

**12 June 2009**

## **Buller fares well in RMA survey**

Buller has topped the chart in the latest Ministry for the Environment Resource Management Act (RMA) survey of Local Authorities.

The Ministry carries out the survey every two years with the assistance of local authorities. The survey is their principal source of information about RMA processes and helps them to monitor the implementation of the Act.

The Honourable Dr Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment, congratulated the Council yesterday, saying that Buller District Council had achieved a high level of compliance when the report highlights levels of non-compliance are at a nationally record high.

“Your Council is to be congratulated for its high level of compliance,” said Dr Smith. “Please pass on my appreciation to your staff who work in the consents area for the effect they are having in this important area of work.”

The survey showed that Buller was one of four councils who processed 100% of applications within the time limits set in the RMA (Chatham Islands Council, Stratford District Council and Taranaki Regional Council). The survey also showed that processing fees in Buller remain substantially lower than the national median costs.

“It is pleasing to note that Buller is meeting the RMA requirements, while continuing to manage to keep costs down,” says Chief Executive, Gary Murphy. “Implementing the RMA and balancing environmental and economic objectives is not always easy. The Ministry’s survey helps us to gauge where we are doing well and where we can improve on our performance.”

“There are likely to be residents who will say that Buller did not process all applications within the time limits set by the RMA,” says Team Leader Planning and Policy Helen Montgomery. “The survey takes into account that Council are able to request further information – Buller requested further information on 39.23% of resource consent applications compared to the national average of 43% - and this affects the timeframe Council has to complete the

processing. The RMA also allows Council's to extend the time limits for processing consents in some circumstances. The survey reflects that as we managed these instances in compliance with the Act, we have still met the time limits prescribed in the RMA."

**ENDS**



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Further information from the RMA Survey of Local Authorities (2007/2008) is included below.

- In the 2007/2008 financial year, Buller District Council processed 130 resource consent applications through to decision, down from 150 in the 2005/2006 financial year. 86 had been processed in the 2001/2002 financial year and 88 had been processed in 2003/2004.
- In total, 51,960 resource consents were processed through to decision throughout New Zealand in 2007/2008.
- Comparison of resource consent processing fees of territorial authorities:
  - Non-notified subdivision consents – the average median charge nationally was \$1,243 and the median charge in Buller was \$646
  - Non-notified land use consents – the average median charge nationally was \$861 and the median charge in Buller was \$439
  - Limited notified subdivision consents - the average median charge nationally was \$4,816 and the median charge in Buller was \$895
  - Limited notified land use consents - the average median charge nationally was \$4,139 and the median charge in Buller was \$584
  - Publicly notified subdivision consents - the average median charge nationally was \$7,148 and the median charge in Buller was \$3,923
  - Publicly notified land use consents - the average median charge nationally was \$23,934 and the median charge in Buller was \$3,575
- Of the 130 applications we processed to decision, 39.7% were subdivision and 62.3% were land use
- 4.7% (nationally) and 4.62% (Buller) of resource consent applications were publicly notified
- 1.9% (nationally) and 10% (Buller) were limited notified – the high percentage is due to requests from applicants for us to limited notify their resource consent application
- 0.74% (nationally) and 0.77% (Buller – equates to 1 consent) of resource consent applications were declined

- 1.4% (nationally) and 3.1% (Buller – equates to 4 consents) of resource consent applications were appealed
- BDC requested further information on 39.23% of resource consent applications, compared to the national average of 43% - the national average increased on previous years, but ours decreased
- 69% (nationally) and 100% (Buller) of resource consent applications were processed on time – this takes into account the extensions to the processing timeframes that can be applied for under the RMA
- We were one of four councils who processed 100% of applications within the time limits set in the RMA (Chatham Islands Council, Stratford District Council and Taranaki Regional Council)
- Councils are ranked based on the percentage of consents processed within time limits. In 2005/2006 BDC ranked 57<sup>th</sup>, having processed 69% of applications within the time limit. This year we are ranked 1<sup>st</sup> equal with the other councils who processed 100% within time limits