

Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

Effective from 27 August 2025

The Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025 introduces new provisions that allow owners of Māori land and water service providers to appeal to the Māori Land Court over decisions about access to Māori land for water infrastructure.

It also enables Māori landowners to seek a charging order if they have paid more than their share of water services charges on Māori freehold land held in multiple ownership.

The Act also allows for appeals to the Māori Appellate Court in relation to decisions of the Māori Land Court around access to Māori land for water infrastructure.

What has changed?

The Local Government (Water Services) Act (the Act) has made the following changes to the Māori Land Court's jurisdiction.

Appealing access decisions

- Water service providers may enter land to carry out water infrastructure work with the landowner's written consent or following an internal review decision. If there is a dispute about access or no response to an access notice, an internal reviewer will assess the situation.
- Where the land is Māori-owned and the landowner does not participate in the internal review, the water service provider can appeal to the Māori Land Court under section 118C(4)(b).
- If the reviewer makes a decision that the landowner disagrees with, the Māori landowner can appeal to the Māori Land Court under section 129(1A). On appeal, the Court may confirm, change, or cancel the reviewer's decision.

Charging orders – water services charges on Māori land

- In certain situations, Māori landowners may have to pay for water services charges under section 68 of the Act. If an owner of Māori freehold land in multiple ownership has paid more than their share of water services charges, they can apply to the Māori Land Court under section 69A of the Act for a charging order to recover the excess amount paid.

Appealing Māori Land Court decisions about access

- A person may appeal to the Māori Appellate Court on a question of law in relation to a decision of the Māori Land Court made under section 170.

How to appeal access decisions

- You can file an application for an appeal by [email](#), [by post](#) or [in person](#). These applications cannot be filed online through Pātaka Whenua.
- Applications for appeals must use the General Form of Application ([Form 1](#)) stating the Act and the section under which application is made:
 - Section 129(1A) – for Māori landowners
 - Section 118C(4)(b) – for water service providers.

How to apply for a charging order

- You can file an application for a charging order by [email](#), [by post](#) or [in person](#). These applications cannot be filed online.
- Applications under section 69A must use the General Form of Application ([Form 1](#)) stating the Act and the section under which application is made.

How to appeal a Māori Land Court decision about access

- You can file an appeal by [email](#), [by post](#) or [in person](#). These applications cannot be filed online.
- Appeals under section 130 must use the Notice of appeal (Form 13) stating the Act and that the appeal is made under section 130.

Need Help?

If you're unsure whether this guidance applies to your situation, or need help preparing an application, please contact your [local Māori Land Court office](#).

You can also find out more online at

www.maorilandcourt.govt.nz/ Appeals /Charging orders

What costs are involved with appeals and charging orders?

- Applications under Sections 69A, 129(1A) and 118C(4)(b) cost \$228.00.
- Appeals to the Māori Appellate Court under s130 cost \$399.00.