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Committee **Environment**
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EnviroSmart and the Get Sustainable Challenge

1. Purpose

To describe the two business sustainability programs happening this year in the Wellington region, EnviroSmart and the Get Sustainable Challenge.

2. Background

Through experience with the *Take Charge* programme, it became clear that many businesses were interested in going beyond just environmental compliance to take the next and subsequent steps in their journey towards greater environmental sustainability. While *Take Charge* helped businesses with the compliance aspect, it was not well suited to assisting firms that wanted to do more for the environment. After some investigation of what had been done in other regions, we identified two successful programmes helping businesses achieve this goal. After analysing the benefits of each and considering the businesses to which they were suited, the decision was taken to sponsor the delivery of both programmes in the region.

The first of these initiatives, now known as 'EnviroSmart[®]' was developed by North Shore City Council in 2002 as a pilot programme. Seven businesses participated in the programme, then called BusinessCare Enviro-Mark. The concept was expanded by North Shore City Council into a regional programme in 2004, (called Auckland BusinessCare Enviro-Mark), in which 58 businesses participated. Building upon these beginnings, EnviroSmart[®] was launched nationwide this year, with the aim of working with over 500 businesses throughout the country. There are twenty-two councils in nine regions of New Zealand helping to promote the programme.

The second programme is the '*Get Sustainable Challenge*'. This was developed by the Sustainable Business Network in the Bay of Plenty and, after three successful years there, has been launched this year in Wellington and other parts of New Zealand.

This paper briefly explains these initiatives. A presentation on both programmes will be made to the Committee.

3. Discussion

3.1 EnviroSmart®

The EnviroSmart® programme was launched by the Prime Minister in February of this year. EnviroSmart® offers businesses a two-year facilitated programme to help improve their environmental performance (as well as health and safety) and enables them to achieve a nationally recognised environmental certificate. It includes on-site support from an EnviroSmart® consultant, workshops and on-line tools such as Enviro-Mark® to help businesses make the necessary changes. Businesses pay around half of the cost of the programme, with the remainder being met by Greater Wellington, Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council and the Ministry for the Environment. The programme will be provided for a three year period. This year 13 businesses have joined up and it is expected that 45 businesses will participate in total.

Some of the main benefits to participating business will be:

- **cost savings** – by reducing operational expenses such as energy, water, solid waste, and raw materials;
- **compliance improvements** - by implementing effective systems to manage health, safety and environmental issues;
- **reduced risk to the environment** – by reducing direct environmental impacts and creating management systems to prevent illegal or accidental discharges;
- **improved reputation** – by demonstrating to stakeholders that the business is serious about improving its environmental performance;
- **enhanced market position** – by creating a positive point of difference or by obtaining the environmental certification demanded by customers or overseas markets;
- **staff motivation** – by participating in a programme that is socially responsible and benefits the wider community; and
- **building capacity** and in-house skills through ongoing staff training and development.

The benefits to the region include reduced demand on natural resources, less risk of environmental pollution, reduced emissions, and less waste going to landfill. There is also the potential for the region to enhance its reputation as a place to do business on a sustainable basis.

3.2 The Get Sustainable Challenge

The Get Sustainable Challenge is a business awards programme with a difference. The purpose and focus of the challenge is helping businesses become more sustainable. Its award component provides recognition for businesses that have made progress along this path. It assesses and recognises sustainable business performance against economic, social and environmental criteria. Categories for the awards are based on the level of sustainable development that a business has obtained.

Businesses that take part are assessed using an interview process and their entry is prepared for them by a trained consultant. In this way they are introduced to the criteria in an informative and time effective manner. Sign off for the content and submission of the entry is in the hands of the business. Businesses receive concise judging feedback in a report that highlights key opportunities to improve their performance over the next 12 months. Recommendations are accompanied by a range of programmes and resources provided by the Sustainable Business Network that can help businesses to implement the recommended sustainability improvements.

Greater Wellington is the principal sponsor of the Get Sustainable Challenge, with Wellington City Council and Hutt City Council being category sponsors. This year, a total of 27 businesses entered the competition. All businesses that entered also receive annual membership of the Sustainable Business Network.

The benefits of this programme are that businesses are provided with a quick way to assess their current position and get feedback on how to make progress. They have the opportunity to be acknowledged publicly for their sustainability improvements and they become part of the Sustainable Business Network with the ability to share problems and solutions with other businesses.

There are also benefits to Greater Wellington and the region's environment. As recommended improvements are implemented, environmental impacts are reduced and, as with EnviroSmart[®], this adds to the reputation of Wellington as a sustainable region. Both programmes enlarge the pool of companies undertaking business sustainability and add to the momentum of these ideas in the business community. The Council's sponsorship is also a signal to business that it believes the sector can make a big contribution to the sustainability of the region and our ability to live within the limits of natural systems.

4. Communication

Both EnviroSmart and the Challenge provide communication opportunities. Thus far, the following has occurred:

- Both EnviroSmart and the Get Sustainable Challenge have featured in news stories on the Greater Wellington website;
- A description of both programs can be found in the Sustainable Business section of the site;

- A feature article mentioning both programs, but focusing on business sustainability, appeared in the Dominion Post;
- Articles in the Kapi-Mana News and Wairarapa News;
- A story on the TV1 morning news show.

There will be an article on the Get Sustainable Challenge in Elements in September and December. Planning is also underway for publicising the outcome of the awards following the presentation ceremony on the 31st of August.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. ***Receive the report; and***
2. ***Note the contents.***

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