



Report 07.762
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Committee Catchment Management
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Report 2006/07

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 2006/2007 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

2. Background

Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act requires Greater Wellington, as the Management Agency, to prepare an operational plan for each Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) which it has approved. Furthermore, the Agency must prepare a report on the plan and its implementation no later than five months after the end of the each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

A few Regional Councils use the Annual Plan reporting process to provide details on performance against RPMS Operational Plan objectives. The Biosecurity Act does provide for this option. However, it is considered more transparent to use a separate reporting process where greater detail can be included on performance, trends, issues and expenditure for scrutiny by ratepayers.

3. Comment

Attachment 1 contains the Annual Report on implementation of the 2006/2007 Operational Plan. This is the fifth progress report detailing performance against the objectives in the twenty year Strategy.

Section 88(6) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 requires a regional pest management strategy to be reviewed every five years. The review process for the Wellington strategy has been underway for the past 18 months. Report 07.767 in this order paper presents a proposed revised RPMS and seeks Committee approval for public notification.

4. Highlights

- 4.1 A review of our performance indicates that we are making considerable progress in meeting most of the Strategy objectives. However, the review of the current Strategy has highlighted that in some cases we are going to need more time, particularly where we are seeking to eradicate a pest from the region. The review has also indicated that the objectives and or categories for some pests will need to be amended. This reflects the need to prioritise our resource allocation and give increased emphasis to pests that have the most adverse potential or actual impact.
- 4.2 During 2006/07 the intensive field surveys around Eradication pest sites continued. This resulted in increased numbers of new pest plant infestations being recorded. An additional benefit of this work was an increased awareness of pests by the affected landowners.
- 4.3 For pest plants, the emphasis has continued to be on Eradication species and increasing our involvement in biodiversity projects with other stakeholders. Stronger relationships have been developed with the Territorial Authorities (TA). Joint work programmes have been maintained with the Department of Conservation (DoC) and with Biosecurity NZ regarding National Pest Plant Accord species.
- 4.4 For pest animals, the majority of effort continues to be centred around the biodiversity support programmes. Working relationships continue to be strengthened with TA, care groups, landowners and DoC. The joint funded work on TA Reserves continues to gather momentum. However, expansion of the programme is now being restricted by funding limitations. The rook control programme was successfully implemented, with operations on our northern boundary successfully undertaken in conjunction with Horizons Regional Council. Rabbits remain at low levels generally but there are concerns that wider use of traditional control methods will be required in the future as the effectiveness of RCD reduces.
- 4.5 Enhancing public awareness of biosecurity matters through various communication initiatives continues to be a critical activity for the Department. Biosecurity responsibilities lie mainly with individual landowners and occupiers. Greater Wellington has a duty to ensure these parties are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address biosecurity risks. Responding to client enquiries is a major function of GW staff under the Strategy. In 2006/07, staff managed 1,340 individual enquiries, many of which resulted in site visits and the supply of advice and equipment.
- 4.6 A well-informed public is essential for the achievement of both national and regional biosecurity objectives. Biosecurity agencies simply do not have enough resources to adequately explore and investigate all potential pest incursions. However, increased public knowledge has also lead to an increased number of new pest infestations being notified. This necessitates an ongoing need to reprioritise work programmes to ensure adequate control is maintained on key species. In some cases this has resulted in some RPMS tasks being delayed.
- 4.7 The attached 2006/07 Operational Report contains separate Pest Plant and Pest Animal sections with an outline of performance against key activity objectives; an overview of major strategy issues encountered during the year, details on biodiversity support programmes; and, finally, ecological and trend monitoring activities.

5. Communications

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the Annual Report is available for inspection.

Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers for their review and comment.

Consideration will be given to using Elements to provide a summary of the key issues.

6. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- (1) ***Approves*** the Annual Report on the implementation of the 2006/2007 Operational Plan for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.
- (2) ***Notes*** that a copy of the Annual Report will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.
- (3) ***Notes*** that the Annual Report will be made available for public inspection.

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: