**Media release**

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**MetService launch new metservice.com**

Today, after a three-month open beta period, MetService - New Zealand’s national weather authority - has launched its new website. Metservice.com is one of the most popular New Zealand based websites, providing national weather and marine forecasts for all of Aotearoa.

More than 200,000 people have trialled the new website over the last three months, with MetService receiving close to 1,500 pieces of feedback. This has helped further refine the website before launch.

MetService Chief Executive Peter Lennox is pleased with the additional capability the new site provides.

“Our current site served us well for over seven years, however, we were at the limit of what we could do in terms of ingesting and delivering the ever-increasing amounts of data now available to forecasters.”

“MetService is committed to adding more precision forecasts and observational data than ever before, and our new site allows us to achieve this.”

”The new site better communicates urgent and critical information and as New Zealand’s only official provider of Severe Weather Warnings, metservice.com is a key channel to alert the public to safety critical information,” says Peter Lennox.

Some of the key new features include the addition of search functionality, interactive map displays, and features allowing users to favourite the pages that matter most to them, so they are more accessible whenever they visit the site. The new website also introduces higher resolution rain radar imagery available at all nine MetService radar locations. The addition of 120-kilometre radar information allows people to see more detailed real-time observations of precipitation, especially useful in severe weather.

MetService Digital Product Manager Stephanie Raill says the site has been over two years in the making and user testing and audience feedback has been a key component of the journey.

 “We conducted our first user testing in early 2018. Since then, we’ve taken on board feedback from groups reliant on metservice.com for up-to-date weather information. We are thankful for the feedback we’ve had from the public over the last three months, which has helped us fine-tune some of the features, such as graphs and map controls.”

“We’ll continue to improve the site, and users will see slight changes over the coming months as we add more information,” says Stephanie Raill.

**What’s changed?**

* This website is fully responsive, so all users see the same information, whatever device is used.
* MetService operates nine New Zealand rain radar sites, with a tenth to be completed in 2020. The new site offers higher radar resolution data, providing users more detailed weather information, especially useful in severe weather.
* The introduction of the favourites feature makes the information used most often available from every page you visit, whenever you visit the site.
* The favourites feature also allows users to add their location to the metservice.com homepage.
* Relevant marine and mountain information is accessible from sub-menus from 100+ town and city pages. Sub-menus provide more detailed information for all locations, from longer range forecasts to historic information.
* Relevant severe weather information is more visible on every page, with the introduction of national severe weather maps that visibly show the locations where watches and warnings have been issued.
* The introduction of interactive marine maps allows users to filter marine and coastal information that matters to them.
* Search functionality has been enhanced.

Users can continue using the old version of metservice.com for a limited time, available at old.metservice.com until early December. MetService encourages those on the new site to view the short video tutorials which outline some of the new features and changes. These can be found at metservice.com/tutorials.

Over the coming months, further changes are planned based on feedback from users and work still in the pipeline.

**ENDS**