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**Committee**            **Rural Services and Wairarapa**  
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## **National Environmental Standard for Air Quality**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee about the National Environmental Standard on air quality.

### **2. Background**

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) are developing national environmental standards under the Resource Management Act (RMA). National environmental standards are regulations that prescribe technical standards, methods or requirements for environmental matters. The standards apply nationally, meaning each local council must enforce the same minimum standard. Councils can however, impose stricter regulations through their district or regional plans and by-laws.

National standards create a level playing field throughout New Zealand, provide consistency and certainty in decision-making and guarantee a level of protection for the health of all New Zealanders.

### **3. National Environmental Standard for Air Quality**

The RMA (National Environmental Standards Relating to Certain Air, Pollutants, Dioxins, and Other Toxics) Regulations 2004 were released on 6 September 2004. The National Environmental Standard (NES) sets out;

- Prohibitions and/or requirements relating to certain activities that discharge contaminants to air.
- Air quality standards.
- Standards and controls on emissions from domestic woodburners.
- Controls on greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.

#### **4. Activities prohibited**

The MfE released the first part of the NES on the 8 October 2004, which prohibits the following activities, unless resource consent is granted as provided for in the regulations:

- Lighting of fires and burning of waste at landfills.
- The burning of tyres.
- The burning of bitumen on roads.
- The burning of coated wire.
- The burning of oil in the open.
- High temperature hazardous waste incinerators apart from those listed.

The second part of the NES will come into effect from the 1 September 2005. It sets out:

- That ambient air quality standards will apply – with regional councils responsible for monitoring and publicly notifying any breaches.
- That discharges of PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter less than 10 micron) are either prohibited or require resource consent, depending on ambient concentrations in the “airshed”. (An airshed is a region or part of a region gazetted by the Minister. The concept is similar to a watershed.)
- Requirements relating to wood burners.
- The control of gas emissions from landfills.

Finally, from 1 October 2006 the following will be required under the NES

- The requirement that incinerators at schools and healthcare institutions have resource consents.

#### **5. Conclusion**

To date there have been no requests for resource consent to provide for compliance with the NES. Next year Greater Wellington will have monitoring requirements. Monitoring will be co-ordinated by the Air Quality Scientist in the Wellington Office and supported by Wairarapa staff.

#### **6. Recommendation**

*That the Committee receives and notes the contents of this report.*

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