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Committee Council  
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## **Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan Report 2009/10**

### **1. Purpose**

To report on the performance of the 2009/10 Operational Plan for the implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters 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**

As the Management Agency that has approved the Regional Pest Management Strategy, the Council is required to prepare an annual Operational Plan under Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. Furthermore, the Agency must prepare a report on the plan and its implementation no later than five months after the end of the each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

The Council approved the current Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS) on 17 September 2002. The Strategy has undergone its first statutory five year review. The RPMS review started in August 2006 with the publication and distribution of a public consultation document. The reviewed RPMS was adopted by resolution on 9 March 2009 and became operative following Council's approval on 12 June 2009.

The reviewed strategy has added to, expanded and updated the original species and corresponding aims and objectives of the strategy. Some of the major changes include:

- Changing the status of rooks to a Total control pest with the long term aim of eradication;

- Re-categorising possums and several other pest species to the site-led biodiversity category to align with new regional possum control and biodiversity programmes;
- Containment zones for several pest plant species were amended while a number of pest plant species were reclassified to a site-led boundary control category;
- A new category of site-led human health pest plant and animal species has been introduced.

The reviewed RPMS is based on current knowledge of the targeted pest plant and animal species biology and contemporary pest control methods available.

A few Regional Councils use the Annual Plan reporting process to provide details on performance against RPMS Operational Plan objectives. The Biosecurity Act does provide for this option. However, Greater Wellington considered it more transparent to use a separate reporting process where greater detail can be included on performance, trends, issues and expenditure for review by ratepayers.

#### **4. The Operational Plan Report - Highlights**

The proposed Operational Plan Report 2009/10 is enclosed separately as Attachment 1. This is the eighth progress report detailing performance against the objectives in the twenty-year RPMS and the first report on the progress of the reviewed Strategy.

During 2009/10, resources continued to be focused on Regional Surveillance and Total Control species. These species are either not known to be in the region or are present but limited in distribution. These pests are all capable of becoming significant regional pests if left unmanaged.

Control of many of the key pest species continued throughout the year. The eighth year of the Strategy has seen great advances in the effective management of a wide variety of pests. This has subsequently resulted in enhanced biodiversity values over large parts of the region. All of this has been undertaken with support from the landowners, care groups and territorial local authorities (TAs).

Biosecurity staff responsible for pest plant management continued with intensive field surveys around Total Control pest sites. The delimiting survey effort, covering 3,670 properties, resulted in increased numbers of new pest plant infestations being recorded, together with a corresponding increase in awareness of these pests by the affected landowners. Staff have continued to be involved in biodiversity projects with other stakeholders. Stronger relationships have been developed with the Territorial Authorities (TA), resulting in continued expansion of KNE pest plant control. Joint work programmes are continuing with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and MAF Biosecurity NZ. The team achieved a significant unplanned contribution to the biodiversity of the region by participating in the Community Max employment scheme for young unemployed people funded by the Ministry for Social Development. The scheme enabled 15 new staff being employed for six months working on more than 50 restoration projects in the region.

The major focus of pest animal work continued on biodiversity support programmes. Working relationships continue to strengthen with TAs, care groups, private landowners and DOC. Control work on TA Reserves has expanded slightly, but further growth is now restricted by funding limitations. The rook control programme was very successful this year with favourable weather patterns able to be utilised. It was encouraging that rabbits remain at low levels generally, with the RCD virus continuing to cycle.

Responsibility for pest control outside of the Key Native Ecosystems and TA reserves remains largely with landowners and occupiers, making education and communication an essential part of the control programme. Greater Wellington has a duty to ensure these parties are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address biosecurity risks. Biosecurity staff continued to encourage public awareness about biosecurity matters through various communication initiatives including numerous newspaper articles, presentations and attendance at the A&P shows and field days. Staff also updated a suite of GW publications and the GW website to align information with the reviewed Strategy.

A well-informed public is essential for the achievement of both national and regional biosecurity objectives. Biosecurity agencies simply do not have enough resources to detect all potential pest incursions and pest spread in a timely manner. New areas of control such as invertebrates, marine and aquatic organisms are serving to further spread staff and resources. Increased public knowledge is contributing to an increased number of new pest infestations being notified. This necessitates an ongoing need to reprioritise work programmes to ensure adequate control is maintained on key species.

Responding to client enquiries is a major function of GW staff under the Strategy. In 2009/10, staff responded to 1,406 individual enquiries from the public. Many of these involved site visits and the supply of advice and equipment.

The attached 2009/10 RPMS Operational Plan Report contains separate Pest Animal and Pest Plant sections with an outline of performance against key activity objectives; an overview of major strategy issues encountered during the year, details on biodiversity support programmes; and, finally, ecological and trend monitoring activities.

## **5. Communications**

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the RPMS Operational Plan Report 2009/2010 is available for inspection.

Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers for their review and comment.

## 6. Recommendation

*That the Council:*

- (1) **Approves** the proposed Operational Plan Report 2009/10 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.
- (2) **Notes** that a copy of the Annual Report will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.
- (3) **Notes** that the Annual Report will be made available for public inspection.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:



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Attachment 1: RPMS Operational Plan (enclosed separately)