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Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
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Take Action Annual Report 2007-2008

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the activities and achievements of schools involved in the *Take Action* programme during the 2007-08 year.

2. Background

Take Action, Greater Wellington's environmental education programme for Year 5 – 8 students, is available free to all schools in the Greater Wellington region. The two teaching and learning programmes available are *Take Action for Water* and *Take Action for Air*.

While both programmes are taught by classroom teachers, they are facilitated by Council staff through teacher training and working alongside teachers and students on field trips and in class where necessary. The performance indicator for *Take Action* requires the programme to be implemented to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.

3. Uptake of *Take Action*

In the 2007-08 year approximately 2300 students in 85 classes from 22 schools participated in *Take Action*, (either the *Take Action for Water* or *Air* programmes). One school worked with both *Take Action* programmes at different year levels. This is the last calendar year that the original *Take Action for Water* programme will be offered, with the new version being available to schools from term one 2009.

Take Action for Water and *Take Action for Air* continue to be very popular with schools in the region with some already booked in for 2009. *Take Action for Water* continues to be our most popular programme with 68% of participating schools doing it in the 2007-08 year.

As Table 1 shows, schools from almost all territorial authorities participated in the programme which resulted in a reasonably even spread across the region.

Table 1: 2007-08 Schools undertaking *Take Action* by territorial authority

Territorial Authority	Schools participating in <i>Take Action</i>
Carterton District	No schools
Kapiti Coast District	Waikanae School Waitohu School Paraparaumu Beach School
Hutt City	Wainuiomata Intermediate
Masterton District	Fernridge School Solway School Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Wairarapa
Porirua City	Discovery School Paremata School St Pius X School Te Kura Kaupapa Maori O Porirua
South Wairarapa	Kahutara School South Featherston School
Upper Hutt	Plateau School
Wellington City	Otari School Owhiro Bay School Miramar Central School Queen Margaret College (Year 8 - Air) Queen Margaret College (Year 7 - Water) Samuel Marsden College St Benedict's School St Brigid's School

4. Take Action highlights

4.1 Re-write of the Take Action for Water programme

With a new school curriculum being circulated and our existing *Take Action for Water* programme coming up to seven years old, it was time to update and refresh the programme for teachers and students. The new *Take Action for Water* programme will soon be published and is in line with both the New Zealand Curriculum and the Environmental Education Guidelines for New Zealand schools.

Whereas the old *Take Action for Water* programme focused largely on the effects of stormwater on rivers and streams, the new programme takes a wider catchment based approach. Students learn how the way they live in their catchment and the actions of their community impact on the living ecosystems and water ways that support them. The programme supports wider Council efforts to take an integrated catchment management approach to caring for the environment and was developed with the assistance of a number of staff from across the Council. It also acknowledges relevant Maori perspectives in a more practical way.

The new programme more clearly integrates current educational thinking and pedagogy than before with unit planning, integrated curriculum and increased educational outcomes clearly identified throughout. The content and layout of the teaching material provides scaffolded learning opportunities for students to provide superior educational outcomes and provides teachers with the tools and information they require to confidently implement the programme.

4.2 Meridian Energy partnership

A major outcome of the year is the new partnership formed between Greater Wellington and Meridian Energy. Meridian Energy wishes to support the delivery of *Take Action for Water* to schools and to increase the effectiveness of the programme's message in the community. Meridian's support is in three parts. It covers all of the costs of publishing the hard copy teaching and learning resources (\$40,000): this support is acknowledged by the placement of Meridian's logo, alongside Greater Wellington's, on the published material.

Meridian has also agreed to provide a 'take home item' for all students participating in the programme and this looks set to be a re-usable calico bag that students will first illustrate with their *Take Action for Water* environmental message. This will increase the reach of *Take Action* into student's homes and extend the message to their families and friends.

Thirdly, Meridian has also agreed to fund a new *Take Action* project fund of \$10,000 per annum for five years. This will mean schools are able to take on larger environmental projects and enable students to turn their more ambitious plans into reality (e.g. water conservation systems, photo-voltaic cells to reduce energy waste).

The launch of the new programme is scheduled for September of this year and will be held at the new Meridian Energy building on the waterfront. Councillors are invited to attend and invitations will be sent shortly. Teachers and those who have contributed to and supported the production of the new resource will also be in attendance.

4.3 Schools taking action in their community

Schools across the region undertook a range of exciting environmental actions during the year. A good example of this is the work carried out by two Kapiti schools as part of the *Take Action for Air* programme. Both Kenakena and Waikanae schools worked on *Take Action for Air* in 2007 and, after participating in organised planting days run by the Waikanae Estuary Care Group, chose to establish their own plant growing units. Establishing this infrastructure within these schools will enable staff and students to contribute to the Waikanae restoration project over the long term.

Both schools have registered with the Trees for Survival programme to resource their shade house work and, using eco-sourced seedlings provided by a local nursery, have already potted up their first batch of seedlings. Both Greater Wellington staff and care group members were on hand to support these working bees and everyone involved benefited greatly from the sharing of knowledge and enthusiasm and the relationships which are starting to develop.

Both schools also supported the community restoration project this year by assisting with planting days and will continue to work alongside the care group maintaining and growing on plants for the project. Next year's planting will see students planting the native plants they have themselves grown which will be a very exciting achievement.

Another student-led environmental action project helped Fernridge School conserve water during the long Wairarapa summer. Students from this Masterton school planned, purchased and installed a rain water collection tank. Rain water is collected from the roof of a school classroom block and diverted into the tank where it is used to water the student's vegetable garden. St Patrick's school (Masterton) also installed a rain water tank.

4.4 Enviroschools

Our relationship with the Enviroschools organisation has continued to be useful and productive for both parties. Enviroschools activities complement the work carried out by schools participating in the *Take Action* programme and vice versa. The Council continues to provide annual funding (\$2,500) to support Enviroschools activities in the region and office space for the Regional Co-ordinator. Staff in the Environmental Education team work co-operatively with Enviroschools facilitators to help schools achieve environmental education and action outcomes.

4.5 Environmental Awards

In November, Greater Wellington Environmental Awards were awarded to Muritai, Naenae and Titahi Bay schools in recognition of their achievements through the *Take Action* programme. The Kahikitea School leadership award went to Stephen Eames, a teacher at Muritai School in Eastbourne. Muritai School has continued to work hard on environmental action projects. Prize money awarded to the school has gone towards the purchase of a camera to record and document environmental projects, tools, seeds and plants etc for gardening and landscaping projects. Muritai also received a Conservation Award in August.

4.6 Performance against budget

The cost of delivering the *Take Action* programmes in 2007-08 was \$286,000 against a budget of \$237,000. The over spend was entirely in staff time, reflecting the time taken to write the new teaching resource whilst maintaining the on-going delivery of the programme in schools. An equivalent underspend in staff time occurred in other areas of the Department's activities.

5. Conclusion

This has been another very busy year for the *Take Action* team with staff juggling school and community restoration commitments with the research, writing and publishing of the new teaching and learning resource. Staff are looking forward to launch of the new programme and working with both teachers and students on the new *Take Action for Water*.

6. Communication

The achievements of the schools described in this report have been described throughout the year in local newspapers and magazines. As this is a summary report no further communication is considered necessary.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report; and***
2. ***Notes the contents.***

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