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**Report 01.730**

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Report to Policy and Finance Committee  
from Dr Jane Bradbury, Divisional Manager, Environment

## **The Opportunities for Increased Use of Indigenous Plant Species in River Control Work**

### **1. Purpose**

To report back to the Committee on an issue that was raised during discussions on annual plan submissions.

### **2. Background**

In response to the Wellington Botanical Society's submission on the Council's annual plan, the Environment Division was asked by the Policy and Finance Sub Committee to prepare a report about the current use of willows in river flood control work and the opportunities for increased use of indigenous species.

A report, prepared by Tim Porteous, was presented to the Environment Committee on 7 August 2001 (Report 01.557). This report is attached (*Attachment 1*). At the Council meeting that followed (23 August 2001) it was resolved that the policy proposed in the report be referred to the relevant Committees for their comment and referral to the Policy and Finance Committee.

The report went to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee on 4 September 2001. That Committee resolved the following:

- (1) *That the report be received and its contents noted.*
- (2) *That the strength of the evidence for the continuing use of willows as a primary defence for riverbank protection be noted.*

- (3) *That the trials involving the use of native species, both as a back up and as frontline defence, be continued and monitored.*
- (4) *That long term decisions about the use of planting options take into account the result of these trials, both in financial and effectiveness terms.*

The report has not yet gone to Landcare Committee, although it was prepared in consultation with the Council's flood protection staff.

### 3. **Comment**

The resolution of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee is an extension of the report's original recommendations. The report recognises the invaluable role of willows in providing a cost-effective bioengineering solution to riverbank protection. It also recognises that increasing numbers of native plants are being established on river banks through planting or natural regeneration.

The crux of the report is the recognition of the opportunities that exist to work with interested organisations to trial native species as "front line defence species". This recommendation is certainly in keeping both with the Council's desire to work more closely with the community and its biodiversity initiatives.

### 4. **Recommendations**

- (1) *That the report be received and its contents noted*
- (2) *That trials involving the use of native species both in back-up and "front line defence" situations be established.*
- (3) *That long-term decisions about the use of plating options take into account the results of these trials, both in financial and effectiveness terms.*

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**Attachment 1:** Report 01.557