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Committee Environmental Wellbeing  
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## Environment Education: An overview

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the objectives and scope of the Council's current environment education programme, *Take Action*.

### 2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

### 3. Background

In 2000 the Environment Co-ordination Department was established in the then Environment Division to implement the Council's environmental and communication strategy *A Better Environment*. This strategy was based on the principle that the environment would only move towards a sustainable position if people made a personal commitment and took action to look after it.

Three programmes were developed to reinforce the simple message that "individuals can make a difference to the environment through daily actions." One of these programme targeted schools (*Take Action*), another targeted small businesses (*Take Charge*) and the third offered support for people who wanted to look after the environment through community care group activities (*Take Care*).

The *Take Action* and *Take Care* programmes transferred to the newly formed Biodiversity Department within the Catchment Management Group in late 2010. This report discusses the *Take Action* environment education programme.

### 4. *Take Action* programme

The Environmental Education team's role was to create and deliver the *Take Action* programmes to schools in the region. Programmes were linked to the New Zealand School Curriculum and the Guidelines for Environmental

Education in New Zealand. *Take Action* programmes integrated the three dimensions of Environmental Education, namely:

1. Education **in** the environment (Explore)
2. Education **about** the environment (Investigate)
3. Education **for** the environment (Take action)

*Take Action for Water* was launched in 2002. The programme targeted Year 5-8 students and focused on storm water pollution. The programme was delivered over a 4 to 6 week period. Students investigated water related issues, explored the health of two streams and took action to help their local waterway.

In 2008 a new and improved *Take Action for Water* was launched. The new programme took a more holistic approach to water by looking at the 'bigger picture' of catchments and the ecosystems they contain. It investigates the relationship between the component living parts of the ecosystem and the impact we have on them. This new version of *Take Action for Water* still targets Year 5 to 8 students but the programme takes a school term to complete.

All *Take Action* programmes have had a similar delivery format. A comprehensive resource was created. Classroom teachers were trained by the Education team to enable them to teach the programme. All schools had their own facilitator ( a Environment Education staff member) who would offer support by assisting teachers, giving presentations to the students, running the field trips and assisting (where necessary) with action projects to help the environment.

To ensure that schools could participate in the field trips GW pays for buses to transport students to the appropriate local sites. Each school is also entitled to \$300 to put towards their action projects. These projects have included plantings at schools for biodiversity purposes, waste and energy audits and involvement in *Take Care* care group activities. Due to our facilitation some schools have formed long term relationships with their local care group (eg. Waikanae School and Kenakena School with the Waikanae Estuary group)

Currently the Environmental Education team delivers *Take Action for Water* to 20 schools a year across the region (approximately 2000 students). The team now consists of 4.6 FTEs who are all trained teachers.

As Table 1 shows, schools from all territorial authorities participate in *Take Action for Water*. The high percentage of repeat business can be interpreted to mean that the programme is highly regarded by schools. Approximately 20,000 students have participated in *Take Action* since its inception. While funding constraints have always prevented any formal analysis of the effectiveness of the programme, there has always been plenty of anecdotal evidence of changes of behaviour. For example, it is common for students to report that they have persuaded their parents to only wash cars on lawns, to understand the link between what happens on the land and water quality and to appreciate the

vulnerability of our native fish species. It is known that many schools continue with sustainable practices after the completion of the take Action programme.

**Table 1: The number of schools that have undertaken *Take Action for Water* from 2001-2011 by territorial authority.**

<b>Territorial authority</b>	<b>Total number of Primary schools</b>	<b>Schools that have undertaken <i>Take Action for Water</i></b>	<b>Schools that have undertaken <i>Take Action for Water</i> more than once</b>
Kapiti	20	8 (40%)	2 (25%)
Porirua	32	18 (56%)	6 (33%)
Upper Hutt	17	11 (65%)	4 (36%)
Lower Hutt	47	27 (57%)	12 (44%)
Wellington	69	42 (61%)	14 (33%)
Masterton	18	15 (83%)	6 (40%)
Carterton	6	5 (83%)	2 (40%)
South Wairarapa	8	7 (88%)	5 (71 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>133 (61%)</b>	<b>51 (38%)</b>

## **5. Maori Perspectives**

### **5.1 Resources**

When creating resources the Environmental Education team has ensured that a Maori perspective has been included. The original *Take Action for Water* provided some resources in Te Reo. The new *Take Action for Water* resource was collaboration with Ara Tahi. It took a different approach and ensured that Maori concepts (kaitiaki and mauri) were woven throughout the programme. Maori words, traditional stories, pepeha and significant sites were included and Maori motifs were used in the design of the posters. We have received a lot of positive feedback about the integration of Maori aspects into the programme

### **5.2 Schools**

We have also worked with Te Kura Maori O Porirua (2008), Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Wairarapa (2007) and Te Ara Whanui Kura Kaupapa Maori (2004). This has provided challenges recently as Kura want resources for the students to be in Te Reo and we have not had the budget to be able to do this.

### 5.3 Maataurangi Taiao

In 2007 we delivered *Take Action for Water* training to the new Maataurangi Taiao team (Maori Education for Sustainability Advisors). This team had been set up by the Ministry of Education to support teachers across New Zealand working in both Kura Kaupapa and immersion (Te reo) classes.

We then ran a *Take Action for Water* workshop for 15 teachers from across New Zealand who were involved in the professional development contract with Maataurangi Taiao team.

## 6. Partnerships

### 6.1 Regional council

We work across the organisation to engage students in their community

- *Take Care* (We link many schools into restoration groups)
- Park Rangers (Maungaraki students planting at Belmont Regional Park)
- Flood Protection (Hutt Intermediate students planting on the Hutt River)
- Marketing and Design (Birchville School planting on regional council land)

### 6.2 Other partnerships

We work collaboratively in the community to get schools actively involved in biodiversity projects.

- Territorial authorities (eg. Collaboration with Pauatahanui School and PCC to plant at Pauatahanui Stream).
- Department of Conservation (Eg. Running “Attracting native wildlife into your school” workshops for Porirua and Kapiti schools; Queen Margaret’s College translocating lizards in their school grounds).
- Forest and Bird (Eg. Dalefield School students monitoring lizards at Fensham Reserve; Upper Hutt students planting at various projects)
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (Eg. Tukurumuri, Martinborough and Pirinoa growing seedlings for the Rengarenga project at Palliser Bay)
- Private landowner (Eg. Wainuioru School growing *Olearia gardnerii* seedlings and planting at Ed Beetham’s QE11 Block)
- Meridian Energy (eg. Meridian funding supported Plateau School removing *Tradescantia* from their forest block; Greytown School realigned and planted their stream)

### 6.3 **Enviroschools Programme**

Greater Wellington supports the Enviroschools programme in our region by providing funding to support their Regional Coordinator and by providing logistical support (office space, access to computer, photocopier etc).

The Enviroschools programme has a broad agenda of creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through people teaching and learning together whereas the *Take Action for Water* programme is focused on total catchment management (TCM). The two programmes are entirely complimentary and staff from both programmes often work along side each other in a number of schools.

## 7. **Future Directions**

In June this year, the Council approved a Biodiversity Strategy for Greater Wellington covering the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2021. As part of aligning the Biodiversity Department to the strategy, a review of all existing programmes within the department is currently underway including the *Take Action* programme.

This comprehensive “zero-based” review will be completed by 31 March 2012 and any changes to the structure of the Environment Education team and its work programme will be implemented from 1 July 2012.

## 8. **Communication**

There are no public communication requirements of this document.

## 9. **Recommendations**

*That the Committee*

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

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