

Report **10.94**  
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Committee Te Upoko Taiao - Natural Resource Plan Committee  
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## Current regional plans

### 1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with information about the effectiveness of Greater Wellington's current regional plans.

### 2. Background

Greater Wellington has five regional plans. These are:

- The Regional Freshwater Plan (December 1999)
- The Regional Plan for Discharges to Land (December 1999)
- The Regional Air Quality Management Plan (May 2000)
- The Regional Coastal Plan (June 2000)
- The Regional Soil Plan (October 2000).

The purpose of regional plans as set out in the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA) is to assist regional councils to carry out their functions under the RMA. The Regional Coastal Plan is the only mandatory regional plan; other regional plans are prepared at the discretion of the Council. Regional plans must give effect to the Regional Policy Statement, national policy statements and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

The RMA requires local authorities to commence a review of provisions in any regional plan, if the provisions have not been a subject of a plan change or review during the previous 10 years.

### 3. Contents of our regional plans, and how they work

Our five regional plans reflect our functions under the RMA and cover the natural resources of fresh water, air, soil, and the coastal marine area. The restrictions that apply to these resources are set out in Part III of the RMA. For

some resources, any activity affecting the resource requires resource consent unless it is specifically allowed by a regional rule. For other resources, activities are allowed as of right unless specifically restricted by a rule in a regional plan.

The restrictive presumption in the RMA applies to almost all activities that regional councils control. That is, activities in the coastal marine area, activities in the beds of rivers and lakes, and uses of water, including discharges of contaminants to water or to land where the contaminant might enter water. Any person who wants to do anything covered by the restrictive presumption must obtain a resource consent unless there is a rule in a regional plan that allows the activity as a “permitted activity”.

Discharges of contaminants to land and air are only restricted by the RMA if they are from “industrial or trade premises”. Discharges from domestic premises or from vehicles only require a resource consent if a regional rule specifically requires it.

Uses of land such as earthworks, vegetation clearance, drilling, or building or demolishing structures follow the permissive presumption. These are allowed unless specifically restricted, and the restriction may be in a regional and/or district plan. Our land use functions relate to soil conservation and maintaining and enhancing water quality or water quantity, whereas district council functions cover all land uses.

Regional rules are therefore the main means of delivering policy in regional plans. They either allow something that the RMA regulates, or restrict something that RMA allows. Regional rules can only be adopted in regional plans; they cannot be adopted in a strategy or any other kind of plan.

#### **4. Effectiveness of the current regional plans**

In the last few years we have prepared reports on the effectiveness of each of the current regional plans, and these reports provide useful information about what could change to make the plans more effective and efficient.

The effectiveness of policies, rules and other methods was assessed by comparing the results of state of the environment monitoring, complaint statistics data, and feedback from interested groups with the implementation of the methods (including rules). Provisions have been deemed to be effective if implementation of the provisions has contributed to achieving the plan objectives, as measured by the state of the environment monitoring, complaint statistics data, feedback from interested groups, other publications, and comments received by Greater Wellington officers.

Refer to **Attachment One** for a brief summary of the results of the effectiveness reports for each of the regional plans.

## **5. Communication**

The reports on the effectiveness of the current regional plans are available on Greater Wellington's website.

The Engagement and Consultation Plan for the review of the regional plans will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

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**Attachment 1:** Regional Plan effectiveness reports - summary