



Report 05.693
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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee
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Measuring up 2005, the state of the environment report for the Wellington region

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee *Measuring up 2005*, the state of the environment report for the Wellington region.

2. Background

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires us to monitor and report on the state of the environment in our region. Monitoring the state of the environment allows us to:

- observe and interpret trends or changes in environmental quality and determine the reasons for these;
- have good information for resource management decision making (resource consents and regional policy statement reviews); and
- convey information about our natural resources to the wider community.

Greater Wellington produces environmental report cards each year, and a state of the environment report every six years. *Measuring up 2005* checks progress towards the objectives set in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and is the beginning of our RPS review. The review is a statutory requirement of the RMA.

Staff have presented key findings from each chapter to the Environment Committee over the last three months, and to a councillor workshop in November.

3. Measuring up 2005

Measuring up 2005 presents a comprehensive overview of the state of the natural and physical resources of the Wellington region. Each chapter - one for each chapter of the RPS - is based on a background report that contains more detailed discussion and analysis of all available data.

Measuring up 2005 will be read by a wide audience, many of whom will be people and interest groups we will be consulting during the RPS review.

In putting together *Measuring up 2005* we have tried to be up-front and objective. The findings tell us that:

- We are doing some things well – for example, water quality has improved in two streams after sewage discharges were removed, and the shift of dairy shed discharges from streams to land has benefited even more streams.
- We are doing other things less well – for example, there is growing evidence that urban stormwater will cause serious long-term effects on aquatic life in streams and harbours.
- We are better informed now about the state of our air and soil quality than we were six years ago, but we need to work more with city and district councils to monitor natural character in the coastal environment and the state of ecosystems.

Measuring up 2005 will be tabled at the meeting.

4. Regional Policy Statement review

Measuring up 2005 is the first step in the RPS review. The next step is to assess the effectiveness of the RPS policies and methods in achieving the objectives. This assessment is required by the RMA and will be reported on early in 2006 as the second stage of the RPS review.

Depending on the outcome of the review, we will then re-notify the operative RPS, or notify a new RPS that incorporates changes proposed as a result of the review. As with all policy statements and plans, the notified RPS must then go through the First Schedule process of consultation, public submissions and so on.

5. Communication

We have prepared a communications plan that covers the promotion of *Measuring up 2005* to the media, and its distribution to the community and to Greater Wellington staff. A media package will be sent out before *Measuring up 2005* is distributed.

Each chapter of *Measuring up 2005* has been summarised in a report card, much like the annual environment report cards that we have published for the last three years. Each card presents the chapter's key information in a way that can be understood by a wide range of people.

Copies of *Measuring up 2005* and the summary report cards, both of which will also be available on our website, will be distributed to the members of the community we will be consulting for the RPS review. They include iwi, local and central government decision-makers, non-governmental organisations, environmental and community organisations, and industry. The summary report cards will also be distributed to schools and others who receive the annual environment report cards.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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