

National-level Environmental Reporting

6 June 2008



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiāo



Environmental Reporting Framework

- Agreed October 2006
- *Environment NZ 2007* is the first product
- Builds on earlier Environmental Performance Indicator (EPI) programme (1996-2002)
- Partly in response to OECD Environment Review Recommendations
- Sets up 5 yearly national SOE reporting, and will phase national-level issues-based reporting in between
- Formalises what we already do



National environmental indicators

- Central to the new Reporting Framework
- Track environmental health at the national level
- Identify changes over time and allow management response
- 'Distilled' from the earlier EPI programme
- A representative sample of 19 indicators
- 75 variables, based on availability of comparable, national-level data



National indicators cover...

- air quality
- water quality
- water allocation
- greenhouse gases
- Stratospheric ozone
- solid waste
- contaminated sites
- land cover & use
- land use capability
- ecological footprint
- native plants and animals
- indigenous vegetation & protected areas
- protected marine areas
- seabed bottom trawling
- fish stocks
- vehicle kilometres travelled
- energy demand, use & supply
- household consumption expenditure



Environment New Zealand 2007

...uses "the core set of environmental indicators and other supporting information to present a national picture of the current state of New Zealand's environment".



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What is Environment NZ 2007?

- Presents a **national picture** of the well-being of our environment
- Identifies **trends** in selected pressures on our environment
- Captures **hard data** to build up a quantitative picture
- Provides a basis for **decision-making** and setting priorities
- Meets international best practice in using **75 environmental indicators/variables** against which we will regularly report
- **Award-winning maps** present complex information & make it accessible

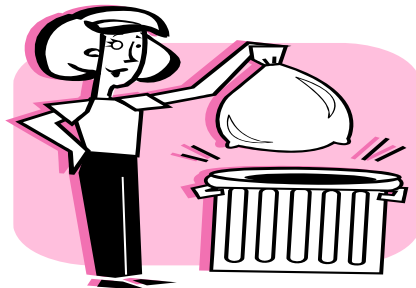
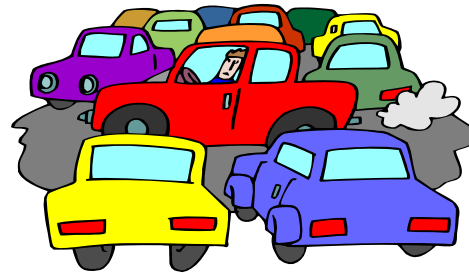


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'Pressures' chapters

- Household Consumption
- Transport
- Energy
- Waste



'State' chapters

- Air
- Atmosphere
- Freshwater
- Land
- Oceans
- Biodiversity



Key Findings / Trends

- **Consumption** is growing more strongly than economy
- We own more cars, they are getting older and larger, and we drive them further – but use of public **transport** is up
- We are using more **energy**, and more of this comes from fossil fuels. But our energy needs are growing more slowly than the economy.
- **Waste** to landfill is decreasing, and waste management has improved. But we continue to throw away potentially useful materials.



Key Findings / Trends (2)

- **Air quality** is generally good, but 53% of us live in areas which experience air pollution.
- **PM₁₀** from home heating or transport appears to be falling in main centres. Other **air pollutants** are stable or have fallen, except in some cases in Auckland.
- **Ozone** levels have risen, and **UV levels** dropped.
- **Land use** is intensifying. Area in dairy has increased, with increases in fertiliser, energy, water use and GHGs



Key Findings / Trends (3)

- **Soils** under pasture & cropping are in poorer condition than those under other land uses
- **Hill country erosion** is improving in some areas
- **Greenhouse gases** are increasing, as is deforestation.
- Increasing **demand for water**, particularly in drier areas
- **Water quality** is generally improving, but **nutrient levels** in waterways in urban & farmed areas are increasing
- **Bacteria levels** at monitored beaches seem to be improving.



Key Findings / Trends (4)

- 15% of **fish stocks** under the **QMS** have been overfished.
- An increasing number of marine species are under **threat**
- High and increasing proportion of land and sea **protected for conservation**
- Many **native land species** remain threatened (+ and -), mainly by introduced pests and weeds.
- All seven '**indicator**' **species** showed a decrease in habitat since the 1970s, despite increases in **pest management** and intensive management.



Cross-cutting themes

- **Key pressures are growing** as our population increases, our economy evolves, and our lifestyles change
- **Importance of sustainably managing our natural resources** to maintain economic, social & cultural well-being ('clean/green')
- Impact of **historic practices** on our environment (legacy pressures), as well as present-day **activities**.
- Improvements since the **1991 RMA**
- **Increased intensity** of both urban and rural **land use**.



Reference document

- 170,000 hits on report web-pages in 4 months
- Second reprint (11,000 copies distributed to date)
- Course book for some academic institutions
- High levels of media interest
- Met its objectives in terms of focusing debate
- But continuous improvement important



Short-term priorities

- Formal review of *Environment NZ 2007*
- 'Blueprint' for 2012 report
- Finalise and test Environmental Reporting Framework
 - Data stocktake (national-level only!)
 - Schedule of 'indicator updates' (0→5 years)
- Pilot a Regional/Central SoE reporting forum pilot
- Begin regular updates of national environmental indicators



Related work under way

- MfE refocusing its own work - key **environmental outcomes** will ensure robust evidence-based policy development / prioritisation
- National **sustainability targets / indicators?** - Possibility of monitoring progress towards sustainability outcomes
- Strengthen **reporting partnerships / data collection** through standardised methodologies / partnerships
- **National surveys** (e.g. cleanfill, waste composition, RMA Survey) and **monitoring programmes** (e.g. Clean Streams Accord)

