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Report to Environment Committee
from Paul Denton, Policy Advisor

Annual Environment Report 2000

1. Purpose

To present to the Environment Committee a draft of the Annual Environment Report for 2000. This report will cover the results from our monitoring work from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

2. Background

The Council has produced some form of annual environment report for many years, the purpose of which is to summarise the results of our monitoring activities for that year. However, no report was produced in 1999 as we released our comprehensive monitoring report *Measuring up: The State of the Environment Report for the Wellington Region* in that year. The annual environment report is designed to complement the series of annual reports focused on single aspects of the environment, such as coastal and freshwater quality.

3. Previous Versions - Survey results

The annual environment reports for 1997 and 1998 were produced in a format that delivered detailed information with accompanying graphs and diagrams about the state of the environment. They also included information about consented activities, consent compliance, and pollution response.

The recipients of the publications included public libraries, secondary school libraries, neighbouring regional councils, territorial authority libraries, local politicians, territorial authority mayors, and environmental care groups. A small survey of some of these recipients produced some interesting results.

Many of the local council librarians interviewed reported that members of the public did not frequently use the reports. The publications are classified as 'technical' and placed onto the reserve shelves. This means members of the public could not take the reports from the library. According to the librarians there was little interest in the publications.

In secondary schools, a similar picture emerged. Most schools found the publications too technical for most students. The information was useful to a point but it did not fit into any course curriculum for most science students or those interested in natural systems.

Other responses, from colleagues, had similar views about the format, content, and readership. In addition, during production of *Measuring Up* some effort was placed into the style of wording. This proved to be successful.

4. **Proposed New format**

Taking into account the recent comments from different groups it was decided to change the format and style of the annual environment report for 2000.

This year the report is in landscape format, with less words and concepts per topic. It is written in an easier to read style, similar to *Measuring Up*, and makes use of stylised diagrams and maps where appropriate.

We also have tried to introduce information that follows on from *Measuring Up*. This will keep people up to date with our work.

A copy of the draft Annual Environment Report 2000 will be tabled at the meeting.

5. **Communications**

The Annual Environment Report 2000 will be released early in the New Year (end of January/early February 2001)

A number of different distribution methods have been mooted. Given the new format, the report does lend itself to being easily incorporated into *Elements*, either as separate pages or one-off articles.

The report will continue to be distributed to other councils, schools, libraries and environmental groups, and contacts throughout the Wellington Region.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its content noted.

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