

Report 07.766  
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Committee Catchment Management  
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## Divisional Manager's Report

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress and any matters that have arisen since the final meeting of the triennium of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee held on 4 September 2007.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

The Departmental Managers' reports are attached.

### 4. Divisional matters

#### **New Catchment Management Committee**

Welcome to all members to this first meeting of the new Catchment Management Committee. I look forward to helping bring you all up to speed with the responsibilities of the Committee, the work of the Catchment Division, some of the key issues that we need address in the immediate future, and opportunities going forward.

Prior to the meeting senior staff of the Division will make a presentation on what we do, how we are structured and highlight a few of those key issues.

The Catchment Division is an operational division with a major presence in the field over the entire region. We build and maintain things, plant lots of trees including poplar poles and natives, control or eradicate a variety of pest animals and plants, as well as work with the community in a policy development,

education or facilitation role. In the New Year it is planned to arrange a series of field visits to inform the Committee of the work going on out there.

In my report below I highlight a few key matters that I am taking a particular involvement with, and which it is appropriate to inform the Committee. The detailed Managers reports are attached. Also attached is a short Divisional financial summary for the financial year to the end of October.

### **Changes to Vector Management arrangements announced by the Animal Health Board**

**Attachment 1** to my report is a copy of a letter just received from the Animal Health Board announcing changes to Vector Management arrangements for the Tb vector control programme around the country.

Currently Greater Wellington, like most Regional Councils, manages the Bovine Tb vector control and monitoring in this region on behalf of the Animal Health Board (AHB). Our contract for doing this work expires on 30 June 2008.

The AHB now proposes to reduce the number of vector management areas around the country, and take the vector management role back in-house. This will have a major impact on Greater Wellington's ongoing involvement in the Bovine Tb programme, and has financial and staff implications.

Senior staff are currently assessing the impacts of the proposed changes, what transition arrangements may be appropriate, and options for this Council going forward. I aim to be in a position to report to the Committee in February next year.

### **BioWorks**

I am currently managing BioWorks, Council's possum control team, following the financial and performance difficulties of the last financial year. The unit undertakes mostly AHB bovine TB work on a contestable contract basis.

Since assuming management of the unit I have made a significant number of changes to bring the unit back up to an acceptable performance level. These include reducing the unit to a core of 18 experienced staff, putting in a workable management structure that puts accountabilities back in the correct places, setting clear performance expectations, ensuring better communication with vector management staff, and a tight control on costs including divesting of those non core parts of the business that made no sense to continue with.

The team has responded well to the changes, but there is still much to do. Currently the unit has work through to about the end of February, and is preparing a bid for a major two year 60,000Ha preferred supplier contract.

### **Sustainable Land Management initiatives from the Government**

The Government has recently announced a number of significant Sustainable Land Use and Climate Change programmes that provide opportunities for this

Council. Dave Cameron, Manager Land Management, will cover these in his presentation to the Committee.

The programmes include \$10million for new initiatives to manage Hill Country Erosion, and funding for the planting of permanent forests as a carbon sink. The total Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Package is \$175million over 5 years.

We have just received the application material for the SLM Hill Country erosion Fund, and staff are working out how best to structure a bid. It is proposed to involve the Wairarapa Hill County Advisory Committee in this process starting with their proposed first meeting on 6 December.

### **Waiwhetu Stream Contaminated sediment removal project**

Progress continues to be made with the 'preparatory work' to commence a removal trial this summer. Work underway includes design of the trial, resource consent requirements, Silverstream landfill requirements, and lining up potential contractors with capacity to do this work over the coming summer.

However before any significant expenditure on the project can be made the funding of the project needs to be finalised (currently \$1million shortfall), and project agreements put in place between this Council and Hutt City Council, and also with the Ministry for the Environment as a major funding partner.

A meeting of the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Sub-committee is proposed before Christmas, if sufficient progress is made with project arrangements, so that a decision can be made on proceeding with the trial this summer.

### **Communications – Catriona Robertson**

Key communication activities for the Division over the last two months include a twelve-page edition of Rural Services Newsletter which was distributed to all rural addresses in the region at the beginning of September (7000 copies).

There was extensive media and public information work following suspected bait tampering at Kaitoke Regional Park and Trentham Memorial Park, and the subsequent deaths of two dogs from 1080 poisoning. A series of media releases and advisories were sent out in addition to the ongoing communications for the Mangaroa/Kaitoke and Akatarawa Forest operations.

Editing and production work on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy is well underway. Editing and design work will be complete in December.

Media activities also focussed on the Long Gully possum control operation and the Honda TreeFund community planting day at Mauriceville.

## **5. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

Report prepared by:

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**Attachment 1: Changes to Vector Management Arrangements**

**Attachment 2: Financial Report**

**Attachment 3: Departmental Managers Report**