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## **Report 02.617**

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Report to Environment Committee  
from Howard Markland, Pollution Control Co-ordinator

### **Incident Response Report for the Period 13 August 2002 - 20 September 2002**

#### **1. Purpose**

To report on incident response, investigation and audit work recently undertaken by the Wellington Regional Council's Pollution Control team.

#### **2. Background**

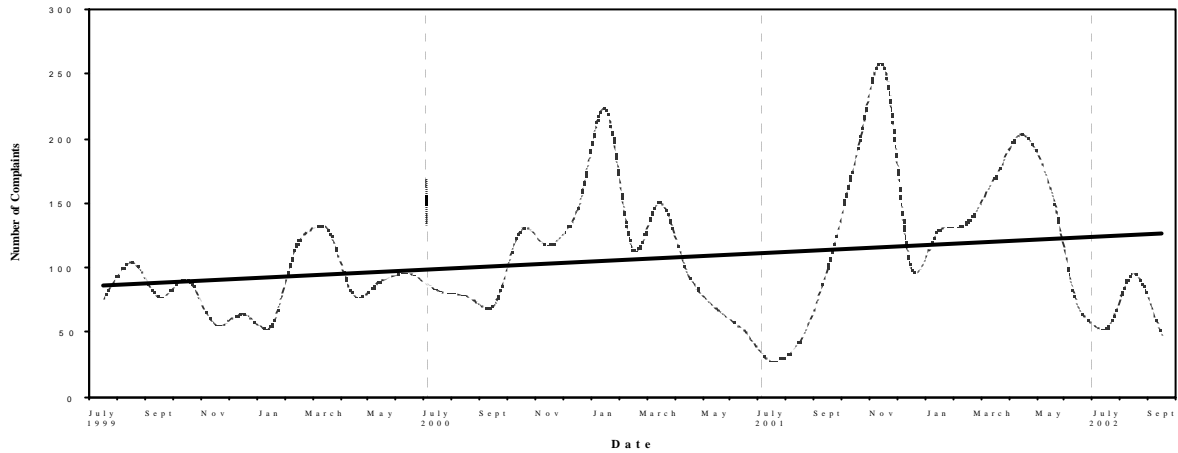
The Resource Investigations Department provides a 24-hour incident response service for the Western Wellington Region. This service responds to complaints about pollution incidents, non-compliance with the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and regional plans, as well as after hours consent non-compliance. The Council's Consents Management department also responds to complaints attributed to consented activities that occur during office hours.

The Department is also currently implementing the *Take Charge* initiative, which is an environmental performance assessment initiative aimed at small to medium sized industry. The objective of *Take Charge* is to be pro-active in our approach to environmental incident management, by assisting companies to understand and meet their environmental obligations.

#### **3. Incidents**

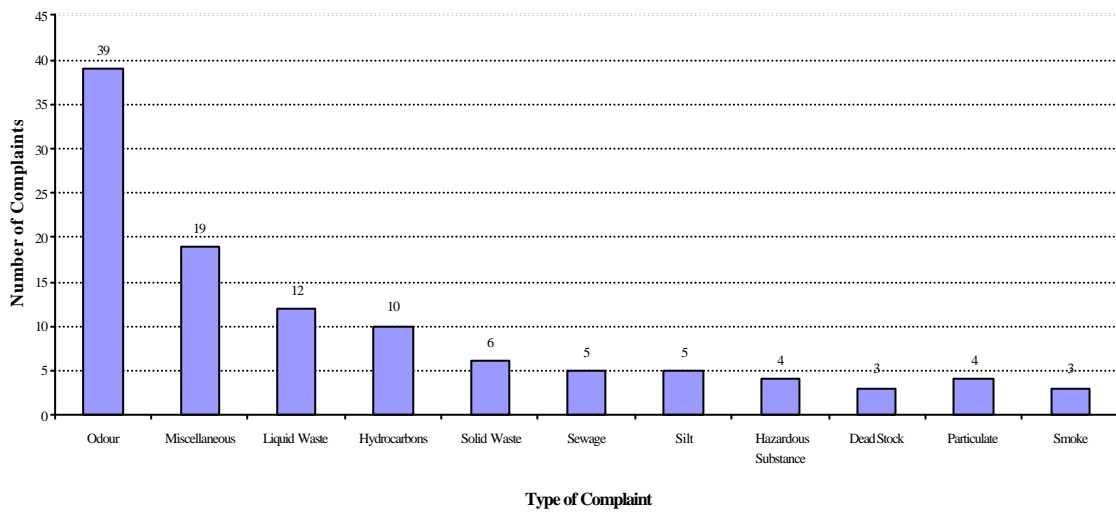
A total of 124 complaints were received during this reporting period, which equates to 3.3 complaints per day. The trend in the number of complaints received over recent years to the end of this reporting period is presented in Figure 1. This illustrates that, despite substantial seasonal variation, the general trend in complaint numbers is upward. This is principally attributed to the growing number of odour complaints.

**Figure 1 Number of Complaints 1999 - Present**



The types of complaints received during this reporting period are summarised in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2 Types of Incident Complaints**



The most significant incidents that occurred during this period are summarised below:

- There was a small diesel oil slick in the Wellington Harbour on 30 August 2002, between Chaffers Marina and Glasgow Wharf. Although no source was confirmed, it is suspected that it arose from a hydrocarbon spill at Seaview marina the previous Friday. The slick had disappeared by 5 September 2002.
- Investigation into animal deaths (numerous seagulls and one dog) around the mouth of the Titoku Stream on the Kapiti Coast revealed no obvious toxic source in the area or stream catchment. Investigations by Wellington Regional Council included taking water samples and walking the stream route to try and identify possible causes.

The time between receiving an incoming complaint and reaching the source of the complaint (response time) is used as a performance indicator for the incident response service. Table 1 shows that officers achieved a high level of conformance during this reporting period.

**Table 1 Response Time Performance Summary**

<b>Response Level (Response Time)</b>	<b>Average Response Time</b>	<b>Conformance Level</b>
Red (60 minutes)	40.35 minutes	87.5%
Yellow (24 hours)	5 hours	100%
Blue (30 days)	1.6 days	100%

#### 4. ***Take Charge***

At the present time, the focus is on the preparation of auditor guidelines and standard materials. In-house audits of Wellington Regional Council facilities have been programmed for November, which will enable us to test our assessment protocols, evaluate the Regional Council's environmental performance, and train our auditors.

#### 5. **Other Projects**

The Coastal Structures Inventory project was completed. The database developed as part of this project provides baseline information for the future management of structures and discharges in the coastal marine area.

Comprehensive comments were provided to the Resource Policy section regarding the effectiveness of all permitted activity rules as environmental protection tools, and the practicality of their implementation.

A review was conducted into the way we respond to odour complaints attributed to principal sources (Carey's Gully Complex, Taylor Preston and Asphalt Surfaces NZ Ltd). This enabled the development of a much more cost-effective complaint response protocol for these sites.

#### 6. **Enforcement Action**

A prosecution is currently being sought against Allied Concrete, following an incident on 19 February 2002, when highly alkaline (pH 12) wastewater overflowed from an on site storage pond into the adjacent Carey's Gully Stream.

**7. Communication**

No further public communication is necessary for this report.

**8. Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

- (1) *receives the report; and*
- (2) *notes the contents.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

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**Attachment 1:** Summary of Incident Complaints