

| TOPIC – Discharges to Air | TRMP Chapter 34 |
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| ISSUES | |
| <p>The Discharges to Air chapter focuses on (a) adverse health, safety and amenity effects from discharge of contaminants to air; and (b) adverse effects from the use of pesticides in the District. The objectives and policies are largely implemented via rules in the TRMP, with some non-regulatory methods (e.g. education and best practice advice for home heating and outdoor rural burning). The plan framework has contributed to the overall intent of the objectives to manage the district’s air quality.</p> <p>However, there are some key issues with the discharges to air provisions, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Richmond Airshed home heating rules adopted by Council have not achieved compliance with the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality for PM10. 2. Permissive outdoor burning rules, examples of poor implementation of best practice burning, and the cumulative effect of outdoor fires all contribute to poor winter air quality. This in turn generates a significant number of complaints. 3. The intent and boundaries of the Fire Sensitive Areas (as shown on the planning maps) has been ineffective in controlling smoke nuisance from rural outdoor burning during winter time in and around urban settlements. 4. The management of pesticides in the plan is outdated as a result of significant legislative changes, and pesticide and fertiliser use is addressed separately in the plan despite similar issues and the potential for adverse environmental effects. | |
| MANDATORY STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS | |
| <p>Since the plan was first proposed, there have been a number of substantive changes to legislation to manage discharges to air.</p> <p>National Environmental Standards (NES) for Air Quality were introduced in 2004 (updated in 2011) and identifies 14 standards which sets a guaranteed minimum level of health protection for all New Zealanders. The Council is required to monitor the Richmond Airshed, which is classified as ‘polluted’ under the NES, and implement management tools to improve ambient air quality. In February 2020, the Ministry for the Environment release further proposed changes to the NES, including a new PM2.5 standard, which will have significant implications for the plan review.</p> <p>Legislative changes have also impacted on the role of resource management plans in regulating the use of pesticides (under the Resource Management (Exemption) Regulations 2017). Additionally, there is a framework in place of other legislation which is administered by other agencies which contributes to the management of pesticide use (including the Health and Safety at Work (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2017; Health and Safety at Work Act 2015; and Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996) and industry requirements and codes of practice through WorkSafe New Zealand and Growsafe. The Plan review will need to determine what remains of Council’s statutory obligations for managing pesticide use under the RMA, and what is regulated by other agencies.</p> <p>In addition to these statutory requirements noted above, the plan review will also need to take into account environmental management plans recognized by iwi authorities.</p> | |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify how to best manage air quality effects from domestic wood burners, while providing for efficient home heating. 2. Identify how to best manage air quality effects from outdoor burning and enabling best practice burning as a land management tool, where this is assessed as the best practicable option. 3. Review the boundaries of the Fire Ban and Fire Sensitive Areas to ensure they provide sufficient protection against air pollution and loss of amenity from smoke nuisance for urban settlements. 4. Provide greater clarity on the management of pesticide and fertiliser discharges. | |