



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Statement of Intent

Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu

2020-2025



Presented to the House of Representatives
pursuant to section 39 of the Public Finance Act 1989

This document may be cited as: Ministry for the Environment. 2020.
Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu | Statement of Intent 2020-2025
Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Published in November 2020 by the
Ministry for the Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

23 Kate Sheppard Place, Thorndon
PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143, New Zealand

ISSN: ISSN 2744-3817 (Print)
ISSN 2744-3825 (Online)

Publication number: ME 1550

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Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao



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Statement of responsibility

Responsible Minister's statement:

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Ministry for the Environment is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker', is positioned below the text of the statement.

Hon David Parker

Minister for the Environment

24 November, 2020

Our Statement of Intent

The Ministry for the Environment is required to publish its strategic intentions at least every three years, as part of a transparent, accountable public service.

This Statement of Intent outlines what we plan to do to give effect to government priorities and our stewardship role, and how our performance can be measured. It also describes the way the Ministry will go about its work, and how we are working to improve our capabilities over time.

One extraordinary country



Statement of responsibility

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Ministry for the Environment. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.

Vicky Robertson
Secretary for the Environment

24 November, 2020

Introduction from the Secretary for the Environment

Sometimes it takes a shock to notice what you value most.

COVID-19 has brought a raft of challenges – but it's also put a spotlight on things we care about.

When we've been asked to stay close to home, urban New Zealanders have walked in quiet neighbourhoods and watched tūi and kākā return to their backyards. Rural communities have seen family members looking for a refuge come home – and in some cases, stay.

And when we've been able to travel further, within our own country, many New Zealanders have been rediscovering what an incredible place we live in.

The full effects of COVID-19 will take years to play out, but even as the pandemic threatens or takes away things we value, it highlights what remains – precious things we may take for granted and need to hold more tightly.

We live in one extraordinary country. It's a unique place on earth, with an exceptional natural environment.

But the natural world is under pressure. COVID-19 has come against the backdrop of environmental issues that won't go away quickly, like climate change and degraded lakes and rivers. Some are well known. Others are emergent, and will become all the more pressing as climate change bites.

Our built environment is under pressure too. Much of the infrastructure in our towns and cities doesn't cope well with, and exacerbates, environmental stresses.

The quality and quantity of housing has struggled to keep up with a growing economy and population. The effects of our consumption are felt inside and outside our urban centres, in our streams and on our coastlines. The expansion of our cities also risks compromising rare, productive land.

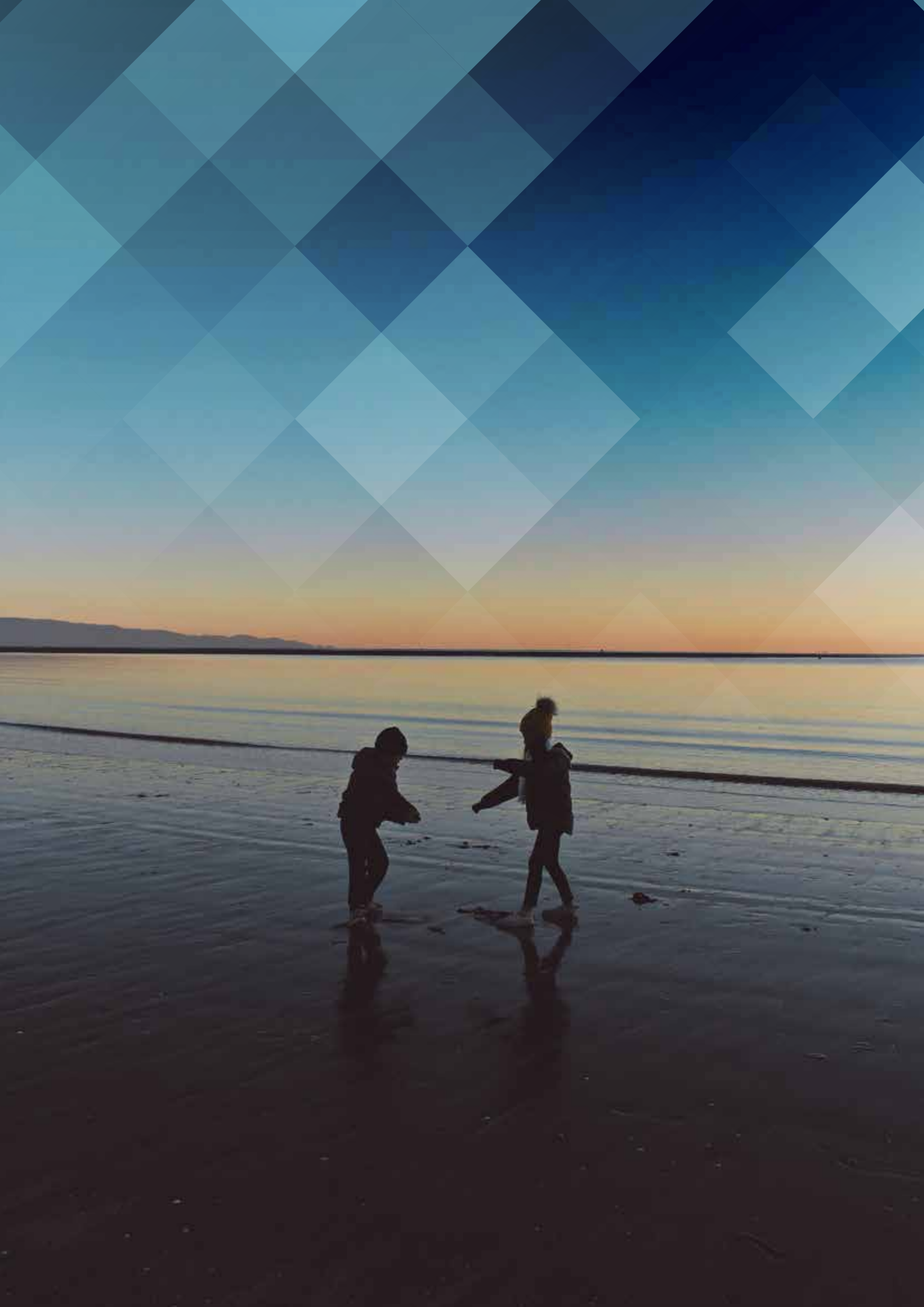
The pandemic has gifted us an opportunity too. The recovery is an opportunity to transition to an economy and society that doesn't just address the environmental symptoms of our way of life, but is regenerative – taking us towards an environment that flourishes for generations to come. We can gift future New Zealanders a healthier world.

Much of the policy work, and regulatory packages of recent years, have laid the foundation for this work, and the Ministry is ready to go.

Our strategic priorities reflect the Government's policy agenda, and focus areas we've identified in our stewardship role, drawn from our environmental reporting with Stats NZ. We're excited about the breadth and depth of the work programme – initiatives like the reform of the environmental management system are a once-in-a-generation opportunity.

To make sure we keep our eye on the ball as we deliver, we've updated our strategic framework, with a fresh purpose and operating principles.

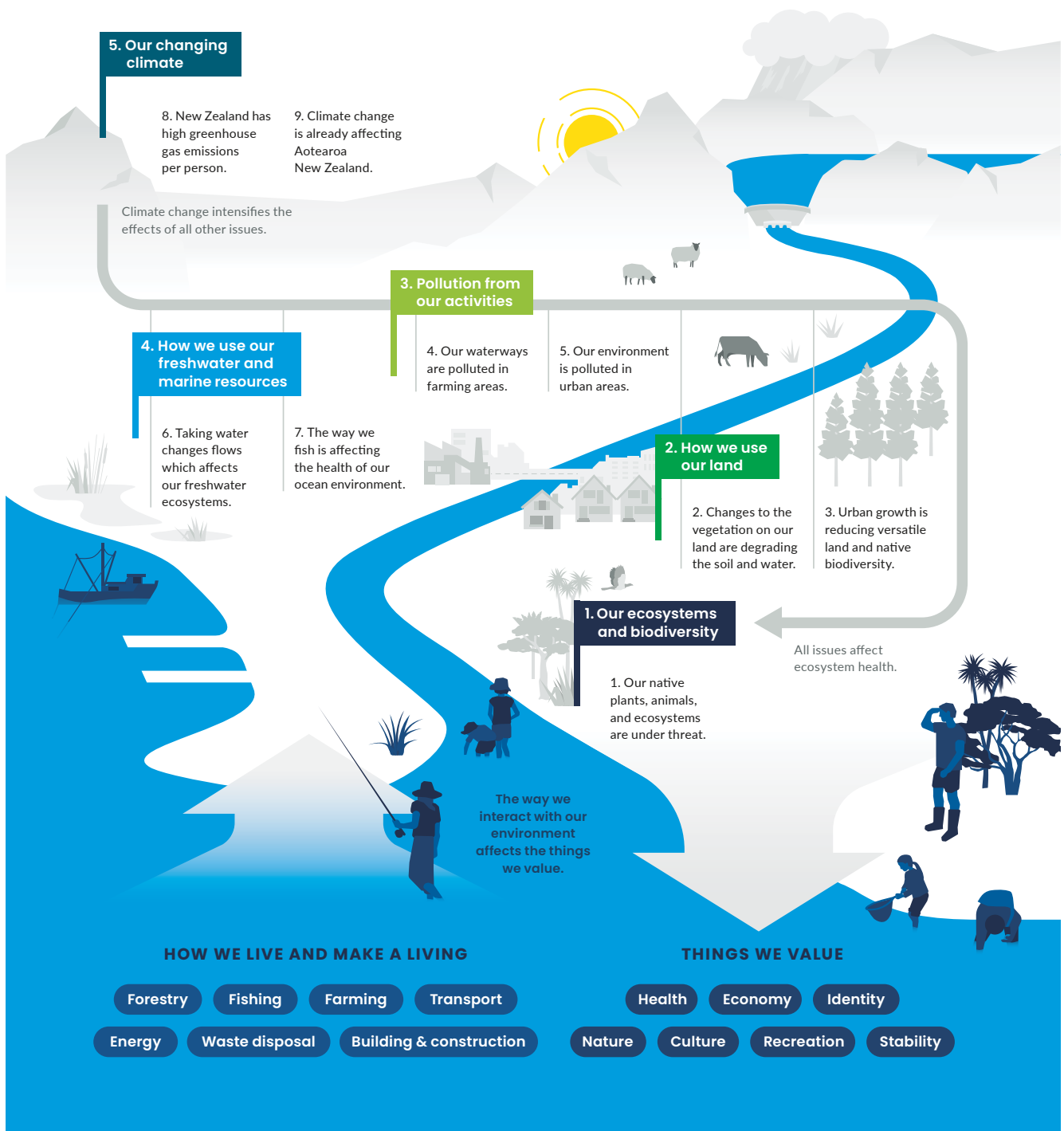
Ultimately, we all need to take responsibility for our environment. As the leader across all aspects of the environmental system, the Ministry has a special part to play and we welcome the opportunity to play this vital role.



Our environment today

Environment Aotearoa 2019 themes and issues

The themes and issues in this report show how the way we live and make a living affects our environment and the things we value.









Our purpose

A flourishing environment for every generation.

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) was established under the Environment Act 1986 and is the Government's primary adviser on environmental matters. We are a public service agency, serving the government of the day.

Our Act requires us to think broadly as we develop our advice. To consider the intrinsic values of ecosystems, the values people place on the environment, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the sustainability of natural and physical resources, and the needs of future generations.

We've wrapped this into a simple purpose statement for the Ministry – we want to see a flourishing environment for every generation.

Our operating principles

Our operating principles describe how we will go about our work.

We bring the environment to the heart of decision-making

The decisions New Zealanders make every day – from central and local government, to the choices we make as consumers, all have an effect on the environment. But often the environment is secondary, rather than a central consideration in our decision-making. The result has been a decline in the quality of the environment we depend on for our social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

The way we live and make a living is having an impact on our environment. We need to be more intentional and deliberate about our decisions to stop further degradation and improve the quality of our environment. The Ministry wants to bring the environment to the heart of decision making in New Zealand – with a particular focus on the intergenerational implications of decisions and ensuring the environment flourishes – rather than simply managing effects. We will do this by providing evidence-based policy advice to the Government on the social and economic systems influencing environmental outcomes, placing a strong emphasis on the intrinsic values of ecosystems, and providing information to New Zealanders about the cumulative effects of our choices through our environmental reporting.

We connect the wellbeing of people to the environment

One of the ways we can bring the environment into the heart of decision-making in areas where it might not normally be a primary consideration is by showing how environmental outcomes influence other things people value, including their wellbeing.

There is a growing body of research, and recognition in society, that wellbeing is strongly influenced by the quality of, and access to, the natural environment. Understanding this relationship, and making stronger connections between wellbeing and the environment will be an important aspect of our work going forward.

We see this as a way to accelerate positive environmental change, with the potential to contribute to wider individual and community wellbeing.

We bring the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori into our work every day

To be effective in our administration of the Environment Act, we need to be confident and capable in te ao Māori, recognising the role of Māori as tangata whenua, and the Act's requirement to ensure full and balanced account is taken of the Treaty of Waitangi in our advice and our actions.

To be authentic and effective, we need to bring the Treaty and te ao Māori into every aspect of our work, every day. It's something everyone at the Ministry is responsible for – from weaving Māori perspectives and mātauranga into our policy advice and environmental reporting, to our relationships with iwi under settlement agreements, and our basic business practices.

Our advice and actions are grounded in science and evidence

This principle speaks to our role as the Government's principal policy advisor on environmental matters. To be effective, and navigate contested issues that go to the heart of what people care about, we need to be a credible and authoritative steward of research and information about the natural world. We also want science and evidence to underpin our actions as a Ministry. We will do this by describing and understanding the path the environment is on – from the mountains to the sea. Environmental science and evidence will indicate how well interventions are performing to achieve a flourishing environment for all generations. To be an effective steward we will excel in weaving together knowledge systems and disciplines (including mātauranga and social science), and environmental intelligence. We'll also know how to turn knowledge into insights that can guide decision-makers (every New Zealander) and create the foundation for change.

We lead across the environmental system

Our 2018 Performance Improvement Framework Review called for the Ministry to play a stronger leadership role across the environmental management system. There have also been calls from government and stakeholders for the Ministry to have a stronger focus on the performance of the system as a whole, in addition to our policy advisory role.

In practice, this means working with central and local government, business, Māori and iwi and communities to achieve improved environmental outcomes. This includes monitoring how well environmental policy is being implemented, the results that are being achieved, where the sticking points are, and getting directly involved where we can help to effect change.

It also means providing targeted advice to the Government on where and how it can intervene most effectively to get better results, including possible enforcement action.

We accelerate change on the ground

There's recognition of a need, and a desire from players across the environmental system, for the Ministry to help ensure government policy is being implemented effectively, and the intent of environmental policies is being realised. The freshwater package is a priority in this area, as is working with others on New Zealand's response to climate change.

We are also responsible for activities that will have an immediate impact "on the ground" in New Zealand's economic recovery, including Fast Track Consenting, the Jobs for Nature programme, and investment in waste minimisation and resource recovery infrastructure. We have set up a new business unit to deliver these functions and accelerate change on the ground. As well as delivering these priorities for the Government, a key focus in the years ahead will be achieving operational excellence in this area, so that New Zealanders experience positive environmental outcomes sooner.

Our business activities

Legislative and regulatory change

Providing policy advice to enable the Government's legislative and regulatory agenda is core business for the Ministry. This includes working with others to understand the implications of proposed changes and ensure legislation and regulations are fit-for-purpose.

Policy implementation

The Ministry is putting a greater emphasis on supporting the implementation of government policies. This includes having a stronger regional presence and relationships. As well as ensuring policies are applied well, and have the desired effect, insights from this work will help to ensure our policy advice is well informed.

Partnerships and engagement

The Ministry partners with others in a number of ways. In particular we play a key role in meeting Crown commitments under Treaty of Waitangi settlements. We also work with our environmental system partners across central and local government and key stakeholders to accelerate change and improve environmental outcomes across the economy and society. This includes supporting positive action by local communities and individuals.

Investment and funding

We are responsible for administering funding to support New Zealand's economic recovery and invest in the environment. This includes funds dedicated to freshwater, waste, remediating contaminated sites, and community environment projects, and the Jobs for Nature programme.

Environmental reporting

We play a key role tracking the impact our way of life has on the environment under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015. Our reports with Stats NZ provide data and evidence to help policy makers, businesses, community groups and individual New Zealanders bring the environment to the heart of their decision making, so our environment, economy and people flourish.

Governance and leadership

The Ministry is the monitoring agency for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Climate Change Commission (CCC). We provide independent advice on the performance of these Crown entities and assist Ministers with their responsibilities, such as the appointment of Board members.

Organisational development

Alongside the delivery of our work programme we invest in the development of the Ministry's people, functions and capabilities, to ensure we are well placed to deliver on the Government's work programme and meet future needs.

Critical enablers

To deliver our work programme successfully, now and into the future, the Ministry needs to be a good steward of people, relationships, knowledge and systems.

People

The Ministry stands on the strength of its people. To deliver our strategy and our growing work programme, we need a workforce with the right capabilities, capacity and culture, which is diverse and skilled at connecting with New Zealanders, and enabled by an inclusive work environment that supports people to do their best work.

Our Workforce Strategy provides a clear focus and direction for growing our people. In recent years we have built the capability of our leaders at all levels of the organisation to navigate complexity, provide thought leadership, coach our people, and engage effectively with our external partners and the broader community.

More broadly, we have introduced new learning tools, adopted a new forward-looking approach to performance, and begun to implement strategies to lift our capability in te ao Māori, and the diversity and inclusiveness of the Ministry. Key achievements include gaining the Rainbow Tick, reducing our gender pay gap, increasing the flexibility of our workforce, and changing how we recruit to attract a more diverse range of applicants.

Our next priority is to develop and implement an organisational capability framework to provide a clear picture of capability strengths and development areas at all levels of the Ministry. It will be used for attraction, learning and development, succession and retention, and identification of any skill gaps. We will continue to focus on growing critical capabilities including mātauranga Māori, understanding and applying Māori perspectives, and data & science. We will also engage with the Public Service Commission System Workforce Deployment platform to share talent and opportunities throughout all government agencies.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees will continue to be a priority. We have established a dedicated role focussed on taking action to support the wellbeing of our people, supported by our health and safety representative cohort who identify and drive improvements across the organisation.

We provide equal employment opportunities through recruitment and selection, career development and progression, training and employment conditions. We are a flexible-by-default organisation and make flexible working equally available to all our people. We have an ongoing focus on addressing instances of inequality in pay.

Relationships

To achieve results for the environment it is essential we work effectively with others across central and local government, Māori and iwi and communities.

Our 2018 PIF Review called for the Ministry to use a broader range of interventions, beyond policy and regulatory change, to address New Zealand's environmental challenges. It included a strong emphasis on working with others across the environmental management system – to be “deeply connected and engaged with the broadest network of stakeholders possible”.

To support this direction we set up a dedicated Partnerships and Customers division. The division is helping us to engage more effectively with New Zealanders, and build a strategic partnership capability across the Ministry. As well as supporting our interactions with stakeholders in the course of our policy work, and iwi partners in the context of Treaty settlements the Ministry is party to, our work in this area has culminated in formal partnerships, such as the Aotearoa Circle, and collaborative initiatives like 9Wire and C-Prize, to accelerate environmental action.

We'll continue to place a high value on relationships in the years ahead, as we tackle a major reform programme for the Government. Inclusive processes will help us to develop lasting, fit-for-purpose solutions. We'll also invest in the relationships needed to make the current environmental management system more effective. In the area of formal partnerships we'll have a narrower focus on driving change through existing channels, to maximise our impact.

Our capability investment within the Ministry will include embedding a new stakeholder engagement framework. The framework is focused on creating

an organisational engagement culture that is values-led, grounded in quality standards, and sees engagement as an integral part of how we operate and get results.

Knowledge

Knowledge – including global science and local knowledge like mātauranga Māori – is a critical foundation for the Ministry's work. It helps us understand where we are now, why, and what we can do about environmental challenges. It goes to the heart of our ability to be an effective policy advisor, a trusted source of information on the state of the environment, and to lead the environmental management system as a whole.

Our Science Strategy will guide the development of our capability in this area over the next four years. The definition of science in the strategy is purposefully broad. Science refers to the data, monitoring, research, reports, scientific methods and understanding we use to make decisions and give advice. It covers areas such as environmental economics, social and behavioural sciences, and mātauranga Māori, as well as the biophysical sciences. The Science Strategy focuses on our people, our tools and processes, our ability to collaborate purposefully, and our ability to make science accessible and meaningful to a variety of audiences.

We also have a Data Stewardship Strategy in place to support our work to improve New Zealand's environmental monitoring and reporting system, and to build the Ministry's capability to use data and evidence in our advice.

Systems

The Ministry has adapted its organisational systems and processes as we grow, with an emphasis on becoming more flexible and resilient. This paid dividends during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when we were able to continue to deliver seamlessly through a distributed workforce, even as our workload increased and key people were seconded out of the Ministry to contribute to the all-of-government crisis response.

In the years ahead our investment in organisational systems will focus on deepening capability, so we're well placed to deliver our strategic direction for years to come. Implementing our Digital Strategy will be a part of this. A digitally engaged Ministry will have major benefits for the public, communities and business. Broadly, digital inclusion will enable more sophisticated targeting of policy interventions, and better social and public engagement. Practically, it will include harnessing tools like open data and automation, to help us be smarter and more efficient.

More broadly, we will continue to develop the systems related to organisational processes, for example around governance and overall management of our work portfolio. This is essential for a larger, more diversified Ministry with a growing work programme.

Reducing our footprint

Our Sustainability Strategy sets out our plan to July 2022. This includes a long-term target to reduce our emissions 50% from our 2017/18 baseline by 2030.

Key targets for minimising our environmental footprint and putting us on track for 2030 include:

- Measure and externally certify our carbon footprint annually.
- Reduce our emissions by 26% from our 2017/18 baseline.
- Staff feel engaged and empowered to use alternatives to travel.
- Use our environmental reporting programme to inform greater action on sustainably managing our natural assets.
- Reduce our waste to landfill from our head office by 50% from our 2017/18 baseline.

Measuring what matters

This Statement of Intent updates how we will report progress against the strategic priorities of the Ministry. It outlines changes we intend to make to the environmental management system, and the aspects of the environment we expect to benefit from those changes. Continuing to improve our ability to measure both environmental outcomes and system performance is a priority for the Ministry.

We have an active work programme focused on understanding and reporting on New Zealand's environment. Under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015, we work in partnership with Stats NZ to jointly publish New Zealand's environmental reporting series. This legislation requires us to report every six months on the state of one of the five domains of our environment: air, atmosphere and climate, fresh water, land, and marine. The state of our environment as a whole is reported every three years and the latest report, Environment Aotearoa 2019 (EA2019), is available on our website. The next state of the environment report will be published in 2022. All reports can be accessed on our website and the indicators and data sets that underpin them can be accessed on the Stats NZ website.

This reporting helps us to understand the health of our environment, track impacts of human activities over time, identify environmental challenges, and consider future outlooks. It underpins much of the Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa – Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand work that the Treasury recognises as an important resource to help monitor progress around wellbeing. Over the coming years we will continue to progress our work linking measures of the environment and the Treasury's living standards framework, which includes the four capitals and domains of current wellbeing. Natural capital is one of the four capitals and incorporates all aspects of the natural environment that support life and human activity.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment completed a review of New Zealand's environmental reporting system in 2019. The review reinforced the significance of data and knowledge gaps identified through our environmental reporting series, noting that these gaps undermine our stewardship of the environment. The Commissioner recommended concerted action and serious investment. The Ministry has taken steps to address recommendations where possible and will provide advice to the Government on how it might respond to the more systematic recommendations within the Commissioner's review.

We will continue to work with Stats NZ and others to improve New Zealand's environmental reporting framework and indicators, recognising the importance of a healthy environment for jobs, incomes, health and safety, cultural identity, and social wellbeing. A te ao Māori perspective, which sees people within, not separate to, their environment, will help to create a holistic view of our relationship with the natural world. As well as measuring environmental outcomes, we also recognise the importance of improving our knowledge of the effectiveness of specific policy interventions and actions on the ground, whether they are the result of work by the Ministry or others.

This is challenging work requiring contributions from a range of partners, including other central and local government agencies, academics, practitioners, farmers, business and industry. The role of Māori and iwi is critical to reflect the role of Māori as tangata whenua and our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi. It must also fit with international frameworks so we can track New Zealand's progress as part of our global context. Getting it right will provide a basis for the Ministry, other partners and stakeholders to identify how our efforts contribute to not only environmental outcomes but wider wellbeing.





Our strategic priorities

The Ministry has seven strategic priorities, covering a work programme that spans every aspect of New Zealand's natural and built environments.

- Transform the Environmental Management System
- The Treaty of Waitangi is reflected in environmental decision making
- Improve the quality of New Zealand's urban environments
- Build a sustainable and resilient land and food system
- New Zealand transitions to a climate-resilient, low-emission, and circular economy
- Improve how New Zealand's natural resources are allocated
- Connect people and communities with Te Taiao

Transform the environmental management system

The environmental management system includes the laws and institutions that influence our relationship with the environment. It covers everything from our natural resources to the way we build our towns and cities. In the broadest sense, the system includes anyone making decisions which affect the environment.

At the heart of the system is the Resource Management Act (RMA). New Zealand's economy has grown significantly since the RMA was introduced in 1991, and the way we use our land and other resources has changed. There is evidence, including through the Ministry's environmental reporting, that current settings are resulting in some poor urban and environmental outcomes. The RMA is also criticised for its complexity and over-emphasis on adverse effects rather than incentivising positive outcomes.

In July 2019 the Government announced a comprehensive review of the RMA led by the Resource Management Review Panel. The RM review panel released its report 'New Directions for Resource Management in New Zealand' in June 2020. This report makes the case for new planning and environmental management legislation that provides a clearer and more positive focus for New Zealand's environmental management system.

Delivering the Government reform programme based on the report will be a major focus for the Ministry in the years ahead. We have an opportunity to deliver a step change in New Zealand's planning and environmental management system. This includes ensuring the transition to the new system, and effective implementation, are considered as integral aspects of the reform process, alongside legislative and regulatory changes.

With the establishment of the Government's new Oceans and Fisheries portfolio, the Ministry will also support progress towards an integrated, ecosystem-based oceans management system which delivers economic opportunities within environmental limits.

Our objective:*To deliver a step change in New Zealand's planning and environmental management system*

FUNCTION	Function 1 To develop new planning and environmental management legislation <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	Function 2 To develop and update National Direction (National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards) <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	Function 3 To support the efficient and effective operation of the Resource Management Act <i>Policy implementation</i>	Function 4 To provide a system perspective on oceans policy to ensure alignment with wider reforms <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	New planning and environmental management legislation is in place to drive improved environmental outcomes in the medium and long-term	Environmental expectations are clear and support better decision making across central and local government	The resource management system is supported effectively to deliver improved environmental outcomes	Strategic goals are established for an integrated oceans management system
IMPACT INDICATORS	The Government has a robust basis for reform and policy change, informed by evidence based advice	Stakeholders have greater clarity and certainty about New Zealand's environmental policy settings Environmental decision making is more consistent across central and local government	Central and local government can access technical support and capacity to support planning and decision making, including transition to the future system	The Government has a robust basis for oceans management reform
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	New planning and environmental legislation is introduced to Parliament	National direction is delivered as agreed with the Government and will support the transition to the future system	Fast-track consenting and streamlined planning applications are delivered within agreed timeframes	The oceans work programme is aligned with the new planning and environmental management system
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Improvement in multiple domains	Improvement in domains specific to each piece of national direction	Improvement in multiple domains	Improved outcomes for oceans

The Treaty of Waitangi is reflected in environmental decision making

The Ministry has responsibilities under our governing legislation, as well as other legislation we are responsible for, to honour the Crown's commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The role of Māori in environmental decision-making was a key issue considered in the review of the Resource Management Act. A key driver of the review was the need to ensure that Māori have an effective role in the environmental management system, and that the system is consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi. The Ministry provides advice to the Government on reform of the resource management system.

The Ministry also has commitments and obligations as part of Treaty settlements. The settlements include a range of innovative governance arrangements across the country where the Ministry, Treaty partners and local government work together to improve environmental outcomes. Co-management of freshwater bodies like the Waikato River and supporting the legal personhood of the Whanganui River are examples of arrangements where the Ministry is involved. We expect settlements currently being negotiated to continue to involve the Ministry in new governance arrangements.

To help meet these commitments, and enable us to play our part in upholding the Treaty into the future, we have a strong focus on lifting capability in te ao Māori across the Ministry.

Our objective:

To give effect to partnership with Māori and iwi in the delivery of the planning and environmental management system

FUNCTION	<p>Function 1</p> <p>To provide advice on environmental redress in Treaty settlements and ensure its effective implementation</p> <p><i>Partnerships and engagement</i></p>	<p>Function 2</p> <p>To provide advice on options to strengthen consideration of the Treaty of Waitangi in environmental decision making</p> <p><i>Legislative and regulatory change</i></p>	<p>Function 3</p> <p>To implement the Te Ao Hurihuri programme to lift Ministry capability</p> <p><i>Organisational development</i></p>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	The Ministry meets its Treaty settlement commitments, including when delivering policy advice and implementation programmes	Central and local government are clear on how to meet their obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi in environmental decision making	The Ministry's engagement with Māori and iwi is competent, confident and effective
IMPACT INDICATORS	<p>Policy advice reflects the Treaty of Waitangi and any specific requirements included in Treaty settlements</p> <p>Implementation work programmes include specific actions to address commitments in Treaty settlements</p> <p>Other specific actions in Treaty settlement agreements are met</p>	Māori and iwi engaged as Treaty partners in the policy options	The Ministry's capability to engage with Māori and iwi is developed and maintained
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	The development and implementation of a Treaty settlements policy toolkit	Advice is developed on options to strengthen consideration of the Treaty of Waitangi	Te Ao Hurihuri is implemented across the organisation
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Improvement in multiple domains	Improvement in multiple domains	Improvement in multiple domains

Improve the quality of New Zealand's urban environments

The quality of urban environments has a major impact on our quality of life. Since 2013, 85% of population growth has been in our urban areas. Urban planning has not anticipated or responded to support this growth well.

Some of the findings about New Zealand's urban environment from Environment Aotearoa 2019 include:

- Urban areas are spreading and encroaching onto highly productive land, with 10% growth over the period from 1996–2012¹. The largest impacts are in Canterbury and Auckland due to a growing population and interest in lifestyle blocks².
- Most rivers and streams in urban areas are polluted by wastewater and storm water³.
- Air quality is generally good and has improved in some places⁴. Air quality is mainly affected by emissions from home heating in winter and transport, particularly in our large urban centres.

A critical issue for New Zealand's urban environment in the next 20 years is *how* our urban centres grow. In this context, implementation of the new National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) is a key focus for the Ministry. The NPS-UD requires councils to amend their zoning plans to make provision for at least 30 years of urban growth.

The Ministry will also be improving urban water outcomes and air quality over the next two years, and working with local government to ensure these regulations are effectively implemented.

1 EA2019, pg. 41

2 EA2019, pg. 41. Original citation: Andrew, R., & Dymond, J. (2013). Expansion of lifestyle blocks and urban areas onto high-class land: An update for planning and policy. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 43(3), 128–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2012.736392>

3 EA2019, pg. 65

4 EA2019, pg. 64 and 67

Our objective:

To work in partnership with central and local government in planning, designing and delivering sustainable urban environments for all people and communities

FUNCTION	Function 1 To implement the National Policy Statement on Urban Development <i>Policy implementation</i>	Function 2 To support the effective regulation and integrated management of urban land-use and water infrastructure <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	Function 3 To support local government to implement the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality <i>Policy implementation</i>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	Urban development is planned, designed and delivered to meet the needs of current and future communities	Urban water is well managed by local authorities and water service providers and contributes to upholding te Mana o te Wai	New Zealand's Air Quality standards reflect our improved understanding of the health impacts of air pollution
IMPACT INDICATORS	The needs of current and future communities are clearly identified by local authorities as required by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Local Councils are monitoring whether communities' needs are being met in accordance with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development	Local authorities and water service providers can demonstrate progress towards improving urban water outcomes and upholding te Mana o te Wai	Regional plans are updated to reflect the requirements of the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality Local government participate in the National Air Quality Working Group
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	An implementation plan for the National Policy Statement on Urban Development is developed The Auckland Joint Work Programme is implemented	A new regulatory framework for Three Waters is enacted through the Water Services Bill and any necessary changes under the resource management system	The National Environmental Standards for Air Quality are amended Local government is well supported to implement the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Higher quality urban environments reduce stresses on ecosystems and pressure on rural areas	Improved urban water quality	Improvements in air quality measures

Build a sustainable and resilient land and food system

The land sector contributes significantly to the economy, and is an important part of New Zealand's identity. It relies on healthy water, soils and biodiversity, and a favourable climate. This makes sustainable land use essential to our wellbeing, and ensuring the environment flourishes for generations to come.

More broadly, the food system – including the way we distribute and consume food – has a significant influence on how we use our land, and environmental outcomes.

The last 30 years has seen significant changes in our land sector, with changes in where we live and what we produce. This has had flow on impacts on our environment. The Ministry's environmental reporting has identified that:

- Freshwater resources are degrading and under pressure from changes in land use⁵
- Agricultural emissions contribute almost half of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions⁶
- Highly productive land is at risk from the expansion of our urban centres⁷
- Native biodiversity continues to decline⁸

The Government has put a new regulatory framework in place to safeguard and enhance freshwater. The next stage is working with landowners and councils to support effective implementation of the framework. This includes funding activities through the Jobs for Nature programme.

We are also working with the primary sector through He Waka Eke Noa, a partnership to help farmers measure, manage, and reduce on-farm greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. In the area of biodiversity, our focus is on completing the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, building on the work of the Biodiversity Collaborative Group and public and stakeholder consultation.

5 EA2019, pg. 30

6 EA2019, pg. 94

7 EA2019, pg. 41

8 EA2019, Issues 1 and 3

Our objective:

New Zealand has a productive and innovative land and food system that drives improved environmental outcomes

FUNCTION	Function 1 To implement the Essential Freshwater package on a kaupapa of Te Mana o te Wai <i>Policy implementation</i>	Function 2 To develop a farm-level greenhouse gas emission pricing mechanism and regulations to give effect to a freshwater farm planning system <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	Function 3 To invest in action to improve water quality <i>Investment</i>	Function 4 To provide advice on the development of National Direction on indigenous biodiversity <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	Landowners and Councils know what is required of them and how to achieve improvements in water quality in their local catchments	Landowners understand their on-farm emissions and take actions to reduce them Freshwater farm plans support improved outcomes for freshwater and freshwater ecosystems	Ecosystem health is improved through targeted investment	New national direction is in place to maintain indigenous biodiversity
IMPACT INDICATORS	Councils update their Freshwater Management Plans as required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Technical guidance products are utilised by landowners and Councils	Landowners know their total on farm emissions and have plans to manage them Freshwater farm plans are being put in place across New Zealand	Funded projects achieve their stated objectives to improve ecosystem health	Significant indigenous vegetation and habitats of significant indigenous fauna are being identified and managed by councils
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	Essential Freshwater package implemented with the Freshwater Implementation Group	Farm level emission pricing is designed and implemented Freshwater farm plan regulations are implemented	There is a clear strategy for prioritising projects for funding Funding is allocated to projects each year	National Direction on indigenous biodiversity is developed
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Improvements in the health of waterways, lakes and groundwater	Greenhouse gas emissions and contaminants to water from agriculture decrease	Improvements in the health of waterways, lakes and groundwater	The decline in indigenous biodiversity reduces

New Zealand transitions to a climate-resilient, low-emission, and circular economy

Climate change is one of the most significant environmental challenges of our time. In addition to reducing emissions as part of a global response, we need to prepare for the effects of climate change that cannot be avoided. Both of these aspects of climate change – mitigation and adaptation – require an economy-wide response.

At the same time, New Zealand needs to make a significant transition in the way we deal with waste. Our current pattern of creating and managing waste is not sustainable – economically, environmentally, or socially. New Zealand produces one of the highest levels of waste per capita in the OECD, around 750kg per person per year.

On top of the effects of waste we experience locally, disposal of waste and resources generates around five per cent of New Zealand's gross greenhouse gas emissions. While this is a small contribution compared to other sectors, there are significant opportunities to make changes that have positive outcomes for climate and waste at the same time.

Our broader work on climate change includes advising the Government on the development of an Emission Reduction Plan for New Zealand, to meet the 2050 target set under the Zero Carbon Act. In addition, as part of our efforts to support and encourage global action to address climate change, we will be reporting on New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions internationally.

Our objective:

New Zealand has an innovative and productive economy, with less waste and fewer greenhouse gas emissions, that is resilient to the physical and economic impacts of climate change

FUNCTION	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4	Function 5
	To provide advice on the development of an Emission Reduction Plan <i>Policy implementation</i>	To provide advice on the development of a National Adaptation Plan <i>Policy implementation</i>	To revise the New Zealand Waste Strategy and expand the coverage and level of the Waste Disposal Levy <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	To provide advice on the development of new product stewardship schemes <i>Legislative and regulatory change</i>	To invest in projects that support resource efficiency, reuse, recovery and recycling, and decrease waste to landfill <i>Investment</i>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	New Zealand reduces its greenhouse gas emissions in line with its emission budgets	Central and local government is coordinated in its efforts to address the impacts of climate change	New Zealand progresses to a more circular economy with lower waste produced and disposed to landfill	New Zealand progresses to a more circular economy with lower waste produced and disposed to landfill	New Zealand has an innovative sustainable design, manufacturing and resource recovery sector
IMPACT INDICATORS	New Zealand has a suite of policy and measures that reduce emissions in line with our 2050 target	Central and local government is taking an active role in planning for the impacts of climate change	New Zealand has policy measures and targets to guide its transition to a more circular economy	The level of waste produced in New Zealand reduces	Sustainable design, manufacturing and resource recovery sectors are expanding and reducing the level of waste to landfill
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	New Zealand has an emission reduction plan in place New Zealand reports its greenhouse gas emissions internationally	New Zealand has a National Adaptation Plan	The New Zealand Waste Strategy is reviewed Changes are made to the Waste Disposal Levy	Three new product stewardship schemes have been designed	Investment approved for five large scale projects
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Greenhouse gas emissions decrease	New Zealand's resilience to the impacts of climate change increases	Level of waste disposed to landfills regulated under the Waste Minimisation Act reduces	Level of waste disposed to landfills regulated under the Waste Minimisation Act reduces	Level of waste disposed to landfills regulated under the Waste Minimisation Act reduces

Improve how New Zealand's natural resources are allocated

As competition for their use grows, the way natural resources are allocated – and the need to ensure the environment flourishes in the future – becomes increasingly important.

Water allocation will be a big focus for the Ministry over the next three years. Water is a key strategic asset for New Zealand to thrive economically. Electricity generation, agriculture and manufacturing, drinking water and recreational activities all rely on access to water resources.

In a growing number of catchments and aquifers, the volume of water allocated for use has reached or exceeded sustainable environmental limits. Requirements under the National Policy Statement-Freshwater Management for councils to put limits in place, or to update existing limits will increase the scarcity of available water resources, yet demand for water resources continues to grow.

Our Freshwater 2020 environmental report identified that:

- Demand for water for irrigation has increased – the area of irrigated land almost doubled between 2002–2017⁹
- Demand for water is growing as our population increases – Auckland's water use has increased from 280 million litres per day in 1980 to 379 million litres per day in 2019¹⁰.

Water allocation is currently managed by local government and is currently allocated on a “first-in first served” basis under the Resource Management Act. Every region in the country has at least some catchments where water resources are under pressure or are over-allocated. These water resources will come under further pressure from changes in rainfall patterns, increasing drought and flooding, that climate change is likely to intensify.

Over the next three years the Ministry will develop options for a fair and enduring water allocation system.

⁹ EA2019, pg. 77

¹⁰ OFW2020, pg. 57. Original citations: Watercare (no date). About us. Watercare Services Limited. Retrieved 5 March 2020, from watercare.co.nz/about-us. Watercare (2011). Auckland Regional Water Demand Management Plan. Watercare Services Limited. Watercare (2019). Annual Report 2019. Watercare Services Limited.

Our objective:

The development of a fair and enduring allocation system for freshwater and contaminants that addresses Māori rights and interests and improves the state of New Zealand's freshwater resources

FUNCTION	<p>Function 1</p> <p>To provide advice on the development of a new system to allocate freshwater and contaminants</p> <p><i>Legislative and regulatory change</i></p>	<p>Function 2</p> <p>To engage with Māori as Treaty partners in the development of a new system to allocate freshwater and contaminants</p> <p><i>Partnerships and engagement</i></p>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	The development of a clear set of options to improve the allocation of freshwater and contaminants in New Zealand that will enhance Te Mana o te Wai	The development of a clear set of options to improve the allocation of freshwater and contaminants in New Zealand
IMPACT INDICATORS	<p>The Government has a robust basis for improving water allocation in New Zealand, informed by evidence based advice</p> <p>Options have been consulted on with a broad range of stakeholders</p>	Māori are engaged as Treaty partners in the development of policy options to improve the allocation of water and contaminants in New Zealand
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	Advice is provided on a new system to allocate freshwater and contaminants	Advice is provided on a new system to allocate freshwater and contaminants
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Improvements in the health of waterways, lakes and groundwater	Improvements in the health of waterways, lakes and groundwater

Connect people and communities with Te Taiao

Concerted action is needed to turn around many of the environmental trends we see in Aotearoa and around the world. Internationally, there is a focus on a “decade of action” for biodiversity, freshwater, ocean and climate goals.

In addition to the steps governments can take to bring about systemic change, many people are taking voluntary action to reduce the impact of their activities and restore the environment. Alongside our policy advice and support for implementation of changes to the environmental management system, the Ministry can support this kind of action by helping to strengthen people’s understanding of the relationship between our way of life and the environment.

A key pillar for our engagement with New Zealanders is our environmental reporting. Data and evidence on environmental trends highlights how our decisions affect Te Taiao, and enables people to make informed decisions. The Ministry produces regular reports on different aspects of the environment with Stats NZ.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment released recommendations to improve the environmental reporting system. Some recommendations have been implemented, while others require more systemic change.

In addition to our environmental reporting, the Ministry will partner with environmental leaders across New Zealand, and invest in public education activities, to accelerate action and achieve better environmental outcomes sooner.

Our objective:

To accelerate change through compelling communication, partnerships and engagement using data and insights

FUNCTION	Function 1 To report on the state of the environment <i>Environmental reporting</i>	Function 2 To partner with stakeholders across New Zealand <i>Partnerships and engagement</i>	Function 3 To undertake public engagement, awareness and communication activities <i>Partnerships and engagement</i>
IMPACT (3-5 YEAR)	New Zealanders can track the quality of the environment over time and are aware of our key environmental challenges	Partnership agreements complement regulatory tools to achieving environmental outcomes	Individuals and communities take action for the environment
IMPACT INDICATORS	The media and civil society engage in our environmental reporting programme	The number of partnership agreements and scale of intended impact increases over time Public sector sustainability targets are being met	Level of awareness of environmental issues by the public
SHIFT (1-2 YEAR DELIVERABLE)	Environmental reporting as per the Environmental Reporting Act	The Partnerships Strategy is implemented	Stakeholder engagement framework developed
ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES	Improvement in multiple domains	Improvement in multiple domains	Improvement in multiple domains



Ministry for the

Environment

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