

Regulator Session

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Introduction

Mentimeter

- *Break the ice, set the vibe*
- *Get some information from you*
- *Set ourselves up for Q&A*

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A few slides

- *Regulatory Foundations*
- *What we have learned*
- *Working in different sectors*

Discussion: Chatham House Rules

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Regulatory Drivers

Environmental regulation exists to balance:

1. Protecting the environment and human health
2. Enabling people and the economy to function
3. Upholding rights, fairness, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Regulators don't exist to "stop development" — their role is to manage effects, make decisions based on evidence and law, and ensure everyone is playing by the same rules.

Time frames involve consultation and engagement with iwi, interested parties and other agencies. It all takes time.

At its core, environmental regulation in NZ is effects-based, locally implemented, and nationally framed

Industry expectations

- Clear and effective regulations
- Consistency across councils and regulators
- Effective and prompt processing
- Engagement and collaborative working with clear communications
- Technically competence and credibility
- Balanced risk-based decision making

Why it matters:

- To better plan and implement projects
- Understanding impacts on cost, programme risk and commercial expectations
- Ability to review critically reports and to engage actively with industry



How guidance is applied

Holistic conceptual site model

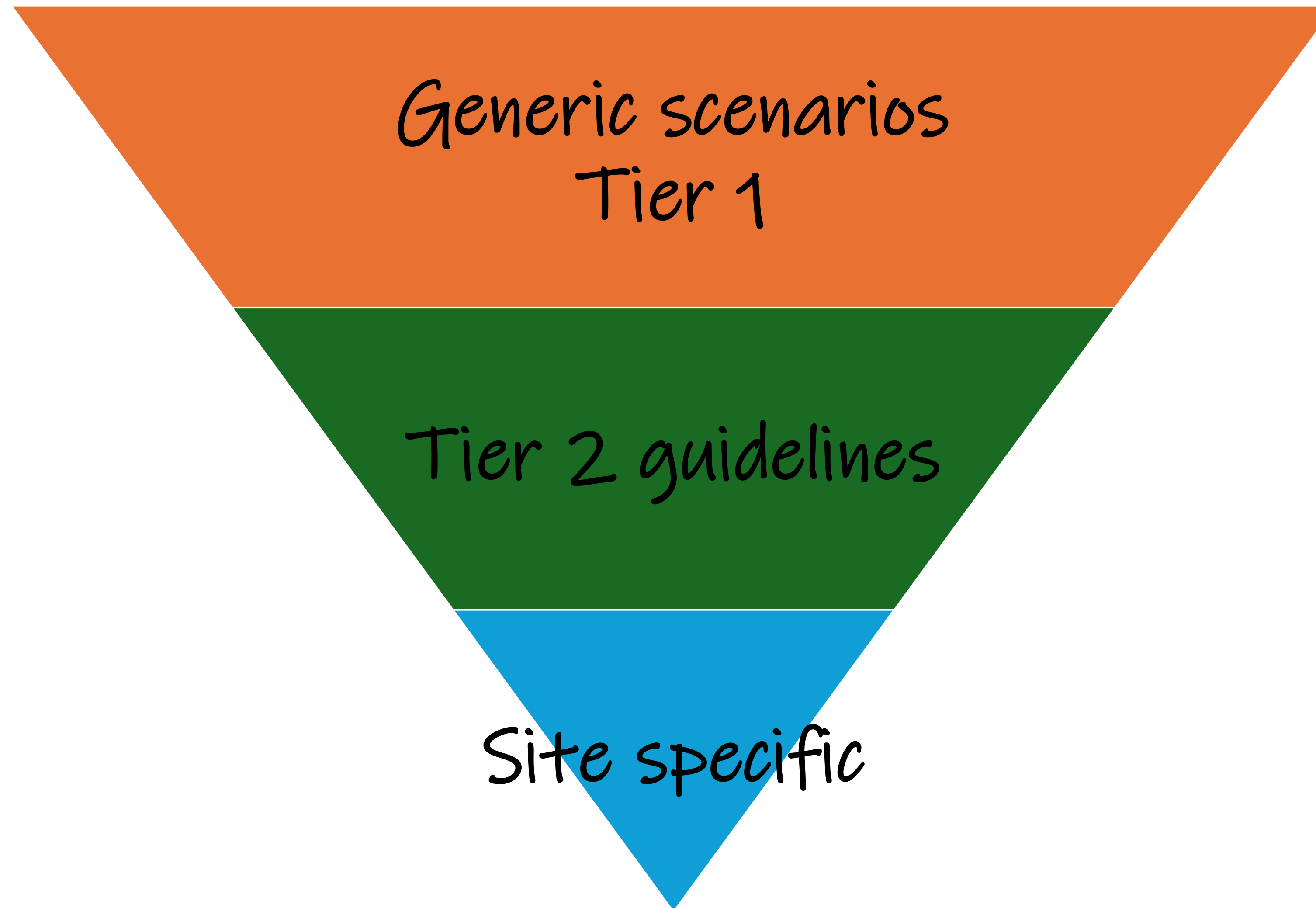
- Contaminated soil
- Water
- Sediment
- Ecological

Many interconnected regulations and guidance that provide a complex area to navigate.

- National guidance
- District rules
- International guidelines



Linking Policy – Guidance – site-based decisions



Top three things we have learned in Regulation

- Regulations are not always black and white – so many ways to interpret
- Multiple priorities are often involved
- There is a lot of people with passion, good intent and wanting to make a difference within the regulatory organisations



Local Government Foundations

Current format

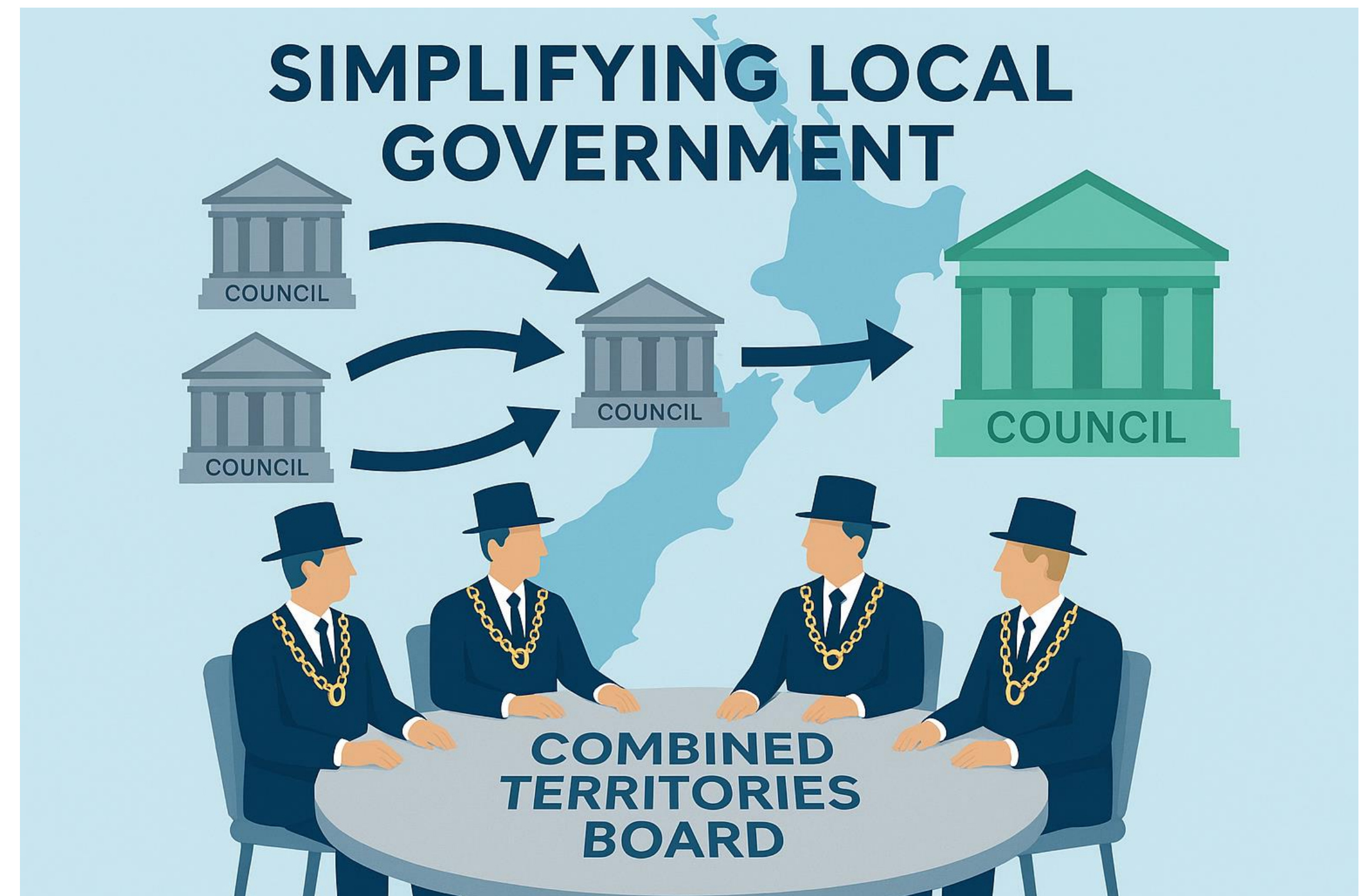
- 11 Regional, 6 Unitary, 67 District/City authorities
- Democratically elected governors
- 10 year budget cycles (completed 3-yearly)
- 10 year planning cycles (policy statement, plan, + district plans)

Resource Management Reform impact

- Regional Spatial Plan + Natural Environment Plan
- Fewer consents (more permitted activities)

‘Simplifying Local Government’ proposal:

- Phase 1 – Replace regional authorities with Combined Territories Boards (mayors)
- Phase 2 – Two year reorganisation plans (shared services, amalgamation etc.)



Co-Pilot

HEAD START

Things we have learned in Regulation

1. Pick up the *phone*
2. If you're unsure, focus on *regulation intent*
3. Policy perfection is a myth - strive for *good outcomes*

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Working in different sectors

Regulatory Roles

Regulatory professionals administer and apply legislation, monitor compliance, and make impactful decisions under public scrutiny.

Central Government Roles

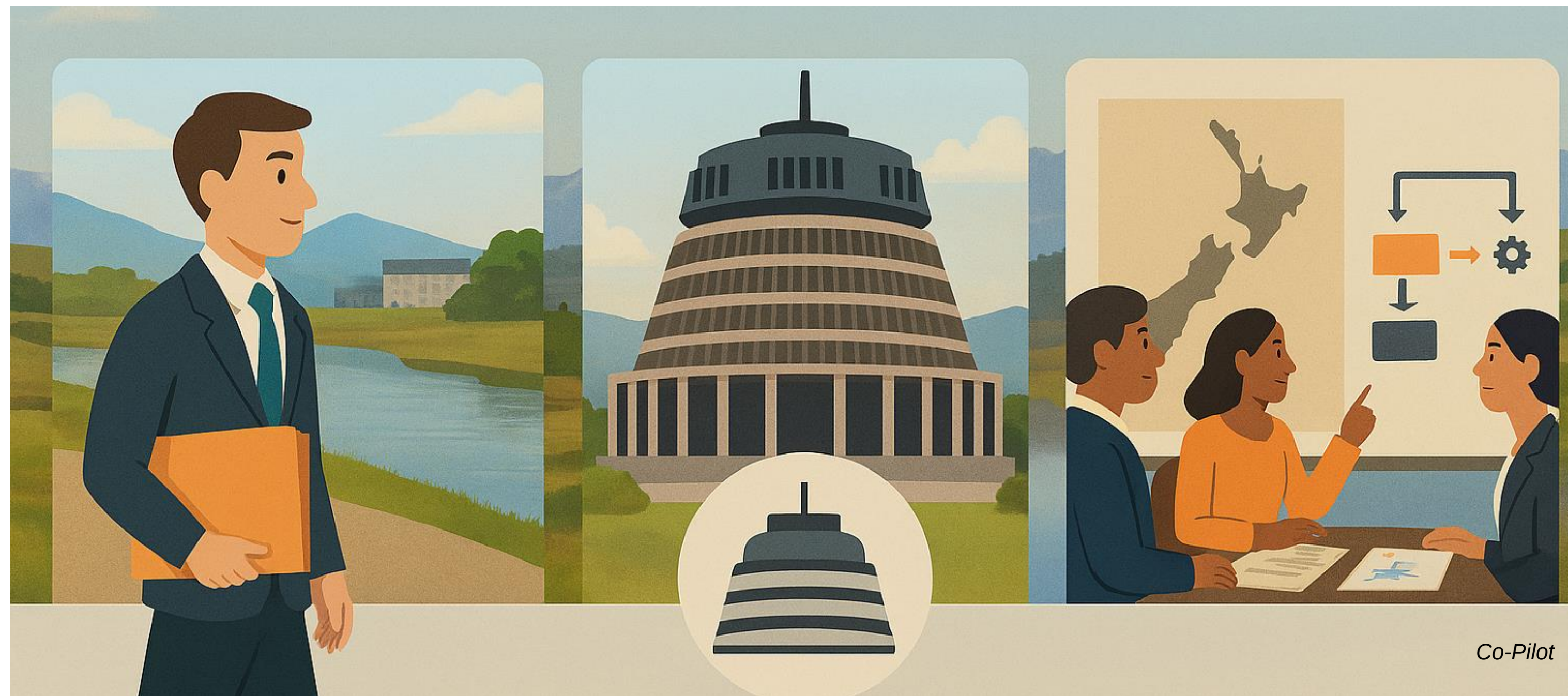
Central government focuses on policy development, strategic leadership, and long-term national outcomes.

Consultancy Work

Consultants provide expertise across sectors, balancing diverse projects with client expectations and deadlines.

Career Perspectives

Understanding sector differences aids career planning and helps professionals navigate trade-offs and growth.



Regulatory

Scientists, engineers, consents, compliance, policy

Pros

- Clear mandate and statutory authority
- Strong sense of public interest and purpose
- Structured processes and clear decision pathways
- Often good work–life balance compared with consultancy
- Technical depth and subject-matter expertise

Cons

- Limited flexibility in how outcomes are achieved
- High scrutiny and pressure from stakeholders
- Decisions can be contentious and emotionally demanding
- Slower pace of change and innovation
- Narrower scope than central government policy roles



Co-Pilot



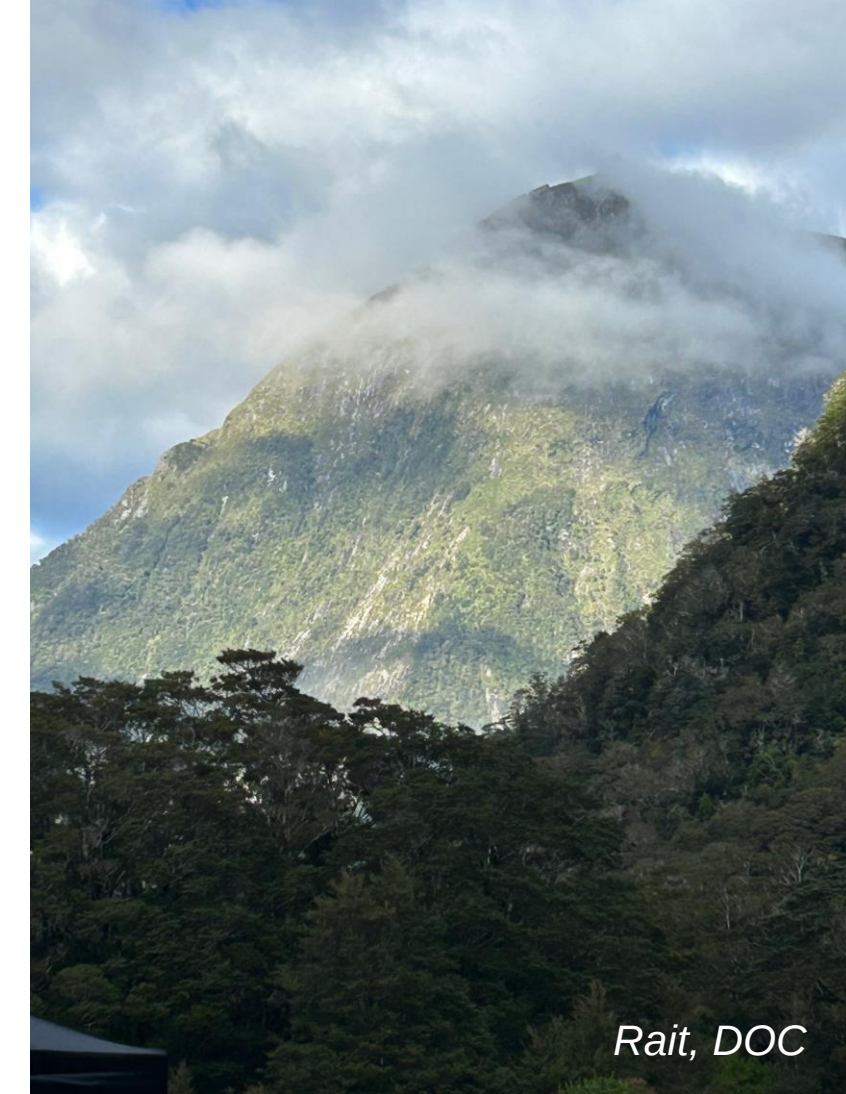
Government

Pros

- Big-picture influence and system-level impact
- Varied and interesting projects and programmes
- Various government organisations and roles
- Exposure to Ministers, cross-agency work, and national priorities
- Strong professional development and secondment opportunities
- Opportunity to shape long-term direction

Cons

- Competing priorities and political pressures
- Slower decision-making processes
- Policy outcomes can be indirect or long-term
- Less technical specialisation in some roles
- Impact from government 3 yearly electoral term



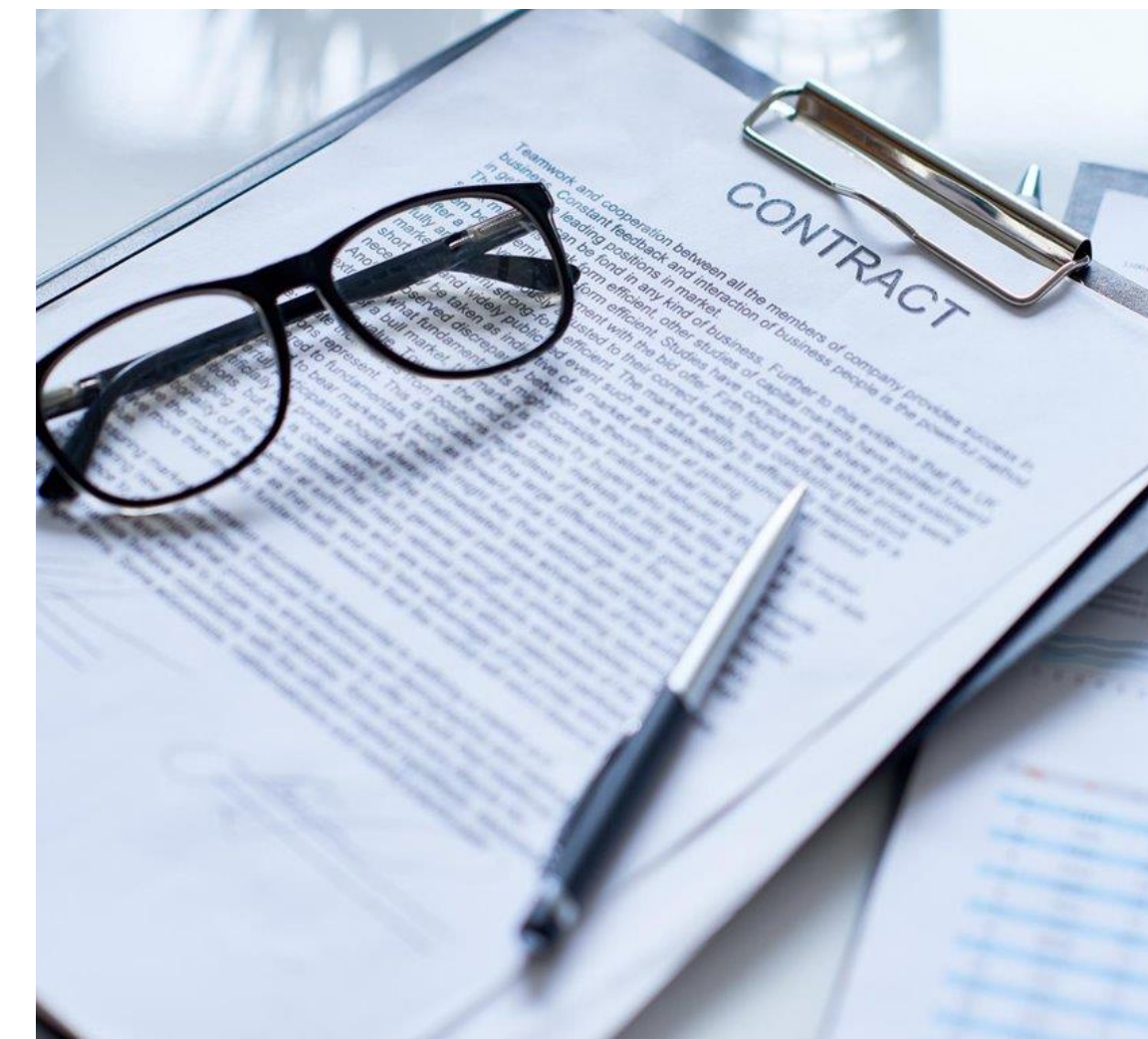
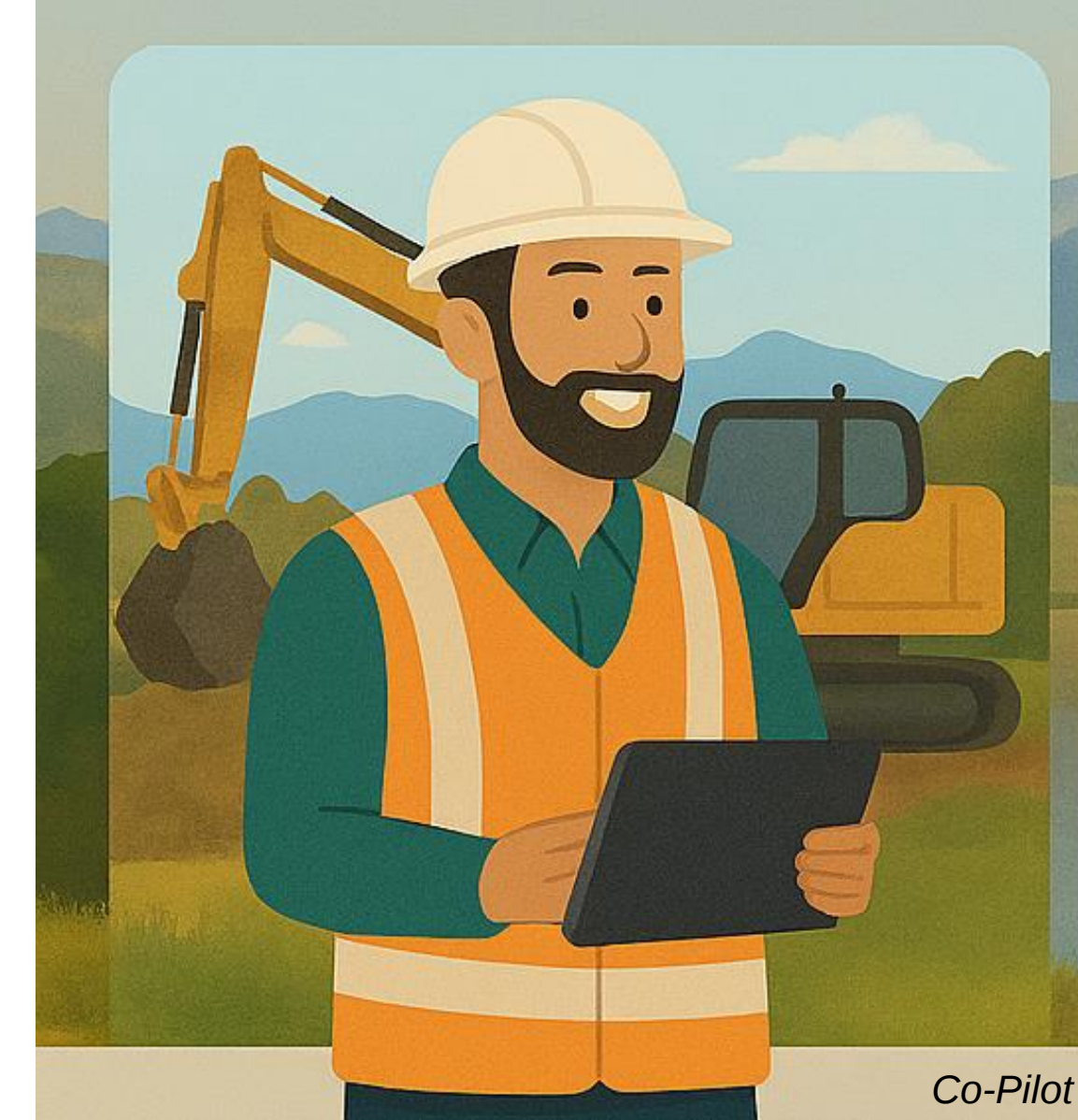
Consultancy

Pros

- Varied, project-based work across clients and sectors
- Faster pace and problem-solving focus
- Opportunity to build strong technical or commercial skills
- Gain project management skills
- Often higher earning potential at senior levels
- Clear performance feedback and progression pathways

Cons

- Billable hours and workload pressure
- Less control over project selection
- Job security linked to market conditions
- Work–life balance can fluctuate significantly



Key questions to reflect on

- ✓ Do you prefer authority, influence, or delivery?
- ✓ Do you enjoy structure or flexibility?
- ✓ Are you motivated by public outcomes or commercial success?
- ✓ Do you want depth or breadth in your expertise?



Overall takeaways

Many people move between sectors to build a well-rounded career.

This is an effective way to understand all sides of the industry.

Having experience in all sectors makes for a good foundation of skill and knowledge.

A fantastic way to grow network of contacts.

There is no “better” sector — the best choice depends on
career stage, values, and personal drivers.



Q&A

"Ask the Oldies"



Finish

