

8.5 AIR QUALITY

8.5.1 BACKGROUND

Although the control and management of discharges to the air (ie air quality) is not a responsibility of the District Council, there are matters under the Council's management and control of land use activities that can influence the effect that the activity has on the environment in terms of air quality (eg requiring the sealing of a road as part of a resource consent application, or requiring effluent treatment ponds to be located a specified distance from residential areas and buildings or ensuring new subdivisions account for surrounding activities such as odorous activities). The primary responsibility for air quality rests with the Regional Council (Environment Waikato).

The Resource Management Act 1991 has recognised this situation by allocating the following responsibilities to regional councils:

"The control of discharges or contaminants into or onto land, air, or water and discharges of water into water."
(Section 30(1)(f))

The following responsibilities are required of the district councils:

"... achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protection of land and associated resources"
(Section 31(a))

"... control ... any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land..."
(Section 31(1)(b))

In addition, there are national responsibilities and actions including the national policy on CO₂ emissions and the Ozone Layer Protection Act.

There are two facets to the matter of air quality. Firstly, there is the "local" detraction to the environment or amenity of an area as a result of dust, smoke or odour. This may result in people's health and enjoyment of the outdoors being affected. It can also have an economic impact through crop damage as a result of dust, or food processing industries having to install additional air filter machinery to protect their product.

Secondly and on a "global" scale, air quality in terms of ozone depletion and Greenhouse gases is considered to have effects on climate change, animal and plant health (through increased ultra violet radiation) and rising sea levels. While these issues are global in scale, their avoidance or mitigation will only be achieved by managing local action (ie think globally, act locally). Both Greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances are produced and/or released to the atmosphere by activities that take place at the local level.

In the area of protecting and enhancing air quality, the District's role is more properly directed to the control and management of land use activities. There are two methods used in this District Plan that seek to carry out that function, and these are the use of zones and the use of rules.

The use of **zones** can assist at both the global and the local level.

A. *Global*

In New Zealand, the largest contributor to greenhouse gases is the land transport sector. Urban design can play an important part in determining energy use in general, as well as transportation patterns and subsequent fuel use. Zones have been used to restrict the extent of urban spread, with the effect of creating a compact urban form. Interrelated or co-

dependent activities (eg Town Centre and Industrial (Light) have been placed in zones that are in close proximity to each other.

These measures serve to reduce the number and extent of vehicle travel, which in turn reduces the contribution from vehicle emissions to Greenhouse gas and ozone depletion.

B. *Local*

Those activities that generate dust, odour or smoke have been physically separated into specific zones (eg Industrial (Light) and (Heavy) and Rural), that are located to reduce the effect of those emissions on environments that are likely to be sensitive to those effects (eg Residential, Conservation).

The use of **rules** can also assist at both the global and the local level.

A. *Global*

Rules relating to the design of roads, location of access points and the type of activities permitted on and adjoining roads (particularly the main traffic routes) can ensure that the function of moving traffic efficiently and safely is not compromised unduly. Protecting roads for that function reduces the emissions from traffic as a result of additional slowing and accelerating moves.

B. *Local*

The buffer area around effluent disposal facilities (both domestic and non-domestic), controls on extractive industries, formation of parking areas, roads and internal access, controlling the type and volume of hazardous substances are all examples of rules which are designed to avoid or reduce the effect of activities through their transmission in the air.

The use of zones and rules in the District Plan are complemented and "strengthened" by other methods such as:

- Abatement and enforcement action;
- Supporting regional and national initiatives to reduce ozone depletion;
- Information and education of operators whose activities generate emissions into the air;
- Advocating to Central Government when there is a need for National Environmental Standards or National Policy Statements with respect to air quality.

The recently prepared Air Quality Guidelines by the Ministry for the Environment are to be used as the basis of assessing the suitability of activities with respect to air quality matters.

8.5.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The protection of air quality is one of the factors to be taken into account by Council in undertaking its responsibilities under the Act (integration, management and control of effects).

This is because any degradation in air quality arising from a land use activity can adversely affect the amenities of the area concerned and the environment generally.

The role the District Council is to play in air quality management is not clearly defined in the legislation, but the primary role clearly rests with regional councils. The District Council has specific responsibilities under the Health Act 1956 to control nuisance issues which could involve air quality nuisances. Other agencies also have a role to play (eg the Ministry of Health, Ministry for the Environment). This somewhat uncertain picture will probably become clearer over time but in the meantime, the District must seek to ensure that the implications land use activities may have for air quality are properly addressed by the appropriate authority.

8.5.3 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The quality of the air resource within the Hauraki District is maintained and wherever possible, enhanced.

8.5.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objective 1 - (Global Issues)

To minimise the production of Greenhouse gases within the Hauraki District, and avoid the release of ozone depleting substances.

Policies

Objective 1 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Supporting national or regional initiatives, policies and standards with respect to the control of the emission of Greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances that are appropriate and able to be implemented at the District level, and to advocate further action as appropriate.
2. Ensuring that Council's contribution to the Greenhouse effect as a result of its own activities, is minimised and ozone depletion is avoided.
3. Ensuring as far as practicable that all future urban design and forward planning takes into account transportation factors aimed at reducing fossil fuel consumption.

Objective 2 - (Particulate Contamination)

To minimise the discharge of particulates which diminish air quality, visibility and which lead to a decline in amenity values.

Policies

Objective 2 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Assessing each land use consent application in terms of its potential to generate particulate contaminants (for example, smoke or dust) and set conditions where appropriate to prevent the production of such contaminants.
2. Seeking to reduce the effects of particulate contamination through the use of the abatement and enforcement provisions of the RMA, in conjunction with the provision of information and education.

Objective 3 - (Odour)

To limit and where possible avoid, nuisance caused by offensive odour from activities carried out within the Hauraki District.

Policies

Objective 3 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Assessing each land use consent application in terms of its potential to cause nuisance by offensive odours and set conditions where appropriate to prevent the production of such odours.
2. Seeking to reduce offensive odours by the use of the abatement and enforcement provisions of the RMA.

3. Providing the Industrial (Heavy) zone, which allows for activities with odour effects to establish and operate.

Objective 4 - (Chemical Contamination)

To minimise the discharge into the air of those chemical contaminants such as spray drift which have an adverse effect on ecological and human health.

Policies

Objective 4 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Providing (in consultation with the Ministry of Health, the Regional Council and other agencies involved in air quality management), information for residents advising on the potential hazards associated with airborne contaminants.
2. Using the Hazardous Substances provisions of the District Plan to avoid, remedy or mitigate the detrimental effects of chemical substances of a "hazardous nature" on air quality.
3. Considering the effects of chemical contaminants such as spray drift on plan changes and resource consents (for residential sites and school sites) for example.

Objective 5

To provide for the management and control of matters that affect air quality in a manner that complements, but does not duplicate the regional functions.

Policies

Objective 5 will be achieved by the implementation of the following policies:

1. Liaising with the Waikato Regional Council in developing the rules and methods related to protecting and enhancing air quality.
2. Providing information to the Waikato Regional Council on developments that are occurring which may require monitoring in terms of air quality.

Reasons for All the Objectives and Policies

1. The matter of air quality needs to be addressed at a global and a local level, through the use of a range of methods.
2. There are three nuisance or amenity matters related to air quality that need to be managed and controlled. These are odour, particulate and chemical contamination.
3. As the principal responsibilities for the control and management for air quality rest with agencies other than the District Council, the objectives and policies give a clear direction to those agencies as to the standard of air quality demanded by the Hauraki community, as well as ideas as to how that quality may be achieved.

8.5.5 METHODS TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The principal method by which Council will implement the above objectives and policies through the District Plan is by the use of zones and rules to control those parts of land use activities that have the potential to affect the quality of air. Another method is to utilise the provisions contained in the Health Act 1956 to control nuisance which affect air quality.

Council recognises that other organisations have the principal role to play in the management and control of air quality (particularly the Regional Council, and Ministries of Commerce, Health and Environment), and that the methods those bodies use lie outside the District Plan.

Monitoring of activities in terms of the need to take abatement or enforcement action to achieve compliance with resource consent conditions and/or performance standards will be carried out. Monitoring of actions required to reduce an air quality nuisance will also be carried out. Both of these monitoring methods will indicate whether the District Plan provisions are working and whether integration between the District and other bodies involved in air quality has been achieved.

Data on CO₂ emissions can also be collected as part of Council's monitoring functions.

Monitoring of changes in legislation, technology, new products and new processes is required. This is where the role of coordination and information sharing between agencies will assist in the spreading of information and the education of industry groups, the public and staff within the local authorities.

Reasons

1. Refer to Section 2.0 which sets out Council's main reasons for adopting a zone and rule based approach to the achievement of objectives and policies.
2. Prevention of adverse effects on air quality is best achieved through methods such as education, information and ensuring that processes and facilities are installed and operated in accordance with the standards, guidelines and manuals.
3. Monitoring is the method proposed to be used for assessing the effectiveness of the District Plan.

8.5.6 RULES

There are no rules contained in the Plan with respect to discharge of contaminants to the air.