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Committee Environment Committee
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***Take Action* annual report 2005-06**

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the activities and achievements of schools involved in the *Take Action* programme during the 2005-06 year.

2. Background

Take Action, Greater Wellington's environmental education programme for 8-12 year olds, is available free to all schools in the Greater Wellington region. The programme is available both guided by Council staff or 'self guided' by participating schools' teachers. The performance indicator for *Take Action* requires the programme to be implemented to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.

3. Uptake of *Take Action*

In the 2005-06 year approximately 3300 students from 25 schools participated in *Take Action*, 1000 more students than the year before. There was more uptake in the self-guided form and more schools putting large numbers of classes through the programme.

Self guided schools for the 2005-6 school year were recruited primarily from Upper Hutt (in calendar 2005) and Lower Hutt, including Eastbourne and Wainuiomata (in calendar 2006). In the past there had been a smaller uptake of the programme in these areas. In Lower Hutt this was considerably less than elsewhere in the region (20% compared with a regional average of 45%). The focus on this area is correcting this; by December 2006 the uptake in Lower Hutt will be 39%. After the strong uptake in Upper Hutt in 2005, 13 of 18 schools have now completed *Take Action*.

We have also continued to target schools within two priority catchments which have been identified as having degraded water quality - the Kaiwharawhara (Ngaio School) and the Waiwhetu streams (Epuni, St Bernadettes, Gracefield).

As Table 1 shows, schools from almost all territorial authorities participated in the programme in 2005-06, with the exception of South Wairarapa district. However, two South Wairarapa schools were recruited and are involved in term four of the 2006 school year. These are St Teresa's School in Featherston and Martinborough School.

Table 1: 2005-06 schools undertaking *Take Action* by territorial authority

Territorial Authority	Schools participating in <i>Take Action</i>
Carterton District	Gladstone School
Kapiti Coast District	Waikanae School
Hutt City	Eastern Hutt School Epuni School Koraunui School Pukeatua School St Bernadette's School St Claudine School Taita Central School Tawhai School Tui Glen School Wainuiomata Intermediate School Wilford School
Masterton District	Douglas Park School Mauriceville School
Porirua City	Bishop Viard College Discovery School Holy Family School
South Wairarapa	
Upper Hutt City	Fergusson Intermediate School
Wellington City	Ngaio School Mt Cook School St Patricks School - Kilbirnie Samuel Marsden School Seatoun School Tawa Intermediate

4. Take Action highlights

There have been many highlights for the *Take Action* team this year. As well as the matters listed below, the team has valued the willingness of teachers to undertake comprehensive training for *Take Action*, and we have had many rewarding trail days and action project sessions with students and teachers across the region.

4.1 Whole school involvement

One noticeable development is the number of self guided schools wanting to implement the programme as a whole school. This has been managed in schools such as Wainuiomata and Naenae Intermediates by the team working with a group of teachers each term over an extended period. Other schools such as Muritai and Eastern Hutt schools have chosen to include their junior classes through teachers adapting the programme to meet the learning needs of the younger students.

4.2 On-going environmental initiatives

A growing trend has been the increasing number of schools contacting the team for advice and support *after* finishing their action projects. Increasingly, teachers are seeking our help to develop and implement environmental education within their schools. Relationships established through *Take Action* are valued and used by teachers. Greytown School is a typical example. The school participated in the self guided *Take Action* programme in 2005 and went on to receive a Conservation Award for their environmental education work. They have since requested support from the *Take Action* team to assist with their planting work in conjunction with the Papawai Care Group and for assistance with their nursery and shade house.

As groups of related schools complete *Take Action*, we have established or contributed to environmental education clusters so teachers can support one another and develop their environmental initiatives collectively.

4.3 Taking action in the community

One of the most satisfying aspects of *Take Action* is helping children carry out activities to improve their environment. There have been too many of these in the last year to describe satisfactorily but we can list some examples. Many schools undertake stream side re-vegetation; notable efforts this year came from Waikanae, Gladstone, Epuni, Mauriceville, Ngaio, and Eastern Hutt. Other schools like to spread the stormwater message amongst their families and in their communities; examples are Wainuiomata Intermediate, Eastern Hutt, Epuni, and Douglas Park. Waste reduction, composting, and worm farming are also popular; these have been set up or are being set up by St Patricks, Tui Glen, St Bernadettes, and others. Other popular “action projects” include murals, water recycling, walking school buses, radio advertisements, letter box drops, environmentally friendly car washes (good for raising money!), and creating lizard or weta habitat to promote biodiversity.

School involvement with local restoration projects has been a feature for several schools this year. Fergusson Intermediate students actively took action for their school stream by advising Pollution Control of their concerns regarding the sustained high temperature of the Moehau Stream and then proceeded to work with the Moehau Stream Care Group to plant the first restoration section of the stream.

Trentham School students will continue the work that Fergusson Intermediate began last year by also being actively involved with the Moehau Stream Care Group this term as a part of their project work. Mt Cook School collected rubbish from the stream in Central Park in the third term of 2005, and have now “adopted” the stream, going back to clean it at regular intervals.

A senior class at Eastern Hutt School has also shown initiative with their school stream and is working with the support of Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington to undertake restoration planting along it. Other projects at the school include a walking school bus, a recycling system for the whole school, a lizard garden, and a public display in the local library to educate adults about storm water drains.

Naenae Intermediate and Epuni Schools have both been involved in restoration planting along the Waiwhetu Stream with Hutt City Council and the Waiwhetu Action Group.

4.4 *Take Action for Air* programme development

As previously reported, a second action-based educational programme - *Take Action for Air* - was developed during the year. It follows the same teaching and learning format as *Take Action* and revisits the essential lessons of the first programme. It focuses on known air quality issues in the region stemming from domestic fires and motor vehicles and reinforces for students that they can make a difference to the environment in which they live.

The new programme is being trialled this term by St Bernadette’s School in Naenae. The teachers involved have reported very successful classroom sessions with their students thus far. Three classes are working specifically with the programme; however the whole school is currently focusing on air issues to ensure junior classes are also involved when it comes time to “take action”.

Intended action projects include an energy audit of the school, setting up a school-wide recycling and composting system, and in-filling the school’s native area (to bolster the “lungs” of the school).

4.5 *Enviroschool* involvement and support

On 6 December 2005 the second annual *Enviroschools* awards ceremony was held at Rutherford House in Wellington. Greater Wellington organised the event and Councillor Turver presented the awards. A larger venue this year was required to accommodate the students, teachers and parents who attended.

Of the fifteen schools who participated from around the region, nine had been involved in the *Take Action* programme or were booked in to work with the *Take Action* team in the near future.

4.6 Performance against budget

The cost of *Take Action* in 2005-06 was \$262,000 against a budget of \$243,000. The variation was due to the need for additional bus transport caused by the larger than expected number of schools taking part, and costs associated with the development of *Take Action for Air*.

5. Conclusion

2005-06 has been a busy year for *Take Action* with the growth in demand for the programme and the development of *Take Action for Air*. Increasingly, whole school involvement in the programme is placing more demands on Greater Wellington but it also augurs well for environmental education in the region's schools. A continued targeted approach to promoting *Take Action* to schools in 2007 will share participation across all territorial authorities. Masterton district schools are still somewhat under represented and will be a focus.

6. Communication

The achievements of the schools described in this report have been described throughout the year in local newspapers and magazines. An article summarising the developments and achievements described here will be prepared for publication.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. ***Receive the report; and***
2. ***Note the contents.***

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