

Consultation submission form

From the Ground Up – A draft strategy to unlock New Zealand’s geothermal potential

How to submit using this form

This form is used to provide feedback on the document *From the Ground Up – A draft strategy to unlock New Zealand’s geothermal potential*.

When completing this submission form, please provide reasons explaining your answers. Your feedback provides valuable information and will inform decisions about the final geothermal strategy.

You can submit this form by 5pm, 12 September 2025 by:

- Emailing to resourcesfeedback@mbie.govt.nz with the subject line ‘**Submission on a draft geothermal strategy**’ or
- Posting to:
Submission on a draft geothermal strategy
Resource Policy
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
PO Box 1473
Wellington 6140

Your feedback will contribute to further development of a geothermal strategy for New Zealand. It will also become official information, which means it may be requested under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The OIA specifies that information is to be made available upon request unless there are sufficient grounds for withholding it. If we receive a request, we cannot guarantee that feedback you provide us will not be made public. Any decision to withhold information requested under the OIA is reviewable by the Ombudsman.

Submitter information

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) would appreciate if you would provide some information about yourself. If you choose to provide information in the section below, it will be used to help MBIE understand how different groups view the draft geothermal strategy. Any information you provide will be stored securely.

A. About you

Name:

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B. Are you happy for MBIE to contact you if we have questions about your submission?

Yes

No

C. Are you making this submission on behalf of a business or organisation?

Yes

No

If yes, please tell us the title of your company/organisation:

Amplify is the economic development agency for the Taupō District. We grow the local economy by attracting investment, supporting business and enabling innovation. Working with iwi, industry, government and education partners, we focus on sustainable growth, job creation and regional competitiveness.

Taupō's geothermal resources and expertise position the district as a national leader in clean energy and low-emissions industry development. Amplify supports geothermal uptake by working with businesses and investors to grow opportunities in process heat, energy innovation precincts and industrial development.

D. Privacy information

The Privacy Act 2020 applies to submissions. Please check the box if you do not wish your name or other personal information to be included in any information about submissions that MBIE may publish.

MBIE may upload submissions, or a summary of submissions, received to MBIE's website at www.mbie.govt.nz. If you do not want your submission or a summary of your submission to be placed on our website, please check the box and type an explanation below:

I do not want my submission placed on MBIE's website because... [insert reasoning here]

E. Confidential information

- I would like my submission (or identifiable parts of my submission) to be kept confidential and have stated my reasons and ground under section 9 of the Official Information Act that I believe apply, for consideration by MBIE.

If you have checked this box, please tell us what parts of your submission are to be kept confidential.

From the Ground Up – A draft strategy to unlock New Zealand’s geothermal potential

The Government is developing a geothermal strategy for New Zealand to provide a focused pathway to geothermal leadership and growth and unlock the potential of our geothermal resources across a broad range of applications.

New Zealand’s geographical location has given us a unique geothermal advantage, and New Zealand has been a global leader in geothermal development since the late 1950s. Geothermal contributes nearly one-fifth of our annual electricity generation, is a strong tourism attraction, and geothermal heat and steam are utilised both directly and indirectly in industrial, commercial and residential applications.

However, despite our world-class resources, geothermal development faces some barriers, including high upfront drilling costs, fragmented access to data, complex and dated regulatory settings and the scale of the sector. New technologies, such as supercritical geothermal, are also on the horizon. In order to drive energy resilience, regional development, economic growth and climate leadership, deliberate and coordinated action is required.

The draft strategy sets out a vision for New Zealand to be a global leader in sustainable geothermal development. Three interconnected strategic outcomes, centred around being a world-leader in geothermal innovation, accelerating energy resilience, and strengthening regional economies and te Ōhanga Māori, have been identified to guide action and focus. Five action plan goals have been identified to guide the Government’s approach, underpinned by a draft action plan. The draft strategy also includes an energy-focused goal to double the use of geothermal energy by 2040.

We are seeking feedback on the draft strategy, particularly whether the proposed direction, ambition and outcomes, and accompanying action plan, capture the necessary government intervention and priorities. We are also interested in views about how the wider geothermal sector can contribute to unlocking our geothermal potential.

Please see the draft geothermal strategy for more information, available on our website:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/consultation-on-a-draft-geothermal-strategy-for-new-zealand>

Questions for the consultation

1. Are the three strategic outcomes of the strategy, centred around **world-leading geothermal innovation, accelerating energy resilience** and **strengthening regional economies and te Ōhanga Māori**, suitable, or is there more we need to consider?

We support the three strategic outcomes proposed. However, the overarching vision could better reflect the role of regional economies in delivering them, particularly those with existing geothermal investment and infrastructure. We suggest strengthening the vision statement with language such as: *“New Zealand is a global leader in sustainable geothermal development, delivering innovation, resilience, driving regional economic growth and te Ōhanga Māori for future generations.”*

The Taupō District is home to New Zealand’s largest and most advanced geothermal operations, leading in generation, geoheat innovation, Māori enterprise and workforce development. We see an opportunity for the strategy to better reflect the importance of place-based leadership and implementation. This is where the resource, expertise, workforce and demand-side potential align.

We recommend the strategy be better aligned with demand-side initiatives, including the New Zealand Energy Strategy and EECA's Regional Energy Transition Accelerator (RETA), to ensure supply growth is matched with clear pathways for decarbonisation and regional industry development.

2. Do the five overarching **action plan goals capture the areas that are most important for achieving** the vision, strategic outcomes and energy goal?

The goals are well-structured, but would benefit from stronger emphasis on economic delivery and commercial enablement. The current focus leans heavily on supply-side development. To accelerate uptake, we need to ensure the same emphasis is applied to attracting users, supporting feasibility and enabling infrastructure at the local level.

We support the goals relating to geoheat uptake, cluster development and research and innovation based in Taupō. We recommend they be strengthened by:

- Incentivising and simplifying the uptake of geothermal energy for industrial and commercial users.
- Supporting place-based clusters in geothermal-rich areas like the Taupō District, where established infrastructure and available supply create strong foundations for industry growth and geothermal use.
- Better linking the action plan to national and regional decarbonisation priorities.

3. Does the proposed action plan correctly capture the necessary **government interventions and priorities**?

The action plan covers key areas of focus, but greater priority should be placed on demand-side activation, regulatory streamlining and investment partnerships to enable commercial uptake and infrastructure development.

As the economic development agency for the Taupō District, we see several opportunities to strengthen delivery:

- Establish a national hub for geothermal research, innovation, commercialisation and workforce development, based in Taupō. This could form part of a wider national network, including the University of Auckland's Geothermal Institute and sector partners such as the New Zealand Geothermal Association.
- Support public-private partnerships to co-invest in infrastructure, test wells and shared-use infrastructure. These partnerships between government, iwi and industry can de-risk innovation, support early-stage investment and enable faster uptake.
- Provide early-stage funding for feasibility studies, pre-commercial trials and first-mover industrial conversions.
- Develop a streamlined national consenting pathway, especially for low- and mid-temperature geoheat use.
- Improving access to geothermal resource data - we suggest a model where data becomes public after a five-year confidentiality period. This would allow innovation and commercial confidence to grow over time.

4. Is the **role for the sector** clear? How can the wider geothermal sector play a role (e.g. are there specific actions that the sector could own)?

The sector's role is broadly outlined, but the strategy would benefit from clearer recognition of regional partners, including economic development agencies, who are already supporting investment, connecting industry users and supporting infrastructure planning.

A more defined co-delivery model would help, where:

- Government enables through policy, funding and incentives.
- Industry leads on technical development and operations.
- Regional partners coordinate clusters, infrastructure and commercial uptake.
- Iwi lead and co-lead development, particularly in rohe with established geothermal enterprises.

We also see an important role for the sector (or a sector cluster tasked to deliver) in:

- Developing education and workforce pathways through schools, iwi partnerships and tertiary training.
- Leading commercial engagement and outreach to potential users of direct-use geothermal energy.

A cluster based in Taupo with representation across government, industry and iwi could lead this.

5. Does the strategy and proposed action plan create the right settings to **enable tāngata whenua to realise their aspirations** for geothermal resources in their rohe?

The strategy acknowledges the role of tāngata whenua in geothermal development. However, it would improve with clear delivery mechanisms to support Māori-led enterprise and ownership.

In the Taupō District, iwi such as Tūaropaki Trust and Tauhara North No.2 Trust are already leading geothermal development, training and innovation. These models show what is possible when iwi have access to capability support, investment pathways and shared governance.

We recommend:

- Support for Māori enterprise leadership, including capability funding, partnerships and access to capital.
- Investment in training and workforce initiatives designed by iwi and for iwi.
- Inclusion of iwi in the design and leadership of any future geothermal hub or Centre of Excellence.
- Support for research and innovation that combines mātauranga Māori with technical expertise and commercial expertise.

6. Are there **opportunities** for our geothermal sector that we haven't considered?

There are economic opportunities that could be better supported:

- Development of Geoheat Innovation Precincts, such as He Ahi Park in Taupō, offering shared infrastructure access for heat-intensive users like food processing, horticulture and manufacturing.
- Use of geothermal energy in circular economy models, including CO₂ capture and reuse, mineral recovery and green chemical production.
- Targeted attraction of power and heat-intensive industries to geothermal zones, supported by spatial planning, infrastructure coordination and economic incentives.
- Greater positioning of geothermal as a high-value export sector, promoting New Zealand's capability in geothermal services, technology and training.

7. Are there **challenges** for our geothermal sector that we haven't considered?

These challenges may require more consideration:

- Uncertainty around demand is a constraint. Industrial users may be interested in switching to geothermal but need support to assess feasibility, manage conversion costs and navigate regulatory requirements.
- Regulatory complexity remains a significant barrier, especially for low-temperature and direct-use applications. A national consenting framework could help unlock uptake at scale.
- A lack of financial incentives slows adoption. There are currently no mechanisms to offset capital costs, such as accelerated depreciation, emissions-linked pricing or targeted investment grants, especially for new developments.
- Skills and workforce shortages are emerging, with no clear national plan to build capability across key geothermal roles such as drilling, operations and maintenance.

8. Are there **any other things** that the strategy should include or exclude?

- A national consenting pathway or 'single-window' process for geothermal under the new resource management system.
- Co-investment funding for feasibility studies, shared infrastructure and early-stage geoheat adoption.
- Integration with the New Zealand Energy Strategy, Emissions Reduction Plan and EECA's RETA programme, to align geothermal with national energy and decarbonisation goals.
- Success metrics that include job creation, regional GDP uplift, emissions reduction, number of connected users and export growth, not just generation output.

Thank you

Thanks for your feedback, we really appreciate your insight. It helps us establish a long-term strategic approach to unlock the potential of our geothermal resources in a sustainable manner.

To help us continue to develop a geothermal strategy for New Zealand, we would appreciate any additional suggestions or comments you may have.

Please leave your feedback here:

Amplify welcomes the development of a national geothermal strategy and supports its ambition to unlock the full potential of this taonga resource for Aotearoa New Zealand. The Taupō District is uniquely positioned to lead the next phase of geothermal growth. Taupō's deep geothermal expertise, established generation infrastructure and strong Māori enterprise leadership make it well suited to demonstrate what a thriving, low-emissions regional economy can look like.

We strongly support the direction of the strategy and believe its delivery can be strengthened by:

- **Increasing focus on demand-side activation:** Support industrial uptake of geothermal energy by providing incentives, feasibility funding, and streamlined consenting.
- **Establishing a national geothermal hub in Taupō:** Drive geothermal research, innovation, commercialisation, and workforce development through a central hub supported by a national network.
- **Supporting regional cluster development:** Precincts like He Ahi in Taupō demonstrate the opportunity to co-locate businesses, share infrastructure and attract clean industries. This model could be scaled through spatial planning, investment partnerships, and enabling policy settings.
- **Investing in workforce pathways:** Expand regional training and education programmes in partnership with iwi and local employers to build the skills needed for a growing geothermal sector.
- **Measuring outcomes beyond generation:** Track the strategy's success through metrics like job creation, emissions reductions, connected users and regional GDP growth.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to working with government and sector partners to turn this strategy into action and deliver strong economic, environmental and social outcomes from the ground up in the Taupō District.