



**Report** 03.569  
**Date** 24 September 2003  
**File** Y/12/2/4

**Committee** Rural Services and Wairarapa  
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## Riversdale Ratepayers Association Consent Charge

### 1. Purpose

To enable the Committee to make a decision on the application from the Riversdale Ratepayers Association for assistance towards the resource consent charges for excavating in the Motuwaireka Lagoon.

### 2. Background

The Committee's previous meeting on 19 August 2003 considered Report 03.483 on the Ratepayers Association's application for remission of consent fees of \$1,295 plus GST.

The history of this matter can be summarised, as follows.

For several years the Riversdale Ratepayers Association has been keen to improve the water quality of both the main Motuwaireka Lagoon and the backwater tributary that extends behind Camp Anderson. In 2001 the Regional Council funded an independent report on the hydraulics of the lagoon system, and specifically sought comment on measures that could improve the water quality of the main lagoon.

On the basis of that report, the backwater tributary was successfully cleaned with this work being jointly funded by the Masterton District Council and the Regional Council.

As previously reported, the consultant's report did not support any work in relation to water quality in the main lagoon. The report noted that the water quality was typical of that naturally occurring in small blocked estuaries during the summer. The consultant saw no long-term advantages in directly cutting the outlet of the lagoon to the sea.

However, the Ratepayers Association maintained a strong desire to "clean up" the main lagoon and also to widen it for recreational purposes.

As previously reported, Council staff provided considerable assistance towards the necessary resource consent application and consents were subsequently granted. Excavation in the lagoon has since proceeded with funding being obtained from elsewhere.

At the previous meeting the Committee acknowledged that the resource consent processing and associated charges had been in accordance with Council policy. Committee members appeared to agree that consent charges should not be remitted under the Council's Resource Management Charging Policy and they asked for information on other options for possible assistance for the Ratepayers Association.

### **3. Discussion**

The only Council programme under which financial assistance could be given in this situation is the Take Care Programme in which the Council works with community groups to achieve improvements in the local environment.

Currently the Council has 28 Care Groups operating in the region with two such groups already operating at Riversdale. One of these Care Groups is involved with dune restoration along the beach and the other with riparian planting on the Motuwaireka Stream.

Council policy is to fund Care Groups at up to \$19,000 spread across four years. Each of the existing Riversdale Care Groups is receiving the \$19,000 funding. The Ratepayers Association is represented on both of these Care Groups, but there are other parties involved as well. There is no Care Group as such for the Lagoon area.

If the Committee chooses to provide some financial assistance to the Ratepayers Association towards the cost of the resource consent, it could do so by making a special allocation from the Take Care budget.

### **4. Recommendation**

*That the Committee decide on whether to provide financial assistance to the Riversdale Residents Association for the costs of the resource consents for excavating in and widening the Motuwaireka Lagoon.*

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