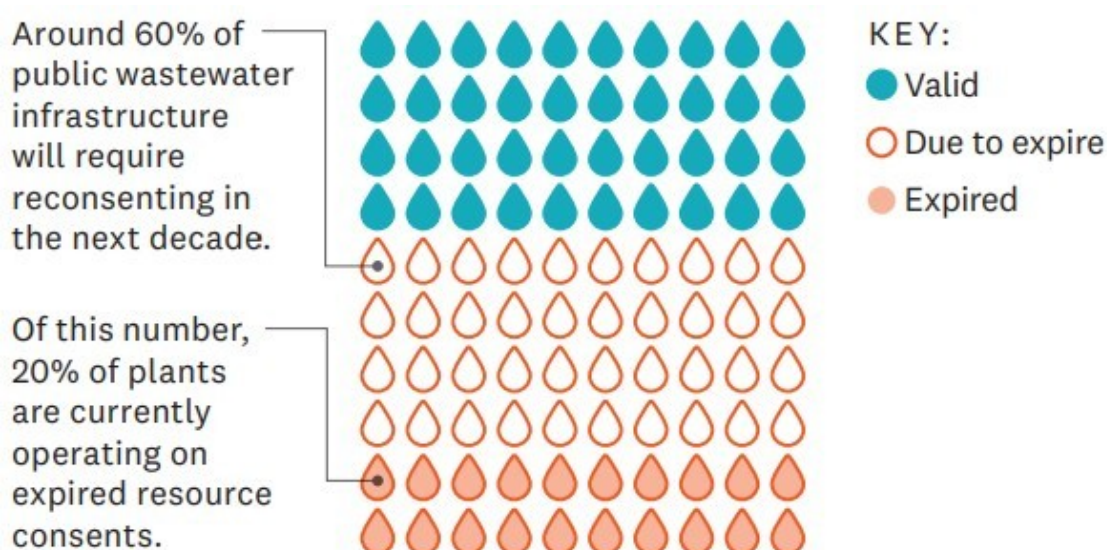
The Government will continue work to bring in new industry-led schemes, enabling supply chains to take responsibility for the full life cycle of their products. Farm plastics and agrichemicals are the next focus, with support from key stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

The [Waste and resource efficiency work programme 2024 to 2026](#) details the Government's plans.

Proposed wastewater environmental performance standards

On 25 February, Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai opened [consultation on proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards](#) under section 138 of the Water Services Act 2021.

The proposed standards would apply to public wastewater networks, which serve just over four million people in New Zealand and are primarily owned and operated by local councils. The proposed standards would not apply to privately-owned wastewater treatment networks or septic tanks.



The four proposed standards cover the most common consenting topics (discharging treated wastewater to water or land, safe biosolid use, and managing overflows and bypasses) – with requirements tailored to appropriately manage the level of risk to public health and different environments.

Territorial authorities (TAs) who have wastewater treatment plants due for upgrade or renewal will consult with their communities under the Local Government Act 2002 to determine the best arrangement for their circumstances.

The standards will set treatment requirements based on the type of water body or land the plant discharges to. These standards will guide councils and communities in making decisions, and in the design, planning, and funding once a decision is made.

[Consultation](#) closes on Thursday 24 April 2025.

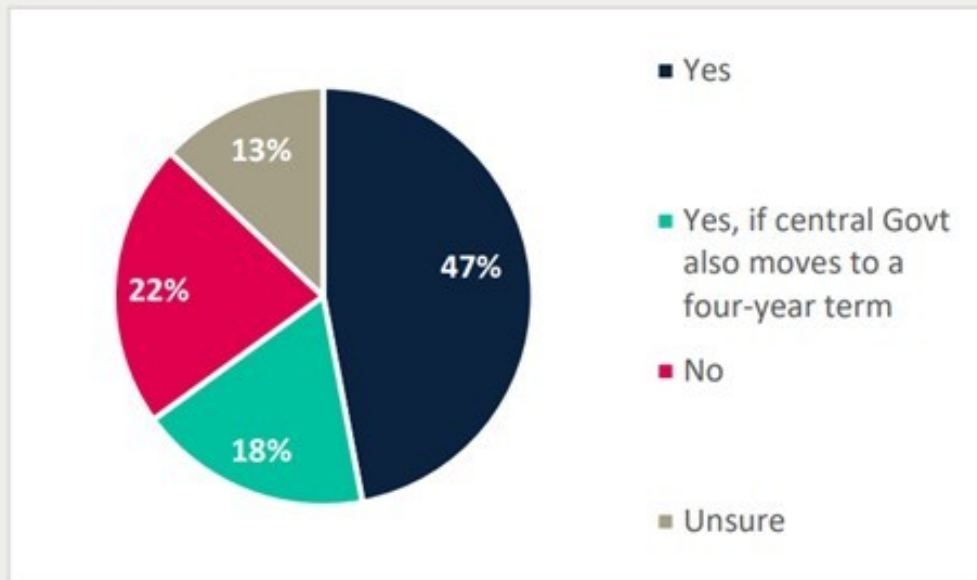
LGNZ report – future of local elections

On 13 March 2025, LGNZ released the [Electoral Reform Working Group \(ERWG\) draft Position paper](#) which contains 20 draft recommendations for the future of local elections.

A move to in-person polling booth voting for local elections is recommended by the ERWG. The ERWG recommend that it should be a nationally consistent system that's as close an experience for the voter as possible to parliamentary elections, with a two-week timeframe in which to vote. [LGNZ Electoral Reform Group Chair, Nelson Mayor Nick Smith said](#) "We believe this could be the single-biggest - and most fundamental -

change to local elections that we can make, alongside the Group's other key recommendations and their focus on lifting voter turnout"

Figure 9 *Public views on four-year terms for New Zealand councils*



Another key recommendation is that local and central government moves to a four-year term with elections spaced two years apart, with the upcoming referendum covering both.

The report calls for the draft recommendations to be made for the 2028 local elections. In the meantime, councils should continue to make short-term improvements to support participation in this year's local elections.

The Electoral Reform Working Group is asking for public feedback on the [draft position paper](#). Consultation on this document closes on Monday 28 April 2025, with a final position paper to be made public in July this year.

Enabling four-year parliamentary term bill

Government has introduced legislation that would enable a four-year term of Parliament, subject to a referendum. Submissions on the [Term of Parliament \(Enabling 4-year Term\) Legislation Amendment Bill](#) are being accepted by the Justice Select Committee until Thursday 17 April 2025.

Both the National-Act and National-New Zealand First coalition agreements include supporting to select committee a bill that would enact a binding referendum on a four-year term of parliament. Justice Minister Paul Goldsmith [noted](#) “At this stage, no decisions have been made on whether this Bill will proceed beyond this. It is possible a referendum could be held alongside the next General Election in 2026. However, any final decisions on timing for a referendum will depend on what comes out of the select committee process.”

Regional Deals next steps

Government has provided an [update on next steps for regional deals](#) following the 28 February 2025 deadline that Councils had to submit their light-touch proposals to the Department of Internal Affairs. Councils were asked to work together to form regions and to outline, via a light-touch proposal, how a deal of up to five priority projects would unlock economic growth in their area.

The Government is now into the assessment stage to determine which regions will be the first to progress towards a deal. The next steps are:

- The City and Regional Deals light-touch proposals will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the strategic framework.
- The results of the assessment will be provided to Ministers for consideration.
- The Government will decide which regions progress towards a deal with the intention to have the first deal concluded by the end of 2025.
- It is expected that three deals will be in place by October 2026.

More information about City and Regional Deals can be found at <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Regional-Deals>.



Time of use charging Bill

On 4 March 2025, a Bill to reduce travel times, increase efficiency, and help boost economic growth and productivity on our busiest roads passed its first reading in Parliament.

The [Land Transport Management \(Time of Use Charging\) Amendment Bill](#) will enable the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and local authorities to develop charging schemes for New Zealand's most congested roads. The Bill requires NZTA to lead the design of schemes in partnership with local councils to ensure motorists benefit from the design of the schemes across their region's roading network.

The Bill has been referred to the [Transport and Infrastructure Committee](#) who are accepting submissions on the bill until Sunday 27 April. The Government intends to pass the legislation before the end of 2025.

Agricultural and Horticultural products regulatory review

Cabinet has accepted [all 16 recommendations](#) of the Ministry for Regulation's Agricultural and Horticultural products regulatory review.

The review found that halving approval times for new products is estimated to generate benefits of \$272 million over 20 years for New Zealand farmers and growers. The recommendations include:

- setting targets to accelerate assessments and reduce application queues
 - increasing the use of Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) rapid pathways, Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) registration exemptions and self-assessments for appropriate applications
 - reducing ACVM efficacy requirements for inhibitors to the minimum required to manage risk
 - using international regulators' assessments to save time
 - exploring a strategic pathway for priority products
 - updating Environmental Protection Authority outdated risk assessment models.
-

Update on Crown Research Institutes (CRI) merger

On 12 March, an [update on work to merge the Crown Research Institutes](#) and form three new and more focused public research organisations (PROs) was released.

Crown Research Institutes and MBIE are working together to explore changes ahead of the legislation that will establish the settings for new Public Research Organisations (PROs) and a proposal for merging into their new configurations in early October. Legislation to formally establish the PROs will follow in 2026.

Two independent convenors have been appointed to lead the mergers for the bioeconomy and earth science PROs. These convenors will ensure the needs of the new entities are at the forefront throughout the merger process. Two governance groups, comprising the relevant Chairs and convenor for each PRO, have also been established.

Additional decisions have also been made on Callaghan Innovation's Biotechnology and Applied Technologies Groups. The Biotechnologies Group will continue to be funded until the end of June 2027 and will transfer to the new bioeconomy PRO once it is established. This will provide sufficient time for the Biotechnologies Group to become commercially viable and operate sustainably, independent of government funding. Funding for the Applied Technologies Group will continue through to 30 September 2025.

GDP increases 0.7 percent in the December 2024 quarter

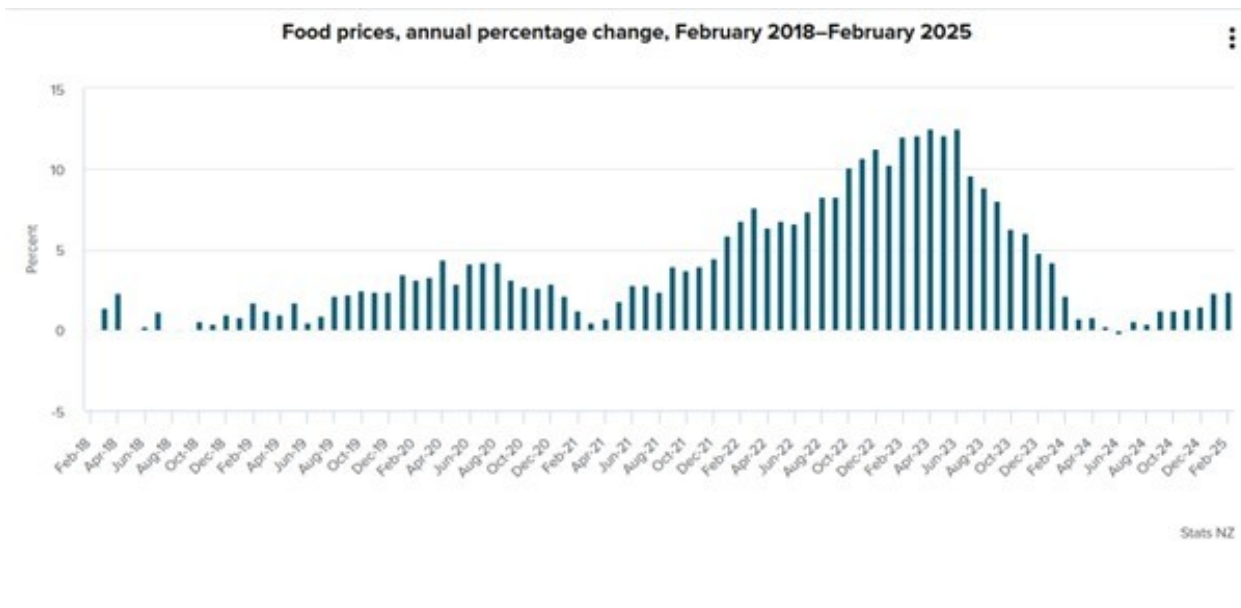
New Zealand's [gross domestic product \(GDP\) rose 0.7 per cent in the December 2024 quarter](#), following a 1.1 per cent decrease in the September 2024 quarter, according to figures released by Stats NZ on 20 March 2025.

Eleven of 16 industries increased this quarter. The largest rises were from rental, hiring, and real estate services; retail trade and accommodation; and healthcare and social assistance. The largest falls were in construction, and information media and telecommunications.

Food prices increased 2.4 per cent

[Food prices increased 2.4 per cent](#) in the 12 months to February 2025, following a 2.3 per cent increase in the 12 months to January 2025.

Higher prices for the grocery food group and the restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food group contributed most to the annual increase in food prices, up 4.3 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively. The price increase for grocery food was due to higher prices for milk, butter, and olive oil. Out of the five groups in the food basket, fruit and vegetables was the only group to record lower prices, falling 6.2 per cent in the 12 months to February 2025.



Out there for comment

- Ministry for Primary Industries consultation on [Fisheries reform: proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act](#). Submissions close 28 March 2025.
- He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission [Call for evidence: National Climate Change Risk Assessment \(NCCRA\) 2026](#). Submissions close 31 March 2025.
- Justice Select Committee consultation on [Term of Parliament \(Enabling 4-year Term\) Legislation Amendment Bill](#). Consultation closes Thursday 17 April 2025.
- Taumata Arowai [consultation on proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards](#). Closes Thursday 24 April 2025.
- Transport and Infrastructure Committee consultation on the [Land Transport Management \(Time of Use Charging\) Amendment Bill](#). Consultation closes Sunday 27 April 2025.
- LGNZ Electoral Reform Working Group consultation on [future for local elections draft position paper](#). Consultation closes on Monday 28 April 2025.

Events

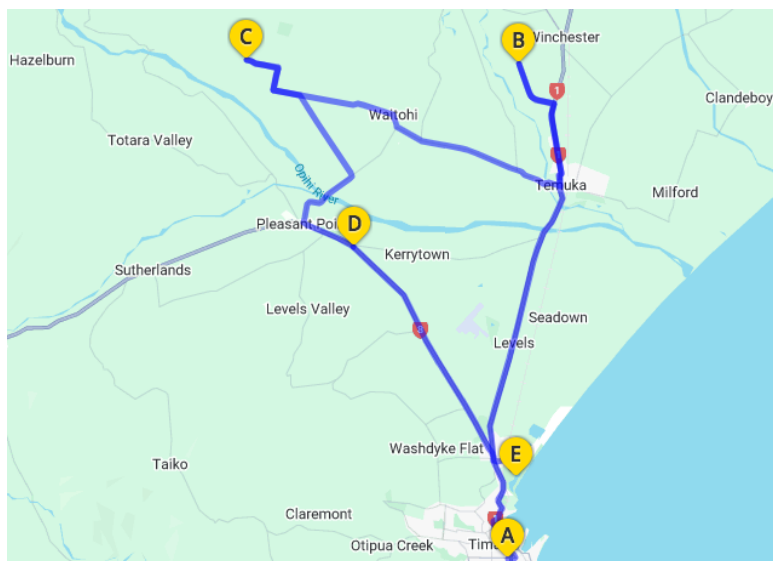
- [New Zealand Planning Institute Conference](#), 26 – 28 March 2025, Waihōpai Invercargill.
- [EDS Dollars & Sense: Making the economy work for nature](#), 12-14 May 2025 - Grand Millennium Hotel, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.
- [SuperLocal Conference](#), Local Government New Zealand, 16-17 July 2025, Christchurch
- [Climate Change and Business Conference](#), 8-9 September 2025, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Zone Committee May meeting

- 5 The 2024/25 Action Plan budget allocations and funding agreements are now complete and there is no further work for the committee to complete.
- 6 For the May meeting it would be useful to allocate some time for workshop to identify local priorities for the new leadership group to consider, based on ZIPs and plans that have guided our efforts to date and the CWMS Targets and Goals. A short meeting could also be held to confirm minutes and any other official business.

March Field Trip to Opuia Water office and shareholder farms

- 7 The group visited two farms who received funding in 2023 for biodiversity planting. At Brent Schriders farm near Winchester Brent showed the planting area alongside a beautiful stream and discussed plans for further planting and dealing with willows. He then took the group to view some leased land where he would like to do more planting.
- 8 The second farm visited was Rupert Power's property in Kakahu. Brent showed the group the planting undertaken on a steep face and along a stream near the river. He also showed us areas where willows have been cleared and he would like to plant in natives when finances allow.
- 9 Discussions were held with both farmers about the importance and challenges of ongoing maintenance. Budget constraints can make this difficult.
- 10 It was pleasing to hear the passion the farmers have for improving biodiversity on their properties.
- 11 At Opuia Water Limited office the committee was treated to a very interesting talk from Julia Crossman at the history of irrigation in the area, the construction and workings of the dam, the consenting environment and plans and challenges going forward.
- 12 The last stop for the committee was Waitarakao Washdyke Lagoon, where Chris Fauth from Environment Canterbury gave an update on the strategy and current work underway. It was encouraging to hear about the enthusiasm of the households, landowners and businesses in the catchment who are keen to contribute

Route

Attachments

Nil

10 Consideration of Urgent Business Items

11 Consideration of Minor Nature Matters

12 Closing Karakia