

SECTION 9 – ENERGY & WATER USE & AIR QUALITY

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9 ENERGY AND WATER USE AND AIR QUALITY

9.1 Introduction

The **Act** deals with a wide range of resources. District **Councils** are mainly concerned with land-related resources, namely soil, minerals, structures, vegetation and fauna.

Implementing measures to control discharges to air and to manage the **effects** of the use of energy and water is primarily a **Regional Council** responsibility. The Regional Policy Statement therefore deals with these matters, and with waste management, which is closely allied to the energy topic. (A lot of energy is used to create products which are used once then dumped). Re-use, recovery and recycling can substantially reduce overall energy demands as well as lessen demand for raw materials.

Local **Councils** also however have some clear duties when it comes to energy use and water and air quality issues. When putting land use controls in place or when dealing with applications to establish factories etc., **Council** must consider the impacts which land use activities could have upon energy resources, air and water.

9.2 Objectives, Policies and Methods

Objectives

- EWA 1) To promote sustainability of energy and water use through more efficient use, conservation and a higher degree of local self-sufficiency, as well as a move toward renewable energy sources. (Refer also: Objectives LU 7 and S 9).
- EWA 2) To take Maori cultural and spiritual values into account when dealing with water and energy use matters and air quality issues. (Refer also: Objectives LU 4 and LU 28).
- EWA 3) To minimise the adverse **effects** of water and energy use and other activities upon the **environment**, particularly upon the life-supporting qualities of water. (Refer also: Objectives LU 7, S 5, S 9, S 11, EM 5 and U 1).
- EWA 4) To help to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse **effects** of activities involving discharge to air, through land use management. (Refer also: Objectives LU 1 and LU 2). (Issues 2, 13 and 14)).

Policies

- a) To promote wider public use of techniques to conserve water and energy and help improve water and air quality.
- b) To take future energy demands into account when considering urban growth proposals.
- c) To work with the Tangata Whenua to identify the relevant cultural and spiritual values related to this topic, through early and ongoing consultation.

- d) To recognise the benefits of tree and forest planting in helping to lower atmospheric CO2 levels, and in improving water quality.
- e) To take potential impacts on water and air quality into account when managing the **effects** of new land use activities.
- f) To require that activities which may cause significant adverse **effects** through discharges to air are, as far as practical, located away from residential areas and other incompatible uses.

Explanation

The above statements are squarely in line with the **Act**, particularly with the matters stated in Sections 6 and 7. Maori cultural values are relevant due to concerns with matters like water quality and water-based disposal of sewage.

There are many ways in which resource users, government agencies and the public could be persuaded to adopt a more sustainable attitude toward energy and water use and air pollution. The degree of financial or competitive benefit which people can gain from becoming more efficient is an important motive. The pricing structures which supply authorities put in place are therefore very important. The prime movers in energy efficiency campaigns should be regional and central government and energy suppliers, who are best placed to do this work. **Council** will be involved in some education campaigns, but will need to look first at water supply pricing and making its own “core activities” more “sustainable.”

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Recycling is an example of an activity which should be promoted for its environmental benefits. These include minimising the amount of material dumped in **landfills** and lowering the demand for raw materials.

The **Regional Council** have prepared Plans for Oroua Catchment Water Allocation, (operative) and Manawatu Catchment Water Quality. They have also produced a Regional Air Plan and Land and Water Regional Plan. The initiatives in these Plans, (and the Land Transport Strategy) will go a good way toward meeting the above objectives. For example the Regional Policy Statement talks about lobbying for a national policy on energy. The District supports this idea since substantial energy savings (which are possible) will never be achieved without suitable energy pricing measures and other changes at the national level. Energy self-sufficiency as a region is an important goal, since dependence on overseas supplies, or even on other parts of New Zealand, may not be in the interests of future generations.

The **Regional Council** also proposes a waste inventory, to find out how much waste each **industry** produces, and how it is being disposed of. Opportunities for waste reduction and recycling can then be identified, e.g. one **industry** may produce a waste product which another **industry** could use as a raw material.

Under Section 30 of the **Act** and the provisions of its Regional Air Plan the **Regional Council** is responsible for controlling discharges of contaminants into the air. This includes discharges from industrial plants, burning of waste, blasting operations and agricultural spraying. The District Plan’s

role, as set out in the Regional Policy Statement is to assist by keeping activities with potential “nuisance” air discharges away from **sensitive activities** such as residential areas.

Council has an input (through **building**, subdivision and planning processes) into projects undertaken by the private sector and **network utility** operators. It is also involved at the “tail end” of other people’s water and energy use processes through operating sewage treatment plants and a **landfill**. This gives **Council** scope to negotiate better environmental performance with its customers.

In general, **Council** cannot require more stringent standards than those which apply under the national Building Code. This means for example that higher home insulation standards cannot be applied in the Manawatu District to meet energy conservation goals.

District Plan Methods

- Plan Rules, including **height** controls which take solar access into account, controls which provide separation between residential areas and industries which could adversely affect air quality, riparian management for water quality reasons, and urban allotment sizes which provide enough room for rainwater tanks.
- Land use and subdivision consent conditions to mitigate **effects** on water and air quality, e.g. esplanade strips.
- Control over nuisances and potentially dangerous activities via abatement notices under the Resource Management Act.

Other Methods

- Promoting walkways and cycle routes and supporting the continuation of public transport.
- Campaigns to make people more aware of the impact of dumping substances into the stormwater system.
- Raising awareness within the **building** and farm supply **industry** about the energy/water efficient systems and appliances which are available.
- Continued water conservation campaigns, with reviewed water supply bylaws which include conservation measures, for example:
- Sensible hosing restrictions based not only on “time of use”.
- Stronger action on persistent water wasters, e.g. ultimate ability to disconnect their supply.
- Requiring that all new **building** projects install simple water conservation technology, like dual flush toilets.
- Back-up for water rationing measures if the townships’ rights to take water are curtailed during severe drought.

- Water supply, refuse and sewage disposal methods and charges which give people an incentive to reduce wastage.
- Making sure that the Tangata Whenua are consulted about any new waste management or sewage disposal plans, and that their concerns with water quality especially are recognised.
- Continued control over nuisances and potentially dangerous activities via the Health Act, Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, offensive trades licensing, and bylaws.
- Responding appropriately to public complaints about environmental pollution.
- Recycling programmes for the public.
- A Regional waste inventory programme, with District **Council** support.
- Environmental initiatives in **Council**'s own operations, including -
 - a) Assessing energy and water efficiency in all new projects and in existing plants.
 - b) In-house recycling and use of recycled products.
- Considering using alternative fuels for **Council** vehicles, taking into account not only direct costs but the benefits of reducing fuel imports and atmospheric emissions.
- Investigating new water supply sources which have less **effect** on river flow regimes.
- Education or incentives for urban residents to install rainwater tanks for supplementary supply and stormwater management.

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9.3 Environmental Results Anticipated

- 1) Satisfaction among Tangata Whenua that their cultural and spiritual values are taken into account in **Council**'s dealings with water and energy use matters and air quality issues.
- 2) District residents are efficient per capita users of water and energy, compared to the national average, and become more self-sufficient.
- 3) A high standard of air quality and improved water quality in the District's rivers, lakes and streams.
- 4) No new activities which require consent for discharges to air under the Regional Air Plan will be located within or near residential areas, or near other incompatible uses.

9.4 Monitoring And Review Procedures - Energy And Water Use And Air Quality

The procedures to be used will include:

- a) Obtaining feedback from **Council’s** Marae Consultative Committee about **Council’s** dealings on these matters.
- b) Reporting on energy and water use in the Manawatu compared to national trends.
- c) “State of the Environment” reporting on water and air quality.
- d) Assessing how effective land use consent conditions have been in avoiding or mitigating adverse **effects** from energy extraction or use, and on air and water quality.
- e) Analysis of the location of new activities which require consent under the Regional Air Plan, and of complaints about these facilities.
- f) Obtaining feedback from the **Regional Council** to identify any water and air quality problems arising from land use activities.
- g) Preparing audits of energy and water efficiency within **Council’s** own operations.