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## **Report 00.809**

13 November 2000

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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Karen Brewster, Section Leader, Policy & Planning

### **Solid Waste Management Plan for Wairarapa**

#### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of recent progress made by Waste Management Wairarapa on Wairarapa's solid waste issues.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 In 1996, following a review of Wairarapa's future waste disposal options, the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils decided to collaborate on the region's waste problems. A jointly funded Wairarapa Regional Landfill Committee was established, which subsequently agreed to operate under the name 'Waste Management Wairarapa'. Membership of this committee also includes local Iwi and Wellington Regional Council representatives. The committee agreed to develop a solid waste management plan on a Wairarapa-wide basis in accordance with a requirement in the Local Government Amendment Act (No.4) 1996.
- 2.2 As part of the preparation of the Waste Plan, a Public Discussion Document was produced in August 1999 identifying waste management issues and options for the Wairarapa. The Regional Council's submission on the Discussion Document expressed general support for the ".....development of a single regional landfill for the Wairarapa, combined with waste minimisation options such as those advocated through "Zero Waste". This approach was consistent with indications from the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee at its meeting on 27 August 1999 (see Report 99.473).
- 2.3 Waste Management Wairarapa considered the public submissions and prepared the Proposed Waste Management Plan in July this year. The Wairarapa Division made a submission on the Proposed Waste Plan, which was discussed in Report 00.641 to this Committee on 29 August this year. The Regional Council's submission sought mainly to tighten wording or correct inaccuracies in the Plan, but also raised the following issues:

- Legal status and power of Waste Management Wairarapa
  - Regional Council's role with regard to hazardous substances
  - Zero waste philosophies *in combination* with a regional landfill
  - Disposal of solid waste by burning
- 2.4 The submission was presented to the Waste Management Wairarapa Hearings Committee (political representatives on Waste Management Wairarapa) on 15 August 2000. A decision was released by the Hearings Committee in mid-October which accepted a number of requests in the submission, but also rejected a few significant points. Further comments on the decisions by the Hearings Committee follow in Section 3.1.
- 2.5 The three District Councils formally adopted the final Waste Management Plan in October. A full copy of the Waste Plan is available from the Policy & Planning Section.
- 2.6 Two technical reports have been recently commissioned by Waste Management Wairarapa in order to make more informed decisions on future solid waste management. The technical reports will form integral components of a Report on Solid Waste Management Options for the Wairarapa.
- 2.7 The first has been prepared by Tong & Associates - Resource Management Consultants (Auckland) to assess current local recycling initiatives and the options for expanding these to reduce the waste stream. The report's recommendations are specific to Masterton, but can be applied throughout the Wairarapa. The report contributes to the 'overall strategic development' of solid waste management in the Wairarapa.
- 2.8 The second report has been prepared by Good Earth Matters Consulting Ltd (Palmerston North) and Martech Consulting Group (Auckland) to assess long term waste disposal options, with a primary focus on the disposal of residual waste. This report is still in draft form and has to date been debated at two Waste Management Wairarapa Committee meetings. Another meeting to discuss the report is proposed for 23 November 2000.
- 2.9 A draft timeline showing the process undertaken by Waste Management Wairarapa is attached to this report (refer Attachment 1). This provides indicative timeframes, but is subject to positions or approaches changing as further information is received.

### **3 Discussion**

#### **3.1 Hearings Committee Decision**

- (1) A summary of the matters raised in the Wairarapa Division's submission, and the decision of the Hearings Committee is attached to this report (refer Attachment 2).
- (2) While the Hearings Committee accepted or acknowledged a number of the matters raised in the Wairarapa Division's submission, the following issues of note were rejected:

- (a) It was requested that a number of goals and actions in the Waste Plan be more explicitly worded to specify what each District Council *will do* with regard to waste collection, recycling and disposal, rather than just what Waste Management Wairarapa will *encourage* them to do. This request stemmed from a concern by the Regional Council that the Waste Plan could go through a lengthy public process, incorporate desirable goals and actions, but impose no firm requirements on the District Councils to attain any of those goals and objectives.

The Hearings Committee determined that Waste Management Wairarapa has no statutory basis for requiring or directing the District Councils. Accordingly, while all three District Councils have adopted the Plan, they are not bound to implement practices or procedures to attain the goals and actions.

- (b) It was requested that the wording of the Plan be amended as it implied that the Regional Council should be actively preventing or mitigating adverse effects arising from hazardous substances. The Regional Council reaffirmed that it has no role in the collection, storage and disposal of hazardous waste unless contracted to do so under Section 37SB. of the Local Government Act.

The Hearings Committee concluded that the law is somewhat unclear on this matter, and the Resource Management Act identifies an integrated approach to hazardous substances. This comment is correct. However, the Hearings Committee's implication that because the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) is not enforceable, its identification of respective local authorities' roles, as specified in the RPS, is also not enforceable, is simply not true.

- (c) The Hearings Committee chose to reject the Regional Council's request for the unconsented (i.e permitted) burning of solid waste to be addressed as Goals and Actions in the Plan. The committee determined that air discharges were a matter already covered by the Regional Council in the Regional Air Quality Plan. While this is technically correct, it was considered appropriate and important that Goals and Actions be added to the Plan to discourage burning (that does not require consent) as a method of waste disposal, particularly given Masterton's known poor air quality during winter periods.

#### **4. Communication**

The Regional Council does not have any direct responsibility for publicity of the Waste Management Plan. All parties who made submissions on the Proposed Plan have been sent copies of the final document.

## **5. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and its contents noted.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

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Attachments (2)