



Summary of key recommendations to Minister Parker to help deliver a successful resource management reform

1. Work with the sector to develop a transition plan that is achievable and will deliver the Government's reform objectives.

- **Consider phasing in the future resource management system.** Introduce the SPA first so the reform will be more manageable for local government – particularly from a resourcing and capacity point of view – and councils have time to establish new regional ways of working.
- **Urgently provide clarity on the transition period.** Councils need clarity around what the arrangements for transition are, including when they can draw a line in the sand and stop making plan changes and leading resource intensive plan reviews.
- **Transition 'ready regions' first.** Our preliminary view is regions that are ready to move should move first. And regions that have recently undergone significant district plan reviews should come last, given the cost implications for their communities of making further changes.

2. Enhance local voice through the reform process

- **Include a requirement to give effect to SCOs and SREOs in the NBA.** We're concerned that without a statutory requirement to 'give effect' to the SCOs and SREOs (subject to other considerations such as consistency with the National Planning Framework), there is a real risk council and community views will be disregarded by regional planning committees.
- **Consider the role of sub-committees.** Establishing sub-committees to undertake sub-regional planning and/or planning related to technical matters, could help ensure the scale of planning is appropriate, reflects unique community needs, and addresses matters where a level of technical expertise is needed.

3. Properly address the risk that local government is held responsible for implementing decisions they have had limited influence into

- **Take time to get the relationship right between joint committees and other council roles and functions.** More time is needed to work through how the proposed regional planning committees and their secretariats will work with and impact on councils' existing roles and functions, in advance of any broader reform of local government.
- **Ensure adequate central government funding to support implementation.** This would help to alleviate councils' concerns at being responsible for implementing regional planning decisions that they may have limited or no influence over. This should include central government contributing funding towards regional planning committee processes.
- **Closely involve local government in the development of the National Planning Framework.** Without close involvement by councils in the development of the National Planning Framework, there is a risk that changes won't land well and will be challenging to implement.

4. Provide transformative resource to enable transformative reform

- **Give long term commitment around greater funding for transition.** We're pleased this year's Budget committed some funding to support the transition – but we're concerned that without a longer-term commitment to significantly greater funding for transition, there's a risk it'll be insufficiently resourced. This has the potential to undermine the success of the reform.
- **Engage meaningfully with iwi/hāpu/Māori to ensure they have the right resources to participate in new system.** Māori cannot nor should not be expected to fund their engagement directly or indirectly in the resource management system, particularly when Māori already face

substantial costs, institutionalised barriers and capacity issues when engaging with local and central government.

5. Progress the Climate Adaptation Act urgently - councils need clarity on adaptation as actions take time

- **Councils need more direction on how to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including via managed retreat.** Despite suggesting a staged approach to reform to better reflect the sector's current capacity constraints, we are concerned that the Climate Adaptation Act is on a significantly slower track – and would like for work on this critical part of the reform programme to be given greater priority. This should happen in partnership with local government.

6. Ensure clear lines of communication between central and local government throughout and after the reform process

- **Coordinate investment decisions.** Greater central and local government coordination of investment decisions through regional spatial planning will allow for improved outcomes to be realised from large scale projects, as well as provide certainty to councils around the availability and timing of central government funding.
- **Appoint local government advisors (or observers) to the interdepartmental Spatial Planning Act Board.** A collaborative relationship must go both ways. As well as central government participating in regional planning committee decisions on RSSs, local government must continue to have a strong role in the development and implementation of the future resource management system. Appointing local government advisors (or observers) to the interdepartmental Spatial Planning Act Board, which will have responsibility for transition to and implementation of the new system, is one way to do this.