

Report No.	19-73
Information Only - No Decision Required	

## STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present to Council the 2019 State of Environment report and release the report to the public.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. Natural resource management is a core function of Horizons, as set out in legislation, our strategic direction, policies and community outcomes. One of these requirements is to monitor and report on the state of the environment. The purpose of the 2019 State of Environment report is to provide information to our community on the current state and trends in a range of environmental indicators.
- 2.2. The report presents key information about the region in the 'Our Region' section, then covers four key topics on the state of the environment: climate, air, land (including productive land, fluvial research and gravel use, biodiversity and biosecurity) and water (including water quantity, groundwater quality, rivers, lakes, estuaries and coast, and swim spot monitoring. Case studies highlighting some of the work being undertaken to address key pressures are included throughout the report.
- 2.3. Each section of the report sets the scene for each topic by outlining 'Where we've come from', and 'Where we are now – current state'. This is followed by 'What we're doing' outlining the work that Horizons and partners are currently undertaking. 'Where we're going and what you can do' aims to provide our community with information around the future direction of Horizons science and research programmes, and outline tangible actions that our communities can take to help make our region a great place to live, work and play.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-73.

### 4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 4.1. There is no financial impact associated with recommendations in this paper.

### 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. Public release of the 2019 State of Environment report is scheduled for 28 May 2019.
- 5.2. In the lead-up to the release of the report, key statistics and information presented in the report have been shared with the community via events such as the Rural Games and Central District's Field Days, and regularly through social media posts. Horizons recently hosted two 'Pint of Science' events as part of the New Zealand launch of this international event, one in Whanganui and another in Palmerston North, on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2019, respectively. These events were facilitated by Horizons' scientists Ms. Staci Boyte and Mrs. Raelene Mercer, and included a series of presentations by Dr. Simon Vale

(Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research), Mr. Brent Watson and Mr. Logan Brown (Horizons), followed by a panel discussion with the presenters and Horizons' staff.

## 6. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 6.1. No significant business risk has been identified.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. **State of Environment** (SoE) reporting is a component of environmental monitoring and reporting outputs delivered in accordance with our legislative requirements to monitor the state of the environment. The last SoE report was published in 2013. The 2019 State of Environment report builds on previous reporting, updating readers with the latest science and research information around air quality, productive land, gravel use, biodiversity, biosecurity and freshwater. This report also introduces a range of new information around climate change, fluvial research, coast and estuaries, lakes, and swim spot monitoring.
- 7.2. Much of the report summarises information from a range of technical work and science reports completed since our last SoE report in 2013. A list of some of these reports is provided in a 'further reading' section, for those seeking further detail. Throughout 2018-19 staff have been undertaking the further data analysis, and compiled information and case studies from around the region. A significant amount of the information in the report has been presented to Council and the public over the years since the last State of Environment report through the regular Science and Innovation team reporting to Council's Environment Committee and other papers to Council.
- 7.3. It is anticipated that the broad summary provided by the 2019 State of Environment report, and further detail available in the supporting technical reports, will provide the foundation for pending policy and planning processes, and inform discussions with communities through processes such as *Our Freshwater Future*. Further, this information is now being utilised to inform the prioritisation of non-regulatory activities such as land and freshwater management through improved targeting of interventions and actions.
- 7.4. Following the delivery of the 2019 State of Environment report, staff will begin work to develop a framework for annual state of environment reporting, as outlined in Horizons annual and long-term planning documents. The aim of this shift to annual reporting is to provide the community with more timely information around the state of the region's natural resources, and to continue to improve public access to the most recent data and information.

## 8. TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 8.1. The official release of the 2019 State of Environment report is scheduled for 28 May 2019.

## 9. SIGNIFICANCE

- 9.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

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## ANNEXES

There are no attachments to this report.