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Committee Environment Committee  
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## **General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 10 May 2016**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

### **2. Catchment Management**

#### **2.1 Biosecurity**

##### **2.1.1 General Biosecurity**

###### **Regional Pest Management Plan review**

Biosecurity officers have met with the Farming Reference Group and the Poutiriao Group to discuss the Regional Pest Management Plan review. Both groups requested to be involved in the review process and receive updates as it develops.

###### **National Velvetleaf response**

A large number of fodder beet crops nationally have been infested with the invasive weed velvetleaf. The imported seed source was contaminated with the weed seeds. Three properties in southern Wairarapa used the contaminated seed source and staff found velvetleaf plant on two of these. More information is provided in the separate report included in this order paper.

###### **Streamlining of 1080 rules**

The Ministry for the Environment (MFE) has released a consultation document on streamlining Resource Management Act (RMA) Regulations for 1080 application. The BioManagers group, representing regional councils, has been working closely with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the Department of Conservation (DOC) and OSPRI for the past two years to get

this review underway. The consultation document is a result of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Report on 1080 and the subsequent MFE business case on the regulation of 1080 under the RMA. Both papers recommended the simplification of how 1080 application is managed under the RMA. A GWRC submission is being prepared.

### **Amendments to Wellington City Council animal bylaws**

The Wellington City Council (WCC) is amending the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008 for animals. The amendments focus on the management of cats, dogs and a number of other problematic species. GWRC and WCC have a long history of working collaboratively on both pest animal management and a range of problem domestic animals. The proposed amendments in this document will help to protect the community from the unwanted impacts of a number of these species.

GWRC is submitting largely in support of the proposed amendments.

## **2.1.2 Pest Animals**

### **Rabbits**

Rabbit numbers remain high on the Kapiti Coast and in Wellington as favourable weather conditions continue. Problem sites are generally being controlled with Pindone carrot on private properties and by night shooting in public areas. Despite the dry weather, rabbit numbers in the Wairarapa remain low.

### **Wasps**

Wasps are in high numbers this season, but there has been a late start to receiving reports regarding problem wasps.

Biosecurity staff assisted a Landcare Research scientist to locate and dig up live nests as part of a national study into a parasitic wasp mite. There is potential to use the mite as a biological control agent to control German and common wasps. The team gathered nests from Lower Hutt and Wainuiomata.

A new European paper wasp species has been discovered in the Nelson/Marlborough region. It is unknown how long this wasp has been present in New Zealand as it is very similar in appearance to the Asian paper wasp. Biosecurity staff are working with MPI to investigate any potential sightings in the region.

Large willow aphids are causing the mass secretion of sap from willow trees, creating a new food source for wasps amongst other environmental issues. This could have a significant impact if the willow aphids continue to spread and support large populations of wasps, much like the beech forests in the South Island.



- 1) Landcare scientists preparing to dig out a wasp nest on a roadside bank
- 2) Asian paper wasp nest, similar in appearance to the new European paper wasp

### 2.1.3 Pest Plants

#### **Surveillance and total control**

Survey and annual inspections for all total control species continue. Particular focus continues on Bathurst bur control. High numbers of Bathurst bur plants are being found in rotational crop land, with no seed burrs found.

#### **Containment species**

An aerial control of Boneseed on steep coastal faces on the Wellington South Coast was successfully completed.

#### 2.1.4 Biocontrol

The team continued transfers of Buddleia leaf weevils, which are doing very well this season. Transfers of Green thistle beetle and Broom gall mite continued until the insects began exhibiting winter behaviours.

Lynley Hayes of Landcare Research ran a two day biocontrol training course, for the entire Pest Plants team. Lynley was impressed with staff commitment to biocontrol and the biocontrol data held by our team. Lynley commented that GWRC is leading the biocontrol effort in the country.

##### **Dung Beetle research**

The private company Dung Beetle Innovations Ltd has secured funding to study the success of dung beetle releases in New Zealand. A scientist from the USA has commenced visiting sites around the country to assess establishment. A visit to the Wellington Region is scheduled for late April.

#### 2.1.5 BioWorks

##### **Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP)**

The RPPCP will cover approximately 70,000 hectares during the 2015/16 year, divided into 18 projects. Eleven projects have control completed and work has commenced on a further five projects.

##### **TB Free New Zealand Control Programme**

BioWorks is preparing a plan for a TBfree New Zealand possum control operation in the southern Rimutaka Range. This project covers approximately 22,000 hectares, extending southwards from Wainuiomata and Eastbourne. The project will include aerial 1080 and ground based control as acceptable to the occupiers. There is some local opposition to this project.

Ground control projects in Mangaroa Kaitoke and Whangaehu (around 13,000ha) are scheduled for completion by middle of June.

## **2.2 Land Management**

### **2.2.1 Porirua Harbour Sediment Management Programme**

A new Land Management Advisor was appointed in November 2015 to take over the role of running the Sediment Management Programme in Porirua Harbour from external consultants. In that five month period a transition between the consultant and Land Management has been underway focusing on meeting key landowners within the catchment and planning of future works programmes and soil conservation plans.

A framework of soil conservation initiatives has been developed which outlines what approaches Land Management will be taking along with grant rates available to private landowners. Further work has looked at how Land

Management can assist with sediment management on public land, in particular Battle Hill and Belmont Regional Park, managed by the Parks Department.

### 2.2.2 Catchment Control Schemes

All six catchment scheme annual meetings have been completed and work programmes finalised for the financial year. The Awhea-Opuawe Scheme had the five year review completed as part of this year's meetings.

A substantial project, the Manawa cutting, was undertaken as part of the Whareama Catchment Scheme. The project was funded through the Masterton District Council and involved rechannelling of the Whareama river to mitigate against persistent flooding along a section of the Annadale Valley Road.

A recent meeting of ratepayers in the Awhea Catchment Scheme endorsed a new five year plan that will focus work on protection of key infrastructure such as roads and bridges.



**Ushers Hill is a focus for the Awhea Catchment Scheme works programme as it is a key access route to White Rock**

### 2.2.3 Farm Environment Programme

The Farm Environment Programme (FEP) has continued its expansion to include all of the Ruamahanga valley. Work over the summer months have included the preparation of new FEPs for farmers, in particular around the Wairarapa Moana catchment targeting landowners who were engaged in the recently completed Fresh-Start for Fresh Water project. Two FEPs in the Kapiti area will also be completed this financial year. Despite the dairy downturn most dairy farmers are recognising the importance of the efficiency gains

they are finding on farm. Farmers have reported that their Farm Environment Plan has served to highlight areas in their business where efficiency gains can be made. These gains have largely come from efficient nutrient management;

- I. One of the most effective Phosphorus (P) loss mitigations is to maintain soil P levels within the biological optimum. Where soil P levels have been identified as sitting at this optimum level, farms are able to reduce or withhold P fertiliser applications.
- II. Farmers are recognising the value of farm dairy effluent (FDE) and increasing the area of land that can receive FDE. This is a particularly effective mitigation tool for Nitrogen and pathogens. Through Farm Environment Plans areas of land suitable to receive FDE are identified and we are able to use grant assistance to incentives this land use change.

Where possible farmers are continuing with riparian planting but despite the desire to continue a number of farmers are having to defer spending on such work until there is an improvements in the current financial situation.



#### 2.2.4 WRECI Hill Country Programme

Two new staff have been appointed to assist running the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) Hill Country programme, one a replacement and the other a fixed term position covering staff on leave. Work has focused on ten-year reviews for farm plans and now commencing annual programming for work during winter, primarily pole planting and soil conservation woodlots. The WRECI programme has a target to deliver 6000

Poplar and Willow poles by the end of June along with 45 ha of conservation woodlots.

At this stage in the planning for the winter pole planting programme demand for poles has been below previous years. Continuing dry soil conditions have had a significant impact and many landowners are waiting for the late autumn rains before confirming their orders.

### 2.2.5 Forestry

Harvesting work continues at two sites in the Metro forest, and at Hiwinui in the Wairarapa. Forestry returns have been relatively high over the last six months. A strong working relationship continues to operate between GWRC staff and the forestry managers. The Forest Ranger position, responsible for day to day liaison with the forestry managers, has recently been transferred from Land Management to Parks. This recognises the strong interaction of forestry operations within the Parks network.

Following the sale of the cutting rights in July 2014, the opportunity has been taken to review surplus land and buildings at Stoney Creek. The Stoney Creek forest is situated east of Martinborough and contains an area of unplanted flat land near the Tukurumuri village. Three small parcels of land have been identified as sale possibilities, one has a dwelling, the other two are bare land. There is a relatively high level of local interest in the pending sale process.



## 2.2.6 Akura Conservation Centre

Staff are currently investigating the market value for the sale of Mangapakeha Nursery in the Castlepoint Road near Tinui. Two scenarios will be covered, an 'as is' value and a 'in pasture' value. This includes the cost of ripping the stool beds out and returning the land to pasture. It is anticipated that the marketing for sale of the nursery would be undertaken during spring this year.

The nursery is currently undergoing a minor transformation in terms of meeting our health and safety obligations i.e. lots of new signage and a sign-in system and high-viz clothing mandatory for anyone visiting the nursery.

## 2.3 Flood Protection

### 2.3.1 Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

#### **Hutt River City Centre Project**

The Hutt River City Centre Upgrade Project (HRCCUP) is now in the preliminary design phase to refine the preferred option selected in December 2015. Report 16.166 to the Hutt Valley Floodplain Management Subcommittee (HVFMS) provides more details of the scope and programme for the Preliminary Design.

Procurement of professional services is proceeding according to programme and proposals have been received for all aspects of design. A joint agency team is assessing the proposals and intend to appoint successful consultants on 26 May 2016.

The project communication plan has been updated and submitted to the Hutt Valley Flood Management subcommittee for endorsement. This is detailed in report 2016.167.

The project property strategy has been updated and submitted to the HVFMS for endorsement. This report contains recommendation to delegate authority for purchase to the Chief Executive, GWRC. The draft strategy is an item for consideration at this Environment Committee meeting, and it, along with the proposed delegation to the Chief Executive, will also require consideration and adoption by Council.

#### **Jim Cooke Park Stopbank**

The consent application for the stopbank upgrade works and river channel improvements at Jim Cooke Park have been lodged and the project team is in the process of responding to further information requests.

Negotiations continue to secure the land entry agreements with the Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) and private land owners.



### **Otaki River**

Work has commenced to repair Traceys' groynes that were damaged in flooding during 2015/16.

### **Lower Wairarapa Development Scheme**

Landowner entry permits for the Whakawhiriwhiri Stream upgrade project have been finalised except for two landowners. Construction work in the reach upstream of Pahautea Road and the work downstream of Pahautea Road has been completed. Rock supply for scour protection works on one property is progressing.

The Barrage Gate control system upgrade work is progressing, and Tawaha Culvert upgrade has been completed.

Boulders for rip rap protection work of wave damaged stopbanks at Macland Farms (Western Lake) has been delivered. Site works have been further delayed due to Lake Onoke blockage.

### **Hutt River Maoribank and Ebdentown Stabilisation**

The rock groyne construction works were completed earlier this year. Finishing works, including planting, are scheduled for July 2016.

Some changes will be made to the fencing between the river trail and the adjacent land used by a horse club. The horse club will relocate the existing fence line in May/June to allow space for the river trail to pass between the fence and the groynes.

### **Avalon/Belmont 'Dog Club' Edge Protection**

The construction of alignment protection works at Avalon/Belmont 'Dog Club' commenced in April 2016. Ground preparation work has been completed. Placement of 2,500 tonnes of rock to form a 100m length of rockwall and a single rock groyne commenced on 18 April. Reinstatement works are programmed to be completed in May.

### **Port Road Edge Protection**

GWRC has identified permanent edge protection works in this area as part of the Hutt River Floodplain Management plan; however, these are not programmed to commence within the current LTP programme. Concerns regarding recent storm damage to the river bank and coastline adjacent to Port Road were raised with GWRC and Hutt City Council (HCC) at a meeting of the local business community. In response to these concerns design of interim erosion protection works have commenced.

A design, cost estimate and resource consent application for interim erosion protection is being prepared on behalf of GWRC and HCC. HCC, using NZTA funding, intends to commence construction of the interim protection work along the portion of the Port Road coastline downstream of the Waiwhetu mouth during the 2016/17 financial year. GWRC will report back to the HVFMS on the funding requirements and priority of the interim repair works once the design is completed.

### 2.3.2 Operations Delivery

All work programmes are progressing to programme. There are some forecast overspends in the Otaki River, Waitohu Stream and Porirua Streams as a result of flood damage last year but the overall spend will be close to budget. In the Wairarapa, channel clearing work and gravel groyne construction has been undertaken but in water work has been delayed to reduce environmental impacts due to low river flows.

Operations staff have also been busy undertaking some of the capital improvement projects discussed above in the FMP Implementation section. The works include the Belmont rock line, Traceys' rock groyne improvements, upgrade of the Tawaha floodgate, the Barrage Gates electronic control system improvements and the Whakawhiriwhiri Stream works.

Annual asset condition inspections are underway. This year we are trialling a mobile phone application to capture the information. The new technology has proven to be more efficient and will also improve data quality. The assessment includes a photograph of every asset. To date 85% of the Wairarapa assets have been inspected. Work will continue in the western area over the next two months.

A consultant has been awarded a contract to undertake dam break assessments of the Porirua detention dams with a final report due in July. Consultants have also been appointed to investigate corrosion issues in the Seton Nossitor Dam culvert outlet.

Notification of resource consent applications for the Hutt, Otaki, Waikanae and Wainuiomata Rivers is anticipated to occur in this quarter. At the same time work is almost complete on a new Code of Practice for River Management.

The fine autumn weather continues to attract people to the rivers; even this late in the year people are still using them for swimming. A number of public events have taken place along the banks of the Hutt River, including the Hutt News Fun Run and the Hutt Valley Harriers. The Hutt trails and berms are becoming increasingly popular with local schools for their cross country events.

Unfortunately unwanted activities such as rubbish dumping and illegal use of vehicles are also occurring and managing this is difficult and costly. At the same time the public are seeking increasingly higher amenity standards.

### 2.3.3 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

#### **Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan (FMP)**

The draft FMP has been endorsed by the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan Advisory Committee, South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC) and Caterton District Council (CDC) for public consultation planned to start in June. Initial meetings to reconnect with affected parties and to give them an update have already begun. This project is covered in a separate report to this Committee.

#### **Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga FMP**

GWRC officers continue to work with Masterton District Council officers towards an agreement on the flood hazard mapping for flooding affecting Masterton. A hydrology peer review has recently been received and we are now moving towards remodelling and remapping the hazard with jointly-agreed inputs. Once the flood hazard has been agreed, we can continue with the development of options for the urban river reaches.

Rural options development continues. A site inspection/workshop was held with the Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga FMP Subcommittee on 14 April to focus on the Ruamāhanga River and some broader management options.

#### **Pinehaven Stream FMP**

A hearing panel convened on 7 April 2016 to consider written and oral submissions on the proposed Pinehaven Stream FMP. It is anticipated that the hearing panel make its recommendation to the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee (HVFMS) on 14 June 2016.

of the hearing panel has requested that officers prepare additional maps that display the flood hazard information in different ways with the intent of assisting community understanding of the flood hazard information. The process of developing these maps will be carried out between April and June 2016 in conjunction with a Pinehaven and Silverstream Focus Group established with the assistance of Upper Hutt City Council.

#### **Waiwhetu Stream FMP**

A Friends of Waiwhetu Stream walkover was held on 22 April 2016. This was advertised through local community groups and in the Hutt News. About 30 people including officers and Councillors attended. The walkover started at the mouth of the stream and included a stop at the Waiwhetu Marae.

### **Upper Hutt Plan Changes**

Flood Protection officers have been helping Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) to prepare their plan changes that reflect the Mangaroa and Pinehaven flood hazard. Public notification of these plan changes has been delayed by UHCC until the Pinehaven FMP is formally adopted by GWRC.

### **Hutt River Environmental Strategy Review (HRES)**

A user survey was carried out from 5 March to 4 April, where four surveyors interviewed close to 1,000 people along the river corridor between Birchville and Petone. The information gathered is currently being processed and will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Engagement with iwi regarding the HRES review will be carried out guided by the partnership agreement between GWRC and the Region's iwi.

A series of stakeholder meetings (approximately seven) are being organised commencing in early June and it is also intended to advertise to a wider audience inviting them to view the website and provide online feedback through "Have your Say".

### **Otaki FMP Review**

A consultant has been appointed to carry out the Otaki FMP review beginning in mid-May. This will carry on through 2016 and possibly into 2017.

### **Flood Warning Review**

A joint project is underway between Flood Protection, Environmental Science and WREMO to review our flood warning service. We will be engaging with internal stakeholders in May and external stakeholders in July.

## **2.4 Biodiversity**

### **2.4.1 General**

The refreshed GWRC Biodiversity Strategy has now been launched. The Strategy sets high-level direction for the organisation, describing why and how we manage and protect biodiversity across the region. Representatives from the Biodiversity department are now meeting with relevant departments to discuss how these departments can contribute to implementing the Strategy.

Biodiversity staff have been part of a 'virtual' project team that addressed the implementation of non-regulatory Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP) methods on wetlands and stock access. A report, *Supporting Landowners to Protect Wetlands and Waterways*, has been prepared. The framework it recommended will now be implemented by the Land Management and

Biodiversity departments, in active collaboration with the Environmental



Regulation and Environmental Policy departments.

**The Seaweek snorkelling event, held in early March, was found to have applied health and safety processes to a high standard**

## 2.4.2 Biodiversity Management

### **Key Native Ecosystems (KNE)**

A fish-friendly flapgate has been installed on the stopbank at the Otaki Coast KNE site. This will allow more salty water to pass through the stopbank to reinstate a more estuarine habitat suitable for Inanga spawning. Native fish migration will also be supported as the flapgate will allow for longer periods of flow when fish can pass through the stopbank, rather than only having access for short periods at high tide.

In April, staff from the Biodiversity and Parks departments accompanied kaumatua from Taranaki Whanui who formally lifted the annual rāhui from the shingle beach at Pencarrow Head, within the Parangarahu Lakes Area KNE site. The rāhui was in place to prohibit vehicle and walking access across the beaches during the shore bird breeding season. Together with other management activities, including predator control, this has led to a successful breeding season for Banded Dotterel.



**Kaumatu from Taranaki Whanui formally lifted the rāhui that was in place at Pencarrow Head to protect shore birds during their breeding season**

### **QEII Covenant Support**

An area of remnant bush on private land near Carterton has been put forward as a potential QEII open space covenant. GWRC has approved funding for fencing and weed control to protect the biodiversity values of this site, which adjoins existing QEII covenants, Fensham Reserve and the Fensham KNE site. The memorandum of understanding with the QEII National Trust is being reviewed to ensure it describes recent improvements in processes between the two organisations. This complements GWRC's strong and positive working relationship with QEII.



**A bush remnant on private land near Carterton that has been put forward for a QEII open space covenant**

### **Wetlands Programme**

The Wetland Programme Plan has been updated and formally approved.

Site visits have been carried out to several significant wetlands that are scheduled in the PNRP. Staff appraised the extent and condition of the wetlands and spoke with landowners about the incentives that area available for fencing and restoration work through the Wetland Programme.

### **Fish Passage Restoration**

Staff coordinated a GWRC response to a national survey relating to the impact of flood management infrastructure on native fish migration, which is being run by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) and consultancy (BBO). The response collated information from the Biodiversity, Flood Protection, Environmental Regulation and Environmental Science departments.

### 2.4.3 Biodiversity Advice and Advocacy

#### **Biodiversity Advice**

A communications plan has been developed to inform the June roll-out of the guidance document implementing RPS Method 21. The guidance will help territorial authorities to identify and protect significant biodiversity values. The communications plan includes a series of presentations to councils in the region that will describe how the guidance can be used. These presentations will also be an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships with relevant staff from other councils and make them aware of how the Biodiversity department can assist them.

A memorandum of understanding has been finalised between GWRC and Winstone Aggregates relating to the Belmont Quarry mitigation package. A project plan has also been developed to direct how the Biodiversity and Parks departments will coordinate delivery of the mitigation package. Staff met with Winstone Aggregates to discuss the next steps for this work.

Staff worked with Auckland Council biodiversity officers on a project brief for the Biodiversity Working Group. The project aims to support the development of local biodiversity offsetting policies and guide how offsets are applied to achieve good outcomes.

Staff contributed to a GWRC submission on the UHCC *Draft Land Use Strategy*. This contribution supported proposed measures to protect and enhance biodiversity values in the district over the long term. Staff also suggested that UHCC place a greater emphasis on enhancing biodiversity values in lowland areas.

Staff contributed to a GWRC submission on the Government's *Next Steps for Freshwater* discussion document which proposed measures to improve fresh water management in New Zealand. Biodiversity staff recommended that the proposed Freshwater Improvement Fund criteria be clarified and that they be set in a manner that would enable poorly-resourced local authorities to seek funding assistance.

#### **Collaborative Restoration: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Project**

GWRC reviewed the pest animal control regime for Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour catchment. Staff are now working with Porirua City Council on a cost-sharing arrangement to service a large number of extra traps that will better control predators in bird breeding areas around the harbour.

#### **Biodiversity Advocacy**

A GWRC Student Transport Grant is being established to support schools who are undertaking fieldtrips as part of GWRC funded programmes (ie, Healthy Harbours Porirua and Wairarapa Moana Whitebait Connection) or using the



GWRC Stream Assessment Kits. These grants will help schools to pay for student transport by bus or train to the fieldtrip sites. The grant offers a higher level of assistance to low decile schools who may not otherwise be able to fund these fieldtrips.

Planning is well underway for Restoration Day on 21May which is being coordinated by GWRC. The event will be held at the Carterton Events Centre with a focus on 'resilient restoration'. Staff are working with Restoration Day partners to develop a workshop series that addresses the needs of restoration groups. Registrations are now open on the Nature Space website.

### **3. Environment Management**

#### **3.1 Harbours**

##### **3.1.1 Recreational Boating**

On the evening of 4 April a recreational yacht ran aground on rocks at Moa Point, Lyall Bay, Wellington. Salvors appointed by an insurance company refloated the yacht on 6 April and safely towed it into Seaview Marina for repair.



**Yacht ashore at Moa Point**



**Safely salvaged and at Seaview Marina hardstand.**

During the night of 22/23 April, a nine metre wooden yacht broke free from its swing-mooring in Evans Bay during a strong north-westerly and drove ashore on the Evans Bay Marina rock breakwater, with the bow on the rocks and most of the boat submerged. The owner was not insured, did not have finances to arrange salvage operations, and formally abandoned the vessel. Salvage work was organised by Harbours, firstly to tow the yacht away from the rocky breakwater on the evening of 23 April and allow it to sink on a flat seabed to avoid further damage and possible breaking-up in bad weather. On 24 April the sunken yacht was refloated and towed to a boat-lift at Evans Bay, where it was lifted ashore, pending decisions on its future.



**Police launch Lady Elizabeth IV assisting to tow sunken yacht away from breakwater.**

### 3.1.2 Navigation Aids

New batteries were fitted to the Front Leading light on 5 April, and an additional wind generator was fitted to both the Front Lead and Rear Lead in order to boost the storage batteries electrical charge over the winter period. This is in keeping with Council's policy of sustainability and use of renewable resources.



**Two wind generators on Rear Leading light structure**

### 3.1.3 Oil pollution response

No marine oil spills needed any response action. The move of equipment into the Tyers Road store, and the “ready-response” equipment container at Aotea Quay work was completed.

### 3.1.4 Commercial Shipping

“Summer” cruise shipping programme has now been completed, and will start again in October 2016. Scheduled arrivals booked for the next season include the new cruise ship “*Ovation of the Seas*” on 4 January 2017, when she will become the largest ship ever to have entered Wellington, at 168,666 gross tonnage and 348 metres length.



**Ovation of the Seas**

### 3.1.5 Ferries

Strait Shipping's ferry *Santa Regina* was sold to Indonesian purchasers in August 2015 and in October 2015 the vessel started a six month refit in an Indonesian dockyard. The vessel emerged in April 2016 looking very different to her appearance in Cook Strait waters.



**Santa Regina sailing from Auckland**



**Santa Regina after major refit, renamed Nusa Putera for service in Indonesia.**

### **3.2 Parks**

#### **3.2.1 General**

The Great Outdoors Summer Events (GOSE) programme offered 51 events over three months and attracted 14,209 people into the regional parks. This season the size of the programme was decreased to focus on the quality of events rather than quantity. There was a decrease of GWRC run events with an increase of events that promoted our partnerships with members of the community and territorial authorities.

This approach was very successful with the average attendance at a partnership event rising from 89.5 in 2015 to 114 in 2016. The best example of the positive partnership events was the *Paws in the Park summer series* which attracted 1,170 people and their dogs. Three of these events were held on GWRC land.

At most events, we ask the public to provide feedback including whether they have visited the park before and whether they would return. Results were very pleasing:

Return visitor	61%
First time visitor	39%
I WOULD visit the park again	94%
I MIGHT visit the park again	4.5%
I WOULD NOT visit the park again	1.5%

Overall user satisfaction remained very high with 95.2% rating the events as excellent. This compared to 92.2% in 2015.

Health and Safety has been a hot topic recently with new legislation and understanding the implications for events. There is an element of risk at all our events and there will still be incidents no matter the level of planning. Over the three months of GOSE, we lodged six incidents in Keeping Employees Safe at Work (KESAW) related to event participants.

Health and safety is embedded in event planning, and we focus deliberately on how to manage and mitigate risk as much as possible. Controls include fully informing participants at the time of booking, briefing them well at the start and monitoring their state of health during events, including personal locator beacons in gear lists, clear communications protocols and a high standard of contractor management.

Each November the Marketing and Events team runs a session with Park Rangers focussing on health and safety for GOSE events, and this will be repeated in the run up to 2017.

### 3.2.2 Western Sector

Flood damage repairs and tree hazard management work in Korokoro Valley is complete and the valley reopened in time for Anzac Day weekend. Installing the new 14m long steel beam bridge was a major highlight. With the upgraded and new structures, the realigned tracks and removal of the major hazard (overgrown pine trees) the valley is now more accessible for both visitors and maintenance and far more able to cope with severe weather events.



**Helicopter installation of the new steel beam bridge at Korokoro (Belmont Regional Park).**



A proposal to repair the flood damaged Woollen Mills Dam has been finalised. Consenting work is scheduled over the winter to enable repairs next summer.

Further flood damage mitigation work is underway at Battle Hill, including removal of two flood prone bridges and re-routing the Bush Reserve track to allow the stream to follow a more natural path and cope better with 'weather bombs' which occasionally occur in the catchment.

Tenders have been received for the construction of the visitor hub buildings and for the construction of the Western Depot office at Queen Elizabeth Park. Outline Plan approval has been received from KCDC.

A self-registration camping fee collector has been installed at Dry Creek to reduce staff time to collect fees. Campers have begun using this with high levels of compliance being recorded from the random patrols being undertaken. A security company has been engaged to open and close the gates through the winter period. As part of this service they will check that campers have paid their fees.

The Little Sprouts Easter Fair held at Battle Hill saw a record 5000 people attending through the day and 700 people arriving at the same time to participate in the scavenger hunt. Parking was stretched, with more area than ever being required for overflow cars.

Thirty equestrian events have been undertaken at Battle Hill over the summer period with high numbers attending the major one day events.

We have worked with a local contractor to cut long grass for hay at Whitireia Park. The bales provided an impromptu playground before they were collected, while many others stopped and watched the baling being undertaken. This exercise has reduced the fire risk, improved access across the shorter grass and incurred nil cost for GWRC.

Planning for the planting season at Queen Elizabeth Park is well underway – sites have been mulched ready for spot spraying and the plants produced by the nursery volunteer group are looking to be the best yet. A total 12,000 trees will be planted in the park which includes a '6000 trees in a day' event planned for 10 July.

### 3.2.3 Eastern Sector

Kaitoke Regional Park has experienced another huge summer of camping with record revenue of \$108,000 to date for the financial year (more than double the budget). Infrastructure improvements put in place last winter and staff resourcing changes have helped us meet the increased demand. The new rubbish crushing trailer and recycling area have been particular successes with

campers using the new facilities and staff dramatically reducing the time spent on rubbish and recycling work.

Further improvements have been identified and over the last month we have implemented some changes. An additional women's toilet has been added to both the small and large facility buildings within the existing building envelope. A second water tank has also been added to the large building to increase capacity during the summer months. With the Top Terrace now in regular use, a small BBQ and sink facility is to be built there before the end of June.

Work has progressed on the Rimutaka Cycle Trail track upgrade in Siberia Gorge on DOC land using matching National Cycleway Funding from MBIE. This has addressed a notoriously difficult section that riders pushed their bikes through.

The scheduled track improvement programme continues in the sector. Tanes Track (Pakuratahi Forest) is mostly complete while the Bus Barn Track work at East Harbour is progressing well. Metalling will occur once ground conditions soften.

Our new Akatarawa/ Pakuratahi Forest Ranger has started in his role. Previously in Land Management, the Forest Ranger (Dion Ngatoro) is now reporting to the Principal Ranger (Eastern Sector). He will be GWRC's key contact for the Metro Forests and work closely with PF Olsen, the forest managers who act on behalf of RMS, the cutting rights holder. He will also work with the Park Ranger for the area, Thane Walls, to improve security and compliance for these two very large land areas.

#### **4. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

##### **4.1 Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

#### **5. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

Report approved by:

**Nigel Corry**  
General Manager,  
Environment Management

Report approved by:

**Wayne O'Donnell**  
General Manager,  
Catchment Management