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**Committee** Environment  
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## **Take Care Annual Report 2004-2005**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide the committee with a summary of the achievements and activities of Greater Wellington funded care groups during the financial year ended 30 June 2005.

### **2. Strategic Context**

Care group projects contribute to five elements from Greater Wellington's ten-year plan "Towards a Sustainable Region". These are - Community, Biodiversity, Water, Land, and Recreation & Parks.

### **3. Background**

The *Take Care* programme provides funding, staff support and specialist advice to community groups working to restore the health of the region's most at risk ecosystem types. These include rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries, coastal dunes and escarpments. The programme balances the joint objectives of restoring ecological sites with the delivery of environmental education, and gives the Council more opportunities to connect with the community.

The performance indicator in the Annual Plan for the programme is that existing groups are maintained; and five new groups are established and assisted to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.

### **4. Discussion**

In 2004-05, Greater Wellington assisted 33 groups with their projects (for a complete list, please see **attachment**). Seven of these were new groups, being funded for the first time. Five groups reached the end of their funding at the end of June this year. Of these, one group (Castlepoint) consider their project completed and two (Fensham and Manuka Street Reserve) expect to be self sustaining from now on. The Pakuratahi Interest Group will continue to be funded through the Landcare division, and the Glenside group has signalled that they intend to reapply with an extension of their project. A further group,

(Te Horo) withdrew from the programme in 2005, although some local residents have continued to work on the restoration area at the mouth of the Mangaone Stream.

Table one (below) shows the distribution of groups across the region during the year.

**Table 1: Regional distribution of care groups**

Regional distribution of groups in 2004-05	
Kapiti Coast	12
Porirua	1
Hutt Valley	8
Wellington	4
Wairarapa	8
Total	33

The Kapiti Coast continues to have the largest number of care groups. This largely reflects the number of applications that are received from this district; as most applications which meet our criteria receive funds or support. While Porirua officially has one group, significant work has been done in both the Horokiri and Kakaho catchments that flow into the Pauatahanui Estuary by corporate volunteers and periodic detention workers. Even with five groups leaving the programme, it is likely that the number funded in 2006-2007 will grow beyond those presently listed.

Table two (below) lists the numbers of groups working on different types of ecosystems in the region.

**Table 2: Ecosystem types being restored by care groups**

Range of ecosystems addressed in 2004-05	
Streams and rivers	16
Wetlands	6
Coastal dunes	7
Coastal escarpments	1
Estuaries	1
Combination	2
Total	33

The two combined projects incorporate riparian, wetland and dune projects. Freshwater restoration projects (streams, rivers and wetlands) continue to be

the most numerous, but interest in coastal projects has been growing, with five of the seven new groups in 2004-05 having a coastal focus (three dune projects, one estuary and a coastal escarpment).

It is difficult to summarise in one report the numerous achievements and solid progress made by such a large number of groups. The following are a selection of highlights from around the region:

- Since starting out four years ago, the Glenside group have planted and maintained 2000 native shrubs and grasses along a stretch of the Stebbings Stream and 6000 natives along 400 metres of the Porirua Stream. The group has an ambitious long term plan to restore natives to the whole catchment.
- Working together with the Global Volunteer Network, the Eastbourne Dunes Protection Group eradicated the invasive weed 'tree medick' along the foreshore south of Rona Bay wharf.
- The newly established Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve Care Group held a beach clean up day to celebrate Seaweek.
- The Paraparaumu Community Beach Management Interest Group completed a baseline survey of their dune restoration site. The site will be resurveyed at regular intervals to monitor the effectiveness of the native plants used at trapping and retaining sand and preventing beach erosion.
- The Henley Lake group continued their restoration of wader ponds in this popular Masterton reserve; planting along the stream edge. The ponds are attracting a good mix of water fowl.
- The Friends of Owhiro Stream extended their shadehouse at the Brooklyn Community Centre and held a planting day with children attending a school holiday programme.
- Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust received a Wellington Conservation award (habitat restoration category) from the Department of Conservation in recognition of their outstanding, sustained voluntary commitment to the restoration of Kaiwharawhara Stream. Since the trust was established in 2000, over 500 people have helped to restore native vegetation to the streamside. Over 20,000 locally grown native plants are now well on their way to establishing a dense young forest between Ian Galloway Park and Otari-Wilton's Bush, an area that was previously dominated by invasive weeds.
- Manuka Reserve Restoration Group received a merit award for their work to transform a bare paddock into a unique streamside forest. This small reserve in Landsdowne, North Masterton is now a popular walkway featuring a selection of rare native plants. 2005 was the final year of *Take Care* funding for the Manuka Street group.

- Fencing was completed at the site along the Motuwaireka Stream and weeds controlled in preparation for planting.
- Friends of Otaki constructed a shadehouse at the Otaki Depot to provide plants for the continued enhancement of the estuary and associated wetlands.
- In August 2004, the Friends of Greendale held their sixth annual planting with pupils from Kenakena School beside the Muaupoko Stream in Otaihanga.

There is good collaboration between care groups and schools across the region. Greytown School contributes to the restoration of Papawai Stream by growing plants for the project in its nursery, and will help with planting over the years to come. In addition to receiving support from Greater Wellington through *Take Care*, the Papawai project incorporates assistance from local land owners, Papawae Marae, South Wairarapa District Council and other groups.

Greater Wellington continues to enjoy good working relationships with other agencies through joint projects and events such as the annual Restoration Day. This event has been held every year since 2001 to celebrate the work of volunteers involved in ecological restoration throughout the region. It is organised by volunteers and staff from the key agencies that support community projects. Greater Wellington Regional Council hosted this year's event with assistance from the Department of Conservation, the New Zealand Ecological Restoration Network and Kapiti Coast District Council.

Kapiti's Queen Elizabeth Park provided an excellent venue for this year's Coastal theme on Saturday 21 May 2005. It was attended by about 120 people who enjoyed a wide range of specialist workshops and field trips at sites around the park including the nursery, kahikatea forest remnant, newly developed wetlands, and the dunes.

## **5. Performance against budget**

The budget for *Take Care* in 2004 – 2005 was \$246,000. Actual expenditure was \$197,000. The difference is due to staff vacancies, an underspend by a Wairarapa group, and time having to be devoted to other activities (e.g. wetland advice).

## **6. Conclusion**

The *Take Care* programme covers a wide range of ecosystem types and has a good spread of groups throughout most of the region. Most groups have made significant progress on their projects and provide an excellent showcase of what communities can do to look after and restore their local environments. Community planting days are generally well supported, with several groups reporting over 40 people at these events. In addition to these events, most care groups also carry out regular (often monthly, but for some groups weekly) working bees.

This year, the target in the annual and strategic plans was exceeded with seven new groups joining the programme. The 2005-06 application round is now open and the first applications have already been received. Applications close on 14 October 2005.

## **7. Communication**

The activities and achievements of care groups frequently feature in local newspapers around the region. An article on the groups' collective achievements for last year will appear in the upcoming edition of elements.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report; and*
2. *Notes the contents.*

Report prepared by:

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**Attachment 1:** *Take Care groups at 30 June 2005*