Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, welcomes the proposed changes to the rules regarding the subdivision of rural land.

Gerry says these changes appear to have been the result of the sorry tale of flooded blocks in the Pelly/Lorikeet Roads at Herbert which caused much heartache for locals over two years ago. This fiasco resulted in a damning report from the Ombudsman.

He says that before any rural land is subdivided there will now have to be a Preliminary Assessment Plan or a Full Assessment Plan.

The Preliminary Assessment Plan will cover land where the subdivision is straightforward but if there is doubt, a Full Assessment Plan will be required.

This will mean that the subdivision design will have to address Land Suitability Guidelines which will cover:

- Drainage
- Onsite Wastewater Management
- Erosion Risk
- Soil Salinity
- Acid Sulphate Soils
- Storm Tide Flooding
- Riverine Flooding

Gerry says there will be resources available to assist in these plans such as Natural Resources Maps, Environmental Health Fact Sheets and Council subdivision guidelines.

Gerry says the new rules seem to leave out two key sources of information in accessing if land is flooded or waterlogged – vegetation mapping and contour mapping. Both of these were essential in showing how poorly planned was the subdivision at Herbert.

Gerry says if these two resources are added to the guidelines then mistakes like what happened at Herbert would be very unlikely to ever happen again.

But all in all, it’s a positive step towards reducing the risk to future rural landowners while also making sure that dodgy subdivisions are a thing of the past.
Cessi foro gallinarum sed surgo