

# Environmental and Regulatory





# environmental and regulatory group

## Overview of Group

This group is made up of the following activities of Council:

- Animal Control
- Building Services
- Environmental planning implementation
- Environmental planning policy
- Infrastructural planning and compliance
- Inspection
- Parking enforcement

Environmental Group activities reflect Council's role in natural resources management and regulation. The activities help us to plan for the future and make sure that everyone gets a fair deal, often balancing competing rights of individuals and groups to do different things.

The new government has already signalled its intent to make changes to the Resource Management Act (RMA). These changes may affect how council manages the resource consent process and the review of the district plan.

## Strategic Direction and Highlights

### District Plan

Council's current district plan was developed soon after the Resource Management Act was enacted in 1991. From an environmental perspective, there are areas of the plan that function well and serve the Rotorua district in a sustainable manner. However, other areas require review.

In order to prepare the draft district plan, three structure plans have been prepared for the eastern, northern and southern areas of the Rotorua caldera. Considerable consultation has already gone into their preparation. These structure plans contribute to the content of the proposed district plan.

The current operative district plan took many years to complete and one area that involved a lot of community discussion and litigation was the Lakes A Zone covering the northern lakes of Okareka, Tarawera and Rotoiti. Council believes this part of the plan should also be reviewed although this will not commence until after the balance of the plan has been notified.

The reviewed district plan will need to be consistent with and give effect to Environment Bay of Plenty's Regional Policy Statement, which is also under review. The two organisations are working closely together to ensure that the Regional Policy Statement complements Rotorua District Council's district plan. It is expected that the proposed district plan will be ready for notification in late 2009.

### Urban Design

Urban design is a means of ensuring that development of a city takes place in such a way as to make positive contributions to:

- the aesthetic values of the city,
- easy, safe and enjoyable ways of getting around the city,
- the use of public amenities, including transport,
- the overall safety of the urban environment.

Cities that have active, well articulated urban design visions are obvious. The visual nature of the city is pleasing to the eye, there is a sense of convenience about using the city, and longer term planning for all involved is simplified with a clear vision. Strong leadership by community opinion leaders and local government is vital.

The new government has indicated a strong commitment to urban development and design. This Council has not traditionally been strong in imposing design requirements although there have been some recent exceptions, such as the CBD design guide which is supported by the district plan. Council has been reluctant to enforce urban design requirements to date as they are not well received by some developers. However, Rotorua, as an attractive place to invest in, would be strengthened by a well developed urban design strategy. This is something that will receive further consideration by Council over the next two years and if successful, will influence this city's shape over the next 50 years.

### CBD Integration and Lakefront Redevelopment

The Rotorua community is fortunate to have a large format retail complex - Rotorua Central - co-located with the CBD and traditional strip retail area. This provides a unique opportunity not available in many cities. However Rotorua Central does create some challenges and pressures on existing retail areas. At the northern end of the CBD is the magnificent 'Lakefront' area (Lake Rotorua) which has not so far had the level of attention to design and integration with the CBD, that it requires. Over the last year or so Council has been exploring opportunities with interested parties and key opinion leaders. The aim of this project is to ensure the Lakefront is able to make an appropriate contribution to the cultural, environmental, social and economic wellbeing of our city. Integration of the Lakefront with the CBD, and provision of clear linkage through Tutanekei Street to Rotorua Central, is critical.

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The Lakefront development will be a long term project, however the vision will be established early in the project to ensure there is a consistent and committed contribution by Council over many years.

It is expected that much of the development, particularly the Lakefront development, will be by way of public/private partnerships. Such joint ventures will be of a long term nature. They will require a level of understanding about the commercial elements of the Lakefront development, not previously explored by this community. Commercial partnership model options will be developed and progressed with potential partners.

These development opportunities, if done well, will make a substantial contribution to the city's economic growth, potentially on a scale similar to that of the Rotorua Regional Airport development.

## Ngati Whakaue: Wharenui Road Development

Ngati Whakaue have taken a proactive decision to change land use of parts of their property in the Wharenui Road area. This land has previously been used for dairy farming, an activity that has been identified as having an adverse affect on lake water quality. Ngati Whakaue propose to develop this land for residential purposes and other urban uses. This is a bold move and would be a significant driver of the shape, dynamics, infrastructure and general community patterns of the city. The proposed area has the potential to meet the growth needs for the district over the next 50 years. However as this is unlikely to be the only area of growth it will require Council to take a careful, balanced approach to ensure growth is managed in a way that serves the best interests of both Ngati Whakaue as a commercial property developer, and the city and district as a desirable place to live, work and play.

A master plan that identifies three development stages has been developed. These are:

- Wharenui Road area for 15 years
- Gee Road/Fairbanks Road - 20 years
- Development of the balance of the area over the next 30+ years.

The proposal requires a change to the district plan and this process commenced in February 2009.

## Air Quality

New air quality measurements through the National Environmental Standard (NES) have shown that some people in our community are at risk from respiratory difficulties. These difficulties occur at times when particulate matter in the air around Rotorua City exceeds the limits. There is a sufficient body of science to support these claims. Through a joint committee, Council is working with Environment Bay of Plenty and the Lakes District Health Board to understand the drivers of poor air quality, and strategies to eliminate these risks. The Ministry for the Environment has also supported the joint committee and earlier working parties.

Although this is an issue that is primarily the responsibility of Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council believes it is important to stay close to the key issue to ensure that it is appropriately resolved, and in a way that is sustainable from both a financial and environmental perspective.

## Geothermal

Rotorua City is unique in that it is centred on a number of geothermal fields. This natural resource is monitored and managed in accordance with the Resource Management Act by Environment Bay of Plenty. Environment Waikato has responsibility for the geothermal fields in the south of the district which are in the Waikato Region.

Until recently our knowledge of the Rotorua geothermal fields was relatively limited. However, over recent years, far more comprehensive understanding of the mechanics, hydraulics and resource availability has been developed. Accordingly, Environment Bay of Plenty is reviewing the geothermal plan, which may allow more extensive use of the resource for geothermal energy production.

Rotorua District Council has consents for geothermal use to provide energy for the Museum, Energy Events Centre, Nursery, Aquatic Centre and Wastewater Treatment Plant. Council proposes to explore opportunities for greater use of the geothermal resource and the potential for geothermal electricity generation, possibly in partnership with other organisations. Benefits would include making Council more self-sufficient in terms of energy use, reducing the risk of electricity outages and reducing operating costs.

## Integrated Planning

Bay of Plenty Regional Council undertakes a range of functions that need to be integrated with the planning and service delivery by Rotorua District Council. They include the following:

- Improving lakewater quality
- Transport planning for the region and sub-regions including funding
- Improving air quality for the Rotorua caldera
- Review of the Regional Policy Statements and the Rotorua District Plan.

Formal structures exist through joint committees for regional transport, Te Arawa Lakes Group and air quality. Well functioning relationships also exist at a staff level of the two organisations for discussion around integrated planning for matters such as the District Plan.

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## Net Cost of Service

| Net Cost of Service by Activity (\$000s) | Actual 2007/08 | Annual Plan 2008/09 | 2009/10      | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      | 2016/17      | 2017/18      | 2018/19      |
|--|----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Animal Control                           | 324            | 365                 | 306          | 319          | 320          | 300          | 306          | 309          | 312          | 319          | 327          | 340          |
| Building Services                        | 414            | 591                 | 352          | 361          | 335          | 345          | 319          | 333          | 308          | 320          | 313          | 325          |
| Environmental Planning Implementation    | 1,713          | 1,918               | 1,898        | 1,904        | 1,936        | 1,937        | 1,984        | 2,024        | 2,063        | 2,116        | 2,170        | 2,232        |
| Environmental Planning Policy            | 1,767          | 1,840               | 1,878        | 1,620        | 1,366        | 1,397        | 1,432        | 1,467        | 1,501        | 1,540        | 1,656        | 1,702        |
| Infrastructural Planning & Compliance    | (428)          | (240)               | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            |
| Inspection                               | 1,000          | 1,137               | 1,067        | 1,091        | 1,110        | 1,121        | 1,150        | 1,174        | 1,195        | 1,229        | 1,259        | 1,300        |
| Parking Enforcement                      | (688)          | (483)               | (535)        | (558)        | (580)        | (604)        | (626)        | (651)        | (677)        | (703)        | (727)        | (751)        |
| <b>Total Net Cost of Service</b>         | <b>4,102</b>   | <b>5,128</b>        | <b>4,966</b> | <b>4,737</b> | <b>4,487</b> | <b>4,496</b> | <b>4,565</b> | <b>4,656</b> | <b>4,702</b> | <b>4,821</b> | <b>4,998</b> | <b>5,148</b> |

## Potential Significant Negative Effects

### Potential negative effects may include:

- Statutory processes take time and can be lengthy, and community aspirations for the environment can alter over this time.
- Possible judicial review of exercising statutory authority and processes.
- Appeals lodged against decisions to the Environment Court.
- Changes in legislation that affect levels of service.
- Expenses associated with the high degree of consultation that must be undertaken for policy development projects.

These and a number of other negative effects identified, and associated mitigation options, are provided in the respective Activity Plan sections.

## Asset Management Plans Information

### The key assets used in this Activity Group are:

- Buildings
- Land
- Parking

Further details are provided in each Activity section.

## Environmental and Regulatory Assets

| Asset Type          | Cost/Valuation (\$000s) | Accumulated Depreciation (\$000s) | Book Value 1 July 2008 (\$000s) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Buildings           | 94                      | 6                                 | 88                              |
| Computer Hardware   | 177                     | 99                                | 78                              |
| Computer Software   | 79                      | 79                                | -                               |
| Environmental       | 2                       | 1                                 | 1                               |
| Furniture           | 112                     | 110                               | 2                               |
| Office Equipment    | 66                      | 58                                | 7                               |
| Parking             | 104                     | 55                                | 49                              |
| Plant and Machinery | 69                      | 57                                | 12                              |
|                     | <b>702</b>              | <b>466</b>                        | <b>236</b>                      |