

SECURING NEW ZEALAND'S FUTURE



**BUDGET
2026**

**Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform**

**Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Climate Change**

**Simon Court MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform**

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Funding to boost resilient planning system

New Zealanders will benefit from better information about natural hazard risks, and faster and more consistent planning decisions under major new investment in the Government's planning reforms, RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop, Climate Change Minister Simon Watts and Parliamentary Under-Secretary Simon Court say.

Budget 2026 invests \$294 million over four years to support the rollout of the Government's new planning and environmental management system that replaces the Resource Management Act.

"For too long, New Zealand's planning system has been slow, fragmented, and overly complex. That has driven up costs, delayed development, and made it harder for people to understand what they can and can't do with their own land," Chris Bishop says.

"The current system imposes significant delays and costs on development, with at least \$1.29 billion spent annually on consenting and approval processes.

"The Government's new planning system is premised on the enjoyment of property rights with people being free to use their property unless there is a good reason to restrict them.

“To make that work in practice, people need clear, accessible, reliable information. Budget 2026 provides the first major investment in the digital foundations that will underpin the new planning system, including nationally consistent data standards, shared digital services, and a centrally managed platform for planning, consenting and monitoring.”

Chris Bishop says digitisation is a critical part of the reforms, and the proposed package has a benefit-cost ratio of 7.2.

“Independent analysis has shown that investment in better data and digital systems could unlock up to \$5.3 billion in economic growth over 30 years by making planning and decision making faster and easier.

“This growth is on top of the billions in economic benefits that the new Planning and Natural Environment Bills are projected to deliver.

“Right now we have 78 councils maintaining separate planning systems that often duplicate effort, reinvent the wheel, and create confusion and inefficiencies.

“Under the new system, councils, planners, infrastructure providers, developers and communities will be able to access more consistent planning information through connected national digital tools and data systems.

“Over time, New Zealanders will be able to go to one website, look at one map, and get clear information about their property and the rules that apply to it.

“Budget 2026 invests \$41 million in the first phase of this work, including development of national data standards, an e-Plan viewer, and the core system architecture needed to support the new planning system over time.

“This is a long-term transformation, and this funding is a down payment on the digital foundations needed to support a modern planning system for decades to come.”

Simon Watts says the reforms will also strengthen New Zealand’s resilience to natural hazards.

“New Zealand is vulnerable to floods, earthquakes, and severe weather events, and needs a planning system that helps communities understand and respond to those risks,” Simon Watts says.

“This investment will improve the quality and consistency of planning data across the country, giving councils, communities, and property owners better information to make smarter decisions.

“The funding will support development of the first New Zealand Flood Map. Over time, this will provide property-level flood risk information to help communities, councils, insurers, and infrastructure providers better understand and manage flood risk.

“The map will show where flooding is likely to happen, both now and in the future as a result of climate change, and will make that information much easier for New Zealanders to access and understand.”

The first iteration of the map is expected in 2027.

Simon Court says this investment is about translating good law into real results.

“The Government has tightened its belt so we can invest where it matters – implementing the most important reform for New Zealand’s productivity in a generation.

“This is mission critical for restoring certainty, consistency, and confidence for Kiwis to invest in the farms, homes, and infrastructure New Zealand needs to grow and thrive.”

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