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**BEFORE THE HEARINGS COMMITTEE**

**IN THE MATTER**

**of hearings on  
submissions concerning  
the proposed One Plan  
notified by the Manawatu-  
Wanganui Regional  
Council**

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**SECTION 42A REPORT OF BETTINA ANDERSON  
ON BEHALF OF HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Bettina Anderson. I am the managing director of Pukekoblue Science Communication Ltd, a communications consultancy specialising in technical communication and interactive learning experiences.
2. My formal qualifications include a B.Sc. and M.Sc. (Hons.) majoring in earth science, and I have 12 years post-qualification experience working for and with a wide range of environmental/science organisations within New Zealand (from academia, research, consulting and regional council environments). I have worked in the environmental/science sector of the Manawatu for the past 10 years and the experience that I draw upon in giving this evidence includes – time spent teaching in the Agricultural Engineering Department at Massey University and then as an environmental scientist with local consulting firm – Good Earth Matters; followed by time in the informal education and cultural sector as Concept Leader-Science and Technology at Te Manawa Science Centre, Museum and Art Gallery.
3. Since 2004 I have worked as a freelance science communications consultant - specialising in designing and developing public engagement communication tools and learning experiences. My work involves a mix of copywriting and editing, exhibition design and production and technical project management - all of it focussed around communicating complex technical and scientific matters in simple, useful and engaging ways. As a passionate advocate for Science & Technology promotion and the informal science education sector – I am an active member of the Science Communicators Association of New Zealand, the Royal Society of New Zealand and the Museums Aotearoa network.
4. I was retained on full-time contract with the Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) Policy Team from October 2004 through to October 2005, with the sole purpose of designing and establishing a new consultation approach to be used in the early stages of the One Plan development process. Since that time, I have been involved on the periphery of the process for short term contract work; and also involved in other related council communication projects - such as the project management and exhibition design for the commissioning of the Horizons Green RIG travelling education truck during 2006/2007.

### Evidence Structure and Content

5. This evidence describes a consultation process that occurred over a period of nearly 6 years, so it is necessarily narrative and chronological in style and presentation. The evidence presented is derived from:
  - my own personal experience in the process (both in an active professional capacity in the early project phases and later in a more sporadic contract capacity);
  - interviews with key Horizons staff involved in the process; and
  - a review of the Proposed One Plan documentation record and relevant Council archives covering the past 6 years.

6. This evidence is referred to in passing in the Council Officer's Report, and is designed to present the details of, and illustrate, the well-planned, thorough, inclusive, on-going and extensive consultation process that accompanied the development of the Proposed One Plan.
7. To do this, the reader is stepped through the key elements of the process, starting with the formative influences (or threads) that came together to form the early vision for the One Plan in 2004; the planning and design of the consultation process at this time; and its execution and evolution throughout the subsequent years. Key milestones and formative influences on the One Plan are noted, with actual data on the circulation and copies of key documentation referred to and supplied (wherever available) in the Supporting Documentation Appendix. To conclude, a summary of the key success factors of the consultation process are outlined.
8. Throughout the project duration, the consultation process was closely linked to the developmental milestones of the Plan itself. As a consequence, to effectively explain the consultation process some description of the internal and external drivers, project evolution and desired outcomes must be presented.
9. For ready-reference and to summarise in a graphical fashion the various phases, milestones achieved, audiences targeted and methods used; a timeline covering the period 2003 to 2008 is presented in Figure 1 (inserted at the end of this document). It should be used as a reference point when reading the main body of this evidence statement or viewing the Supporting Documentation Appendix.

### **Evidence Summary**

10. This evidence documents what essentially is a 'long conversation' that Horizons Regional Council has had with its community over the past 6 years, and highlights the efforts the community has made to participate in and shape the policy of the proposed One Plan in that time.
11. It will be readily apparent from the summary timeline (Figure 1) and data presented, that in preparing the Proposed One Plan, Horizons Regional Council has made every effort to operate an effective and robust consultation process that:
  - invited interested parties to participate in the planning process right from Day One, and influence the evolving policy approaches and Council decisions;
  - utilised best-practice and innovative audience-targeted communication techniques to ensure an inclusive community involvement process; and
  - canvassed the community far and wide and offered extensive and ongoing opportunities for people to become involved at any stage of the process.

### **Background: What is Consultation?**

12. 'Consultation' is a widely used word, one that is open to many interpretations and application in wider society. Under the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act (1991) (RMA), local authorities may consult anyone during the preparation of a proposed policy statement or plan, and specific requirements are set out with regards the need to consult with the Minister for the Environment, other Ministers for the Crown, local authorities and tangata

whenua. The RMA does not provide a definition of ‘consultation’ and nor does it specify the methods of consultation to be used, but it is unequivocal on the fact that it is needed.

13. As context for the Proposed One Plan development process, an often-quoted and useful statement by Justice McGechan on ‘what is and what constitutes’ adequate consultation is taken from case law (from *Wellington International Airport v Air New Zealand* [1993] 1 NZLR 671 (Court of Appeal)).

*“Consultation must be allowed sufficient time, and genuine effort must be made. It is to be a reality, not a charade. To “consult” is not merely to tell or present. Nor, at the other extreme, is it to agree. Consultation does not necessarily involve negotiation toward an agreement, although the latter not uncommonly can follow, as the tendency in consultation is to seek at least consensus...”*

*...Consulting involves the statement of a proposal not yet finally decided upon, listening to what others have to say, considering their responses and then deciding what will be done.*

*Implicit in the concept is a requirement that the party consulted will be (or will be made) adequately informed so as to be able to make intelligent and useful responses. It is also implicit that the party obliged to consult, while quite entitled to have a working plan already in mind, must keep its mind open and be ready to change and even start afresh. Beyond that, there are no universal requirements as to form ... or duration. In some situations adequate consultation could take place in one telephone call. In other contexts it might require years of formal meetings...”*

14. From this starting point, and summarising a body of professional opinion collated in the ‘Consultation’ guidance notes on the New Zealand Quality Planning website ([www.qp.co.nz](http://www.qp.co.nz)) (Appendix 1.1), the core elements of a consultation process (in the context of developing a local government plan) are as follows. Consultation is:
- A two-way communication process that involves both the giving and receiving of information;
  - A critical tool to ensure public views are reflected in environmental policy drafted by local and regional government;
  - An integral part of an accountable and transparent decision-making process; and
  - A key factor in increasing trust and confidence in decision makers.
15. Consultation involves:
- Putting forward a statement of a proposal that is not yet fully decided upon; and
  - Listening to what interested parties have to say, considering their responses and then making a decision.
16. Consultation takes:
- Hard work and commitment by the lead agency and the process participants;
  - Perseverance and patience to see it through to its logical conclusion;
  - Time – that is, time to plan, prepare, engage, allow feedback and discussion;

- Considerable resources – both in financial and staff terms; and
  - A willingness by the community to be involved constructively.
17. It's easy to say what consultation should involve, but much more difficult to put this into practice in a meaningful way!

## 2. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES | PROPOSED ONE PLAN CONSULTATION PROCESS

### Best-Practice Consultation – What does it look like?

18. This was the question asked by the Horizons Policy team in 2004 when commencing the main development phase of the One Plan. What are the fundamentals of effective consultation? What models were out there to base the process on and what expertise was needed to support it?
19. At the time, extensive reference was made to the Guidance Notes on *Consultation Process* and *Consultation with Tangata Whenua* provided on the Quality Planning website ([www.qp.co.nz](http://www.qp.co.nz)) (Appendix 1.1). The various best-practice case studies provided here were examined and associated links explored - such as the community participation website [www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz).
20. It became obvious there were no models that fitted the intent of the developing One Plan concept, and it would be necessary to develop some innovative new approaches and tools based around sound public engagement principles. Expertise beyond that of the traditional local government model would be needed and it was decided this should be brought into the team on a contract basis, as required.
21. Best-practice case studies suggest that good consultation requires those consulting to:
- Have an open mind;
  - Be prepared to make concessions;
  - Provide appropriate, clear information;
  - Allow time for parties to respond;
  - Report/feedback and follow up; and
  - Keep the momentum of the consultation process going.
22. Good consultation processes include:
- identifying target audiences and their needs, and matching key messages and communication tools to these audiences;
  - providing easily understood information to support informed debate – i.e. de-jargonising technical material and making technical and legal processes more accessible;
  - effective feedback systems that record and demonstrate discussions and proffered input is being noted and acted upon;
  - creating quality presentation of the key messages and information - through good editorial, layout and design;
  - providing continuity through the process. There needs to be a steady flow of information designed to build up and show relevance to the chosen audience;

- demonstrating a clear process, one that is flexible enough to evolve as needs arise; and
  - developing good media relations and active use of all types of media to engage with key audiences.
23. Once consultation is complete, how can we tell it has worked? Best-practice case studies make use of indicators of success that include:
- A high level of community participation;
  - Few complaints about the nature of the consultation process;
  - Development of sound relationships between Councils and communities that go beyond the current process;
  - Discussions that focus on the issues of importance;
  - Community and stakeholder groups adopting the vision and approach being consulted upon and espousing it to others;
  - Value being added to process, product and institutional knowledge; and
  - Up-skilling of staff– particularly around relationship management, cross-cultural interaction and communications.

### **The Foundations: The Aim of the One Plan Consultation Process**

24. From the outset, Horizons was intent on creating a consultation process that was robust and meaningful. Effective consultation was needed to
- reflect the community’s aspirations for the management of their environment;
  - ensure early identification of the issues and good community buy-in to the process;
  - ensure good decision making and the eventual successful adoption of the plan (with in theory, fewer unresolved points of contention);
  - ensure issues of importance to iwi were identified and provided for;
  - create a climate of informed debate; and
  - fulfil legal and Treaty obligations.
25. It was also recognised early on that the question of “who is Horizons and what do they do” often needed to be addressed before conversations could get to “how will what Horizons is doing affect me”.

### **The Foundations: One Plan Consultation Process Guiding Principles**

26. The core values which were defined at the outset and guided the entire consultation process were, that Horizons would:
- extend the invitation far and wide to consult with anyone, anywhere, anytime!
  - be as inclusive as possible in its approach;
  - reach as many people as possible;
  - involve the community right from the start and bring them along with the process;
  - over rather than under-communicate;
  - make it easy for people to become and stay involved in the process; and
  - be honest and up-front about the issues and challenges and run an open and transparent plan development and consultation process.

27. With these principles in mind, Horizons began its 'long conversation' with the community, to ensure the policy of the proposed One Plan was shaped by and reflected the needs of, the people of the region.

### 3. THE 'CONVERSATION' SO FAR | PROPOSED ONE PLAN CONSULTATION PROCESS 2003-2008

#### 2003 | Where it all started – the threads coming together...

28. It is difficult when looking at the continuum of Council-community relationships to pinpoint an exact point when the One Plan idea sprang into being and began to be 'talked about' both internally and externally. In 2003, a number of influences were at work to set the scene for the birth of the One Plan concept. These included:
- The RMA Amendment Act (2003) which introduced new requirements for regional councils to manage and provide for biodiversity;
  - Despite being one of the few Councils at the time with a full suite of operative environmental plans (some recently completed), there was an impending need to review some of the older policy documents as part of their mandatory 10 year review cycles. The need for second generation plans was looming; and
  - Increasing community demand for water had prompted the release of a Discussion Document on managing water allocation for community comment and consultation.
29. The water allocation policy drafting process kicked off a range of community discussions in 2003 with the eventual aim of producing a plan change to the operative Land and Water Regional Plan (2003). Key water users such as territorial authorities (TA's) and farming interest groups were met with and their input canvassed. However, towards the end of 2003 the concept of a combined regional resource plan was mooted and began to gather momentum, gradually overtaking then later subsuming the Water Allocation Plan Change process.

#### 2004 | The wake-up call and launch of the One Plan concept

30. 2004 was a year shaped by change – both for the region and Horizons. External and internal factors were at work and for the Council, a new way of the engaging with their community was starting to take shape.
31. The first public mention of a combined "Regional Resources Plan' or streamlined single planning document was in the February 2004 issue of Horizons 'Across The Region' (ATR) circular (which is circulated to between 90 000 and 100 000 readers across the region via an insert in local community newspapers) (Appendix 5.2). It signalled the intent of the plan, how it would simplify and improve the resource consent process for users and presented a simple timeline for its development. Right from this initial step, the importance of community input was stressed:

*"How can I be involved? Public input is important right from the start. There are going to be lots of opportunities for you to give us your feedback on the new Regional Resources Plan over the coming three years."*

These were prophetic words! A newsletter was promised and a call made for interested parties to add their names to a mailing list. Herein it can be said, started the public paper trail of the One Plan consultation process.

32. Early in 2004, the 'One Plan' name was developed by Horizons staff and an accompanying 'brand' created in conjunction with a specialist local design company - BlacksheepDesign. The simple, catchy name and logo were designed to give a 'presence' to the project, and help 'sell' the new concept by encapsulating its key tenets – a simple, approachable, second generation plan built on the seven existing regional plans and Regional Policy Statement. The resultant eye-catching logo (which is still used today) was designed around the idea of weaving together the strands (the seven original regional plans and regional policy statement) into a tighter and more cohesive single entity.
33. A 'wake-up call' as to the fragility of the regional environment arrived with a vengeance in mid February 2004, in the form of a massive 'weather bomb'. In its wake, the region staggered under the burden of repairing massive flood and slip damage (at an estimated cost of \$300 million), and was left with hill-country that had been decimated by storm-induced erosion at a scale that had never been seen before. Horizons and the community's focus and resources were necessarily diverted into flood recovery in the months following.
34. In the wake of this event, as the scale of the impacts on the environment and people became apparent, the Policy team lead a partnership initiative with the Palmerston North museum, Te Manawa, to develop an exhibition entitled *Storm – when the rain kept falling* (Appendix 2.2). This was a very public way for the community to examine the 'hurt' and reflect on the lessons learnt from the storm event. Produced to accompany this, was one of the very first 'coffee-table' style publications that Horizons was to put out over the coming years. The book *Storm* (Appendix 2.1), was designed to capture the story of the flood in an engaging manner and quantify the magnitude of the event and lessons learnt. It ran to many reprints over the following years and was the first taste of the suite of innovative communication tools Horizons was to use to engage its regional community with environmental issues of concern.
35. Towards the end of 2004, the One Plan policy development process really gained momentum. A new project manager with community engagement skills was brought on staff (myself) to design and lead the process, and considerable planning was undertaken by the Policy team in shaping the communication tools needed to effectively engage the community with this new planning concept.
36. The August edition of the ATR (Appendix 5.2) carried a story about the new 'One Plan' and the burgeoning interested party (or stakeholder) mailing list received their first One Plan newsletter advising on plan intent and key directions (Appendix 3.2). As well being sent to those TA staff on the mailing list, multiple copies of this newsletter and later public documents (i.e. roadmaps) were sent to TA receptions to allow them to be displayed in their public areas.
37. This newsletter was quickly followed with the release of a Discussion Paper in September 2004 (Appendix 3.3) that sought feedback on the regional issues of note and desired environmental outcomes. This was supported with a round of 5 public meetings and 27 key stakeholder face-to-face meetings across the region (8 of which were with territorial authorities) (Appendix 4.2 & 4.3).

Feedback from this first round of consultation was collated and fed back to the participants via a second newsletter and feedback summary document in December 2004 (Appendix 3.2 & 3.4).

38. At this point, many of the internal systems that supported the consultation process throughout its duration were set in place, such as: maintenance of various interested party mailing lists; detailed meeting outcome recording (minutes), tracking and feedback systems; newsletter updates; and the regular publishing of documents and information to the Horizons website ([www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz)) (Appendix 5.1).
39. The first of many internal workshops were held with Horizons staff and Horizons councillors (28 workshops were held in total over the period with councillors), to ensure they were brought along with the One Plan process. From this point onwards they were treated as one of the key stakeholders in the process, and special systems were in place to capture their input. One such system that was used to good effect internally for several years was the *WAT* (What About This) Bin – a large receptacle in the Policy team office that any Horizons staff could drop notes or comments into about suggested improvements to the current policy regime, and any changes and issues that should be addressed in the One Plan. Periodically the bin was cleaned out and the points tabulated and fed into the policy drafting process. During this period and leading into 2005, a series of internal working drafts of the One Plan were reviewed, work-shopped and commented on by staff to help refine proposed policy and methods and promote synergy between the policy team and science teams providing the research needed to support policy being developed.
40. In this early phase of consultation (extending into the first half of 2005), the focus revolved around getting the council, stakeholders and some parts of the wider community excited about the possibilities of the new One Plan, and what it could offer. Obviously there was little 'policy and regulatory substance' at this point, only a clear vision of what the One Plan should achieve for the environment and resource users (i.e. the end-point). Public and stakeholder meetings and correspondence centred on 'telling' the community about what the One Plan might be. This focus would change later on in 2005 (Appendix 4.2).
41. In general, groups responded well to the promised positive change the One Plan would bring, for much of it cut to the heart of frustrations resource users had with the current planning regime (such as cumbersome and repetitive plan provisions, overlap of council roles (TA versus regional council), and a lack of certainty how resource use activities would be dealt with). This early informal feedback had some common themes around what the One Plan should deliver through the process, namely that Horizons needed to:
  - provide more clarity on who does what (i.e. the respective TA and regional council planning roles);
  - 'stick to its knitting' and deal with the environmental issues head on;
  - get tougher when dealing with non-compliance;
  - make the resource consent process easier, and
  - share information more effectively with the community.

This early feedback played an important part in shaping the future plan framework.

42. One of the first invitations Horizons issued to the industry stakeholder groups it began talking to at this time was the potential for industry Codes of Practice (COP) to be incorporated into the One Plan – either to self-regulate low-impact resource use activities (i.e. make them permitted), or to streamline the resource consent process. It was realised early on that despite the intention to allow this, there were few COP's in existence that had the necessary rigour to achieve the desired environmental outcomes. Part of the subsequent consultation process involved working with stakeholder groups to facilitate the development of COP's. This was both successful and unsuccessful, with examples of this process including:
- the Horizons Policy team working with the Horizons Operations team to successfully facilitate the development of a River Engineering COP (2007) that identifies a range of best-practice guidelines that if followed allow a number of river engineering works activities to be permitted under the Proposed One Plan; and
  - attempts to work with sector groups such the region's TA Asset Managers (to develop a COP for Public Water Supplies) and the NZ Forestry Owner's Association (to develop a COP that would guide forestry operations).
43. It is important to note that as 2004 drew to a close, another strand of the process was forming – that of the Sustainable Landuse Initiative (SLUI or 'slew-ee'). The longer-term economic impact of the flood was beginning to be quantified, with the impact of eroded hillsides and silted rivers on farming and flood protection systems becoming readily apparent. Horizons convened a meeting of community leaders in September 2004, to discuss the options for improving the region's resilience to extreme events, and from this the SLUI project and governance group arose. As there needed to be a community-driven response to this community problem, the Governance Group included broad community representation, with senior members drawn from district mayors, Federated Farmers, New Zealand's Special Agricultural Trade Envoy, AgResearch, Horizons councillors and the New Zealand Landcare Trust. This group met bi-monthly and collectively they were tasked with finding a way of bringing to fruition a package to improve the sustainability of the regions' productive (but erosion-prone) land. This subsequently developed into a suite of non-regulatory tools that were later embodied in the proposed One Plan. Please note, more detailed evidence relating to the development and implementation of the SLUI programme will be presented when the Land Chapters of the Proposed One Plan are considered at a topic hearing.

### **2005 | Bringing people into the planning process – audience-focussed engagement**

44. 2005 was a year of rapid progress, with an enormous amount of consultation undertaken (and further refinement to the communication tools and processes), the internal working draft of the One Plan document taking shape, and the start of a massive re-definition of Council internal processes to align the Council's second (2006-2016) Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) with the directions being set out in the One Plan.
45. March 2005 saw the publication of the region's second State of the Environment (SOE) report. This provided yet another wake-up call for the region, as the report showed less improvement in regional environmental indicators than had been hoped for, and identified that new management methods were urgently needed, along with clear definition of the environmental

outcomes sought. Mounting issues around increased water demand (surface and groundwater), nutrient runoff impacts, the risk of saltwater intrusion in coastal aquifers, and biodiversity losses (including aquatic life) were identified and fully scoped for the first time. Although some water quality improvements were attributable to the current policy regime, in general, water quality in most of the region's waterways continued to decline - irrespective of the current policy approaches. This information provided a solid database and was used to support informed communication with the regional community around the issues of concern that the One Plan needed to address from this point on.

46. Feedback and lessons learnt from the previous year's Discussion Paper round of consultation were used to inform the consultation process planning for 2005. In particular, poor attendance at public meetings (a perennial Council problem!) was identified as an issue, along with the need to avoid 'over-consultation' or 'consultation fatigue' (both within the community and Horizons staff) with the impending Community Outcome consultation process also needing to be completed in 2005.
47. The solution to this involved four key elements:
- **A need to focus on consulting on the resource management issues not the planning processes.** It was acknowledged by Council planning staff that the public do not really care what planning process (i.e. whether One Plan or LTCCP) sits behind the questions being asked of them. In fact, in many areas Horizons was still struggling with a lack of organisational profile and poor community understanding of "what is it the regional council does?"
  - **A merger of the One Plan and LTCCP community (or public) consultation processes into a single user-friendly process.** The idea here was to create a bold and innovative consultation tool to collect a wide range of public input that could be fed into each of the planning processes.
  - **Maintenance of separate key stakeholder consultation streams for each planning process.** It was acknowledged that stakeholders were more focussed on the underlying planning processes and outcome frameworks than the wider public and needed to have their own more 'details-oriented' processes for engagement.
  - **Development of consultation strategy for involving tangata whenua in the consultation process.** With more than 12 distinct iwi groups in the region, special legal requirements under the RMA, and strong messages via the resource consent process from iwi groups as to the failure of current operative plans to address their concerns - this all pointed to the need for a special process to capture tangata whenua input to help shape the One Plan.
48. Early in 2005, this led to the definition of three key consultation audiences (general public, stakeholder and iwi) and a suite of key messages and communication tools developed to engage with each. For each audience group, the communication tools and processes used are described briefly below.

#### **Engaging the General Public Audience in 2005:**

49. Two key communication tools were used to engage with this audience – a pre-draft summary document (or Roadmap Guide #1) and a travelling, interactive, exhibition roadshow called "*Picture our Environment*".

50. As one of the first summary-style guide documents produced on the One Plan, Roadmap Guide #1 (Appendix 3.5) presented the proposed theme content and key messages of the Plan in an easy-to-digest fashion. This proved to be a model for future One Plan publications, with the use of:
- a conversational, plain English writing style,
  - a high quality design layout and print stock
  - use of newly-commissioned eye-catching graphic imagery of the region to illustrate key points, and
  - packaging-up of the information into a series of theme-based, bite-sized info sheets accompanied by a structured feedback form.
51. The roadmap analogy was used here to signal the fact that the One Plan was going to set out a route to guide management of regional resources into the future, and to also encourage community input to ensure that things 'went in the right direction'. The roadmap analogy has continued to be used throughout the One Plan process to date to try and help 'demystify' and describe in a simple fashion the lengthy plan development process. Roadmap Guide #1 also introduced for the first time the concept of the "Big 4" – four issues that Horizons (in light of data from the March 2005 SOE report) needed to be addressed as a priority in the One Plan. There were – declining water quality, increasing water demand, unsustainable hill-country landuse and threatened habitats. It sought feedback via the use of a structured feedback form and the response rate was good (Appendix 3.6).
52. The "*Picture our Environment*" roadshow was a unique, combined One Plan/LTCCP Community Outcomes consultation tool that was innovative for its time (Appendix 2.3). It was designed to ensure robust input was gained from the general public (who had either very little understanding of Horizons role in environmental management, and/or no or very limited interest in the One Plan and LTCCP plan development processes).
53. This was achieved by creating a travelling interactive exhibition and roadshow that asked visitors to 'prioritise' resource management issues of concern to them. Considerable front-end planning was invested to ensure the roadshow would attract the desired audience and ensure a good turnout in each of the 10 towns across the region it visited. This included:
- An extensive and provocative pre-visit advertising campaign (newspaper, radio and poster) to raise interest.
  - Running the roadshow over weekends (Saturday and Sunday) to ensure family audiences were reached.
  - Visiting a local school with the roadshow on the Friday prior, both to capture the children's input (via a colouring competition with prize incentives and a simple "what do you like/dislike" about your environment feedback form) and ensure the 'pester power' children brought the adults along to visit at the weekend.
  - Mounting the roadshow display in high-profile areas (usually an empty shop in the main street or local shopping mall) to ensure good foot traffic.
  - Offering a range of incentives to generate a friendly, fun and relaxed atmosphere for people to engage with Horizons.
54. Upon entering the exhibition space, visitors were presented with six environmental issues of relevance to their local area (described using some simple text and a suite of large, stunning art-gallery style photographic images).

Visitors were given 5 'environmental credits' (that resembled money and were designed to represent their rates 'spend') with which they could 'vote' for 5 of 6 issues they felt were a priority for Horizons to address. A total set of 13 regional issues were used, and they were mixed and matched to suit the local area being visited and its issues (e.g. the issue of managing pressures on groundwater resources was voted upon in the aquifer-rich Horowhenua area but not in the Ruapehu District).

55. The engagement technique proved highly successful and even fun for both staff and the community who participated! An unprecedented 3786 people took part, representing nearly 2% of the regional population of approximately 220 000. In some towns visited the voting public represented anything from 1% to 13% of the town's population, or at a district level between 1% and 4% of the district's population (Appendix 2.3). Voters included students from 12 primary and secondary schools.
56. In brief, visitor voting data showed that:
- Water quality was the single most important issue in the region;
  - Flood protection was an important issue in many parts of the region, especially in recently flood-damaged areas;
  - Habitat protection, coastal environment, hill country erosion and water allocation were all considered moderately important in many parts of the region;
  - Whanganui River values, waste management, volcanic hazards, ground water quality and air quality were either considered very important, or reasonably important, in very localised parts of the region;
  - Landscape issues, presented only in Palmerston North City, where it was topical, was of low importance and did not receive a significant proportion of votes.
57. Horizons considered that the community 'had spoken' loud and clear, giving a strong mandate to develop policy to address the "Big 4" issues as a priority in the One Plan. Considerable effort was directed into providing the communities who voted with direct and timely feedback on their voting statistics - through the posting of results on the Horizons website, media releases to local papers and via the ATR and One Plan newsletters.

#### **Engaging the Tangata Whenua Audience in 2005:**

58. In the past, Horizons had had a Maori standing committee – Te Roopu Awhina to facilitate Council-iwi relations. As part of a review of this committee, an iwi survey had been conducted in 2002 that indicated direct (or individual) iwi- and hapu-based relations (rather than pan-iwi) were a priority moving forward. A four person Iwi Strategy Team (IST) was nominated by iwi groups to help negotiate a new way of working between the 12 distinct groups within the region and Horizon.
59. The need to consult with iwi groups over the One Plan development process in 2005 focussed the development of this relationship management process. With the assistance of an expert external agency – Tuia Consulting, a special consultation process for engaging with tangata whenua was developed. They worked closely with Horizons' Iwi Liaison Officer during the early part of the year to prepare a detailed *Iwi Consultation Strategy* which defined a series of

consultation phases, a timeline, a feedback structure and set of guiding principles for engagement. The four key phases included:

- Pre-consultation hui. These were held with the Iwi Strategy group to test consultation ideas and confirm a way forward for first round of hui. Part of this phase included an enormous 'ring around' by the consultant and Council iwi liaison officer to alert groups to the upcoming process and update Horizons iwi authority mailing list.
  - First round of hui. The need for the parties to meet "*kanohi ki te kanohi*" or face-to-face in an initial round of 'ice-breaker' hui where historical issues and concerns could be aired was outlined.
  - Feedback and submissions. Adequate time was to be given for Maori to respond to material provided to them and have input to further development.
  - A second round of hui. This was to allow possible solutions to be presented back to Maori for comment.
60. The first round, comprising four regional hui, were held during August and September 2005 up and down the region (Appendix 4.4). By in large they were well attended, and the many and varied environmental issues raised were summarised in hui reports. A strong message came through regarding continuing poor water quality in the region's waterbodies, as did comments on the lack of enforcement action for non-compliance.
61. Staff reported difficulty in getting traction with tangata whenua for the second round of hui planned for late 2005. Many attempts were made to kick off this process but there appeared to be a reluctance to engage further, which may have been due to other consultation or treaty commitments pressing on the various iwi groups. Eventually a smaller second round, comprising 3 hui, were held in March 2006 with a small discussion paper being used to provide background for the discussions (Appendix 4.4).

#### **Engaging the Key Stakeholder Audience in 2005:**

62. There were two key tools used in the stakeholder consultation undertaken during 2005 – the Roadmap Guide #1 and early Working Draft Versions of the One Plan.
63. Initially the Roadmap Guide #1 document was used as a simple starting point for round-table discussions. Some 51 stakeholder meetings were held in the period July to December 2005, with around 30% of these held with governance, planning or asset management staff of TA's. During 2005 another amendment to the RMA stated that district plans (prepared by TA's) must now 'give effect to' regional policy statements, whereas in the past the requirement had only been that they 'not be inconsistent with'. This added extra momentum to TA-Horizons discussions.
64. In the latter half of 2005, the working draft of the One Plan had reached a point where it was felt in the interests of open and honest dialogue, it could be shared with the stakeholder community for comment and exchange of ideas. This spawned an innovative stakeholder consultation process, whereby a series of four slowly-evolving 'staple' (or unfinished) working draft versions of the Plan were issued to stakeholders and consulted upon (Appendix 4.3). This iterative consultation process started in September 2005, with each 'working draft' version being released to anything from 100 to 170 key stakeholders with

feedback being sought and then being incorporated into the next working version (or iteration) of the Plan.

65. For Horizons there was a degree of risk involved in taking such an open approach and putting unfinished work into the public domain (there were literally large gaps in the document!!), but it was felt the key relationships had developed and the mutual trust was there for this technique to be productive. Nonetheless, considerable effort was made to communicate to stakeholders that this was a radically new approach for Council and quite different from what other Councils were practising. Positive comments were received from participants regarding this process, with examples including:

*“Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments at the early stage”.*

[A Crown Research Institute]

*[A bulk energy supplier] supports the concept of the One Plan and congratulates Council on providing this opportunity for comment prior to the preparation of a Draft Plan.”*

66. Horizons staff and councillors were also key stakeholders in this iterative process and proposed policy was actively work-shopped with them. Some examples of the sorts of influence stakeholder groups at this point in the process had on the policy framework include:
- Horizons councillors advocated for the removal of early policy approaches aimed at mitigating the mining of peat soils and destruction of coastal dune lands on the Manawatu plains – due to perceived adverse economic impact on local farming communities.
  - Horowhenua District Council advocated for policy at the regional level to help control “septic tank villages” in semi-rural areas. The wastewater COP drafted by Horizons (Manual for On-site Wastewater Systems – Design and Management (2005)), and incorporated into the Sewage Rule of the Proposed One Plan, came about as a consequence of this.
  - Considerable exchange of ideas between the TA Asset Managers group and policy/science staff working on defining efficiency and essential use for public water supply water allocation (for more detail refer to the later section on **Engaging key stakeholder group – the region’s TA’s**).

## **2006 | Refining the Draft One Plan with community input**

67. After intensive consultation during 2005, Council efforts in 2006 were necessarily more focussed on further policy drafting and refinement. The focus was on the production of the final working draft version (Version 4) of the One Plan for further stakeholder input in March, moving on to a public release of the revised document as a Draft Plan for comment in October 2006. It was pretty much ‘business as usual’ with regards communications with stakeholders, iwi and the public.

### **Engaging the Stakeholder Audience in 2006:**

68. Nurturing stakeholder relationships was a priority for the year, with meetings running continuously up until July, when there was a break for several months whilst staff readied for the Draft Plan release, and then meetings commenced again in October (and they have continued on a regular basis right until the present day) (Appendix 4.3). 75 stakeholder meetings were held during the

course of the year, with around 30% of these with local government/TA groups, and a further 30% with industry groups (including various farming interests).

69. There was real effort directed into getting various sector interest groups around the meeting table forum-style (rather than just single organisation or one-on-one meetings). Around the middle of year, in the lead up to the Draft Plan release, a number of fora were run with:
- TA's – a TA Planner's Forum, TA Asset Managers Forum and TA Biodiversity Staff Forum
  - Other – a Rural Consultants Forum, Forestry Interests Forum and Planning Consultants Forum.
70. One of the key matters for discussion in these fora was the ongoing invitation for industry-driven COP's to be incorporated into the One Plan to allow more activities to have 'permitted' status. Horizons was keen to review existing COP's or those in preparation to evaluate their suitability, and work with groups to refine and develop them further. In terms of biodiversity management, Horizons was looking to get general agreement from the TA's that Horizons should be the lead agency for the protection of biodiversity on private land. This would have an impact on the regulatory structure of existing District plans and require new regional rules. During the course of the year, general agreement to proceed was obtained around this from the informal consultation process.
71. After the Draft One Plan release in October 2006, stakeholder meetings continued on a regular basis. During November and December, just after the release, a series of "Big 4 Fora" were held in Palmerston North. Water Quality, Water Quantity, and Biodiversity & Land stakeholder groups from across the region (that had shown interest in the Plan) were invited to attend.
72. Copies of the Draft Plan were sent to key stakeholders Horizons was engaging with, as well as any of the key parties identified under Clause 3, Part 1 of the First Schedule of the RMA - i.e. the Minister for the Environment, other Ministers for the Crown, local authorities and tangata whenua - that were not already on the stakeholder list.
73. Feedback on the Draft Plan was largely in the form of these types of round table discussions and some (approximately 35) written responses. Most of the feedback received was from the farming community (both individuals and interest/industry groups) and centred around airing concerns about the impact of provisions in the Draft Plan on farming. Support for the Plan and its approach was articulated by Fish and Game NZ and various regional Conservancies. Examples of some of the sector concerns that were taken on board and responded to in the Plan were:
- Permitted activity surface water takes were doubled (from 15 m<sup>3</sup>/day to 30 m<sup>3</sup>/day) in response to farming viability concerns
  - Repeated concerns were raised by the farming community regarding the need to avoid blanket regulation of fertiliser inputs to land. As a consequence, the approach taken was to require 'intensive farms' in key catchments to obtain a resource consent, one that requires them to have in place a nutrient management plan tailored to their farm.
  - The poultry industry advocated that no resource consents should be needed for the spreading of poultry manure – which was carried through in the Plan.

74. The second round of 3 regional hui, were held in March 2006. As mentioned earlier, repeated attempts to engage iwi groups in a positive fashion were not readily picked up upon. Staff continued to work away at individual iwi group relationships with those who that had shown interest in the process – such as the Nga Pae Rangitikei catchment collective, Ngati Rangī and members of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board.
75. From this point on, the 80 or so regional iwi authorities on the One Plan mailing list were corresponded along with other stakeholders, with regular correspondence, working versions of the One Plan forwarded for comment and later documents sent through as produced. When the first version of the *Te Ao Māori* chapter in the One Plan appeared in Version 4 of the working draft, it was sent to iwi groups with a special covering letter requesting feedback and inviting further hui to be had around the approaches suggested (Appendix 4.3). No formal feedback was received.

### **Engaging the General Public Audience in 2006:**

76. During 2006, the public were kept informed of plan progress and developing policy approaches via regular updates in the new look ATR publication (Appendix 5.2), the local media (Appendix 5.3 & 5.4), and a second smaller roadshow (Appendix 2.5). Approximately 200 people visited the April roadshow across three venues (Taumarunui, Wanganui and Palmerston North). It was designed to feed back to the community how the issues they had voted on first time around were being addressed and planned for the One Plan and LTCCP.
77. A second Roadmap Guide to the Draft One Plan was released in October. Horizons was conscious that, for a member of the public to read the hefty Draft Plan for provisions of relevance to their situation, was a very daunting task. Roadmap #2 was aimed at short-circuiting this by outlining “where are we heading” with proposed new policy targeting the “Big 4” issues, and identifying how this might impact on different sectors of the population (Appendix 3.7). Short theme summaries were presented and a large map of the region with ‘signposts’ was used to show how Horizons intended to manage nutrient losses, set water allocation limits, encourage sustainable landuse, improve polluted rivers and protect rare and threatened habitats. It also explained the plan development process and yet again invited feedback in any form from the community.
78. Towards the end of 2006, a Horizons decision under the current policy regime to allow Fonterra to continue discharging treated waste to the Manawatu River sparked outrage, heated public debate and even a protest march. Public feeling regarding the ongoing poor water quality of the Manawatu River was galvanised around this decision, and Horizons responded by organising a large public meeting in Palmerston North (Appendix 4.2). Aimed at providing current information on the state of the river and informing the public about what the One Plan was gearing up to achieve around improving water quality into the future, it was attended by approximately 100 people. Recognising that the need to clean up the Manawatu River was a community problem, speakers at the meeting included the MP for Palmerston North – Steve Maharey, the Mayor of Palmerston North – Heather Tanguay, as well as management and staff of Horizons.

### **2007 | Getting to the heart of community issues – entering the Proposed Plan statutory process**

79. The focus for 2007 was attempting to resolve with stakeholders as many of the outstanding issues as possible surrounding the Draft Plan, prior to commencing the statutory process and advertising this was the 'last chance' to engage at the more informal consultation level with Horizons. The Proposed Plan was publicly notified on 31 May 2007, which then triggered the formal process of submissions, hearings and decision-making set down by the RMA (Appendix 3.10 and 5.5). Formal submissions were sought from the community from 31 May through to 31 August, with further submissions sought during the period 17 November to 19 December 2007.
80. Once the Proposed One Plan was notified, copies were sent (again as required by Clause 3, Part 1 of the First Schedule of the RMA), to the Minister for the Environment; the Minister of Conservation and regional conservators for the Department of Conservation, the region's TA's and adjacent regional councils; and tangata whenua via regional iwi authorities (Appendix 4.3).

### **Engaging the General Public Audience in 2007:**

81. In total, 18 public meetings were held during 2007 at venues across the Region (Appendix 4.2). In addition to the statutory public notification requirements for the Proposed Plan, Horizons open and user-friendly consultation approach saw an intense media drive during June, July and August. Numerous newspaper articles, media releases, and radio and print advertisements were used to call for input and spark interest in the plan submission process (Appendices 5.2-5.7). Advertising centred on each of the big four issues (along with backyard burning) for two weeks each throughout the submission period; with radio and print ads working in tandem. The final two weeks were used to encourage and remind people to get their submissions in.
82. Horizons launched its new mobile environmental education vehicle - the Green RIG truck and semi-trailer, with a regional tour that included a third One Plan travelling roadshow that ran throughout July and August 2007. The roadshow was based around a series of public meetings to discuss the Proposed One Plan and call for submissions. The Green RIG provided a purpose-built high tech meeting venue on wheels, and also acted as catalyst for discussion and debate as the interactive exhibition content within it was themed around raising awareness of the scale and impact of the "Big 4" environmental issues (Appendix 2.6).
83. As in past plan document releases, a number of user-friendly summary documents were produced to aid interpretation and make the plan content more accessible to a wider general public audience. A third Roadmap Guide on the Proposed Plan was produced (Appendix 3.8), following the same layout as Roadmap Guide #2 (i.e. a regional map with new policy provisions summarised and an outline of the submission process). As well as hard copy format, various electronic versions of the Proposed One Plan were available either in CD format (Appendix 3.9), or online in the One Plan webpages at [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz) (Appendix 5.1).
84. A series of single page information sheets were also produced in June (Appendix 3.11). The Farm Info Series provided summary information on the new FARM Strategy, and advice for Crop &Vegetable, Sheep & Beef, and Dairy farmers, regarding what activities on their land would be permitted and what would need resource consent under the Proposed One Plan. A "Big 4"

Info Sheet Series (Water Quality, Water Allocation, Hill Country Landuse and Biodiversity) provided summary information on these issues, FAQ's and outline of how the Proposed One Plan would tackle these issues on the ground.

85. Overall, the wider public response was huge. The intense advertising regime, particularly on the radio, brought it to the community's attention and Horizons received a huge number of enquiries from the public (Appendix 4.1). For example, when the radio ads were running on proposed bans on backyard burning in urban areas, Horizons received hundreds of phone calls. Some pundit commented that if they ever heard the radio ad character 'Freddy the fantail' again, he was going to do something unmentionable! This advertising campaign prompted many people who wouldn't normally get involved in a submissions process (i.e. those outside of Horizons group of key stakeholders) to put in submissions. On the flip side, the response to the region-wide public meetings (encouraged via invites sent out to the One Plan interested party mailing list and public notices) and held in the Green RIG was poor. Meetings were offered once during the day and again at night at each venue, and an average turnout was typically less than 10 people. The exception was in Taumarunui, where hill country issues were big news and the meetings attracted up to 50 people to each.

#### **Engaging the Stakeholder Audience in 2007:**

86. In total, 44 stakeholder meetings were held during 2007 (30% prior to Proposed Plan notification, with 70% of them being held during the submission process) (Appendix 4.3). Prior to the plan being notified, a series of six meetings were held around the region during May to provide information on how new nutrient management policy and the FARM strategy rules proposed in the One Plan would affect dairy farmers. To ensure good turnout, there was a large advertising drive using local rural papers, which resulted in a big turn-out from the farming community (Appendix 5.5).
87. For many stakeholder groups, conversations with Horizons had been progressing over the last three years and concerns had either been fully addressed or for some, things were getting down to the 'nitty gritty' i.e. working on any remaining issues that had not been resolved to both party's satisfaction. Within the rural and farming communities, the conversations had become quite focussed on the impact of new land rules and SLUI (in northern districts); and contention over the proposed nutrient management approach (FARM strategy) came to a head in many meetings during the submissions period. Meetings that were held to try and address these issues were well attended and at times volatile. The feedback coming through was that Horizons was 'forcing people off their land', and was overdoing the regulatory approach. There were high levels of scepticism around Horizons motives and whether the FARM strategy was sound and would actually work (and not cost farmers significantly in terms of opportunity).
88. Broad concerns continued to be raised throughout the year by the farming community about:
- the proposed regulation on intensive farming to control non-point source pollution,
  - the effects of the controls on hill country farms, and
  - to a lesser extent, water allocation issues.

89. Requests for 'more time' from submitters saw Horizons willingly accept late submissions for a month after the submissions closing date of 31 August. A total of 467 submissions were received, and after release of the Summary of Submissions documents, 62 further submissions were received. Staff opinion is that this is a high number of submissions for this region (based on past plan processes) but low in comparison to what has been seen in other regions. It is important to note that there is a small percentage of these submissions that challenge or query the consultation process directly.
90. Informal stakeholder meetings continued throughout 2007 and have (and will) continue well into 2008 (Appendix 4.3).

### **2008 | Working towards resolution of community issues – the sharp end of the consultation process**

91. Heading into 2008, the Proposed Plan was now well into the statutory process, and the focus both within Horizons and the 'submitters community' was now on preparing for plan hearings programmed to start in July 2008.
92. In March, a fourth Roadmap Guide was released to summarise the One Plan development and consultation process to date and outline the upcoming hearing schedule (Appendix 3.12). Again the key messages regarding the impacts of new policy and regulation were summarised in a regional roadmap form - this time tailored to show key issues for each District in the region. This was circulated to One Plan mailing list and submitters and formed an insert into the March 2008 ATR.
93. For Horizons, a key part of this preparation was continuing the any unresolved conversations of the past four years as part of more formal pre-hearing meetings. Since March, 7 pre-hearing meetings have been held (up until the time this evidence was prepared on 19 May 2008), with at least 10 more scheduled. It is expected that many more will be held over the coming months as both the hearings and the pre-hearing conversations progress through the plan themes. Staff report that overall, these structured meetings are positive with opportunity for everyone present to have their say. Submitters have been open, voicing their ideas and concerns - and by-in-large there is a willingness to work with Council staff in a constructive way.

### **Engaging with key stakeholder group – the region's Territorial Authorities**

94. As an addendum to the chronological section of this evidence, a summary of the engagement process with key stakeholder group - the region's TA's, is presented. Meeting records and transcripts show at least 51 meetings were held with the region's TA's from late 2004 to the present, with around 20% of these at the governance level. They have been a key part of the 'long conversation' since the plan's inception. Some of the earliest discussions around the development of water allocation policy and the emerging 'regional resources plan' were held with TA's in 2003 and conversations have continued ever since. Engagement with TA's has run across many levels, with regular presentations at the governance level to District Council meetings, and with TA planning and asset management staff – both forum style and one-on-one. Themed meetings were also run with TA staff on topics such as solid waste, air quality and biodiversity. Regular discussion and updates on the One Plan have also occurred via senior management staff attendance at quarterly "Regional

Chiefs” meetings (a regular assembly of the region’s mayors, local and regional government CEO’s, and MP’s).

95. From Day One, the issues discussed and debated upon in the informal consultation process were driven by 1) the need for the TA’s and Horizons to work as partners in the environmental management arena, 2) the interface between each of the District’s Plans and the regional plan and regional policy aspects of the One Plan, and 2) District Council resource use (e.g. municipal waste disposal and water use). In 2004, the initial round of One Plan meetings with TA’s yielded feedback on the proposed process and environmental outcome goals that was largely positive and supportive. Issues were raised around community constraints on water efficiency, the need to have a policy framework that accounted for district differences (not one-size fits all) and one that supported urban communities and economies, and the need to allow for growth.
96. In 2005 and 2006 discussions centred around 1) obtaining agreement from the TA’s that Horizons should be the lead agency for biodiversity management in the region and develop regional rules for the same, and 2) working towards developing a COP that would allow public water supply takes to become permitted activities under the One Plan. Numerous conversations, meetings and correspondence are documented and archived at Horizons around these matters. The four versions of the gradually evolving ‘Working Draft document were shared with TA’s and discussions had around the evolving policy framework. A COP for Public Water Supplies got to a draft stage but was not able to be progressed to its logical inclusion into the Proposed One Plan.
97. Although difficult to summarise the range of issues discussed as part of the consultation process, broad TA feedback regarding environmental outcomes and specifics such as water use efficiency centred around the need for Horizons to consider it in the context of the four community ‘wellbeings’ (including the social, economic and cultural aspects). Around the efficiency issue, of note is the work that was done by Horizons with TA Asset Managers and their asset management staff to test the practicality of proposed policy. Four TA’s were selected and an independent external consultant used to ‘roadtest’ with TA water supply staff whether the draft policy was workable practical and achievable. As a consequence of this, various options and recommendations for improvement were put forward by the consultant for consideration and policy amendment.
98. Also of note is the fact that now, at a compliance monitoring level, Horizons has direct telemetered links into TA recording systems to allow compliance checks on a daily basis. This was an outcome of the ongoing conversations had over the past years, with initial TA reaction to the need for monitoring and telemetry being negative due to perceived cost impacts, until a practical and affordable approach (i.e. tapping into existing TA systems) was negotiated.

### **The ‘Long Conversation’ – a short summary**

99. Four solid years of consultation effort to ensure key stakeholders and the public were brought along with the plan development process and concerns were aired early on and dealt with, has been reflected in the shape of the Proposed One Plan seen before us today.

100. -Aside from the volume of paper and circulation numbers that supports this evidence and documents the various stages in the One Plan conversation, one of the most tangible measures of the impact of the consultation process internally is the observable and dramatic change in council communication processes (something anyone who reads the newspapers over the last 5 years will have noticed). This is also reflected in the up-skilling of Horizons staff who have participated in the consultation process, with plain English communication styles, tailoring of information to audiences and the use of graphical tools (imagery and simple diagrams) now commonplace across the organisation.
101. However, despite these endeavours it is clear that some parties to the process are not happy with or have misunderstood the intent of Horizon's consultation approach; have somehow missed out on engaging with the process, or fundamentally disagree with policy approaches and regulation contained within the plan. These conversations now must move to a formal environment for resolution.

#### **4. SUMMARY | KEY SUCCESSES OF THE ONE PLAN CONSULTATION PROCESS**

102. As stated in the introductory sections of this evidence, what constitutes 'good consultation' and 'how much is enough' is a matter of professional debate and difficult to measure in any tangible form. To support and synthesise the consultation chronology provided above, the final section of this evidence provides a summary of the key elements that demonstrate Horizons has made every effort to operate a lengthy, effective and robust consultation process to support the development of the Proposed One Plan.
103. In terms of investment, thousands upon thousands of hours of staff time have been devoted to consultation planning, consultation conversations and information sharing that had been conducted throughout the process.
104. The One Plan consultation process has been notable for its:

##### **Well-planned communication frameworks**

Horizons worked hard and invested considerable time in the early stages of the project to:

- plan a communication framework and suite of tools that would support community involvement throughout the life of the plan development process
- set up a communications environment that was flexible, so it could evolve alongside the plan development process (e.g. combining the One Plan and LTCCP Community Outcome consultation processes)
- identify clear messages that needed to be communicated, and use these along with a set of guiding principles and best-practice communication techniques, to engage with its target audiences.
- including in the framework systems to record, track and process meetings and feedback and record detail regarding the process.

##### **Active relationships**

Key stakeholders were identified very early on in the process and strong relationships cultivated based on:

- open and honest communication

- up-front sharing of information before any clear policy directions were set (e.g. the iterative working draft process)
- a commitment to facilitating two-way conversations, and
- an emphasis on mutual trust and respect

In some cases the relationships (such as those with local conservators of the Department of Conservation and Fish and Game New Zealand), evolved from simple information provision in the early days, to partnerships whereby stakeholders contributed knowledge and expertise directly into the plan development process. Despite staff changes internally and externally, many of these key relationships have withstood the test of time and are now at an organisational rather than staff level.

### **High levels of community involvement and participation**

Horizons used a range of tools to engage and inform the regional community of the plan development process, including:

- early involvement all key parties, including tangata whenua
- extensive use of interested party mailing lists and ongoing staged release of information
- offering features that made it easy (or at times impossible not to) participate (such as specific feedback ‘tear-offs’, meeting with people in their environment, directed advertising, plus the use of structured meetings (often facilitated), and providing comfortable meeting environments).
- use of roadshow-style meetings and innovative consultation/information ‘events’ to ensure the region was ‘covered’ from one end to the other and people could meet Horizons in ‘their place’ not the Council’s
- tangata whenua were explicitly provided for and consulted face-to-face early on in process in their environment.
- use of special processes to ensure Horizons councillors and staff were included in the process with their input sought to shape and roadtest the plan. This also ensured they were kept informed about the plan and ensured they were well-prepped to help in the consultation process.

In this online age, a measure of the pervasiveness of a topic can be achieved by conducting a quick Google internet search. Googling “One Plan” and Horizons in New Zealand web domains yields around 1530 hits, and reveals a range of information sources, conversations and commentary around the Plan and its impacts. By comparison, searching for the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council’s combined regional plan that was made operative in 2006 and therefore has had longer to ‘permeate’ cyberspace, yields around 2340 hits (googling “Regional Resource Management Plan” and Hawke’s).

### **Use of multiple, audience-focussed engagement tools**

The consultation process has been notable for its use of different and innovative communication tools to engage a wider audience. This was achieved by:

- drawing audiences in slowly to the process, starting with broad principles and goals and then gradually providing more detailed information
- capturing audience interest through the use of different mechanisms to suit different stages in the process (e.g. the interactive Picture our

Environment roadshow for early issue refinement and the detailed public meeting-style roadshow to launch the Proposed Plan to the community).

- using clear, simple branding (i.e. the One Plan), a plain English style, and the use of a common visual theme throughout the process (i.e. the roadmap concept)
- making use of every communication tool available including: posters, brochures, information sheets, newsletters, interactive exhibitions, displays, websites, media interview, articles and advertising (including TV, radio and print), conferences, meetings (hui, public, one-one-one, specialist fora, and organisation-on-organisation), phone calls, emails, talks and lectures.
- catering to different learning and engagement styles to suit the audiences being targeted e.g.
  - i. The use of highly visual content, good design and evocative imagery in meeting powerpoints and print media to support the messages being communicated to all audiences
  - ii. The use of interactive tools – such as the general public ‘voting system’ used in the *Picture our Environment* roadshow exhibition
  - iii. The use of more traditional methods (face to face meetings and workshops) for more technical stakeholder audiences.

### **Continuity**

Horizons is to be commended for maintaining the momentum of the entire process over a period of 5 years, and ensuring the original core values for the consultation process have been maintained throughout. This process has been characterised by

- Providing information ‘little and often’ and in bite-sized, easily-digestible chunks
- Strong leadership from within Horizons to ensure momentum was maintained through time and across numerous staff changes
- Changes in pace and the tools used to ensure interest maintained and over-consultation avoided
- A regular flow of information into the public domain to ensure people could step into the process at any point in time - as it caught their interest or attention.

### **Personal approach and integrity**

Again there was strong leadership from within Horizons to ensure the consultation process was informal and friendly, with

- governance, policy and science staff willing to meet anyone, anywhere, anytime to discuss the One Plan – often at great personal time cost.
- senior management staff being actively involved throughout the process
- an emphasis placed on using the ‘best people for the job’ – so that the organisation’s best communicators and experts were made available to facilitate consultation.

This personal touch ‘humanised’ the debates, with many of the key senior management staff being a consistent point of contact throughout the 6 year process.

### **Use of constructive debate**

Throughout the process Horizons was willing to

- be upfront about where there were gaps in the knowledge or policy being drafted in order to promote debate and input
- talk about and tackle the difficult environmental issues and get to the heart of stakeholder and public issues and how they could best be addressed

### **Integration of council processes**

To provide seamless public accountability and ensure efficiencies and alignment of all sectors of the organisation, Horizons devoted considerable time and investment during the lifetime of the consultation process to:

- integrating community consultation processes between the One Plan and LTCCP
- integrating operational and financial planning between the 2006 LTCCP and developing One Plan

### **Focus on ‘keeping it simple’ and being user-friendly**

These two principles were embodied in everything from the name, the look, feel and function of the Proposed One Plan, right down to Horizons everyday dealings with its community over the Plan’s development – and guided the consultation process every step of the way.

105. However, at the end of the day, plan development and its eventual regulatory application on the ground is a legal process, duly bound by a legal framework and derived from highly technical data and research. Communications experts would agree - simplicity can only be taken so far before all meaning is removed. There must be a balance, and it has been shown that Horizons Regional Council did everything within their means to create a robust, inclusive consultation process, one that was user-friendly but still supported the decision-making needed to produce a technically-robust and effective regional planning tool – the Proposed One Plan.

***You should make things as simple as possible but no simpler...***

**Albert Einstein**