



caring about you & your environment

Report 01.676

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Report 01.676.GS.sw.ENV Committee

Report to Environment Committee
from Geoff Skene, Manager, Environment Co-ordination

Survey of Environmental Behaviour

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the key findings of the recent survey of environmental behaviour and opinion.

2. Background

In June this year a telephone survey was undertaken of 1000 regional residents. The purpose of the survey was to find out what people do, if anything, to look after the environment in their day to day lives, and what they know about pollution and how to prevent it. The survey also identifies attitudes towards the environment, knowledge of the Pollution Response Service, feelings and perceptions about the marine environment, and public interest in some of the Council's environmental information.

The need for the survey was initially identified in the Council's Environmental Education Strategy and it fulfils a requirement of the 2000-01 Annual Plan. The Survey was undertaken by UMR Research Limited.

3. Findings

For the first time the Council now has detailed information about how the regional population feels about the environment and how people behave towards the environment. Our only previous environmental survey, done in 1993, polled the opinions of only two subsets of the population, farmers and recreational users.

The survey is also quite different from most other environmental surveys undertaken in New Zealand in that it seeks to measure behaviour and understanding as well as preferences.

The major findings are outlined in the attachment to this report. The amount of information in the survey is considerable. This report is only a summary of some key findings and it presents little in the way of analysis to show differences according to such factors as district, age, gender, income, or environmental attitude.

The findings relating to the marine environment are not discussed here. Copies of the full report are available on request.

4. **How will the Results be Used?**

The information from the survey will be used in a number of very significant ways. For example:

- It will inform any environmental education initiatives directed at the general population. It will assist us to target our actions to the issues, people, demographic groups, or districts that are important and devise more effective methods and strategies for increasing environmental awareness.
- It will serve as a general baseline to much of the work of the Environment Division so that in years to come we can retest to see if there have been any changes, and whether our programmes are being successful.
- It can be used to derive measurable objectives for any future environmental education or sustainable development initiatives. For example, we are considering using it at the moment to set specific targets for the Pauatahanui Inlet project (e.g. the proportion of the population in Porirua saying they let car or paint washings go down the gutter is reduced to X percent from a current figure of Y percent).
- It enables us to identify the actions, values, and concerns of specific groups (e.g., “under 30 year olds”, “over 60 year olds”, “Wairarapa residents”).
- It provides useful information about public environmental concerns which will be useful in providing guidance for the Council in its future strategic planning processes (e.g. next LTFS).
- The marine information is being used now to help the Council identify its role in managing blue water ecosystems.
- It has already provided a clear indication that public knowledge of our pollution response service is not as great as we thought.
- It has also shown considerable public interest in the state of the environment information we possess and provides clues as to what information people want to know about.

5. **Communication**

A press release will be made outlining the major findings of the survey.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

GEOFF SKENE
Manager, Environment Co-ordination

JANE BRADBURY
Divisional Manager, Environment

Attachments: 1 (one)