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Report to Ara Tahī
from Howard Markland, Pollution Control Co-ordinator

Annual Incident Report 2001/2002

1. Purpose

To present the Annual Incident Report 2001/2002 to Ara Tahī.

2. Background

Greater Wellington - The Regional Council provides a 24-hour incident response service which deals with pollution complaints and non-compliance with the Resource Management Act 1991 and Regional Plans. This service deals with a broad range of environmental incidents including discharges to air, water, land and unauthorised works in streams and the Coastal Marine Area. Pollution incidents associated with industrial and farming activities typically include odour and contaminant discharges to surface water, whilst those arising in residential areas typically include the discharge of paint waste and car wash water to stormwater drains, sediment export from site development, and the dumping of inert waste on land.

Investigating officers evaluate the significance of each incident, and determine the optimum action to remedy or mitigate environmental impacts arising (which may include enforcement action). Samples, measurements and other evidence may be collected, to confirm and quantify pollution incidents.

The Annual Incident Report provides a summary and analysis of the complaints received over the past year (1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002). Information presented in the report is intended to inform the community of significant pollution incidents and common pollution and resource management issues that occurred during 2001/2002.

3. **Key Findings**

A total of 1,702 complaints were received between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2002, which represents a 7% increase on the 1,594 complaints received during the previous year. The majority of complaints were received from populated urban areas. Odour complaints predominated in the west of the Region, whilst the majority of complaints in the Wairarapa were attributed to abandoned vehicles and alleged unconsented works.

3.1 **Major Sources of Odour Complaints**

The majority of odour complaints received were attributed to the following sites:

Asphalt Surfaces New Zealand Limited

This site (formerly MKL Asphalt Surfaces Limited) has been a historical source of odour nuisance to residents in northwestern Tawa. Wellington Regional Council has issued three infringement notices and one enforcement order, and arranged an independent review of odour sources from the plant. This has resulted in the installation of a carbon filter on the main stack and a significant reduction in the number of complaints received.

Carey's Gully Complex

This site comprises Wellington City Council's Southern Landfill, Anglian Water International Ltd sewage dewatering plant, Living Earth Ltd composting plant and Novagas methane flare facility. Odour complaints attributed to the Carey's Gully Complex have been received from a wide area, including Happy Valley, Island Bay, Owhiro Bay, Kingston, Mornington, Vogeltown, Kowhai Park and Brooklyn. Despite odour control initiatives complaints increased 49% since the previous year, indicating a less tolerant attitude amongst complainants.

Taylor Preston

This meat processing plant gives rise to odour complaints from Rangoon Heights, Broadmeadows, Khandallah and Johnsonville. Wellington Regional Council served an infringement notice in September 2001 and commissioned an independent review of odour sources and controls. Taylor Preston is currently implementing the recommendations.

3.2 **Significant Pollution Incidents**

Significant pollution incidents that occurred over the last year were as follows:

The Allied Concrete batching plant discharged alkaline wastewater Carey's Gully Stream on 19 February 2002, which caused elevated pH and sediment levels.

A Sewer overflow at Porirua Hospital resulted in contamination of an adjacent playing field and stream. Capital Coast District Health Board commissioned a consultant to

advise on the clean up, resulting in the area being cordoned-off until it was deemed safe for public access.

3.3 **Enforcement Action**

Enforcement action taken during the year included the following:

Abatement Notices:	9
Infringement Notices:	7
Enforcement Orders:	0
Prosecutions:	2

3.4 **Response Times**

Responsiveness to incoming complaints is measured via conformance with target response times. Almost all complaints were responded to within the target response time, with all exceptions being due to traffic delays en route to distant sites.

4. **Issues**

Odour complaints dominated the incident response service workload during the reporting period. The majority of complaints can be attributed to several industrial operators, all which have achieved marked reduction in their odour emissions in recent times. This issue was dealt with in greater detail in a technical paper submitted to the Environment Committee.

The discharge of silt, detergent and hydrocarbons to stormwater drains occurs repeatedly around the Region. Although individual discharges do not have a significant impact, their collective impact upon environmental quality may be significant.

Watercourses throughout the Region have been subjected to repeated contamination via sewer overflows, silt-laden run-off, oil spillage and solid waste dumping. The most affected watercourses were Waiwhetu Stream, Taupo Stream, Karori Stream, Kaiwharawhara Stream, Owhiro Stream, Koromiko Stream, Pauatahanui Stream and the Hutt River.

5. **Action for 2002/2003**

Greater Wellington will be taking a more proactive approach to pollution management in the coming year, via implementation of the Take-Charge programme. This programme involves environmental assessments of small to medium sized business operations, to identify actual and potential environmental impacts, and facilitate their management.

6. **Communication**

Copies of this report will be distributed to territorial authorities in the Region. Copies are also available for members of the public requesting information of this nature. Findings of this report will be released publicly through a press release.

7. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Ara Tahi:

- (1) *receive the report; and*
- (2) *note the contents.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

HOWARD MARKLAND
Pollution Control Co-ordinator

JOHN SHERRIFF
Manager, Resource Investigations

JANE BRADBURY
Divisional Manager, Environment