

# Acknowledgements

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## Mayor's Foreword

I am pleased to present 2008 State of the Environment Marlborough to the community. This report tracks the issues that our district has faced in recent years and provides information on how we have been dealing with those issues. Importantly the report describes what we know about the health and state of Marlborough's natural and physical resources.

This report is significant as it is an integral part of the Council's process to review the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement. Because of this, 2008 State of the Environment Marlborough is more detailed than previous state of the environment reports. What is included is not just a review of monitoring for the previous year, but rather is a look back over a number of years to about 1995, when the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement started to direct how we should look after Marlborough's resources.

A further report to be released later this year will look at how effective the policies in Marlborough's resource management documents have been. The information in 2008 State of the Environment Marlborough will be used to help us decide if the course set out in these planning documents is being achieved or not.

One of the things you will notice in reading this report is increased central government involvement in how we deal with some resources. For example, national environmental standards for air quality and drinking water are in place, which weren't the last time we published a state of the environment report. This has seen changes in the monitoring we do and how we report the results of that monitoring.

What can we say about the state of Marlborough's environment, its people, places and natural resources? We know some aspects are okay and others are not. In some cases we simply do not have the information to be able to say. What we do know is Marlborough has experienced unprecedented growth and development in the past 10 to 15 years. Much of this has come about with the expansion of the viticulture industry, which has brought with it significant benefits to the economy, but has also had impacts in the community and the wider environment.

We also know that much of our current day activity is hugely reliant on using resources in public ownership. Marlborough's lengthy coastline, large areas of Crown owned land and extensive freshwater resources sees the Council frequently giving people the right to use these natural resources for private benefit for things like viticulture, aquaculture or even putting down a mooring. However, these rights either by themselves or together with others can affect the state of the resource or in some cases even affect or restrict the wider community's use of the resource.

Changes in the make up of people who now live in Marlborough have made a difference as well. Many of those who have moved to Marlborough in the past 10 years will have been attracted by the natural and physical resources of the district, and the opportunity to build a livelihood, and enjoy a lifestyle, that is based on those resources. The key point is that, although many of the people who live in Marlborough today are "new", they share the same aspirations for a quality of life as those of us who have lived here all our lives.

Therefore as individuals and as a community we need to have good information about how our daily activities affect those around us and the wider environment. 2008 State of the Environment Marlborough is a way of sharing information with the community about the state of Marlborough's natural and physical resources.



**Alistair Sowman**  
Mayor, Marlborough  
District Council





# SECTION ONE



Introduction

Setting the Scene 1

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# Introduction

## About this report ....

*2008 State of the Environment Report Marlborough* highlights aspects of Marlborough's environment that have come under pressure over the past 10 to 15 years. Using information obtained from investigations, research and monitoring data gathered over that period, this report describes how our resources have been affected by those pressures.

The Marlborough District Council has produced state of the environment reports on an annual basis from 1994 through until 2004. The information presented in previous reports described the state of Marlborough's land, air, groundwater, surface water, coastal environment and community wellbeing in relation to the objectives and anticipated environmental outcomes in the current Marlborough Regional Policy Statement. A standard set of chapter headings was used in these reports, especially for the five reports produced from 1999 through until 2004.

The last comprehensive overview of Marlborough's environment was reported in 1999. The first part of the 1999 report took a step back in time and described how the district had evolved both in terms of its natural and physical resources and human occupation. Information was included about issues arising from use of resources, what the policy framework was in Marlborough Regional Policy Statement to manage issues and the responses being undertaken by the Council to deal with issues and pressures from resource use.

The content and format for this years report will be somewhat different to that used previously. The reasons for this are because there have been significant pressures in recent years from growth and development, not only at a local level, but also at a national level. These pressures have manifested themselves in a range of ways that were not previously considered in the current Marlborough Regional Policy Statement. Because of this there are more chapters and increased content in this 2008 report. It is intended this report will provide information to increase the understanding of those with an interest in the state of Marlborough's environment.

## STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

### Background

This first chapter report provides background as to why we monitor, what the Marlborough District Council actually monitors, the role of iwi and the use of public resources.

### Setting the scene

The second chapter sets the scene for what follows: Marlborough's environment, its history and people are described along with the importance of the environment to Marlborough's economy.

### Pressures on the environment

This part of the report includes a series of chapters about the significant pressures that have been experienced in Marlborough. These chapters are on biosecurity risks, land use change, waste management, climate change and infrastructure and energy.

### State of Marlborough's environment

The remaining chapters of the report include information on the major natural resources of air, freshwater, land, coastal areas and biodiversity as well as chapters about heritage and landscape, the townships and small settlements of Marlborough and natural hazards.



## STRUCTURE OF CHAPTERS

Aside from the first two chapters, each chapter includes the following information:

- Brief insight to issues and responses;
- Introduction;
- Description of significant issues or development pressures;
- Overview of any national implications where relevant;
- What we know from monitoring over time; and
- What we are doing to address particular issues.

In most chapters we have included stories or case studies within a text box about specific issues or responses undertaken by the Council.

*Marlborough Sounds*



# Introduction



## Background ....

Our very existence and desire to develop and grow as a community can compromise the things that make our life special in Marlborough, our water resources, clean air, natural habitats, landscapes and our general community wellbeing. We constantly face challenges in dealing with the pressures on these things, especially as we have differing views about how Marlborough's natural and physical resources should be looked after.

We also have different aspirations for ourselves and our families. However, most of us at least want a safe environment in which to live, access to essential services, employment, clean water and air and an affordable place to live. Having good overall community health and access to sport and leisure activities are also very important parts of our daily lives.

In Marlborough our quality of life and our economic wellbeing is very much dependent on natural and physical resources such as the coast, soils, rivers, groundwater, air, landscape, vegetation and animals. How we use and develop these resources is governed to a large extent by the Resource Management Act 1991.

The essential purpose of the Resource Management Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. In this way the Act allows people to use and develop resources, so long as this use does not adversely affect the environment in a way that impacts on the foreseeable needs of future generations, the life supporting capacity of ecosystems, other users or the environment. This is the concept of 'sustainability', which the Act promotes as its overriding purpose.

To achieve the purpose of the Act, the Council has to have regard to a number of principles. These are set out in the Act and include recognition of and provision for 'matters of national importance', such as the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment. The Council also has to have particular regard for things such as 'amenity', 'kaitiakitanga', 'quality of the environment', and 'intrinsic values of ecosystems'.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING

The Resource Management Act recognises the value of monitoring and gives local authorities major responsibilities for this. Section 35 of the Act imposes a duty on the Council to monitor:

*The state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act.*

Monitoring is an ongoing and systematic process. Monitoring is the collection of data over time that informs us about the condition of our resources. It allows us to assess whether

### PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT (SECTION 5)

- (1) The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- (2) In this Act, sustainable management means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while—
  - (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
  - (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
  - (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

environmental quality is improving, remaining the same or becoming degraded. Monitoring occurs in a variety of ways: through established state of the environment monitoring programmes on natural resources such as air, water and soils; through checking on compliance with resource consent or resource management plan rules; and through monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of policies, rules and other methods in the resource management plans.

Reporting on the state of the environment is important, as it can tell us about how good, bad or otherwise our environment is. Sometimes it can be quite hard to tell whether things are good or bad. For a new issue that arises, there is often little or no scientific information on how things were before, to be able to make a comparison about how bad the effects of the issue really are. Deciding on how good or bad things are can also depend on how long we have been monitoring for. Trends in water quality, for example, may not become evident for well over 10 to 15 years. While differences from year to year can be observed in such monitoring, it may take a lot longer to determine what the actual trends are.





*Council staff monitoring fish species in the Wairau River*

From whatever part of the community we belong to, live or work in, or represent, we can all directly or indirectly influence the overall well-being of our environment. Reporting on the state of the environment can help influence peoples' actions about their own use of the natural and physical resources of Marlborough. (The environment includes people and communities as well as what we usually think of as 'natural' ecosystems.)

Currently the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement highlights the importance of involving the community and resource users with environmental monitoring. By reporting information on issues, and on ways in which the adverse effects of the use of these resources can be reduced, the Council is helping to achieve the sustainable management purpose of the Resource Management Act.

One of the most important reasons for reporting is that it allows the Council to assess the overall resource management policy framework for Marlborough. In this context the information gathered for 2008 State of the Environment Report Marlborough will be used in two other Council projects: the review of the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement and the effectiveness

and efficiency review of the policies, rules and other methods in the two resource management plans: the Marlborough Sounds Plan and the Wairau/Awatere Plan.

A significant consideration for the Council in its monitoring work is that much of Marlborough's resources are in public ownership. We have a huge coastline, large areas of land in Crown ownership and extensive freshwater resources. The Council frequently allocates or allows the use of natural resources for private benefit, especially resources in the coastal marine area and in our rivers and aquifers. For example, the viticulture industry, which contributes significantly to Marlborough's economy, relies on access to freshwater resources from rivers and aquifers. Another significant contributor to the economy is the aquaculture industry: this industry has been totally reliant on being able to occupy coastal space in order to develop. Other examples include the many moorings and jetties dotted around the Sounds, which contribute to the social wellbeing of residents and holidaymakers as does the use of the Sounds waterways by recreational craft.

Having good quality information about the state of resources is essential because allocating rights to use resources in public ownership has become a fundamental part of the overall fabric of Marlborough's social and economic wellbeing.

## THE ROLE OF IWI

The Resource Management Act sets up a special relationship between iwi, the Crown and local authorities. The Act requires the Council to recognise and provide for the relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga, protection of historic heritage and recognized customary activities. It also requires the Council to have particular regard to kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in sustainably managing Marlborough's natural and physical resources.

Tangata whenua are kaitiaki (or guardians) of their natural resources. As such, they have the responsibility for ensuring that the mauri (or life essence) of these resources is protected. The mauri of a resource embodies a spiritual as well as a physical essence. From the Maori perspective, damage to resources also carries spiritual damage. Protecting the mauri maintains the integrity of a particular resource, and ensures its protection for future generations.



## KAITIAKITANGA

Kaitiakitanga is a traditional practice of managing resources so as to conserve and protect them. Kaitiakitanga is an environmental decision making system, developed by tangata whenua to fulfill their responsibility towards the environment. The responsibility of kaitiaki is twofold: first, there is the ultimate aim of protecting mauri and, secondly, there is the duty to pass the environment to future generations in a state, which is as good as, or better than, the current state.

Kaitiakitanga is broad - it includes guardianship, care, wise management and resource indicators, where resources themselves indicate the state of their own mauri.

Kaitiakitanga may be practised through:

- The maintenance of waahi tapu, waahi tipuna and other sites of importance.
- The management of fishing grounds (mahinga maataitai).
- Observing the maramataka (lunar calendar).
- Observing the tikanga of sowing and harvest.
- Designing settlements in keeping with the environment.

In Marlborough, eight iwi have manawhenua: Ngati Apa, Ngati Koata, Ngati Kuia, Ngati Rarua, Ngati Toa, Ngai Tahu, Rangitane and Te Atiawa. Each of the iwi has a unique and rich cultural and spiritual heritage as tangata whenua. Iwi history, iwi interests and the areas (rohe) over which the various tribes hold manawhenua status differ considerably, and are somewhat complex. Tribal rohe overlap and the eight iwi, collectively (not as a collective), hold manawhenua over Marlborough.

Over the last decade or so, Marlborough's iwi groups have been making preparations for Treaty of Waitangi hearings, and tentatively shaping their aspirations and structures in anticipation of the outcomes of Treaty settlement. This has been a difficult period for iwi, since, as well as facing these challenges, with very limited resources, they have also had to run their day to day affairs, which amongst other things, includes involvement in resource management issues that potentially affect them.

Ngai Tahu's historic claims in respect of the Treaty of Waitangi were settled in the 1990s, culminating in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. The remaining iwi had Treaty claims with the Waitangi Tribunal heard over a four year period (2000 to 2004). At the time of preparing this report these iwi had begun the process of negotiations with the Crown to settle historic claims.

The Council has been involved with various iwi on a wide range of environmental projects over the past 10 to 15 years. These include things such as the restoration of the Grovetown Lagoon, management of heritage values of the Wairau Bar, protection of significant natural areas at Cape Campbell and working with iwi on managing the impacts from ship wake in the Marlborough Sounds. Most recently Marlborough's eight iwi have come together to form a group to work alongside the Council in reviewing the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement.

## Grovetown Lagoon Working Group

The Grovetown Lagoon is a Wairau River oxbow lagoon that has been neglected and abused over many years. The lagoon is of significant length, some 2 kilometres long and quite wide. For some years Rangitane O Wairau had made representations to the Council to take the lead role in developing a plan to restore the lagoon. This effort finally saw a working group being formed, led by the three iwi (Rangitane, Ngati Rarua and Ngati Toa) and involving the Council, the Department of Conservation, the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council, NZ Landcare Trust and the wider Grovetown community.

The restoration project was launched in February 2002 and has been influential in enhancing working relationships between the Council and tangata whenua iwi, as well as improving the lagoon's environment. See the box 'Grovetown Lagoon' for more about this project.

Grovetown Lagoon



## GROVETOWN LAGOON

Today, organisations with an interest in the Grovetown Lagoon's ecological, cultural, historic and recreational values have joined together as a working group. The group is guided by a community management plan that has as its vision statement "The restoration of the Grovetown Lagoon to enhance the habitat for fish and bird life, to enable the gathering of food and to encourage recreational uses".

It is intended that by working with iwi, the Grovetown community and other interested people and groups, the outcomes of implementing the management plan will:

- make the lagoon safe, clean and friendly;
- improve the water quality;
- be visually pleasant;
- provide habitat and enhance biodiversity;
- provide a source of food;
- be a place for family recreation;
- celebrate bicultural co-operation.

Objectives for dealing with a range of issues are defined and recommendations and methods for achieving the objectives are set out in the management plan.

Working bees are regularly carried out at the Lagoon and dozens of volunteers - from children to the elderly - have helped with weed control and planting. Old mans beard, in particular, has been targeted as a pest weed with a lot of the removal being carried out by volunteers. Willows and other trees including plums, hawthorn and elderberry have been removed along with any re-growth. This has opened up areas for planting and created views across the Lagoon.

The planting of native plant species has occurred with locally sourced manuka, kanuka, kowhai, kahikatea and cabbage trees having been planted. Significant introduced trees including oaks (planted as a food source for ducks), silver birch, walnuts and poplars will be retained.

Early planting efforts are concentrated on the water's edge, where species have been selected to create shade and thus suppress oxygen weed.

The project is funded by the Council and the Department of Conservation. Grants have also been received from Transpower, Landcare Trust and the Community Trust. People are welcome to visit the area and are invited to take part in working bees.

*Grovetown Lagoon working bee*





### Wairau Bar Working Group

This is a more recent working group that has emerged to look at managing the heritage values (both Maori and post European settlement) and ecological values in the vicinity of the Wairau Bar. Some of Marlborough's most valuable heritage is to be found in this area. The working group includes tangata whenua iwi, the Council, the Department of Conservation, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and local property owners.



*Wairau bar*

### Marlborough Significant Natural Areas Project - Cape Campbell

The Marlborough Significant Natural Areas Project has been underway since 2000. It is driven by the requirements of Section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act, which requires the protection of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna be recognised and provided for as a matter of national importance.

This Council has been achieving protection of significant natural areas largely through a non-regulatory approach, forming partnerships with local landowners and providing them with information and practical assistance to encourage protection. One example has seen the development of a management plan with Cape Campbell landowners Rob and Sally Peter. Ngai Tahu and Rangitane representatives, the Council, the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, signed a management plan committing the parties jointly to protecting a coastal site at Mussel Point with high cultural, historical and botanical significance. See the box 'Landowners and Maori share conservation commitment' for more about this project.



*Cape Campbell*

## LANDOWNERS AND MAORI SHARE CONSERVATION COMMITMENT

On November 20, Cape Campbell landowners Rob and Sally Peter, along with Ngai Tahu and Rangitane representatives, signed a management plan cementing their joint commitment to protecting a coastal site with high cultural, historical and botanical significance.

The QEII Trust, the Historic Places Trust and Marlborough District Council also signed the Plan and a QEII covenant is being put in place.

Before the signing, those involved worked together to pile driftwood onto eroded areas to stabilise sites, which will next year be planted in locally occurring species including spinifex, pingao, mingimingi, tauhinu and hebes. "We were humbled by the special gift of a beautiful carving by Reg Thompsett, with special significance to the area" say Rob and Sally

The Cape Campbell coastline has been settled by Maori since moa-hunter days, providing an abundance of food. There has also been a colourful European history based around whaling, seafaring (there are 18 shipwrecks between the Cape and Waima River mouth), and settlement by a succession of lighthouse keepers and their families until the light was automated in 1986, and farming.

Last winter the Peters and Maori planted karaka trees at Mussel Point as a reminder of the many karaka nurtured here as a source of food and medicine, then felled by Te Rauparaha. Muelenbeckia, mingimingi, akiraho, totara and five finger were also planted.

Cape Campbell was one of the first properties surveyed through the Marlborough District Council's Significant Natural Areas survey.

*(story reproduced from the Council's 'Marlborough's natural environment' newsletter January 2005)*



*The Peter family with representatives from Ngai Tahu, Rangitane, MDC and QEII*

*Cape Campbell*





## MANAGING SHIP WAKE EFFECTS IN THE MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

A new policy framework for managing the effects of large and fast ships operating within the Marlborough Sounds was first included in the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan in late 2002. This included some very specific policy and methods concerning Te Atiawa in recognition of that iwi's role as kaitiaki, particularly within Tory Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound.

Te Atiawa was very concerned about the effects that the operation of fast ferries had had on almost all aspects of the customs and practices that belong to Te Atiawa. This included

- customary use of Tory Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound;
- the distribution, abundance and gathering of kaimoana;
- access to the area and safety issues;
- a loss of cultural knowledge and mana; and
- damage to waahi tapu sites.

The policy framework in the Marlborough Sounds Plan will see the Council working in partnership with Te Atiawa in managing the effects of ship-generated waves in Queen Charlotte Sound and Tory Channel. The policy framework will also require the Council to recognise and provide for Te Atiawa's continued access to, and use of, traditional coastal resources in Tory Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound and especially, recognise the value of Tory Channel for Te Atiawa, in terms of the concepts of mauri, mana and manaakitanga that this area brings to this iwi.

This framework has only recently been confirmed by the Environment Court (January 2008), but is already being given effect to.

*Cook Strait ferry*

