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**Report 00.520**

6 July 2000

File Y/12/1/3

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Stephen Yeats, Compliance Officer

## **Annual Incident Response Report**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of environmental incidents reported and acted upon in the 1999/2000 financial year.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Compliance staff are responsible for investigating and following up public reports of pollution and other non complying incidents. Apart from the various forms of pollution dealt with, the term *non-complying incidents* refers to other reported activities such as illegal water and gravel takes, diversions, damming of water, air pollution and unconsented works.
- 2.2 Response usually involves investigation of the original report, persuading the party involved to fix the problem, sometimes fixing the problem ourselves (e.g. cleaning up pollution when the person responsible cannot be found), and taking formal enforcement action where appropriate.
- 2.3 Administration includes keeping a database with details of every incident, reporting back to the original complainant, taking formal enforcement action, billing some offenders for staff time and other costs, and providing an annual report to Council.
- 2.4 Summaries of incidents are reported in each Committee agenda as part of the Divisional Manager's report.

### **3. The 1999/2000 Year**

- 3.1 This year, 143 incidents were responded to, compared to 92 1999/00, 120 in 1998/99, and 89 in 1997/98. It is the busiest year since records commenced in 1993.
- 3.2 An analysis of incidents is given in the following tables:

*Table 1 – Type of Incident by District*

District	Air	Land	Coastal	Ground-water	Rivers & streams	Total
Masterton	36	7	1	1	26	71
Carterton	15	7	2	1	14	39
South Wairarapa	5	7	3	1	17	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>143</b>

*Table 2 – Numbers of Incidents by Category and District*

	Masterton District	Carterton District	South Wairarapa District	Total
<b>Agricultural Effluent</b>	3	6	2	<b>11</b>
<b>Dead Stock in Water</b>	4	2	2	<b>8</b>
<b>Hazardous Substances</b>	4	1	5	<b>10</b>
<b>Hydrocarbons</b>	1			<b>1</b>
<b>Liquid Waste</b>	7	2	1	<b>10</b>
<b>Odour</b>	14	8	1	<b>23</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	4	6	<b>12</b>
<b>Particulate</b>	9	2		<b>11</b>
<b>Sewage</b>	2		2	<b>4</b>
<b>Smoke</b>	10	3		<b>13</b>
<b>Solid Waste</b>	8	5	7	<b>20</b>
<b>Unconsented Works</b>	4	5	5	<b>14</b>
<b>Silt</b>	3	1	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>143</b>

## **4. Discussion**

- 4.1 There has been a marked increase in incidents reported over the past year.
- 4.2 It is not clear whether this increase in incident numbers is a result of more genuine environmental problems in the community, or whether it is a result of people being more willing to report problems.
- 4.3 In the past, Wairarapa has had proportionately more environmental complaints than the Wellington side of the region, in terms of numbers of incidents per population. However, over the last two years, the two parts of the region have evened out proportionally.
- 4.4 Incidents affecting rivers and streams continue to be the most significant area of complaint, although air is a very close second. The number of air complaints has grown substantially over the last three years.
- 4.5 Odour is the form of pollution, which causes the most complaints.
- 4.6 The majority of concerns arise in rural areas.
- 4.7 Very few of reported incidents related to a repeat of a previous incident. There were few multiple complaints about a single incident.

## **5. Enforcement**

- 5.1 One of the public complaints has led to one infringement notice being issued, with a total fee of \$500.
- 5.2 Seven abatement notices were issued following investigations of reported incidents. All notices have had successful outcomes.
- 5.3 The majority of cases that required enforcement were successfully dealt with through negotiation or correspondence.

## **6. Communications**

An 'Ecofile' article is planned.

## **7. Recommendation**

*That the Committee receives the report and notes its contents.*

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