



Proposal to improve the bylaw and control about navigation

Te marohitanga hei whakapai ake i tā tātou ture ā-rohe me tōna whakaūnga mō te whakatere

Statement of Proposal to amend the Navigation Bylaw 2021 and Navigation Bylaw (Specific Areas and Conditions of Use) Control 2021.

Public consultation from 4 May to 7 June 2026

March 2026, Version 1.0



1 What this is about

Helping to keep people safe on Auckland's navigable water

Vessels on Auckland's navigable water provide enjoyment, enriching cultural experiences, sporting events and transportation. Every day, people use these waters for activities such as boating, kayaking, kiteboarding, swimming, fishing, ferrying passengers and cargo.

The shared use of Auckland's waterways brings risks. For example, the failure to wear personal flotation devices on small vessels, comply with safe boating rules, unsafe vessel operation, vessel activity in swimming areas, illegal mooring and transportation of hazardous cargo can lead to fatalities, injury, collisions, and property damage.

The Navigation Bylaw helps to minimise these risks and ensure maritime safety on Auckland's navigable waters.

What Auckland Council does

We make rules about the wearing of personal flotation devices and where certain vessel activities are allowed. We set approval frameworks for on-water events and moorings, and sets specific rules for large vessels. These rules work to minimise the risk of accidents, nuisance and damage within Auckland's navigable waters.

The existing rules are in the [Navigation Bylaw 2021](#) (Bylaw) and [Navigation Bylaw \(Specific Areas and Conditions of Use\) Control 2021](#) (Control).

Improving our approach

We recently checked how the Bylaw and Control are working and identified improvements. The proposal is to make amendments to:

- require the wearing of personal flotation devices (PFDs) on small vessels while underway to further reduce the risk of fatalities
- introduce rules to protect the public from risks associated with emerging technologies and novel craft, for example, motorized hydrofoil boards, flight boards and tow foiling
- make updates to legacy mooring licences to ensure all moorings licence holders are subject to the same terms and conditions for fair and equal use
- include long-standing Harbourmaster Directions regarding the Ferry Terminal Basin to ease ongoing tension over space sharing between public transport ferries and cruise ships
- establish an exclusion zone for powered vessels around Auckland Airport to address aviation and maritime safety risks
- introduce exclusion zones to better protect high-use or sensitive areas, including Horne Rock, Tāmaki River Rowing Precinct, Harbour Bridge, and Simpson Rock
- revoke 14 access lane controls that are rarely used by the public.

We want to know what you think

From **4 May** through to **7 June 2026**, we want you to tell us what you think about the proposal to improve our Navigation Bylaw and Control.

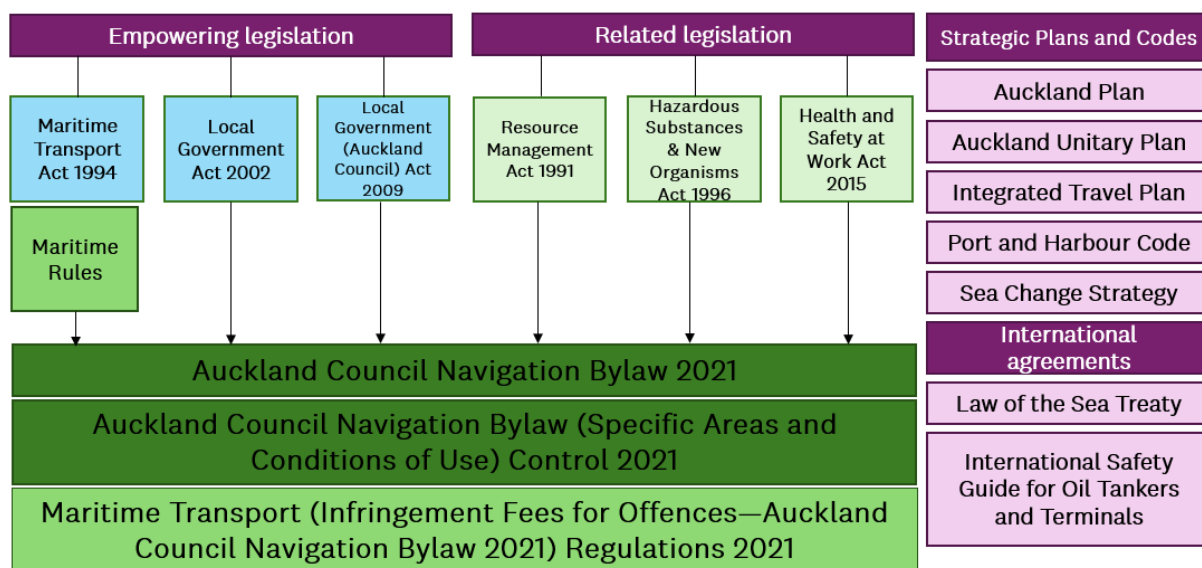
Visit akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/ for more information and to find out how to give your feedback in writing, in-person or by phone. Free internet access is available at our libraries.

2 What are the Bylaw and Control?

The Navigation Bylaw and Control contain rules that seek to help minimise the risk of fatalities, injuries, nuisance, accidents, collisions and damage on Auckland's navigable waters through:

- direct provisions (for example about the wearing of personal flotation devices and the management of large vessels)
- controls (for example to identify restricted areas or access lanes)
- approvals (for example to hold an on-water event or a mooring licence).

These rules form part of a wider legislative and strategic framework about the use of Auckland's navigable waters that the Bylaw and Control seek to compliment and do not duplicate.



3 Implementing the Bylaw

The Harbourmaster administers the Bylaw

Our Harbourmaster has a team of Maritime Officers within Auckland Transport who implement the Bylaw, made by the Auckland Council Governing Body.

The Bylaw enables the Governing Body and Harbourmaster to make controls for matters listed in the Table below.

Type of Control	Explanation or conditions of use
Restricted area	An area where conditions such as speed restrictions or access may be restricted to large vessels only (for example to protect public safety in high-risk commercial vessel areas such as the Port of Auckland).
Access lane	A lane with a purpose of allowing power-driven vessels and power-driven vessels towing water-skiers, wake boards or sea biscuits to navigate from a beach or launching area.
Prohibited anchorage	An area where anchorage is prohibited to not impede (get in the way of): - the route of a large vessel coming into port - in the area surrounding a naval base - areas where high vessel traffic exists - areas where underwater cables and pipelines exist.
Restricted anchorage	An area where a vessel must not anchor or moor unless various conditions are met. Examples of these conditions include that the vessel must be kept ready to depart at all times or that a vessel is directed by the Harbourmaster to temporarily anchor in the area.
Reserved area	An area where space is reserved for certain activities such as swimming, vessels towing water skiers or sea biscuits, and motorised water sports.

Modern approach to regulatory compliance

The Harbourmaster's team carry out activities to ensure people follow the rules by using a modern approach to regulatory compliance. This includes:

- an educational response for lower-risk issues, such as cases involving unregistered personal watercraft
- a 'no excuses' approach to offences relating to personal flotation devices and other offences that directly or imminently risk public safety or damage to property
- support of the Port and Harbour Safety Code (a voluntary standard), including by applying the Code's principles into Navigational Safety Management Plans that are supported by detailed procedures and processes that ensure safe navigation and maritime operations
- maintaining a Memorandum of Understanding with Ports of Auckland and facilitating regular engagement and information exchanges to clarify roles, managing risks, and ensuring the Port operates smoothly
- cross-agency collaboration with the Maritime Police, Coastguard, and Harbourmasters in other regions to share intelligence, coordinate responses and promote best practices.

4 What council proposes to change

Improving safety on Auckland's navigable waters

We recently checked how the rules are working and identified improvements.

The Table below summarises the proposed changes and reasons.

Main proposed changes	Reasons for proposal
Require wearing Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) on vessels six metres or less in length when underway.	- to further reduce risk of fatalities on small vessels - to align rules with neighbouring region's navigation rules - to clarify and simplify PFD compliance requirements.
Introduce rules for the use of novel craft (for example motorised hydrofoil, flight-boards and tow-foiling).	- to protect public safety and minimise risk of accidents, collisions, damage, and nuisance - to ensure water users have fair access without risk of collision.
Replace historic mooring licences to update their terms and conditions.	- ensure all moorings licence holders are subject to the same terms and conditions for fair and equal use - improve the administrative structure to be available digitally and easier to use.
Reduce the maximum anchorage stay from 14 days to 7 days in a 28-day period.	to prevent misuse and promote fair access to popular anchorage areas.
Clarify bunkering rules.	- to ensure they are certain and enforceable - reducing notification time from 24 hours to three hours to ensure all ships are compliant.
Add related information about large vessels requirement to have anchors ready to deploy in pilotage areas.	to reduce risks of collision and damage by promoting existing general maritime safety practice.
Introduce new controls at Horne Rock, Tāmaki River Rowing Precinct, the Harbour Bridge, and Simpson Rock.	- to better manage and protect high-use or sensitive areas - to minimise safety, navigational, and operational risks that require tailored rules to support safe and efficient use.
Include longstanding Harbourmaster Directions about the Auckland Ferry Terminal Basin.	- to reduce confusion for ferry and cruise ship operators - to ensure fair and equal access and reduce commuter disruption.
Introduce an exclusion zone (control) around Auckland Airport	to minimise aviation and maritime risks by preventing power-driven vessels from operating in the area.
Revoke 14 legacy access lanes that are rarely used	to allow Harbourmaster resources to be focussed on higher risk areas.
Minor practical and technical clarifications of existing rules	sought be the Harbourmaster and Maritime New Zealand to ensure practicality of enforcement and alignment with legislation.
Clarifying all maps in the Control	- to be easier to read and understand - to be visually clearer.

If you want to know more, see **Appendix A** for the proposed amended Bylaw and **Appendix B** for the proposed amended Control.

5 How we got here

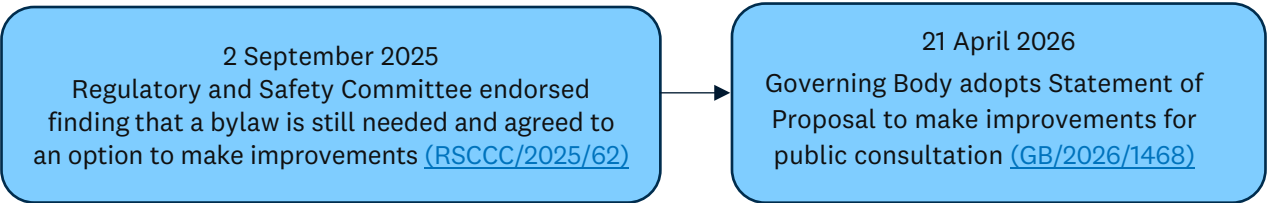
Decisions leading to the proposed changes

The [Local Government Act 2002](#) requires the council to review its bylaws periodically to determine whether they are effective, efficient and still necessary to address the problem. We also check that our bylaws do not conflict with other laws, such as the [Maritime Transport Act 1994](#) and the [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#).

We reviewed the current Bylaw and Control by engaging with stakeholders and undertaking research. Following the review, we decided to propose improvements to both the Bylaw and Control for public consultation.

The decisions leading to the proposed changes and a summary of the key findings and options are summarised in the Figure and Tables below.

Go to akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/ for a full copy of these decisions.



Key findings from our review of the current Bylaw and Control
- There continues to be risks of fatalities, injuries, nuisance, accidents, collisions and damage on Auckland’s navigable waters. For example, preventable fatalities continue to occur due to people not wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs) on small vessels. - The current Bylaw and Control help address these risks and problems by contributing to the necessary framework of rules that ensure navigation safety. - A bylaw about navigation safety is still required but improvements could be made, including to require the wearing of PFDs on small vessels to further minimise risk of fatalities (see next Table).

Assessment of four options in response to the findings				
The Bylaw and Control rules were grouped under four topics and assessed against four options.				
Topic	Assessment of statutory options and rationale for recommended option			
	Confirm (no change)	Amend	Replace	Revoke
Topic 1: Personal Flotation Devices	x	✓	x	x
Topic 2: User Responsibilities and Operational Requirements	- A bylaw is still needed to prevent maritime safety issues in Auckland’s navigable waters (‘Revoke’ not appropriate) - Improvements required to current Bylaw and Control (‘Confirm’ not appropriate). - Improving the current Bylaw is the most effective and efficient option (‘Replace’ not appropriate).			
Topic 3: Commercial and Large Vessel Operating Requirements				
Topic 4: Controls and Approvals				

6 We want your input

Have your say on changes to our navigation rules

We are proposing amendments to the Auckland Council Navigation Bylaw 2021 and Specific Areas and Conditions of Use Control 2021.

We want to hear from the people who use Auckland's navigable waters for recreational boating, water sports, commercial vessel activities and transport. Your on-water experience is essential to getting these changes right.

Read the full proposal, then share your views between **Monday 4 May** and **Sunday 7 June 2026**.

You can give us your feedback:

- by completing the online feedback form
- in-person or online via audio-visual link at one of our 'Have your say' events
- by phone
- using New Zealand sign language.

We will **consider** your feedback and feedback from mana whenua, stakeholders and technical experts **before deciding** whether to adopt, **amend or reject the proposed changes** in late 2026.

Visit akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/ for more information.

Free online services are available at our libraries or by contacting us by phone on 09 301 0101.

Your feedback may be published in Auckland Council reports and online, but your personal details will **not** be made public.

