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Committee Council  
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## Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan

### 1. Purpose

To inform Council of the development of the *draft Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan* (Attachment 1) including a public consultation process.

### 2. The decision-making process and significance

The matter requiring decision in the report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act).

- 2.1 Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

### 3. Background

Porirua Harbour is the largest estuary in the lower North Island and is well recognised for its ecological, cultural, aesthetic and recreational values. Porirua Harbour is comprised of two arms – the larger Pauatahanui Inlet and the Onepoto Arm.

Since 2000, Greater Wellington has been working with Porirua City Council to address some of the environmental issues affecting the Pauatahanui Inlet. This project has focussed on reducing sediment inputs into the harbour by working with landowners and the community in the Pauatahanui Inlet catchment to retire erosion prone land and fence off and plant stream banks.

In 2006, Porirua City Council broadened its focus to the whole harbour and catchment by establishing the Porirua Harbour Programme including the

establishment of a Harbour Coordinator position and the provision of additional resources. In 2008, the four key stakeholders with responsibility for, or an interest in, the management of the Porirua Harbour formed a partnership to work together to produce the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy. The four were Ngati Toa Rangatira, Porirua City Council, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington. Additionally, agencies such as the NZ Transport Agency, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Fisheries and Regional Public Health were involved, as were the various community groups with an interest in the harbour.

#### **4. Strategy development**

During 2009, a series of public seminars were held followed by community workshops and the release of a public discussion brochure on proposals to improve harbour conditions. As result of this public and agency consultation a clear set of broad priorities emerged to form the foundation of the Harbour Strategy:

- General and targeted education and awareness programmes and increased enforcement activity, capability and resources;
- Strengthened controls over land management such as urban and rural development and forest harvesting;
- Strong inter-agency collaboration and cross-boundary consistency with effective political leadership;
- Infrastructure improvements and innovative or “best practice” approaches to the management of stormwater, sewage, landfills and roading.

As the strategy was further refined as a result of inter-agency collaboration, the problems of the management of the harbour were summarised by the “big three” issues:

- Sediment – With the removal of vegetation from the catchment and the disturbance of soil during the construction of roads, houses and subdivisions, elevated levels of sediment are entering the harbour. Unless this rate is reduced, irreversible harm will occur to the ecological and recreational values of the harbour.
- Pollution – Contaminants enter the harbour as a result of a range of legal (zinc from roofs) and illegal (cross-connections between sewer and stormwater systems) processes. Contamination has implications for both human and ecological health.
- Degraded ecology – Sedimentation, pollution and direct harbour edge modification (for the construction of roads, railways etc) have destroyed significant areas of the original estuary habitat and reduced critical sub-tidal, inter-tidal and harbour edge ecologies. Estuaries are one of the most productive ecological communities and the loss of saltmarsh and seagrass will be negatively impacting on offshore and near-shore fisheries.

The *Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan* sets three key objectives:

1. Reduce sedimentation rates;
2. Reduce pollutant inputs;
3. Ecological restoration

and the key actions the community, agencies and individuals need to make to achieve these objectives.

## **5. Public consultation and hearings**

*The Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan* was subject to a public consultation process following two specific consultations with the harbour catchment community, and deliberate liaison with and participation of key local community groups and key regional and national agencies. The draft strategy was publically notified in September 2011.

A four-person hearing panel was established of representatives from three councils and the Runanga to consider written and supporting oral submissions. The representatives were Rawiri Faulkner (Te Runanga O Toa Rangatira), Cr Liz Kelly (Porirua City Council), Cr Ngaire Best (Wellington City Council), and Cr Barbara Donaldson (Greater Wellington Regional Council). Mr Faulkner chaired the panel.

All 23 written and the 7 supporting oral submissions were considered by the Hearing Committee. Attachment 2 is the Report of the Committee outlining matters raised by submissions, Panel recommendations and explanations regarding the recommendations. Recommendations the councils and Runanga accept from the Hearing Committee report will be appropriately actioned and/or incorporated into a final *Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan*.

## **6. Where to from here?**

It is intended that the current multi-agency Porirua Harbour Programme steering group will continue to meet on a regular basis to guide the project and ensure the current high level of inter-agency collaboration continues. At its next meeting, the group will be considering which actions from the Action Plan will be given priority by each of the agencies over the next three years.

Greater Wellington intends to consult with the community through the Long Term Plan process on allocating an additional \$90,000 towards the harbour project. The current thinking is that this sum will be split between undertaking further scientific investigations into long term trends in the health of the harbour, extending the catchment protection work into the catchment of the Onepoto Arm and commencing restoration of key areas of estuarine habitat within the harbour.

## 7. Recommendations

*That the Council:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Endorses the findings and recommendations of the Joint Hearing Committee Report***

Report prepared by

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**Attachment 1: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan**  
**Attachment 2: Report of the Joint Hearing Committee**