

SHARE THIS

10 FEBRUARY 2021

RMA to be repealed and replaced



HON DAVID PARKER(/MINISTER/HON-DAVID-PARKER)

Environment (/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/environment)

The Government is delivering on its promise to reform the Resource Management system based on the comprehensive review carried out last year.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) will be repealed and replaced with new laws this parliamentary term, Environment Minister David Parker confirmed today.

The three new Acts will be the:

- **Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA)** to provide for land use and environmental regulation (this would be the primary replacement for the RMA)
- **Strategic Planning Act (SPA)** to integrate with other legislation relevant to development, and require long-term regional spatial strategies
- **Climate Change Adaptation Act (CAA)** to address complex issues associated with managed retreat and funding and financing adaptation.

“Urban areas are struggling to keep pace with population growth and the need for affordable housing. Water quality is deteriorating, biodiversity is diminishing and there is an urgent need to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change,” David Parker said.

“The new laws will improve the natural environment, enable more development within environmental limits, provide an effective role for Māori, and improve housing supply and affordability.

“Planning processes will be simplified and costs and times reduced,” he said.

Other key changes include stronger national direction and one single combined plan per region. And there will be more focus on natural environmental outcomes and less on subjective amenity matters that favour the status quo. Better urban design will be pursued.

The reform follows the review of New Zealand’s resource management system led by former Appeal Court Judge Tony Randerson and published in July 2020. Reform has been called for over the last decade, including by the Productivity Commission, the Waitangi Tribunal, LGNZ, EDS, the Property Council, Infrastructure NZ and the Northern EMA.

5th

Under the NBA there will be a mandatory set of national policies and standards to support the natural environmental limits, outcomes and targets specified in the new law. These will be incorporated into combined regional plans prepared by local and central government and mana whenua.

“The existing 100-plus RMA council planning documents will be reduced to about 14.”

The Strategic Planning Act will integrate functions under the RMA, Local Government Act 2002, Land Transport Management Act 2003 and the Climate Change Response Act 2002 to enable clearer and more efficient decision-making and investment.

“New spatial strategies will enable regions to plan for the wellbeing of future generations, ensuring development and infrastructure occurs in the right places at the right times.”

The CAA responding to the effects of climate change will be progressed by Climate Change Minister James Shaw.

David Parker said secure, healthy and affordable housing is at the heart of the wellbeing of New Zealand families but that it is no longer a reality for many New Zealanders.

“Urban areas hold 86 per cent of our population and experience 99 per cent of our population growth. Instead of allowing cities to respond to population growth sustainably, poor quality and restrictive planning has contributed to a lack of certainty and unaffordable housing.

“Housing problems are a complex mix of demand, costs, financing, capacity and supply and there is no silver bullet. This reform will help by improving how central and local government plan for housing and urban development. This includes better coordination of future infrastructure with land use, development and urban growth.”

These changes will build on the National Policy Statement for Urban Development released last year that directs councils to make room for growth both ‘up’ and ‘out’.

David Parker said the National and Built Environments Act, as the core piece of legislation replacing the RMA, will be progressed first.

“Given its significance and complexity, a special select committee inquiry will consider an exposure draft of the NBA Bill from mid-year. This will include the most important elements of the legislation, including the replacement of Part 2 of the RMA.

“I expect that the complete NBA and the SPA will be formally introduced into Parliament by the end of 2021, with the NBA passed by the end of 2022,” he said.

The Government is working with a collective of pan Māori entities on key elements of the NBA including the strengthened recognition of tikanga Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Continued engagement with local government will also be crucial.

More information about the reform is available on the Ministry for the Environment’s website.

(<https://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/resource-management-system>)

