

Frequently Asked Questions for Plan Change 8 (Natural Hazards) and the Lakes A Zone

1. I have received a letter about Plan Change 8 and the Lakes A Zone, what do I have to do?

You don't have to do anything. You may choose to find out more about Plan Change 8 and you may choose to make a submission on the plan change.

2. What is Plan Change 8?

Plan Change 8 is a proposed change to the Rotorua District Plan to improve how natural hazards are managed.

Submissions can be made on Plan Change 8 until **8 September 2025**.

After submissions close, there will be a chance to make further submissions to respond to submissions already made, followed by a hearing for those submitters that wish to be heard. A final decision will then be made on Plan Change 8.

More information, including a summary of the plan change, the full Plan Change 8 proposal and evaluation (Section 32 Report), additional FAQs and details on how to make a submission, can be found on the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

3. What is the Lakes A Zone?

The Lakes A Zone is an area around specific lakes in the Rotorua District (including the settlements at Lake Tarawera and Lake Ōkāreka), shown in the map to the right. It has a special section in the District Plan with its own planning rules. Plan Change 8 proposes changes to the District Plan for this area, as well as changes that apply across the wider district.

4. Which natural hazards are covered under Plan Change 8?

Plan Change 8 proposes changes relating to the management of the following natural hazards:

- flooding,
- wildfire,
- active faults,
- land stability (liquefaction, soft soils and slope stability), and
- geothermal hazards.



Figure 1 Lakes A Zone

It also updates guiding strategic objectives and policies for all natural hazards.

Volcanic hazards are not the focus of Plan Change 8, other than in the guiding objectives and policies for all natural hazards.

5. What is Plan Change 8 proposing in relation to the Lakes A Zone?

Plan Change 8 aims to improve clarity and consistency in how natural hazards are managed throughout the district. Currently, the Lakes A Zone has separate provisions from the rest of the District Plan. Plan Change 8 proposes to better align the Lakes A Zone provisions relating to natural hazards with the rest of the District Plan.

Key changes affecting the Lakes A Zone include:

- Updated strategic objectives and policies for all natural hazards.
- Changes to the rules for building in flood-prone areas (see FAQ 7).
- A new geothermal hazard assessment standard for building in geothermal systems (see FAQ 8)
- Clearer rules for development in areas with active faults (FAQ 9).
- Extending matters considered at subdivision to include natural hazards.
- Strengthened requirements for firefighting water supply for building and development in the Settlement and Bush Settlement Management Areas of the Lakes A Zone, and clarification that firefighting water supply does not need to be provided in other management areas.
- New standards for buildings, structures and earthworks in the Settlement Management Area and Bush Settlement Management Area, aimed at preventing obstruction of overland flowpaths that could lead to flooding of neighbouring properties.

6. What properties in the Lakes A Zone are affected by Plan Change 8?

New buildings or new development on most properties in the Lakes A Zone may be affected by the proposed changes in some way. You are encouraged to read the summary document and the full plan change proposal (Section 32 Report) to understand how your property may be affected. These documents are available on the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

7. What are the new rules for building in areas prone to flooding?

Currently, the Lakes A Zone requires buildings to be located outside the 2% annual exceedance probability (AEP) (that is, '50-year') lake flood level unless resource consent is obtained.

Plan Change 8 proposes replacing this with updated rules consistent with the rest of the district. These rules will apply to new building work in areas prone to flooding in a 1% AEP ('100 year') flood event with an allowance for climate change:

- New buildings must meet minimum floor levels designed for the 1%AEP flood event with an allowance for climate change and freeboard where flood depths are expected to be low

- [illegible]

The blue boundary shows where these flooding rules would apply for lake flooding (using the most recent high lake level projections provided by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council). You can 'zoom in' to see these high lake levels in more detail on Council's online map viewer: [Geyserview](#).

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8. What are the performance standards for building in Geothermal Systems?

Plan Change 8 proposes a performance standard for building within identified geothermal systems (orange areas in Figure 3). This would require an assessment of geothermal hazards and mitigation to be submitted at the same time as the building consent application.

This is most likely to be relevant for properties in the Waimangu area, as the other geothermal systems in the Lakes A Zone are fairly remote.

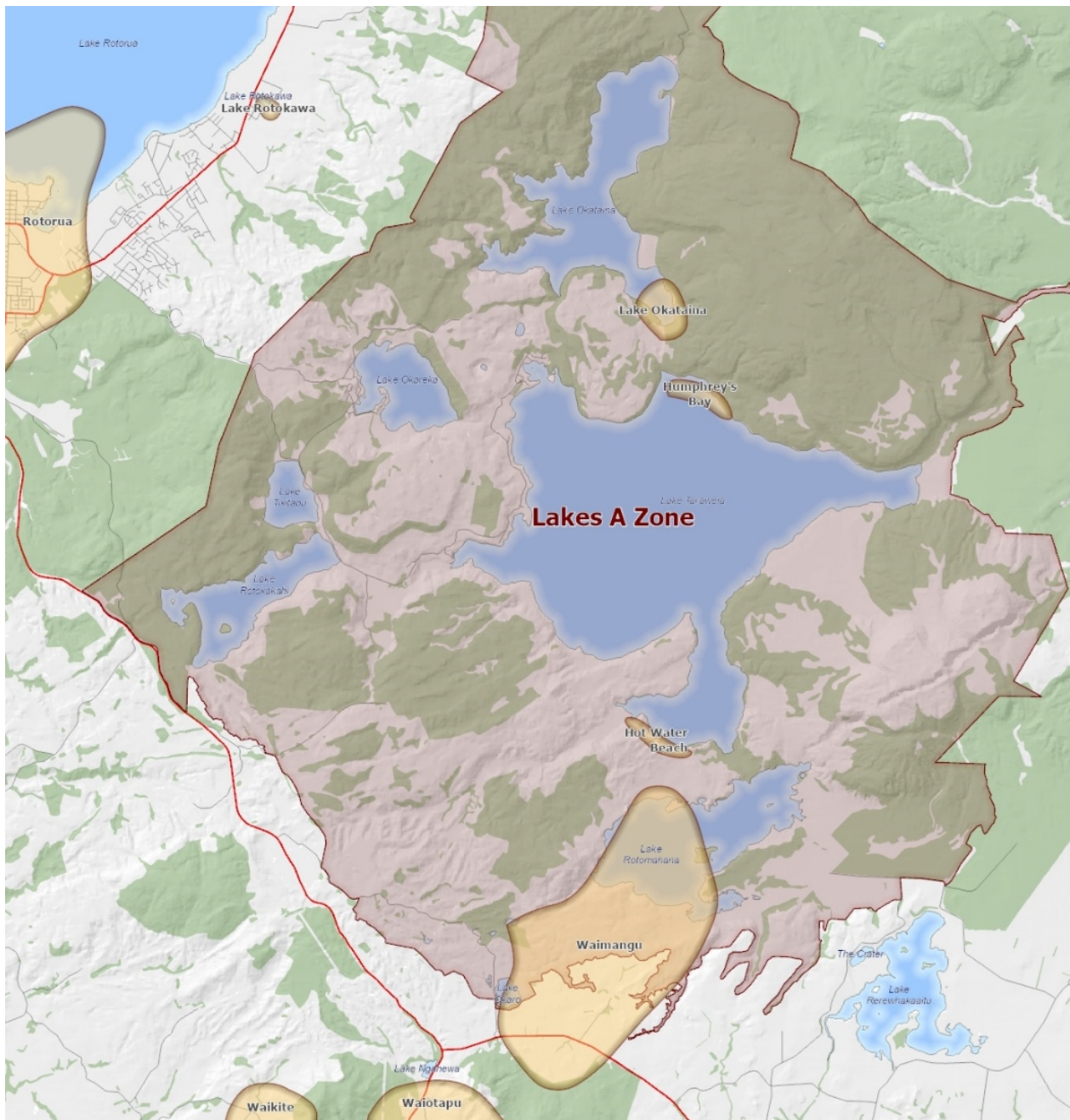


Figure 3 Geothermal Systems in the Lakes A Zone (Orange)

9. What are the new rules for building in areas with active faults?



Figure 4 Fault Buffers Around Active Faults (Source: GNS Science)

The Rotorua District has many active faults running through it, including in the Lakes A Zone, as shown Figure 4. General building performance standards in the Lakes A Zone help to manage active faults – these require that buildings are clear of any areas of instability. However, Plan Change 8 proposes to clarify the rules by extending the rules specifically addressing active faults in the rest of the District Plan to the Lakes A Zone.

We have sent further information to people we know are owners or ratepayers of properties affected by these faults. Further information, including additional FAQs specifically on Faults, is available at rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8

10. How can I check if my property is in an area potentially affected by high lake levels, active faults or a geothermal system?

The high lake level maps (based on Bay of Plenty Regional Council information) and geothermal system maps are available on Council's online mapping tool: [GeyserView](#).

The active fault maps are available in the GNS Science New Zealand Active Faults Database: www.gns.cri.nz/data-and-resources/new-zealand-active-faults-database/. We have also overlaid this mapping on property boundaries in an online viewer that you can access from the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

Email us at policy.planning@rotorualc.nz with your property address if you are having issues accessing this mapping.

11. Is existing development affected by these changes?

Generally, no. Existing development is protected by what are known as existing use rights under the Resource Management Act 1991. This means that buildings and activities lawfully established before the plan change takes effect can usually continue, even if they no longer comply with the new rules. However, if you want to modify or redevelop a property in the future, the new rules may apply. Note: building alterations and changes in use of a building may also require building consent.

12. Will the plan change affect insurance or property values?

The Council cannot provide advice on these matters. We recommend you consult your insurance policy and/or contact your insurance provider to see if there are any implications on insurance. For questions about property values we recommend you consult a registered valuer and/or real estate agent.

13. How do I make a submission on Plan Change 8?

Details about how to submit are provided in the public notice on our website rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

Submissions close 8 September 2025.

14. What happens after I make a submission on Plan Change 8?

- All submissions on Plan Change 8 will be summarised and made publicly available.
- There will be an opportunity to make further submissions supporting or opposing those submissions already lodged.
- A hearing will be held where submitters can speak to their submission if they wish.
- A decision will be made and submitters will be notified of the decision.

15. What should I do if I have questions about the plan change?

Please contact the Council's policy team: policy.planning@rotorualc.nz.