

The 2026 Clean Heating Blueprint

Navigating New Zealand's changing emission regulations, local expiry rules, and home heating subsidies.

A tightening regulatory landscape

**9 January
2026**

EECA Warmer Kiwi Homes permanently stops accepting new applications for wood and pellet burner grants.

**27 February
2026**

Absolute final deadline for existing EECA burner quotes to be processed.

**Ongoing
2026**

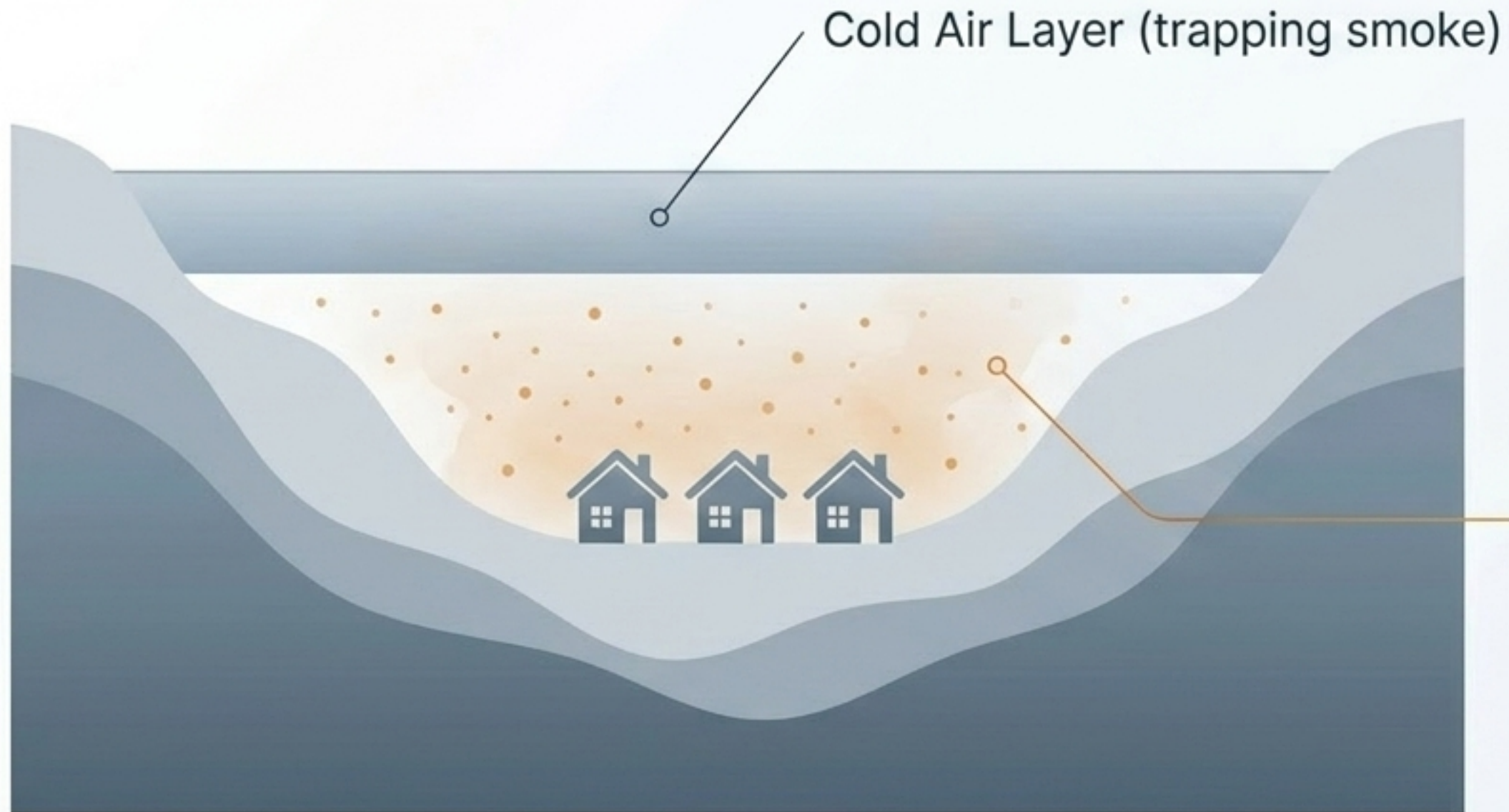
Rolling 15-to-20-year expiry deadlines for older wood burners across Canterbury.

**Point-of-Sale
Triggers**

Rotorua and Hawke's Bay require non-compliant burner removal before property transfer.

2026 Countdown

The Airshed effect



Takeaway Box

Topography and winter inversions trap microscopic particulate matter (PM2.5/PM10) like Rotorua and Nelson).

These particles penetrate the lungs and bloodstream, driving the mandate for Ultra-Low Emission Burners (ULEBs) and heat pumps.

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The EECA Warmer Kiwi Homes policy shift



As of **9 January 2026**, wood and pellet burner grants are discontinued.

Existing quotes expire if not processed by 27 February 2026.



Funded vs. Unfunded

Heat pump grants remain fully active.

Heat pumps are now the primary EECA-subsidized technology, offering up to a 90% grant (capped at **\$3,450**) for eligible homeowners.

Canterbury's rolling expiry lifecycle

A graphic consisting of a grey semi-circle with a thick orange arc on its right side, framing the text.

20-Year Rule

Applies to Clean Air Zones in Christchurch, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, and Ashburton. Low-emission burners become non-compliant 20 years after installation.

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15-Year Rule

Applies to the Timaru Clean Air Zone. Low-emission burners become non-compliant 15 years after installation.

Status Note: Waimate and Geraldine are exempt; low-emission burners are still permitted.

The point-of-sale roadblock



Rotorua Rule

Non-compliant burners must be removed or replaced before a property sale is completed. The vendor is responsible. Before/after photos and a Compliance Form must be submitted to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

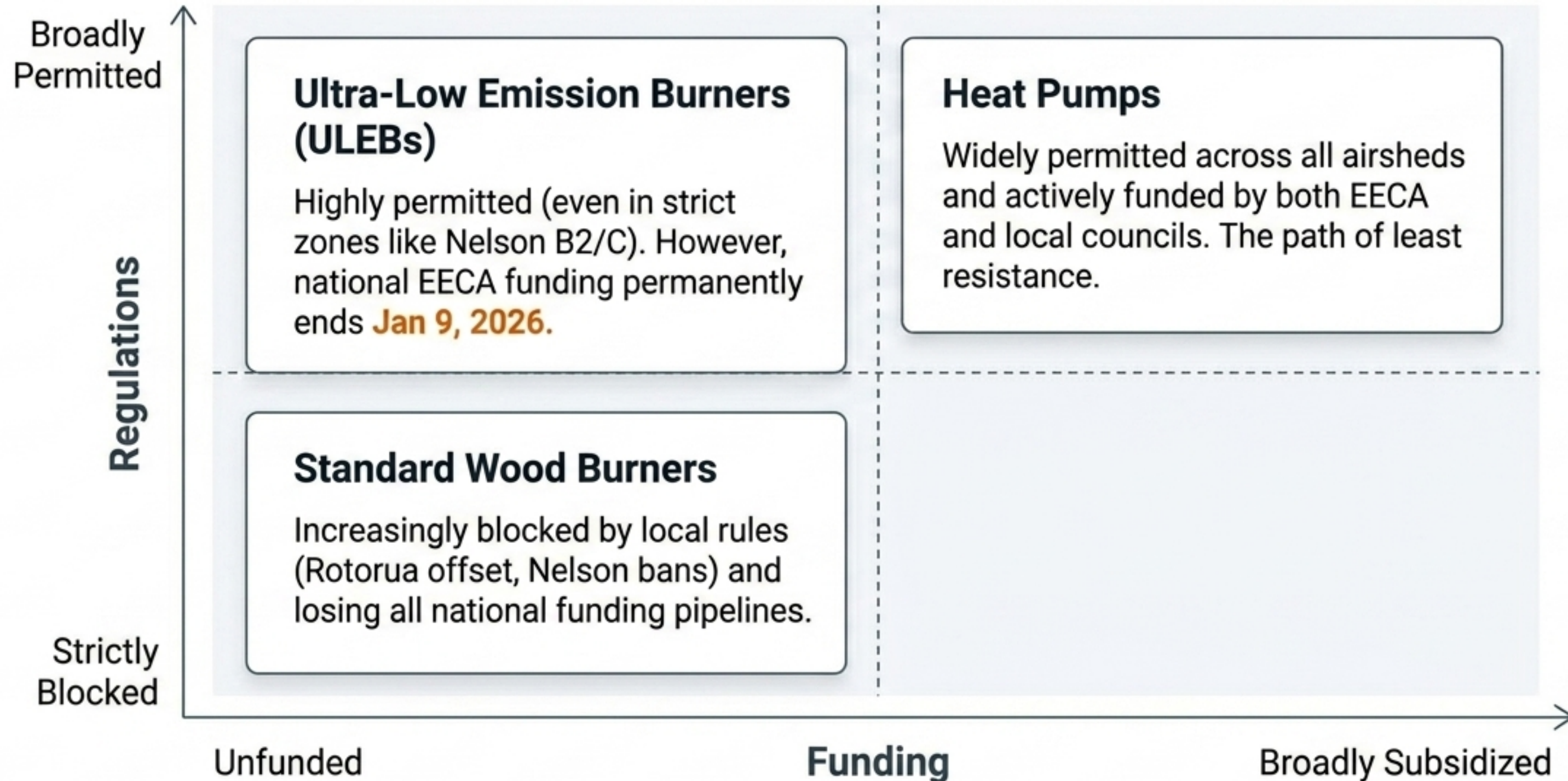
Hawke's Bay Rule

In Airzone 1 (properties under 2 hectares), non-compliant wood burners or open fires are strictly prohibited from use upon transfer to a new owner.

Regional compliance at a glance

| Criteria | Canterbury | Nelson | Rotorua | Hawke's Bay/Otago |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Phase-outs | 15/20 year rolling expiry | Phased out by age (Zones A/B1) | Banned pre-2005 models | Phased out by emission tier |
| Point of Sale Rule | None | None | Yes - strict vendor removal | Yes - prohibited on transfer |
| New Build/Install | ULEB / Heat Pump | ULE pellet burners allowed | Offset rule required for wood | Must meet local limits |
| Open Fires | Phased out | Banned since 2008 | Banned indoors | Banned in HB Airzone 1 |

The funding and compliance intersection



Unlocking the ECan heating subsidy

Decision Funnel

Step 1: Status
Must be the homeowner and occupier
(tenanted properties ineligible).

Step 2: Equipment
Must have a verified expired or expiring
burner in a designated Clean Air Zone.

Step 3: Financial
Must hold a Community Services Card (CSC), a
SuperGold Combo card, or reside in an eligible
Social Deprivation Index area.

**Outcome: Up to \$5,000 directly paid to the supplier for a
ULEB or heat pump installation (and consent fees).**

Securing the EECA heat pump grant

Decision Funnel

Step 1: Property
Home built before 2008. Must have existing EECA-standard ceiling and underfloor insulation.

Step 2: Current Heating
Must NOT currently have a fixed operational heater (heat pump, central heating, flued gas, or compliant burner) in the living area.

Step 3: Financial
Must hold a CSC, SuperGold Combo card, or live in a designated low-income area.

Outcome: A 90% grant (up to \$3,450) specifically for a high-wall heat pump (ducted/floor mounts excluded).

Approved technology profiles



Heat Pumps

Non-polluting. Broadest funding eligibility (EECA & ECan). Easiest regulatory compliance across all national airsheds.



ULEBs

Ultra-Low Emission Burners. Must achieve >65% thermal efficiency. Requires building consent.

(EECA funding ends Jan 9, 2026).



Pellet Burners

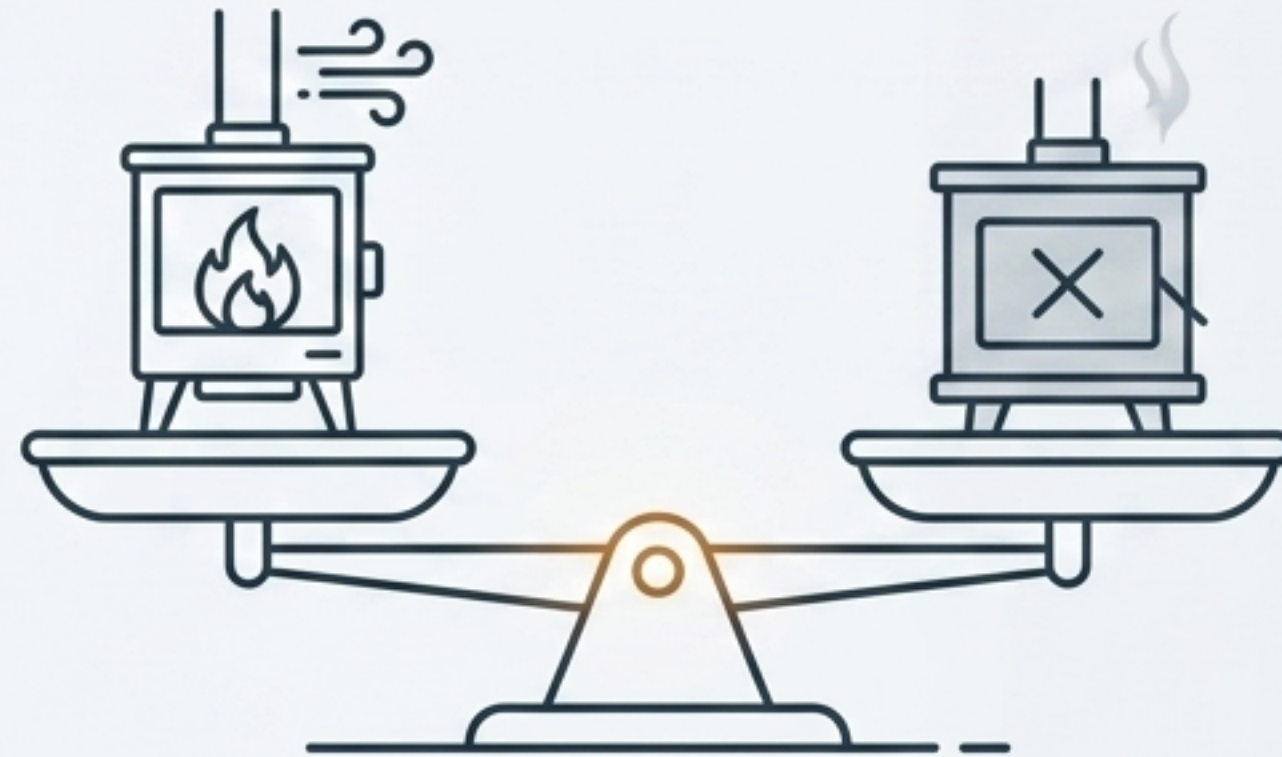
Automated feed, consistent low emissions. Approved for new builds in strict zones like Nelson.

(EECA funding ends Jan 9, 2026).

Navigating Rotorua's offset rule

Proposed Installation

Installing a new ULEB in your home.



Required Offset

Removing an existing, operable, consented solid fuel burner from another house.

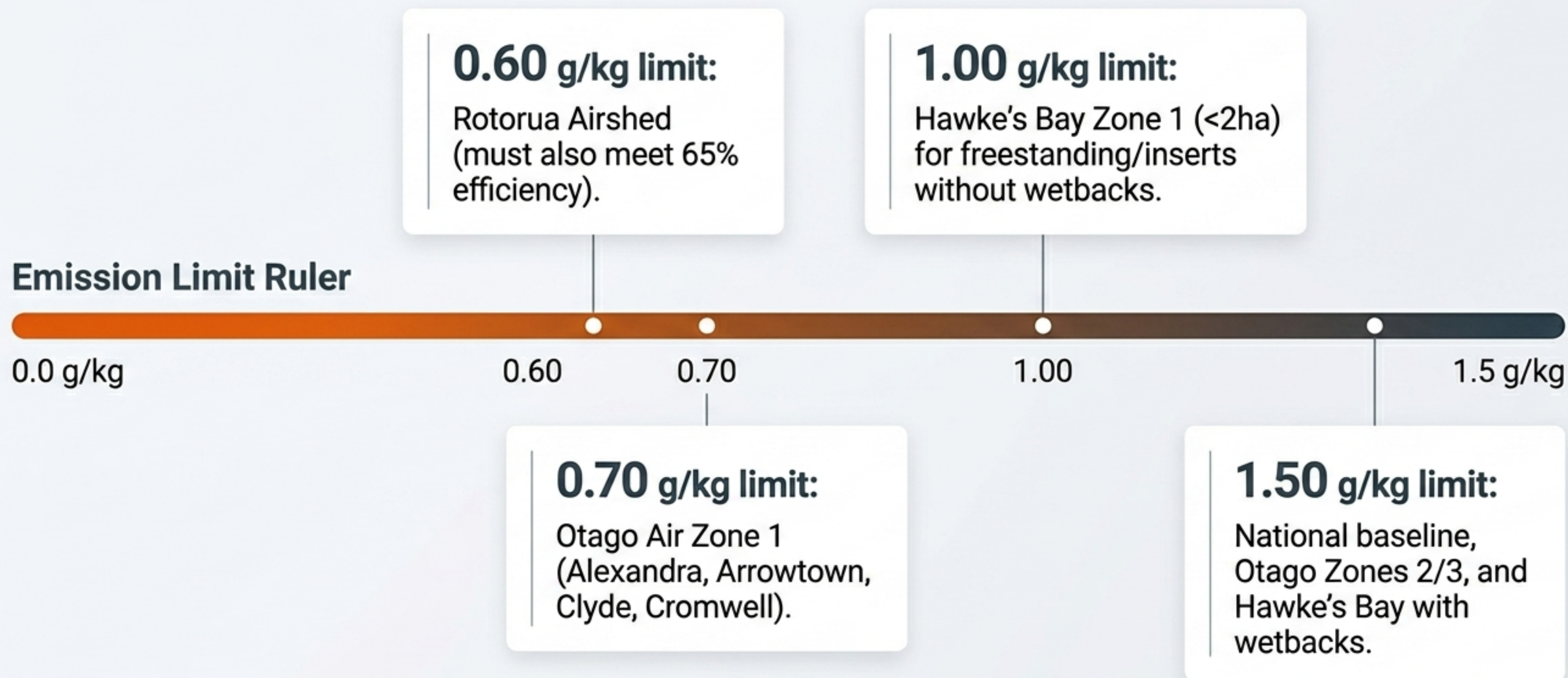
The Rule:

If a homeowner wishes to install a new woodburner but does not have an existing consented one to replace, they cannot simply add a net-new appliance to the Rotorua Airshed.

The Solution:

To gain resource consent, the homeowner must locate and permanently remove a consented solid fuel burner from another property within the exact same Airshed to neutralize emissions.

The regional emissions threshold



The 25% moisture mandate



The Science

Burning damp wood forces the fire to boil off moisture rather than produce heat. This results in excess PM2.5 smoke emissions, lower thermal efficiency, and wasted money.

Best Practice

Firewood must measure below 25% on a moisture meter. Properly seasoned wood should sound hollow when struck together and have visible cracks at the ends. Never burn treated timber, plastics, or beach driftwood.

The 2026 Homeowner Action Dashboard

1

Assess

Look up your property in your local council's Airshed map and Solid Fuel Burner Database to check installation/expiry dates.

2

Verify

Check eligibility for the EECA (Heat Pump only post-Jan 9) or ECan (\$5,000) subsidies based on your CSC status and home age.

3

Select

Choose an appliance from the MfE Authorised List that meets your local g/kg emission limits and >65% efficiency requirements.

4

Execute

Apply for building consent, process funding quotes before late-February deadlines, and ensure old burners are decommissioned to meet Point-of-Sale rules.