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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
Environment Committee

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Results of the two-yearly Resource Management Act Survey of Local Authorities 2001/2002

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee of the results of the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) two yearly Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) survey.

2. Background

For a number of years, MfE has been conducting a survey of local and regional authorities to determine how the Act is being implemented.

The survey covers a wide range of areas, including consent processing timeframes, costs of processing consents and developing regional plans, monitoring and enforcement, and Maori participation in the resource management process.

Basic comparative information is provided by the survey that can be used to benchmark our performance, particularly in the easily measured areas such as consent timeframes, consent notification rates, plan and consent appeals, and enforcement.

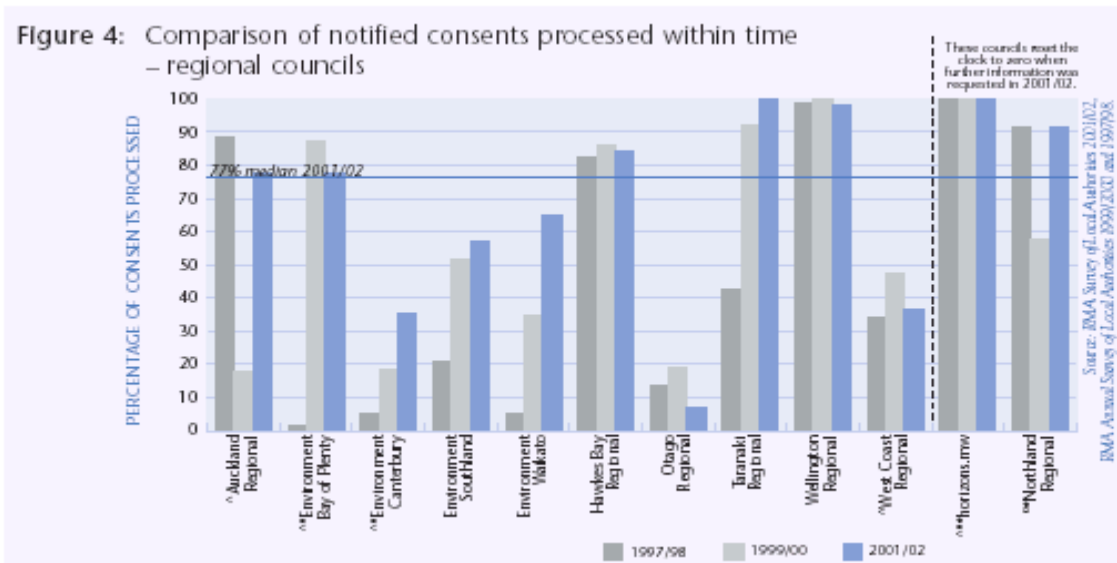
3. Results

The survey period was for the 2001/2002 financial year and our results are the combined figures for both the Masterton and Wellington offices. A full copy of the survey results is available in the Councillors' Lounge, or can be viewed on <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/annual-survey/index.html>.

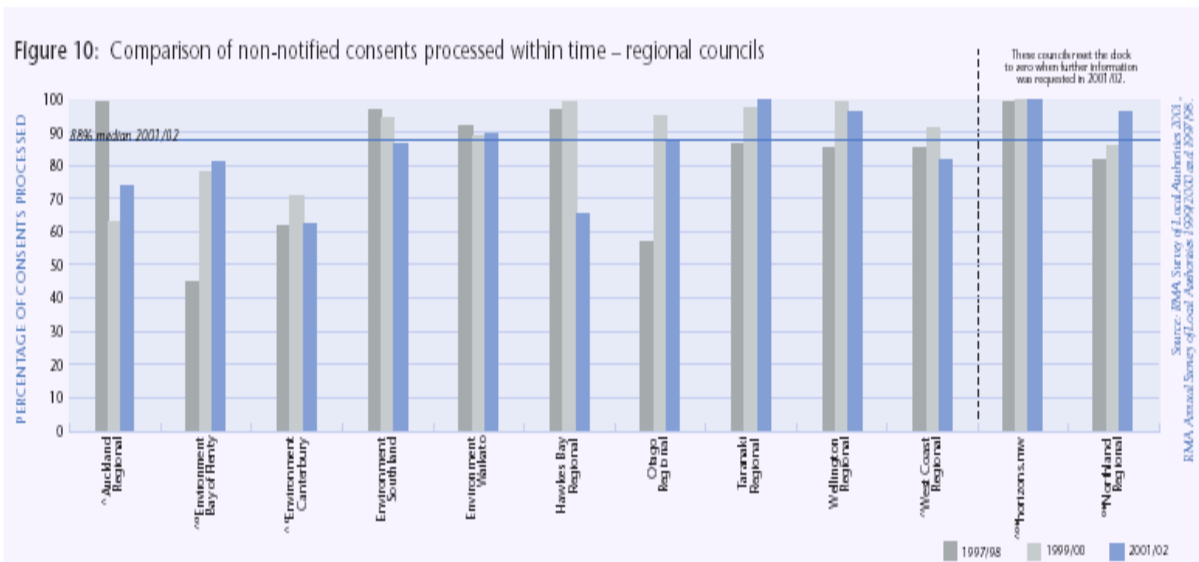
Timeframes

We have continued our strong performance in meeting consent processing timeframes. Ninety six percent of our resource consent applications were processed with the timeframes set down in the Act. For notified resource consent applications (see the survey's Figure 4) 98% of our applications were

processed within statutory timeframes, compared to the median of 77% for Regional Councils overall.



For non-notified resource consent applications (see the survey’s Figure 10) 96% of our applications were processed within statutory timeframes, compared to the median of 88% for Regional Councils overall.



Costs

The comparison of costs is notoriously difficult to assess because councils’ process consents and apportion costs differently. Table 1 shows the average median cost of different types of resource consent. GWRC’s median costs, in all cases, are below the national median.

Consent Type		Average Median across all Regional Councils	GWRC Median
Land Use	Notified	\$3,424	\$1,656
	Non-notified	\$278	\$263
Water	Notified	\$2,672	\$602
	Non-notified	\$438	\$228
Coastal	Notified	\$8,773	\$3,871
	Non-notified	\$528	\$140
Discharge	Notified	\$2540	\$602
	Non-notified	\$473	\$280

Table 1

Monitoring and Enforcement

All regional councils monitor the state of the environment, resource consent conditions and maintain a complaints' register. Most regional councils monitor their plans, delegations and any transferred functions.

Nationally (including territorial authorities), 72% of those resource consents monitored for compliance, complied with their consent conditions. Of those resource consents monitored by GWRC, 79% complied with their consent conditions.

Regional Councils issued over half of all the infringement notices issued in the 2001/2002 period. Of the 620 infringement notices issued, 47 were not proceeded with, while 326 were defended (appealed) in the Environment Court. GWRC issued 16 infringement notices, four of which were withdrawn and six were appealed.

Maori Participation

Forty-nine percent of local authorities reported a budgetary commitment to Maori/Iwi participation in the RMA process in 2001/2002 – a decrease from 65% in 1999/2000. The average amount budgeted for was \$69,845. GWRC's budgetary commitment was \$481,840.

4. Communication

It is a little disappointing that the results of the survey are released a year after they were collected, (2001/2002), and that they coincide with the completion of the 2002/2003 financial year. Due to this delay, it is likely that the recipients of the information will believe the results are from the current financial year.

We are currently preparing the results for the financial year just finished (2002/2003), which will provide more meaningful, up-to-date data. Those results will be presented to the next committee and will be appropriate for further communication.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee

1. *receive the report; and*
2. *note the contents.*

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