

Environment Division Activities that Contribute to Regional Plan Implementation

Consent processing

A large number of policies and some methods in the regional plans are implemented through the resource consent process.

Environmental monitoring

Resource Investigations Department staff carry out environmental monitoring programmes that implement a variety of regional plan methods and policies. These include ambient and targeted monitoring programmes for groundwater, surface water, coastal water and air.

Pollution response

The pollution response duties carried out by the Resource Quality section contribute to the implementation of all of the regional plans.

Submissions on territorial authority plans, consents and designation requirements

Staff from the Resource Policy Department and the Planning and Resources Department make submissions on territorial authority plans, resource consent applications and designation requirements where appropriate. These fulfil a number of regional plan policies and methods.

Staff involvement in appropriate industry groups

Staff throughout the Council are required by the regional plans to be involved in relevant industry groups and working parties. Groups that Environment Division staff are currently involved with include:

- Hutt Valley Environmental Industries Group;
- National Business Care Programme;
- Enviromart;
- Regional Waste Officers Forum;
- Regional Hazardous Waste Liaison Group;
- Hazardous Substances Technical Liaison Committee;
- WREA (Wellington Regional Environmental Agency); and
- Air Quality Working Group.

Liaison with relevant stakeholders including iwi

To achieve integrated resource management, the Regional Plan Implementation Programme requires Wellington Regional Council staff to liaise with a range of relevant stakeholders. Staff currently work with territorial authorities, public bodies, non-government organisations, relevant industries, iwi and communities.

Regional co-ordination of Clean Up New Zealand Week 2000

Four policies and one method of the Regional Coastal Plan commit the Council to help voluntary groups undertake community cleanups of streams and beaches.

For the second year in a row, Resource Policy Department staff undertook the regional co-ordination of Clean Up New Zealand Week. This involved organising meetings with local co-ordinators and assisting them with advice, administration, publicity and support before and during the cleanups.

Regional co-ordination of Seaweek 2001

In March 2001 Resource Policy Department staff undertook the regional co-ordination of Seaweek. This involved sending letters to potential participants, meeting with local co-ordinators, and providing them with administration, publicity and support before and during Seaweek.

This activity contributes to the implementation of four Regional Coastal Plan policies and one method.

Community Connections/Take Care programme

The Take Care programme (formally called Community Connections) contributes towards the implementation of twenty-four regional plan policies and eleven methods.

The Council provides funds to assist thirteen community groups to carry out environmental restoration projects on wetlands, streams, and beaches. Staff provide the groups with advice, administrative support, equipment and meeting facilitation where necessary.

This programme will be reported on in more depth in the Regional Policy Statement implementation report which will be submitted for the next Environment Committee meeting.

Business Bridges/Take Charge programme (including the development of environmental site audit kits, and the support of the Enviromart initiative)

As part of the Take Charge programme (formally called Business Bridges) staff from the Environment Co-ordination and Resource Investigations Departments have produced environmental site audit kits. These help businesses take charge of potential pollution problems.

Enviromart is an internet based waste exchange programme. Environmental Co-ordination Department staff are on the Enviromart Working Party that oversee the work of the contracted Enviromart co-ordinator. The Council financially supports Enviromart.

A report on the Take Charge programme is included as a separate agenda item in the order papers for this Environment Committee meeting.

Learnwell/Take Action programme

Take Action (formerly known as Learnwell) is an environmental education programme for schools aimed at eight to twelve year olds. It involves classes taking part in a four week teaching unit, going on a field trip, and undertaking an action project to enhance their local environment. A resource booklet was produced this year and the programme trialled with seven schools.

This programme will be covered more fully in the Regional Policy Statement implementation report which will be submitted at the next Environment Committee meeting.

This programme directly implements eleven policies and ten methods from the regional plans, and indirectly contributes towards the implementation of a further twelve policies and eleven methods.

Planwell publications for schools, community groups and businesses

Resource Policy Department staff have produced three Planwell publications targeting schools, community groups and businesses again this year. The Planwell publications contribute to the implementation of many regional plan policies and methods.

Trees for Survival programme

During this financial year, Resource Policy Department staff have continued to work with the Trees for Survival programme. This has involved the co-

ordination of seedling supplies, planting sites, plant maintenance, materials supplies, displays, presentations, school visits and new units.

The Trees for Survival programme contributes to the implementation of three policies three methods of the Regional Freshwater Plan and one policy of the Regional Soil Plan.

Riparian Management Strategy

The Riparian Management Strategy has been written and is being presented to the Committee at this meeting. The Strategy provides direction about where riparian management should be directed in the short term and sets a programme for the future.

The Council has begun by supporting riparian management initiatives at three pilot sites. Each site shows how riparian management can help meet the particular desired outcomes wanted for the stream.

The development and implementation of the Riparian Management Strategy contributes to the implementation of six policies and twelve methods in four of the regional plans.

Freshwater Ecosystems programme

A Freshwater Ecosystems programme has been developed for implementation this year and for the next two years. Work has begun on water races in the Wairarapa, whitebait spawning habitats, freshwater fisheries, and freshwater ecosystem management. A report on the structures in South Wairarapa that may impede fish passage has also been completed.

Wetland Recovery programme

Resource Policy Department staff have undertaken initial consultation with internal and external stakeholders to help develop the Wetland Strategy. The Wetland Advisory Service has been set up and has provided on site advice to eight landowners. The progress made this year will help complete the Wetland Strategy.

The Wetland Recovery programme implements one policy and two methods in the Regional Freshwater Plan.

Risk assessment report on petroleum storage (completed by contractors)

Independent contractors completed a study entitled “Natural Hazards Risk Associated with Petroleum Storage, Wellington Region: Risk Assessment Report”. This project was completed in response to one method in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land.

Report on alternatives to agrichemicals

Resource Policy Department staff have examined Council and territorial authority agrichemical usage in the region. As a result of investigations a report entitled: “Reducing pesticide use: the results of an investigation in the Wellington Region” has been completed.

The report has contributed to the implementation of two policies and six methods from the Regional Air Quality Management Plan and two policies in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land.

Regional review of discharges to air

Resource Policy Department staff completed a review of the emissions inventory, air quality monitoring results, pollution response database and consents database to prioritise discharges to be targeted through non-regulatory methods. This review contributed to the implementation of three methods and one policy of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan.

Education programme for home owners on on-site sewage treatment and disposal systems

The Resource Policy department published technical guidelines for on-site sewage systems in December 2000. The Guidelines were prepared with the help of staff from territorial authorities, horizons.mw, and consultants with expertise in sewage systems. They are primarily for the use of territorial authority staff, both planning and technical, when they are assessing the suitability of on-site sewage system designs, or applications to subdivide or change a land use.

Most sewage discharges from on-site systems are allowed as permitted activities in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land. The Council is investigating transferring responsibility for on-site sewage systems to territorial authorities under section 33 of the Resource Management Act 1991. The Guidelines are intended to provide the level of technical expertise necessary before any transfer is made.

The Council prepared a “sewage help” pamphlet series for all homeowners reliant on on-site sewage systems. The territorial authorities of the Region have distributed one of these pamphlets to homeowners in their districts, and have copies of the other two for homeowners who want more detailed information about how systems work.

These projects were required by three methods and one policy in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land for the Wellington Region.

Pamphlets on Rules 1 and 2 (discharges of agrichemicals) of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan

Resource Policy Department staff have produced two pamphlets, one on aerial applications and one on land based applications of agrichemical sprays and powders. These pamphlets explain Rules 1 and 2 of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan, and were distributed to farm supply stores around the region.

These pamphlets contribute towards the implementation of three policies in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land, and one policy and one method of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan.

Pamphlet on spray painting

The Council agreed to prepare and disseminate a pamphlet on spray painting as part of negotiations to resolve the Moir St residents Environment Court Appeal on the Regional Air Quality Management Plan. This pamphlet is part of the implementation of one part of one method in the Regional Air Quality Management Plan.

Register of organic farmers

A method in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land commits the Council to developing and maintaining a register of organic farmers so that Council staff can “involve those farmers in solutions to managing animal pests on their properties having regard to their needs as organic farmers”. Lists of organic farmers from all three providers of organic certification have been combined to form a regional database that is used by Biosecurity Department Staff in particular. The register is updated every six months.

Wellington Regional Council ANZECC Site Use Database

Resource Investigations Department staff continue to maintain and update the Wellington Regional Council ANZECC Site Use Database. Staff also participate in the Regional Waste Officers Forum which is collectively reviewing the classification of sites on databases throughout the country and co-ordinating with the Ministry for the Environment on a nationally consistent gathering of contaminated site information and retention (databases) for regional councils. The maintenance and review of this database implements four policies and two methods of the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land.

Promotion of regional plans to relevant parties

Regional plan policies and methods require staff to educate resource users about the regional plan contents, how and when to get a resource consent, and what to do to comply with a permitted activity. This is being achieved through pamphlets and booklets, demonstrations and displays at relevant venues and events, and seminars and courses targeting specific issues. These activities contribute to the implementation of policies and methods in all five regional plans.

Environmental Management System for the Resource Policy Department

Resource Policy Department staff are implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) for the Resource Policy Department. Other Council Departments are also developing or implementing an EMS. These implement one of the methods in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land.

Coastal Structures Inventory

Resource Investigations Department staff are compiling an inventory of coastal structures for the western Wellington Region. This has involved a field inspection of existing structures along the entire coastline of the western Wellington Region. A survey of the Wairarapa coastline was undertaken in 1997.

These surveys are being undertaken to identify existing lawful structures that are provided for by the rules in the Regional Coastal Plan, and redundant and illegal structures for which staff will investigate options for removal. The Coastal Structures Inventory is required by four methods and three policies in the Regional Coastal Plan.

Visual Soil Assessment and 500 Soils monitoring programmes

The Council supports the Visual Soil Assessment and 500 Soils monitoring programmes. Staff from the Resource Policy and Operations Departments began implementing these programmes this year.

Integrated User Guide

Resource Policy Department staff produced a User Guide to the regional rules. This allows easy navigation through the rules of the regional plans and makes the regulatory requirements more comprehensible to the public. It is now available on the internet. This User Guide won a KPMG Innovation Award.

The User Guide implements one policy and four methods in the Regional Air Quality Management Plan, one method and two policies in the Regional Plan for Discharges to Land and two policies in the Regional Coastal Plan.