

10. STRATEGY PREPARATION, PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

The following outlines the process the Northland Regional Council under the statutory framework of the Biosecurity Act follows for preparation of Regional Pest Strategies, monitoring the Strategies performance and review process.

10.1. PROCESS OF STRATEGY PREPARATION

In April 2000 the Northland Regional Council's Landcare Committee agreed a programme for progressively reviewing the 1998 Northland Regional Pest Management Strategies. The 1998 Pest Management Strategies had an expiry date of April 2003, but the Strategies remain "live" until replaced by a new Strategy or until the Northland Regional Council has decided that a Regional Strategy is no longer required for that pest. A discussion document was published and submissions invited prior to reviewing the operative Strategies and making of a Proposed Pest Management Strategy.

A Proposed Northland Regional Pest Management Strategy for Nassella Tussock was publicly notified in May 2001 and Proposed Strategies for Possums, Rabbits and Hares, Pampas, Privet, Lantana, Spartina and Mothplant were publicly notified in August 2001. Submissions were received on each of these Proposed Strategies and hearings conducted before the Northland Regional Council appointed commissioners in each case. Submitters who disagreed with any decision on his or her submission, could appeal that decision to the Environment Court. One appeal was lodged but was withdrawn before the matter was set down for hearing before the Environment Court in May 2003.

A group of Proposed Northland Regional Pest Management Strategies for Feral Cats, Ferrets, Stoats, Weasels, and Rats, Wild Deer, and African Feathergrass was publicly notified in July 2002 and attracted five submissions, all in support. A further group of Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategies – for Wild Goats, Surveillance Animals (Rooks and Wallaby), Bathurst Bur, Nodding and Californian Thistles, Broom, Gorse, Ragwort, Manchurian Ricegrass, Wild Ginger and Surveillance Plants (Eelgrass, Senegal Tea, Hydrilla, Nardoo, Water Poppy, Fringed Marshwort, Entire Marshwort, Houttuynia, Old Man's Beard, Rhamnus, Needlegrass and Skeleton Weed) – was publicly notified at the beginning of November 2002. While eight submissions were received, again all were in support and hearings were not required. The Northland Regional Council's decisions on this group were sent to the submitters at the end of May 2003 and no appeals have been lodged with the Environment Court.

During the period of Strategy reviews the Northland Regional Council, along with all the other Regional Councils, entered into an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to provide field services in respect of a list of almost 100 unwanted organisms, plants that must not be distributed or sold, or displayed in places where plants are sold. This agreement, the National Pest Plant Accord, enables the replacement of the National Pest Plants Surveillance List Strategy adopted by the Northland Regional Council in April 1998.

As there were no outstanding appeals in respect of any of the Proposed Northland Regional Pest Management Strategies, the Northland Regional Council, pursuant to section 79f of the Biosecurity Act, has made the Strategies operative. Submitters are sent copies of the Northland Regional Councils decisions.

10.2. STRATEGY REVIEW PROCESS

Each Strategy, once approved, is operative for a period of five years. Upon the expiry date a Strategy will be reviewed. The review may result in the extension of the Strategy in its existing or amended form or cessation of a Strategy if the objectives have been met, circumstances change or a Strategy is not having the desired impact.

The Northland Regional Council may initiate a review within the five year period if it considers that a Strategy is failing to meet its objective(s) or circumstances have changed significantly.

The following steps are required in the review of a Regional Pest Management Strategy:

- 1) Internal Staff Review
- 2) Discussion document to Landcare Committee
- 3) Proposed Strategies notified for public submission
- 4) Submissions received
- 5) Decisions on submissions and Hearings conducted
- 6) Appeals to the Environment Court if required
- 7) Resolution of Appeals
- 8) Strategies operative and publicly notified

10.3. MONITORING PROGRESS OF STRATEGIES

The Northland Regional Council will monitor the progress of implementation of the Strategies to ensure that the objectives and targets are being achieved by committing to the following:

- Maintenance of comprehensive data capture system and tracing systems;
- Undertake annual inspections to determine if land occupiers are meeting their obligations under Pest Management Strategies and, as appropriate, action regulatory compliance;
- Surveying, mapping and recording the incidence and density of targeted pest plants and animals, biological control agents and the assessment of trends in pest populations in the Northland Region
- Maintaining a complaints and enquiries register/database;
- Advocacy/Education initiatives
- Inspections of plant nurseries and retail outlets to ensure compliance under the auspices of the National Pest Plant Accord;
- Strategies are implemented within budget;
- Surveillance throughout Region for biosecurity incursions;

- Auditing contracted and community pest control operations;
- Regular communications with the Auckland Regional Council, representatives of the Crown and research agencies;

10.4. PERFORMANCE OF THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Under section 85 of the Biosecurity Act the Northland Regional Council must prepare operational plans and annual reports on the implementation of the Strategies' operational plans. These requirements are incorporated into the Northland Regional Long Term Council Community Plan. The Land Operations Department of the Northland Regional Council maintains accreditation with the quality assurance programme Standards New Zealand (ISO 9000:2000). This accreditation requires regular external and internal audits of the Land Operations Department of the Northland Regional Council systems and procedures.