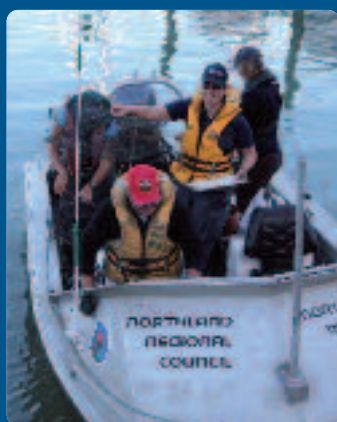


Annual Report 2010



Putting Northland first

NORTHLAND
REGIONAL
COUNCIL



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Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil
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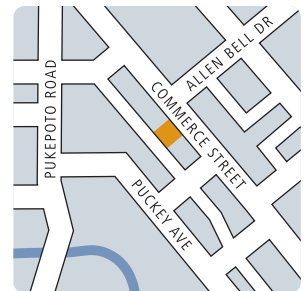
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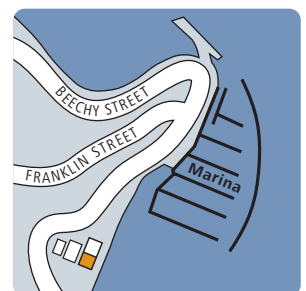
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ŌPUA

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introduction

The Northland Regional Council produces an Annual Report each year to account for the money provided to us by our ratepayers and through investments, financial institutions and government agencies. This is our Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2010.

In this report you will see the progress we have made in delivering what we set out to achieve and our involvement in working towards the social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for Northland.

The way in which most of the information is shown is governed by legislation, such as the Local Government Act 2002 and standard accounting practices, but you will also find general information about the Regional Council, our roles and the activities we perform.

There have been many highlights during 2009-2010 including funding for a wide range of community projects, work to develop the next generation of our Regional Policy Statement and the completion of construction of the multi-purpose Northland Events Centre. The Highlights 2009-2010 section is a snapshot of these.

The Regional Council has eleven key activity areas: Democracy and Corporate Services, Regional Information and Engagement, Regional Economic Development, Resource Management Planning, Transport, Consents, Environmental Monitoring, Land and Rivers, Biosecurity, Emergency Management and Maritime Operations. In each area we show you our key performance indicators – the targets we use to measure our success and financial performance.

The summary report

The Regional Council has also produced a summary of this report. The summary outlines the most important information, to give you an easy snapshot of exactly what we have achieved in the past year. This summary is available from all our offices and can also be found on our website www.nrc.govt.nz/annualreport



Our mission

Through growth, putting Northland first by providing regional leadership, environmental protection, economic opportunities and integrated infrastructure.

Our role

The Northland Regional Council aims to create a region of choice through growth, and the provision of regional leadership, environmental protection, economic opportunities and integrated infrastructure.

We will achieve this by putting our community and the Northland region first. We are committed to being forward thinking and innovative, flexible and open, responsive and value-driven, and professional and accountable. We also work with others – regional and central government, iwi, community groups, development agencies and commercial enterprises – to meet these goals.

Your Regional Council is made up of eight elected Councillors, including a Chairman, an appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and around 140 full-time staff. We are here to serve our community and ensure Northland is a great place to live.

Our direction

During 2009-2010 the Council completed a full review of its 10-year old Regional Policy Statement (RPS). The RPS is a key document – which the Council is required by law to prepare – that sets the broad direction and framework for managing Northland's natural and physical resources including land, water, air, soil, minerals, energy, plants and animals and all built structures.

Now the review is complete the process of developing the new RPS has begun. The first half of 2010 was spent meeting with key stakeholders – including iwi, Northland's three District Councils, industry and community groups – hosting workshops and developing a discussion document for public consultation.

This work is vitally important to Northland. The rewrite of the RPS is a rare opportunity to shape the direction of the region for the future – it affects the lives of all Northlanders and we encourage everyone to become involved in the consultation process during the latter part of 2010.

Also important to our direction has been the development of the new Regional Pest Management Strategies. The Strategies are the culmination of a comprehensive review of the way in which introduced pests are managed in Northland.

Northland faces new and increasing biosecurity challenges. There are constant new pest threats as well as established pests that require ongoing management. A growing number of landowners have also become involved in pest management, through Community Pest Control Schemes (CPCAs) – the Strategies aim to protect the gains already made while expanding on the CPCAs.

The new Strategies – which include plant, animal and marine pests – are indicative of our commitment to working with Northlanders to 'future-proof' our region's economic, environmental and cultural values.

foreword

The 2009-2010 financial year saw Northland gripped by one of the most severe droughts we've experienced in the past 80 years. On the back of the worst global recession in many decades, the impact on Northland's economy was significant – and the effects will continue to be felt for some time to come.

Initial assessments of the financial impact of the drought indicate a loss of income to Northland of more than \$300 million, however, the final amount will not be known until later this year.

Against this backdrop, your Regional Council has worked hard to strike an acceptable balance between funding its many operations and the recognition that times are tight for many.

As the 2009-2010 financial year drew to a close, your Councillors were pleased to be able to approve a new yearly budget that saw the average Regional Council rates bill increase by less than 27 cents a week.

In dollar terms, this equates to a total of about \$13.90 plus GST this year, significantly below the actual impacts of rates rises by other Northland local authorities.

We note with some concern that the combined debt of the region's three District Councils has virtually doubled over the past three years to approximately \$340 million as at 30 June 2010. In contrast, the 2009-2010 financial year saw your Regional Council remain debt-free, while successfully introducing new rates to fund the region's rescue helicopter service and Whāngārei's public bus service.

Reflecting its concerns to ensure maximum value for our shared ratepayers, the Northland Regional Council remains keen to work co-operatively with its local authority counterparts wherever possible.

Our investments remain a crucial contributor to Regional Council revenue, accounting for roughly half our income in an average year. Key amongst these investments is a strategic, majority shareholding in the Northland Port Corporation. The 2009-2010 year saw the Council – as 53.61 percent majority shareholder – take the opportunity to further broaden the professional focus on the board to ensure the Port Corporation had the right mix of appropriately skilled directors.

This reflected Council's belief in the strategic and pivotal role the Marsden Point deepwater port (which the corporation holds a 50% stake in) is likely to play in Northland's future over the next few years.

In a similar vein, the 2009-2010 year also saw your Council restructure the Northland Regional Council Community Trust and its subsidiary Enterprise Northland, which supports regional economic development and sustainable business. This change was designed to ensure the trust had a broader focus to strategically develop Northland's economy and to grow the trust fund. This restructure is also paying dividends, with Enterprise Northland's operational costs halved and the fund growing \$258 thousand to \$9.96 million.



The review of our most important policy document – the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) – has been very timely given the questions around the use and management of our water resource that have arisen as a result of the drought.

The RPS review was one of two major planning projects that were completed during 2009-2010. The "One Plan" feasibility report was completed and presented to the October 2009 Council meeting and the RPS 10-year review in December 2009.

As a consequence of completing these documents, the Council began developing a new RPS. The first half of 2010 was spent meeting with key stakeholders, hosting workshops and developing a discussion document for public consultation next financial year on the significant resource management issues for Northland and how they could be managed. An independent review of the resource management issues and potential options for tangata whenua also started this year, as a first step in a longer process of engaging with tangata whenua in the preparation of the new RPS.

The next year will be challenging as we continue to develop the new RPS and strive to get a balance between the use, development and protection of Northland's resources.

The past year has seen the successful completion of several major infrastructure projects in Northland, the largest the Northland Events Centre. Work on the Okara Park, Whāngārei project began early in 2009 and was completed on time and on budget in mid-2010. The multi-events centre will provide Northland with a versatile venue for a wide range of functions and will see Northland hosting two matches during the Rugby World Cup 2011.

2009-2010 also saw work continue on the 27 catchments around Northland identified as priorities for flood risk planning. Each of the Priority Rivers had a river management plan developed and implemented, detailing flood risk and the options for reducing risk.

Detailed hydraulic models have been developed for each of the Priority Rivers, incorporating extensive air and conventional survey data. Flood hazard maps have been prepared using the models. The maps show the extent and depth of flooding that could occur in a range of 'design storm' scenarios. Risk assessment and identification of options to reduce flood risk have also been developed and flood mitigation and protection works continued in the Kaihū, Kaeo-Whangaroa and Awanui River schemes.

Environmental management remains a core role for the Council and a great deal of time and effort was spent on this function including processing 1129 resource consent applications. The Council maintained its high standard, processing 98.8% of applications within statutory time frames.

The updated Northland Regional Pest Management Strategies (RPMS) were completed during 2009-2010. After a review of the strategies in 2008 it was decided to merge the existing 25 documents into three – marine pests, animal pests and plant pests.

The new RPMS place greater emphasis on investigating new options for controlling pest plants, such as biological control, and also increasing the scale of pest control areas to link existing community projects – such as Community Pest Control Areas – to protect biodiversity on private land in Northland.

The Strategies are a good example of the Council's commitment to working with Northlanders to ensure the best outcomes for our region – putting Northland first.

He Korero Whakamutunga

Ahakoā ngā pāweraweratanga
Ahakoā ngā piki me ngā heke
Ahakoā awangawangatanga
Ahakoā ngā whakahoa rautaki
I te mutungā, ka hoki mai ki a tatou o
Taitokerau te whakaoti, te whakatuturu.

Closing Statement

In spite of all our sweat
In spite of all our ups and downs
In spite of all our worries
In the end, it all comes back to us
the people of Taitokerau for
completion and implementation.



Mark Farnsworth
Chairman



Ken Paterson
Chief Executive Officer



© Copeland Associates Architects

our activities – what we do

The Northland Regional Council is one of Northland's main environmental guardians. We are charged with protecting Northland's land, water, coast and air while allowing for sustainable development. We are also responsible for promoting the region's economic, social and cultural wellbeing: 'Putting Northland first'.

Our responsibilities include environmental management, flood and land management, biosecurity, emergency management, pollution control, public transport planning and funding, and coastal navigation and safety. Councillors decide our overall policies and our 140 staff implement them.

Roughly half our income comes from rates and charges with the balance from investments and government grants.

Awards and funding

The Council has funding available to assist with a variety of eligible environmental, educational and cultural initiatives undertaken by the Northland community.

Regional Council funding and advice is available to all individuals, landowners, community groups, schools and iwi throughout the region. www.nrc.govt.nz/funding

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is about protecting our environment, economy and way of life from the harmful impacts of pest animals, pest plants and diseases. The Council works with landowners to target regional pest plants and animals and helps the rural economy by controlling possums to stop the spread of bovine Tb. www.nrc.govt.nz/nasties



Environmental planning and monitoring

The region's natural resources sustain our lives. We help people to use these resources appropriately and sustainably. Through Regional Plans, resource consents and monitoring, we work with the community to care for our environment – the air, land, water and coast. www.nrc.govt.nz/environmentalmonitoring and www.nrc.govt.nz/consents

Education and public information

Specialist Council staff host seminars and field days designed to educate Northlanders about a variety of topics linked to the environment, while others visit schools to deliver environmental education initiatives. We also produce a wide range of publications and self-help guides covering most aspects of our work. www.nrc.govt.nz/schools and www.nrc.govt.nz/publications

Emergency management

The Council coordinates the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group for the region. We work together to minimise the potential effects of emergencies, prepare ourselves and the community, respond to emergencies and help the community to recover. www.nrc.govt.nz/civildefence



Flood management

The region's rivers can put homes, farmland, jobs, livelihoods and property at risk from flooding. We help communities protect themselves from the effects of flooding. www.nrc.govt.nz/floodplans

Harbours

We look after the navigational safety of all vessels in our region's harbours – from Kaipara in the south to Pārengarenga in the north – and around the regional coastline. We also encourage safe boating behaviour and we are ready to respond in the event of a marine oil spill. www.nrc.govt.nz/onthewater



Infrastructure

We work with regional and national agencies to help ensure the provision and security of core regional infrastructure like transport, energy and telecommunications. We also have plans to establish an Infrastructure Development Authority as a way to fund future infrastructure projects. www.nrc.govt.nz/projects



Land management

We encourage landowners to recognise the economic and social value of managing land in a way that will protect the resource and meet the needs of current and future generations. The Regional Council works with landowners to develop sustainability and property conservation plans and with rural community groups.

Tourism and economic development

We support business development and tourism promotion through the NRC Community Trust and its subsidiaries, Enterprise Northland and Destination Northland Ltd. www.enterprisenorthernland.co.nz and www.northernlandnz.com



Pollution control

We maintain a 24/7 incident response service (0800 504 639), conduct environmental assessments of industrial and commercial sites, and maintain a register of sites with hazardous industries or activities. www.nrc.govt.nz/waste



Northern Advocate photo.

Transport

We help plan the region's road network and administer and partially fund Whāngārei's urban bus service. www.nrc.govt.nz/transport and www.nrc.govt.nz/bus

Water management

We ensure there is enough water for everyone – a difficult task with so many competing needs. Water allocation, use and monitoring help us to manage our water resources. www.nrc.govt.nz/water

measuring our performance

We keep track of our performance during the year so we can measure how effective we have been in delivering on our plans for the region. Through our Annual Report we aim to keep you informed and make ourselves accountable. Our performance is measured against key indicators for each area of our work. These indicators are based on the community outcomes and are highlighted in 'Our activities in detail' section.