

## Media release

For immediate release, Thursday 15 August 2019



## One of New Zealand's most popular websites gets a refresh

MetService, New Zealand's National Meteorological Service, has refreshed its website to make it even easier for New Zealanders to get the weather information they need.

From today, the new look website is available to preview, with MetService encouraging people to check it out and provide their feedback. The refreshed site can be accessed by going to **beta.metservice.com**. The refreshed site will run concurrently to the original website over the coming months.

metservice.com is one of the most popular New Zealand-based websites, with more than one million pageviews per day. The site provides national weather and marine forecasts for all of Aotearoa, including the Chatham Islands.

As New Zealand's only official provider of Severe Weather Warnings, metservice.com is one of MetService's key channels to alert the public to this safety-critical information.

Peter Lennox, MetService's Chief Executive Officer, says the organisation understands how integral the weather is to people's safety, their day and livelihoods.

"We're always looking at how we can enhance the vital information we provide New Zealanders. We've listened to the feedback of our audiences which has helped us shape the new site.

"This upgrade also provides us with a more flexible web platform which will allow us to be more adaptable as the future of forecasting evolves," says Peter Lennox.

MetService's Product Manager Digital, Stephanie Raill, says metservice.com has always been a bit more than weather on a website, it's a destination that people rely on to plan their day.

"The site refresh will make it easier for people to find the right forecast for their needs, with better visualisation of available forecasts and the ability to search and customise their experience."

"Broadly speaking, the layout of the pages has changed but no content has been removed. We've just made it easier to find the most relevant forecast, in a variety of ways for the very broad range of people who use our website."

"It has also been designed to be more flexible, so we can better communicate urgent and critical information such as Severe Weather Warnings, and to be more adaptable for future changes we'd like to make," says Stephanie Raill.

The new website has been two years in the making, following comprehensive research and user testing. The research involved a survey of 1000 people and smaller focus groups, which drilled down into how people use and interpret our forecasts.

In recent months, hundreds of stakeholder groups have been invited to test and feedback on the new site design, which has helped further shape the site prior to launching it.

“Some of the results were what you’d expect, people using our weather info to determine what to wear and what they are going to do in a day. But it also revealed that people use very different weather information and have very different ways of getting to that info.”

“This told us that there is no one universal way to order or rank the info we have, so flexibility was key. A priority of the refresh was to enable people to find the weather information they are interested in, easily and quickly.

“It’s been a big project. The website is complex, given the vast amount of data it holds, the frequency with which data updates and the multiple layers of information we present for a really diverse audience,” says Stephanie Raill.

metSERVICE.com presents data from hundreds of weather stations across New Zealand, high resolution rain radar and satellite data, high resolution MetService and MetOcean weather and ocean modelling, as well as the very best in global weather models. These observations are used by our team of 60 trained operational meteorologists, who are qualified to the World Meteorological Organization training standards, to provide New Zealand’s forecasts and official Severe Weather Watches and Warnings service.

All data and forecasts on the new look site mirror the current metSERVICE.com website.

“We are really excited to launch this new site and encourage feedback from New Zealanders,” says Raill.

### **Key features of the new look metSERVICE.com:**

#### **Easier navigation:**

- Visitors can customise their navigation by **favouriting** information they use regularly, and this is then visible from any page, whenever they visit the site.
- The **search tool** has been improved and is the fastest way to find the location people are seeking, in addition to using the maps or the menus.
- All information relating to a location is now grouped together - including the content previously found solely under the Marine, Rural and Mountains and Parks section.
- The top-level navigation menu remains in place and a **second navigation** bar has been introduced.

### **Fully responsive:**

- Visitors will have access to the same information no matter which device they use. The site is fully responsive, meaning the layout will change to properly fit any screen being used to view the site.

### **Improved Marine, Rural and Mountain & Park sections:**

- **Interactive maps** have been introduced to each of these sections making it easier to see all the available information for that area and its surrounds.
- The **Marine** interactive map provides an overview of all available marine info such as coastal, recreational, boating, surf and tides. Filters can be turned on and off to show relevant information to users.
- The **Rural** sections cover a larger geographic area, so more forecasts and observations are available on one page, including rain radar.
- **Mountains & Parks** are now on an interactive map so forecast and observations for different sites within the area can be viewed. The **Ski** section layout has been refreshed too.

### **More forecasts:**

- MetService provides forecasts and observations for over 100 towns and cities with the addition of **Wairoa, Picton and Waikanae** forecasts to [beta.metservice.com](https://beta.metservice.com)
- **Clearer Severe Weather Warnings:**
  - It is much clearer to see which areas are affected by Severe Weather, the type of alerts in place and how people should respond to keep themselves safe.
  - This has been achieved through a **new interactive map** and the introduction of a **two-tier land-based warning system**. An Orange Warning (orange hexagon graphic) for weather that meets or exceeds warning criteria and a Red Warning (red triangle graphic) reserved for only the most extreme weather events, when MetService forecasters expect significant impact or disruption.

**ENDS**

**For more information or to request an interview please contact:**

Andrea Tandy, Senior Communications Advisor, MetService. Mobile 027 5700 721 or email [andrea.tandy@metservice.com](mailto:andrea.tandy@metservice.com)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The new look website can be viewed directly by following this link:

<https://beta.metservice.com>

The website was last refreshed seven years ago in 2012.

## **Images and video**

Please use the following dropbox link to find:

- Images of the new site
- PDF infosheet detailing changes to our Rural, Mountains & Park and Marine pages
- A 45 sec video highlighting the most significant changes

[Dropbox Link:](#)

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/263ac1uvj7lygpv/AACZgpBFAbsEWEvJTbjpao\\_9a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/263ac1uvj7lygpv/AACZgpBFAbsEWEvJTbjpao_9a?dl=0)

## **About MetService**

MetService is New Zealand's National Meteorological Service and the only authorised provider of Severe Weather Watches and Warnings. As a State-Owned Enterprise its core purpose is to protect the safety of life and property in New Zealand while operating as a commercial business.