



Report **04.635**
Date 15 November 2004
File ENV/20/01/03

Committee **Environment Committee**
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Annual Environment Reports 2003-04

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee the annual summary of our ‘State of the Environment’ monitoring.

2. Reason for monitoring

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires us to monitor and report on the state of the environment in our region. Monitoring the state of the environment allows us to:

- observe and interpret trends or changes in environmental quality and determine the reasons for these;
- have good information for resource management decision making (resource consents and regional plan reviews); and
- convey information about our natural resources to the wider community.

3. Annual monitoring reports

This is the third year we have presented a summary of the year’s monitoring results in a package of annual report cards. The nine report cards summarise the state of the region’s environmental resources during 2003-04. The cards cover biodiversity, air quality, coastal and freshwater quality, groundwater, soil and hydrology. We also have reports about our work in pollution control and natural hazards.

Each card translates data into information that can be understood by a wide range of people. For more detailed or specific information, people can contact the staff member identified on each card.

The report cards will be tabled at the meeting.

4. State of the Environment reporting

In addition to our Annual Environment Report cards, we publish an in-depth 'State of the Environment' report every six years called 'Measuring up'. This will be published in December next year and will evaluate the state of the environment against the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) objectives.

In 2005, 'Measuring up' will also contain information to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and methods in the RPS so that it can be used for the RPS review. The Resource Management Act 1991 requires us to "commence a full review" of the Regional Policy Statement by May 2005 (ten years after it became operative). The results of the RPS review will be presented to the Council after the publication of 'Measuring up' in 2005.

Depending on the outcome of the review, we are required to re-notify the operative RPS, or notify a new RPS that incorporates changes made as a result of the review. As with all policy statements and plans, the notified RPS must go through the First Schedule process of consultation, public submissions and so on.

5. Strategic context

One of the approaches of the Take 10 element – Community – is 'Ensuring people have useful information about our region'. The State of our Environment report cards gives useful information about a number of the Take 10 elements.

6. Communication

The report card package will be distributed to the broad community of users of environmental information, including Greater Wellington staff, the general public, iwi, local and central government decision-makers, non-governmental organisations, environmental and community organisations, industry, libraries, schools and universities. The cards will also be available on our website.

The package was designed with the help of the Communications Department. Communications staff are also helping us to promote the report cards to a wide audience.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) *receive the report; and*
- (2) *note the contents.*

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