

Report 09.230
Date 22 April 2009
File PK/02/03/01

Committee Regional Sustainability
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Regional Outdoors Programme 2009

1. Purpose

To report on the 2009 Regional Outdoors Programme (ROP).

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

The 2009 ROP was the ninth in the series of annual summer event programmes. This year's programme started on 27 December and concluded on 5 April.

Sixty-two events were scheduled. Five events were cancelled because of inclement weather. Twenty-seven of these events were organised and staffed exclusively by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) staff, 28 were organised and run by GWRC in partnership with volunteer groups, territorial authorities and/or Sport Wellington, and seven were organised by external providers.

4. Objectives

The ROP contributes to two LTCCP success factors:

- More people visit the regional parks
- More people taking positive action for a healthy community

4.1 More people visiting the regional parks

Through the ROP, GWRC is able to:

- Make it easier for people to use parks by providing a safe structured environment to explore an area of the park, information about correct equipment needed and public and private transport options

- Provide an opportunity for park rangers and other GWRC staff to interact with the public, educating them about services that GWRC provides
- Distribute regional park brochures

The programme events are attractive to many people because they are free or low cost and offer a variety of activities for various ages and fitness levels. Thirty percent of the people who attended a GWRC event had not previously visited the regional park that the event was held in. Ninety-eight percent of survey participants indicated they would revisit the respective park.

4.2 More people taking positive action for a sustainable region

4.2.1 Volunteers

The ROP provides an opportunity for GWRC to build relationships with environmental and park user groups (see Attachment 1). It also allows groups to promote their aims and encourage the public to join up. Many of the groups we have worked with have reported increased membership as a result of the programme.

GWRC staff members are given the opportunity to volunteer at events. Staff from Water Supply, Flood Protection, Support Services, Marketing and Design, Transport Strategy Implementation, Wellington Regional Strategy, Parks, Environmental Education and Communications supported the events throughout the programme. These volunteers gain knowledge of our parks, as well as a chance to interact with the public and promote other functions of GWRC.

Volunteer partners and staff are each given a T-shirt representing the park they worked in to thank them and further promote the park.

4.2.2 Territorial authorities and partners

One of the outcomes of the Wellington Regional Strategy is to provide a quality lifestyle. The population of the Wellington Region is fortunate that several territorial authorities have diverse and low cost summer programmes. By establishing positive and ongoing relationships with other territorial authorities, we have been able to cross-promote events and work on joint projects, as well as ensuring events do not clash and are spread throughout the summer period.

We have worked on the following events with other territorial authorities and partners:

- *Kev the Wandering Kiwi* - with Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils. Kev the Wandering Kiwi was held every Thursday in January and targeted families with young children. The parks used were Tunnel Gully Recreation Area, Wainuiomata Recreation Area, Kaitoke Regional Park and Belmont Regional Park.
- *Paws in the Park* - a joint initiative with the Upper Hutt City Council that promotes the dog friendly aspect of Tunnel Gully. Unfortunately this year we had to cancel the event because of wet weather.

- *Lion Foundation buggy walks* - an ongoing partnership with Sport Wellington. This monthly event is aimed at parents and caregivers with babies, with events from November to April taking place in the regional parks and the winter series in urban areas.

5. Promotion

Promotion for 2009 included:

- A four page lift out in *Our Region*. The brochure was redesigned to include a new look and layout that made the best possible use of the more limited space.
- A direct mail out to our database of approximately 1,500 people and organisations.
- Bundles of brochures were delivered to libraries, information centres, swimming pools, recreation centres and other organisations to be displayed to the public.
- Distribution of the programme brochure at ROP events.
- Radio advertising through the Radio Network
- Listings on the GWRC, New Zealand Live and Eventfinder web sites.
- Feature stories on the GWRC web site.
- Half page full colour advertisements were placed in *The Wellingtonian*, *Capital Times*, *Kapi Mana*, *The Hutt News* and the *Upper Hutt Leader* at the beginning of January. These advertisements were redesigned to match the new look brochure.
- Territorial authorities promoted GWRC events specific to their area within their summer programme brochures and on their web sites, e.g., *Summer Scene*, *Lively Parks* and *Stepping Out*
- Media releases were written for the following events:
 - The ROP launch
 - Opportunities available in Belmont Regional Park
 - Events involving Flood Protection - the *Hutt and Otaki Great Gravel Grabs*, and the *Stopbank Soiree*
 - *Celebrate Darwin's 200th birthday*
 - *Farm Day* at Battle Hill
 - *Discover Henley Lake*, new event in the Wairarapa
 - *Old Coach Road History Trail* and the *Battle Hill Guided History Walk*
 - *Hull to Hutt guided stream walk*
 - An end of programme wrap-up, highlighting key results

6. Attendance

6.1 Summary of attendance

A total of 15,854 people attended ROP events in 2009, 1,749 more than in 2008.

Key result areas	2009	2008	2007
Total number of events in the ROP	62	57	49
Events organised by GWRC	49	48	41
Events run by other agencies	6	3	4
Events run by volunteer groups with GWRC support if required	6	6	4
Participants at GWRC events	4,736	4,724	3,881
Average number of participants at GWRC events	105	98	95

The cancellation of five GWRC organised events meant that numbers remained almost the same as last year. Events organised by outside providers totalled 10,896 attendees. These included the *Anything Vintage Festival* (8,500), the *Karapoti Classic* (1,314), the *Mt Lowry Challenge* (350), the *Big Coast* (180), *Walk the Trail* (157) and the *Grand Traverse* (395).

6.2 New events

These included:

- *Rongoa Maori Medicine Walk* - a guided walk in Kaitoke Regional Park to learn about Rongoa - the Maori term for medicines produced from native plants. To ensure a satisfactory experience, we set a maximum of 30 people on the event and could have booked it twice over.
- *Stopbank Soiree* - the inside view of flood protection works at Strand Park with the Hutt River Ranger and Flood Protection project manager. Twenty people attended this event. Most found it interesting and informative.
- *Darwin's 200th Birthday* at Queen Elizabeth Park - Phil Garnock-Jones, Professor of Plant Science and Deputy Head of School of Biological Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, delivered a keynote speech. Tony Edwards, Professional Geologist, Stratigraphic Solutions, Ian Armitage, a member of the Orthinological Society, Rob Craven, GWRC Team Leader, Maintenance led walk/talks, which were repeated in the afternoon. Around 36 people also enjoyed a sausage sizzle and birthday cake as part of the event.
- *Walk the Trail* - a fun, family friendly 5 km walk along the scenic Hutt River Trail, from Trentham Memorial Park to Stokes Valley an event organised by Leisure Active (Hutt City Council) following the success of *Bike the Trail*.

6.3 Highlights

- *Beginners guide to Fly Fishing* - This partnership with the Hutt Valley Angling Club lead to a 13 percent increase in their club membership, securing the future of the club with new younger members and ensuring repeat visits to the Hutt River.
- The *Kev the Wandering Kiwi* walks were attended by 928 children and parents, compared to 815 last year (a 14 percent increase).
- We had five *Lion Foundation buggy walks*, including the April walk at Battle Hill and a new event at Lake Henley. A total of 491 people

attended the three buggy walks in the 2008 programme, while 605 attended the three equivalent walks in 2009. This represents a 23 percent increase in attendance.

- The *Kapiti Gravel Grab* was attended by 185 vehicles, compared to a total attendance of 125 vehicles in 2008 - a 48 percent increase in attendance. The gravel grabs continue to be very popular and appreciated events.

7. Feedback

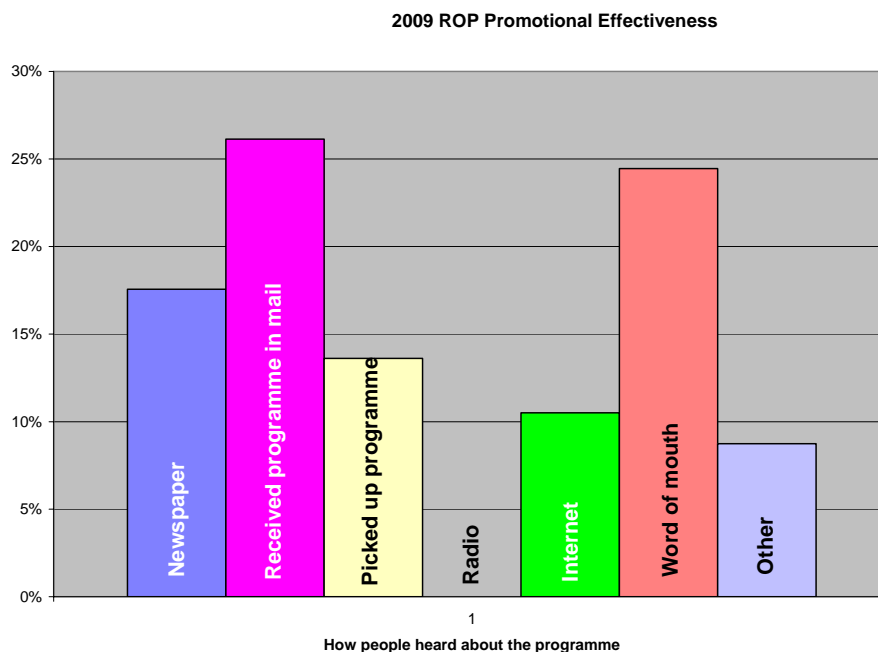
All participants on GWRC organised events are given evaluation forms to provide feedback about the programme. We receive additional feedback through telephone calls, emails and letters.

Comments have been predominantly positive. Suggestions for improvement focus on adhering to published event timings more closely, ensuring those attending walks have an appropriate level of fitness and ensuring speakers at events can be clearly heard. Where attendance was low, we will review the event and decide whether to run it again next year.

Discussions with staff and volunteer organisations have indicated potential to include more clubs' *have-a-go* days and other events in the ROP. These represent good opportunities to promote a range of recreation opportunities, support local groups and clubs, and get better value for the time and resources invested in the ROP.

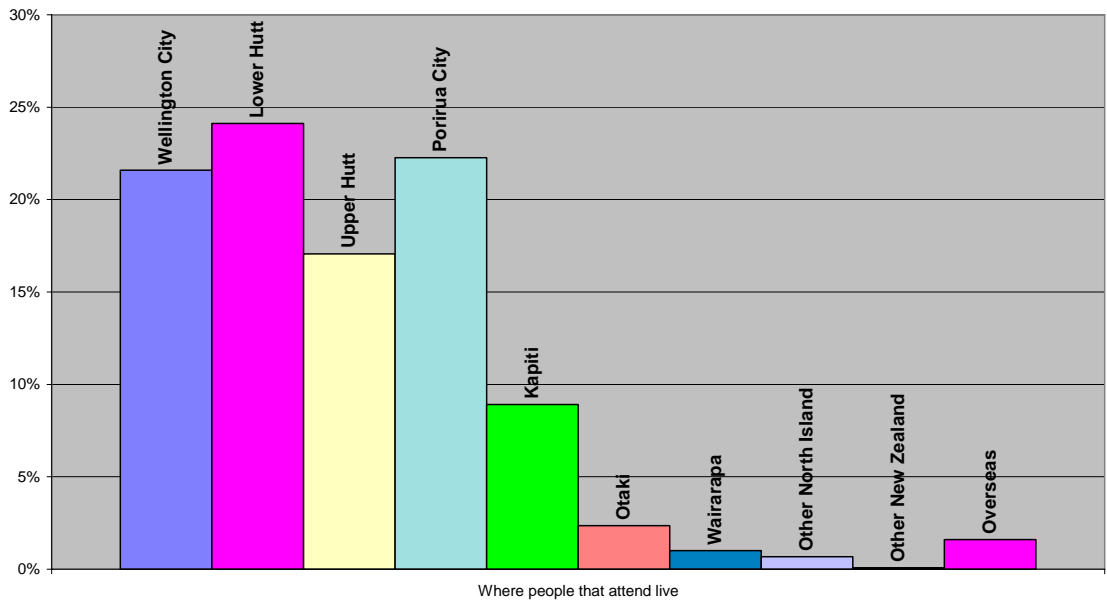
Information from 2009 participant evaluation forms:

A total of 528 people completed the surveys, which are issued during GWRC organised events.



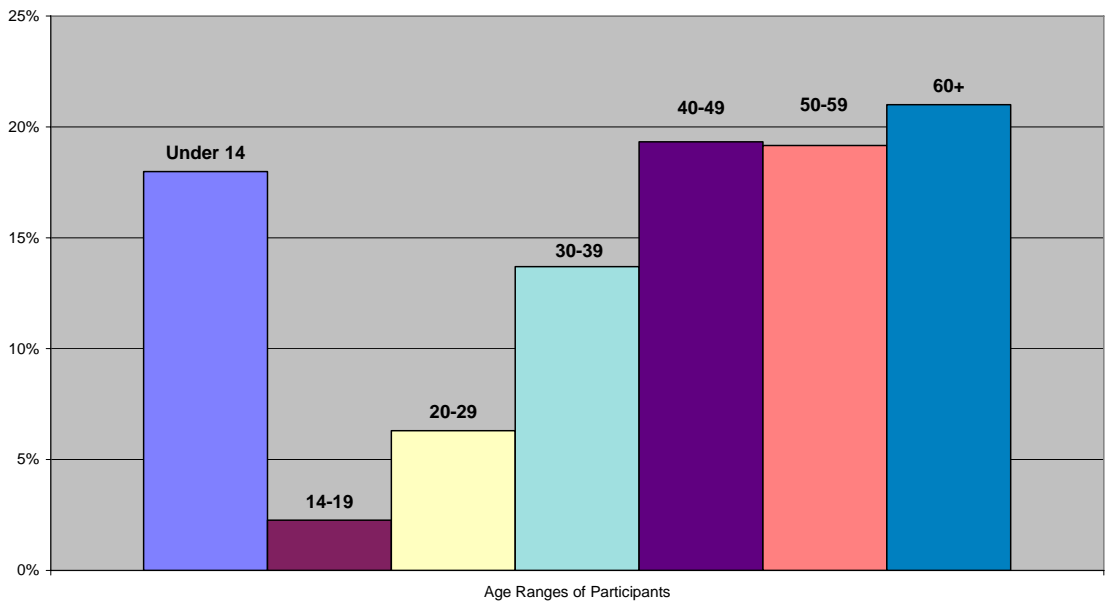
As a result of this information we will not be advertising on the radio as part of the 2010 ROP. "Newspaper" includes commissioned advertising and articles published as a result of press releases.

2009 ROP Geographical Distribution of Participants



The number of people attending the ROP from each district is relatively proportional to the population of that area. Wellington City is slightly under-represented, possibly because of the number of other events in the city and the distance involved in travelling to the regional parks.

2009 ROP Participant Age Distribution



We are pleased to see a good number of under-14 year olds attending events. We will continue to explore options to attract more 14-29 year olds but note that this age group is generally more strongly attracted to urban based activities.

Fifty-nine percent of the people that attended the ROP were female. This year was the first year we asked *Would you have done this many hours physical activity today, without attending this event?*

Fifty-one percent of the respondents said they would not have done the same amount of physical activity if they had not attended the event. The average satisfaction rating for our events was 4.75 out of 5.

Information collected from volunteers and rangers feedback forms has been included in recommendations for the 2010 ROP.

8. Sponsorship

The programme received sponsorship from Dwights Outdoors, Caffe L'Affare, Radio Network (Kapiti Coast) and The Cancer Society (Wellington and Kapiti branches).

Attachment 2 shows more detail about the sponsorship received.

9. Budget

The 2009 programme had a net budget of \$20,000. The budget excludes the cost of GWRC staff time. Any charge to participants covers direct costs, such as transport and portaloos.

Total expenditure for the programme was \$28,585, with revenue from participants \$11,273 for a net cost of \$17,312. Therefore, the 2009 programme was \$2,688 under budget.

10. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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