

Fixing the Basics. Building the Future.

National Party Bluegreen Policy

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"New Zealand's environment is at the core of our quality of life, our national identity, and our competitive advantage. We enjoy some of the most pristine and accessible natural beauty in the world."

The National Party Bluegreens are the practical environmentalists. Our position recognises that our natural environment is an asset to be protected, restored and handed on in better condition. Healthy rivers, productive soils, thriving native species and abundant oceans are not barriers to prosperity. They underpin our quality of life, our regional economies and New Zealand's competitive advantage.

The Bluegreens approach is underpinned by five principles:

- Resource use must be based on sustainability.
- Economic growth and improving the environment can and must go hand in hand.
- Good science is essential to quality environmental decision-making.
- People respond best to change when engaged and given incentives.
- New Zealanders have a unique birthright to access and enjoy our special places.

Our natural environment matters to every New Zealander. It is part of who we are, supports our communities and underpins the industries that rely on our clean, green reputation.

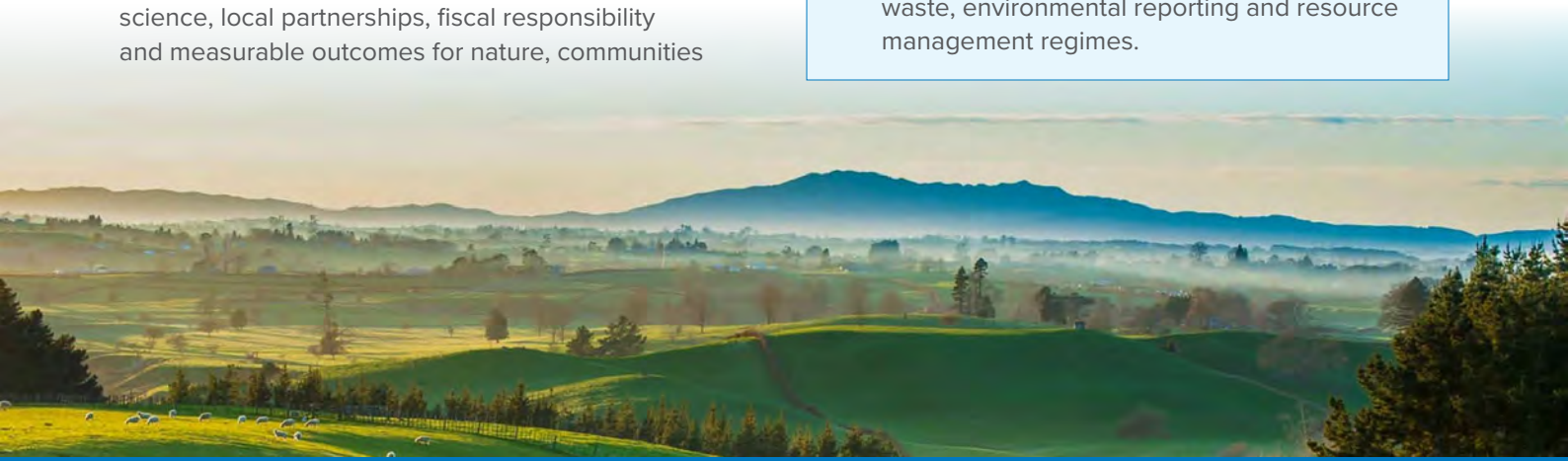
National believes New Zealanders should not have to choose between a strong economy and a healthy environment. We can grow, build, farm and invest while also improving water quality, restoring habitats, reducing waste and protecting the places New Zealanders love. We support clear rules, good science, local partnerships, fiscal responsibility and measurable outcomes for nature, communities and the economy. National will increasingly look for environmental investments that deliver multiple benefits rather than treating each problem in isolation.

Since coming into Government, National has focused on practical environmental outcomes. We have progressed planning reform, biodiversity and conservation investment, waste modernisation, climate mitigation and adaptation, and stronger environmental reporting.

National will build on that progress with a plan that is science-led, locally informed and focused on results.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Restore biodiversity and back local conservation efforts** by supporting Predator Free 2050, backing catchment groups, doubling QEII baseline funding and boosting pest management across the country.
- **Clean up our coastline and support a healthier ocean** by establishing a Coast and Ocean Clean-Up Fund and increasing protections for the Hauraki Gulf and the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- **Support lower-emission and resilient households** by backing renewable energy generation, household renewable energy, a national flood map and council adaptation plans.
- **Improve our environmental regulatory systems** by modernising our conservation, waste, environmental reporting and resource management regimes.



Restore biodiversity and back local conservation efforts

New Zealand's unique biodiversity is under pressure from introduced predators such as rats, stoats and possums. Protecting native species requires cooperation across the entire landscape, not just public land.

National will focus on protecting and restoring New Zealand's biodiversity, recognising that it supports all our critical ecosystems. Healthy forests, wetlands, soils and oceans sustain food production and support the natural systems our economy depends on. Thriving native wildlife and beautiful natural places enrich our lives, attract visitors and give communities a sense of pride and belonging. Protecting and restoring biodiversity means more birdsong in our neighbourhoods, healthier waterways and landscapes, and a natural inheritance our children and grandchildren can enjoy. It is an investment in both our quality of life and our long-term prosperity.

Community groups, iwi, farmers, schools, government, NGOs and industry all have an important role. By combining resources and expertise, we can strengthen conservation efforts, focus limited resources and achieve the greatest possible impact.

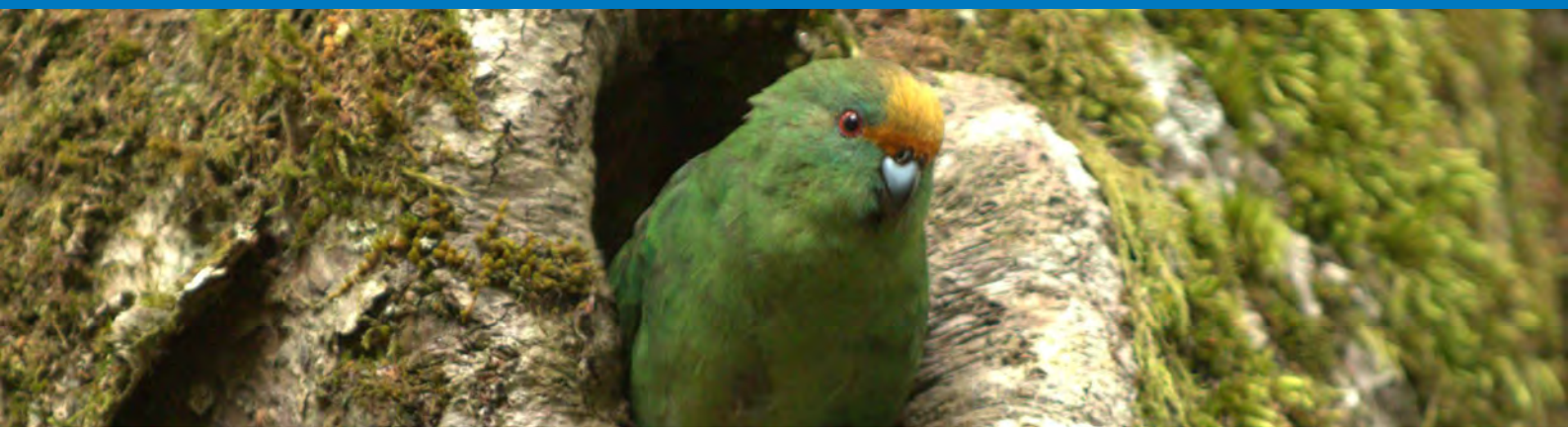
Strengthening community conservation

Community-level conservation efforts are integral to protecting native wildlife, forests, wetlands and our coastlines. These efforts include neighbours checking traplines, volunteers clearing weeds and planting natives, landowners protecting bush and wetlands, and local groups caring for streams and beaches year after year. Their knowledge, relationships and commitment extend the reach of conservation across public and private land and sustain the gains long after a planting day or funding round has ended.

Backing these local efforts with practical tools, expert advice and reliable support helps turn local pride into lasting environmental improvements. Strong community partnerships are fundamental to leaving our natural environment in better condition for the next generation.

Lake Ōkataina, Tarawera Falls and Lake Tarawera already have $1 million in International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) funding to upgrade 22 kilometres of track, improve campgrounds and reopen the Eastern Ōkataina Walkway, which has been closed since a 2021 rockfall. It is a strong start in a place with the scenery, cultural significance and visitor demand to match any Great Walk, but the tracks, infrastructure and visitor experience remain fragmented.





National will build on this year's investment with a joint Te Puni Kōkiri, DOC and regional development programme, delivered in partnership with tangata whenua, to link Lake Ōkataina, Tarawera Falls and Lake Tarawera into a single signature multi-day visitor experience. The programme will lift infrastructure, tangata whenua-led guiding and interpretation, and ecological restoration. Funding will come from the Department of Conservation's allocation of the IVL. This pilot will test a new model for future community and iwi partnerships to develop tourism offerings and protect our natural habitats.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Pilot a new partnership approach for a multi-day visitor experience based around Tarawera** to improve tracks, infrastructure and the overall visitor experience.
- **Double the DOC Community Fund to $9.2 million.** The DOC Community Fund is a Crown fund established in 2014 that provides contestable funding for community-led biodiversity restoration projects on public and private land. We will fund the increase through the IVL.
- **Establish a voluntary national outdoor service and conservation pathway** that helps young New Zealanders get outdoors, build practical skills, develop leadership, and contribute to their local communities through hands-on conservation projects[1].

Backing catchment groups

National recognises that lasting environmental improvements come from partnership, not prescription. Communities achieve the best outcomes when they have ownership of both the local challenges and the solutions.

Catchment groups bring farmers, growers, landowners, iwi, councils, industry and communities together to improve the waterways and landscapes they share. Rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all approach from Wellington, National backs local leadership.

Good science helps communities put their effort where it will make the greatest difference. Catchment monitoring can identify local pressures, establish a starting point and track change over time. Sharing results helps groups learn from each other and distinguish work completed, such as planting and fencing, from the longer-term improvements we want to see in water quality and ecosystem health.

Restoring stream margins and wetlands can provide habitat for native species, while stronger local networks help rural communities share knowledge, support wellbeing and respond to changing conditions. This is practical environmental stewardship that looks after the land and water while supporting productive farms and stronger rural communities.

In June 2026, we identified 51 supported groups and 17 regional collectives to improve coordination and extend coverage. National will support this network, keeping local leadership and practical delivery at the heart of the approach.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Invest $40.5 million in locally led catchment groups and regional collectives** to strengthen coordination and practical support for farmers and growers[2].
- **Strengthen access to science and catchment monitoring** so communities can identify local pressures, target action and track environmental improvements over time.
- **Keep support focused on local delivery** by sharing proven tools and resources across regional collectives, avoiding unnecessary administration and making results clear to communities and taxpayers.

1 Delivered through existing schools, kura, youth organisations, Iwi, councils and community conservation groups, the programme would build on successful initiatives already in place. Participants will work towards nationally recognised awards while also earning NZQA-recognised learning through practical conservation and community service.

2 Funded in Budget 2026

Beating the pest crisis

National will invest a further $16 million over four years from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy to reduce damaging pest populations across public, Māori and private land. This builds on previous IVL investment in wild animal management delivered by DOC.

Landowners are spending more time and money controlling pests but feel like they are still going backwards. Pests move across the boundaries between conservation land, forestry, farms and whenua Māori. They eat pasture and young trees, damage fences, threaten lambs, prevent native forest regeneration and undermine earlier conservation investment.

National will back coordinated control at landscape scale. We will target the source of pest pressure, protect productive land and conservation gains, and build local capability so pest numbers stay down. We will significantly boost investment to stop pests moving from public and forestry land onto farms, meaning less damage to pasture and fences, and more protection for young trees and native vegetation. The funding will focus on the Central North Island and Southern Westland regions first. Work will initially target the Whanganui–East Cape corridor and protect the gains made through Predator Free South Westland and Zero Invasive Predators, with final detailed plans agreed locally.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Invest a further $16 million in pest management** over four years from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy to concentrate efforts on reducing damaging pest populations across public, Māori and private land.
- **Pilot a Pest Bounty Scheme,** paying individuals, hapū and community groups for verified eradication of possums, stoats, wallabies and other priority pests in targeted landscapes. The scheme will focus on priority landscapes, with outcomes verified, and will complement Predator Free 2050 and regional pest plans, including control of wallabies and possums in Rotorua.
- **Fund coordinated control programmes** across land tenures. National will combine aerial and ground control, surveillance and monitoring by partnering with councils, iwi and hapū, landowners, forestry, hunters and community groups.
- **Finalise the National Introduced Wild Animal Management Framework** to improve the management of introduced wild animals, guide coordinated management programmes and enable stakeholders to work effectively together.
- **Support hunter-led conservation by strengthening the Access Charter** to ensure better access for recreational hunting and fishing on public land by adding the Game Animal Council, Land Information New Zealand and the Overseas Investment Office as signatories. National will also ensure existing recreational access is protected when sensitive land is purchased by overseas investors and improved where practical.
- **Complete the National Pest Management Plan for wilding conifers.** Wilding pines are a major and rapidly expanding threat to New Zealand's landscapes, conservation estate and regional economies. Sustained action is essential to prevent the problem from becoming even more widespread and expensive to manage.



Expanding Predator Free 2050

In 2016, the National Government launched Predator Free 2050, aiming to eradicate rats, stoats and possums, the main introduced mammalian predators threatening New Zealand's native taonga. Feral cats were added to the target species list in 2026.

More than 9,000 community trapping projects and 20 large-scale programmes now support this goal across New Zealand, from cities to remote islands. In 2026, the National Government increased investment in Predator Free 2050 partnerships, including:

- **Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau:** $10 million over five years for island eradication and the region's first urban mainland predator-elimination programme.
- **Wellington Te Whanganui-a-Tara:** $5.5 million over five years, alongside partner and philanthropic funding, to expand predator control across 18,500 hectares and support more than 200,000 residents and 20,000 businesses.
- **Otago:** $3.9 million over three years to extend predator elimination from Port Chalmers to Orokonui Ecosanctuary, the Aramoana Peninsula and Blueskin Bay, following the successful removal of possums from the Otago Peninsula.

Predator control helps native species recover, strengthens biodiversity, connects communities with their environment and supports tourism. However, obtaining regulatory permissions for eradication, research and development can be complex, costly and time-consuming, with some projects requiring up to 33 approvals.

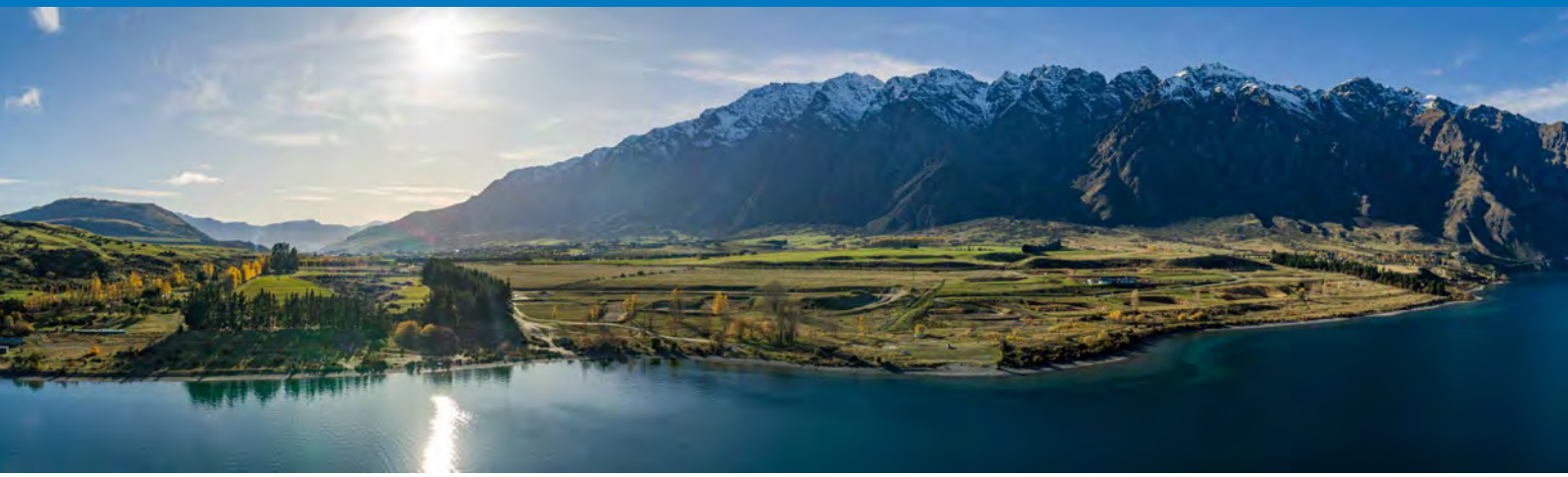
Communities should be able to spend more of their time and money protecting native wildlife, not navigating confusing approval processes. Clear guidance through a single online portal and the removal of unnecessary regulatory duplication will help local groups get on with the job while retaining essential environmental, safety and animal-welfare safeguards.

Scaling up predator elimination also requires smarter tools. AI-enabled traps have the potential to distinguish target predators from native wildlife and pets, while improved detection and remote alerts can help teams respond quickly when predators return. Making it easier to safely trial and assess these technologies will help establish which tools reduce costs, ease pressure on volunteers and protect conservation gains across larger areas.

A re-elected National Party will:

- **Scale up predator elimination across New Zealand,** building on the work already underway in communities.
- **Make it easier and cheaper for communities to navigate the regulatory requirements for pest control** through a single online portal and resource page.
- **Remove unnecessary and complex regulatory barriers.**
- **Make it easier to trial AI-enabled traps, improved predator detection and rapid-response technology.**





Doubling baseline funding for the QEII National Trust

National backs farmer-led conservation. Most land in New Zealand is privately owned, and much of it holds native bush, wetlands and biodiversity. That makes the QEII National Trust's work with farmers and landowners, through voluntary covenants, critical to protecting our unique landscapes.

National will provide the QEII National Trust with long-term funding certainty and support its work alongside farmers and landowners protecting New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage.

Permanent funding certainty means the QEII National Trust can plan ahead, respond to growing demand and continue providing practical support for fencing, weed and pest control, revegetation and covenant enhancement.

Covenants protect the bush remnants, lookouts, landscapes and special places that give rural districts their character and identity. They also build communities' resilience to natural disasters by protecting hillsides from erosion, mitigating flooding impacts and reducing fire and disease risks.

A re-elected National Party will:

- **Double baseline funding for the QEII National Trust** from approximately $4.2 million to approximately $8.5 million per year. The increase will be confirmed in Budget 2027 and will be permanent, rather than a time-limited top-up.



A healthy ocean and coastline

The health of our ocean matters to every New Zealander. It is part of who we are and provides us with food, recreation, wellbeing and a place for families and communities to connect. New Zealand's marine estate is huge, and our coastline is the ninth longest in the world. Our marine environment is one of our most important environmental, recreational and economic assets.

National wants fish stocks managed at healthy and abundant levels, not simply kept above minimum sustainability limits. Our decisions will be guided by the best available science, data and evidence, while upholding property rights and the Crown's Treaty settlement obligations.

Healthy oceans support healthy coastal communities. Fishing, aquaculture, tourism, recreation and marine conservation all depend on productive and resilient marine ecosystems. National's approach will protect the health of our oceans while ensuring coastal communities can continue to live, work and prosper alongside them.

Establishing a Coast and Ocean Clean-Up Fund

New Zealanders value clean coastlines, but too much litter is still ending up in our waterways and on our beaches. Community groups, councils, iwi and volunteers are already doing the work, but funding support is patchy. Existing waste funding mostly goes to infrastructure rather than clean-ups and practical, on-the-ground action. National will establish a contestable $8 million Coast and Ocean Clean-Up Fund over four years to support practical, local action to deliver cleaner beaches and a healthier ocean.

Community organisations have already shown what can be achieved. The job now is to back that kind of community effort and expand what works.

The Coast and Ocean Clean-Up Fund is about practical environmentalism. Rather than simply talking about marine pollution, National will back projects that deliver. The Fund will give councils, iwi and community organisations greater capacity to remove rubbish, intercept it before it reaches the sea and deliver practical community projects that produce cleaner beaches and waterways.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Establish a contestable $8 million Coast and Ocean Clean-Up Fund** to support practical, local action to deliver cleaner beaches, coastlines and seas[3].
- **Prevent rubbish reaching the sea and remove litter from our waterways, beaches and coastlines** by working with councils, iwi and community groups on practical projects that prevent illegal dumping, capture waste before it reaches the ocean and support local clean-ups.

3 To be funded by the Waste Disposal Levy.



Protecting the Hauraki Gulf

The Hauraki Gulf is loved by many Kiwis. It is a place to swim, boat and fish. It is also a vital hub for tourism, transport and commercial activity. It is central to Auckland's identity and way of life, and National understands the strength of that connection.

Since coming into Government, we have passed the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Act 2025, delivering the most significant expansion of marine protection in more than a decade by tripling marine protection in the Gulf. The Act recognises the Gulf's importance to mana whenua, recreational and commercial fishers, tourism operators and communities across the Auckland region. It expands two existing marine reserves and creates five new Seafloor Protection Areas and 12 new High Protection Areas.

The decision to allow bottom trawling in some designated trawl corridors in the Gulf has been controversial. While this has provided limited access for the commercial sector, we have heard the widespread concerns of environmental groups and recreational fishers. We will also review those corridors.

We believe a consistent approach to protecting the Gulf is best for all users and that exceptions to the original intent of the protections need to be removed. We have invested in addressing kina barrens to help restore the kelp forests in the Hauraki Gulf, which are critical to a healthy ocean. National will build on these protections.

National believes the waters of the Gulf are best utilised by those who fish, dive, swim or collect kaimoana recreationally. It is Auckland's playground and the centrepiece of some of New Zealand's most iconic aquatic events.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Establish the Hākaimangō-Matiatia Marine Reserve off Waiheke Island,** a new 23.5-square-kilometre marine protected area in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.
- **Further expand the size of the Goat Island / Te Hāwere-a-Maki Marine Reserve**, home to one of the most diverse marine habitats in the country and an educational, scientific and tourism hub with 350,000 visitors per year.
- **Ban commercial fishing in the Hauraki Gulf's High Protection Areas** by removing the exemptions for ringnet fishers.
- **Keep the ban on harvesting shellfish and marine species from rockpools** and continue to impose higher penalties and strict enforcement. National will keep this ban in place as long as necessary for these ecosystems to recover and will not support its removal before then.
- **Develop a sustainable fisheries plan for the wider Hauraki Gulf Marine Park** in partnership with industry and interested stakeholders, and review bottom trawling corridors, incorporating innovation, new methodologies and updated environmental and biomass data.



Supporting recreational fishers

Enjoying time on the water and catching a feed is part of what makes us Kiwis. At least 600,000 New Zealanders fish recreationally now and then. We are fortunate to have a charter fishing industry that drives local coastal economies, provides expert access to deep-water fishing grounds and makes recreational boating accessible to everyday Kiwis and tourists.

Too often, we identify serious problems only once a stock has declined to a level where drastic restrictions are required. National will work with the wider fishing sector to investigate how we can improve fisheries data in New Zealand.

A more proactive management system would help identify emerging stock pressures earlier and enable management responses to occur sooner. This would help keep fish stocks healthy and productive for future generations. Better information would mean less risk of change to stock depletion or collapse and more certainty for recreational fishers, commercial operators, iwi and our coastal communities.

National will protect the marine environment so it keeps providing for recreational, sport and customary fishers.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Rule out a licence for recreational sea fishing.** Fishing for a feed is a Kiwi right. We will not introduce or require a licence or permit for recreational fishing in the sea. Existing licences for freshwater sports fish are not affected.
- **Support the Billfish Accord.** National will prevent the commercial sale of marlin to preserve a world-class sport fishery.
- **Increase penalties and enforcement, including instant fines for those exceeding catch limits.** If we want our fish to be there for our children and grandchildren, we all need to take only what we need and stick to the limits. Those who do not follow the rules should face consequences.
- **Increase the number of Honorary Fisheries Officers to 200** to crack down on illegal fishing and strengthen patrols and targeted enforcement to catch offenders and protect our fisheries. Revenue from higher fines will be reinvested in their monitoring, enforcement and training programmes.



Protecting our Exclusive Economic Zone and seamounts

There are over 1,900 seamounts and seamount-like features in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). They support diverse ecosystems and rare species such as stony corals, black corals, gorgonian corals and hydrocorals. Over 70,000 people signed the Live Ocean petition calling for greater protection for seamounts. National will act to protect more of these biodiversity hotspots in our EEZ through a targeted, balanced and science-led approach.

Spatial management measures will seek to protect vulnerable habitats and ecological values while avoiding unnecessary impacts on the value of the existing fishing catch and upholding the Crown's Treaty obligations under the Fisheries Settlement. Our proposed approach will retain the flexibility to review settings as scientific understanding, environmental conditions and fisheries change over time, rather than applying a blanket ban.

Transparent, reliable data is essential to public confidence in how much fish is harvested and how our fisheries are managed. We must balance commercial, recreational and customary interests while protecting this shared resource for future generations. Commercial fishing is a significant contributor to New Zealand's economy, earning close to $2 billion in exports each year and supporting 9,000 jobs and incomes in regional communities.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Increase protection of the EEZ and preserve our seamounts,** aiming to increase protected areas from 32% to 50% by 2040.
- **Prioritise vulnerable corals and seamounts for protection** based on a balanced and science-led approach.
- **Uphold the Crown's Treaty fisheries settlement obligations.**

Seamounts are defined as submarine features greater than 1,000 metres in height from base to peak. Seamount-like features include underwater mounts of lesser elevations, such as hills, knolls, banks, rises and peaks along oceanic ridge systems greater than 100 metres in height.





Supporting lower-emission and resilient households

National understands that more renewable electricity, efficient appliances and well-insulated homes can help reduce reliance on fossil fuels and manage household energy costs. National has progressed reforms through Electrify NZ aimed at making renewable generation and electricity networks easier to consent, build and maintain. These reforms will support investment in the electricity supply needed as more homes, transport and businesses become electrified.

National also introduced a building-consent exemption for eligible rooftop solar installations and announced changes to network voltage settings to better accommodate electricity exported from homes. Solar panels and batteries can help households manage their electricity purchases and supply surplus power to the network, although savings depend on installation costs, electricity use and tariff settings. Upfront costs and access to suitable housing remain important considerations in how widely these benefits can be shared.

Lower emissions need to be accompanied by preparation for the impacts of a changing climate. The National Adaptation Framework brings together better risk information, clearer responsibilities, investment in risk reduction and approaches to sharing costs. Work is underway on a national flood map, and legislation introduced in July 2026 proposes requirements for adaptation plans in priority areas. National supports measures to help households and communities understand their exposure, plan ahead and reduce the long-term cost and disruption of natural hazards.

Supercharging the growth of household renewable energy

Kiwi families are under pressure from rising power bills. Rooftop solar, batteries, insulation and modern electric appliances can ease that pressure and make homes more resilient, but high upfront costs put them out of reach for many households, and existing green loans from commercial banks are limited.

The Ratepayer Assistance Scheme, long advocated for by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and Rewiring Aotearoa, offers a practical, market-based answer by providing a low-interest loan secured against a homeowner's property and repaid over time through their rates bill.

A re-elected National Government will implement a narrower version of the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme, called the Home Energy Fund. The fund will pay the approved installer upfront, and the homeowner will repay the low-interest loan over ten years through a charge on their rates bill, or on the sale of their property. Because these loans are secured against property and backed by Crown and local government balance sheets, they can be offered at low, competitive interest rates. Council participation will be voluntary, but based on advocacy from LGNZ, we expect strong interest from councils across New Zealand.

Energy resilience investments eligible for support through the Home Energy Fund include:

- Residential solar and battery storage.
- Insulation, heat pumps and other investments in residential electrification.

Establishing the Home Energy Fund will require an amendment to the Local Government Act and a one-off Crown equity investment of $7 million for a 20% shareholding in the new entity, with the balance funded by participating councils and the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA). Loans from the Home Energy Fund will be available to ratepayers with at least 20% equity in their property.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Introduce the Home Energy Fund,** a national financing platform jointly owned by central government and participating councils that offers ratepayers low-interest, long-term loans secured against their property.

Boosting competition for renewables

More Kiwi households and businesses are installing solar panels and batteries, but the rules still assume power flows one way, from a big power station to a customer. Today, each home can have only one retailer, so a family exporting surplus solar power has to sell it to the same company it buys power from. To get a better price for the power they sell, they must also switch the company they buy from. That limits competition for Kiwis.

This term, the Electricity Authority has consulted on letting households use one company for the power they buy and another for the power they sell. National will turn that proposal into a right, so families who invest in their own power, including through the Home Energy Fund, can seek the best price for the power they do not use.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Give every household and business the right to sell the power they export to any retailer or buyer they choose,** and direct the Electricity Authority, through the Government Policy Statement and legislation if needed, to have this in place within two years.
- **Require lines companies to base export limits on the real capacity of their local network,** so households can export more wherever there is room, and require any lines company that restricts exports to demonstrate the genuine network constraint that justifies the restriction.

Enabling electrification

This term, National delivered on our plan to Electrify NZ. We turbocharged new renewable energy projects by requiring resource consent decisions within one year and consent durations of 35 years, while cutting red tape holding back transmission and distribution upgrades.

Those reforms are supporting a robust pipeline of new generation, but Kiwis still face costly, confusing rules when developing small-scale renewables on their own property, making the process slow and expensive.

It is not just solar that faces barriers. Micro-hydro and battery storage also face fragmented and confusing consenting requirements that vary from region to region.

There are huge opportunities to supercharge small-scale renewables such as solar and micro-hydro on Kiwis' own land. New Zealanders should be able to draw on the abundant natural resources on their own property with as little red tape as possible.

That is why the next National-led Government will go further. We will set clear national rules so that small-scale renewables, including rooftop and ground-mounted solar, micro-hydro and battery storage, are largely permitted as of right on people's own property.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Let property owners install rooftop solar without a consent,** even where height limits or landscape overlays would otherwise get in the way.
- **Make small-scale on-farm ground-mounted solar a permitted activity,** with standard rules to manage genuine effects and sensible safeguards to protect environmentally significant land.
- **Allow small-scale battery storage outside an existing building as of right,** subject only to standard rules managing genuine effects.
- **Permit small run-of-river micro-hydro for on-site use,** where it stays below a set size and meets standard environmental conditions that protect the river, fish passage and other water users.
- **Permit New Zealand stores to sell plug-in solar panels** to support more households to lower their power bills.



Adapting to a changing climate

New Zealand has always lived with natural hazards. But a changing climate is increasing the damage and disruption caused by flooding, coastal hazards and severe weather. Recent events have shown the enormous cost this can impose on families, farmers, businesses, infrastructure and taxpayers. The 2023 North Island severe weather events, including Cyclone Gabrielle, caused an estimated $9 billion to $14.5 billion in damage to households, businesses and infrastructure.

National believes New Zealand needs to be better prepared. Adaptation means understanding the risks we face and making sensible decisions now that reduce the damage and cost of future events. It means resilient infrastructure, better information, sensible land-use decisions and communities having a clear plan for managing the risks they face. The National-led Government allocated $400 million towards flood resilience for at-risk communities.

Our approach is practical and forward-looking. We want New Zealanders to know the risks affecting their property and communities, know what is being done about those risks, and have the information they need to make good decisions about where they live, build and invest. Better and more consistent information will also help insurers, banks, councils and infrastructure providers make better long-term decisions.

National also believes responsibility needs to sit with those best placed to manage it. Individuals and businesses have a role in managing their own risks, councils should lead local responses, and central government should provide the national information, standards and settings that allow good decisions to be made. Investment should increasingly focus on reducing risk before disaster strikes rather than simply paying for the damage afterwards.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Deliver a national flood risk map,** giving New Zealanders access to consistent, credible and regularly updated information so they can make better decisions about where they live, build and invest.
- **Require adaptation plans for New Zealand's highest-risk communities,** starting with areas facing significant flood and coastal hazards, so communities have certainty about how risks will be managed over the long term.
- **Make climate risk part of long-term infrastructure and spatial planning,** so new development and infrastructure investment avoid unnecessarily creating tomorrow's problems.
- **Reduce duplication and unnecessary process for councils implementing agreed adaptation plans,** aligning adaptation with the new resource management, infrastructure and emergency management systems.
- **Continue working towards an enduring cross-party approach to adaptation,** giving households, councils, businesses and investors greater confidence that New Zealand's long-term approach will remain stable.



Modernising environmental law

New Zealand's environmental laws, such as the Litter Act 1979, the Conservation Act 1987, the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 shape how we protect nature, manage natural resources and deal with waste. But the current regulatory system is not delivering the environmental results we need. Overlapping rules and complicated processes can be slow, costly and hard to understand. Too much time and money goes into navigating the system rather than improving the environment it is meant to protect.

Reforming these laws will create a clearer, more coherent system focused on better environmental outcomes. National will measure the state of our environment properly, use that evidence to set firm environmental limits, protect the places that matter most, and reduce waste and pollution. A re-elected National Government will deliver stronger environmental protection, clearer responsibilities and less unnecessary process, with a system that is clear about what must be protected and simpler about how to achieve it.

Simplifying conservation management

Our conservation estate is part of who we are, but the legislative framework that supports it is nearly 40 years old and no longer fit for the scale of today's conservation, recreation and tourism challenges.

The Government has introduced the Conservation Amendment Bill to modernise how conservation land is managed, support economic growth and improve environmental outcomes.

The reforms will support faster decisions, regional jobs and stronger protection for nature. They will replace more than 100 complex planning layers with a single National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS) and a single layer of area plans. The reforms will also reinvest revenue into conservation and visitor infrastructure by introducing access charges for international visitors at selected conservation sites.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Pass the Conservation Amendment Bill** to modernise conservation management, support regional jobs and improve conservation outcomes.
- **Reinvest revenue from international visitor charges directly into conservation and visitor infrastructure.**
- **Provide clearer, more consistent processes for applying Treaty obligations.**
- **Keep national parks and the Coromandel off limits to mining.** There will be no changes to Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act 1991.



Modernising the waste system

National is committed to modernising waste legislation and improving how levy funding is used. We have introduced a Waste and Resource Efficiency Strategy focused on reducing waste and improving reuse, expanded the use of waste disposal levy funding to support a broader range of environmental outcomes, increased funding for practical, on-the-ground projects, and begun reform of the Waste Minimisation Act and Litter Act. Our focus is on reducing waste at the source and improving how resources are used across the economy. Waste also contributes over three million tonnes of emissions a year.

The next step is to complete reform of the Waste Minimisation Act and related legislation so the system better supports waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery and investment in modern waste infrastructure.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Pass reforms to the Waste Minimisation Act** to better support waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery and investment in modern waste infrastructure.
- **Strengthen product stewardship schemes for priority waste streams.**
- **Drive reductions in waste going to landfill.**
- **Ensure waste disposal levy funding is spent on practical environmental improvements.**

Delivering a more credible environmental framework

National recognises the need for a cohesive and integrated environmental approach, as well as the importance of strong data, consistent standards and practical long-term policy. When Parliament passed the Environmental Reporting Act in 2015, it gave New Zealand, for the first time, a legal duty to report independently on the state of our environment. That was an important step. A decade on, the system needs to evolve and become more efficient to keep meeting its intended purpose.

National is reforming the Environmental Reporting Act to improve data quality and usefulness, strengthen monitoring and long-term environmental reporting, invest in digital environmental and planning systems, and support more timely, transparent and evidence-based decision-making. This reform will give New Zealanders clearer and more useful information about their environment. It is a critical part of our wider plan to fix the basics and build the future. You cannot protect what you do not measure, and there is no accountability without evidence.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Pass reforms to the Environmental Reporting Act** to improve data quality and usefulness and strengthen monitoring and long-term environmental reporting.





Resource Management Reform

At the 2023 election, National made commitments to reform New Zealand's broken planning system, and we have delivered on them. We scrapped Labour's failed RMA replacement, slashed red tape for farmers and businesses, overhauled National Policy Statements, passed the Fast-track Approvals Act, and have passed the most transformational planning reform in New Zealand's history.

These reforms are not a trade-off between the economy and the environment. They are proof that we can have both. Our new system sets clear, binding, science-based environmental limits for air, water, land, and biodiversity. Enforcement will be stronger and more consistent. Spatial plans will identify and lock in the areas that genuinely need protection.

Protections will be focused on what actually matters – not applied as a veto on growth.

Replacing the legislation is only half the job. A re-elected National-led Government will finish it, by delivering planning rules that work for Kiwis and make a real difference on the ground.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Complete the once-in-a-generation transformation of our planning system** and unlock billions in economic growth for New Zealand, while continuing to protect the environment.
- **Deliver national standards** for farming and energy, including consistent national rules for vegetable growing, wetlands, solar, and micro-hydro.
- **Support regions to carry out spatial plans,** identifying the areas for growth, as well as the areas in need of greater protection.
- **Implement the environmental limit framework** under the Natural Environment Act to protect human and ecosystem health.

The Bluegreens approach

Protecting nature is not about locking New Zealand up. It is about looking after the natural assets that underpin our prosperity, our way of life and the country we want to pass on to future generations.

National will look for practical solutions that deliver multiple benefits rather than treating environmental challenges in isolation. We believe the best results are achieved when government sets clear expectations, backs good science and provides the right tools while empowering New Zealanders to get on with the job.

Farmers, fishers, landowners, iwi, councils, businesses, philanthropists and community groups all have a part to play. Local people often understand their environment best, and National will continue to back partnerships that turn that knowledge and commitment into measurable environmental gains.

For National, conservation is about more than protecting what remains. It is about restoration, abundance and improvement. Clean lakes and rivers. Healthy forests. More native birds. Thriving marine ecosystems. Strong coastal and rural communities and rural communities. And infrastructure and communities that are better prepared for the challenges ahead.

The best environmental policy does not force us to choose between the environment and prosperity. It finds the opportunities where they reinforce one another, such as cleaner water and productive farming, thriving wildlife and stronger communities, healthy oceans and prosperous coastal towns, and greater resilience with lower long-term costs.







