

Plan Change 8 (Natural Hazards) – Mana Whenua Impact Statement

He Kupu Arataki | Introduction

This summary is provided to support iwi, hapū, and Māori land trusts in understanding the key impacts of Proposed Plan Change 8 – Natural Hazards. It highlights how the proposed changes may affect whenua Māori, papakāinga, and iwi aspirations, so that our mana whenua entities can make informed decisions about whether to make a submission.

Te Aronga o te Panonitanga Mahere | Purpose of the Plan Change

Rotorua Lakes Council is proposing updates to how the Rotorua District Plan manages natural hazards, based on new mapping and best practice. The hazards included are:

- Flooding
- Wildfire
- Fault rupture
- Slope instability and soft soils
- Liquefaction
- Geothermal hazards

The Plan Change seeks to:

- Improve consistency and clarity across the District Plan
- Remove outdated hazard maps and rely on best-available information
- Clarify development requirements for hazard-prone areas

Ngā Pānga Matua ki te Māori | Key Impacts for Māori - Māori Land and Papakāinga Development

Building near active faults

- Outdated mapping of active faults is proposed to be removed from the District Plan and existing rules that restrict building near active faults are proposed to be retained but rewritten so they apply to the new fault mapping by GNS Science (Rules NH-R1 to NH-R3).
- For many Māori land blocks, this may be positive. The new mapping has a reduced number of faults and narrower management zones. However, the location of some realigned or newly identified faults may be a concern for some land blocks.
- The new fault mapping (in an online viewer) and FAQs about faults are available on the Plan Change 8 webpage: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

Firefighting Water Supply Requirements

- Firefighting water supply requirements are proposed to be retained for new papakāinga in Rural Zones (Performance Standard PK-S3). These requirements are normally met by providing water storage tanks adjacent to buildings.
- Firefighting water supply requirements would also apply when building houses or other vulnerable activities on Māori land in the Rural 2 Zone and Rural 3 Zone

(Performance Standard RURZ-S5A). These zones cover more intensely developed rural areas, for example, Hamurana, Mamaku and Reporoa.

- Firefighting water supply requirements are proposed to be removed from the Rural 1 Zone, which covers a large portion of the Rotorua district.

Building in Geothermal Systems

- When applying for a building consent for most types of buildings inside a geothermal system (for example, for a papakāinga, or new house) an assessment will need to be submitted of any geothermal hazards and mitigation options (NH-R8). This is not expected to add significantly to costs for most building consent applications, as it can be covered by the geotech assessments already required with most building consent applications. However, for consents for minor projects where a geotech report is not normally required, it may require additional work.
 - Policy amendments are also proposed to direct the Council to take into account the cultural significance of co-existing with geothermal activity in any assessment of geothermal hazard risk associated with development in papakāinga and traditional Māori settlements, such as the Te Arawa villages of Ōhinemutu and Whakarewarewa (Policy NH-P3).
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- A map of the Te Arawa region in New Zealand, showing the coastline and several large lakes. Lake Taupo is the largest lake on the left, followed by Lake Rotomahana in the center, and Lake Rotorua on the right. The map is color-coded with green for land and blue for water. Red lines indicate major roads or boundaries. The map is titled 'Te Arawa' in the top right corner.

Changes to the Lakes A Zone

- Plan Change 8 proposes to align natural hazard rules across the entire district, including in the Lakes A Zone, which covers the areas near Lakes Tarawera, Ōkāreka, Tikitapu, Rotokākahi, Ōkataina and Rotomahana.
- This clarifies and strengthens the natural hazard rules (e.g. for flood or fault risk). Separate FAQs are available on the Plan Change 8 webpage about these changes:
rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.



Figure 1 Lakes A Zone

Hei Whakakapi | In Summary

- The plan change proposes to retain rules that require assessment and approval by the Council for developing in areas at risk of natural hazards (areas prone to flooding, near active faults or next to geothermal surface features).
- However, the proposed policies for assessing and considering risk acknowledge that, for developments undertaken by tangata whenua, the cultural significance of the site or activity may justify acceptance of a higher level of natural hazard risk (Policies SDNH-P1(3)(d), NH-P3).

Te Tukanga | Next Steps

| Stage | Timeline |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Submissions Open | Now – 8 September 2025 |
| Further Submissions | September/October 2025 |
| Hearings | Late 2025 / Early 2026 |
| Council Decisions | Mid-2026 |
| Appeal Rights | Following decision |

More details and how to submit: rlc.net.nz/PlanChange8.

Making a Submission

Iwi, hapū, and Māori landowners are encouraged to:

- Review hazard maps and the locations of their whenua in relation to hazard zones
- Consider how the new rules affect papakāinga and whenua Māori aspirations
- Discuss the changes with their trustees, kaumātua, or hapū
- Submit feedback before the deadline of **8 September 2025**

Those that wish to can present their submission at a hearing and all submissions and iwi feedback must be considered before a decision is made.

Ngā Pātai Hei Whakaarotanga | Questions to Consider

- Will the rules help to make future development and future generations more resilient to natural hazards and climate change?
- Will this impact our ability to develop papakāinga or build on our whenua and achieve our long-term goals as iwi/hapu landowners?

He Kupu Whakakapi | Closing Statement

Council acknowledges the significance of natural hazards, but it's vital that iwi and hapū perspectives are heard and reflected. Your submission helps ensure that decisions about risk management align with the aspirations of mana whenua.