

Chapter 17

INFORMATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

PREAMBLE

Section 35 of the Act requires the Regional Council to gather information, monitor and keep records as follows:

- (1) Every local authority shall gather such information, and undertake or commission such research, as is necessary to carry out effectively its functions under this Act.*
- (2) Every local authority shall monitor-*
 - (a) The state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act; and*
 - (b) The suitability and effectiveness of any policy statement or plan for its region or district; and*
 - (c) The exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by it; and*
 - (d) The exercise of the resource consents that have effect in its region or district as the case may be-**and take appropriate action (having regard to the methods available to it under this Act) where this is shown to be necessary.*

Section 35(3), (4) and (5) requires local authorities to keep this and other information relevant to the administration of policy statements, plans and the monitoring of resource consents at its principal office and to enable this to be available for scrutiny by the public.

Section 62(1)(i) requires the Regional Council to state the procedures it will use to monitor the effectiveness of this RPS as a means of achieving its objectives and policies.

Section 79 requires that a full review of any regional policy statement or plan be commenced no later than 10 years after it becomes operative.

ISSUE 17: Monitoring the relevance and effectiveness of the West Coast Regional Policy Statement.

It is important that this RPS, and any regional plan, remains appropriate and relevant to any changing needs of the West Coast while also meeting statutory requirements. Further, anticipated environmental results should be met (see Chapters 5 to 16 and the end of this chapter). If they are not, the reasons will need to be investigated and appropriate changes made.

The RPS provides a list of issues associated with different facets of resource use and the nature of an impact on the resource, and anticipated environmental results. This list is the basis for determining the scope and

extent of environmental monitoring required. Environmental monitoring will be carried out to determine whether the objectives relating to their respective issues contained here have been met.

Currently, the Regional Council is carrying out a limited range of environmental monitoring which includes the following:

- ?? Resource consent compliance monitoring.
- ?? River cross sections.
- ?? Ambient air quality.
- ?? River levels and discharges at selected sites.
- ?? Rainfall intensities and flood levels in catchments.

A *Regional Monitoring Strategy for the West Coast* has been completed. It includes state of the environment and resource consent monitoring. State of the environment monitoring will cover issues such as water quality and quantity, river channel stability, river protection works and drainage works, coastal discharges and structures, air quality, natural hazards, hazardous waste management, contaminated sites, pest plants, energy and cultural and historic resources. The Strategy also provides statements on monitoring purpose, methods, frequency and capabilities within the Regional Council and the region. The ability of the Regional Council to carry out this wider range of environmental monitoring is currently restricted by financial resources.

The Regional Council has also prepared an inventory of sites associated with hazardous substances. Information has also been compiled on natural hazards in terms of mapping areas prone to flooding. Inventories of dams and earthquake hazards have also been completed.

Regional plans will be prepared. These will establish regional rules under which activities are *permitted, controlled, discretionary, non-complying or prohibited*. They will also include appropriate performance standards. These plans will also outline criteria under which resource consent applications will be assessed.

OBJECTIVE 17 Ensure that this RPS remains effective, relevant and appropriate to the needs of the West Coast.

INFORMATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW POLICIES

POLICY 17.1 To monitor and review the effectiveness of this RPS and of regional and district plans at regular intervals.

POLICY 17.2 To adopt appropriate baseline standards for environmental monitoring that are consistent with this RPS relevant and appropriate to the needs of the West Coast and to national programmes.

POLICY 17.3 To promote the collection of data that is comparable regionally, nationally and over periods of time when developing environmental monitoring for the West Coast.

Cross reference policies 17.1-17.3
All policies in this RPS.

METHODS

- 17.1 Evaluate and respond to complaints received from the public.
- 17.2 Consult with and review commentary from the public, resource users and other affected parties.
- 17.3 Review the effectiveness of this RPS and of regional and district plans in achieving their stated objectives, policies and anticipated environmental results at regular intervals.
- 17.4 Ensure that, where appropriate, conditions for resource consents include conditions for monitoring and that they are consistent with the objectives, policies and anticipated environmental results in this RPS.
- 17.5 Report on the state of the region's environment at two-yearly intervals.
- 17.6 Exchange data on the state of the environment with other local authorities and the Crown and have regard to their data collection programmes and techniques when developing environmental monitoring for the West Coast.
- 17.7 Implement the *Regional Monitoring Strategy for the West Coast*.
- 17.8 Carry out compliance monitoring and environmental monitoring, including that of the state of the coastal environment as required under the NZCPS.
- 17.9 Liaise with territorial authorities on a regular basis regarding the effectiveness of the RPS.

EXPLANATION

The Regional Council's environmental monitoring function has two components:

1. An understanding of the resources identified in this RPS in sufficient depth to formulate the procedures and rules necessary for their management.
2. A determination of whether the anticipated environmental results have been met. This provides a means of evaluating how well the objectives of this RPS have been achieved.

The process of review and monitoring will provide information on the effectiveness of this RPS, reveal long term environmental trends and determine whether natural and physical resources are being sustainably managed. It may also reveal the degree to which environmental changes are due to human activities or natural processes. This should enable any review to be based on factual information and data. Seeking to ensure, as far as practicable, that the data collected is comparable nationally, regionally and over time will assist in providing a consistent response to cross boundary resource management issues and improved inter regional

understanding of them.

If further national policy statements are issued it may be necessary to review this document sooner than the maximum ten year period the Act presently requires.

Adoption of baseline standards in regional plans is necessary because they provide a measure against which environmental trends can be compared. This will enable alteration of the objectives, policies and rules to be undertaken on a rational basis.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

- 17.1 Regular reports on the state of the West Coast environment.
- 17.2 Effectiveness of resource consent and monitoring conditions assessed at regular intervals.