

## Government's Long-awaited RMA Reforms Gain Support for First Reading

Today, after much anticipation, Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment, introduced the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (the Bill) into Parliament for its first reading.

The government has been considering amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) since Minister Adams was in the Environment portfolio in 2013. The support of the Māori Party was lost in 2013 because of potential reforms to the heart of the Act being the purpose and principles contained in Part 2.

The proposed amendments have now morphed into an Omnibus Bill which will make amendments to the RMA as well as a number of other pieces of legislation, being; the Reserves Act 1977; the Public Works Act 1981; the Conservation Act 1987; the Environmental Protection Authority Act 2011; and the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012. The new- look Bill retains the Part 2 environmental protections almost completely as they are, and instead focusses much more on **processes** of environmental decision making; including looking at duplication across different pieces of legislation, plan-making processes, iwi and public participation, and reforms to the resource consenting regime.

Minister Smith announced that the substantial 180-page long Bill, which includes 235 clauses of proposed changes, "is a moderate reform Bill that will reduce the cost and delays for homeowners and businesses, as well as improve New Zealand's planning and environmental controls".

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1511/S00504/resource-legislation-introduced-to-parliament.htm>

The Māori Party has supported the Bill in its current form for introduction, enabling it to progress to the first stage of consideration by the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. Whether the Bill will be able to progress beyond this initial stage will depend upon the Māori Party's continued support, or the support of United Future Leader, Hon Peter Dunne. Support from either party remains uncertain at this stage.

<http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/dunne-warns-consequences-if-maori-party-supports-rma-reform-rh-p-182087>

Anderson Lloyd will present seminars in the New Year on the proposed reforms, which will affect councils, developers and all stakeholders. Further announcements will be made on our website soon with a close analysis of the Bill.

If you would like more information on the effects of the reforms, or help with making a submission to the Select Committee on the Bill, please contact one of our experts in the [Resource Management Team](#).

Maree Baker-Galloway, Partner at Anderson Lloyd and President of the Resource Management Law Association, provides a concise summary of the Bill at the following link: [RMLA Exec comments on RMA Reform Proposals](#)

**The full text of the Bill can be found at the following link:**

[http://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/1511/3\\_Resource\\_Legislation\\_Amendment\\_Bill.pdf](http://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/1511/3_Resource_Legislation_Amendment_Bill.pdf)