



**Report**                    **05.493**  
**Date**                     14 September 2005  
**File**                      ENV/19/02/01

**Committee**            **Environment**  
**Author**                **Susan Hutchinson-Daniel Environmental Educator**

## ***Take Action* Annual Report**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of the activities and achievements of schools involved in the *Take Action* programme during the 2004-05 year.

### **2. Strategic Context**

*Take Action* contributes to the achievement of the outcomes in Greater Wellington's strategic plan, "Towards a Sustainable Region" under the Water, Biodiversity, Land, Waste, and Recreation and Parks elements.

### **3. Background**

*Take Action*, Greater Wellington's environmental education programme for 8-12 year olds, is available free to all schools in the Greater Wellington region. The programme is available both guided by Council staff or "self-guided" by participating schools' teachers. Between the launch of the programme in March 2002 and the end of June 2004 approximately 3600 students have been involved. A detailed evaluation of the *Take Action* programme was undertaken during 2005. The results of this were presented to the Environment Committee on August 16. The performance indicator for *Take Action* in the Annual Plan requires the programme to be implanted to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.

### **4. Discussion**

#### **4.1 Uptake of *Take Action***

From July 2004 to June 2005 23 schools were involved in the *Take Action* programme. Twelve schools undertook the guided programme and eleven schools took up the self guided option. Seven of the schools involved had more than three classes working on the programme which contributed to a total number of students involved of approximately 2200. As Table 1 shows, schools from almost all territorial authorities participated in the programme, with the exception of Masterton District.

**Table 1: 2004-2005 schools undertaking Take Action by territorial authority.**

<b>Territorial Authority</b>	<b>Schools involved in Take Action</b>
Carterton District	Ponatahi Christian School
Kapiti Coast District	Kenakena School
Hutt City	Te Ara Whanui Kura Kaupapa Maori Gracefield School
Masterton District	
Porirua City	Discovery School
South Wairarapa District	Kahutara School Greytown School
Upper Hutt City	Fraser Crescent School Totara Park School Oxford Crescent School Silverstream School Fergusson Intermediate School St Brendans School St Josephs School Birchville School
Wellington City	Houghton Valley School Brooklyn School Khandallah School Karori Normal School Otari School St Francis Xavier School Clyde Quay School Island Bay School

However, Masterton schools are involved in the 2005 calendar year. This term we are working with Douglas Park School and Gladstone School, both within the Masterton district.

The large uptake by schools in the Upper Hutt area is due to the successful marketing of the self guided option in this area at the end of 2004. We also have continued to target schools within priority catchments (the six most

degraded water bodies of the region), in particular the Kaiwharawhara (2 schools in 2004-05) and Waiwhetu (1 school) catchments.

## **4.2 Promotion of the Self guided Take Action Programme**

In the 2004-05 year changes were made to the self guided programme to increase its appeal to teachers. The rationale for this was to grow the programme and make better use of the environmental education team's time and energy. The strategy has been to focus on training teachers in running the programme themselves and to provide teaching tools and class resources to enable this to happen. Comprehensive teacher training was provided and transport costs were met for schools taking up the self-guided option.

Our expectation is that the experience of the Upper Hutt schools will be repeated in other parts of the region as we promote the self-guided option in these areas. As indicated at the last Committee meeting, the focus for this in 2005-06 is Masterton district and Lower Hutt.

## **4.3 Action project highlights**

### **4.3.1 Self guided schools**

The self-guided schools in 2004-05 were: Brooklyn (term three 2004); Khandallah and Karori Normal (term four 2004); Silverstream, Oxford Crescent, Ponatahi Christian School, Greytown, and Clyde Quay (term one 2005); and St Josephs, Birchville, and St Brendans (term two 2005).

For their action projects, some of these schools made links with their local authority to undertake stream restoration work, whilst others have joined with a care group to work on community restoration projects in their area. Their projects have included both tree planting and weed control. Silverstream School, for example, is assisting a local care group to restore a wetland in the area. These links strengthen the school's long term commitment to environmental education, and also help community groups meet their objectives.

### **4.3.2 Guided schools**

Houghton Valley School, Fraser Crescent School and Discovery School completed the programme in term three of 2004. All three schools made a commitment to long term action projects. Houghton Valley has commenced worm farming, and is recycling and composting its waste, as well as continuing the development of its "rainforest" (a joint initiative with Wellington City Council). Discovery School students worked on increasing the biodiversity of their school grounds with the support of Porirua City plant nurseries. Fraser Crescent students planted native trees along the Hutt River with Greater Wellington's River Ranger Thane Walls.

Kenakena, Kahutara and Te Ara Whanui Kura Kaupapa Maori schools did *Take Action* in term four 2004. Students undertook a wide range of action projects, including composting and recycling school wastes, environmentally

friendly car washes, planting native trees, creating a web site, and promoting water quality messages through flyers and radio advertisements.

St Francis Xavier, Otari, and Totara Park schools completed Take Action in term one of 2005. These schools have committed to improving the biodiversity of their surroundings both at school and within their local environment. Otari School developed a system to collect rain from the hall roof to water the native seedlings in the school nursery. The Utility Services Division of the Council re-cycled a large polythene drum which was no longer needed to assist with this project. The seedlings grown will ultimately be planted out in Otari Wilton's bush.

The remaining guided schools (Gracefield, Island Bay, and Fergusson Intermediate) undertook the programme in the second term of this year. Gracefield School has established a link with the Waiwhetu Action Group and will be involved in future planting projects at the stream. Island Bay School persuaded children in Walking School Buses to clean the storm drains on their way to and from school. As indicated earlier, Fergusson Intermediate School students won 1000 native trees in the Meadowfresh Trees 4 Kids competition which they have now planted in the school grounds. Students are working alongside members of the Upper Hutt Forest and Bird Society to plant along the neighbouring Moehau Stream.

#### **4.4 Karori Wildlife Sanctuary**

Four schools from the Wellington City area have used the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary for field trips this year. Using this magnificent local resource has been very successful, offering many students not only the experience of being stream health scientists, but also for some the opportunity to visit the sanctuary for the first time.

#### **4.5 Enviroschool Awards**

In December 2004 the inaugural Enviroschool Awards for the Greater Wellington region were sponsored by the Council. Of the eleven schools receiving awards, seven had been involved with *Take Action*.

#### **4.6 Website**

New *Take Action* content for Greater Wellington's web site was developed during the year. It includes all of the material from the old site that enables teachers to do the programme on their own, plus new material to support teachers during the action project phase, planning advice for field trips, and games and activities for students. It also includes a section on how to continue with environmental education once a school has finished the programme, including links to local restoration projects.

#### **4.7 Intermediate Schools**

Another important development has been the "whole school approach" devised for intermediate and larger schools which have not taken up *Take Action* thus far. This has been piloted successfully with Ferguson Intermediate (in terms

two to four of 2005) and can now be applied more widely in the urban parts of the region.

#### **4.8 Performance against budget**

The cost to deliver *Take Action* in 2004-05 was \$160,000, against a budget of \$188,000. The under spend is due to staff vacancies, GIS services allowed for but not taken up, and time given over to training new staff.

### **5. Conclusion**

2004-2005 has been a busy year for the *Take Action* team as we explore new ways of working with schools to meet Greater Wellington's environmental objectives. The increase in uptake of the programme is pleasing and will guide our future promotional initiatives. A targeted approach to promoting the programme to schools in 2006 will share participation across all territorial authorities, as well as continuing to focus on key catchment areas.

The increasing involvement of schools in other environmental education programmes (e.g., Enviroschools, Trash Palace, school "EE" clusters) provides an assurance that the *Take Action* programme is starting more schools on their journey towards education for sustainable development. Schools choosing longer term initiatives such as native tree planting, waste reduction, recycling, worm farming and composting is further evidence of their commitment to this journey.

### **6. Communications**

The achievements of the schools described in this report have been described throughout the year in relevant local newspapers. As this is an annual summary, it is not necessary to repeat this.

### **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

**Susan Hutchinson-Daniel**  
Environmental Educator

**Geoff Skene**  
Manager Environment  
Education

**Jane Bradbury**  
Divisional Manager,  
Environment