



Report 09.09  
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Committee Catchment Management  
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## **Regional Pest Management Strategy Review – Hearings Committee Report**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide the Committee with a summary of the outcomes from the Hearings Committee deliberations, to seek the Committee's endorsement of the proposed amendments, and to recommend to Council that it approves the amended Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

At the 19 March 2008 meeting, the Catchment Management Committee appointed a Hearings Committee comprising Councillors Buchanan and Kirton, and Mr Gawith. The Hearings Committee was tasked with hearing and considering submissions and possible amendments to the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS).

### **4. Hearings**

A total of 23 submissions were received following notification of the Proposed RPMS. Eleven of the submitters requested to present an oral submission.

Staff analysed all submissions and provided a Summary of Submissions document for submitters to consider prior to the hearings. The Hearings Committee received a copy of all submissions. Hearings occurred on Tuesday 1 July 2008 in Wellington and Wednesday 2 July 2008 in Masterton. The Hearings Committee considered the information presented orally immediately following the hearings.

A further meeting was held on Wednesday 13 August 2008 to consider the written submissions and recommended amendments to the Proposed RPMS by

GW staff. At this meeting the Committee also considered draft written responses to individual submitters, including the proposed decisions on points raised by the submitters. It is these decisions which can be appealed by the submitters to the Environment Court following Council's approval of the reviewed RPMS. The proposed amendments and responses to submitters were finalised by the Hearings Committee.

#### **4.1 The Consultation Process**

Staff have gone to considerable lengths to ensure the widest possible audience were consulted prior to the development of the proposed RPMS.

Consultation processes included the following:

- An initial consultation document was published in August 2006. This document sought feedback from the public on possible amendments to the RPMS;
- Feedback on the initial consultation document was considered by staff and, where deemed appropriate, incorporated into the Proposed RPMS;
- The Proposed RPMS was developed and published in February 2008;
- Submissions on the proposed RPMS were received up to April 2008;
- A Summary of Submissions document was prepared by staff, and circulated to all submitters for review;
- Submitters views were considered at the hearings and at a subsequent meeting.

#### **4.2 Issues Raised by the Submitters**

A number of submitters stated that they supported the proposed RPMS as a whole, or supported the proposals to maintain or amend aspects of the current strategy. Positive comment was received on the proposed new lay-out and format of the document.

The majority of submissions were focused on part two of the document, with comments on the category or rules surrounding specific species. There were over 30 requests for a change in category or rules for specific species, with the majority requesting more work or greater input on these species. Several submissions listed extensive lists of species for consideration, the majority of which were pest plants.

There were two oral submissions strongly opposing aspects of the proposed strategy. The New Zealand Deer Stalkers Association requested the retention of feral deer and feral pigs in the Site-Led KNE programme, and opposed the move to the broader Site-Led Biodiversity category. Another submitter strongly objected to changes in the management regime for a number of pest plant species.

Of note was the relatively low number of submissions on the Proposed RPMS. Other Regional Council's have received in excess of 300 submissions following notification. The Hearings Committee can only presume that the current RPMS is satisfying the needs of the majority of ratepayers and wider community. There has certainly been ample opportunity for the community to influence the review outcomes.

## 5. Amended Proposal

The Hearings Committee has recommended a number of changes to the notified Proposed RPMS, following a review of the submissions and staff comments. The Hearings Committee is confident that the amended Proposed RPMS satisfies the content requirements of the Biosecurity Act (Sections 76 and 77). Further, the Hearings Committee is of the opinion that the amended strategy meets the criteria of Section 72 of the Biosecurity Act, with regards to the following –

- the benefits of having a strategy outweigh the costs;
- the need for regional intervention for the listed species;
- the use of general rates to fund the implementation of the strategy;
- the requirements for landowners to be responsible for the costs of managing pests on their land, in accordance with the rules of the strategy; and
- that the selected pests are of regional significance with regards to economic, environmental, social and cultural effects.

## 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Recommends to Council that it approves the amended Proposed Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.***



Cr Ian Buchanan  
Chairman, Hearings Committee

Attachment 1: Minutes of the Meetings of the RPMS Hearings Committee  
Attachment 2: Main amendments to the Proposed RPMS