

Annual Report 2012

S U M M A R Y



Putting Northland first

This is a summary of the Northland Regional Council's activities for the year 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 and contains information taken from our full Annual Report 2011-2012.

The Annual Report 2011-2012 was authorised for issue by resolution of the Northland Regional Council on 16 October 2012. The Annual Report Summary 2011-2012 was authorised for issue by the Chief Executive on 15 November 2012. They have been prepared in accordance with FRS-43: Summary Financial Statements.

To see a full version of our Annual Report 2011-2012 visit

www.nrc.govt.nz/annualreport

For more information freephone 0800 002 004.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Northland Regional Council's Annual Report Summary 2011-2012

This summary shows you what we did during the year, some of the highlights and what it cost to provide the many services we carry out for Northlanders.

The year included considerable work to progress and complete crucial planning documents – including the council's Long Term Plan 2012-2022, Regional Policy Statement and the Northland Water Programme. These plans will provide the foundation for the council's future direction.

As part of this process, the council decided to begin redirecting its investment income into the Investment and Growth Reserve and to establish project selection criteria for the funding of economic development projects.

The council also developed, consulted on and adopted a streamlined structure for its organisations. The Northland Regional Council Community Trust was disestablished and the Enterprise Northland Trust was made into a shell entity.

In October 2011, Malcolm Nicolson was appointed as the council's new chief executive. Mr Nicolson took up the position in January 2012 after serving the last 12 years with Far North Holdings.

In June this year the council learned of the sudden passing of former Chief Executive Officer, Ken Paterson. His legacy lives on in the Events Centre, a project he directed and saw completed, on time and on budget.

Council received a \$1 million tax refund during 2011-2012 after a decision by the Inland Revenue Department that a \$3 million council contribution towards the Regional Events Centre in 2008-2009 was a donation.

The money will go towards paying back the \$13 million internal loan used to pay for the centre. This will slash the amount ratepayers have to pay by around \$1.6 million and also cut the amount of time it takes to repay the loan by about 15 months.

Results of an Enterprise Northland and GNS Science co-ordinated aerial mineral survey were also made freely available during the year. The information is a valuable resource enabling councils and private individuals to identify key land for a variety of uses.

Work also continued on important flood protection in the Priority Rivers Project with actions outlined in the 2012-2022 Long Term Plan. These initiatives will continue to assist in reducing river flood risk to Northland's people and assets.



About the council

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 achieve this by putting our community and 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 over 140 full-time staff. We are here to serve our community and constantly strive to ensure Northland is a great place to live and work.



Your regional councillors: **Ian Walker, Graeme Ramsey, Tony Davies-Colley, Bill Rossiter, Joe Carr, John Bain (Deputy Chairman), Craig Brown (Chairman), and Bronwyn Hunt.**

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 staff put them into practice.

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, land owners, 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 land owners to target regional pest plants and animals and helps the rural economy by controlling possums to stop the spread of bovine tuberculosis.

www.nrc.govt.nz/nasties

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 resources covering most aspects of our work.

www.nrc.govt.nz/schools

www.nrc.govt.nz/publications





EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Council co-ordinates 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

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

www.nrc.govt.nz/consents

LAND MANAGEMENT

We encourage land owners 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 council works with land owners to develop sustainability and property conservation plans and with rural community groups.

www.nrc.govt.nz/land

HARBOURS

We look after the navigational safety of all vessels in our region's harbours – from Kaipara in the south to Pāren-garenga 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 roading, rail, ports, energy and telecommunications.

www.nrc.govt.nz/projects



TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We support business development and tourism promotion through Northland Inc (formerly the activities of Enterprise Northland Trust and Destination Northland Ltd).

www.northlandinc.co.nz

www.northlandnz.com



TRANSPORT

We help plan the region's road network and administer and partially fund urban bus services in Whāngārei and (from 1 July 2012) Kaitiāia .

www.nrc.govt.nz/transport

www.nrc.govt.nz/bus

POLLUTION CONTROL

We maintain a 24/7 incident response service on freephone 0800 504 639. We also conduct environmental assessments of industrial and commercial sites and maintain a register of sites with hazardous industries or activities.

www.nrc.govt.nz/waste

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



Our year in numbers

- 696 resource consent applications processed
- 99.7% of resource consent applications processed within statutory time frames
- 34 new publications produced
- 2 new marine pests found
- 35 river quality monitoring sites sampled monthly
- 20 region-wide weed workshops held
- 96% of customers rated helpfulness of consents staff as 'very good' or 'good'
- 78% of passengers rated Citylink Whāngārei bus services as 'very good' or 'excellent'
- 21 reported marine oil spills responded to
- 116 Environment Fund projects completed to the value of \$467,321
- 32% increase in website subscription service
- 359 land management enquiries logged
- 56% increase in Twitter followers
- 38,000 hectares of land covered by Community Pest Control Areas
- 882 calls to 24/7 Environmental Hotline
- 81 environmental incidents referred to other agencies
- 85 environmental incidents resulted in formal enforcement action
- 29 CoastCare groups assisted
- 54 ships piloted into the Bay of Islands
- 80,000 passengers visited Bay of Islands on cruise ships
- 49 Community Response Plans completed

Our year in review

The following is a snapshot of our key successes and work this year.

DEMOCRACY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

New Long Term Plan adopted

Council developed a new Long Term Plan for the decade 2012-2022 with a special focus on the first three years, particularly for the organisation's operational and capital projects and budgets. We received 1194 submissions on the draft plan.

Cuppa with a councillor

In June 2012 councillors initiated a new informal catch up with members of the public inviting them to a coffee ahead of their regular monthly meetings.

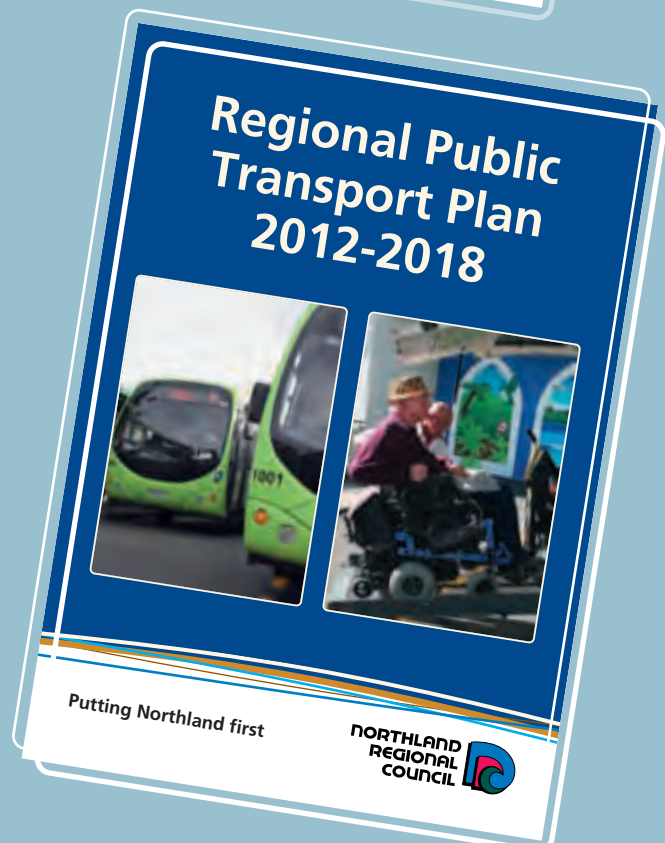
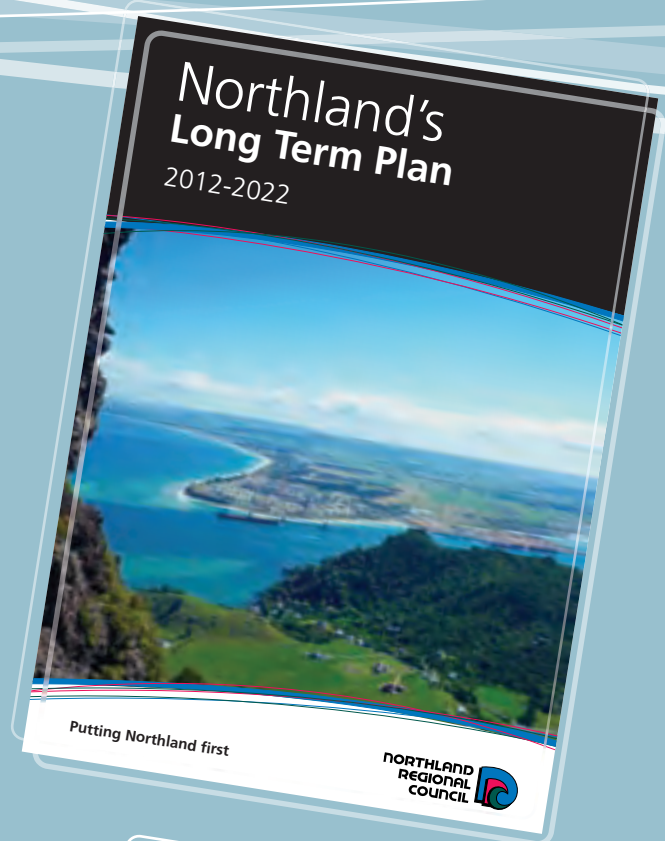
REGIONAL INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Community awareness of council's services is one of the key ways in which this role is measured. Awareness has remained steady since last year with an average awareness rate of our main functions of 79%.

Thirty-four publications were produced during the year covering a wide range of the council's services and projects.

Consultations

The council held several region-wide consultations over the year including the council's draft Long Term Plan, the draft Regional Land Transport Programme, draft Regional Passenger Transport Plan, review of the draft Regional Policy Statement and review of the Navigation and Safety Bylaw. We used the council's quarterly resident newsletter, the Regional Report, plus newspaper and radio advertising to highlight the consultations.





www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

Sustainable Business Awards

The council sponsored Sustainable Development Business Award winner was Explore NZ. Businesses are judged on the economic, environmental, cultural and social value they add.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Changes to CCO

Following consultation, a change in structure was agreed for the Northland Regional Council Community Trust (the trust) and its subsidiaries.

The trust was disestablished after year end; Enterprise Northland Trust (a subsidiary of the regional council community trust) is a continuing entity (going concern) to be available in the future if a charitable opportunity is identified.

Subsequent to year end the council became the owner of Destination Northland Limited and has widened the entity's focus to include the delivery of economic development programmes and facilitating economic development projects.

Investment and Growth Reserve

The council established the new Investment and Growth Reserve in July 2011 to fund economic development projects. During the year \$1.3 million was transferred to the new reserve.

The criteria to determine eligible projects for funding were adopted in June 2012.

The council has decided, as part of its Long Term Plan, to extend the transition to 10 years for the redirection of the council's investment income to the new reserve in order to reduce the rating impact on Northlanders.



Mineral survey

The aerial mineral survey funded by the regional council, the Far North District Council and a government contribution was completed and the data released. New Zealand Petroleum and Minerals released 200-plus copies of a 'Northland 2012 Data Pack' following the official Northland launch in May 2012.

Waikare oyster shell project

Timber from the oyster farms will be recycled on the Department of Conservation's estate at Trounson Kauri Park as part of the re-use initiative, under the Ministry of the Environment's Waste Minimisation Fund.

Resource consent was granted to build a small reclamation site in the mid Waikare Inlet to process the waste material, to assist the oyster industry in securing a long term zero waste aquaculture industry in the future.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

New Regional Policy Statement

Council released the Draft Regional Policy Statement for public feedback between October and December 2011. The Regional Policy Committee reviewed the feedback and produced revised issues, objectives, policies and methods to form the basis of the Proposed Regional Policy Statement.

Maps identifying properties within the coastal environment (with high and outstanding natural character within the coastal environment and outstanding natural landscapes and features) were produced and discussion with newly-affected owners happened between May and September 2012. The maps will be included in the Proposed Regional Policy Statement, which will be publicly notified in October 2012.

Adoption of Northland Water

In May 2012 we adopted Northland Water, a programme aimed at improving Northland's freshwater management. It brings together strategies, programmes and plans for water in Northland and prioritising our future management actions. It also sets out our staged programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management by 2030.



Transport

Reducing the number of road deaths as a result of motor vehicle accidents is a key role of this activity, as is effectively managing the Whāngārei Total Mobility scheme.

Road deaths significantly decreased in the past year going from an average of 30 for the previous three years to 14 in 2010-2011 and seven in 2011-2012.

Total Mobility is a nationwide scheme designed to increase the mobility of people who have difficulty using public transport. We exceeded the target customer satisfaction level with 78% satisfaction but did not maintain the target volume of trips (of 35,000) with only 33,769 trips recorded. The economic downturn has been noticed in this area, with some clients struggling to pay their 50% fare of a taxi trip.

Bus services in Kaitāia

A new targeted rate for the Kaitāia, Mangōnui and Ahipara communities was established in June 2012 to provide permanent funding for the public bus service in Kaitāia. The bus service provides daily transport to Kaitāia for Ahipara and Mangōnui residents and regular transport around Kaitāia.





New Regional Land Transport Programme

A new Regional Land Transport Programme for 2012-2015 was developed by the four Northland councils and the New Zealand Transport Agency. This programme helps to secure national funding for the maintenance of the road network and new road projects.

New Regional Public Transport Plan

The council adopted a new Regional Public Transport Plan for the next six years 2012-2018. This is a long term plan that looks at how public transport will be delivered in the region.

CONSENTS

The council issued 696 resource consents (down from 1284 in the previous 12 months) for both industrial and private developments across the region.

We maintained our excellent performance record, processing 99.7% of consent applications within statutory timeframes.

Customer satisfaction

The annual customer satisfaction survey of consent applicants resulted in a 96% satisfaction rating for helpfulness of staff as being either very good or good. The result compares well against the previous year's results of 88%.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The council's Annual Monitoring Report from last year is available at www.nrc.govt.nz/amr and provides substantial information on the monitoring results and trends.

The environmental hotline handled 882 calls during the year compared to 1057 the previous year. The highest category was for air incidents (40%), especially burning and smoke nuisance. This is similar to previous years.

State of the Environment reporting

Every five years the council collates and publishes the State of the Environment report. The next report covers the period 2007-2011. Information was collated and the document drafted with the final report due for release in early 2013.

River water quality

Water quality monitoring of rivers and streams is done at 35 sites throughout Northland. Water quality is monitored monthly for a range of properties such as bacteria and nutrients.

Trend data for 24 of the river sites (that have data for at least five years) shows 13 improving trends for total phosphorus and four improving trends for total nitrogen. There were no deteriorating trends evident across the 24 sites.

Water clarity has improved in six sites and deteriorated in the Victoria River; E.coli bacteria is worse in the Mangahuru Stream and Waipoua River.



Kaipara Harbour sediment report complete

A report on the history of sediment in the Kaipara Harbour has been completed and was published in February 2012 on our website www.nrc.govt.nz/kaiparasediment

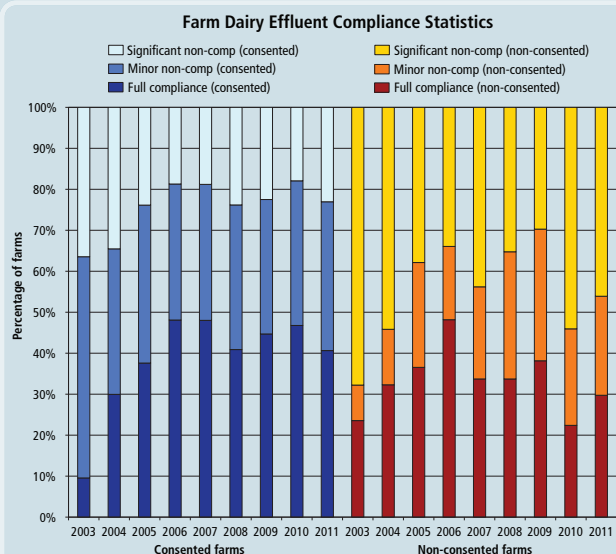
The project involved the collection and analysis of sediment cores, to reconstruct the sedimentation history of the harbour over the last century.

This report will be used as a building block tool for Northland Water, particularly the implementation project for the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

Farm dairy effluent discharges

The farm dairy effluent monitoring programme aims to minimise and reduce the impacts of farm dairy effluent on water quality in Northland.

Figure 1: Farm dairy effluent compliance rates for the last nine years.



At the start of the 2011 season there were 985 farm dairies being used in Northland. Of these, 716 were authorised by resource consent to discharge treated farm dairy effluent to water. The other 269 farms had undertaken to meet the permitted activity criteria for land disposal. All dairy farms are monitored annually, timed to coincide with seasonal peak effluent loadings. Where a discharge to water is identified, water quality field tests are done and samples taken for laboratory analyses.

Where significant non-compliance is identified, council officers arrange on-farm meetings to discuss the non-compliance and agree options for improvement/upgrade. In certain circumstances the council fines the offender and/or pursues prosecutions.



LAND AND RIVERS

Priority rivers

Proposed flood scheme works for Kaeo, urban Whāngārei rivers, Kerikeri-Waipapa and Awanui, as well as a minor works programme in other priority river catchments, were developed and included in the new Long Term Plan. These initiatives will assist to reduce river flood risk to people and assets. Specific works undertaken this year are detailed below.

New river management liaison committees for Kerikeri-Waipapa River and Waitangi River were established.

Awanui design work and maintenance

The scheme's asset management plan was completed; the hydraulic model upgrade was commissioned and near completion; and the 2011-2012 works contract implemented. The Awanui River flow containment upgrade options report for urban Kaitiāia was completed and the Bell Hill inclinometer and water table monitoring was evaluated.

Kaihū River management

The 2011-2012 works contract was completed and 30,000 cubic metres of gravel was extracted at no cost to the scheme. Hydraulic modelling of scheme options and upgrade options were developed however the scheme plan was discontinued by the council after consultation with the community. The plan, due to technical grounds, was not able to achieve equitable distribution of floodwater because of the contribution of internal water from sub-catchments.

Kaeo River and Whangaroa Stream management

The 2011-2012 works contract, flood risk reduction strategy and detailed design for Kaeo flood scheme works were completed.

The resource consent for flood scheme works was lodged and land use negotiations started. Government funding support to mitigate risk to most flood-vulnerable Kaeo homes was confirmed.



Coastal hazards

Tsunami modelling and mapping for priority coastal communities and the Whāngārei Harbour, was completed. This work will enable communities to be better informed of the potential tsunami risk. A risk-screening of 55 coastal communities was undertaken to establish priorities for risk reduction plans. A dune restoration scoping report was undertaken for Whangāumu (Wellington) Bay and summer and winter beach profiling was undertaken to monitor changes in shore profile.

BIODIVERSITY

Environment Fund

The Environment Fund funding was fully allocated (\$467,321). Funding contracts were implemented for 116 projects, including 51 soil conservation projects, 32 water quality projects, 20 CoastCare projects and 13 biodiversity projects.

Soil conservation works were promoted, with poplar and willows distributed to land owners through the Environment Fund.

Top wetlands project

The Top Wetlands report, which ranks the top wetlands in Northland, was completed. Wetland fact sheets were developed and mail-outs sent to land owners of top wetlands in the Kaipara and Whāngārei districts.



BIOSECURITY

New marine pests identified

Mediterranean fanworm (*Sabella spallanzanii*), an internationally significant marine pest, was found on the hulls of four fishing vessels in Whāngārei.

A second pest – the seaweed *Undaria pinnatifida* – was also found on two vessels. Neither pest is thought to be permanently established in Northland.

The pests were removed from the infected vessels and from surveyed adjacent port structures. Surveys to determine and remove any surviving pests will continue into 2012-2013.

Gum leaf skeletoniser found

Gum leaf skeletoniser, an invasive insect which damages all eucalypt tree species, silver birch, plum, oak and copper beech, was found in September 2011 near Whāngārei port. Host-specific parasitic wasps are being bred to target the insect and are expected to be available later in 2012. In the meantime, biosecurity staff have sprayed five infected trees in the port area.



Increasing awareness of pests

Twenty weed workshops were conducted region-wide over the year. The workshops involved more than 330 ratepayers who have gained training in weed control and identification of regional pest plants.

Six marine pest workshops were run jointly by the council and MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (now MPI Biosecurity) in mid-October 2011.



New community pest plans

Five new community pest projects were launched during the year – the largest at Whāngārei Heads is aimed at restoring kiwi populations across more than 6000 hectares. The others are located at Pīpiwai (for control of possums, rats, mustelids, feral and stray cats), Maungatāpere, (for weed control including climbing asparagus, Taiwan cherry, wild ginger), Ngāwhā (to control possums, stoats, cats and rats) and Puketōtara (for control of possums, rats, mustelids and cats).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Community Response Plans

There are now 49 community response plans completed across Northland. The 2010-2011 Resilience Fund made available \$50,000 for the development of 12 community response plans in Northland. At the end of June 2011 plans were completed under the Resilience Fund Project.

Emergency responses

The emergency operations centre was activated between 18 and 20 March 2012 to co-ordinate an interagency response to a severe weather event. Widespread flooding occurred across the region, from Kaeo in the north to Ngunguru in the south. The event debrief identified that in the main, the response was carried out in a professional and efficient manner.

MARITIME OPERATIONS

Navigation Safety Bylaw reviewed

A complete review of the Navigation Safety Bylaw was completed during the year. This included major reviews of definitions, moorings, ski lanes, lifejackets and speed clauses.

The bylaw review addressed a number of safety issues, making Northland's waters safer and cleaner (by preventing accidents and spills).

www.nrc.govt.nz/navigationbylaw

Record number of cruise ships to Bay of Islands

A record 54 cruise ships (including three super-yachts and one coastal cruiser) were piloted in the Bay of Islands during the summer season.

Approximately 80,000 passengers visited the bay on board these ships. The season was extended longer than usual, and had more visitors primarily due to the Rugby World Cup.



Assistance with Rena incident

The Maritime team provided a number of staff to assist with the Rena response off Tauranga.

The staffing assistance provided by the council generated additional council income (\$236,923) and was valuable training for the staff involved.

