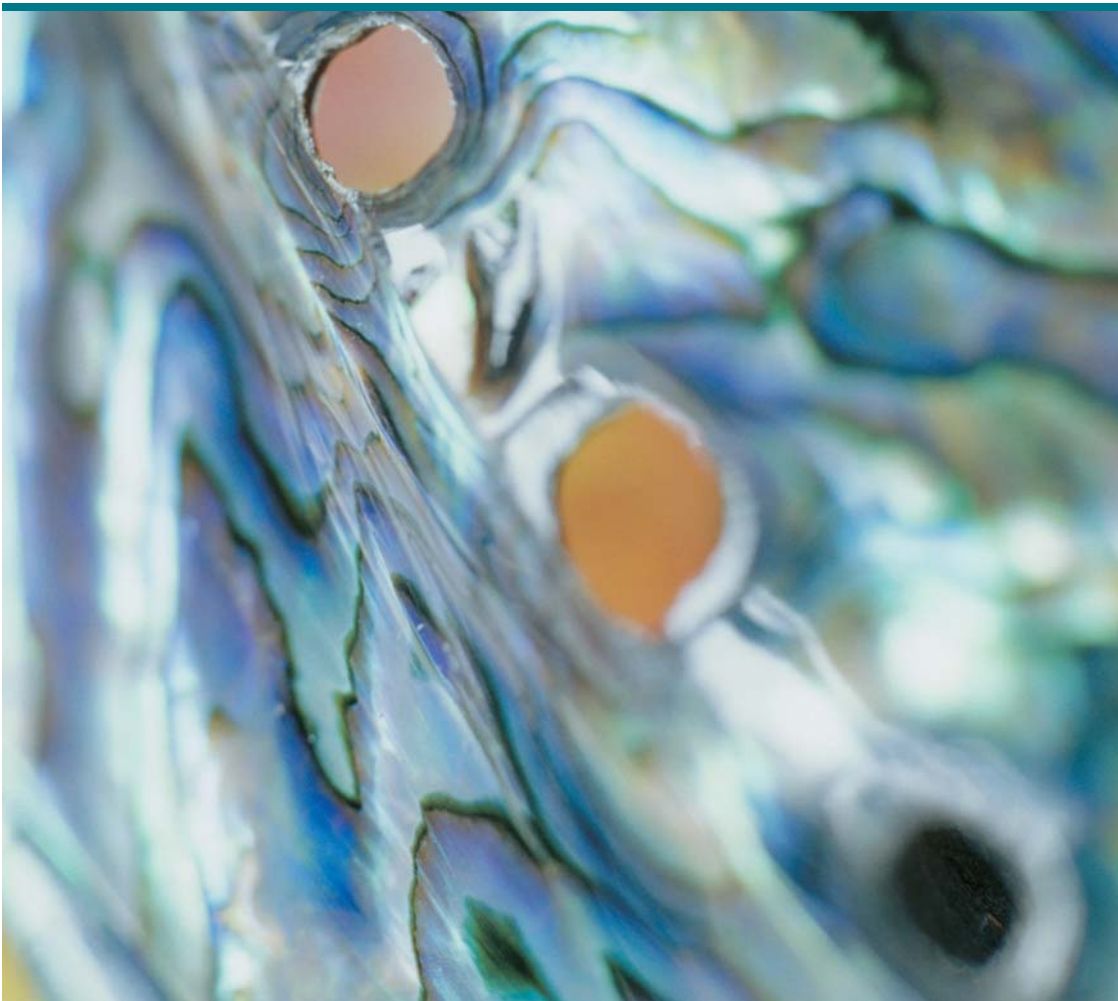




# Applying for a resource consent

Quality for Life





## What is a resource consent?

A resource consent is permission from a regional, city, or district council to use a resource in some way or do something that might affect the environment. Consents and their processes are covered by the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA).



Greater Wellington deals with four of types of resource consent:

- **land-use consents:** for activities that involve constructing or altering bores; using or disturbing a river or lake bed; or soil disturbances
- **discharge permits:** for activities that involve discharging a contaminant or water into or onto water, land, or air
- **water permits:** for activities that involve taking, damming or diverting water
- **coastal permits:** for activities that involve the coastal marine area.



City and district councils deal with consents for other activities, such as subdivisions.

Some activities are classified as 'permitted activities', which means they are allowed without a resource consent as long as you meet the conditions specified in one of Greater Wellington's regional plans.



You can find out more about the activities that require resource consent in our regional plan user guide or one of our regional plans. These are available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or at a Greater Wellington office.

## Useful definitions

- **non-notified application:** is an application that isn't publicly advertised which means no one can make a submission on it. You'll have written approvals from affected parties, and the environmental effects of your proposed activity are minor.
- **limited notified application:** is an application that allows only affected parties to make submissions on it. You won't have written approvals from all affected parties and the environmental effects of your proposed activity are minor.

- **notified application:** is an application that is publicly advertised allowing anyone to make a submission on it. You might not have written approvals from affected parties and the environmental effects of your proposed activity could be significant.
- **hearing:** a hearing is a formal meeting where a 'hearing committee' considers and decides whether a notified or limited notified resource consent application should be approved.

## Applications and charges



You pay a fee in advance to cover the cost of assessing and processing your resource consent application. The actual amount depends on the time we need to deal with the application.



- **Non-notified application** fees range from \$150 to \$1,200 depending on the type of consent you apply for. However, the actual cost may be more or less than the application fee you pay, depending on the size and complexity of your proposal. We'll let you know if it's likely to be more and, once a decision has been made on your application, bill you for this extra cost. If the actual cost is less than the fee you've paid, we'll refund the difference.



- **Public or limited notification** application fees are initially \$3,937.50. However, the final cost of a publicly notified application with significant environmental effects may be as high as \$30,000. We'll provide a cost estimate once we've received and assessed your application, and revise it as needed during the application process.



You can find more details on charges in our [Resource Management Charging Policy](#), available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or at a Greater Wellington office.



## Before you apply

We strongly recommend that you talk to us before you apply for your resource consent. Phone our Environment Help Desk on 04 384 5708 for activities in the Wellington region or 06 378 2484 for activities in Wairarapa.



### You can help reduce costs and avoid delays in processing your application if you:

- consult everyone who may be affected by your proposal and get written approval if possible
- fill in the application forms fully and include all the required supporting information
- make sure you apply for all the resource consents needed for your activity
- provide any additional information we ask for quickly and with the required detail
- try to resolve any submissions that oppose your application (if it is notified)
- get professional advice from an environmental consultant if your proposed activity is large or complex, may significantly affect the environment, or may attract major public interest.

## Preparing your application

### Greater Wellington application forms

You can download resource consent application forms at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz). They are also available at Greater Wellington offices.

Please use the Greater Wellington 'Resource Consent Application' form to apply for your resource consent. This covers the basic information we need to start processing your consent. We also have additional forms for non-notified or limited notification applications. These forms outline the specific information we require, including an assessment of environmental effects.



### Your application must include:

- a description of the activity you want the consent for
- the location of your activity (e.g. a map, aerial photo or sketch with scale)
- an assessment of environmental effects (AEE)
- any information required by a regional plan or regulations.

## What is an assessment of environmental effects (AEE)?

An AEE is a report about the effects your proposed activity will or may have on the environment – and the ways in which any adverse (or negative) effects of your activity can be managed.

Effects include:

- any positive or adverse effect
- any temporary or permanent effect
- any past, present or future effect
- any cumulative effect that arises over time or in combination with other effects, no matter what the effect's scale, intensity, duration or frequency
- any potential effect that has a high probability of happening
- any potential effect that has a low probability of happening, but has a high potential impact.



Examples of environmental effects are: discolouration of water; smoke, dust or odour in the air; dead or damaged plants or animals (including aquatic life); flooding or erosion; and effects on cultural values. Every activity has some effect, even if it is only temporary or minor.

The amount of detail required in the AEE depends on the scale and significance of your proposal. Be specific about the methods you intend using to carry out your activity and how you intend to prevent or reduce adverse effects.

## What should you include in your AEE?

Schedule 4 of the RMA covers what you should include and consider when writing your AEE. You can get a copy online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz), or from a Greater Wellington office.

### A basic AEE must:

- describe your proposal
- specify alternative locations or methods if your proposed activity is likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment, or is a discharge (e.g. dairy effluent to land)
- assess the activity's actual or potential effects on the environment
- describe any contaminants discharged and the sensitivity of the receiving environment, together with any alternative discharge methods
- describe measures you will take to prevent or reduce the effects
- identify anyone who may be interested in or affected by your proposal, including a statement on your consultation with those people and your response, if any, to their views
- if necessary, outline how effects will be monitored and by who (if the consent is granted).



## How to consult for your AEE

Consultation aims to identify how other people may be affected by your proposal and how you can modify it to address any negative effects for them. In most cases, thorough consultation helps the smooth processing of your application and may even avoid the need for a hearing.



Potentially affected parties may include: owners or occupiers of land and neighbours; downstream and adjoining property owners; community or environmental groups; local iwi; the Department of Conservation; Fish and Game; and local city or district councils. Contact us if you would like help in identifying potentially interested or affected parties.



Your application will need to identify who you consulted, along with their names, addresses, telephone numbers and who they represent.

**You can read more about consulting iwi in our 'Consulting iwi' brochure, available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or from a Greater Wellington office.**



## What if you also need consent from the district or city council?

Let us know if you're also applying to a district or city council for a consent (such as earthworks) as part of your proposal. If your application needs to be publicly notified, we may have to hold a joint council hearing to decide on your application.



## Getting someone else to apply on your behalf

You can ask someone else, such as a consultant, to apply for your resource consent on your behalf – they should be listed under the name and address for service on the 'Resource Consent Application' form. We will deal with this person throughout the consent application process.

Before you sign the application, make sure you read everything the consultant has prepared for you.

## Lodging your application

You can lodge your application with Greater Wellington in person, or by post or fax (although this is not recommended if you're sending maps or plans). All information in your application will be available to the public on request.

**Our contact details are on the back page of this booklet.**



## Processing your application

Within five days of receiving your application, we'll check it to make sure it's complete. We will return it if:

- it isn't signed or dated
- it doesn't contain an adequate AEE
- it doesn't include the required fee
- you haven't applied for all the consents you need.



Once we've accepted your application, we'll write to let you know whether your application will be processed as non-notified, limited notified or publicly notified. We'll also provide an estimate of costs if processing your consent is likely to cost more than the standard fee, and tell you who will be dealing with your application.



## How long does processing take?

The RMA specifies the time allowed to process your application. For example, we must make a decision on non-notified consent applications within 20 working days of a complete application being accepted. We can extend the set timeframes if needed or put your application on hold if, for example, you need to get approval from adversely affected people.



**You can read more about processing timeframes in our 'Resource consent timeframes' brochure, available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or from a Greater Wellington office.**

## If we need more information

We may need you to provide more information about your proposal so that we can better understand the effects of your activity. We'll ask for this in writing and put the consent process on hold while we wait for your response. If you wish, you can formally object to our request for further information.

**You can read more about how to lodge an objection in our 'Objections and appeals' brochure, available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or from a Greater Wellington office.**

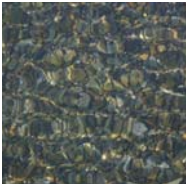


## Non-notified applications

If we're satisfied that your proposed activity will have only minor effects on the environment, and you've provided written approval from everyone who may be adversely affected, your application may be processed as non-notified. This means we won't publicly notify your application in the newspapers, and the public will not be allowed to make submissions on your proposal. Non-notified applications take less time to process and cost less, because they are not open for submissions and a hearing is not held. It's important that you get signed and dated written approvals from all affected people before you lodge your application.

## Limited notifications

If we think the effects of your proposed activity will be minor and you have not obtained written approval from all adversely affected people, your application will require limited notification. This means we write to people we think may be adversely affected by your proposal and give them the opportunity to make submissions for or against it. If submitters wish to be heard or Greater Wellington thinks it necessary, we'll hold a hearing to decide your application.



## Public notifications

If we think the effects of your proposal will be more than 'minor' we will publicly notify your application, even if you have written approval from affected people.

This means we:

- put a notice summarising your application in the 'public notices' section of the major daily newspaper and occasionally in a local paper in the area of your proposed activity. You'll have an opportunity to check the details of this notice before it's advertised
- write to other people who we consider may be affected by your proposal, such as neighbours
- place a sign summarising your application at the site of your proposed activity.





When your application is publicly notified, anyone can make a submission either supporting or opposing it. All submitters have 20 working days from the notification date to make a submission.

**You can also read advertisements for publicly notified consents at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz).**



## What happens if your application receives a submission?

After the submission period closes, we'll send you a copy of any submissions on your application. Submitters are required to state why they support or oppose your application and what conditions, if any, they would like to see on a resource consent if it is granted. They must also indicate whether they wish to be heard at a hearing.



We encourage applicants and submitters to talk to each other about how concerns could be addressed. If needed, we may arrange for a pre-hearing meeting.



## Pre-hearing meeting and negotiating consent conditions

Pre-hearing meetings offer you and submitters an opportunity to discuss and clarify issues arising from the application. They are held soon after submissions close, usually in the evening at a place close to the area affected to make it easier for everyone to attend.

The issues raised in submissions can often be resolved at a pre-hearing meeting, avoiding the need for a formal hearing. If agreement looks likely, you and the submitters are asked whether you want to negotiate consent conditions. Greater Wellington suggests possible consent conditions and, if everyone agrees to them, submitters may be asked to withdraw their wish to be heard (not their submission) so that the consent application does not need to go to a hearing. Note that any conditions you agree to must be approved by Greater Wellington before they are attached to the consent (if it is granted).

**You can read more about pre-hearing meetings in our 'Pre-hearing and hearing meetings' brochure, available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or from a Greater Wellington office.**

## When is a hearing required?

A hearing takes place if one or more of the submitters (or you) asks to be heard, or if Greater Wellington thinks it is necessary. So if submitters stated in their submissions that they wished to be heard, the hearing gives them the opportunity to present their views.

The hearing committee is usually made up of two Greater Wellington councillors or independent commissioners, and a maori appointee.

A hearing must take place within 25 working days after submissions close, unless the time limit has been extended by Greater Wellington or you.



### Before the hearing

We will give you and all submitters at least 10 working days' notice of the hearing date, time and place.

A Greater Wellington report will be prepared, recommending whether the application should be granted or declined. If it recommends granting the application, it will also suggest any conditions that should be attached to the consent. This report is sent to you and to all submitters who wish to be heard, at least five working days before the hearing.



### At the hearing

All hearings are open to the public, including the media (unless it is necessary to protect sensitive information). However, the only people who can speak are you, submitters who have reserved the right to be heard, Greater Wellington staff, and the hearing committee. Applicants and submitters can bring expert witnesses to help them present their views.



**You can read more about hearing procedures in our 'Pre-hearing and hearing meetings' brochure, available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or from a Greater Wellington office.**

# The decision on your application

## Who makes the decision?

An assigned Greater Wellington manager decides non-notified applications on the recommendation of the person who processed the application.

When a hearing is held, the hearing committee makes the decision.

## What happens next?

If a hearing has been held, we'll send the decision to you and the submitters no more than 15 working days after the hearing closes (unless the timeframe has been extended). The letter will include reasons for the decision and the consent conditions.

If there are no objections or appeals, we will send you your consent certificate, specifying the consent granted and the conditions placed on it, 15 working days after we sent you the decision on your application.



### OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Greater Wellington  
Regional Council  
Level 3, 142 Wakefield Street  
P O Box 11646  
Wellington  
T 04 384 5708  
F 04 385 6960  
E [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)

Greater Wellington  
Regional Council  
34 Chapel Street  
P O Box 41  
Masterton  
T 06 378 2484  
F 04 378 2146  
E [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Greater Wellington has a range of other brochures designed to help people with resource consents and the consent application process. Copies are available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) or at a Greater Wellington office.

Topics include:

- Resource consent information
- Making a submission on a resource consent application
- Resource consent timeframes
- Consulting iwi
- Pre-hearing and hearing meetings
- Objections and appeals