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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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State of Environment - Annual Summary

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee the annual summary of our state of the environment monitoring.

2. Background

Under the Resource Management Act 1991, Greater Wellington – the Regional Council is required to monitor the state of the environment. This monitoring tells us about the condition of the environment, any changes or trends that may be occurring and the reasons for these changes. As a result we can make informed decisions about the management of the Region's natural and physical resources.

Monitoring the state of the environment allows us to:

- Meet the requirements of section 35 of the Resource Management Act 1991 with respect to environmental monitoring;
- Collect relevant and robust information on the state of the environment, trends or changes in environmental quality and the pressures or reasons for these changes;
- Have good information for decision making, especially for regional policy and plan reviews; and
- Report effectively on the results of monitoring to achieve maximum uptake of the information by decision-makers, interest groups and the wider community.

To achieve the above, we also need to make our monitoring information accessible.

Reporting is the mechanism by which data becomes an asset, and we need to translate the data gathered in our monitoring programmes into useful information for a number of audiences.

3. Report Cards

The Regional Monitoring Strategy, which was approved by Council in December of last year, identified reporting of environmental information as an area requiring improvement. It recommended a number of changes to the way we report information, including the development of annual 'report cards' to summarise the year's monitoring information.

The report cards replace the annual environment report and annual resource reports. The report cards are a summary of each resource that Greater Wellington monitors. They provide a summary of the year's monitoring results, explain some background to the resource and why it is being measured, and give tips about what people can do to help manage the resource. The report cards will be tabled at the meeting.

4. Communication

The report cards will be distributed to the broad community of users of environmental information including the general public, Iwi, local and central government decision makers, non-governmental organisations, environmental and community organisations, industry and the educational sector, including schools and universities.

The report cards are only one of the communication options identified in the Regional Monitoring Strategy. The way we report our monitoring information will vary according to the information gathered and the target audience. Other methods include better use of the Greater Wellington website, issues based reports, enviro-mail and direct targeting.

5. Recommendations

That the report be received and its contents noted.

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