

## Survey Questions and Responses

The survey was sent to all seven parties on 14 September with a deadline of 30 September. Parties that had not responded received follow-ups from 1 October, and the final date for responses was 17 October. Four parties answered; the Greens declined to participate, and ACT and New Zealand First did not reply. The contact made with each party is recorded in the [Party Responses](#) section after the survey responses.

Responses to the survey are organised thematically rather than by party, so that each party's answer to the same question can be read side by side. Each theme opens with a short overview of the key issue and the context in which the question was asked, followed by the question itself and the responses received. Responses are reproduced *exactly* as received, without correction of spelling, grammar or punctuation, including the answers to the additional questions in the Party Responses section. Within each theme, they appear in **alphabetical order** for consistency only; this implies no ranking, preference or endorsement. Where a party did not respond to a question, this is noted. Some parties were also asked additional questions in the body of the email, tailored to their position in Parliament. These are listed in the [Party Responses](#) section.

## Heritage Funding Cuts

The two Crown agencies most responsible for heritage, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) and the Department of Conservation (DOC), have both faced significant funding reductions in recent years. In Budget 2025, HNZPT's operating budget was cut by \$2 million a year from 2026/27 – a 12 per cent reduction, totalling \$6 million over three years.<sup>247</sup> The organisation retains approximately \$15.2 million a year in operational Crown funding. Budget 2026 then introduced further baseline savings across the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and 13 other entities, including HNZPT (see "Budget Cuts to Heritage Funding" under "Where National Falls Short").<sup>248</sup>

HNZPT was struggling to deliver what was expected of it before these cuts. Its 2017–2021 Statement of Intent noted that a further 20 per cent of its baseline funding was self-generated, through membership fees, property admission and function charges, grants, interest and bequests, and warned: "The demand for our services consistently exceeds our ability to supply. Rather than spreading our available funding too thinly across all our properties and functions we will continue to deliver the best value for money by being selective about the activities and

<sup>247</sup> Willis, "Budget 2025: Summary of Initiatives," 9; Gabel, "Ministry of Culture and Heritage Mulling Restructure After \$2m Annual Funding Cut."

<sup>248</sup> Willis, "Budget 2026: Summary of Initiatives," 7.

properties on which we will focus our efforts.”<sup>249</sup>

Its responsibilities have since grown. The Tohu Whenua programme, delivered with DOC, now covers four regions and 39 heritage sites, and is working towards nationwide coverage, with Manawatū-Whanganui and Murihiku Southland next.<sup>250</sup> The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 has added new statutory advisory work. Under the Act, HNZPT is invited to comment on fast-track applications as an administering agency and prepares reports on those that seek an archaeological authority, which the expert panel decides in its place.<sup>251</sup>

DOC, which manages Aotearoa New Zealand’s largest heritage portfolio, has also faced reductions in its operating funding. Budget 2024 set DOC a baseline savings target of \$31.341 million a year from 2024/25, about 6.5 per cent of the baseline eligible for savings.<sup>252</sup> By February 2025, DOC had announced cuts to 124 jobs.<sup>253</sup> Its director of heritage and visitors, Catherine Wilson, said of its huts, tracks and other visitor facilities: “Our estimate is that we have the funding to properly maintain and support about 70 percent of the current network.” Storm damage added to the pressure, with DOC estimating that repairing the more than 500 assets damaged in Cyclone Gabrielle, including bridges, tracks and huts, would cost \$90 million, counting facilities, heritage and biodiversity.<sup>254</sup>

Budget 2025 ended DOC’s co-funding of the Tohu Whenua programme, worth \$130,000 a year, and allocated an ongoing \$20 million a year from the International Visitor Levy.<sup>255</sup> Budget 2026 followed with ongoing savings of \$9.428 million a year, or \$37.712 million over four years.<sup>256</sup>

These reductions raise the question of what both agencies can continue to deliver, and what level of Crown funding would allow them to meet their roles.

### Each party was therefore asked:

1. The two biggest government agencies tasked with caring for Aotearoa New Zealand’s heritage (the Department of Conservation, who manages the largest heritage portfolio in the country, and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga) have had significant funding cuts in recent years. **Would your party increase the funding of these two agencies to care for heritage above and beyond pre-reduction levels?**

<sup>249</sup> Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, “Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Statement of Intent 2017-2021,” *Parliament Bills* (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, May 25, 2017), <https://bills.parliament.nz/download/Paper/32ce4461-7461-4e44-a563-def33930ab1b>, 9-10.

<sup>250</sup> Potaka, “Heritage Tourism Boost to Support Local Economies.”

<sup>251</sup> Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, ss 17(1)(c), 51(2)(d) and 53(2)(k).

<sup>252</sup> Department of Conservation, “Budget 2024 Overview.”

<sup>253</sup> Kate Green, “DOC Faces 30% Shortfall in Funding Huts and Tracks,” *Radio New Zealand*, February 12, 2025, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/politics/541585/doc-faces-30-percent-shortfall-in-funding-huts-and-tracks>.

<sup>254</sup> Kate Green, “DOC Faces 30% Shortfall in Funding Huts and Tracks.”

<sup>255</sup> Department of Conservation, “Budget 2025 Overview,” 2025, <https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/budget/budget-2025-overview/>.

<sup>256</sup> Department of Conservation, “Budget 2026 Overview.”

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Labour values the work of the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. Our record shows it: in Government we increased Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga funding to strengthen its work on built heritage and sites of significance to Māori. We're concerned about the effect of recent cuts on the agencies that care for our most important places. Labour will fund the Department of Conservation and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga appropriately, so they have stable, sustainable funding to do their job.

### National

New Zealand's heritage is an important part of our national identity, and we want to see it protected and enjoyed by future generations. Our focus is on getting better results from the funding available, while making it easier and more affordable to maintain and conserve heritage places. Through our Amplify strategy, we're working to reduce unnecessary costs and regulatory barriers, so more heritage buildings can remain in use rather than falling into disrepair.

Our focus has been on progressing a legislative and regulatory programme that supports the long-term protection of significant heritage while making it easier to maintain, strengthen, adapt and make use of those assets. Alongside these reforms, the Government has continued to invest in heritage and conservation assets, including providing \$4.2 million from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy to the Backcountry Trust since 2024 to help restore and maintain New Zealand's backcountry huts and tracks.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

Successive governments have cut the conservation budget, and we will reverse that. Our Healthy Land and Water policy raises Vote Conservation funding to a level where species and ecosystems begin to recover. We've also opposed changing DOC's purpose to facilitating development. Its core job should stay protecting New Zealand's natural heritage, including its cultural values.

### Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori supports a focus on protecting sites of significance to hapū and iwi, strengthening

specialist heritage capability, and ensuring Māori communities have access to advice and support for conservation work.

## Heritage Protection versus Development + Heritage EQUIP

Heritage protection has increasingly been framed by government as an obstacle to development. Bishop legislated in 2025 to remove heritage protection from the Gordon Wilson Flats, describing the existing system as “a failed planning system that prioritises preservation of heritage, no matter the economic cost” (see “Gordon Wilson Flats” under “Where National Falls Short”).<sup>257</sup> He has since announced the removal or modification of heritage provisions at sites in Wellington on housing, economic growth and employment grounds (see “Wellington Heritage Provisions” under “Where National Falls Short”).<sup>258</sup>

The government’s Amplify strategy acknowledges both the financial burden of conserving heritage places and the need for heritage requirements to facilitate urban development.<sup>259</sup> It also lists exploring regulatory solutions to the cost of seismic risk in heritage buildings as a supporting activity, noting that heritage requirements in Aotearoa New Zealand are not nationally consistent.<sup>260</sup>

The same framing appears in public debate. A 2024 article aimed at young audiences asked whether heritage buildings were “precious history, or waste of space?”, and a documentary released the same year presented heritage protection as an obstacle to housing affordability in Wellington.<sup>261</sup>

Some heritage professionals reject the link between protection and the housing shortage. Dr Jamie Jacobs, Director of HNZPT’s Central Region, argues that “heritage and densification are not mutually exclusive” and that developers should look first at land that sits undeveloped or underdeveloped.<sup>262</sup> He adds that such land is likely too valuable for development on it to deliver affordable housing for first-time buyers.

Heritage EQUIP (the Heritage Earthquake Upgrade Incentive Programme) was established in Budget 2016 to assist private owners of heritage buildings with earthquake strengthening work. By June 2018 it had supported 22 projects with a total of \$4 million in grants.<sup>263</sup> It has since

<sup>257</sup> Bishop, “Gordon Wilson Flats’ Heritage Protection Goneburger.”

<sup>258</sup> Chris Bishop, “Planning Changes to Support Wellington’s Growth.”

<sup>259</sup> MCH, “Amplify: A Creative and Cultural Strategy for New Zealand 2025–2030,” 32.

<sup>260</sup> MCH, “Amplify: A Creative and Cultural Strategy for New Zealand 2025–2030,” 42.

<sup>261</sup> Janhavi Gosavi, “Heritage Buildings: Precious History or Waste of Space?,” *Re:News*, February 23, 2024, <https://www.renews.co.nz/heritage-buildings-precious-history-or-waste-of-space/>; “Under the Surface (2024) - Documentary Short Film.”

<sup>262</sup> Gosavi, “Heritage Buildings: Precious History or Waste of Space?”

<sup>263</sup> Carmel Sepuloni, “Seismic Funding Supports All Manner of Heritage Buildings,” Press release, June 27, 2018, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/seismic-funding-supports-all-manner-heritage-buildings>.

been discontinued (see “Heritage EQUIP” under “Where National Supports Heritage” and “Heritage EQUIP Funding Not Renewed in Budget 2021” under “Where Labour Falls Short”). In a 2021 media release from Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA), Helen Craig, then a Whanganui district councillor and an HPA executive member, said that Heritage EQUIP was “revolutionary in that it funded private owners of buildings”.<sup>264</sup> A 2025 government review of the earthquake-prone building system points the same way in Whanganui’s Drews Avenue precinct, where EQUIP provided \$178,451.25 towards restoration costing more than \$3 million. The review estimates that tax from the restored buildings is four times the grant, and says the programme has been attributed as “an essential source of support and advice”.<sup>265</sup>

These competing views raise the question of whether heritage protection and urban development can be achieved together, how consistent heritage requirements should be across the country, and whether the Crown should restore or increase support for the seismic strengthening of heritage buildings.

### Each party was therefore asked:

2. The government’s 2025 Amplify strategy acknowledges both the financial burden of conserving heritage places and the need for heritage requirements to facilitate urban development. The strategy further lists exploring regulatory solutions to address the cost of seismic risk in heritage buildings as a supporting activity, noting heritage requirements in Aotearoa New Zealand are not nationally consistent. **What is your party’s position on balancing heritage protection with urban development? Do you believe these objectives can be achieved together, and how important is national consistency in heritage requirements? In addition, would your party reinstate the Heritage EQUIP (Heritage Earthquake Upgrade Incentive Programme) fund, or otherwise increase funding for the seismic strengthening of heritage buildings both privately and publicly owned in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

New Zealand has unique heritage sites that need protection. Labour believes heritage protection and urban development can and should work together. More national consistency

<sup>264</sup> Historic Places Aotearoa, “Loss of Heritage EQUIP Funding a Blow,” Press release, August 11, 2021, <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK2108/S00175/loss-of-heritage-equip-funding-a-blow.htm>. The author is also an executive member of HPA.

<sup>265</sup> MBIE, “Earthquake-Prone Building System and Seismic Risk Management Review,” 27.

would give owners, developers and councils greater certainty, and communities need a real voice in what matters locally. Labour believes decisions around heritage sites and funding should be worked through pragmatically and in consultation with communities.

### National

We can protect important heritage without putting a handbrake on growth. Our RMA reforms, passed into law this week, strike the balance between protecting significant historic heritage while creating a simpler and more nationally consistent planning system.

More than 100 existing plans will become just 17 combined regional plans, with nationally standardised zones and rules to reduce unnecessary variation across the country.

We've also passed major earthquake-prone building reforms, expected to remove around half of currently designated buildings from the system and save owners an estimated \$8.2 billion. That means fewer unnecessary strengthening bills, while continuing to address serious risks to people's safety.

The goal is to protect what genuinely matters while making it easier to build homes and infrastructure, strengthen and reuse existing buildings, and support economic growth.

EQUIP was time-limited funding made available under the previous earthquake prone-building settings, which meant some owners faced strengthening bills running into the millions. Our Government has since changed reformed the system to be appropriately focused on risk to life. There are no plans to renew this fund.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

Yes, the two can be achieved together. We reject the false choice between growth and protection. Set firm protections first, then let development go ahead quickly and with certainty inside them.

National consistency is central to our housing policy. This includes certain and consistent heritage protection alongside certain and consistent opportunities for higher density development.

### Te Pāti Māori

Māori heritage is not a barrier to growth. It is part of the cultural foundation that makes Aotearoa unique. Te Pāti Māori believes development must respect local Māori heritage.

Sites of cultural significance, wāhi tapu, pā sites, heritage buildings, natural taonga and other places of importance to Māori are not obstacles to progress. They are part of the identity and

whakapapa of our people and communities. We support decision-making led by hapū and iwi, and a development approach that works around heritage wherever possible rather than removing heritage to accommodate development.

Te Pāti Māori supports clear and consistent heritage protections across Aotearoa while upholding the rights of hapū and iwi to exercise tino rangatiratanga over places of significance to them. We also support increased investment in the protection and seismic strengthening of heritage sites and buildings, including support for communities, hapū and iwi carrying responsibilities as kaitiaki.

## Regulatory Relief

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance.<sup>266</sup> In practice, councils give effect to this by scheduling heritage items in district plans, which can restrict what owners are permitted to do with their property. The cost of complying with those restrictions is also a live public issue. In 2025, a news article reporting that Mount Eden villa owners had been told their aluminium-framed double-glazed windows violated heritage rules drew more than 800 comments on social media, and its headline was revised after the Media Council upheld a complaint.<sup>267</sup>

The coalition government's reform of the RMA changes how those restrictions are treated. ACT championed a regulatory relief framework, under which local government "must provide practical relief mechanisms when imposing restrictions such as heritage protections and significant natural areas".<sup>268</sup> Simon Court, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for RMA Reform and Infrastructure, described the aim as putting property rights "at the core" and forcing local government to justify restrictions that "for too long have been costless to them".<sup>269</sup> The Planning Act and Natural Environment Act, which carry the framework, passed their third reading on 22 September 2026 and received Royal assent on 30 September.<sup>270</sup>

Under the Planning Act, a council must include a relief framework in its proposed plan if a rule on a specified topic is reasonably likely to have a "significant adverse impact on the reasonable use of land".<sup>271</sup> The specified topics include significant historic heritage sites and structures (to the extent they relate to an identified area), and sites of significance to Māori.<sup>272</sup> A relief

<sup>266</sup> Resource Management Act 1991, s 6(f).

<sup>267</sup> Ben Leahy, "Auckland Mt Eden Villa Owners Told Aluminium-framed Double-glazed Windows Violate Heritage Rules," *NZ Herald*, May 17, 2025, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/auckland-mt-eden-villa-owners-told-double-glazed-windows-violate-heritage-rules/VTRS7R7VX5F4PPXP24LAUQTUGQ/>.

<sup>268</sup> Bishop and Court, "A Better Planning System for a Better New Zealand."

<sup>269</sup> Bishop and Court, "A Better Planning System for a Better New Zealand."

<sup>270</sup> Bishop and Court, "RMA Era Ends as New System Passes Parliament"; Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70) and Natural Environment Act 2026 (2026 No 71), dates of assent September 30, 2026.

<sup>271</sup> Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70), sch 3 cl 65(1).

<sup>272</sup> Planning Act 2026, s 3 (definition of "specified topic", paras (a) and (c)).

framework may include monetary payment, reduced rates or fees, additional development rights, land swaps or targeted grants.<sup>273</sup> Relief need not fully address the impact, and only those who own the land when the plan is made operative are eligible.<sup>274</sup> Analysis of the proposals notes that the threshold for relief is lower than under Labour's replacement legislation, which would have kept compensation to extreme cases where land is incapable of reasonable use. Chris Bishop, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, acknowledged that how councils would afford compensation if a future government changed the national plans was "something we'll need to work through", given the new rates cap.<sup>275</sup>

In contrast, the incentives available to owners who choose to conserve heritage are limited. The main central government fund for privately owned heritage buildings, Heritage EQUIP, dedicated \$12 million over four years from 2016 and has since been discontinued (see "Heritage EQUIP" under "Where National Supports Heritage" and "Heritage EQUIP Funding Not Renewed in Budget 2021" under "Where Labour Falls Short"). The Planning Act also allows councils to offer voluntary incentives, but does not require them to.<sup>276</sup>

Relief for owners who bear the cost of heritage protection sits alongside few incentives for owners who conserve voluntarily, and it is unclear how councils will fund relief.

### **Each party was therefore asked:**

3. What is your party's position on the proposed regulatory relief for landowners affected by heritage protections, particularly given the currently limited incentives available at central and local government levels to encourage private heritage conservation?

### **ACT**

No response received.

### **Greens**

Declined to participate.

### **Labour**

Labour proposed amendments to the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act during the Committee of the Whole stage to delete the regulatory relief provisions and would carry this out in Government. That's because these provisions are unworkable and could shift costs onto ratepayers for heritage protections. It could also make protection unaffordable in practice.

<sup>273</sup> Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70), sch 3 cl 69.

<sup>274</sup> Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70), sch 3 cls 67(3)(b) and 70(1).

<sup>275</sup> Russell Palmer, "Duelling RMA Reforms: How Different Is the Coalition's Solution From Labour's?," Radio New Zealand, December 10, 2025, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/politics/581427/duelling-rma-reforms-how-different-is-the-coalition-s-solution-from-labour-s>.

<sup>276</sup> Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70), s 113.

## National

Heritage protections deliver benefits for the wider community, but we recognise that the costs can fall heavily on individual property owners.

That's why our new planning system provides for regulatory relief where certain planning restrictions significantly affect the reasonable use of private land.

This means councils will have to proactively offer relief to affected landowners. The aim is to ensure heritage protections are justified and proportionate, rather than leaving individual owners to carry an unreasonable burden for something that benefits the whole community.

## New Zealand First

No response received.

## Opportunity

We oppose the regulatory relief provisions in the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. They would weaken councils' ability to protect what matters and to set higher standards.

## Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori believes heritage protection must uphold Māori rights, not diminish them.

We support incentives and assistance that help conserve taonga while maintaining strong protections for wāhi tapu, sites of significance, and historic places. Where land and heritage sites have been taken from Māori, we support their return and the restoration of Māori stewardship and decision-making authority.

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## Demolition by Neglect

Demolition by neglect is a significant issue facing heritage in Aotearoa New Zealand. It occurs when a historic property is allowed to deteriorate, through abandonment or a sustained lack of maintenance, until its disrepair becomes justification for demolition. Often described as a "loophole" in conservation policy, it exploits the gap between protecting a building and requiring its owner to maintain it.<sup>277</sup> The gap is not new: the repair notices in the Historic Places Act 1980 were never used and were not carried into the Resource Management Act 1991 or the Historic Places Act 1993, and in 2007 the Historic Places Trust warned that owners could still let listed buildings deteriorate "without hindrance".<sup>278</sup> The New Zealand Environment Guide

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<sup>277</sup> Andrea M. Goldwyn, "Demolition by Neglect: A Loophole in Preservation Policy" (M.S. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1995), <https://archive.org/details/demolitionbynegl00gold/page/n19/mode/2up>.

<sup>278</sup> Paulette Wallace and Anita Franchetti, "Heritage at Risk: Addressing the Issue of the Demolition by Neglect of Historic Heritage in New Zealand," ed. Robert McClean and Lorie A. Mastemaker, *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga* (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, August 3, 2007), <https://hnpzpt-rpod-assets.azureedge.net/zfpdyw24/discussion-paper-no6-demolition-by-neglect-2.pdf>, 4, 6.

recognises it as a key threat to historic heritage, yet this report found no mechanism in either the RMA or the HNZPT Act to prevent it.<sup>279</sup>

The pattern is visible across the country. The heritage-listed Toomath's Building in Wellington was hit by fire in 2023 after years of neglect, and the former Erskine College, also in Wellington, was lost to sustained neglect.<sup>280</sup> Antonio Hall in Christchurch has been demolished, and Auckland's Carlile House and the former Carrington Hospital remain at risk.<sup>281</sup> The Gordon Wilson Flats in Wellington, vacant since 2012, lost its heritage protection through legislation in 2025, and its owner began demolishing it in 2026 (see "Gordon Wilson Flats" under "Where National Falls Short").<sup>282</sup> Condition also shapes public support: a survey of Invercargill residents found that a building's maintenance and condition was the most important factor in support for retaining heritage buildings.<sup>283</sup>

These cases raise the question of what can be done to keep heritage buildings maintained before their condition becomes the argument for demolition.

### Each party was therefore asked:

4. What are your party's thoughts on the issue of demolition by neglect, a key threat to historic heritage, and what concrete action would you take, or intend to take, to prevent this from happening in future?

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

<sup>279</sup> Environment Foundation, "Threats to Historic Heritage," New Zealand Environment Guide, 2017, <https://www.environmentguide.org.nz/issues/heritage/threats-to-historic-heritage/>; Resource Management Act 1991; Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

<sup>280</sup> Hanna McCallum and Monique Ford, "Heritage-listed Toomath's Building Hit by Fire," *The Post*, October 15, 2023, <https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/350091967/heritage-listed-toomaths-building-hit-fire>; Matt Stewart, "Erskine College \$30m Housing Project Gets Thumbs up From Island Bay Residents," *Stuff*, August 23, 2016, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/83472217/erskine-college-30m-housing-project-gets-thumbs-up-from-island-bay-residents>.

<sup>281</sup> Geoff Sloan, "Landmark Building Disappearing," *Otago Daily Times*, July 21, 2026, <https://www.odt.co.nz/canterbury/christchurch/abandoned-hall-makes-way-for-450-bed-student-village-j5vja1vj>; Audrey Van Ryn, "Carlile House Continues to Deteriorate," *Civic Trust Auckland* (blog), October 28, 2025, <https://civictrustauckland.org.nz/carlile-house-continues-to-deteriorate/>; Smith, "Local MP Seeks Law Change as Historic Auckland Building Falls Into Ruin."

<sup>282</sup> Bishop, "Gordon Wilson Flats' Heritage Protection Goneburger"; Ethan Manera and Azaria Howell, "Gordon Wilson Flats Demolition: Victoria University to Spend \$7.25m, Work to Take Until 2027," *NZ Herald*, April 13, 2026, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/wellington/gordon-wilson-flats-demolition-victoria-university-to-spend-725m-work-to-take-until-2027/YIHWMWQ4TBGV7MPFXAGQZA7RQE/>.

<sup>283</sup> Itohan Esther Aigwi, Olga Filippova, and Bridgette Sullivan-Taylor, "Public Perception of Heritage Buildings in the City-centre of Invercargill, New Zealand," *City, Culture and Society* 34 (August 30, 2023): 100538, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2023.100538>.

### Labour

Losing heritage buildings through neglect can be a real loss for communities. New Zealand has unique heritage sites that need protection. Labour believes decisions around heritage sites and funding should be worked through pragmatically and in consultation with communities.

### National

Nobody wants to see important heritage buildings left empty and falling into disrepair because the cost of maintaining them has become prohibitive.

That's one reason we've reformed the earthquake-prone building system. Under the previous settings, some owners faced strengthening bills running into the millions, leaving buildings empty or deteriorating.

Our changes focus on genuine risks to life and remove disproportionate strengthening requirements. Combined with our work to make heritage maintenance simpler and more practical, this addresses some of the financial pressures that can leave heritage buildings neglected.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

We have not developed any policy on this matter. But we note your question and the concerns that lie behind it. We would certainly consider policy options once we are in Parliament.

### Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori supports stronger measures to prevent owners deliberately allowing sites of significance to Māori, wāhi tapu and other protected heritage places to deteriorate until demolition becomes inevitable.

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## Adaptive Re-use

Adaptive re-use is the process of updating an existing historic building for a new function while protecting its cultural, architectural and historical value. It is often presented as an environmental and economic alternative to demolition. Heritage economist Donovan Rypkema calls historic preservation “the ultimate recycling strategy” and describes adaptive re-use as cost-competitive with new construction.<sup>284</sup> Demolition, by contrast, generates waste: in Aotearoa New Zealand, a report commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment found that 69.4 per cent of waste

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<sup>284</sup> Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*, 3rd ed. (1994; repr., National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002), 31, 85–87.

disposed at levied landfills (Classes 1–4) could be attributed to construction and demolition.<sup>285</sup> Re-use can also save time and money: the University of Auckland’s Building 201 project retained much of the existing building, which shortened the “design and build time by a year” and saved an estimated 25 per cent compared with a new build.<sup>286</sup>

Despite this evidence, demolition often remains the default response. This raises the question of whether adaptive re-use should be encouraged and promoted more widely.

### Each party was therefore asked:

5. Architect Carl Elefante once said that “the greenest building is the one already built.” Do you and/or your party think that the practice of adaptive re-use should be encouraged and promoted to a greater extent in Aotearoa New Zealand?

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Labour recognises the value adaptive re-use can bring where is it appropriate, from keeping heritage buildings in active use to reducing the carbon cost of demolition and rebuilding.

### National

Keeping heritage buildings useful is often one of the most practical ways to preserve them.

We want to make it easier for owners to repair, strengthen and adapt existing buildings rather than leaving them empty because the rules make redevelopment too difficult or expensive.

Our earthquake-prone building reforms remove unnecessary strengthening costs for many owners, while Amplify commits to making heritage maintenance and conservation simpler and more practical.

Heritage New Zealand also provides guidance through its Saving the Town toolkit, helping councils and communities find ways to retain and reuse heritage places.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

<sup>285</sup> BECA Limited, “New Zealand Construction and Demolition Waste Baseline & Tracking Methodology Report,” *Ministry for the Environment* (Ministry for the Environment, June 5, 2025), <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Waste/New-Zealand-Construction-and-Demolition-Waste-Baseline-and-Tracking-Methodology-Report.pdf>.

<sup>286</sup> Bill McKay, “Stripped to Its Bones for the Planet,” *Architecture Now* (Architecture Now, n.d.), <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/stripped-to-its-bones-for-the-planet/>.

## Opportunity

Yes. Our housing policy changes the Unit Titles Act and other law so it's easier to build a wider mix of uses, from home offices and shop fronts to co-housing and multi-generational homes. That makes converting existing buildings simpler. We'll also let owners write building energy improvements off against tax, and we're expanding Warmer Kiwi Homes. Both make upgrading an existing building more attractive than replacing it.

## Te Pāti Māori

Kaitiakitanga is not about freezing places in time. It is about ensuring taonga endure and continue to serve communities.

Adaptive re-use can breathe new life into heritage places while maintaining the whakapapa, stories and identity that make them important. Our focus is on kaitiakitanga led by mana whenua.

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## Heritage and Private Investment

In 2025, Historic England, the national heritage public body, launched a Heritage Investment Prospectus showcasing historic sites and buildings where owners are actively seeking investment partners or buyers, with advice available to investors early in the development process.<sup>287</sup> The first edition featured 17 sites, from mills to a former bank and a market hall, while the recent 2026 edition features 20 sites, particularly focused on residential-led regeneration.<sup>288</sup> Historic England says historic buildings “will be better conserved if they are relevant and in use, rather than standing empty”.<sup>289</sup>

This report found no equivalent national publication in Aotearoa New Zealand that brings together heritage buildings whose owners are seeking investment partners or buyers, but investment has already brought heritage buildings back into use. Auckland's Britomart precinct was “successfully transformed from a disparate collection of run-down historic buildings into a cohesive heritage precinct”.<sup>290</sup> In Palmerston North, the Safari Group bought the former post office in 2022 and proposed a hotel that keeps the original façade. Mayor Grant Smith said the council had supported the redevelopment but needed the commercial sector to step forward,

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<sup>287</sup> Historic England, “Heritage Investment Prospectus: 2025,” *Historic England* (Historic England, 2025), <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/heritage-investment-prospectus-2025/>.

<sup>288</sup> Historic England, “Heritage Investment Prospectus: 2025,” 3; Historic England, “Heritage Investment Prospectus: 2026,” *Historic England* (Historic England, 2026), <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/heritage-investment-prospectus-2026/>, Contents.

<sup>289</sup> Historic England, “Heritage Investment Prospectus: 2025,” 1.

<sup>290</sup> Glen Hazelton, “Case Study 2.3 - Britomart, Auckland and the Warehouse Precinct, Dunedin,” in *Saving the Town* (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 2020), [https://issuu.com/heritagenz/docs/saving\\_the\\_town/26?e=36&o=1](https://issuu.com/heritagenz/docs/saving_the_town/26?e=36&o=1), 28.

as buying the building was not its role.<sup>291</sup> Others are still looking for partners: in July 2026, Christchurch City Council, having committed \$20 million to restoring the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, invited expressions of interest from potential partners to help fund the rest of a restoration expected to cost around \$100 million.<sup>292</sup>

This raises the question of whether a national prospectus could help match owners of large unused heritage buildings with investors.

### Each party was therefore asked:

6. England recently produced (through national heritage public body Historic England) a Heritage Investment Prospectus, showcasing historic sites where owners are actively seeking investment partners or buyers to create homes, workspaces or mixed-use developments in large unused heritage buildings. These include former mills or historic public and commercial buildings. **What are your party's thoughts on this initiative, and would your party advocate for a similar prospectus to be produced for New Zealand?**

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Historic England's prospectus is an interesting example of how other countries are finding new uses for underused heritage buildings. Labour is always interested in learning from international approaches.

### National

There's real potential in connecting heritage buildings with people who have the investment and ideas to give them a new lease of life.

Our Amplify strategy recognises the importance of attracting private investment and alternative funding to support heritage and cultural assets.

We're also reducing regulatory barriers that can make it difficult to maintain and redevelop older buildings. The aim is to create an environment where heritage can be preserved, buildings

<sup>291</sup> Judith Lacy, "First Look at Safari Group's Hotel for Old Palmerston North Post Office," *Manawātū Guardian*, March 7, 2023, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/manawatu-guardian/news/first-look-at-safari-groups-hotel-for-old-palmerston-north-post-office/PYCGQQMIOVDMZD3ML4URYTBP4/>.

<sup>292</sup> Ryan Boswell, "Private Investors Sought to Save Significant Christchurch Heritage Site," *1News*, July 16, 2026, <https://www.1news.co.nz/2026/07/16/private-investors-sought-to-save-significant-christchurch-heritage-site/>; Inside Government NZ, "Partnership Sought for Council Buildings Restoration," *Inside Government NZ*, July 11, 2026, <https://insidegovernment.co.nz/partnership-sought-for-council-buildings-restoration/>.

can be put to productive use and communities can benefit.

## New Zealand First

No response received.

## Opportunity

We have no set policy, but are open to exploring this idea further.

## Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori supports models that return heritage sites, buildings and lands of significance to Māori ownership, stewardship and decision-making wherever appropriate.

Too often, heritage funding and investment frameworks treat Māori as stakeholders rather than tangata whenua. We believe hapū and iwi should be empowered to lead the restoration, management and future use of sites connected to their whakapapa.

We would support initiatives that help unlock investment into heritage places, but the priority must be strengthening tino rangatiratanga, protecting cultural heritage, and ensuring future generations inherit these taonga, and that Māori are the decision makers where it relates to sites of significance to them.

## Heritage and Economic Growth

Public debate about heritage tends to focus on its costs: maintenance, consent restrictions and earthquake strengthening. Heritage economist Donovan Rypkema has long argued that conservation is an economic asset, saying that “far from being the antithesis of economy, historic preservation is at the heart of it”.<sup>293</sup> He identifies job creation, downtown and small-town revitalisation, heritage tourism, property values and small business incubation as sources of economic value.<sup>294</sup> Because heritage projects are labour-intensive – with labour accounting for 60–70 per cent of project expenditure compared with about half for new construction – more of the spending stays in the local economy.<sup>295</sup> A European study by Nypan likewise found that historic rehabilitation created 16.5 per cent more jobs than new construction.<sup>296</sup>

Rypkema’s research is largely American, but research in Aotearoa New Zealand points the same way. A 2023 study of Auckland’s Special Character Areas found median capital values 33 per

<sup>293</sup> Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, 3rd ed. (1994; repr., National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002), 7.

<sup>294</sup> Rypkema, *The Economic Power of Restoration* (Washington, D.C.: Restoration & Renovation Conference, 2001), <https://ihbc.org.uk/consultations/docs/PDF/The%20Economic%20Power.pdf>, 6.

<sup>295</sup> Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, 14.

<sup>296</sup> Terje Nypan, *Cultural Heritage Monuments and Historic Buildings as Value Generators in a Postindustrial Economy: With Emphasis on Exploring the Role of the Sector as Economic Driver* (Oslo: Directorate for Cultural Heritage, 2003), [https://mapa.valpo.net/sites/default/files/repositorio-documentos/nypan\\_ch\\_und\\_tourismus.pdf](https://mapa.valpo.net/sites/default/files/repositorio-documentos/nypan_ch_und_tourismus.pdf), 12.

cent higher in Freemans Bay and 9 per cent higher in Onehunga than in the wider study area. The Freemans Bay figure is well above the 4.3–5 per cent found in earlier New Zealand studies, a gap the authors put down partly to their smaller sample and use of capital values.<sup>297</sup> Of the 99 homeowners surveyed, 78.8 per cent were satisfied living in a Special Character Area, although 52.7 per cent of those who had applied for resource consent reported a negative or very negative experience.<sup>298</sup> Britomart shows the same pattern at precinct scale. Its heritage character has been used to create “a sense of place and point of difference” that attracts visitors, workers and businesses, and the precinct is now home to more than 4,000 workers.<sup>299</sup> In Dunedin, the city council’s \$1.6 million investment in the Warehouse Precinct between 2012 and 2017 leveraged an estimated \$50 million of private investment.<sup>300</sup>

Economic considerations also feature in the process for removing heritage protection. Under the 2025 Resource Management amendments, the criteria for a Ministerial direction to remove heritage protection from a listed building include “the economic viability of any proposed use”, alongside heritage significance, physical condition and whether the owner agrees.<sup>301</sup>

This raises the question of what role heritage should play in economic growth, and how its economic value can be recognised without weakening its protection.

### Each party was therefore asked:

7. Research by Donovan D. Rypkema has identified a range of economic benefits associated with heritage conservation, including employment and household income, property values, tourism and the revitalisation of urban areas. This research suggests that heritage conservation can be understood not only as a cultural and social good, but also as a contributor to local economic development. The Amplify strategy notes that the Government will work with the sector to improve “the quality of research on the value of cultural heritage to wellbeing and economic growth.” **What role does your party see heritage playing in New Zealand’s economic growth, and how would you support greater recognition of the economic value of heritage while ensuring its protection?**

### ACT

No response received.

<sup>297</sup> Lucy Rossiter and Kai Gu, “The Impact of Special Character Areas on Property Values and Homeowners’ Experiences: Cases From Auckland, New Zealand,” *Land* 12, no. 6 (2023): 1181, <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/12/6/1181>, 10–11.

<sup>298</sup> Rossiter and Gu, “The Impact of Special Character Areas on Property Values and Homeowners’ Experiences: Cases From Auckland, New Zealand,” 12.

<sup>299</sup> Hazelton, “Case Study 2.3 - Britomart, Auckland and the Warehouse Precinct, Dunedin,” 27–28.

<sup>300</sup> Hazelton, “Case Study 2.3 - Britomart, Auckland and the Warehouse Precinct, Dunedin,” 28.

<sup>301</sup> Resource Management Act 1991, sch 1 cl 78(3B), inserted by Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025 (2025 No 41), s 87(17).

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Labour recognises that heritage contributes to communities in many ways, including economically. We support efforts to better understand and support that value.

### National

Heritage is not only a cultural asset. It contributes to tourism, local economies, urban revitalisation, community identity and economic growth. A good example is our recent \$8 million investment in the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, preserving nationally significant heritage buildings and cultural facilities at a site that attracts more than 160,000 visitors a year and supports Northland tourism, jobs and economic activity.

Through Amplify, we also want to improve our understanding of the contribution cultural heritage makes to wellbeing and economic growth. Additionally, the strategy aims to grow the creative and cultural sectors' contribution to GDP from \$17.5 billion in 2024 to at least \$22 billion by 2030.

We're supporting that ambition by reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers, encouraging investment and making it more practical for owners to maintain and conserve heritage places.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

We have no policy on this matter, but this accords with our wider approach. Our policy directs Treasury to develop standards for counting nature as an asset in cost-benefit analysis. That's because values that are real but unpriced get discounted next to a dollar figure for development. Heritage has the same problem. We'd support better evidence on its economic value so decisions weigh what would be lost.

### Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori supports better recognition of the economic benefits that flow from protecting heritage, including employment, tourism and regional development. However, the true value of heritage lies in preserving the whakapapa, histories and connections that bind people to place. Investment in heritage should be seen as investment in both economic resilience and cultural wellbeing. Heritage is a source of identity, belonging and cultural continuity.

## Heritage and Tourism

Tourism is one of the most visible ways heritage contributes to the economy. In July 2025, Conservation Minister Tama Potaka said tourism to the 15,000 heritage places DOC is responsible for was worth an estimated \$1.3 billion a year.<sup>302</sup> Heritage events draw visitors too. The Art Deco Trust aimed for Napier's 2024 Art Deco Festival to bring around \$10 million to the local economy, up from an estimated \$6 million before Covid.<sup>303</sup>

Research in Aotearoa New Zealand suggests heritage matters to visitors beyond the sights. In a study of international tourists in Hawke's Bay, University of Waikato researchers Gregory Willson and Alison McIntosh found that 46 of the 66 participants in photograph-based interviews chose at least one heritage building to represent their experience of the region, and that most valued the buildings together more than any single one.<sup>304</sup> They concluded that heritage buildings make the townscape "an experiential space filled with emotion, mindfulness, engagement and personal meaning", and that their findings "should strengthen support for the preservation of heritage buildings", although the study covered only English-speaking international visitors to one region.<sup>305</sup>

Relying on tourism to justify heritage, however, risks favouring the places visitors want to see. Economist Xavier Greffe observes that tour operators choose destinations "not always because it is more interesting or culturally rich, but because it is in vogue".<sup>306</sup> He asks whether heritage is an asset or a liability, and concludes that cultural tourism must be judged against local conditions and "is not a panacea", warning that smaller towns and rural areas, which often pin their hopes on it, should not base investment on an exaggerated expectation of demand.<sup>307</sup> He also cautions that estimates of tourism's value may be biased, because they can be used to justify or to claim subsidies, and that heavy use of heritage without additional resources for its upkeep leads to deterioration.<sup>308</sup>

Government support for tourism-linked heritage has also changed. Budget 2025 ended DOC's \$130,000 a year co-funding of the Tohu Whenua Heritage Visitor Programme, while the programme was extended to two more regions with \$4.5 million over three years from the International Visitor Levy.<sup>309</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Potaka, "Heritage Tourism Boost to Support Local Economies."

<sup>303</sup> Henry McMullan, "Napier Art Deco Festival Hopes to Bring \$10m Boost to Local Economy," *1News*, February 18, 2024, <https://www.1news.co.nz/2024/02/18/napier-art-deco-festival-hopes-to-bring-10m-boost-to-local-economy/>.

<sup>304</sup> Gregory B. Willson and Alison J. McIntosh, "Heritage Buildings and Tourism: An Experiential View," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 2, no. 2 (2007): 75-93, <https://doi.org/10.2167/jht024.0>, 82, 84.

<sup>305</sup> Willson and McIntosh, "Heritage Buildings and Tourism: An Experiential View," 88-89.

<sup>306</sup> Xavier Greffe, "Is Heritage an Asset or a Liability?," *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 5 (2004): 301-9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2004.05.001>, 306.

<sup>307</sup> Greffe, "Is Heritage an Asset or a Liability?," 301, 309.

<sup>308</sup> Greffe, "Is Heritage an Asset or a Liability?," 302, 306.

<sup>309</sup> Willis, "Budget 2025: Summary of Initiatives," 17; Potaka, "Heritage Tourism Boost to Support Local Economies."

This raises the question of whether heritage should be valued mainly for what it brings the visitor economy, and what part tourism should play in paying for its protection.

### Each party was therefore asked:

8. Tourism and heritage are often closely linked, with heritage contributing to visitor experiences, and tourism a key income stream for many heritage properties. **Does your party see heritage primarily as an asset for tourism, or as having value independent of its contribution to the visitor economy? What role, if any, should tourism play in supporting the protection and conservation of heritage?**

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Labour sees heritage as an important part of our national identity and for communities. Tourism is one of the ways people can experience and support heritage places. Labour sees value in both.

### National

Heritage has value well beyond tourism. It tells the story of who we are, connects communities with their history and helps preserve our national identity for future generations.

Tourism is an important part of that picture. Heritage attractions bring visitors into our regions, supporting local businesses and jobs, while creating opportunities for communities to share their stories.

Our Amplify strategy recognises both the cultural and economic benefits of heritage, with a focus on increasing public engagement, encouraging investment and supporting the long-term sustainability of the sector.

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

Heritage has value in its own right. Tourism should support it, not define it. That's the line we took on DOC: commercial use has a place where it fits with protection, but it shouldn't become the purpose. We'd also rebalance the International Visitor Levy so 75% goes to recovering the natural heritage visitors come to see.

## Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori views heritage as having intrinsic value regardless of its tourism potential.

Tourism can play an important role in supporting conservation where it is sustainable and community-led. However, heritage should not be protected only because it attracts visitors. Our heritage exists first for the communities and peoples who hold connections to it.

The tourism sector should contribute to the protection and maintenance of heritage assets that underpin visitor experiences.

## Notable Tree Protection

Councils list notable trees in their plans to protect them, for heritage, amenity, landscape, ecological and cultural reasons.<sup>310</sup> A tree can qualify because of its age, stature or history, or because it is an exceptional example of its species.<sup>311</sup> The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) says thousands of trees are protected in council plans across the country, around 6,000 of them in Auckland.<sup>312</sup>

The Planning Act and Natural Environment Act passed their third reading on 22 September 2026.<sup>313</sup> The select committee's report said the Bills "intend to move away from individually listing urban trees for protection, in favour of only demarking trees with significant historic heritage value".<sup>314</sup> The Planning Act does not mention notable trees, but it requires territorial authorities to regulate and manage "significant historic heritage", and defines "historic heritage" by archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific and technological qualities, so under the committee's approach a tree would need to meet that definition to be protected individually.<sup>315</sup> Chris Bishop, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, said trees with significant heritage value would continue to be protected, but the new system encouraged councils to be more deliberate when applying tree protections.<sup>316</sup>

Groups that work with trees warn the effect could be large. The NZ Notable Trees Trust suggests that up to three-quarters of protected notable trees on non-council land may no longer qualify, based on analysis in Auckland and Nelson, because the trees are valued for reasons other than

<sup>310</sup> Nine to Noon with Kathryn Ryan, "Special Trees Set to Lose Protections," *Radio New Zealand*, August 19, 2026, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoonoon/audio/2019048244/special-trees-set-to-lose-protections>.

<sup>311</sup> Luka Forman, "'Many, Many More Trees Will Disappear' Under RMA Replacements, Advocate Says," *Radio New Zealand*, August 31, 2026, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/environment/1192700/many-many-more-trees-will-disappear-under-rma-replacements-advocate-says>.

<sup>312</sup> Environmental Defence Society, "Urban Tree Protections Face the Axe in New Resource Management System," August 25, 2026, <https://eds.org.nz/resources/documents/media-releases/2026/urban-tree-protections-face-the-axe-in-new-resource-management-system/>.

<sup>313</sup> Bishop and Court, "RMA Era Ends as New System Passes Parliament."

<sup>314</sup> Environment Committee, "Planning Bill: Report of the Environment Committee," *Select Committees* (New Zealand Parliament, July 20, 2026), <https://selectcommittees.parliament.nz/v/6/68ac5da4-d3aa-4338-7f1f-08dee6029fb6>, 117.

<sup>315</sup> Planning Act 2026 (2026 No 70), s 3 (definition of "historic heritage") and s 216(2)(f).

<sup>316</sup> Forman, "'Many, Many More Trees Will Disappear' Under RMA Replacements, Advocate Says."

historic heritage.<sup>317</sup> The Tree Council, an advocacy group, warns that regulatory relief could also deter councils from keeping tree rules, for fear of compensation claims.<sup>318</sup> These are advocates' estimates and concerns, not official figures, and Auckland Council's own submission recommended that notable trees remain protected. Canopy cover is already uneven: Māngere-Ōtāhuhu has 9 per cent, against an Auckland average of 20 per cent.<sup>319</sup>

This raises the question of whether notable trees should remain protectable for their ecological, amenity and landscape value, and not only for historic heritage.

### Each party was therefore asked:

9. The proposed Resource Management reform significantly narrows the protection of notable trees. Some organisations even suggest that up to "three-quarters of currently protected notable trees on non-council land may no longer qualify for protection, because their importance is in their ecological, botanical, amenity, landscape or community value rather than historic heritage." (NZ Notable Trees Trust, as cited by EDS, 2026) **Would your party strengthen these protections, recognising that notable trees can contribute to the character, amenity and heritage value of neighbourhoods across the country?**

### ACT

No response received.

### Greens

Declined to participate.

### Labour

Yes, Labour will strengthen the protections of trees. Labour proposed amendments to the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act during the Committee of the Whole stage, including to improve protection and consideration for green spaces and trees in urban areas.

### National

Our planning reforms are designed to provide clearer, more consistent rules about what should be protected, while reducing unnecessary restrictions on landowners.

The new Planning Act retains protection for significant historic heritage, alongside other identified environmental and landscape values.

The intention is to focus protections on what is genuinely significant, with clearer national direction rather than inconsistent rules that can make it difficult for property owners to use and develop their land.

<sup>317</sup> Environmental Defence Society, "Urban Tree Protections Face the Axe in New Resource Management System."

<sup>318</sup> Tree Council, "No More Urban Trees," August 15, 2026, <https://treecouncil.org.nz/no-more-urban-trees/>.

<sup>319</sup> Forman, "'Many, Many More Trees Will Disappear' Under RMA Replacements, Advocate Says."

### New Zealand First

No response received.

### Opportunity

We have no specific policy on this matter, but have reservations about many aspects of the new resource management framework, so we are certainly open to exploring this further. We note in passing the other positive effects of trees in cities, where some of their amenity value arises from removing air pollution and mitigating some of the effects of heat islands.

### Te Pāti Māori

Te Pāti Māori supports protections for notable trees as living taonga.

We recognise that notable trees can sometimes be seen as constraints on development, particularly in high-growth urban areas. However, many of these trees have stood for centuries and hold deep cultural, ecological, historical and spiritual significance.

Their value extends well beyond property boundaries. They are part of the whakapapa of our landscapes and communities and contribute to the character and identity of place.

We are concerned by proposals that weaken protections for notable trees and support planning frameworks that recognise their significance, including the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki for future generations.