



SUBMISSION TO MANAWATU DISTRICT COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

From Environment Network Manawatu (ENM)

Name: **Alastair Cole (ENM Deputy Chair, Source to Sea Chair)**

Contact person: **Sally Pearce**

Email: **coordinator@enm.org.nz**

Phone: **06 355 0126**

Postal address: **PO Box 1271, Palmerston North**

www.enm.org.nz

Speaking to our submission:

ENM would like to speak to our submission on Thursday August 8. We request a timeslot after 12 noon.

Background

Environment Network Manawatu (ENM) is a charitable umbrella organisation dedicated to enhancing the environment within the Manawatu River catchment area. We currently have 53 member groups engaged in areas ranging from water quality and biodiversity to sustainable living. At least 20 member groups are active in the Manawatu District.

ENM's role is to increase communication, cooperation and coordination within the community environmental sector. ENM also has significant and growing outreach into the wider community through our monthly newsletter (over 1100 subscribers), Facebook (over 1000 followers) and through other activities.

ENM convenes and is the current legal entity for Manawatū River Source to Sea (Source to Sea). This community-led initiative has been developed by the Biodiversity Cluster, a subset of 25 ENM member groups. Source to Sea is focused on providing positive outcomes for our community, from the headwaters of the Manawatū River in the Tararua District, through the Manawatū District and Palmerston North (with the Pohangina and Oroua Rivers as sub-catchments,) out to the confluence at Foxton Estuary in Horowhenua. For more information visit <https://enm.org.nz/about/biodiversity>

Introductory Comments

ENM thanks Manawatu District Council for inviting us to participate in the environmental workshop on the Community Development Strategy held earlier this year. We welcomed the opportunity to engage with Council early in the development of this strategy and are keen to be involved in pre-consultation processes for future plans and strategies of relevance to the environment.

We were pleased to see that as a result of the workshops that there is a greater focus on care of the natural environment within the draft strategy within the "Tinana - Physical, Environmental" dimension.

ENM supports the Outcome "We Prepare for Tomorrow Today - Our natural, physical and social environment is safe, sustainable and resilient"

We support all three Goals under this Outcome and in particular the addition of the goal “We are guardians (kaitiakitanga) of the natural environment”

ENM is also supportive of Council using the Te Whare Tapa Whā model incorporating social, physical (including the environment), spiritual and mental wellbeing as a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the Manawatū District.

We also note our support the description of what Community Development is (p3), particularly the inclusion of the last 4 points

- ensure the environment in which we live is safe, strong and healthy both now and in the future
- build stronger, resilient, sustainable local communities
- strengthen the interests and values of our District’s residents by encouraging active participation
- generate community led opportunities and outcomes

Our view is that environmental action at the community level not only contributes to a healthier environment but also provides opportunities for communities to become more resilient and better connected, for residents to participate positively in their community and for individuals and communities to provide leadership.

The remainder of our submission focuses on actions related to the Tinana - Physical, Environmental dimension as listed in Appendix 2 .

Comments on “Council will continue to do...”

ENM strongly supports Council’s ongoing support for 1) organisations that enhance the wellbeing of the natural, physical and social environment and for 2) initiatives that protect, beautify and communicate the value of our natural land, water and coastal environments.

ENM supports the use of Public Spaces Plans to make public spaces cater for all, with planning and design also incorporating environmental sustainability principles.

ENM also supports investment in “careful planning, education and preparation for disaster resilience.” We note that climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme weather events. Actions to increase community resilience can be combined with actions that promote greater environmental sustainability. For example greater connectedness within neighbourhoods can be supported through community gardens and the sharing of produce.

ENM strongly supports Council’s continued active engagement in environmental protection groups and agreements – currently the Manawatu River Leaders Accord, Oroua Catchment Care Group, Oroua Declaration and the EnviroSchools programme.

The support for catchment scale initiatives and community catchment groups, along with education and awareness initiatives amongst communities is going to be of huge importance to the uptake of practices that will make our communities more resilient, improve economic performance and enhance our environment.

ENM requests council also actively engages with ENM and the Manawatū River Source to Sea initiative (Source to Sea). This new initiative aims to bring together the many projects throughout the Manawatu River catchment which are working towards enhancing biodiversity, the health of rivers and the wellbeing of communities.

As a community-led initiative, Source to Sea complements the Manawatu River Leaders Accord by encouraging, supporting and mobilising collective action at the community level. Source to Sea has already demonstrated its ability in this regard through the very successful Palmy Plastic Pollution Challenge – a citizen science project which, in partnership with Massey and in collaboration with PNCC, Horizons and Rangitaane o Manawaū, and with support from 4 schools and many other organisations and individuals, sampled 41 random urban stream sites for plastic and other litter, engaged 1000 people in the collection, sorting, counting and weighing of the litter

collected and brought together over 65 people including 12 PNCC Councillors and staff members at a recent workshop to come up with strategies for reducing the amount of plastic pollution getting into the streams. More information at <https://enm.org.nz/about/palmy-plastic-challenge>

Comments on “Council will do” (New actions)

ENM fully supports the Council in its intention to develop an Environmental Sustainability Strategy. We see this as a positive and important step for Council to take. We urge Council to begin developing the strategy as early as possible in the 2019-20 year so that provision can be made in the 2020-21 Draft Annual Plan towards implementation.

It is important that Council consult with the community, tangata whenua and the environmental sector, early in the process of developing the draft. ENM is keen to be involved at the pre-consultation phase and we are happy to help to get the word out to the wider community.

In regard to the implementation of the strategy, we strongly recommend that Council considers employing a senior officer to oversee the implementation of the strategy, with provision in the next LTP budget. We also recommend that Council has a “go to” person as a first point of call for community members wanting to engage on environmental matters.

We strongly support MDC moves towards the development of a climate change plan (as either a separate strategy or as part of the environmental sustainability strategy) that addresses both climate change adaptation and mitigation, and is developed with the input of experts, in consultation with the wider community and in collaboration with regional and neighbouring councils and other relevant agencies.

The latest IPCC report shows that the need to reduce carbon emissions is a matter of great urgency. To achieve the necessary reductions all levels of society need to be involved – individuals and households, businesses, schools, institutions, local government and national government, as well as action at the international level.

Conclusion

Environment Network Manawatu thanks Council for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Community Development Strategy. We are heartened to see Council placing a greater emphasis on environmental sustainability and we strongly encourage Council to continue moving in that direction with some pace, as the environment, which is important to us all, faces serious and some urgent challenges – action at the community and local government level must be part of the solution! As noted above, ENM is keen to engage in the early stages of the development of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.