

Introduction: state of environment summary

Our Environmental Success

Much has changed between 2002 and 2007 at a national, regional, and local level.

On a national level there have been amendments to the RMA, and the introduction of a new Local Government Act. Amendments to the RMA have made it a legal requirement for Council to pay attention to efficient use of energy and the effects of climate change, and to assess the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy. Historic heritage has been elevated to a 'matter of national importance'. Monitoring of the Rotorua environment has been expanded to have regard to these changes and is reflected in this report.

As well as the actions of the three tiers of government, the Rotorua community deserves much credit for the proactive enhancement and protection of the environment. Since 2002 new groups have formed and existing community groups have achieved a great amount through a range of community projects.

Rotorua has been pro-active in addressing a number of environmental issues in the past five years. One of the most important issues has been lake water quality. A partnership approach between the Rotorua District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and Te Arawa Lakes Trust has been adopted to tackle this issue. Central Government has also provided support and significant funding.

Many milestones have been achieved since the release of the 'Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District'. Some of these are the Ohau Channel wall, fencing of riparian margins, formation of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Group, the Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act 2006, the development of action plans, the Township Reserves Management Plan and Rotorua Growth Model Study.

Monitoring of lake water quality is ongoing. Our understanding of catchments and lake systems continues to develop and will inform future management options. Improving water quality is a long term commitment and will be an ongoing issue for many years to come.

State of environment summary

The 2002-2007 State of the Environment report has found many parts of the Rotorua environment are in better shape than in 2002. A constant measure across a range of indicators is important as the world moves to an era where environmental awareness is far greater than ever before.

The Rotorua district has seen a much improved understanding and recognition of keeping livestock out of waterways. This means lower faecal coliform counts in waterways and cleaner bathing water. Combined with a focus on lakes protection, this augurs well for the future of the district's lakes.

The amount of materials being recycled is greater than ever before with a total of 5.3kg of waste recycled per person in the district. However, this is offset by the fact that there is just as much waste going to the landfill. This means the amount of waste has increased overall.

One big plus is that people are using public transport in the district to a far greater degree than in 2002. The number of passenger kilometres travelled on local bus services has increased by 54%, which is a dramatic increase. Again, however, this is being offset by an increase in the number of people who use motorised transport to get to and from work.

The amount of heavy traffic travelling through the city has also increased and while this is an indicator of economic activity, it also brings issues such as noise, air pollution and traffic congestion. Heavy traffic numbers are being dealt with through the development of the roading network to take heavy traffic off local roads and out of residential areas.

Overall there are more walkways, more cycleways in the urban areas, less noise complaints, and fewer planes but more passengers using our airport.

Air quality is an issue which still needs work, as national air quality standards are consistently exceeded, especially in the winter. An awareness of global environment issues is needed, as well as plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and a reduced carbon footprint.

This report documents Rotorua's progress to a brighter and more environmentally sustainable future, and looks forward to further improvements and monitoring over the next five years.

Introduction: how to use the state of environment summary

Indicator symbol that summarises the state of the resource. Four symbols are used:



Baseline information from which future trends will be measured



There has been a marked improvement in the state of the resource









The state of the resource remains steady



There has been a marked deterioration in the state of the resource

Introduction: summary of the state of Rotorua's environment

Indicator	State	Page	Summary	Related Indicators
1. Freshwater sustainability				
1.1	Lake water quality - trophic level index. 	18	Little change in the past seven years. However, some changes in the ecosystem can take decades, so this result is not unexpected.	1.2 1.3 1.4 4.1 4.2 7.6
1.2	Stream water quality stream macroinvertebrate community index (MCI). 	19	More monitoring is necessary to establish trends and reasons for changes in MCI.	1.3 4.1
1.3	Protection of lake water quality percentage of water body margins protected from livestock access. 	20	About 98% the district's lake margins are protected from stock access, which prevents direct nutrient input into water bodies.	1.1 1.2 1.4 4.1
1.4	Bathing water quality faecal coliform counts in Rotorua lakes and streams. 	21	Declining faecal coliform counts mean safer bathing areas.	1.3 4.1 9.3
2. Geothermal resources				
2.1	Health of geothermal fields geothermal field water levels and surface feature activities. 	26	Geothermal fields have recovered and are in a new state of equilibrium. The use of geothermal resources for energy production is an emerging environmental issue for the district.	3.1 11.1
3. Culture, heritage and tourism				
3.1	Tourism number of visitor nights in Rotorua. 	32	Overall, visitor nights have remained steady. However, since 2004 both visitor nights and expenditure have continued to increase. The Energy Events Centre has equipped Rotorua with a greater capacity for national and international events in close proximity to the CBD.	1.1 3.2 7.5 10.8 1.2 4.2 8.1 11.1 1.3 5.1 8.2 1.4 7.1 9.1 2.1 7.4 9.2

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Indicator number

Theme / indicator

Tells you which page the indicator appears on

Summarises the state of the indicator

Relates to other indicators in the report