

Election 2017 - SMC science Q&A with political parties



The Science Media Centre put questions on key science-related issues to the political parties ahead of the 2017 General Election, scheduled to be held on September 23.

Click on the links below to find the answers from the responding political parties.

[Freshwater quality](#)
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Q1: Freshwater quality

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

What policy decisions does your party propose to tackle the issue of freshwater quality degradation in our country's waterways?

NATIONAL: The Government has set a target of 90 per cent of New Zealand's lakes and rivers to meet swimmable water quality standards by 2040. This compares to a current standard of 72 per cent.

The goal to improve water quality is estimated to cost the Government, farmers and councils \$2 billion over the next 23 years. This is on top of the \$140 million already committed by the Government to be spent on specific river and lake clean-ups.

We are moving to a system which requires councils to improve the swimmability of their rivers and lakes over the year. This is a significant change. Under the new proposal, over 50,000 kilometres of waterways will be improved for swimming. We will see more and more places suitable for swimming more often.

The plan is backed up by national regulations requiring stock to be fenced out of waterways, new national policy requirements on regional councils to strengthen their planning rules on issues such as sewage discharges and planting riparian margins, a new Freshwater Improvement Fund and new maps that clearly identify where improvements are needed.

We will require monitoring and public reporting to show progress.

LABOUR: Labour will restore our rivers and lakes to a truly swimmable state within a generation. We'll help farmers and other owners of waterways with fencing and riparian planting through our Ready for Work programme and we'll give the regional councils the resources to clean up their waterways through a water royalty. Labour has a suite of other policies to stop water quality getting worse straight away and reverse the damage being done.

GREEN: The Green Party will require as a minimum that all water bodies be safe for swimming in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

Our full policy package on water is yet to be announced but we have already said that we will:

- Put an immediate 10 cent/litre levy on water bottling and exports – local councils will be expected to use the revenue to clean up waterways, and protect drinking water sources and infrastructure. Half the revenue will go to mana whenua.
- Toughen national standards to limit the amount of pollution going into water
- Put a hold on all new conversions of land to dairy farms
- Require resource consents for more intensive land uses
- Introduce rules that require all farms to be fenced from rivers and creeks, and for riverbanks to be planted so that excess run-off is absorbed
- Ensure Māori are recognised and supported in their role as kaitiaki of their taonga and tikanga.
- Look at how urban design can reduce stormwater pollution from entering rivers
- Upgrade and invest in sewerage systems that dispose sewage onto land rather than water, where appropriate
- Introduce a charge on water used for irrigation. Those who profit from water use should pay for the privilege
- Keep wild rivers wild by not building new water storage schemes
- Wind up Crown Irrigation Investments, a subsidy used to fund water storage and irrigation scheme.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First supports efforts already being undertaken by farmers in terms of the installation of effluent containment and dispersal systems, fencing and bridging of waterways to exclude stock, and riparian plantings to limit nitrate and phosphate leaching. In Government we will provide assistance for planting programmes to both tangibly improve water quality, and to help this country meet such emissions targets as we have committed to.

In addition, New Zealand First recognises the significant contribution to water degradation that is directly attributable to urban wastewater and stormwater runoff, industrial discharges, and domestic wastewater discharges containing high levels of phosphates in particular. We will initiate programmes to ensure that urban dwellers are properly educated about the realities of wastewater discharges from metropolitan sources, and the seriously deleterious effects that these considerable volumes of heavily polluted discharge waste have on our waterways. It is

clear that urban sources of water pollution are as much in need of attention as rural and farming sources, if not more so.

NZ First will also reform the RMA on the principle of one law for all. Order reviews of regional plans using panels of real farmers, genuine residents and truly independent experts. Seriously invest in the nutrient tool Overseer and only allow its use in regional plans when fully calibrated. Provide 100% depreciation for farm environmental works done against farm plans while supporting farmers to take on job seekers to help with fencing, riparian planting and maintenance. Target nitrogen leaching pest plants and animals and close the rural-urban divide certain politicians have exploited.

MĀORI: Water is a taonga and we must do everything we can to protect its quality and vitality and ensure its availability for all New Zealanders. The Māori Party established the Te Mana o Te Wai fund for the health and well-being of our water and has supported the key objective of te mana o te wai as a driving policy for freshwater management.

The three elements of Te Mana o Te Wai are:

- Te hauora o te wai – the health and mauri (quality and vitality) of water
- Te hauora o te taiao – the health and mauri of the environment and
- Te hauora o te tangata – the health and mauri of the people

We want to:

- **Legislate to protect** freshwater and give it the status of taonga
- **Enhance** Te Mana o Te Wai funding to support community projects such as planting riparian buffers and establish wetlands
- **Establish** Regional Water Authorities based on a co-governance model between water rights holders and the Regional Councils to manage, clean up, and restore our waterways
- **Ensure** Te Mana o Te Wai is the overarching objective for freshwater management
- **Impose** a moratorium on the sale of water (this includes all water used/sold for commercial use including water exports by foreign companies) so that issues around water, namely quality, management and ownership, can be addressed
- **Make** the freshwater standard 'drinkable'
- **Set up** annual Te Mana o te Wai funding to support community projects such as planting riparian buffers and establishing wetlands
- **Prioritise** action to counter the effects of pollution caused by nitrogen and phosphorus that are leaching into our waterways
- **Support** funding for the capturing of rainfall and better clean water storage systems particularly in rural areas

ACT: The Government should adopt the Land and Water Forum's recommendation of replacing

first-in first-served water use with a system of tradeable use rights – emulating our world-leading fisheries’ quota system. This would retain farmers’ access to water while also incentivising conservation of water by giving farmers the option of on-selling their quota excess.

The Opportunities Party (TOP): Our environment is the cornerstone of our key exports (agriculture and tourism) as well as our unparalleled quality of life. Currently, we are pursuing economic growth at all cost, predominantly through intensification of land use. However, we are blind to the impacts it is having on our environment, and especially, our water resources.

Industries such as dairy currently get a free ride on environmental externalities (while also receiving subsidies for irrigation), and the taxpayer is forced to pick up the bill for cleanup. This is only going to get worse as we insist on pursuing increased volume of exports over value, [driving even more pollutants into our rivers](#).

To combat this TOP will ensure that all externalities are accounted for. Those who are above a sustainable level of [pollution will pay](#), those below will receive payment from the penalty pool, driving all polluters towards best practice.

The bottom line is to improve the quality of our waterways. By having the rights to the environment written into the constitution we can ensure that every waterway has at least the minimum flow required to retain its aquatic ecosystem. Commercial allocation can be set above this minimum flow. TOP will also ensure that we [place a price on water usage](#), set by the market.

Q2: Science funding

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

Will your party maintain the current level of public spending on science, decrease it or boost it? Does your party propose any significant changes to science funding priorities? What policy measures will your party make to boost business R&D levels?

NATIONAL: The Government significantly increased investment in science and innovation through Budget 2017, adding \$256 million of new funding over four years. This increases total Government investment in science and innovation from \$1.32 billion in 2015 to \$1.66 billion by 2021 – an increase of 26 per cent.

The National Statement on Science Investment, launched in 2015, outlines the broader science investment priorities of the National-led Government.

Encouraging business R&D helps high-tech, innovative Kiwi companies to bring products and ideas to the market sooner, which has significant benefit for export revenues. The Government

has invested a further \$74.6 million in Budget 2017 to meet the rising demand for Callaghan Innovation's Growth Grants, bringing the total amount available through to the programme over the next four years to \$657 million.

This approach is working, between 2014 and 2016, business spending on R&D grew 29 per cent, and Callaghan Innovation grant recipients lifted their own spending by 42 per cent.

LABOUR: Labour will prioritise an increase in our public science spend to link New Zealand to the OECD average over time. We'll also strengthen innovation through a 12.5% Research & Development (R&D) tax credit.

GREEN: The Green Party will boost total spending on science and R&D; alongside this we will reduce organisational complexity, transaction costs and overheads associated with funding decisions and research delivery.

Regarding priorities, we will invest in research that contributes to sustainability through innovation, knowledge creation, adoption of appropriate technologies, and changes in practice. We are not comfortable with public science funding being used for environmentally destructive practices like seabed mining.

We will work with the sector to reform science research in Aotearoa New Zealand from the current corporatised model of CRIs and universities to one that enables cross-disciplinary research focused on public good and economic transformation.

We will introduce a Green Infrastructure Fund to kick-start the green economy and create a Minister for Manufacturing at the heart of government. The Green Infrastructure Fund is a government-owned, independent, for profit fund aimed at attracting private finance for transformational low carbon projects.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First has a policy goal to increase Government funding of Science and R&D to 2% of GDP over 10 years, accompanied by incentives to encourage business to match that level of investment. We will also review the public science ecosystem that is based on competition rather than science outcomes.

MĀORI: Successfully aligning investment in science and innovation with Māori business potentially will lead to 150,000 additional jobs per year in the New Zealand economy by 2060; and an additional \$12 billion per annum in GDP from the Māori economy. The Māori Party will:

- Establish a priority investment fund for Māori Research and Development. We will promote collaboration between Māori entrepreneurs, scientists and innovators to improve opportunities, jobs and incomes.

- Create and resource a real and virtual incubation hub for hapū and iwi to test the economic viability of new ideas on the local and global market and to mentor researchers.

ACT: ACT opposes subsidies and grants for R&D. They result in politicians picking favourites and skewing competition in favour of businesses best-placed to apply for grants. We would instead use this funding to cover the cost of a corporate tax cut, allowing all businesses to keep more of their profits and reinvest in R&D or any other form of innovation.

TOP: TOP wants to see R&D levels boosted across the board. Our low R&D levels are undoubtedly tied to our moribund productivity and relatively low wages. New Zealand needs to grow by working smarter, not harder; by boosting the value we create, not the volume of our primary products.

Our tax policy will encourage productive investment which should see Business R&D levels rise over time. In the short term we want to prime the R&D effort with government investment. The full details of this policy are to come.

TOP wants to see government science funding become more long term and independent of Ministerial interference. Any gag clauses should be removed from publicly funded contracts to ensure that scientists can use their findings to further the public interest. Funding should also not be so reliant on co-funding with the private sector if public good can be demonstrated.

Q3: Climate change

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

How will your party meet the goals of the Paris Agreement? How will agriculture be accounted for in climate change adaptation and mitigation? What are your plans for the Emissions Trading Scheme?

NATIONAL: Under the Paris Agreement, we have signed up to a fair and ambitious target of reducing emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. We will meet this target through a combination of reducing domestic emissions under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), planting more trees and participating in international carbon markets.

With more than 85% renewable electricity generation already, and a target of 90% by 2025, we are off to a good start. We are also looking at how we can reduce emissions in other sectors such as agriculture and transport, however we will not bring agriculture into the ETS until we have the viable technology to reduce emissions.

We're spending a record \$2 billion on public transport with a target of 64,000 electric vehicles by 2021, each year we invest \$20 million in agricultural greenhouse gas research and are providing up to \$200 million for international climate-related support.

We are committed to making the ETS work and will not scrap it like other parties have proposed. The National Government recently announced a package of changes to the ETS to provide businesses with the clarity they need about the direction of the ETS. We are committed to ensuring New Zealand businesses whose emissions are a big part of their costs are not disadvantaged compared to their international competitors.

LABOUR: Labour will ensure a just transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy with decent and secure jobs and, as a key to achieving ambitious emissions reduction targets, will establish an independent Climate Commission and carbon budgeting. We'll restore the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to be an all sectors, all gases scheme, so that we move away from carbon-polluting goods and services towards low or zero-carbon options.

GREEN: We are committed to a net zero carbon economy by 2050. We must act to ensure a secure future according to science on Climate Change.

The Green Party will:

1. Work to strengthen the ineffective ETS, e.g. through a progressively rising price cap and a minimum price floor, and over time replace it with an effective levy;
2. Use all the levers available to government: R&D, energy efficiency, transport changes, tree-planting etc. to make New Zealand a world leader in the race against climate change.
3. Prioritise investment in low-carbon transport options.
4. Move towards 100% renewable electricity by 2030 with our Empowering NZ plan, and also help major industrial energy users wind down their use of coal.

On agriculture, although New Zealand has a unique emissions profile, primary industry has ways to cut carbon emissions that are already cost effective for farmers. There will be an early and measured phase-in of a levy on agriculture emissions for the agriculture sector. We will introduce incentives for on-farm mitigation measures and potentially on-farm sequestration. The Green Party is committed to assisting vulnerable sectors adapt to a low emission economy and will make this a priority.

NZ FIRST:

- NZ First will repeal the Emissions Trading Scheme and replace it with a UK-style Climate Change Act (the UK policy is in serious accord with Norway's policy, that is, that both populations will clean their own act up.)
- Integral to this new Climate Change Act will be a new Parliamentary Commission for Climate Change, or PCCC, to be established as an office of Parliament;

- The Parliamentary Commission for Climate Change will be legally responsible for reporting against both the Kyoto and Paris Agreements. It will work with the government to set a three-yearly 'Carbon Budget' designed to reach these commitments such as forestry with NZ First committed to reestablishing the Forestry Service;
- The first such 'Carbon Budget' will become operative in 2021 with the Parliamentary Commission for Climate Change providing independent advice to Government on how to meet carbon budgets and how to prepare for climate change. It will also conduct independent analysis into climate change science, economics and policy;
- The Parliamentary Commission for Climate Change will be funded from current administrative costs for the Emissions Trading Scheme meaning it is cost neutral;
- Savings from no longer having to buy \$1.4bn worth of emission units every year will be redirected into research and development and adapting to climate change.

MĀORI: Climate change solutions:

- Prioritise solutions that address the effects of Climate Change working across the political spectrum to tackle climate change
- Enact emissions targets into law and support the setting of carbon budgets that would act as stepping stones towards the targets
- Support the establishment of an independent Climate Commission to advise on setting carbon budgets and to report on meeting those budgets
- Set up government subsidies for electric vehicles for community groups
- Establish whānau friendly cities encouraging young people to have a voice in the design and planning of their cities starting with green spaces in urban centres
- Create more kura taiaō and enviro-school models of curriculum
- Support a proposal that will see the planting of 100,000 hectares of new forests over the next 10 years

We also believe in the efficient use of water, energy conservation and the need for sustainable environmental management. We are concerned about water management, restoration of water quality; and environmentally sustainable land use that does not degrade our water system.

In this regard, the Māori Party looks to:

- Expand the mandate of the Environmental Protection Authority to include crown minerals and freshwater
- Transfer the role of kaitiaki back from the Department of Conservation to mana whenua
- Subsidise organisations to undertake environmental impact assessments to support businesses becoming more environmentally friendly.

ACT: ACT opposes blunt environmental regulation, but supports various initiatives that would reduce emissions, such as modernised ride-sharing rules, demand-based road pricing, and priced irrigation.

As for the ETS, ACT's preference is for a carbon tax rather than a trading scheme.

TOP: [TOP will ensure the Emissions Trading Scheme](#) is restored to being a proper cap and trade scheme. It should remain closed to international units, phasing out the free allocations to energy intensive exporters and auctioning credits with the cap set at the 2030 target. We expect this will cause the price of carbon to rise significantly, sending a long term signal for investment. If international trade resumes, the government should purchase the units and auction them into the ETS.

The revenue raised by the ETS should be used in the first instance to invest in improving [energy efficiency in the nation's homes and small businesses](#). That includes insulation, and the adoption of energy efficient heating systems. This will save money and reduce emissions at the same time. The other short term priorities are planting all our 1.1m hectares of erosion prone land and ensuring electricity pricing encourages a move to 100% renewable energy.

In the short term we want to see agriculture managed through freshwater controls. When agriculture is brought into the ETS we need to ensure methane is accounted for correctly, which may mean a two basket approach (short lived gases treated differently to long lived).

Q4: Predator Free/1080

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

How will your party support the Predator Free 2050 initiative - what role should aerial 1080 drops play in pest eradication efforts?

NATIONAL: In July 2016, the Government announced Predator Free 2050, to control pests and help protect our native wildlife. It is the most ambitious conservation project attempted anywhere in the world.

The Government is leading the effort by investing in a range of projects such as \$21.3m for Battle For Our Birds, \$2.8m for a sea lion threat management plan, and released the first ever Threatened Species Strategy.

Through Battle for the Birds, which supports Predator Free 2050, we are working to protect a dozen priority species of birds, bats, frogs, lizards, and snails at risk of serious decline or local extinction. Predator control will also benefit many common native species and whole ecosystems.

Aerial 1080 will be used at around 29 sites to knock down rat, possum and stoat numbers as it is the most effective pest control method across large areas and difficult terrain. We'll also be using traps and other ground-based methods at other more accessible sites.

DOC is spending more than ever before on natural heritage and recreation work. There's also more conservation work being done in New Zealand now, than at any time in our history. DOC continues to spend more on biodiversity work than it does on recreation – even with the \$76m tourism infrastructure increase this year.

LABOUR: Labour will back New Zealand being predator free by 2050, or earlier, with mammalian predators being eradicated as technology and techniques allow. We believe aerial 1080 application is the best available option for possum, rat and stoat control particularly in difficult to access country, and its use is strongly supported by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. Labour will at the same time encourage research into and development of new and improved alternatives to 1080.

GREEN: The Green Party will double the number of rangers working on the front lines to defend nature and double the amount of pest control on conservation land, within five years.

Our [Thriving Nature](#) package will:

1. Restore the Department of Conservation's (DOC) role as nature's primary defender. By doubling DOC's baseline conservation budget within five years we can double the number of people working on the frontlines of conservation — DOC rangers and the technical staff and scientists who support them — and double the amount of pest control on conservation land.
2. Stop all new mining on the conservation estate, strengthen legal protection for threatened species and the places where they live, and create a strong, overarching conservation action plan.
3. Support community-based conservation and conservation on private land by doubling the government funding they can receive and better co-ordinate the great work of conservation volunteers nationwide.
4. Increase funding for Predator Free 2050 through a \$20 [levy on international tourists](#) entering New Zealand, raising \$65 million per year for Predator Free New Zealand by 2021.

Our native birds are in serious trouble, and their number one threat is from pests. The Green Party supports the appropriate use of 1080 poison in remote or hard to access areas where aerial drops are the only practical way to control pests.

NZ FIRST: Predator Free 2050 may be noble in intention, but New Zealand First regards it as being unrealistic and unattainable. We propose increased resourcing for Conservation and pest control based around trapping and other forms of ground control, along with urgent and significantly increased investment in research into alternative methods and substances used for

animal population controls.

New Zealand First favours increased resourcing for more, larger, and better protected sanctuaries, both on offshore islands and on the mainland, which can be properly protected and maintained through the disproportionate application of pest control measures, the application of which over the entire country is not feasible.

New Zealand First is opposed to the continued use of aerial 1080 and it is our intention to end its use as soon as is practicable (by way of vastly increased public science investment), without compromising our pest control requirements in the process.

Our initial action will be to immediately halt aerial 1080 operations while comprehensive and accurate surveys of both native and pest populations are carried out in those areas that are currently subject to 1080 on the basis that they are inaccessible. Too much of the justification claimed for aerial 1080 is based on incomplete or non-existent data regarding population and threat levels, and too little follow-up is carried out in order to determine either the effectiveness of poisoning or the direct negative impact that 1080 has on the native species it is intended to benefit.

MĀORI: Our overarching policy supporting Predator Free 2050 initiative is kaitiakitanga. The spiritual and cultural guardianship of Te Ao Mārama; our responsibility to care for our environment.

The Māori Party oppose the use of 1080 on conservation land in New Zealand, but at the same time understand over 90% of conservation land is difficult to access and therefore 1080 is currently the most efficient form of pest eradication. As such, the Māori Party will support research and development into alternative methods for 1080.

ACT: ACT believes Predator Free 2050 is a promise with no intention of being kept. The politicians who made the promise will have long since retired by 2050 and so will not be held accountable.

ACT's policy is more realistic – we would sell Landcorp and use the proceeds to fund community groups who would like to set up publicly-accessible conservation sanctuaries. They will be contracted to achieve targets such as producing sustainable native bird populations which could be interbred with other sanctuaries.

ACT supports the use of 1080 for pest eradication.

TOP: TOP are completely committed to Predator Free 2050. In fact, Gareth was a founding member of Predator Free NZ! We want to levy a [\\$20 per tourist border levy](#) that will raise \$60+ million per annum to go towards funding the predator free effort and war on weeds.

The Predator Free effort should invest in projects that will offer the greatest biodiversity return on investment for the conservation dollar. This is a major scientific and analytical challenge and at the moment we are not convinced DOC has the capacity to make these strategic calls.

Any investments have to include control operations such as aerial 1080. This will remain an essential tool in maintaining our native fauna until the predator free effort is able to successfully eradicate predators from areas and protect them from reinvasion on the mainland.

Q5: Genetic modification

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

Is it time to lift the moratorium on the commercial release of genetically modified organisms? Do we have a competitive advantage internationally or are we missing out by not being able to apply this science in NZ? Can we achieve the predator free goals without it?

NATIONAL: The Environment Protection Agency is the independent controlling authority and has not approved any GM crops for release here to date. Food imports are a Food Safety issue but it is possible that some imported processed foods could contain GM ingredients.

Some work is going on at the development stage involving the genetic modification of vegetables (eg, onions that are herbicide resistant and potatoes that are resistant to disease).

To date, no fresh produce (fruit, vegetables, meat or milk) originating in New Zealand is genetically modified. Some processed foods may, however, contain genetically modified ingredients sourced from overseas (eg, soy or corn flour).

There is some frustration by those in the science community that similarly low-risk biotechnologies developed since 1998 have not been included in the new 'not GM' regulations.

The rationale for our cautious approach is that New Zealand is an exporter of billions of dollars of food products and we need to be mindful of market perceptions as well as the science. We will continue to monitor global rules around the regulation of GMOs and adapt our system over time in line with international developments.

LABOUR: Labour will maintain the status quo of new GM techniques requiring EPA approval for use. Labour will also maintain the ability of councils to decide on economic grounds whether and where release and commercial use of GMO plants and animals is allowed. We'll also protect farmers who do not wish to adopt GM technology by ensuring the liability regime for use

of GMOs that cause harm is strengthened.

GREEN: Genetic engineering should occur in a contained laboratory setting only. Our food and environment should be GE Free.

This definitely gives us a competitive advantage as it means we can market our agricultural exports as high-end boutique products. It's a powerful marketing tool to have on our export goods.

On predator free, the lines of research should remain open. One big breakthrough could be as simple as creating a long-lasting and effective lure for stoats. Our [Thriving Nature](#) plan significantly increases funding for Predator Free 2050, doubling pest control on DOC land and for community conservation groups. Via those means, we will make significant progress towards the goal of eliminating all predators from New Zealand by 2050.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First policy with regards to genetic modification is to proceed with caution, and only within the confines of suitably equipped laboratories, until such time as any modified organism has been proven to be safe for release.

We are aware that there are types and degree of genetic modification, and also that there is some uncertainty in the public's perception as to what these various differences might entail.

New Zealand First is supportive of the desire on the part of much of the Primary Sector for this country to continue to be seen as a source of high-quality, clean, safe, GMO-free food. At the same time it is important that New Zealand does not miss out on the benefits of certain types of genetic modification that provide us with essential medical substances such as insulin, grasses that deter birds from congregating around airports, and plants able to resist changes in climatic conditions that can assist with land stabilisation and drought amelioration.

Employing gene technology in the pursuit of environmentally-friendly pest control is another field of research from which New Zealand can obtain tangible and desirable benefits. New Zealand First believes it is important that all information relating to differing types and potential effects of genetic modification is available to New Zealanders, and that the cautionary principle continue to be applied within the acceptance of these clearly understood differences.

MĀORI: The Māori Party supports communities and their right to determine whether there are genetically modified (GM) crops in their regions. We preserve a region's ability under local plans to regulate all types of GM crops in their territories including forestry and grasses and any activities involving the growing of GM crops whether for commercial or other purposes. We believe that it is for regions to determine whether they have a competitive advantage to have GM-free communities and whether the moratorium on the commercial release of genetically modified organisms should be lifted.

We support iwi, tribal trusts, whānau trusts, landowners and incorporations to identify lands and resources to grow food for overseas and local markets, at the same time initiating new employment. We encourage the return of iwi trading in specialist kai, including organic food and GM free kai production.

ACT: ACT supports the commercial use of GMOs. However we also respect the rights of individual local authorities to set their own GMO policies.

TOP: Based on current technology, it does seem unlikely we would achieve our predator free goals without the use of genetic techniques. However, technology can change and it makes sense to invest in a variety of techniques.

In the meantime, TOP favours having a public conversation on this issue, in line with the recommendation of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Jan Wright that we need a public engagement process on the potential use of genetic techniques to control predators.

Q6: Biosecurity

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

Following a string of biosecurity responses in recent years - from myrtle rust and *Bonamia* to velvet leaf and the Queensland fruit fly incursion - what will your party do to strengthen our biosecurity preparation and response?

NATIONAL: Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy has always said that biosecurity is his number one priority and this has been backed up with major funding boosts and new initiatives.

This year's Budget included a funding boost for biosecurity of \$18.4 million, taking total funding to \$248 million – a record high. In the last few years MPI has employed 50 new biosecurity staff and 20 extra biosecurity detector dog teams, introduced new x-ray scanning machines, a dedicated Border Clearance Levy to meet rising passenger numbers, an inflight video for arriving air travellers, and a new animal health laboratory is under construction. We've also released the Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement, setting out a long term strategy for engaging all New Zealanders.

National's full primary industries policy will be released soon and continue the strong focus on biosecurity.

On average the overall number of incursions per year has been consistent with previous years going back to 2000 – this is despite strongly increasing passenger and cargo volumes. We have around 12 million passenger movements a year across our borders and 175,000 items a day

cross our border. Even if we shut down all trade and people movements, incursions can still happen via wind (myrtle rust) and the ocean (bonamia).

LABOUR: Labour will establish an independent biosecurity authority sufficiently resourced and capable of maintaining a robust, pro-active and fit-for-purpose biosecurity framework. We'll also conduct a review of, and invest in improvements to, existing GIAs to ensure they are responsive to future risks and opportunities, not just current threats, and we'll continue to support sectors and research organisations working to reduce the impact of introduced biological pests that threaten the viability of existing industries.

GREEN: Aotearoa New Zealand should have stricter border security, quarantine and internal biosecurity regimes and capacity. The Green Party wants to see even higher standards including more stringent inspections overseas.

Our biosecurity strategy will:

1. Be based on a precautionary approach and promote the lowest practical risk;
2. Ensure MPI and others constantly improve biosecurity protocols, including controls on seed importation, GE and micro-organisms;
3. Only permit new species of biological control after extensive risk assessment.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First recognises that intelligence, risk assessment, profiling, and the like, are useful tools in pursuit of Biosecurity. However we hold that these alone are not sufficient, and that full and proper inspection, fully and properly resourced, of all goods, passengers, mail, luggage, and freight crossing the border is the only way in which this country can maximise our ability to protect our native and exotic flora and fauna, and our predominantly agrarian economy, from the dangers of unwanted introduced pests and diseases.

Since January 2008 up until July 2017 there have been 172 post border biosecurity incursions.

85% of empty sea containers are not even physically inspected by MPI Biosecurity. At the border indicating the seriousness, MPI Biosecurity seizes every day, just under two plant cuttings, plant material or whole plants off passengers from Australia, South Africa, South America, United States and Asia.

New Zealand First believes that the entry to New Zealand of bulk imports of agricultural-related goods, and freight with the potential to harbour biological organisms, should be limited to a small number of nominated ports, and that these ports should be equipped with full quarantine and inspection and testing facilities.

In addition, we believe that all incoming passengers along with their luggage should be subjected to x-rays, sniffer dogs, and such further electronic inspection as technology allows.

We believe that Biosecurity is manifestly under-resourced relative to the value of the Primary Sector exports that depend on it. New Zealand First in Government will increase resourcing for Biosecurity and ensure that such increased resourcing is properly directed and applied. Even including the Biosecurity Levy, Budget 2017/18 will see less spent on Biosecurity in real terms than what was spent in 2008/9.

New Zealand First will review the structure of MPI to ensure that our Biosecurity mechanisms are adequately and properly prioritised, managed, focussed, and resourced.

MĀORI: We place whānau at the centre of everything we do because whānau/fanau/family is the foundation on which Aotearoa thrives. We are driven to advance the interests of our people, and to protect and defend their rights.

Philosophies of Te Ao Māori:

- Manaakitanga
- Kotahitanga
- Kaitiakitanga

Māori needed to be active participants in decision-making and implementation of plans for the management of pests and diseases. This includes a clear understanding of the complexities of the relevant Māori landscape relating to myrtle rust and the key strategic priorities for Māori. We are deeply concerned about the impact of myrtle rust on native species such as pohutukawa and mānuka and believe that iwi and hapū need to be at the decision making table in terms of solutions.

ACT: ACT does not have a biosecurity policy. Any changes in this area should ensure environmental benefits are weighed proportionally against the privacy and freedoms of travellers.

TOP: We are an evidence based party. We have not researched this issue but if it came up we would talk to the experts to understand the issues. Obviously on one hand biosecurity costs money and on the other hand incursions inflict a massive cost on our economy. A precautionary approach is needed.

Q7: Renewable energy

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

What policy proposals does your party make to boost uptake of renewable energy use, electric vehicles and to improve energy efficiency?

NATIONAL: The New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NZECS) 2017-22 was released in June and focuses on the promotion of energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy.

It sets the overarching direction for Government and specific actions for the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. The goal is for New Zealand to have an energy productive and low emissions economy.

The strategy sets out an objective and target in three priority areas. The targets are:

- **Process heat target:** A decrease in industrial emissions intensity of *at least* one per cent per annum on average between 2017 and 2022 (new).
- **Transport target:** Electric vehicles (EVs) make up two per cent of the vehicle fleet by the end of 2021 (existing under the Government's EVs Programme).
- **Electricity target:** 90% of electricity will be generated from renewable sources by 2025 (in an average hydrological year), providing security of supply is maintained (existing under the New Zealand Energy Strategy).

The Government's 2017 electric vehicle (EV) registrations target was achieved last month - 5 months early. Currently, around 200 EVs are registered monthly with a total of 4,027 EVs now registered in New Zealand.

LABOUR: Labour will plan for the transition to the next stage of energy culture, based primarily on renewably-generated electricity and low emissions. We'll ensure that at least 90% of New Zealand's electricity is generated from renewable sources by 2025, with close to 100% being renewably generated by 2040. Labour will also investigate and develop new electricity system structures that can deal with higher proportions of variable renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, and we'll explore options for marine power generation.

GREEN: Our [Empowering NZ](#) policy sets a goal of 100% renewable electricity generation by 2030 (in normal hydrological years). It is backed up by technical research that shows how we can achieve that through a mixture of investment in renewables and demand management. Current fossil fuel plants will be replaced with renewable electricity when they reach the end of their lives. We'll push for a smarter electricity system and ensure companies consider affordable batteries and other new technology alternatives. We'll also make it easier for people to generate and store their own electricity including through peer-to-peer networks.

We'll incentivise electric vehicles by, amongst other things, [exempting vehicles](#) provided by employers from fringe benefit tax. Our [Green Investment Fund](#) will also help build the infrastructure to make these vehicles a viable option.

Our Energy, Transport, Environment and Housing policies all require that we use energy efficiently.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First has announced a policy to have the Government's core vehicle fleet 100% zero emissions by 2025/26. This will make a genuine positive net impact, set a clear example, and also assist in creating critical mass for the electric vehicle industry in New Zealand, from which an economically viable supply and serving sector may grow. In addition, New Zealand First will initiate a Public Inquiry into the future of conventionally powered vehicles.

New Zealand First's Home Insulation policy will see more than 500,000 homes with no or inadequate insulation properly addressed over the next ten years. This will not only assist in providing considerable power savings, and cut back on emissions from combustion heating, but also ease family budgets and contribute to improved health outcomes.

We will ensure that business and domestic electricity consumers are enabled to install and invest in renewable power generation such as windmills and solar panels by adjusting fiscal and regulatory settings to make such initiatives both attractive and sustainable.

MĀORI: Government must invest in energy infrastructure and increase renewables in preparation for an oil-less world.

Increasing grid efficiency and reducing energy use, more efficient water pipelines, sewerage systems, wind farms, and the like will all support our environment for future generations.

We want to:

- Introduce tax breaks for renewable energy research and projects
- Provide incentives for the business and industry sector to change from coal generated power to solar energy
- Introduce a government subsidised solar energy installation plan for all homes in Aotearoa
- Promote innovative ways to support the development of alternative fuel from raw materials
- Develop a trial with the Māori Centre of Research Excellence and the Government to test the viability of a locally focused alternative fuels project
- Develop grants to fund mentors to support whānau to develop alternative energy sources
- Champion solar panels for government agencies, hospitals, schools and marae
- Subsidise solar heating and expansion of energy hubs for rural communities
- Close all coal fired power plants by 2025
- Provide solar power and energy storage (home battery) solutions to low income families and remote communities
- Provide solar power and energy storage solutions to Marae, schools, hospitals, government departments, sports clubs and community centres

- Enable families, community organisations and businesses to sell their unused solar energy to a government trading platform
- Ensure Mana Whenua are consulted on all oil and mineral exploration permits

ACT: ACT is yet to release its energy policy.

TOP: As set out above in the response on climate change, we need to wean ourselves off fossil fuels by 2050. Improving energy efficiency in homes and small businesses is the low hanging fruit – it can reduce emissions and save us all money at the same time. Things like efficient appliances and insulation are the key here. This has to be the immediate priority for investment, and is where we would focus the proceeds from a boosted Emissions Trading Scheme.

There are two keys to achieving 100% renewable energy at minimal cost:

1. Moving to true cost reflective pricing so that people have the right incentives to install renewables such as solar or reduce demand at key times.
2. A public conversation about how we manage dry years. Do we overbuild capacity so that we can cope with a dry year, or are we happy to restrict energy use during that time?

Electric vehicles will become more cost competitive in the next few years. In the meantime TOP advocates using government procurement to purchase electric vehicles in order to create a second hand market.

Q8: Natural hazards

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

Is the country doing enough to prepare for and respond to major natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis and extreme weather events? What policy initiatives does your party propose in this area?

NATIONAL: New Zealanders have never been better prepared for disasters, according to the latest annual disaster preparedness survey. Current levels of preparedness are on par with the previous highest on record, which was following the Canterbury earthquakes.

The Government has invested around \$550,000 to support young people to volunteer for their local emergency services, and become more involved in civil defence and emergency preparedness.

We're also investing \$3 million to develop and enhance GeoNet's natural hazards monitoring capability and response service.

Earlier this year the Government announced the implementation of a new nationwide cell broadcasting alert system, which is due to be up and running by the end of the year. The alerts will deliver information about an emergency to at-risk communities faster and more reliably than ever before. It will be a free service, making it available to everyone who uses a mobile.

We've set up a Technical Advisory Group to go up and down the country and identify improvements in New Zealand's response to natural disasters and other emergencies. We have also set up a cross parliamentary reference group to support the work of the TAG, and provide views on any recommendations they may make.

LABOUR: New Zealand needs to be prepared for the next civil defence emergency before it happens – how we plan for a major event will determine in large part its impact. Labour's approach will bring a more integrated and coordinated sector to work effectively before an emergency happens.

Labour will ensure recovery planning is embedded in our preparedness planning and training and we'll develop a more sustainable volunteer base. Labour will also empower communities to not only be able to respond to a crisis, but also to own their own recovery.

GREEN: The effects of climate change will create a much more unstable environment, with floods and droughts expected to become harsher and more frequent.

The defence forces have relevant expertise. We will ensure that our armed forces retain and further develop the organisational structure and processes to use their various capabilities in cooperation with civilian agencies, personnel and equipment in civil defence tasks, search and rescue, disaster relief, fisheries monitoring, and sea border control work. This means cooperating closely with the following agencies: police, immigration, customs, agriculture and fisheries, environment, conservation and civil defence.

Recovery and rehabilitation of disaster-affected areas also requires greater commitment to local decision-making and appropriate roles for central and local government.

NZ FIRST: Aside from reviewing the publicly funded science ecosystem, so that the substantial increase in public R&D is maximised, there are two elements to this. NZ First are planning policies related to natural hazards such as removing gravels (or liquefaction) that may raise river beds making them more prone to flooding even in moderate storm events. There are also higher sea level and resulting river mouth issues that need constant planning adjustment for.

In terms of the Civil Defence response, New Zealand First is not convinced we have sufficient resources for a large scale natural calamity – both at a local government and central government level. New Zealand has been fortunate going all the way back to the 1931 Napier earthquake when *HMS Veronica* was nearby. In the large Christchurch earthquake, the multirole

vessel *HMNZS Canterbury* was at Lyttleton while during the Kaikoura earthquake, a large number of foreign naval vessels present for the RNZN's 75th.

Luck will not always hold so we will reinvest in the New Zealand Defence Force to acquire multi-use vessels that can be used as floating docks, hospitals, helicopter bases and for command and control. We will also regenerate our transport aircraft and increase the number of navalised transport helicopters. There is also a pressing need to return the Reserve Forces to a true territorial basis so that there is a body of trained personnel to support local government and Police in emergencies.

MĀORI: We support greater education and preparedness campaigns to avoid unintended harm, injury and/or deaths occurring as a result of natural disasters.

We have supported all legislation this term through the House that has sought to improve our response to natural hazards.

ACT: ACT is wary of responses to disasters that may be politically expedient, but actually do more harm than good. For example, there were unacceptable breaches of property rights during the Government's response to the Canterbury earthquakes. Furthermore, earthquake-strengthening rules motivated by these earthquakes have created disproportionate costs in low-risk areas like Auckland and Northland.

In terms of damage to property, ACT's policy of replacing building consenting processes with a mandatory insurance regime would ensure greater resilience than blunt regulations to the unpredictable nature of natural disasters.

TOP: The main issues here are that we are not investing in the science and even when we do we don't use the available science to have conversations with the public. Climate change adaptation, earthquakes and tsunamis are all good examples. TOP favours supporting Local Authorities to start having difficult conversations with specific areas about how we deal with these issues. Government can help these conversations by providing the science and more central guidance through National Policy Statements.

Obviously these are difficult and scary conversations and need to be handled carefully. In our view well managed collaborative processes that work with locals and draw on outside expertise to inform them of the issues and potential solutions are an essential part of making this work.

Q9: Medicinal cannabis

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

What is your party's position on legalising the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes?

NATIONAL: It's important to be clear on what we're discussing. Cannabis has a number of active ingredients. The two cannabinoids which come up in public debate are THC (which is mind altering with psychoactive properties) and CBD (confusingly called Cannabinol).

CBD commonly forms the base of medicinal cannabis-based products.

The Government has taken a sensible, evidence-based approach when it comes to cannabis-based products.

The Government view is that if cannabis is to be used for medical purposes, it must be subject to the same evidenced based principles as any other pharmaceutical used for a therapeutic purpose.

In recent years we've made it easier to access recognised medicinal cannabis-based products, bringing NZ in line with what's happening internationally.

LABOUR: Labour supports the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes.

GREEN: Doctors should be able to prescribe medical marijuana if that is the best medicine for chronically or terminally ill people. We should have solutions and scientific-focussed discussion about access to legal, affordable medicinal cannabis.

Green MP Julie Anne Genter has a [Member's Bill before Parliament](#) which would legalise access to cannabis products for New Zealanders suffering from terminal illness or any debilitating condition.

New Zealand has to catch up with global developments and allow people access to cannabis-based medicine.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First recognises that there is a difference between non-psychoactive medicinal extracts of the cannabis plant, and the use of psychoactive herbal cannabis in the pursuit of medical benefits.

We are not opposed to the use of medicinal cannabis extracts, provided that the benefits of these are unobtainable elsewhere, and that any benefits are not outweighed by any potential deleterious side effects.

However New Zealand First believes that any change to the status of cannabis when used as a psychoactive substance, for any purpose, must be mandated by a referendum.

MĀORI: We support the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes.

ACT: ACT supports the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes.

TOP: The evidence on medicinal benefits is quickly growing, but still not completely conclusive. TOP's concern is that medicinal cannabis simply passes on [responsibility for policing the drug to doctors](#) so we would need to work with them on any medicinal cannabis proposal.

TOP advocates full legalisation. TOP's approach is harm minimisation. It is clear from international and local evidence that the prohibition of cannabis has failed; [42% of New Zealanders](#) have smoked cannabis at some point in their lifetime.

This is all about reducing overall harm to society and is based on 4 pillars.

- [Evidence shows](#) that criminalisation of cannabis has had no significant impact on reducing use.
- Legalisation prevents exposure to gangs, the criminal justice system, and removes a significant amount of cost in policing drug control.
- [While there is evidence](#) to support the impact cannabis has on young brains, these users are exposed regardless of the legal status. The best way to reduce these impacts is by controlling the purchase age, quality of the product, and increasing awareness of the effects.
- [Evidence shows](#) that overseas full commercial models have resulted in an increase in usage. By restricting the sale through government owned not for profits, we can ensure price remains stable. We can then invest revenue gained back into the seriously underfunded mental health and addiction services.

Q10: Healthy housing

[National](#); [Labour](#); [Green](#); [NZ First](#); [Māori](#); [ACT](#); [TOP](#)

What policies does your party propose to improve health outcomes through improving the quality of New Zealand's housing stock?

NATIONAL: This Government is working hard to provide warm, healthy social housing, along with providing ways to improve the standards of rental properties.

The Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill (No 2), currently before select committee after passing its first reading, allows for the prosecution of landlords who tenant unsuitable properties as living space, and builds on changes made last year requiring smoke alarms and insulation. Meth contamination and careless damage of properties have become significant issues that need clearer direction. We want homes to be safe but we also don't want properties being vacated when the risks are low.

The Warm Up New Zealand scheme has helped landlords to insulate homes through providing insulation grants for landlords with low-income or high health need tenants. This has now been extended to low-income homeowners, as well as the low-income tenants who are already eligible.

As part of this regeneration of the country's social housing stocks, the Government is replacing old housing stock with warm, dry new housing. For example, the Crown Building Project will see 8300 old rundown houses in Auckland replaced with 34,000 brand new purpose-built houses over 10 years. This project will include 13,500 new social houses.

LABOUR: Labour has a comprehensive plan to solve the housing crisis and ensure all our homes are warm and dry. Labour will invest the money from ending the tax loophole for speculators in grants to help 600,000 families insulate their homes or install a clean, fixed form of heating. We'll also introduce a healthy homes guarantee that will require all rental properties to meet proper standards in: insulation, heating, ventilation, draught stopping, and drainage. This will ensure people who live in them don't get sick. Finally, we've announced a Winter Energy payment to help pensioners and beneficiaries meet their power bills over the winter months.

GREEN: We are proud of working with successive Labour and National-led governments through the Warm Up NZ programme to see over 200,000 homes insulated. Unfortunately, funding for that programme has been cut and will end next year, but the problem is far from fixed. In Government, we will increase funding for home insulation and thermal performance improvements. This is one of the simplest and most obvious ways to improve quality of life for New Zealanders.

We would also like to see the Building Code updated to reflect higher thermal performance and energy efficiency standards for new homes.

The Green Party has a plan to build thousands of state homes. Our vision is a country where safe, warm and dry housing is an affordable reality for everyone. We will institute a rental warrant of fitness on all rental homes. We will strengthen the role of government in urban design, providing research and technical assistance to ensure homes are built sustainably.

Our Home for Life plan will help New Zealanders get into their own homes by establishing a rent-to-buy programme and by creating new opportunities for community housing providers to play a bigger part in solving the housing crisis. We will:

1. Create a progressive home ownership programme that will make 10,000 new homes over ten years available for those who can't afford a deposit or commercial mortgage
2. Work with community housing providers to build 5,000 new, energy efficient homes.

NZ FIRST: New Zealand First believes that everyone should live in a warm and dry home. This

is common sense – according to Unicef, 40,000 children are admitted to hospital every year with poverty-related illness – the majority with respiratory and skin infections that can be prevented by adequate housing. Keeping people healthy is in our interests so we need action in this area. Too many New Zealanders are living in unsatisfactory conditions.

New Zealand First would;

- Introduce our Insulate NZ programme to provide subsidies to insulate 53,000 houses every year.
- Require better building quality including earthquake and landslip resistance.
- Assist local authorities to develop aged-care housing and public rental housing projects.
- Provide accelerated depreciation for landlords to invest in energy efficient housing from insulation to HRV systems.

MĀORI: We need to strengthen whānau capacity to identify housing solutions; improve agency capability to respond, and address homelessness, overcrowding and substandard housing.

WHARE ORANGA | Housing

Everyone has the right to an affordable, safe, warm and well insulated and well maintained home.

Everyone, no matter where they are in the country, no matter what their ethnicity, should live in a safe, warm, healthy, affordable home. The goal of home ownership is a pipe dream for some living in our more expensive cities such as Auckland.

In many areas of New Zealand, tenants are finding more and more of their income is being spent on rent and as those rents rise, so too does the pressure on them to keep a roof over their heads, especially as wage increases struggle to keep pace with rising housing costs.

The Māori Party will:

- Develop a National Housing Strategy taking into account the specific rights and interests of Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Establish a Housing Sector Committee within the first 3 months of the next Parliament to co-design a 25 year government enabled housing strategy that builds on *He Whare Āhuru He Oranga Tangata* and addresses the entire housing spectrum.

Homelessness

Adequate housing is a determinant of health and social outcomes. Homelessness is a mark of failure for communities in providing basic security. The OHCHR indicate that homelessness is a prima facie violation of Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognises the right of everyone to housing, adequate standard of living and continuous improvements of living conditions.

We will:

- Require the government to meet its international obligations under Art 11(1) ICESCR and set a target to eliminate homelessness by 2021
- End homelessness for everyone as a matter of urgent priority
- Address the over representation of Māori and Pacific whānau in severe housing deprivation and hold the Government to account to reduce the rates of homelessness and severe housing deprivation through the setting and monitoring of specific targets and measures.
- Build 30,000 houses over 2018/19 and a further 30,000 houses over 2019-2022 comprised of a mixture of social housing and apartment housing developments in Auckland and 30,000 houses over three years in other areas of NZ where whānau experience severe housing deprivation
- Invest in community and iwi led projects to grow the number of social housing developments available for whānau in need
- Prioritise a \$1 billion Housing Fund for innovative housing products to more easily accommodate the specific needs of kaumātua, rangatahi and their whānau/families and extended whānau
- Introduce New Community Housing Associations made up of community and mana whenua representatives to purchase and manage state housing stock from Government for social and affordable housing
- Advocate for the Crown to make on account settlement to iwi whose claims are not yet settled to enable their participation in social / housing development opportunities
- Enable marae, hapū and iwi to purchase at cost government housing stock to hold in trust for
- Support communities to coordinate and expand on modern papakainga as urban solutions to land scarcity
- Promote 'wood first' policy that achieves better quality housing options
- 1000 new Whanau Ora navigators with specialist housing knowledge to support whānau into homes, and to retain them in those homes
- Double the numbers of qualified Māori and Pacific in construction through trade training.
- Fast track the resourcing and funding of Marae and community organisations to provide immediate emergency housing for everyone in need
- Review the stock valuation of state housing and explore the viability of transferring a proportion of the ownership and management of state housing to Māori housing providers, hapū and iwi
- Support iwi-based and kaupapa Māori providers and consortia to participate in Request for Proposals processes through a non-competitive process that supports providers to become 'investment ready' and meet MSD contracting requirements
- Support cultural practices of extended whānau living arrangements to accommodate whānau housing needs by establishing an independent design review panel for all HNZA, urban regeneration and Kainga Whenua Infrastructure Grants / Māori Housing fund applicants.

Renters Rights and Interests

- Prioritise a review of the rental sector to ensure that whānau have access to suitable, habitable homes and tenure security at a fair price
- Review the *Residential Tenancies Act 1986* to restore equity to the tenant and landlord relationship and ensure whānau can enjoy greater housing security
- Improve tenants' rights
- Freeze rents on all social housing stock and review every five years
- Introduce housing navigators to support homeless whānau and individuals to get into homes, and support tenants and landlords with understanding their rights.
- Enforce compulsory annual warrant of fitness for all rental homes and introduce Housing Inspectors to ensure compliance
- Provide government subsidies for the installation of solar panels and efficient energy solutions, water tanks and sustainable heating solutions.
- Explore rent caps to ensure fair prices and affordability of private rental properties
- Require landlords to test for methamphetamine use if there is a reasonable suspicion that meth may have been cooked in the house before new tenants occupy it
- Introduce a cap on rent increases for all state-owned social housing stock and explore rent caps for private rentals
- Impose an obligation on landlords to ensure tenants are not out of pocket when landlords give notice due to the proposed sale of their property
- Require all Community Housing Providers and all Crown providers of state housing (such as HNZC) to provide for tenant involvement in governance, through boards to whom the Community Housing Providers or HNZC must report regularly. Funding for their operation and a budget for tenant-led initiatives will be a required operating cost for the Community Housing Provider or Housing New Zealand Corporation
- Expanding the Kainga Ora approach with the introduction of a 'Well Housing' Initiative. We will use data to identify whānau in substandard living arrangements and work with intermediaries to target and co-ordinate a range of assistance as part of an expanded Kainga Ora initiative
- Reintroducing the Drinkable Water Supply fund to ensure every home is attached to a drinkable water supply
- Provide increased government subsidies for the installation of solar panels and water tanks
- Take urgent steps to tackle substandard housing and infrastructure in rural and urban areas
- Simplify rent subsidies such as the Accommodation Supplement and Income Related Rent subsidies package to allow more whānau to capitalise on their family support tax credits, income related rent subsidy and/or accommodation supplement allowances as a deposit for a home
- Explore subsidies and tax breaks for landlords who install heat pumps, insulation, DVS systems and wood pellet fires who tenant their homes with holders of community services cards to incentivise landlords to improve the state of their homes and to maintain the health of tenants

- Create a new category of social housing within the private rental market where tenants with school-aged children and larger families are income-tested and their rents topped up by government with the amount tenants are unable to pay; so larger families and families with school-aged children are able to live with dignity and have access to homes more quickly.
- Review the bond refund system and create fairer and more streamlined processes to get bonds released sooner
- Improve regulations around the earlier release of bonds and create a Bond Release Checklist that clarifies the definition of ‘fair wear and tear’ and ‘clean’ so tenants are not left paying commercial cleaners with their bond when they leave a property.

Home ownership

- Plan better for the future, to ensure supply keeps pace with demand for homebuyers and tenants
- Implement pathways to home ownership to support all whānau to achieve their housing aspirations
- Work with the housing sector to build 120,000 houses in Auckland by 2025 (60,000 of which will comprise social housing) and increase the number of qualified Maori across the whole construction sector through initiatives such as trades training, and scholarships for Māori to develop their corporate skills in the construction industry with the aim to reach a target of 400,000 new homes by 2045
- Re-introduce the Māori Affairs low interest housing loans for Māori and Pacific families and support an overall government approach to helping all low-income families to access low interest housing loans
- Address the financial lending and legal barriers for papakāinga housing, shared ownership, and co-housing options by maintaining and extending the Kainga Whenua fund and introducing a Māori Housing Equity Fund
- Deliver financial literacy and budgeting support for successful low-interest housing loan applicants
- Introduce options for “Rent to buy” and “equity financing” for first time home buyers
- Subsidise private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their projects
 - Increase the numbers of homeowners
- Extend the Home Ownership Pathways trials
- Return to the capitalisation of the family benefit to target support where it matters most – for younger children and larger families and enable whānau to capitalise on their family support allowance as a deposit for a home.

We also want to:

- Increase the investment in the prevention of rheumatic fever such as insulating low income homes, ensuring Housing New Zealand homes have a bach or extra rooms to address over-crowding

- Develop government enabled co-investment options with whānau, hapū, iwi or community housing providers and private equity firms to support the building of fully serviced, high quality retirement communities.

ACT: ACT would lift the supply of homes by replacing the Resource Management Act with planning law that acknowledges the importance of land supply for housing. We would share GST from building projects with the council that issues the consent, removing the current anti-development bias. These policies will enable homebuilding on an epic scale, returning per-capita building rates to those we achieved until the '70s.

By increasing housing stock, a landlords' market will become a renters' market. Landlords will have an incentive to lift the quality of housing to attract renters/buyers – an incentive they currently lack due to an excess of tenants vs the number of homes.

TOP: We believe that safe, secure housing should be a right for all Kiwis. The loopholes in our tax system have pushed prices beyond the reach of many, while rising rents and stagnating wages make the cost of living a daily struggle. [Our flagship tax policy](#) will place a tax on all assets (including housing), so those with wealth pay their fair share, rather than having wage and salary earners bearing the brunt of the tax burden. This will remove the incentive to speculate on housing, stopping rising prices, and will mean that working Kiwis will receive income tax cuts of around a third.

TOP will also [reform the Tenancy act](#), giving greater rights for renters. This will extend the default standard lease and ensure that tenants can only be evicted for not paying rent or damaging the property. Any sale of the house will be with the tenants included.

We will also restore the ETS raising the price of carbon and reinvesting proceeds in improving insulation and energy efficiency of all homes. This will be backed up by a Warrant of Fitness for all rentals.