



Building a Bluegreen Future

An environment policy paper by the New Zealand National Party
March 2012

National
www.national.org.nz



Introduction

National knows how important the environment is to New Zealanders and our quality of life. It's central to our international reputation, our primary sector, our growing tourism market, and our economy.

Building a Bluegreen Future reports on our work in Government to improve how New Zealand manages its natural resources and sets out our next steps.

At the heart of our Bluegreen approach is National's belief that sensible resource management can go hand-in-hand with faster economic growth and job creation. A stronger economy can better provide the means to restore, maintain, and enhance our environment.

This approach includes a focus on science and support for collaborative decision-making, and is getting results.

In just three years we have made great progress. We've improved air quality, helped minimise waste, and enhanced environmental governance. We've simplified resource management. We've put a sensible plan in place to improve our rivers, lakes, and aquifers. And we've introduced a more balanced approach to climate change to ensure New Zealand does its fair share on emissions, while helping our economy grow.

We've focused on practical solutions that improve our environment and support growth.

New Zealand is planting more trees. Our energy companies are building more renewable power stations. We're insulating more houses, cleaning up more lakes and rivers, converting more homes to clean heating, and recycling more waste.

But there is much more to do.

This document lays out the challenges we face and the direction we're taking across our environment – from fresh water to climate change, from energy to resource management, from our native plants and animals to our oceans.



It includes some great thinking. It also includes practical and innovative proposals our MPs and supporters have developed to protect the environment while growing our economy and building a brighter future for all New Zealanders.

I hope you will read this document. Please complete the return form inside the back cover so you can be involved and informed about the ongoing work of our Bluegreen team.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Key". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rt Hon John Key
PRIME MINISTER

Building a Bluegreen Future

CONTENTS

1	The Bluegreen Approach	2
2	Climate Change	4
3	Energy	6
4	Transport	8
5	Biosecurity	9
6	Fresh Water	10
7	Biodiversity	12
8	Oceans	14
9	Recycling	16
10	Contaminated Sites	17
11	Air Quality	18
12	Outdoor Recreation	19
13	Resource Management	20
14	Environmental Governance and Reporting	21
15	National's Bluegreen Team	23



1. The Bluegreen Approach

“National’s Bluegreens are all about bringing together policies that support a strong, growing economy with sound stewardship of our natural environment.”

HON DR NICK SMITH



Environmental issues are too important for New Zealand to be left to the fringe of politics. That is why National founded the Bluegreens in the 1990s and it continues to grow in strength and numbers. It is one of the most active of National's Policy Advisory Groups. The Caucus Committee, once made up of just a few MPs, with new additions from the 2011 election, now numbers 18.

The Bluegreens approach is based on five important principles that we are now applying in Government to the broad range of environmental challenges facing New Zealand.

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

New Zealand is gaining a global reputation for its innovative approach in bringing together successful economic and environmental policy. This approach has National favouring the use of pricing instruments to achieve improved environmental outcomes over traditional regulatory approaches. Regulation so often assumes Government knows best and often costs the economy more and delivers the environment less.



Prime Minister John Key at the Nelson Environment Centre checking out Nick Smith's full electric car.

We have made significant advances in our first term using pricing tools to improve environmental outcomes. In February 2009 the nutrient cap and trade model was introduced to the Lake Taupo catchment with Government support to reduce nitrogen inflows. In July 2009 the waste levy was implemented resulting in a wave of innovation in recycling and better waste management. The third new pricing tool is the Emissions Trading Scheme introduced 1 July 2010 which is successfully increasing afforestation and investment in renewable energy. We have also successfully introduced financial incentives for electric cars, hot water heat-pumps, home insulation and clean home heating systems.

The next difficult policy decision around economic tools for improving the environment will be on climate change and water. The 2011 ETS review recommends significant change in how we implement the next phases of the scheme. We also need to explore the potential for using such tools to improve water allocation.

National has been advancing reforms that support greater collaboration in environmental decision making. Our thinking has been heavily influenced by experience in the Nordic countries. Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark have dynamic, open market economies with high standards of living and significant primary industries. They illustrate that high levels of economic performance are compatible with high environmental standards. They have successfully put in place collaborative processes that get environmental and industry stakeholders working together with government officials on long-term environmental goals.

We applied this approach here in 2009 to the Fresh Start for Fresh Water programme with the establishment of the Land and Water Forum. It followed a decade of procrastination and polarised debate on water. The same sort of process has been used to advance agreement on marine protection on the West Coast and around Kaikoura. It is also being trialled with the contentious development issues in the Mackenzie Country through the Mackenzie Sustainable Futures Trust with one-off special funding from the Ministry for the Environment.

The next steps are where to expand this collaborative approach. Does it have application to urban environmental problems? Should changes be made to the Resource Management Act to encourage collaborative solutions? Should the Ministry for the Environment, rather than just funding environmental legal disputes, use the Community Environment Fund to more

GREEN GROWTH AT WORK: ENVIROCOMP NAPPY COMPOSTING

widely support collaborative initiatives? These are questions we will address in our second term in Government.

National is also focused on New Zealand picking up opportunities for jobs and wealth creation from Green Growth. New Zealand already has many innovative businesses that leverage off our strong clean, green reputation. We believe there is potential for more.

We are in good shape to participate in the OECD Environment Roundtable in March and the UN Rio+20 conference in June with both focused on Green Growth.

In late 2011, the Green Economy Index was published analysing the performance and perception of 27 countries and scored New Zealand first in overall performance. Its report states "New Zealand's best green performance in 2011 suggests that prioritising green in the political and economic spheres can transform smaller nations into global sector leaders."

The Global Green Economy Index 2011

	Leadership	Domestic Policy	Clean-tech Investment	Green Tourism
1	New Zealand	Norway	Denmark	New Zealand
2	Iceland	Iceland	Germany	United Kingdom
3	Denmark	Brazil	Sweden	South Africa
4	South Africa	New Zealand	Israel	Denmark
5	United Kingdom	Sweden	Canada	Sweden
6	Sweden	Canada	New Zealand	Netherlands
7	Brazil	Finland	Australia	Germany
8	Mexico	Denmark	Norway	Japan
9	Finland	Germany	Finland	Italy
10	Germany	Mexico	United States	Australia

Ref: www.dualcitizeninc.com

At Bluegreens Forum 2011, we initiated the Advisory Group on Green Growth and this year we will be considering its report and recommendations. Some countries' green growth strategies have been poorly conceived and become financial disasters. The lessons are to avoid policies that have Government picking winners or relying on a narrow group of clean-tech industries for growth. Bluegreens favour a broad approach to green growth that has all industries moving to more environmentally sustainable technologies.

Established by Karen and Karl Upston in 2009 in Balcairn, North Canterbury, EnviroComp uses a purpose built 'HotRot' composting plant that each day can break down around 15,000 disposable nappies and incontinence waste into safe, odourless compost.

Disposable nappies are convenient for busy modern families but people are concerned about the impact of this waste on the environment. This world-leading Kiwi innovation enables parents to enjoy the convenience of disposable nappies without getting the environmental guilts.

EnviroComp is now expanding the business to Wellington with a new plant being built in the Hutt Valley thanks to a \$700,000 grant from the Government's Waste Minimisation Fund established in 2010.

It is estimated there are 17,500 babies aged under two and a half in the Wellington region wearing disposable nappies producing 6600 tonnes of waste each year. The aim is to divert 1000 tonnes of this waste every year into the new composting facility.

The business is now going global with new plants under construction in Australia and the United Kingdom using this New Zealand know how.

This enterprise is consistent with National's Bluegreen agenda of developing smart new businesses that improve our environmental management and fit in with our clean, green brand.



The innovative 'HotRot' composting plant used by EnviroComp in North Canterbury that is now being exported.

2. Climate Change

“New Zealand’s climate change policy is in good shape with the successful implementation of our ETS, the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Emissions and our significant role in progressing international negotiations’ at Cancun and Durban.” [HON TIM GROSER](#)



Climate change is a global problem that will be resolved only when every country takes responsibility for their domestic emissions regardless of their overall contribution to the problem. There is also an issue of equity between developed and developing countries. Developed country status brings with it the responsibility for historical emission levels, while developing countries expect to follow a similar pathway as they move to developed status.

In building our Bluegreen future we will ensure that New Zealand continues to do its fair share with respect to the global threat of climate change. We will focus our resources in our areas of scientific expertise and encourage support from other countries. We will contribute to international negotiations to agree a set of rules with a view to securing a global agreement that includes all major emitting countries.

As the solution to reduced emissions is generally technology based there is a need to transfer technology from developed to developing countries but this process is complicated by economic impacts like intellectual property rights and market share. So the fine balance between environment and economy dominates international negotiations on climate change, and establishing exactly what constitutes a fair share is a complex process.

National has proposed an emission reduction target for 2020 that reflects our fair share internationally taking account of the emission reduction technology available to our economy. The fact that this is a global problem means that all countries need to do their fair share and the rules that apply need to be based on sound science. For this reason we have qualified our 2020 target with respect to the effort of other countries and agreement of the rules.

While it is not clear at this time as to legal form, there is no doubt that there will be international agreement on the action required by both developed and major developing countries. National will ensure that New Zealand continues to do its fair share with respect to the global threat of climate change.

National began building a Bluegreen future with the moderation of the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) introduced by the previous government in 2008. The scheme recognises the important role that forestry and renewable energy can play in managing our future emission levels while acknowledging that following a global recession our economy is in no position to

withstand a high cost on carbon at this time. The first review of the ETS has been completed and endorses National's approach. The Review Panel has recommended that with the slow pace of global economic recovery the move to a full obligation should transition at a more moderate rate. The proposed slow-down has significant fiscal implications and National will be considering carefully the balance between the level of action and the cost to the taxpayer before making a decision on the recommendations.

OUR TRACK RECORD

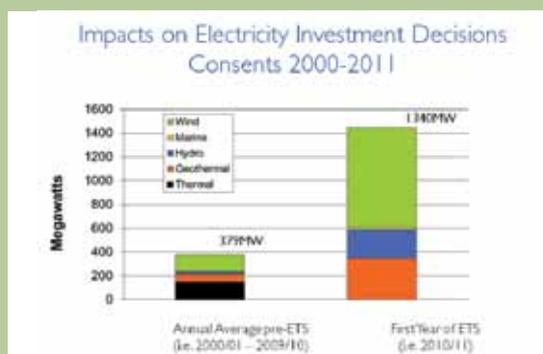
- Implemented a moderated Emissions Trading Scheme.
- Actively participated in all international negotiations under UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.
- Set 2020 target conditional on a number of milestones being achieved internationally.
- Set a target for our net 2050 levels of emissions at 50 per cent of our gross 1990 levels.
- Established a domestic Agricultural Research Centre.
- Set up the Global Alliance on Agricultural Emissions Research.
- Chaired the Cancun Working Group on Measuring Reporting and Verification (MRV) of emissions.
- Hosted an Asia-Pacific workshop on carbon markets and an international workshop on MRV .



The Emissions Trading Scheme is reducing emissions, getting trees planted and encouraging renewable energy.

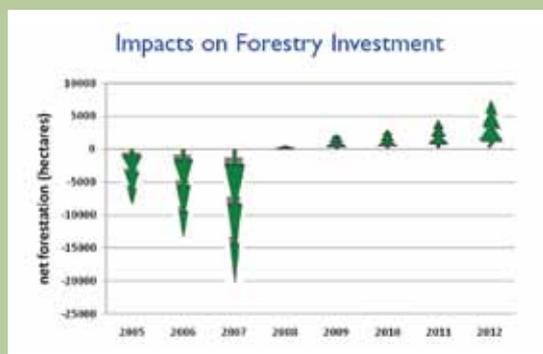
Encouraging more renewables

Under our ETS, no new fossil-fuelled power plants have been consented and there has been a five-fold increase in renewables.



Getting more trees planted

There has been a sharp switch away from deforestation as the ETS provides incentives to plant trees.



WHAT ARE THE RESULTS SO FAR?

Our ETS is operating as predicted. There have been no unexpected impacts and most participants are comfortable with the progress made.

The launch of our Global Alliance on Agricultural Emissions Research in Copenhagen has been well supported by both developed and developing countries. There are now some 32 contributing members, at least four countries with observer status, and the portfolio of research projects is now taking shape.

International negotiations have made major, and in some respects, unexpected progress at the last two UNFCCC Ministerial meetings in Cancun and Durban. However, there is some way to go before the Government can make an informed decision on precisely the extent of New Zealand's next mitigation target, and whether this would be expressed internationally as a further commitment under the Kyoto Protocol or the alternative emerging structure where the United States, Japan, Canada, Russia, and all the emerging economies will inscribe their mitigation commitments.

There is significant interest in a regional carbon market from officials representing Australia, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, China, and the US.

National is committed to ensuring that New Zealand does its fair share in combating the threat of global climate change but not to the detriment of our economy. We will focus our efforts in the areas of research and technology that address our specific problems in agricultural emissions.

Our domestic policy will be reviewed in the context of progress achieved towards an international agreement and our proposed target levels for emissions. We will also consider recommendations from our Advisory Group on Green Growth Initiatives with a view to facilitating our transition to a low-carbon economy.

NATIONAL WILL:

- Extend the transitional implementation phase for the electricity, industrial and transport sectors.
- Maintain the \$25/tonne fixed price option until at least 2015.
- Review the second tranche of compensation for pre-1990 forest land owners in light of introducing offsetting.
- Advance trans-Tasman discussions on linking the New Zealand and Australian carbon markets post-2015.

3. Energy

“New Zealand has an abundance of renewable resources and every year marks another step towards the Energy Strategy’s goal of 90% renewable electricity generation.”

HON PHIL HEATLEY



A reliable and sustainable energy supply is essential to building a Bluegreen future.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of natural energy resources and it will be important to employ these to maximum value for our economic future. The world will continue its dependence on fossil fuels until such time as economically viable alternatives are readily available. New Zealand will continue to maximise the use of its good supply of renewable energy but that does not preclude the development of fossil fuel resources to support enhanced economic growth.

New Zealand supplied 74 per cent of its total electricity needs from renewable sources in 2010 and we are aiming for 90 per cent by 2025. The main generators have been actively seeking consents for further renewable electricity generation. In fact, consents have been five times the average for the preceding 10 years.

In the past three years, National has focused on affordability and efficiency in electricity provision. We have significantly reformed our wholesale electricity markets, to improve and encourage competition, efficiency and reliable supply. We’ve made it easier for consumers to switch between electricity retailers to encourage retailers to offer better deals, and keep electricity price increases as low as possible.

New Zealanders are increasing competition amongst electricity retailers by switching in record numbers. The www.WhatsMyNumber.org.nz website was launched in May 2011 and gives householders an estimate of how much money they could save a year by switching retailers. The website had over 225,000 visits in its first month. An average of just over 30,000 New Zealanders switch each month and we have halved the amount of time it takes to implement a switch.

There has also been significant interest in developing our fossil fuel resources. While this is painted as a conflict by some, this ignores the reality of the global demand for fossil based energy. The transition to a low carbon economy will take many decades and it is not in New Zealand’s interest to be a net importer of fossil fuels during this period. As with the drive for more efficient use of energy through proactive energy management, technological advancement is the answer. Refusing to explore our natural resources is not.



National MPs have supported ambitious reforms to remove obstacles to the development of renewable energy options, like wind farms.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Established the independent Electricity Authority.
- Invested in strengthening the national electricity grid and upgraded the vital Cook Strait cable.
- Committed \$347 million to insulate 188,500 homes.
- Provided tools for consumers to compare and switch gas and electricity retailers.
- Launched the Energising Business programme to assist around 180 companies invest in energy efficiency.
- Amended the Resource Management Act to streamline processes around renewable energy projects.
- Developed and implemented a National Policy Statement on Renewable Electricity Generation.
- Focused on unlocking more of our petroleum and mineral resources for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Petroleum has become our fourth largest export to the value of \$2.1 billion. The industry directly and indirectly employs over 7000 people.

New Zealand's petroleum estate is vastly under-explored. We are keen to see our petroleum resources developed in an environmentally responsible way. New Zealand is set to earn more than \$3 billion in royalties from oil and gas fields already in production, and modelling shows this could increase to \$12.7 billion with future discoveries. Further responsible development of our oil, gas, and mineral resources has the potential to create additional skilled jobs, earn substantial royalty and tax return, and contribute to future prosperity that will encourage people to stay in New Zealand.

To facilitate building our Bluegreen future we intend to look at ways to continue the *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* home insulation scheme, including encouraging third-party participation in funding and special projects so that more Kiwis can have the benefit of warmer, drier, healthier homes.

NATIONAL WILL

- Continue to promote competition in the electricity market.
- Encourage New Zealanders to switch electricity retailers to keep price increases as low as possible.
- Introduce exclusive economic zone legislation to provide more control over activities, including seabed mining.
- Introduce a transparent and competitive new system for oil and gas exploration permits.
- Make changes to the Crown Minerals Act, including:
 - Automatic inclusion in Schedule 4 of appropriate newly classified areas.
 - The consideration of specific economic, mineral and national-significance-related criteria when making decisions on mineral-related access.

CASE STUDY

WARM UP NEW ZEALAND: HEAT SMART HOME INSULATION SCHEME

More than 145,000 homes around New Zealand are warmer, drier, and healthier thanks to the National-led Government's *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* scheme.

The Government is investing \$347 million in this scheme over four years to retrofit 188,500 homes.

Thanks to new under-floor insulation, ceiling insulation, and clean heating such as a heat pump, more than 300,000 people have healthier homes. Those families who have taken advantage of the scheme will be feeling the benefits this winter.

Anyone who has a home built before 2000 is eligible for 33 per cent off the cost of installing ceiling and under-floor insulation up to a maximum of \$1300. Community Service Card holders can get 60 per cent off the cost of installing insulation.



More than 145,000 homes are warmer, healthier, and drier because of the home insulation scheme.

4. Transport

“National has boosted investment in public transport, rail and new technologies to reduce vehicle emissions.”

HON GERRY BROWNLEE



Building a better transport system is vital to transform New Zealand's future.

While economic growth is our top priority in transport, taking a balanced approach to achieve better environmental outcomes is also important.

New Zealand has 700km of “high-use highways”, just over six per cent of the state highway network. They carry 19 per cent of freight volume kilometres across the whole road network. National has boosted investment in state highways by \$1 billion over three years thanks to the Roads of National Significance programme. This investment will allow us to tackle the chokepoints in our roading infrastructure, reducing travel time, which in turn will reduce emissions from our vehicles.

In 2010 National introduced an exemption from road user charges for electric cars until 2013. The uptake of electric cars has been encouraging and National will extend this exemption to 2020. This Government has continued to impose minimum exhaust emissions standards for all vehicles entering the fleet and require used vehicles to be tested when they enter the country to make sure they comply with tighter minimum emissions standards. While the primary reason to introduce emissions standards is to improve air quality, there are also safety benefits as newer vehicles will usually have better safety features than older vehicles.



National's Bluegreen policies are encouraging more energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Boosted investment in State highways by \$1 billion over three years.
- Accelerated \$400 million of roading projects.
- Invested \$4.6 billion in a KiwiRail Turnaround Plan.
- Committed \$1.6 billion to upgrade and electrify Auckland's rail system.
- Invested \$500 million to upgrade Wellington's rail.
- Introduced exemption for full electric cars from Road User Charges.

National is determined to improve the rail freight network, help KiwiRail become commercially viable, and support modern and reliable commuter rail services. National has already invested \$4.6 billion in the KiwiRail turnaround plan and over \$2 billion in upgrading Auckland and Wellington's rail systems.

Public transport patronage in Auckland and Wellington is increasing and the National government will continue to improve public transport with investments in infrastructure and services.

NATIONAL WILL

- Encourage a move to more fuel efficient vehicles.
- Promote greater uptake of electric vehicles, particularly for inner city transport.
- Continue improving our road networks, thus reducing the increased emissions arising from stalled traffic flows.
- Ensure KiwiRail's ongoing success and growth by supporting its board in making robust commercial decisions.

5. Biosecurity

“Our sound reputation for biosecurity is as vital for New Zealand to open and maintain market access, as it is to protecting our own industries and native flora and fauna.”

HON DAVID CARTER



In an increasingly free world trade environment, New Zealand needs biosecurity systems and measures to protect our primary industries, our tourism, and our clean, green brand. It is paramount in determining New Zealand's economic well-being and protecting our environment for future generations.

A staggering 175,000 items come across our border each day. Every year, over four million international passengers, many thousands of containers, and tens of millions of items of mail will pass through airports and ports around New Zealand. Annually we spend three quarters of a billion dollars on biosecurity in New Zealand.

Our biosecurity system works overseas to stop travellers and importers from bringing pests here, at the border to identify and eliminate pests that do arrive, and within New Zealand to find, manage, or eliminate pests that have established here.

Consistent with National's Bluegreen approach, National has improved and modernised the biosecurity system. We're delivering long-lasting solutions for our biosecurity to grow the economy and ensure better protection for our natural environment.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Improved border management and boosted pest management.
- Setting up collaborative Government Industry Agreements.
- Strengthened enforcement and compliance.
- Doubled the instant infringement fine to \$400.
- Invested \$25 million to help the New Zealand kiwifruit industry fight the Psa incursion.
- Committed \$30 million a year to control Bovine TB until 2015.
- Implemented and funded the National Animal Identification and Tracing system – New Zealand's first universal electronic livestock traceability scheme.
- Invested \$75 million for Biosecurity NZ and Customs to develop a single trade window for importers and exporters with the new electronic Joint Border Management System.

It is difficult to strike the balance between protecting our borders and ensuring we do not hold back economic growth.

National does not believe that biosecurity equates to red tape. It does not mean complex regulation or long delays, nor should it require mountains of paperwork. Our Bluegreen reforms have made biosecurity more effective and efficient.

National believes that biosecurity is a collaborative effort. Everyone has a role to play in keeping out unwanted pests and diseases, and containing or eradicating those that establish here. We want to continue improving efficiency and targeting where the risk is greatest.

NATIONAL WILL

- Improve the efficiency of our biosecurity by better integrating our Customs, MAF, and Immigration border controls.
- Make greater use of technology to protect New Zealand from unwanted pests.
- Strengthen our risk profiling work on people and freight movements so we focus on areas of greatest risk.



Protecting our borders is crucial to maintaining our primary industries that contribute so much to our economy.

6. Fresh Water

“I credit the Land and Water Forum partners with the significant first steps we have made in improving fresh water management but the work has just begun.”

HON DR NICK SMITH



For a decade now, surveys have shown New Zealanders view cleaning up fresh water as the country’s most urgent environmental challenge.

By and large, we want local fresh water resources that are fishable, swimmable, and safe for gathering mahinga kai. There is an acknowledgement that restoring some water bodies to good ecological health will be a long-term task. Nonetheless, under National, a firm start has been made.

For many years under the previous Labour government, progress had become stuck and the various stakeholders were in a polarised stand-off. National introduced a collaborative approach in this difficult policy area. At the national level, the Land and Water Forum brought together primary producers, iwi authorities, energy companies, environmentalists and recreationists. National has also commenced direct discussions with the Iwi Leadership Group on water.

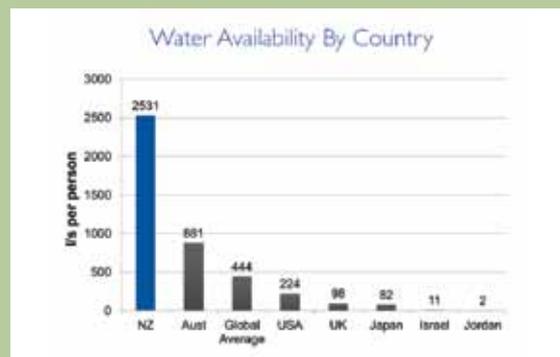
The Forum’s first report in 2010 introduced key elements of a much-needed policy approach, such as limit-setting, and audited self-management by farmers. These concepts – and the whole collaborative approach – were widely endorsed when the Forum toured New Zealand introducing its report to regional communities.

The Government is responding to the Forum’s report in stages. The first stage, announced in May 2011, included a clean-up fund and a national policy statement on freshwater management. The latter requires regional councils to set limits on abstraction from, and discharges into, water bodies. Already several regional councils have responded positively with moves in this direction, and an initial grant from the clean-up fund has gone to Lake Ellesmere in Canterbury (see over).

The Government hopes to provide more detailed national guidance on environmental standards, and on transferring water permits between users, following the next phase of work by the Land and Water Forum. Meanwhile, the challenge of freshwater leadership is being picked up by industry groups such as forestry, dairy, and horticulture. As well, collaborative processes are being picked up at regional and local level to resolve water issues in places such as Canterbury, Waikato, and Rotorua.

A big step forward for the future of the Waikato River was the establishment in 2010 of the Waikato River Authority, which is empowered to implement a vision and strategy for the river, as well as funding eco-restoration and clean-up projects.

“New Zealand is richly blessed with abundant fresh water but this abundance has resulted in us being too casual about its mangament.”



“Fresh water quality in New Zealand is good by international standards but it is deteriorating in too many of our lakes and rivers in lowland catchments.”



Photo courtesy of Guy Salmon, Ecologic

Clutha River: New Zealanders are proud of our clean, free-flowing rivers.

MAKING PROGRESS ON CLEANING UP TWO ICONIC LAKES

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Embarked on an ambitious programme for water, including establishing the Land and Water Forum.
- Launched a National Policy Statement on Fresh Water.
- Doubled penalties for non-compliance and strengthened monitoring and enforcement.
- Passed regulations for metering 98 per cent of water takes.
- Increased funding of \$265 million to clean up iconic waterways like Lake Taupo, Waikato River and Rotorua Lakes.
- Canterbury has an operative water plan.
- Doubled funding for the New Zealand Landcare Trust.

NATIONAL WILL

- Provide central government funds for nationally significant clean-ups where rules are in place and key stakeholders work together.
- Advance Land and Water Forum policy work to set limits on water quality and minimum flows.
- Strengthen monitoring and compliance of resource consents by regional councils to ensure greater consistency in performance.



Photo courtesy of Guy Salmon, Ecologic

Collaboration on cleaning up national treasures like Lake Ellesmere/Te Waihora will benefit everyone if we can make progress.

Lake Ellesmere/Te Waihora, New Zealand's most polluted lake, is finally going to be cleaned up thanks to an initiative announced by the Government in August 2011. Almost \$12 million has been committed over two years in an initial partnership between the Government, Environment Canterbury, Fonterra, and Ngai Tahu, but the full task will take 25-30 years.

The focus will be on reducing nutrients from agricultural runoff, including the purchase of some lakeside farmland, native plantings, and further research. There will also be changes to the water conservation order which controls the lake's opening to the sea, to recognise Ngai Tahu values. The lake was once the fishing basket of Maori.

The clean-up of the lake is going to require a combination of both carrot and stick. There will need to be tight controls on farmers and tighter enforcement of the existing controls. But it is also going to involve education and encouragement.

In recent years there has been growing farmer support for restoring the lake. The new initiative for Lake Ellesmere taps into the community's sense of collective responsibility for the lake.

A different approach has been taken to achieve rapid improvement in water quality at Lake Rotoiti, one of 12 beautiful lakes around Rotorua which are important to New Zealand's "100% Pure" tourism brand. Here, a \$10 million "nutrient diversion wall" diverts away nutrient-laden water which previously flowed from Lake Rotorua into Lake Rotoiti, causing summer blooms of smelly and dangerous cyanobacteria. The wall was jointly funded by the Government and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

The long-term solution to this problem is to clean up Lake Rotorua itself, and Government funding is also enabling progress to be made in this, with two farms recently being retired from intensive land use. Restoring a clean lake will take decades – not least because pollution inflows from past farming activities in the more remote parts of the catchment can take many years to move through groundwater to the lake.

National's support for the Rotoiti nutrient wall reflects its pragmatic philosophy on the environment – getting quick results where we can, while still working hard on the long-term sources of the problems.

7. Biodiversity

“Our flora and fauna is an important part of New Zealand’s culture and heritage. We need to protect our native species for future generations.”

HON KATE WILKINSON



New Zealand’s native plants and animals are mostly unique and found nowhere else in the world. They are also incredibly distinctive: they trace their origins to the ancient, southern supercontinent of Gondwanaland from which New Zealand broke free 70 million years ago, and they have evolved in isolation on these islands ever since.

The greatest proportion of New Zealand’s biodiversity is found on our large conservation estate, administered by the Department of Conservation. But here it depends on ongoing control of weeds and pests, and strong border protection against new ones. National has a strong track record in funding both these crucial activities.

But a significant proportion of the nation’s threatened plants, wildlife and ecosystems is located outside the conservation estate, on lowland or coastal sites which are usually on private land. This is the emerging focus of conservation activity, and it can only be advanced by winning the engagement and support of landowners and local communities.

In recognition of this reality, National has expanded the funding of entities that promote and support conservation on private and Maori land – such as the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, Nga Whenua Rahui, and the NZ Landcare Trust. National has also created the Community Environment Fund, which provides co-funding for community initiatives in eco-restoration and collaborative community solution-finding on biodiversity issues (see box on the Mackenzie project).

From a landowners’ perspective, the tax deductibility of conservation expenditure – like fencing and native plantings – is an important issue. National has initiated a review by Inland Revenue of this issue to look at further opportunities to encourage private conservation.

Besides preserving New Zealand’s natural heritage, National is committed to enabling people to get out and enjoy it. We have expanded DOC campsites, and extended and developed cycle trails. We have begun an investigation for a national park embracing the great kauri forests of Northland, which aims to fill an important gap in our system of national parks.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Announced nine new marine reserves.
- Added 12,400 hectares in 14 areas to Schedule Four, our most valuable conservation land.
- 19,000 hectares of land protected in the QEII National Trust and Nga Whenua Rahui.
- Opened 10 new DOC camping grounds.
- New freedom camping laws to protect our outdoor lifestyle.
- 195km of new cycle trails being developed on conservation land.
- New Coastal Policy Statement giving district councils clearer guidance on protecting and managing our coastline.
- 140 experts in response to the Rena disaster; including ornithologists and vets with experience in treating oiled birds.
- Funded new self-resetting traps to better protect our native species from pests.



Prime Minister John Key planting a native scrub on the Otago Peninsula Headland.



Auckland Central MP Nikki Kaye releasing Kiwi in the Hauraki Gulf.

NATIONAL WILL

- Create a Biodiversity Forum to develop a long-term pest control strategy.
- Undertake a full review of New Zealand's threatened species management framework.
- Complete testing for self-resetting traps and fund research for 1080 alternatives.
- Update the penalty regime for smuggling protected species.
- Lift the maximum penalty to three years in prison and double the maximum fine to \$200,000.
- Pass a new Marine Reserves bill to allow marine reserves beyond the territorial sea, and to improve the way they are created.
- Progress the creation of a new Kauri National Park in Northland's Waipoua Forest.
- Progress the National Policy Statement on Biodiversity.
- Provide up to 200 places for 10-14 year olds to attend 'conservation camp'.
- Support DOC's new business unit to establish more public-private business conservation partnerships.

CASE STUDY

A SHARED VISION FOR THE MACKENZIE COUNTRY

The Mackenzie Country is an iconic New Zealand landscape. An expansive dryland landscape ringed by mountains, it has a marvelous heritage of high-country pastoralism. The Mackenzie is associated in the minds of many with golden tussock grasslands, crystal-clear streams, and calm lakes which capture reflections of snowy peaks. It is the home of special biodiversity – threatened plants, birds, and unique freshwater fish. It is also a world-class tourism destination which, with careful management, and in combination with farming and electricity generation, could earn more than its share of livelihood for New Zealand.

Sadly, its signature indigenous vegetation, the tussock, has suffered in recent years under the influx of rabbits, fast-spreading wilding pines, and hieracium – an incredibly tough and persistent weed. Farm businesses are struggling to protect the dryland ecosystems of the Mackenzie. Now, an influx of irrigated farming, including large-scale dairying, is transforming the landscape.

On the one hand, irrigation on a modest scale could strengthen the viability of farm businesses that have protected this land for generations. On the other, too much irrigation in the wrong place could mean the end of the Mackenzie Country as we know it. Careful planning is essential and much greater community consensus is needed.

Following the leadership of Waitaki MP Jacqui Dean, National has funded a collaborative community process that is developing a shared vision and strategy for the future of the Mackenzie Country. Bringing together 30 leaders from farming, tourism, other businesses, environmental, recreational, and community groups, this process is pioneering a new way of resolving old differences. It is building a vision for the Mackenzie in which biodiversity, landscape, and livelihood are integrated together.



Waitaki MP Jacqui Dean has played a critical role in bringing stakeholders in the Mackenzie together to find enduring solutions for this iconic part of New Zealand.

8. Oceans

“This year we will put in place the new laws and regulations to properly protect New Zealand’s vast ocean area.”

New Zealand is a maritime nation. Our ocean area is 20 times our land area and the fourth largest in the world. National has been advancing work to improve how it’s managed.

The coast is managed under the Resource Management Act. Conservation Minister Kate Wilkinson adopted a new National Coastal Policy Statement in October 2010. It gives councils clearer direction on managing the coast and puts a stronger requirement on protecting nationally significant surf breaks, addressing water quality, improving public access, and managing hazardous risk.

National is proud of its heritage in marine conservation in passing the original Marine Reserves Act in 1971 and last term announced New Zealand’s largest offshore island and mainland reserves. Three new reserves were announced by Ministers Kate Wilkinson and Phil Heatley in January at the 2011 Blue-greens Forum for the Antipodes, Bounty, and Campbell Islands covering 435,163 hectares. Five new West Coast marine reserves were announced this year at Kahurangi, Punakaiki, Okarito, the Gorge, and at Ship Creek. It is a tribute to the collaborative process that these reserves, including New Zealand’s largest adjacent to the mainland, were universally agreed in a region in which conservation issues are often so divisive. A new reserve at Tawharanui Peninsula near Kawau Island in the Hauraki Gulf was also approved by National in August 2011.

Consistent with National’s Bluegreen approach, the Government has also been reforming New Zealand’s aquaculture laws. New Zealand has made less progress than most countries in moving from hunting wild fish to farming fish. The previous Labour government’s aquaculture laws were excessively bureaucratic, resulting in not one application being successful for a new marine farm area. The new law shepherded through Parliament in August 2011 by Aquaculture Minister Phil Heatley will support sustainable growth in this exciting export industry.

Labour’s blunt Foreshore and Seabed Act, overturning the ruling of the Court of Appeal and imposing Crown ownership, was divisive and unsustainable. Attorney-General Chris Finlayson has successfully charted a middle course with the Maori Party with a new Marine and Coastal Area Act. This approach of “public domain” or takutai moana also recognises customary rights. It is also enabling us to get on with much needed wider reforms in ocean management.

The most important of these is environmental legislation for the area beyond the 12 nautical miles of the territorial sea covering 400 million hectares of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and 170 million hectares of extended continental shelf (ECS). This gap in New Zealand’s environmental protection systems has been long recognised but not addressed.

Ocean resources are coming under increased development pressure from the depletion of resources on land, growing global demand, and advances in technology that are making resource recovery possible. These developments come with risks. The Gulf of Mexico disaster in April 2010 was a chilling reminder of how badly things can go wrong.

National in Government opted to review our 2008 policy on oceans management in the wake of the Gulf disaster to ensure our new law would prevent such a disaster in New Zealand. New regulations have been adopted with the latest drilling rules. A new High Hazards Unit with four petroleum inspectors has been established within the Department of Labour. An interim regime has also been put in place for environmental assessments.



Photo courtesy of US Coast Guard

National’s new legislation on environmental protection in our oceans is to ensure we do not have an oil spill disaster like that in the Gulf of Mexico.

KAIKOURA MARINE STRATEGY

On the South Island's east coast, the Kaikoura community is working collaboratively to protect and manage its iconic coastline.

The proposed Kaikoura marine strategy Sustaining Our Sea was launched at Takahanga Marae and was developed by the Kaikoura Coastal Marine Guardians (Te Korowai), made up of representatives from iwi, fishing organisations, local businesses, and environmental and recreational groups.

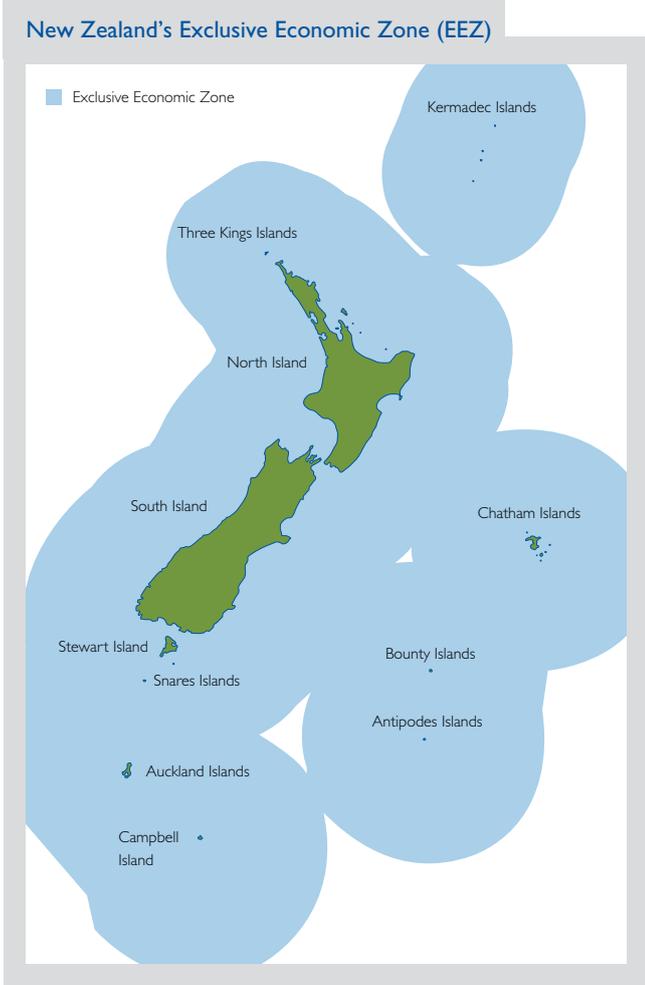
There has been discussion for more than a decade about marine protection on the Kaikoura coast and with this draft strategy it's great to see local groups working together on areas of agreement where marine protected areas should be located.

The draft strategy aims to establish the largest marine reserve adjacent to the New Zealand mainland, a marine mammal sanctuary, an integrated coastal management plan, and a future World Heritage Area.

Kaikoura is an iconic part of New Zealand and the home of our famous whale watching tourist industry. This draft marine strategy recognises how important it is to protect the coastal environment of Kaikoura and its future.

National is a strong believer in the collaborative approach of stakeholders working closely together to resolve complex environmental issues and has helped fund this coastal initiative.

Source: Land Information New Zealand data. Crown Copyright Reserved.



Environment Minister Nick Smith introduced the new EEZ/ECS Environmental Effects Bill into Parliament on 13 September 2011 with the support of the Greens, Act, UnitedFuture, and the Maori Party. This proposed law empowers the Environmental Protection Authority to require environmental impact assessments, public notification and consultation, and consents for significant activities. National's commitment is to pass this into law by 1 July this year.

National is also committed in this term of Parliament to pass new marine reserves legislation. The old Act does not provide for marine reserves beyond the territorial sea. It is also too narrowly constrained to scientific purposes. The process for advancing marine reserve proposals is cumbersome and divisive. Our changes will encourage early engagement of local communities, fishers, iwi, and conservation interests on marine reserve proposals and encourage collaboration.

NATIONAL WILL

- Pass EEZ legislation by 1 July 2012.
- Introduce regulations to support EEZ legislation.
- Pass revised marine reserves legislation this term.



Prime Minister John Key and Conservation Minister Kate Wilkinson whale watching off the Kaikoura coast.

9. Recycling

“The waste levy introduced in 2009 is helping fund recycling programmes like *Love NZ* and delivering on our Bluegreen goals on reducing harm from waste.”

On a global basis our natural in-ground resources are finite which makes recycling, where practicable, essential to the development of future generations.

Over time New Zealand's waste profile has moved from the contaminated sites of coal and gas manufacturing through herbicides and timber treatment residue to mining by-products and chemicals, from product packaging to the mixed waste from the evolution of electronics. Just about everything in our consumer society ends up at some time as waste and while not all waste can be recycled economically it is possible to recycle up to 60 per cent as demonstrated by Austria.

National has tackled recycling with the same Bluegreen approach it applies to all important areas of the economy. For too long little attention has been given to our growing mountain of waste and its environmental impacts and even less attention has been paid to the economic benefits of recycling.

The implementation, by National, of the Waste Minimisation Act on 1 July 2009 established the framework for an integrated approach to waste management. The introduction of a waste levy under the Act has ensured national funding for innovative and sustainable approaches to recycling through the contestable Waste Minimisation Fund as well as direct funding for projects delivering on territorial authorities Waste Management Plans.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Successfully implemented the new waste levy providing stronger incentive to minimise waste.
- Approved three product stewardship schemes covering paint, silage wrap, and waste oil.
- Funded the provision of in-street recycling waste bins under the *Love NZ* brand.
- Begun the transition from a one day a year collection of e-waste to provide seven day depots and collection points countrywide.
- Initiated a trial scheme for the collection of televisions with cathode-ray tubes.

The main issue facing a country such as New Zealand is economy of scale. This does not just apply to waste minimisation but in this instance it brings added problems. Harmful waste is of particular concern and while it is possible to recycle it requires large volumes to make it economically viable. This means there are at present only a few suitable processing plants globally, thus the waste needs to be transported to the plant which brings added risk.

Our first task is to establish an efficient collection infrastructure.

As part of our Bluegreen future National wants to see as much of our waste as possible recycled in New Zealand.

This requires efficient infrastructure with everyday collection points and strategically located processing plant. Even then we will ultimately need to export waste for further processing or alternatively import other countries waste to provide economies of scale.

NATIONAL WILL

- Develop a comprehensive nationwide programme to recycle the estimated 800,000 redundant televisions as part of the switch over from analogue to digital signal.
- Explore the adoption of a product stewardship scheme for electronic waste in parallel with similar developments in Australia.
- Work with CERA and the Christchurch councils to maximise recycling from the 6 million tonnes of waste from the Christchurch earthquakes.



Christchurch Central MP Nicky Wagner is helping businesses recycle more, reducing the 80,000 tonnes of waste that goes to landfill each year.

10. Contaminated Sites

“We have successfully partnered with the Green Party and local authorities to step up the management and clean up of contaminated sites.”

New Zealand has a legacy of contaminated sites liable to create health issues for anyone living or working in the vicinity. These sites in the main are a result of previous commercial activity where hazardous substances have been employed but can vary in terms of the likelihood of harm.

In building a Bluegreen future National intends to initiate the adoption of a common approach to documenting these sites on a regional basis. While there is always concern with the impact a register of this type can have on property values it is in everyone's interest to know where these sites are and the level of hazard they present. This register will also allow sites to be prioritised for cleaning up and will assist in identifying the liable parties. In many cases the company that operated on the site no longer exists and under these circumstances the cost of any remedial work falls on central and local government.

To date it has been extremely difficult to identify and quantify any detrimental environmental or ecological impacts from contaminated sites and the main focus has therefore been on health issues. National is however interested to explore the potential for identifying and measuring environmental and ecological impacts to further enhance the prioritisation process. Officials will undertake an international literature search and review these findings in context with New Zealand's issues. While it is not known if the identification of other than health impacts is feasible, National has committed to completing this study.

The Government has committed \$15.2 million to the second phase clean-up of the Tui Mine. This is currently the highest priority contaminated site, being the remains of an old mine tailing dam. The work will, when completed, stabilise the contents of and remediate the area around the dam thereby removing the potential for a catastrophic failure allowing chemicals to leak into the surrounding catchment area.

CASE STUDY

CLEANING UP TUI MINE

New Zealand has a legacy of sites left contaminated from old mines, gas works, timber treatment yards, and chemical works. The Tui Mine tailings dam in Te Aroha, Waikato, is without a doubt the worst.

In Government, National has committed \$15.2 million to clean up the Tui Mine. We've also announced a new national environment standard that will help provide clear rules for councils to manage public health risks.

We're also supporting the compilation of regional registers of contaminated sites, a national register of priority sites, and improving the legislative framework. Our goal is a safer and cleaner New Zealand.



Local MPs Scott Simpson and Lindsay Tisch in Te Aroha at the site of the clean-up.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Announced a comprehensive workplan to clean up New Zealand's contaminated sites with the Green Party.
- Adopted a National Environment Standard to provide clearer rules for councils to manage public health risks.
- Contributed \$15.2 million to clean up the Tui Mine dam in the Waikato.

NATIONAL WILL

- Implement the new National Environment Standard on contaminated sites.
- Create a new national register of nationally significant contaminated sites.
- Improve the law around liabilities for cleaning up contaminated sites.

11. Air Quality

“We have set realistic standards and backed it up with the practical support resulting in New Zealand’s cleanest air in more than a decade.”

Clean air is as fundamental to New Zealand's clean green lifestyle as clean water, wild beaches, gleaming white mountains, and rich green forests. Images of grey smog hanging over Auckland and Christchurch are not consistent with our environmental values and brand.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Cleanest air quality recorded in a decade.
- More than 20,000 homes converted to clean heating.
- Revised the National Environment Standard for air quality.
- Phased in tougher vehicle emission standards.

When National came to government in 2008 the National Environment Standard (NES) required all areas to have no more than one exceedance a year in particulate pollution by 2013. The first problem with this ambitious standard set in 2003 was that government had done nothing to actively reduce pollution. The second problem was that the penalty for non-compliance was that no new or existing consent for industry could be issued after 2013.

The implications of non-compliance on jobs were dramatic and draconian. It meant that if any industry sought a renewal of an air discharge consent after 2013 in these areas, no consent could be granted. The acute unfairness of this was that although households and vehicles produce the bulk of the particulate pollution, it was only industry that faced any penalty for non-compliance with this former regulation. It was estimated that

this would affect more than 180 consents and put about 17,000 people out of work.

National revised the NES and introduced a split target for compliance. This now means moderately polluted areas, such as Auckland and Napier, have until 2016 to comply. For those more polluted areas, such as Christchurch, Timaru, Rotorua, and Nelson the new NES allows them to achieve three or fewer exceedances by 2016 and be fully compliant by 2020.

This pragmatic approach of a split target recognises that some communities have a greater challenge than others.

From 1 September 2012, new open fireplaces in areas with poor air quality will be prohibited. Also from 1 September 2012, we are going to require mandatory offsetting for any new significant industrial consents in polluted areas. This will replace the arbitrary 2013 ban on consents that would have been so costly on jobs.

National is also moving to reduce air pollution from vehicles by toughening up on vehicle emission standards on second-hand imports and new vehicles, as well as progressing improvements in fuel standards. The tighter rules on vehicles came into force on 1 January 2012.

The big gains in air quality have been achieved by ramping up Government support to households to install clean air heating devices. 7500 homes a year are being converted with Government support, up from only 500 a year before 2008.

National monitoring has confirmed that in 2010 we had the cleanest air in a decade.



Photo: Fish and Game New Zealand

Images of grey smog hanging over our cities is inconsistent with New Zealand's environmental values or brand.

12. Outdoor Recreation

“Fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreation are part of New Zealand’s unique way of life that needs to be enhanced by involving the participants more in managing their recreation.”

Outdoor recreationists have long expressed frustration that their sport and opportunities are controlled by bureaucracies that seem remote and focused on the interests of others. Today, a new trend is emerging. It’s about cooperative, place-based management of outdoor recreation opportunities, based on empowering users to implement responsible self-management within an agreed framework.

New Zealand’s Fish and Game Councils are often cited as a successful example of this model. For decades, freshwater sports fish and game birds have been managed by recreational users within a framework agreed by Parliament. Today, outdoor recreation sectors are pressing to extend user-driven models more widely.

National’s thinking is in tune with this. In our first term, we worked with UnitedFuture to draft and introduce the Game Animal Council Bill. The Bill will establish a Game Animal Council to advise and manage particular herds of deer, chamois, tahr, and wild pigs, as designated by the Minister of Conservation on the Council’s advice. This term, we’re working with UnitedFuture again to pass the Bill and empower recreational hunters to manage their sport themselves, while integrating self-managed areas into the wider context and purposes of conservation land management.

Similar moves are now afoot amongst sea fishers. The aim is to create a representative body with a mandate from both fishers and the Government, which can seek an increased share of key fisheries based on good conservation management practices.

National will be receptive to any user-initiated proposal that has been worked through within the sector and has broad support.

Anglers and New Zealand-based professional fishing guides are united on a proposal to confer powers on Fish and Game Councils to grant concessions over freshwater fishing waters, parallel to the concessions currently administered by DOC over conservation land. The purpose is to ensure that in future,

commercial concessions over all public waterways include provision for access to, and management of, the associated sports fishing resources by New Zealanders.

All these user-driven management proposals will need to respect existing property rights, and be integrated with wider decision-making about conservation and wise management of resources. To ensure that these things happen effectively, and that the views of all those affected are taken into account, National will consult widely on such proposals.

New Zealanders have a unique birthright to access and enjoy our special places. This is one of National’s five Bluegreen principles. To safeguard this principle in changing times, National recognizes the need for new policy approaches.

NATIONAL WILL

- Announce whether non-resident anglers will be asked to contribute more than New Zealand residents for fishing licenses.
- Pass the Game Animal Council Bill into law.
- Work with UnitedFuture to restrict unsporting heli-hunting practices.
- Rename Conservation Boards as Conservation and Recreation Boards to better recognise the place of outdoor recreation in conservation.
- Continue to work with hunters as important stakeholders in the outdoor environment.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Opened 10 new DOC camping grounds.
- Created a hunting advisor position at DOC.
- Worked with UnitedFuture to introduce the Game Animal Council Bill.



As well as keen environmentalists, members of National’s Bluegreen Caucus like MP Cam Calder also enjoy New Zealand’s great outdoors.

13. Resource Management

“Our reforms to streamline and simplify the Resource Management Act are helping the economy recover and ensure environmental issues can be addressed more quickly.”

The Resource Management Act (RMA) is New Zealand's most important environmental statute. Our programme of reform has been about making it work better both from an economic and environmental perspective.

The problems over delays, uncertainty, and cost impact on all participants, whether they be infrastructure providers, kayakers concerned with river flows, homeowners doing extensions, or environmental groups concerned over pollution.

National's reforms have been about making the RMA processes more efficient and providing stronger central government direction.

The Resource Management (Streamlining and Simplifying) Amendment Act 2009 represented the most significant overhaul since the RMA came into force in 1991. It involved 146 changes that took effect on 1 October 2009. It reduced the ability for the RMA to be used for frivolous, vexatious, and anti-competitive objections and appeals. It introduced the new national consenting process for major consents with the new Environmental Protection Authority. It improved the process for making plans, environment standards and policy statements. It also improved mechanisms for enforcement and more than doubled fines for non-compliance.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Simplified and streamlined the RMA to reduce delays, uncertainties, and costs.
- Established priority consenting for projects of national significance.
- Reduced late consents from 29 per cent to 5 per cent and time extensions from 28 per cent to 15 per cent.
- Developed National Policy Statements on Renewable Generation, Fresh Water Management and Biodiversity.
- Adopted new national environment standards on air quality and contaminated sites.

National is encouraged by the way the changes are working. The new national consenting process has involved many billions of dollars of public and private infrastructure. The first application to use the new system, the \$1 billion Tauhara geothermal power station, was consented in less than nine months. In contrast to the 17 years it took for the Wellington inner city bypass, the \$2 billion Waterview project was consented in nine months. Objectors to this motorway wrote after the decision was issued complementing the Environmental Protection Authority and Board of Inquiry on the fairness and thoroughness of the process.

The changes prohibiting anti-competitive objections have at last brought an end to the supermarket circus. The robustness of the provisions were put to the test in June before the Environment Court in a dispute between New Zealand's supermarket giants, with one objecting to the other opening a new store in Tawa. The judgment throwing out the objection was good news for families wanting real competition over food prices in these difficult economic times.

Consent processing by councils has improved significantly due to the changes, as can be seen in comparing the 2008/09 and the 2010/11 biennial RMA report. The proportion of late consents has dropped from 29 per cent to 5 per cent meaning fewer frustrated applicants. The provisions tightening up on councils granting themselves time extensions has seen these drop from 28 per cent to 15 per cent. Some of this improvement has occurred by councils rejecting inadequate applications but at least the applicant can address this promptly rather than being left in limbo.

NATIONAL WILL

- Review Sections 6 and 7 of the RMA to strengthen consideration of natural hazards in response to the Canterbury Earthquakes.
- Introduce six month statutory time limit on the consenting of medium-sized projects.
- Improve processes for infrastructure in line with Technical Advisory Group recommendations.
- Provide incentives for collaboration.
- Strengthen urban design provisions.
- Progress recommendations of the Land and Water Forum on improving fresh water quality and allocation.

14. Environmental Governance and Reporting

“The new Environment Protection Authority and our planned enhancements for the Parliamentary Commissioner put in place the systems to strengthen the integrity of our clean, green brand.”

The fact that our environment is a critical contributor to our economic wellbeing demands that we have a robust and efficient central government system for policy development, consenting, and reporting.

The problem is that New Zealand's environment governance and reporting systems have been quite disaggregated with confusion between central, regional, and local government, and between different government agencies over who does what.

National has commenced a programme of reform to ensure we match our clean, green brand with the best possible environmental governance system. It matches the innovative reforms implemented in the economic sphere of government that is now recognised globally as best practice. Here we have Treasury as the policy agency, the Reserve Bank as the arm's length regulator, and the completely independent Auditor-General doing the audit role. Our plan is to build a parallel structure with the Environment Ministry, Environmental Protection Authority, and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

The first challenge was to refocus the Environment Ministry. It had been badly discredited and excessively politicised in the previous term, resulting in resignations of its chief executive and minister. It had also made mistakes over the Mapua contaminated site clean-up by becoming involved in operational matters that it was ill-equipped to manage. National has worked to rebuild the ministry as a politically-neutral, first rate policy advisor on the environmental and natural resource challenges facing New Zealand.

The major step last term was establishing the new Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). It was born with three objectives, Firstly, New Zealand's system of environmental regulation was too devolved to regions and districts when some things are best regulated nationally. Secondly, decisions over environmental regulation are best made by a specialist authority. A key conclusion from the inquiry into the Gulf of Mexico disaster was that it was wrong for the agency promoting petroleum exploration to be also approving the environmental rules. The third objective was in keeping an appropriate separation between ministers setting the policy and individual decisions on national consenting.

OUR TRACK RECORD

- Rebuilt the Ministry for the Environment as a politically neutral, first rate policy advisor on natural resource issues.
- Formed the new Environmental Protection Authority.

The next item on our agenda becomes a new Environmental Reporting Act together with a new role for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment in producing statutory national environment reports.

New Zealand is the only OECD country to not have a statutory requirement for regular state of the environment reports. This is inconsistent with our strong, clean, green credentials. The proposed reports will show how New Zealand is doing on air quality, water quality, oceans management, protection of our unique flora and fauna and reducing our greenhouse gases. For instance, it will rank which are our cleanest and dirtiest rivers and lakes and which are improving and deteriorating. This will help focus communities on doing better but will also help nationally in determining areas of environmental management that need greater attention.

NATIONAL WILL

- Pass a new Environmental Reporting Bill.
- Provide for five-yearly State of the Environment reports to be produced by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment



Local MP Todd McClay checking out water quality at Lake Rotorua.

National's Bluegreen Team



Your Bluegreen Caucus - Back row (from left): Paul Hutchison, Ian McKelvie, Amy Adams, Scott Simpson, Nikki Kaye, Jacqui Dean, Chris Auchinvole, Nicky Wagner, Kate Wilkinson, Nick Smith, Todd McClay, Cam Calder, Louise Upston, Tau Henare. Front Row (from left): Tim Macindoe, Colin King, Maggie Barry. (Absent: Tim Groser).

Keep in touch with the Bluegreens

Visit us at www.bluegreens.org.nz, or write to us at:

Hon Dr Nick Smith
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160
New Zealand



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Have your say

The Bluegreens play an important role in developing policy and highlighting environmental issues. If you would like to get involved, contribute to future policies and events, or just stay in touch, please complete the form below and return it to us freepost:

Hon Dr Nick Smith, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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COMMENTS: _____

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|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh water | <input type="checkbox"/> Biosecurity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oceans | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling | |



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