



*caring about you & your environment*

**Report 02.638**

8 October 2002

File: E/6/18/3

[Report 2002.Env02.638 JB:slh]

Report to Environment Committee  
from Jane Bradbury, Divisional Manager, Environment

## **Divisional Manager's Report**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Environment Division and about any matters that have arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

### **2. Managers' Reports**

The Department Managers' reports, along with the Divisional Accountant's report, follow as attachment 1.

### **3. Compliance Cost and Resource Management**

The issue of business costs for complying with the Resource Management Act 1991 is on-going and Central Government is now in the process of providing some direction.

A report from the Ministerial Panel on Business Compliance Cost (including RMA, Tax, and OSH), was issued in July 2001 and was followed by a report from Central Government, '*Striking the Balance*'. That Central Government response culminated in budget approval for twelve new projects to improve the implementation of legislation. Nine of the twelve projects related directly or indirectly to the Resource Management Act 1991. A budget of \$1.05M has been allocated to Ministry for the Environment (MfE) over the next two years. MfE is working in partnership with LGNZ on the issue.

MfE and LGNZ have produced a consultation document '*Promoting Excellence in RMA Practice*'. A Workshop to discuss the projects and implementation was held on 25 September 2002. The projects are wide ranging and will attempt to standardise certain facets of RMA implementation throughout the country, giving business some certainty when approaching a local authority.

Of note for Councillors is the proposal to introduce a voluntary accreditation scheme for decision-makers. Councillors that sit on Hearing Committees may be required to undertake a training programme, followed by certification.

Some of the projects may not be relevant to Greater Wellington, such as developing templates. MfE and LGNZ recognise that we have good processes and templates in place and do not require assistance in this area. However, this is not true of some of the smaller local authorities .

Other projects include:

- guidance for charging for resource consent processing (already clearly outlined in our Charging Policy)
- guidance for when and how to contract out resource consent processing (we don't contract out processing)
- best practise guides for councils consulting with iwi (non-notified contracts, Ara Tahi, iwi commissioners on each hearing)
- providing assistance to iwi so they can operate in a business-like manner,
- creation of centres of regulatory excellence - an accreditation scheme (Consents is already ISO accredited and subscribes to the Regional Council best practise guidelines)

There will be on-going consultation as the projects are developed over the next year.

#### 4. **Stream Clean-up**

As part of “Clean-up New Zealand” week, staff of the Environment Division spent an afternoon cleaning up the Owhiro Stream. (Geoff Skene referred to this work at the recent Albie Workshop on environmental issues.)

Although it was a rather wet day, staff were enthusiastic and industrious. It was rewarding to see the amount of rubbish that was cleared during the time available and was an indication of what we could achieve with community assistance.

We finished, wet, tired and a bit smelly – but the result was worth it!

#### 5. **Coastal Issues - KCDC**

KCDC recently held an evening meeting for residents of Manly Street, Paraparaumu, to discuss the coastal erosion issues.

Our staff were asked to present on resource consent issues. The meeting was well attended and the concern of those with houses at risk was evident. Some possible solutions, such as dune planting, were discussed. There is no doubt that this is a highly emotive issue and one where the community needs to be aware of the wider issues.

## 6. **Transit New Zealand**

We recently held one of our regular meetings with Transit New Zealand. These are being held on a regular basis to improve communication between Transit and the Environment Division. They are proving very worthwhile and allow difficulties to be “ironed out” before they get too great.

## 7. **Manager, Emergency Management**

Rian van Schalkwyk has just returned from a training course in Gufuskalar, Iceland, as part of his responsibility as a member of the UNDAC team.

I am pleased to advise that the team that went to Jenin in Palestine received an award for being the best-managed mission for 2002. (Please see Manager, Emergency Management’s, report outlining details.)

## 8. **Albie**

The Division’s management team are working hard on preparing information for the Albie process and LTCCP.

## 9. **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

- (1) *receives the report;*
- (2) *notes the contents.*

Report prepared by:

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