



Report 03.689
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Committee Environment Committee
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Environment Division and about any matters that have arisen since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' Reports

The Department Managers' Reports, along with the Divisional Accountant's report follow as Attachment 1.

3. Councillors' Workshops

At the last meeting of the Committee, Councillors requested that three workshops be arranged. One of these, on odour, took place on 4 November 2003. The other two – marine biodiversity and water allocation – have been arranged for the 2nd and 10th December respectively. Certainly the staff find that these workshops are an excellent way to discuss issues and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Councillors for taking such an interest.

4. National Environmental Standards

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is developing a package of national environmental standards. I was a member of a regional council national reference group, set up by MfE, to assist in the broad development of these standards.

New Zealand currently does not have any national environmental standards. The intention is develop standards that are not hugely ambitious and that can be adhered to. The first batch of standards to be released focuses on air quality. The Ministry has provided background material on the following standards:

- Ambient air quality for priority contaminants.
- Emission standards for new solid –fuel burning appliances.
- Prohibitive standards for activities that discharge significant quantities of harmful contaminants into the air, such as dioxins.

There is also a proposed standard for landfill gas collection and destruction.

Submissions are being sought by 5 December 2003. Whilst we certainly do not oppose having standards, we are anxious that the content is correct and able to be sensibly implemented. It will fall to regional councils to ensure compliance with these standards.

Another standard is also being proposed, although submissions are not being sought at this time. This is a human drinking water source standard that will have implications for our water supply operations.

The Ministry recently held a roadshow where staff were given an opportunity to discuss the standards – and, indeed, any other matters of interest. Some Councillors did attend the Wellington roadshow. In our view the standards as proposed and the development process require some re-thinking. We are still unsure about the exact wording. However, the Ministry staff have shown that they are open to any suggested improvements.

5. Happy Christmas

As this is the last Environment Committee meeting before Christmas, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the Committee for its help and support during the past year and wish everyone a good holiday.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. receive the report; and*
- 2. note the contents.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Department Managers' Reports