

## **Implementation of Environmental Education Programmes in 2001-2002**

### **1. Introduction**

This report provides information on the work undertaken in 2001-02 to implement the Council's environmental education programmes.

### **2. A Call to Action**

The central theme of all of the Council's environmental education programmes is the notion of "action". This is the idea that the environment will only move towards a sustainable condition if people make a personal commitment and act to look after it. The Council has recognised that it cannot achieve this alone.

### **3. Promoting Change in Environmental Behaviour and Attitudes**

#### **3.1 Performance Indicator**

The performance indicator for this programme in the departmental Operating Plan reads:

"A report will be completed describing the activities of the Department in promoting change in environmental behaviour to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget".

#### **3.2 Implementation**

One of the functions of the Environment Co-ordination Department is to raise public awareness about the environment and encourage people to look after it in a more sustainable way. The basis for this is the Department's role in co-ordinating and implementing the Regional Policy Statement. There are many "methods" in that document that talk about people using the environment in a more sustainable way.

The ways in which we live our lives day-to-day have a fundamental bearing on the environment. While the large industrial pollution spill may grab the headlines, much more environmental degradation occurs simply through the accumulated minor impacts of the everyday activities of people and communities. Air pollution from cars and the effects on streams of runoff from roads and suburbs are examples.

However, the Department's ability to encourage the community to think differently about the environment is constrained. The task is a substantial one and the Department is not equipped to put a significant amount of effort into such activity. Our primary foci are the *Take Action*, *Take Charge*, and *Take Care* programmes, and this is where we have put our energies over the last year. As the year progressed, the value of a corporate approach to community environmental education and awareness raising became more apparent and its place within the corporate communication strategy was clarified. We have contributed to the development of this corporate approach and will continue to play a role. It is more

appropriate, however, for any suite of broad scale environmental messages to be delivered corporately, using skills and resources from across the Council, than for these to be developed by the Environment Co-ordination Department. Nevertheless, within these boundaries, we can play a role in the development and promotion of these messages through the use of the “ecobus”.

(i) ***The Ecobus***

When the Council’s environmental education strategy - *A Better Environment* - was developed, funding was included for a vehicle to extend the delivery of our educational programmes and their messages to as many school children and community members as possible. The concept was of a mobile display and education facility (a roadshow) that would help raise awareness about the environment generally, as well as contribute to the delivery of *Take Action*. This vehicle has become known as the “Ecobus”.

As reported in February, we have made progress this year. The vehicle has been purchased and is in operation in its *Take Action* role. We have also been developing the vehicle’s public education role but progress with this has had to follow the development of the Council’s brand and the corporate communications strategy. Independently of the brand development, we had been developing a public education approach for the ecobus based around the Region’s “quality of life”, and the ways in which people can protect this in their day-to-day relationship with the environment. With the Council brand moving along similar lines, it was necessary to hold this work back to ensure a better fit with the corporate direction. Consequently, the public education role has not been developed extensively in 2001-02. The application of the brand and associated graphics to the exterior of the vehicle has also been held back. Funds for the public educational role of the ecobus have been re-budgeted into 2002-03.

(ii) ***Working with Business***

Increasingly many business organisations are opting to give effect to their perceived environmental responsibilities by contributing to environmental causes and activities, and are turning to triple bottom line reporting to communicate these activities. This has obvious synergies with the Council’s need for labour for its restoration activities.

In May, for example, staff from Deloitte’s Consulting Ltd gave a day of their time to plant a riparian area on the Kakariki Stream, but there are many other businesses which are willing to make this kind of commitment. We plan to investigate, and hopefully develop, this potential over the coming year.

(iii) ***Stream Restoration Brochure***

This year we produced and printed a brochure to help groups doing riparian planting and stream restoration. The brochure is also useful for schools doing the *Take Action* programme and has been included in the school resource kit.

(iv) ***Environmental Education***

Staff from the Department have been active in promoting environmental education throughout the year. Jo Campbell and Geoff Skene both served on the national executive of the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education, and have taken part in that organisation's strategic planning and related activities. New Zealand's first environmental education conference was held in February. Staff attended this and we also supported the attendance of two teachers (one from Masterton and one from Johnsonville) who are trying to develop environmental education programmes in their schools. Furthermore, a Youth Environment Summit was held in Christchurch during the year and, as in the year before, we sponsored a young person to attend this.

As part of our efforts to increase the availability of environmental education locally, we organised a regional workshop and have been active in the national Professional Development and Pilot Schools Programme. Jo Campbell continued working on this initiative to build environmental education into the work and management of schools in the Wellington Region. At the national level, there are about 60 schools piloting this approach. Jo worked with Plimmerton School last term, helping the school to include environmental education in its teaching of the curriculum and to act environmentally in its day-to-day activities. Paparangi and Cornwall Street Schools are being supported as this year's Pilot Schools.

#### 4. **Take Action**

##### 4.1 **Performance Indicator**

The performance indicator for this programme in the departmental Operating Plan reads:

“Environmental trail one will be fully operational and used by school children from 28 February 2002, to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget”.

##### 4.2 **Implementation**

Three schools – Pukerua Bay, Greytown, and Paparangi - commenced the full programme on 1 February this year and have completed action projects to help their local stream. Paparangi School, for example, ran a stream festival on March 27<sup>th</sup> at Seton Nossiter Park, whilst other classes made radio ads, fridge magnets, cleared weeds, and planted stream banks. In addition, seven schools (including Silverstream, Brooklyn, Raumati Beach, Kenakena, Queen Margaret College) undertook the self-guided option, after training and advice from the Action Crew. Each self-guided school has between 3 and 6 classes doing the programme.

Oxford Crescent, Naenae Intermediate and Northland schools did the guided programme in the second term, with three more schools doing it self-guided - Gladstone, Paraparaumu, and Mangaroa. The second school term concluded at the end of June.

To assist with the delivery of the programme a number of works were undertaken in regional parks, the most significant of which has been the construction of a teaching space, attached to the wool shed at the Stratton Street entrance to Belmont Regional Park. This building was completed in March.

The programme was launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March (World Water Day) by the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Marion Hobbs, and Councillors, and the building was opened by kaumatua from the local iwi.

The multi-media presentation to introduce the children to *Take Action* and excite them about their participation in the programme has been completed. The presentation uses film, music and our own staff to tell students about the importance of water, its scarcity, and value to different cultures, as well as introducing simple concepts like a catchment, erosion, and pollution. It can be adapted to differing audiences and has been extremely well received thus far. The presentation, its stage set, and accompanying models and props, arrive at the school with the "Action Crew" in the "ecobus". This will be even more dramatic once the van has its external livery.

Work has continued with the development of resources to assist maori to make greater use of the programme. While *Take Action* does include information about the relationship and importance of water to the tangata whenua, we have taken steps this year to improve on this. Parts of the resource kit have been translated into maori (including the posters and leaflets). These are being made available for kura and other schools that want them.

The programme is being developed within a framework of continuous improvement. We have learned a lot from the first six months of operation, and these lessons are being implemented. To cope with the demand for the programme, staff resources were increased by a half a person from April. However, the programme has been developed and delivered within budget for the year.

## 5. **Adopt-A-Stream**

As indicated in last year's Annual Report, the performance indicator in the Department's Operating Plan for this now refers to the action project component of *Take Action*.

## 6. **Take Charge**

### 6.1 **Performance Indicator**

The performance indicator for this programme in the Annual Plan reads:

"Together with the Resource Investigations Department, the Business Bridges programme will be applied to one business type or problem area to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget."

### 6.2 **Implementation**

Renamed *Take Charge*, the pollution prevention programme for small to medium sized businesses, was developed, tested, and resource materials printed last year. *Take Charge* has been positioned as a tool for businesses to use to take charge of their environmental issues – from stormwater management to drainage, materials storage, maintenance, inspections, and spills. It also offers advice for sites that are contaminated and businesses unsure of how to handle their air discharges.

The programme commenced in the Gracefield/Seaview area in November. This area was chosen because of its concentration of potentially polluting industries, its history of pollution events, and its proximity to the drainage network feeding into the Waiwhetu Stream, where the Council is also working. Eleven companies have taken up the offer of service, and in addition *Take Charge* has been applied to eight quarries across the Region.

This level of implementation is disappointing. Consequently, we have recently undertaken a review to consider the reasons for the slow uptake and to consider how to get the most out of the programme. The conclusion we reached is that the resource materials are of a high quality but that our ability to deliver the service has been limited by the staff resources available. The staff who deliver the service are from the Pollution Response team and this work is their primary responsibility

We have reorganised the management of this programme and increased the role of the Business Facilitator, but the delivery to businesses will only occur at a more sustained level when the Pollution Response team has more time to give to *Take Charge*. Greater up-take would also be facilitated by a stronger marketing push, and this is in preparation, but it does depend on there being sufficient staff available to implement the programme.

The absence of key staff throughout the year, and the inability of Pollution Response staff to address *Take Charge*, means that the programme came in well under budget for the year.

## 7. **Take Care**

### 7.1 **Performance Indicator**

The performance indicator for this programme in the Annual Plan reads:

“Together with the Resource Policy Department, at least five Care Groups will be maintained and two new Care Groups established and assisted in providing local environmental care, to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget”

In this, the second year of the *Take Care* programme, ten existing groups from the first year and seven new groups have been assisted to carry out local environmental care activities. In addition, there are five groups that have been supported as RPS implementation projects and funded from that budget. All groups are working on the rehabilitation or improvement of ecosystems which are under threat in the region – wetlands, streams and their margins, dunes, estuaries and adjoining coastal areas. At this stage, *Take Care* does not provide for forest revegetation projects.

The seven new groups that commenced this year are working on:

- the dunes at Castlepoint
- the Pakuratahi Stream
- a Te Horo wetland
- the Glenside Stream
- the Waimeha Lagoon
- the Korimako Stream (in Ngaio)
- a plant nursery on the Kapiti Coast.

Considerable progress has been made this year. Whilst it is difficult to single out the achievement of any one group, some of the highlights might be:

- the clearing of weeds and replanting in the Otari area of the Kaiwharawhara Stream, and the progress being made on a community vision for this stream with the community and the Wellington City Council;
- the planting below Stebbings Dam by the Glenside community group, and this group's involvement in the Northern Growth Strategy;
- the weed removal, re-vegetation, and community commitment to the Waimapehi Stream at Pukerua Bay, and the Muapoko Stream at Greendale;
- the beach and dune restoration at the mouth of the Waitohu Stream, and the growth of community involvement and support for this project;
- the transformation of the Manuka Street reserve in Masterton through planting, and the involvement of local schools in this project;
- the completion of rock protection, fencing and planting at Riversdale; and
- the continued care of the Fensham Wetland by the group working there, and the increased participation in the project by neighbouring land owners.

Two of these groups (Waitohu and Fensham) were awarded Conservation Awards in recognition of their valuable contributions to conservation.

One of the objectives of *Take Care* is to involve communities in caring for the environment through the efforts of the groups. It was hoped that the efforts of group members would spur other friends and neighbours to greater environmental involvement. It is, of course, difficult to measure this effect. However, the figures on the performance of the groups over the past year show a considerable amount of activity and the involvement of others beyond the group membership. Nigel Clarke (*Take Care* Co-ordinator) estimates that:

- 1200-1500 people are directly involved in groups.
- Approximately 4000 people have been involved or come in contact with aspects of the programme in one way or another (planting days, community awareness raising, education and training).
- 38 major planting days have occurred.
- Approximately 55,000 plants have been planted.
- Four initiatives have taken place to reduce recreational conflicts and damage to the environment.
- Groups have been able to create community pride and involvement in their projects (e.g., Waitohu, Greendale, Riversdale, Manuka Street Reserve, Waimapehi Stream, Glenside).

Another objective has been to equip group members with the skills needed to carry out projects without Council support in the longer term. Over the last two years thirteen training sessions have been run, with some of this years topics being weed and pest management and setting up a nursery. We have observed, however, that some of the larger groups would like a relationship with the Council for longer than the four years that they may receive funding and that some groups have been unable to spend their full allocation in their second year. These lessons are being fed into our planning for the next three years of the programme.

This programme came in marginally over budget for the year.

## 8. Sustainable Region

### 8.1 Performance Indicator

The performance indicator for this programme in the Annual Plan reads:

“A report will be prepared describing actions that have been taken to promote the sustainable region concept to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.”

Over the last year considerable effort has been put into re-looking at the concept of “sustainability” across the Council. This has included such things as the Council’s brand, the nature of our reporting to the public, the purpose and wording of performance indicators, the corporate communications strategy, Council’s internal sustainability and so on. The Department has been involved in this work. In particular, we:

- Commissioned a report on the theoretical basis of environmental performance indicators to inform our deliberations on the best way to communicate environmental achievements to the public. This was undertaken by Dr Murray Patterson from Massey University;
- Investigated the Council’s implementation of the energy chapter of the Regional Policy Statement and developed a methodology for implementing this and the energy component of the Council’s new brand. This can be used by the Environment and Transport Divisions to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to this increasingly important set of issues (e.g., energy use, transport, air quality, climate change).

In addition to these activities, this budget heading contains provision for the Council’s contribution to Enviromart, the regional waste exchange. This contributes to a sustainable region through reducing waste and encouraging business to recycle the by-products of their activities. We also contributed to the national ‘Sustainable Households Project’ which is developing ways of getting individuals and households to adopt more environmentally friendly ways of living.

This aspect of the Department’s operations was undertaken within budget.