



Report 09.64
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Committee Regulatory Committee
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Environmental Regulation – 2007/08 report card summary

1. Purpose

To present a summary of regulatory activities undertaken by the Environmental Regulation department in 2007/08.

2. Reason for regulatory action

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires activities to be regulated through the process of issuing and monitoring resource consents, with conditions set according to the provisions of Regional Plans. When environmental incidents occur, and regional rules and environmental regulations are breached, enforcement action may be taken. The Environmental Regulation department carries out these functions, and undertakes proactive work to raise awareness and prevent breaches from occurring.

3. Annual environmental reporting

Previously, a summary of environmental pollution incidents, enforcement action and pollution prevention has been included with the State of the Environment report card set; this year the Environmental Regulation department has produced a set of cards, covering all its functions, including:

- Resource consents
- Resource consent compliance
- Incident response
- Enforcement
- Pollution prevention

The report cards will be tabled at this meeting.

4. Selected highlights from the 2007/08 cards

The following is a summary of some of the key points from each report card:

Consents

- 703 resource consent applications were processed in 2007/08, which represents a 10% increase since the previous year, and a return to 2005/06 levels
- 95% of all consent applications were processed on a non-notified basis
- 50% of all notified applications were resolved without a hearing
- 99% of all resource consent applications were processed within statutory timeframes
- The two biggest groups of applications received were land use consents (55% of all applications processed), and water use consents (20% of all applications processed). Last year these were also the two biggest groups, but land use was more of the whole (67%) and water use was less (13%).

Compliance

- Overall, the proportion of consents receiving fully complying to non-complying ratings has remained consistent since 2004/05
- The permit type with the highest level of non-compliance is discharge permits (48% of all compliance inspections), compared with 28% for water permits, and 12% for each of coastal and land use
- Three quarters of all compliance inspections done in 2007/08 received a 'fully complying' rating
- One quarter of all compliance inspections received a 'non-complying' rating

Incident response

- Environmental incidents are up 7% from 2006/07 but this does not represent a change in overall stable trend observed since 2003/04
- Non-compliance with regional rules and the RMA was confirmed for 40% of all incidents reported
- Air and freshwater are the most frequently affected receiving environments
- Odour incidents comprise 75% of incidents affecting air, and 29% of all incidents
- Sediment and liquid waste are the most common causes of freshwater pollution
- 44% of all sediment-related incidents were attributed to earthworks activities

Enforcement

- Four prosecutions were resolved, of which only one was fully defended
- Two enforcement orders were issued
- The number of infringement notices issued increased by 20% from 2006/07
- The number of abatement notices issued increased by 186% from 2006/07
- The largest single type of offence leading to abatement and infringement notices, concerned discharges of contaminants to the environment

Take charge and pollution prevention

- Take Charge Coordinator appointed
- 35 new sites audited, 19 of which completed their audit requirements in 2007/08
- Pollution prevention projects included the continuation of the 'Muddy Waters' programme, the Regional Environmental Protection Officers forum (REPO), the Wairarapa Permitted Water Takes Surveys and the 2007/08 Rural Agrichemical Collection

5. Communication

A press release will be prepared to support the distribution of the report card package in April. The package will be sent to environmental service providers in the region, including iwi, local and central government decision-makers, non-governmental organisations, environmental and community organisations, industry, interested individuals, and libraries. The cards will also be available on our website, along with the more detailed environmental protection annual report.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

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

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