

Resource Management Act:

Two-yearly Survey of Local Authorities 2001/2002

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Foreword

I thank local authorities for responses that are the basis of this survey. I am very pleased with a 100% return for the third survey running.

Many local authorities are now using the survey as a basis for their own internal monitoring of consent processing. This year local authorities were given the opportunity to respond to the survey using the Internet – many utilised this new tool and it is planned to further develop this method of responding in the future. The survey questionnaires were answered more fully than before, the responses are more comparable and the resultant statistics are more robust. I hope the data will be used to provide the basis for ongoing performance improvement.



Hon Marian L Hobbs

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Executive summary

Resource consents

- 52,935 resource consents were applied for in the 2001/02 financial year. There has been virtually no change in the total number of resource consents applied for from that reported in 1999/2000 (52,933).
- 49,012 resource consents were processed during 2001/02 – 967 more than in 1999/2000.
- 2,921 (6.0%) resource consents were publicly notified during 2001/02 – an increase from the 2,417 (5.0%) publicly notified in 1999/2000.
- Pre-hearing meetings were held for 19% of all notified consent applications, compared with 18% in 1999/2000.
- Local authority officers acting under delegated authority made 84% of decisions on resource consent applications – no change from 1999/2000.
- 274 (0.56%) resource consent applications were declined in 2001/02 – a small decrease from the 308 (0.64%) resource consent applications declined in 1999/2000.
- 893 (1.8%) resource consent decisions were appealed to the Environment Court in 2001/02 – 486 (1.1%) were appealed in 1999/2000.

Time

- 88% of local authorities formally receive resource consent applications within one full working day of their arriving at the council office ie, the clock started within one day of consent applications being lodged. This is an increase from the 80% in 1999/2000.
- 79% of local authorities do not reset the resource consent processing time limit clock back to zero once they receive requested further information from applicants. This best practice has increased from the 72% that did not reset the clock to zero in 1999/2000.
- 82% of all resource consents were processed within statutory time limits in 2001/02 – there has been no change from 1999/2000.
- 69% of all notified consents were processed within statutory time limits – an improvement from 63% in 1999/2000.
- 83% of non-notified consents were processed within time limits, the same as in 1999/2000.
- Section 37 was used to extend statutory time limits for 6% of the total resource consents processed – there has been no change from 1999/2000.

Cost

- Median charges for consents vary for different consent types and type of issuing local authority.

Good practice in resource consent processing

- 70 local authorities (81%) define the environmental effects that must be addressed in consent applications for controlled and restricted discretionary activities. This is the same as in 1999/2000.
- 77 local authorities (90%) provide potential applicants with an estimate (based on past experience in that kind of work) of the cost of applying for a resource consent if requested. This is an increase from 86% in 1999/2000.
- 65 local authorities (76%) said they advised applicants if an application is deficient (in terms of section 88(4)) before formally receiving it.
- 55 local authorities (64%) indicated that they follow a structured process to check that environmental effects are adequately identified and addressed in Assessments of Environmental Effects – no change from 1999/2000.
- 63 local authorities (73%) indicated that guidance notes or checklists are available to staff on when to notify an application, compared with 56% in 1999/2000. Forty-nine local authorities (57%) advised they have internal guidance notes or checklists available to staff on how to identify affected parties, up from the 44% who advised they did in 1999/2000.
- 73 local authorities (85%) formally monitor and report consent processing performance, the results of which are made available to ratepayers. This is a slight improvement on the 84% recorded in 1999/2000.

Enforcement and compliance

- 75% of complaints were dealt with using informal means – a decrease from the 78% in 1999/2000.
- Those councils able to provide information on compliance indicated that 72% of all resource consents requiring monitoring complied with resource consent conditions.

Maori participation

- 49% of local authorities made a formal budgetary commitment to Maori/Iwi participation in resource management processes – a decrease from the 65% in 1999/2000.
- The average specified budgetary commitment made by local authorities for Maori/Iwi participation in RMA processes is \$69,845. This is an increase from \$49,981 in 1999/2000.
- 59% of local authorities provide guidance for their staff for determining when Maori/Iwi are likely to be affected parties in a resource consent application and should be notified. This is down slightly on the 61% recorded in 1999/2000.
- 589 resource consent applications that affected statutory acknowledgements under the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 were received by eight local authorities in 2001/02. This is an increase from the 381 received by 17 local authorities in 1999/2000.

Introduction

This is the sixth *RMA Survey of Local Authorities*. The survey, which was run annually up until 1999/2000, is now run once every two years. This report covers activity in the financial year beginning 1 July 2001 through to 30 June 2002 – referred to in the report as the year 2001/02. The previous survey covered the financial year 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. All 86 local authorities responded to the questionnaire. A copy of the [questionnaire](#) is available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the RMA Survey of Local Authorities is to:

- assist the Minister for the Environment to monitor the effect and implementation of the Resource Management Act (RMA)
- provide the Ministry for the Environment and local authorities with information:
 - to highlight areas that may need further research and assist with research projects
 - to highlight trends over time for some key processes under the RMA
 - to provide a basis to consider comments on the RMA, including general enquiries and ministerial letters

- promote local authority good practice and improved performance in terms of benchmarks established in the RMA and/or guidance produced by the Ministry for the Environment
- provide local authorities with information to more accurately respond to criticism about RMA processes
- assist individual local authorities in comparing performance with their peers.

The survey does not measure the performance of the RMA or individual local authorities in delivering better environmental outcomes.

[The State of New Zealand's Environment](#) (the Ministry for the Environment's national state of the environment report, 1997) gives an overview of environmental quality as a baseline for future comparison and is available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz. Local authority state of the environment monitoring and reporting provides information about environmental quality and the achievement of environmental outcomes on a district and regional basis.

The Environmental Performance Indicators (EPI) Programme is the national system for reporting on the state of the environment. Indicators are agreed measures, which help track changes in the state of the environment – refer to www.environment.govt.nz for further information. [Monitoring Progress Towards Sustainable Development in New Zealand](#) (New Zealand's report for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development) also provides a broad picture of New Zealand's progress towards sustainable development.

Responses from local authorities are compared to:

- identify local authorities complying with statutory requirements and recommended good practice
- stimulate discussion about any variance in results between like local authorities
- promote benchmarking and performance improvement.

The 2001/02 questionnaire

In response to feedback on earlier surveys the 2001/02 questionnaire was made available over the Internet, as well as the traditional paper format. Forty-four local authorities entered their response directly into the Internet questionnaire. Respondents were generally satisfied with the Internet response option and some suggestions were made as to how it could be improved. For the purposes of data handling this method of responding to the survey is preferred. It is envisaged that all 86 local authorities will use this method of responding to the 2003/04 survey.

A pilot group of local authorities played a significant role in shaping the questions and in testing the Internet questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

- Resource consent processing statistics
- Time
- Cost
- Good practice in resource consent processing
- Monitoring and enforcement
- Maori participation in RMA processes
- Research questions and other issues.

The core questions on *resource consent processing statistics* and *time* (sections one and two of the survey) were the same as those in previous surveys. This means that most local authorities are now familiar with these questions, and have systems in place to capture most of the required information. For the questions on cost, *median* (rather than *mean*) charges were asked for in this survey. The *median* charges provide a better tool for comparison as they eliminate the effect of extreme charges at either end of the range, particularly where there are limited numbers of consents in each category.

Local authority family groups

Where appropriate, results are reported in family groups of local authorities to enable comparisons to be made between those authorities with similar characteristics. These six local authority family groups are the same as those used in the past two surveys:

- regional councils
- unitary authorities, including the Chatham Islands Council
- territorial authorities that process similar numbers of consents:
 - Group 1: 0 – 110 consents
 - Group 2: 111 – 300 consents
 - Group 3: 301 – 650 consents
 - Group 4: 651 – 7,000 consents.

Appendix 1 shows the group each local authority has been placed in, along with the number of consents they processed. Nine local authorities have changed family groups since the 1999/2000 survey.

Waitaki and Central Hawkes Bay District Councils moved from Group 1 to Group 2, whilst Invercargill City Council, and Papakura and Kapiti District Councils moved from Group 3 to Group 2. Tauranga and Rotorua District Councils and Hamilton and Hutt City Councils moved from Group 4 to Group 3.

Data presentation

Throughout the report the number of local authorities that answered a question is indicated in brackets (n=). Because the survey has moved to a biennial format data has been presented in two year time intervals using the results from 1997/98, 1999/2000 and 2001/02. Changes in the survey questionnaire do not allow all results to be presented for these years. In these instances the most recent available data has been used. A full report on the results of the [1999/2000 survey](#) is available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz.

Key results are presented in bar graphs rather than tables, to make it easier for local authorities to compare performance with their peers. If a local authority did not answer a particular question, it is omitted from the relevant graph.

Auditing of survey responses

This year the Ministry again provided all local authorities with the opportunity to have key parts of their survey response audited by [Audit New Zealand](#) on a share cost basis. Those who were audited in previous years were given the opportunity to have a follow-up audit if they wished. In 2001/02 48 local authorities were involved in the audit process (up from 39 in 1999/2000). Fifteen local authorities were audited for the first time in 2001/02, taking the total number of local authorities who have been audited to 67. The local authorities that participated in the audit process in 2001/02, and all local authorities that have participated in an audit since it began being offered in 1998/99, are listed in Appendix 2. Given the results of the audits, no inference should be drawn as to the reliability of responses from those local authorities participating in the audit process, against those who chose not to participate. The full [audit report](#) is available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz. Audit comments throughout the report are highlighted in **aqua boxes titled Audit Comment**.

The purpose of the audit process was to:

- provide the Ministry for the Environment and local authorities with information about the quality and comparability of key information collected in the survey
- verify critical data items within the survey with records held by local authorities
- investigate whether data definitions were appropriately and consistently applied
- assess the adequacy of computerised and/or manual systems to record key RMA data items in the questionnaire
- where appropriate, make suggestions as to how data recording could be improved
- improve local authority performance in consent process monitoring and reporting.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Section 35 of the RMA requires every local authority to gather sufficient information to fulfil their functions under the Act; this includes recording details of each resource consent granted by it. This information is vital for supporting local authority decisions and performs an important audit function.

It can also be used to:

- identify areas where improvements can be made in local authority practice
- monitor local authority performance
- maintain consistency in procedures
- provide local ratepayers with a credible and transparent record of their performance.

Questions audited included critical items on resource consent processing statistics and time, charges and enforcement and compliance monitoring. Audits were undertaken in the two-month period immediately after the survey period and prior to the survey questionnaires being returned. Some local authorities had not collated all their responses at the time of audit and were unable to have key items in their responses verified.

In their audit of the survey returns, Audit New Zealand identified a number of issues with the way local authorities were collecting and recording information. The most prevalent issues were:

- *internal quality assurance*: few local authorities had systems in place to ensure the correct information was entered into consent processing databases correctly
- *the calculation of statutory time frames*: local authority results vary in this section due to different interpretations of statutory time frames (this is further outlined in the section on Time).

Audit New Zealand also identified some survey design issues for the Ministry's consideration. The Ministry for the Environment will incorporate these suggestions when further developing the survey questionnaire and accompanying explanations.

Local authority best practice

Local authority best practice recommendations are included throughout the report and are highlighted in **green boxes titled Local Authority Best Practice**.

Limitations of the 2001/02 survey

Interpretation of the survey questions by local authorities varied. Respondents expressed difficulties in answering questions where the information required was not recorded or held in a format that could be readily extracted.

Forty-eight local authorities were independently audited by Audit New Zealand (refer to Appendix 2). Audit New Zealand were unable to verify all results for 39 of those councils that were audited. Concerns about the quality of responses were expressed.

Not all local authorities have developed data collection systems to record basic RMA data. In the case of local authorities that process a very small number of consents, an electronic database may not be practically or economically justified. A number of local authorities advised that they could not answer questions about the time taken to process resource consents. This means that for a number of questions a full picture of the local authorities throughout the country could not be obtained.



Resource consent processing statistics

This section reports on:

- Resource consents applied for and processed
- Applications for changes to consent conditions
- Requests for further information
- Notification of resource consents
- Pre-hearing meetings
- Resource consent decisions
- Resource consents declined and appealed.

Resource consents applied for and processed

Local authorities reported that they received 52,935 applications for resource consents in 2001/02. This is almost identical to the number reported in 1999/2000 (52,933). 1,225 applications were withdrawn (n = 84) which is less than the 1,410 withdrawn in 1999/2000 (n = 79).

49,012 consents were processed through to a decision in 2001/02. This is 967 more consents than in 1999/2000 (48,045), but 9,048 fewer than in 1997/98 (58,060). Territorial authorities processed the majority of resource consents (67.7%), followed by regional councils (23.8%) and unitary authorities (8.5%).

Table 1 shows the change in consent numbers processed by each local authority type over three previous surveys. The downward trend in the number of consents processed by territorial authorities continued in 2001/02, while the number of applications processed by regional councils and unitary authorities increased from that reported in previous surveys.

Appendix 1 reports the number of consents processed by each local authority in local authority family groups.

REFER TABLE ONE

The majority of resource consent applications processed were for land use and subdivision consent. This result is similar to that of previous surveys. The spread of applications between different consent types was similar to the results recorded in previous surveys.

REFER TABLE TWO

1,069 certificates of compliance (RMA section 139) were processed in 2001/02 (n = 85). This is less than half the 2,217 reported in the 1999/2000 survey (n = 85).

Table 1: Resource consent applications processed by local authority type

Local authority type	Total consents processed		
	1997/98	1999/00	2001/02
Regional councils	9,510	8,037	11,643
Territorial authorities	44,975	36,000	33,159
Unitary authorities	3,575	4,008	4,210
Totals	58,060	48,045	49,012

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00 and 1997/98.

Table 2: Resource consents processed by consent type

Type of resource consent	Subdivision consent	Land use consent	Coastal permit	Water permit	Discharge permit
% of total number of applications 2001/02 (n=86)	20	62	5	6	6
% of total number of applications 1999/00 (n=86)	26	61	3	4	5
% of total number of applications 1998/99 (n=86)	31	59	2	4	5

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00, and 1998/99.
Note: Due to rounding, not all percentages in rows will add to 100%.

Applications for changes to consent conditions

Local authorities were asked for the number of applications for changes to resource consent conditions (RMA section 127). Authorities (n = 83) processed 1,690 applications, an increase from the 1,620 applications processed in 1999/2000 (n = 75). Just under 8% of these were publicly notified, the same as in 1999/2000. Table 3 provides details on the proportion of applications for changes to consent conditions processed by each local authority type, and the percentage notified by each local authority type.

REFER TABLE THREE

Table 3: Applications for changes to consent conditions processed by each local authority type and the proportion notified

Local authority type	1999/2000 (n = 75)		2001/02 (n = 83)	
	% processed by each local authority type	Proportion notified %	% processed by each local authority type	Proportion notified %
Regional councils	34.1	4.3	39.7	11.0
Territorial authorities	60.4	9.4	54.9	5.3
Unitary authorities	5.5	6.7	5.4	8.8

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, 1999/2000.

Table 4: Percentage of total resource consents processed where further information was requested

Year	1995/96 (n=54)	1996/97 (n=73)	1997/98 (n=76)	1998/99 (n=82)	1999/00 (n=82)	2001/02 (n=86)
% of total consents where further information requested	22	39	22	28	33	35

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00, 1998/99, 1997/98, 1996/97 and 1995/96.

Requests for further information

Local authorities reported that they requested further information from applicants for 35% of resource consent applications processed in 2001/02. This is an increase from the 33% reported in the 1999/2000 survey, and the 22% reported in the 1997/98 survey.

REFER TABLE FOUR

A multiple request for further information is where information is requested by the local authority more than once on a single application. The survey does not differentiate between repeated requests for the same information and further requests for new information. Local authorities reported multiple requests for further information (n = 80), although 34 were estimates. These authorities requested further information more than once for 7.5% of the total number of consent applications they processed. This is an increase on the percentage reported in the 1999/2000 survey (5.7%).

Further information was requested more than once on 3,496 applications. This means that multiple requests were made on 22% of applications where further information was sought. This is an increase from the 1999/2000 survey (19%).

REFER FIGURES ONE – THREE

Notification of resource consents

Local authorities reported 2,921(6.0%) resource consents that were publicly notified. This is an increase of 504 notified consents from 1999/2000 (2,417 notified consents) and a change from previous surveys, where the percentage of notified consents has consistently remained at 5%.

The increase in the total number of resource consents processed and the introduction of the aquaculture moratorium can account for much of the increase in notified consents. The aquaculture moratorium (entered into force on

28 November 2001) led to a significant increase in the number of publicly notified coastal permit applications in Marlborough. Marlborough District Council alone issued 336 notified coastal permits in 2001/02. This is more than the 237 notified coastal permits that were issued by all councils in 1999/2000. In total 539 notified coastal permits were issued in 2001/02, an increase of over 300 from 1999/2000.

Proportionately, the most frequently notified consents in 2001/02 were coastal (21%), discharge (18%) and water permits (15%), respectively.

REFER TABLE FIVE

Table 6 presents the percentage of resource consent applications notified by local authority type. Unitary authority notification rates for resource consents have nearly doubled from 9% in 1999/2000 to 17% in 2001/02. The large number of notified coastal permit applications processed by Marlborough District Council can account for this increase. Regional councils and unitary authorities have a higher public notification rate than territorial authorities because they more frequently process resource consents relating to public resources (water, air, coast) as opposed to private resources such as land.

REFER TABLE SIX

Pre-hearing meetings

Local authorities were asked to provide the number of pre-hearing meetings held and the number that resulted in no formal hearing being required.

Five hundred and forty-six pre-hearing meetings were held in 2001/02 (n = 54). In 1999/2000, 432 pre-hearing meetings were held (n = 58).

Table 5: Percentage of consents notified by consent type

Resource consent type	Subdivision consent	Land use consent	Coastal permit	Water permit	Discharge permit	% of all resource consents notified
% notified 2001/02 (n=86)	5	3	21	15	18	6
% notified 1999/00 (n=86)	4	3	17	15	17	5
% notified 1997/98 (n=83)	3	4	15	24	21	5

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00 and 1997/98.

Table 6: Percentage of consents notified by local authority type

Local authority type	% of notified applications 1997/98 (n=85)	% of notified applications 1999/00 (n=86)	% of notified applications 2001/02 (n=86)
Regional councils	14	11	10
Unitary authorities	10	9	17
Territorial authorities	3	3	3

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00 and 1997/98.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Pre-hearing meetings are a good practice tool for clarifying, mediating or facilitating resolution of an issue associated with an application for resource consent. While it may not always be appropriate to hold a pre-hearing meeting, they can produce more sustainable results and greater satisfaction for all involved. They can also save both the local authority and the applicant time and costs in the resource consent process.

One hundred and twenty-six (23%) pre-hearing meetings held resolved the issue to the extent that no formal hearing was necessary. This is a decrease from that recorded in 1999/2000 (35%) and 1998/99 (40%).

Pre-hearing meetings were held for 19% of all notified resource consent applications, compared with 18% in 1999/2000. These figures do not account for informal meetings which are frequently used by local authorities to assist the resource consent process. As with previous surveys, regional councils remain the most frequent users of pre-hearing meetings.

REFER TABLE SEVEN

Table 7: Percentage of notified resource consents for which a pre-hearing meeting was held by local authority type

Local authority type	% of notified applications 1997/98 (n=80)	% of notified applications 1999/00 (n=85)	% of notified applications 2001/02 (n=86)
Regional councils	37	33	35
Territorial authorities	12	12	11
Unitary authorities	3	3	3

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00 and 1997/98.

Resource consent decisions

In 2001/02 the majority of decisions on resource consent applications were made by local authority officers acting under delegated authority (84%)*. Regional councils reported that 91% of their resource consent decisions are made by local authority officers acting under delegated authority. Since 1999/2000 there has been a 2% decrease in the number of decisions made by councillors acting as commissioners. This decrease was particularly noticeable for unitary authorities, where the percentage of decisions made by councillors acting as commissioners fell by 10% whilst the percentage made by *other* decision-makers rose by 11%.

REFER TABLE EIGHT

Table 8: Percentage of resource consent decisions made by decision maker, local authority type and overall

Decision maker	Local authority officers		Independent commissioners		Councillors acting as commissioners		Councillors as part of hearings panel		Other eg, mixed panel of councillors/commissioners	
	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02
Regional councils	90%	91%	1%	2%	1%	1%	6%	4%	2%	2%
Territorial authorities	84%	85%	1%	1%	8%	8%	6%	5%	1%	<0.5%
Unitary authorities	54%	53%	1%	1%	39%	29%	6%	5%	1%	12%
Overall total	83%	84%	1%	1%	10%	8%	6%	5%	1%	2%

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/2000.

* Note that 17 of the 86 responses to this question were estimates.

AUDIT COMMENT

Although not part of the scope of Audit New Zealand’s visit, Audit New Zealand noted that many councils have continued to refine their delegations. This has had the effect of enhancing the ability of staff to make decisions on the simple or routine consents whilst holding higher delegation for more complex consent applications, thereby improving the efficiency of processing.

Resource consents declined and appealed

Resource consent decisions can be appealed to the Environment Court under section 120 of the RMA. Local authorities reported in 2001/02 that 274 (0.56%) applications processed were declined. Eight hundred and ninety-three (1.8%) decisions were appealed, up from 486 (1.1%) in 1999/2000.

The proportion of decisions appealed varied between regional councils (3.8%), territorial authorities (1.1%), and unitary authorities (2.0%). All of these figures are an increase on those reported in 1999/2000. The greatest increase was for regional council decisions appealed, up from 1.2% in 1999/2000 (3.8% in 2001/02).

REFER TABLE NINE

Table 9: Percentage of resource consent decisions appealed by local authority type

Type	Total appealed 2001/02	% appealed 2001/02	Total appealed 1999/00*	% appealed 1999/00*
Regional councils	437	3.75	96	1.19
Territorial authorities	371	1.12	329	0.92
Unitary authorities	85	2.02	61	1.52
Totals	893	1.8	486	1.0

* (n = 80)

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/2000.



Time

AUDIT COMMENT

Audit New Zealand noted that a large proportion of councils did not check applications for completeness prior to formally receiving them in the consent processing system. Several reasons for this were identified:

- Smaller councils did not appear to have the resources or in-house knowledge to perform this check before sending the applications on to the consultants employed to process consents.
- Several councils indicated that it would be unacceptable from a customer service perspective for them to reject incomplete applications. They therefore accepted them and started processing while requesting the missing information be supplied.
- Several small to medium councils were combining the completeness check with an assessment of the adequacy of the information presented, thereby sending only one letter to the applicant for missing and inadequate information, instead of (potentially) two.
- Some councils did not perform a completeness check within 24 hours of its physical arrival. Rather than taking longer than the recommended 24 hours to formally receipt after the completeness check was undertaken, these councils formally receipted on physical arrival and carried out a completeness check at a later time when resources permitted.

This section reports on:

- Checking applications for completeness
- Formal receipt of applications
- Resetting the time limit clock once further information is received
- Resource consent applications processed within statutory time limits
- Notified and non-notified resource consent applications processed within time limits
- Use of section 37 to extend time limits.

The time frames used in this survey to define whether an application was processed within time are described in section 115 of the Resource Management Act. If one part of the consent process falls outside the statutory time for that phase, but the entire consent is processed within the overall upper time limit, for the purposes of this survey it is considered as processed within time.

In addition to collecting information about compliance with statutory time frames, for the first time the Ministry also collected information about the median time taken to process resource consent applications in 2001/02.

Checking applications for completeness

In 2001/02, 62 local authorities (72%) checked applications for completeness within one working day of the application arriving at the local authority's office, less than in 1999/2000 (76%), but an increase from 1998/99 (65%). The local authorities adopting this best practice are listed in Appendix 5, Box 1.

This led to a large number of councils issuing letters requesting information missing from the application utilising section 92 of the RMA. We believe this is an inappropriate use of section 92 and distorts the number of legitimate requests for further information to aid in council's understanding of the application and its effects.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Checking for completeness should involve a scan of the application to determine if the above information is included. It does not involve checking the information provided for *correctness*, or assessing whether further information is required. It is good practice for local authorities to check applications for resource consents for completeness within one working day of the application arriving at the local authority office.

If an application were not actually *complete* then technically it would not be an *application* for the purposes of section 88 of the Act. Local authorities should return these to the applicants, and if the application is lodged again it should be treated as a new application. The Resource Management Amendment Act (2003) has now clarified when a local authority can reject deficient applications (see section 88(3) of the Act).

Formal receipt of applications

Local authorities were asked whether they formally receive¹ (ie, start the time limit clock) resource consent applications within one working day. Seventy-six local authorities (88%) advised that they did, an increase from 80% in 1999/2000, and 62% in 1997/98. The local authorities adopting this good practice procedure are identified in Appendix 5, Box 2.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

The Ministry for the Environment considers it is best practice to start the clock on the day an application arrives at the local authority's office. However, some local authorities have collected their statistics based on the clock starting at a later time, making meaningful comparison difficult.

Resetting of the time limit clock once further information is received

In 2001/02, 68 local authorities (79%) reported they do not reset the clock once further information is received, more than the 72% reported in 1999/2000. Box 3 (Appendix 5) contains a list of the local authorities that carried out this good practice in 2001/02. The Resource Management Amendment Act 2003, clarifies when local authorities may reset the time limit clock.

Resource consent applications processed within statutory time limits

In 2001/02 82% of all resource consents were processed within statutory time limits. This figure is the same as that recorded in 1999/2000 and 1998/99, and an increase from 78% in 1997/98. This includes resource consents where the time limits were formally extended using section 37.

¹ The time limit clock begins as soon as the application is **received**. The Resource Management Amendment Act 2003 clarifies that the processing clock starts on the date the application is first lodged with the local authority ie, when it physically arrives at the counter.

AUDIT COMMENT

Audit New Zealand found that the majority of councils reviewed were using a date stamp and/or council receipt as evidence of the date of physical receipt. However, there were still instances where there was no evidence of the date of physical receipt, and the date on the application was often different to the date noted in the system as the lodged date.

Table 10 presents the percentage of each consent type processed within statutory time limits in 2001/02. The results for subdivision and land use consents were similar to those reported in 1999/2000. There was an increase in the percentage of water permits and discharge permits processed within time compared to 1999/2000. The percentage of coastal permits being processed within time increased significantly in 2001/02 following the introduction of the aquaculture moratorium.

REFER TABLE TEN

Notified and non-notified resource consent applications processed within time limits

Figures 4-15 present the proportions of reported resource consents, notified and non-notified, processed within time (RMA, section 115) by local authorities in 2001/02, 1999/2000 and 1997/98. In addition, the graphs illustrate whether or not the local authority reset the time limit clock once further information was received. Local authorities that: a) do not receipt complete applications on the day of application; b) have high rates of further information requests; and c) reset the clock when further information is received, may appear to process more consents on time.

Appendix 4 provides a full summary of the percentage of notified and non-notified consent applications processed by individual local authorities within time. The percentages for resource consents processed within time limits should be interpreted with caution where a local authority processes a small number of consents. A consent application may be processed outside of the time limit at the request of the applicant and in this situation does not reflect any inefficiency on the part of the local authority.

There was an increase in notified consents processed within statutory time limits from previous years. In 2001/02, 69% of all notified consents were processed within statutory time limits, compared with 63% in 1999/2000 and 64% in 1997/98.

In 2001/02, local authorities reported that 83% of non-notified consents were processed within time limits, the same as in 1999/2000, and an increase from 79% in 1997/98.

Table 10: Percentage of consents processed within statutory time limits by consent type

Consent type	Subdivision	Land use	Coastal	Water	Discharge	Total
% processed within time 2001/02	79	85	86	63	75	82
% processed within time 1999/2000	79	87	62	67	73	82
% processed within time 1997/98	77	81	84	61	66	78

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02, RMA annual survey of local authorities 1999/00 and 1997/98.

Notified consents processed within statutory time limits (including section 37) by local authority family group

A number of local authorities processed no notified consents during recent survey periods:

- in 2001/02 Gore, Hauraki, Kawerau, Opotiki, South Waikato, Stratford, Tararua, Wairoa and Waitomo Councils processed no notified consents
- in 1999/2000 Carterton District, Central Hawkes Bay District, Chatham Islands, Kaikoura District, Kawerau District, Mackenzie District, Opotiki District, Otorohanga District, Rangitikei District, Tararua District, Waimate District and Waitomo District processed no notified consents
- in 1997/98 Central Hawkes Bay District, Chatham Islands, Kawerau District and Upper Hutt City processed no notified consents.

Note: The following symbols are used to indicate in which years the results are influenced by the re-setting of the clock when further information was requested - ^ 1997/98, ° 1999/2000, * 2001/02.

Figure 4: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – regional councils

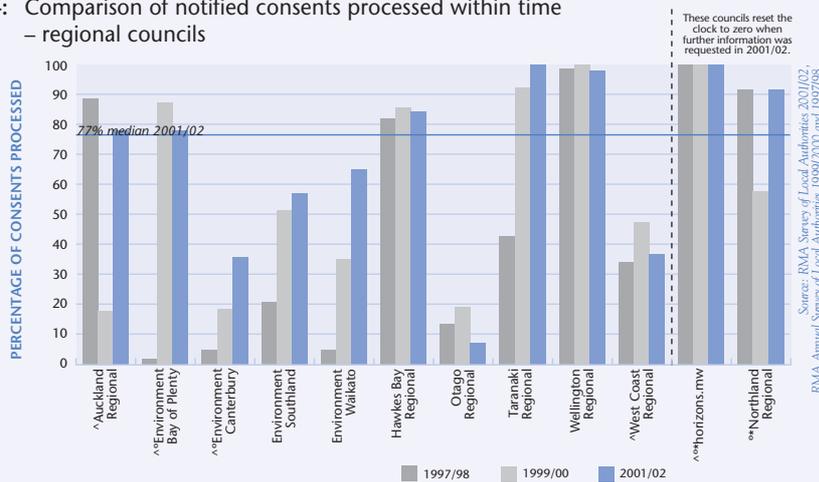


Figure 5 Note:

Stratford District Council processed 100% of notified resource consents within time in 1999/2000. This was mis-reported by the Ministry for the Environment as 67% in the 1999/2000 report.

Clutha, Otorohanga and Ruapehu District Councils each processed one notified consent in 2001/02, but did not do so within the statutory time frame.

Buller District Council processed 0% of notified consents within time in 1999/00.

Ruapehu District and Waitomo District Councils processed 0% of notified consents within time in 1997/98.

Kaikoura District Council was unable to supply time limit information for notified consents in 1997/98.

MacKenzie District Council did not provide a response in 1997/98.

Figure 5: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 1)

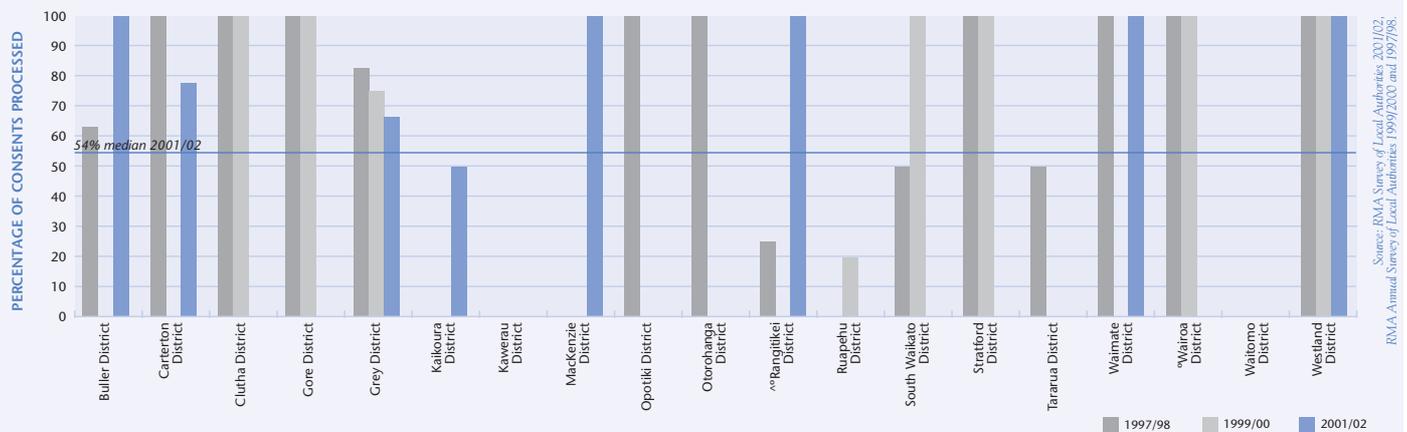


Figure 6: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 2)

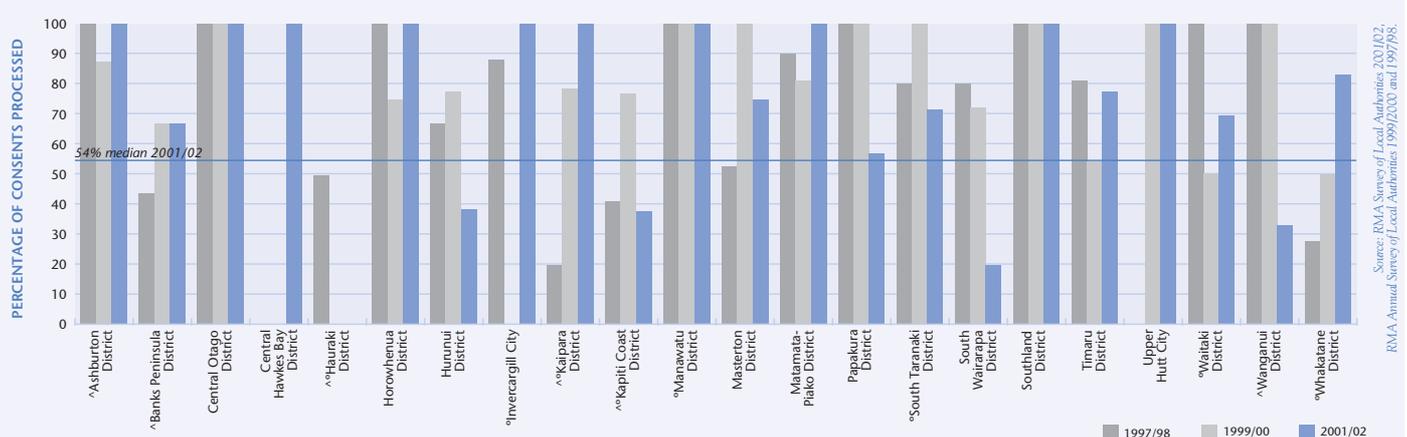
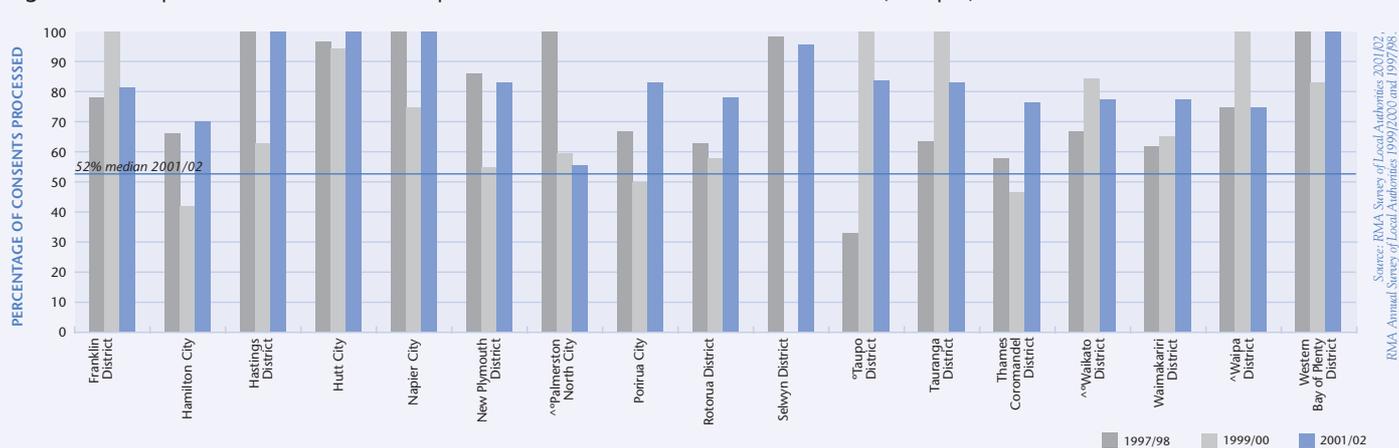


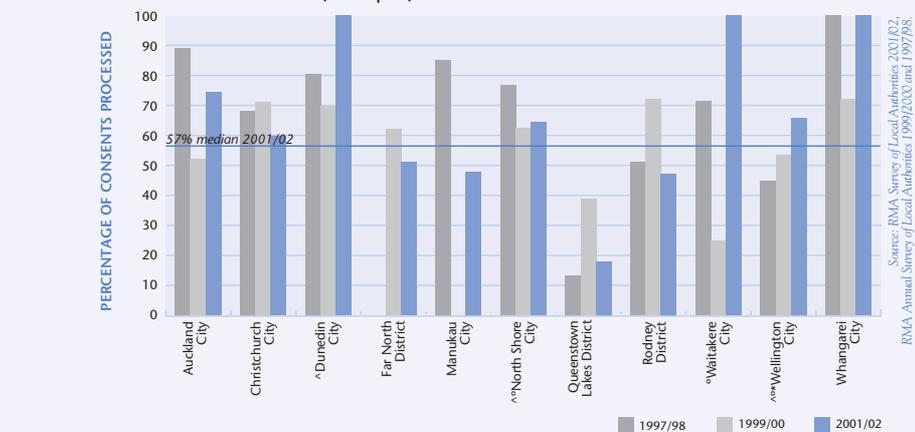
Figure 6 Note: Hauraki District processed 0% of notified consents within time in 1999/00.

Figure 7: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 3)



Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 8: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 4)

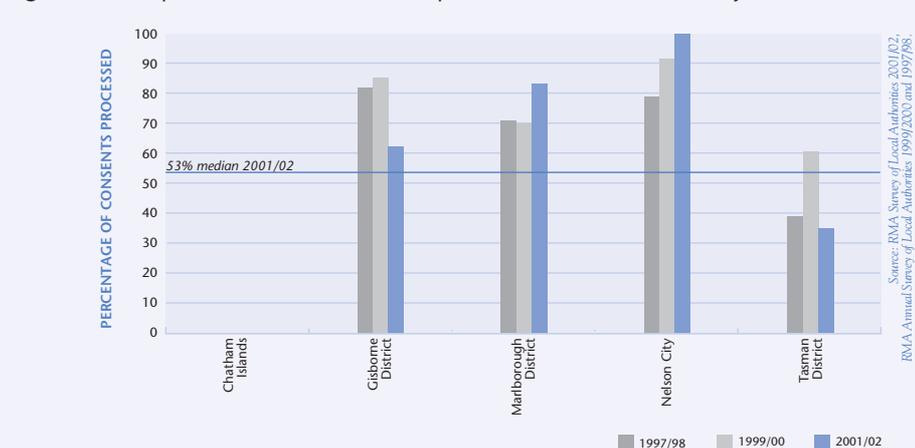


Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 7 Note: Invercargill City and Selwyn District Councils were unable to supply time limit information for notified consents in 1999/00.

Figure 8 Note: Information for Manakau City Council in 1999/2000 and Far North District Council in 1997/98 was unavailable.

Figure 9: Comparison of notified consents processed within time – unitary authorities



Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 9 Note: Chatham Islands District Council only processed one notified consent in 2001/02 but did not meet the statutory time frames.

Note: The following symbols are used to indicate in which years the results are influenced by the re-setting of the clock when further information was requested - ^ 1997/98, ° 1999/2000, * 2001/02.

Non-notified consents processed within statutory time limits (including section 37) by local authority family group

REFER FIGURES TEN – FIFTEEN

Figure 10: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – regional councils

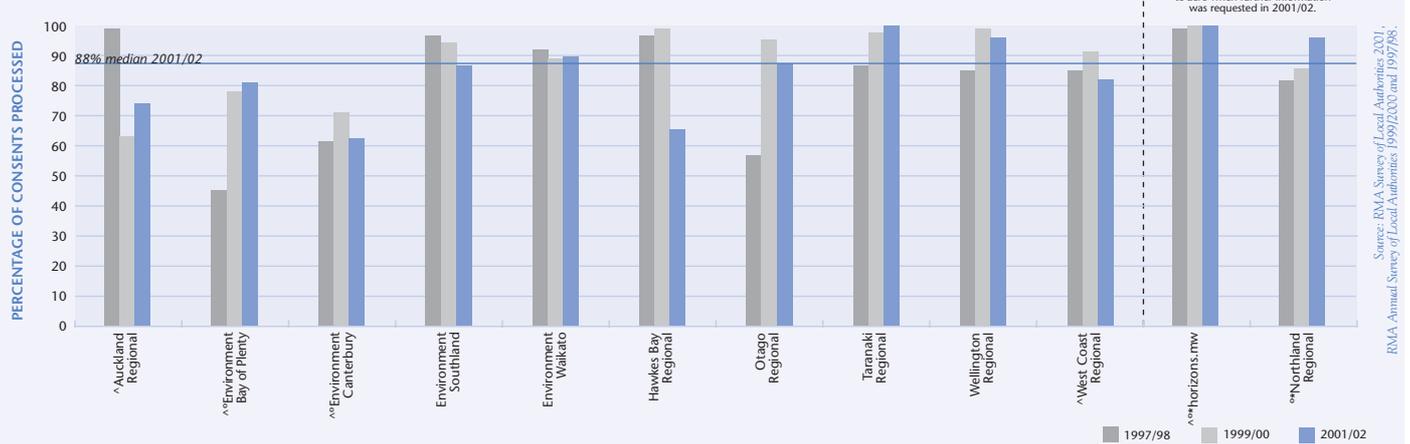


Figure 11: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 1)

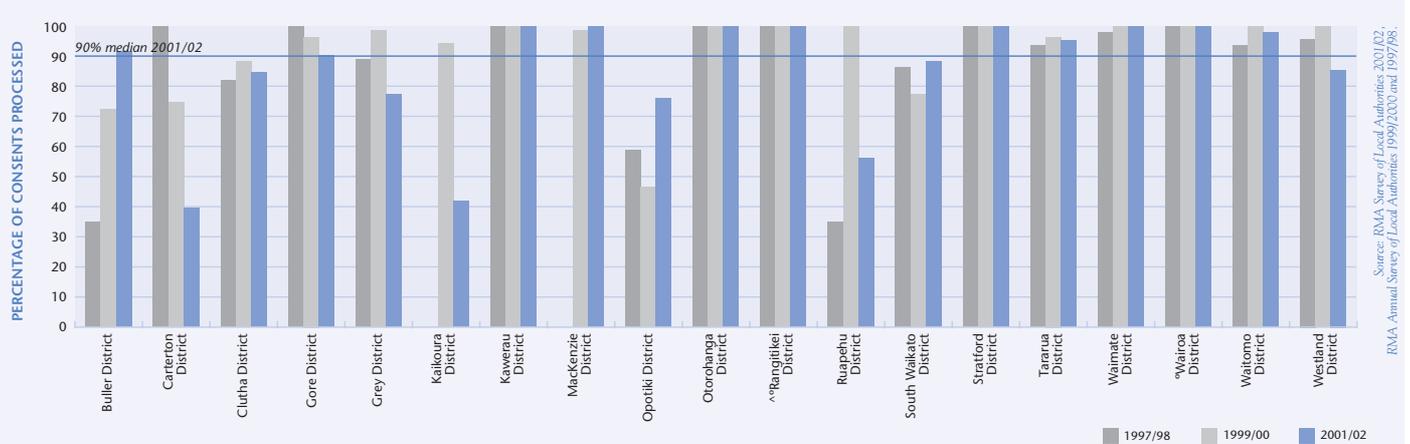


Figure 12: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 2)

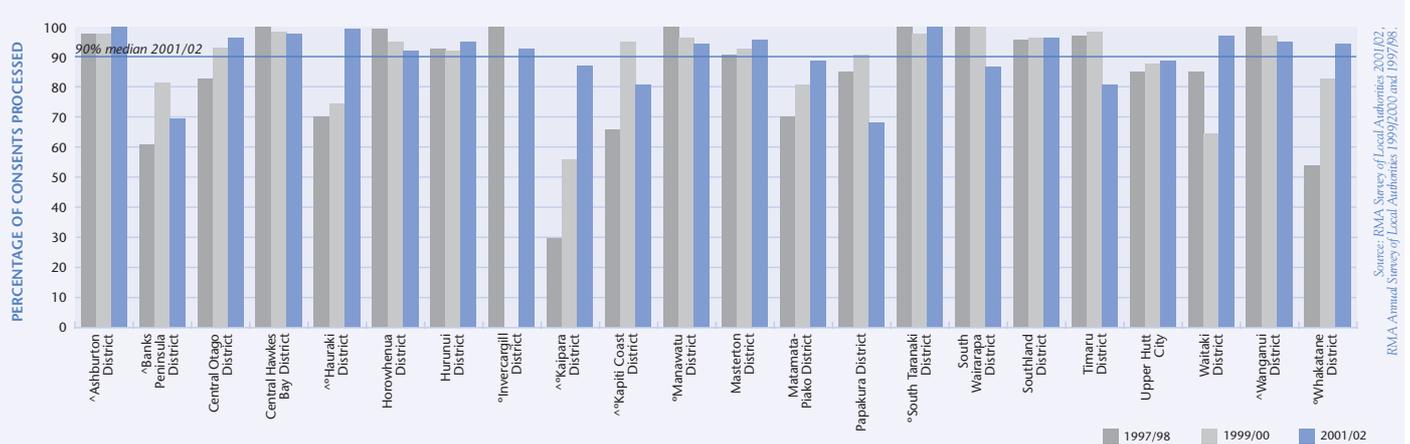
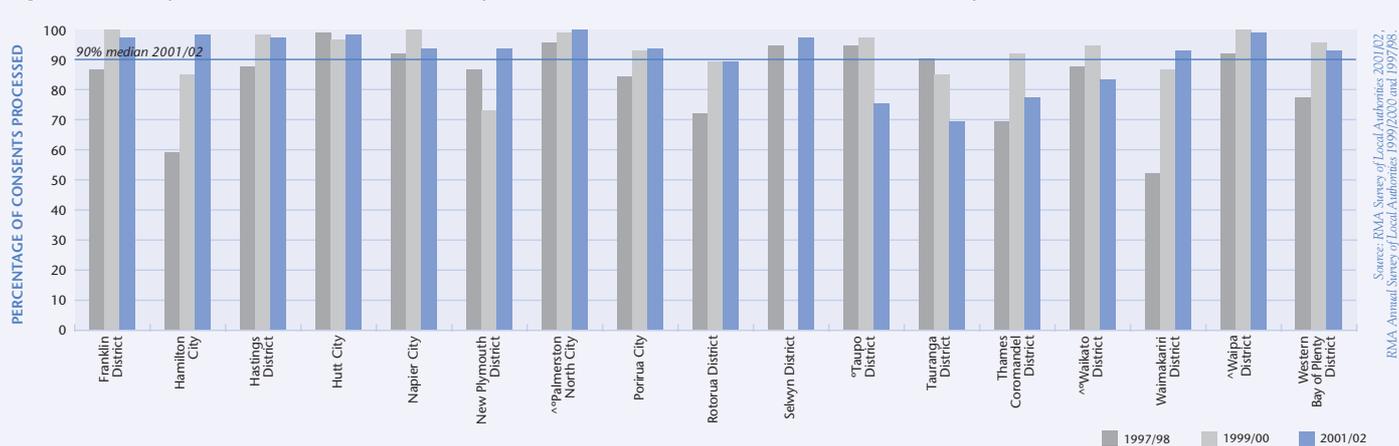
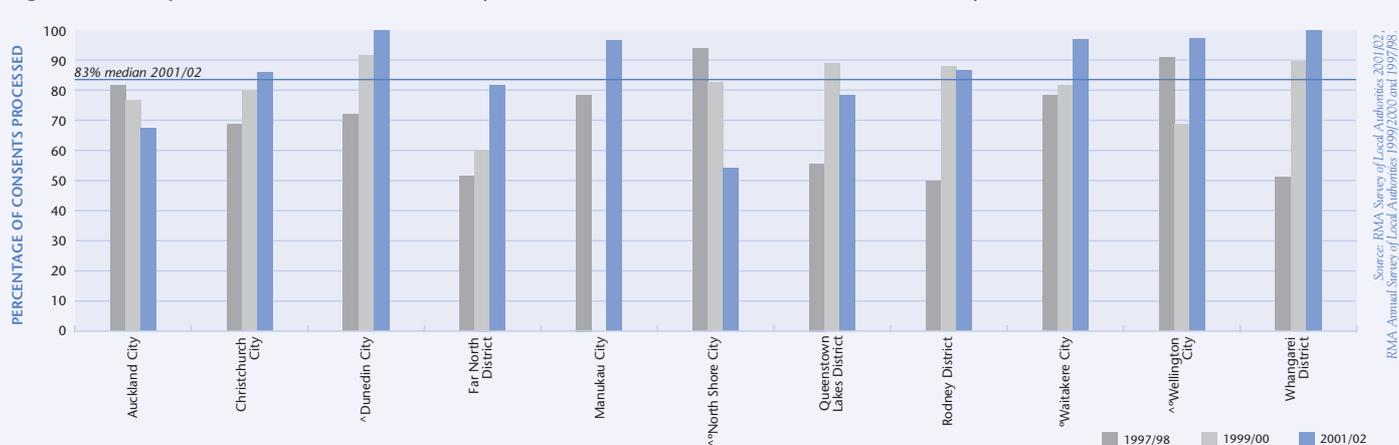


Figure 13: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 3)



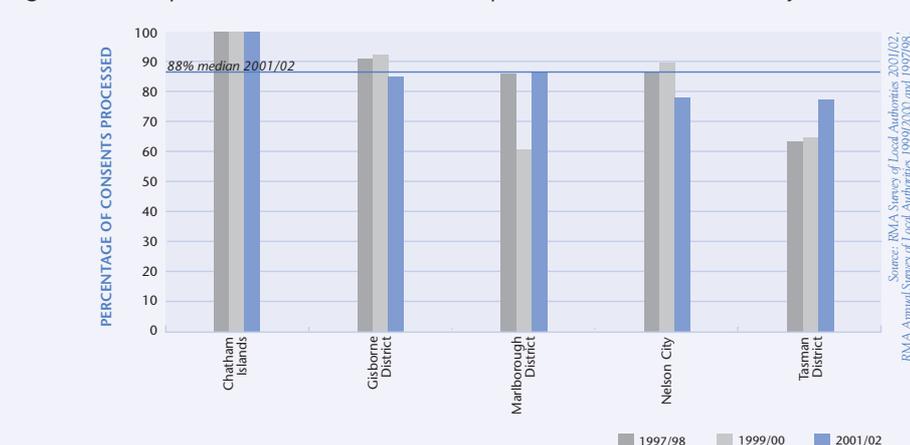
Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 14: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – territorial authorities (Group 4)



Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 15: Comparison of non-notified consents processed within time – unitary authorities



Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02, RMA Annual Survey of Local Authorities 1999/2000 and 1997/98.

Figure 11 Note:

Kaikoura District Council was unable to supply time limit information for non-notified consents processed in 1997/98.

MacKenzie District Council did not provide a response in 1997/98.

Figure 13 Note:

Invercargill City and Selwyn District Councils were unable to supply time limit information for non-notified consents in 1999/00.

Figure 14 Note:

Manakau City Council was unable to supply time limit information for non-notified consents in 1999/00.

AUDIT COMMENT

Audit New Zealand found that Section 37 has a vastly different level of application, and indeed acceptance, between councils. Opinions range from “not seen as politically acceptable to apply” through to, “used as a standard procedure on some consent types” and all points in between. These opinions generally fall along size of council lines with smaller councils not seeing it as politically acceptable. For a comprehensive description of the issues associated with Section 37 application and reporting refer to Section 10 of the [audit report](#) – available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz.

Median time taken to process consents

Local authorities were asked to provide the median number of working days taken to process resource consents. This was a new question in the 2001/02 survey.

Audit New Zealand found that few consent databases were capable of calculating the median, requiring a download of the entire database population into an Excel spreadsheet or similar. They noted several issues arising from this that impacted on the usefulness of the data. Many local authorities were unable to provide a complete set of data for this question.

The results of this question are not presented in this report.

Use of section 37 to extend time limits

In 2001/02, section 37 was used to extend statutory time limits for 6% of the total consents processed, the same as in 1999/2000. Local authorities processed 87% of those consents within the extended time limits established, compared with 83% in 1999/2000, and 92% in 1997/98.

The RMA provides two premises for the extension of statutory time limits:

- Section 37(1) – provides for a time frame to be extended indefinitely with the agreement of the applicant
- Section 37(5A) – provides for a local authority to extend a time period up to double the maximum time period.

Respondents were asked to provide information on whether section 37(1) or section 37(5A) was used to extend time limits. Forty local authorities (47%) were able to provide this information. Of those resource consents where section 37 was used, section 37(1) is used approximately 64% of the time, section 37(5A) is used 30% of the time, and both are used 16% of the time.



Charges to resource consent applicants

Under the Local Government Act 2002², local authorities must adopt funding and financial policies to provide predictability and certainty about sources and levels of funding. Local authority funding of resource consent processing is predominantly derived from fees and charges to the applicant. Some local authorities may subsidise their fees and costs using other income streams ie, rates.

Charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Local authorities were asked to provide information on minimum and maximum charges to resource consent applicants. Local authorities were also asked for median charges. This is a change from the 1999/2000 survey where the average of the middle third of charges were sought. Using the median minimises significant variation in data and the potential for the skewing effect of extreme results.

² This act did not come into force until after the period of the survey.

Data limitations

The data reported should be treated carefully as there are a number of limitations associated with its use. For a comprehensive description of the limitations refer to Section 12 of the [audit report](#) – available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz. These limitations are brought about because:

- some local authorities estimated the median
- as some local authorities were not able to rank their data they were not able to work out the difference between the median and the average
- in this section, questions were asked in a different way in 1999/2000 and 2001/02
- some local authorities provided standard charges rather than the actual amounts that were paid by applicants
- there was some confusion about whether additional charges (eg, approval of survey plan for subdivision) should be included in the answers or not.

Regional council charges to applicants

The average median charge of regional council notified consents for coastal permits (\$8,773) is significantly higher than that of notified land use (\$3,424), water (\$2,672) or discharge permits (\$2,540). The highest average maximum charge for notified consents is for discharge permits (\$20,482). The average median charges for non-notified consents issued by regional councils range from \$278 – \$528. The average maximum charge for a non-notified consent was highest for water permits (\$6,674) and lowest for a non-notified coastal permit (\$2,900).

REFER TABLE ELEVEN

Table 11: Regional councils: Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Land use	Notified	\$1,116	\$10,211	\$3,424	11
	Non-notified	\$108	\$4,694	\$278	12
Water	Notified	\$757	\$9,715	\$2,672	12
	Non-notified	\$144	\$6,674	\$438	12
Coastal	Notified	\$3,482	\$16,078	\$8,773	12
	Non-notified	\$212	\$2,900	\$528	12
Discharge	Notified	\$678	\$20,482	\$2,540	12
	Non-notified	\$118	\$5,664	\$473	12

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Note: This table includes figures for discharge permits that were supplied by territorial authorities, who process these under delegation.

Unitary authority charges to applicants

The average median charge of unitary authority notified consents for discharge permits (\$8,104) is significantly higher than that of notified water (\$3,097) or land use (\$2,858) permits. The highest average maximum charge for notified consents is for discharge permits (\$11,427). Median subdivision charges for notified consents (\$4,187) are similar to those of territorial authorities in local authority family groups 3 and 4 (300+ consents). The average median charges for non-notified consents issued by unitary authorities range from \$154 – \$789.

REFER TABLE TWELVE

The average maximum charge for a non-notified consent was highest for subdivision (\$3,429) and land use (\$3,366) consents and lowest for a non-notified water permit (\$576).

Territorial authority charges to applicants

Average median charges for notified subdivision and land use consents vary for territorial authorities in different local authority family groups. The average median charges for notified subdivision consents range from \$2,089 – \$4,409. The average median charges for notified land use consents range from \$1,850 – \$4,265. Average median charges for notified subdivision and land use consents are highest for councils processing between 301 – 650 consents (local authority family group 3) and lowest for councils processing between 111 – 300 consents (local authority family group 2). Average maximum charges for notified subdivision and land use consents increase with the number of consents processed by a local authority. Average maximum charges for notified consents range from \$3,905 – \$18,721.

The average median charges for non-notified consents issued by territorial authorities range from \$248 – \$1,096. The average maximum charges for non-notified consents issued by territorial authorities range from \$730 - \$7,046. The average maximum charge for a non-notified subdivision consent was highest for (\$3,429) local authority family group 3 territorial authorities (310 – 650 consents). The average maximum charge for a non-notified land use consent was highest for (\$7,046) local authority family group 4 territorial authorities (650+ consents).

REFER TABLES THIRTEEN – SIXTEEN

Table 12: Unitary authorities: Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Subdivision	Notified	\$1,812	\$8,440	\$4,187	3
	Non-notified	\$133	\$3,429	\$423	3
Land use	Notified	\$1,377	\$10,356	\$2,858	3
	Non-notified	\$36	\$3,366	\$264	3
Water	Notified	\$2,772	\$9,602	\$3,097	3
	Non-notified	\$88	\$576	\$154	3
Coastal	Notified	Insufficient data to analyse			
	Non-notified	Insufficient data to analyse			
Discharge	Notified	\$7,516	\$11,427	\$8,104	2
	Non-notified	\$461	\$1,879	\$789	2

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Table 13: Territorial authorities in local authority family group 1 (0 – 110 consents): Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Subdivision	Notified	\$1,454	\$3,905	\$2,163	8
	Non-notified	\$201	\$734	\$331	22
Land use	Notified	\$1,913	\$5,376	\$2,583	13
	Non-notified	\$132	\$730	\$248	22

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Table 14: Territorial authorities in local authority family group 2 (111 – 300 consents): Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Subdivision	Notified	\$1,212	\$4,086	\$2,089	14
	Non-notified	\$405	\$2,873	\$504	18
Land use	Notified	\$1,023	\$5,524	\$1,850	16
	Non-notified	\$131	\$2,436	\$298	18

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Table 15: Territorial authorities in local authority family group 3 (301 – 650 consents): Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Subdivision	Notified	\$2,567	\$9,959	\$4,409	11
	Non-notified	\$233	\$2,608	\$1,096	11
Land use	Notified	\$1,918	\$9,479	\$4,265	11
	Non-notified	\$137	\$1,941	\$362	11

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Table 16: Territorial authorities in local authority family group 4 (651+ consents): Average charges to applicants for resource consent processing

Consent type		Average minimum charge	Average maximum charge	Average median	Number of councils responding
Subdivision	Notified	\$1,471	\$20,094	\$3,454	10
	Non-notified	\$196	\$9,668	\$942	13
Land use	Notified	\$1,652	\$18,721	\$4,071	13
	Non-notified	\$110	\$7,046	\$519	13

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Charges data supplied by local authorities

Eighty local authorities (93%) were able to provide some information on their charges to applicants for resource consent processing. Incomplete and estimated responses from several local authorities have limited the usefulness of this data set.

Tables 11 – 16 illustrate the averages of the minimum, maximum, and median charges to applicants for each type of resource consent processed by local authority type. They also provide the number of local authorities who responded to each question.

Comparison to 1999/2000 data

It is difficult to compare the 2001/02 data to data collected in previous surveys due to changes in the data requested (medians used in 2001/02, average of middle third used in 1999/2000) and the number of local authorities that responded. Refer to the [1999/2000 report](#) on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz for information about the 1999/2000 results.

Minimum and maximum charges can be compared to give a rough guide to changes in charges to applicants, bearing in mind the varying and lower response rates in 1999/2000. Maximum charges for notified regional council consents charges in 1999/2000 ranged from \$11,718 (land use permit) to \$19,192 (coastal permit). For territorial and unitary authorities maximum charges ranged from \$3,423 to \$20,447 for subdivision and land use consents. Both of these ranges are similar to those reported in 2001/02.



Good practice in resource consent processing

One purpose of the RMA survey is to promote local authority good practice and improved performance in resource management functions. This section reports on:

- Pre-application phase of resource consent processing
- Application phase of resource consent processing :
 - Requests for further information
 - Assessments of Environmental Effects and notification
 - Monitoring processing time frames
- Customer satisfaction.

Pre-application phase of resource consent processing

Local authorities were asked to indicate whether they carried out four defined good practice measures (see figure 16).

Seventy local authorities (81%) define in checklists for applicants the environmental effects that must be addressed in consent applications for controlled and restricted

discretionary activities. This is the same as in 1999/2000 and an increase from 73% in 1998/99. This practice assists applicants in understanding and writing an Assessment of the Environmental Effects (AEE).

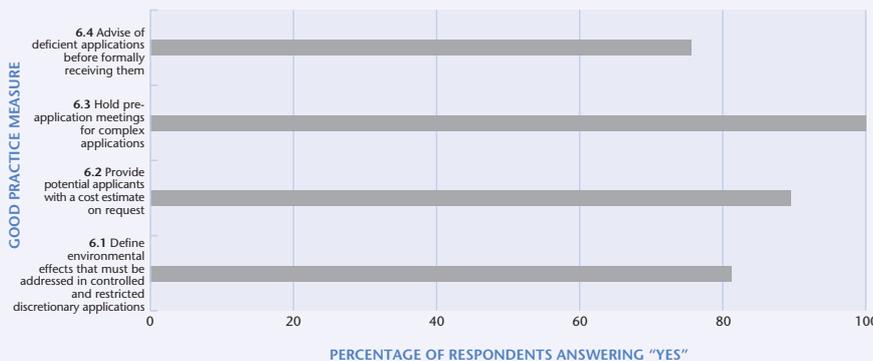
If requested 77 local authorities (90%) provide potential applicants with an estimate (based on past experience in that kind of work) of the cost of applying for a resource consent. This is an increase from 86% in 1999/2000. The Resource Management Amendment Act 2003 amended the Act so that local authorities *must* provide on request an estimate of any additional costs likely to be incurred (see section 36(3A)). This provides fair warning to applicants of any extra charges.

One hundred percent of local authorities indicated that they would hold a pre-hearing meeting for a complex application (up from 96% in 1999/2000).

In 2001/02, local authorities were asked for the first time whether they advised applicants if an application is deficient (in terms of section 88(4) of the RMA) before formally receiving it. Sixty-five local authorities (76%) said they did advise applicants. Section 88(3) (inserted by the Resource Management Amendment Act 2003) clarifies that if an application doesn't include an adequate assessment of environmental effects or the information required by regulations, local authorities can (within five days of the application being lodged) determine the application is incomplete and return it with reasons to the applicant.

REFER FIGURE SIXTEEN

Figure 16: Good practice: Pre-application



Source: RMA Survey of Local Authorities 2001/02.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Requests for further information by local authorities can be made under section 92 of the RMA. To reduce overall time delays, the Ministry considers that it is useful for local authorities to have mechanisms in place to assist in minimising the number of requests for further information. These methods should ideally be user-friendly and cover all issues relevant to an application.

Application phase for resource consent processing

Requests for further information

Local authorities were asked to indicate from a list (see figure 17) the mechanisms they used to minimise further information requests. The most common was the use of application forms that assist an applicant to identify all potential issues.

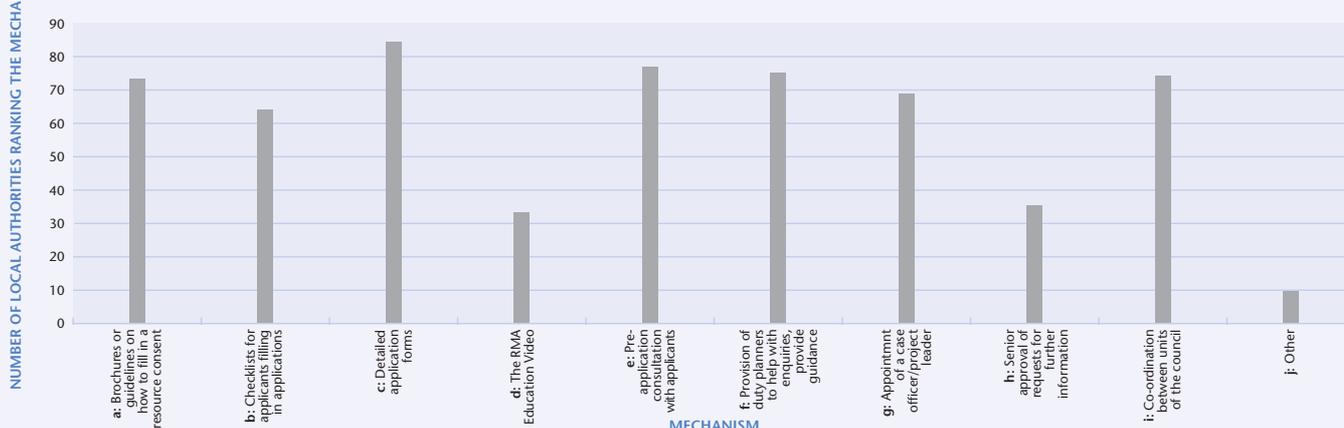
Other mechanisms employed by local authorities to minimise further information requests included:

- providing information on a website
- having on-site meetings before the application is lodged
- holding seminars and workshops with consultants, and regularly sending them information on matters regarding the processing of applications
- undertaking audits of further information requests to come up with best practice measures for planners and consultants
- using the Ministry for the Environment's CD Rom on the Resource Management Act.

Before commissioning specialist reports, 81 local authorities (84%) indicated that they provide applicants with the opportunity to discuss or dispute the requirements to provide such further information and/or obtain it themselves, a marked increase from the 42% recorded last year. This allows applicants to avoid paying for a specialist report where the information can be obtained from another source. The Resource Management Amendment Act 2003 clarifies the process by where applicants are notified of the requirement to commission a specialist report. The Act clarifies the process by which applicants can object to the requirement.

REFER FIGURE SEVENTEEN

Figure 17: Local authority use of mechanisms to reduce further information requests



Assessments of Environmental Effects (AEEs) and notification

Local authorities were asked to indicate from a list (see figure 18) the mechanisms they used to ensure adequate identification and assessment of AEEs, identification of affected parties and proper notification. Fifty-five local authorities (64%) indicated that they follow a structured process to check that environmental effects are adequately identified and addressed in AEEs, the same as in 1999/2000 and up from 53% in 1997/98. Adhering to a set process helps to ensure that all the necessary steps are followed and completed, providing consistency from application to application as well as from officer to officer.

Sixty-three local authorities (73%) indicated that guidance notes (such as *To Notify or Not to Notify – A good practice guide*, Ministry for the Environment 1997) or checklists are available to staff on when to notify an application (compared with 56% in 1999/2000 and 53% in 1997/98). Forty-nine local authorities (57%) advised they have internal guidance notes or checklists available to staff on how to identify potentially affected parties (up from 44% in 1999/2000 and 47% in 1997/98). Internal checklists and guidance notes assist staff to make consistent decisions on notification and the identification of affected parties.

REFER FIGURE EIGHTEEN

Monitoring processing time frames

Local authorities were asked if they monitor whether resource consents are processed within statutory time limits. Forty-two advised they do so weekly, 33 monthly, three not at all, and eight use other methods (for example daily, continually, or a combination of these). Eighty-three local authorities (97%) monitor whether consents are processed within statutory time limits (although some don't need to due to the very low number of resource consents they receive).

Local authorities were asked whether they use mechanisms to assist staff to process resource consents within time. Sixty-seven local authorities (78%) advised they use mechanisms to assist staff to process resource consents within time, up from 72% in 1999/2000, and 70% in 1998/99.

Local authorities were asked whether they formally monitor and report consent processing performance. Seventy-three local authorities (85%) formally monitor and report consent processing performance, the results of which are made available to ratepayers. This is higher than the 84% recorded in 1999/2000.

REFER FIGURE NINETEEN

Figure 18: Good practice: Application process (Assessment of environment effects (AEE) and notification)

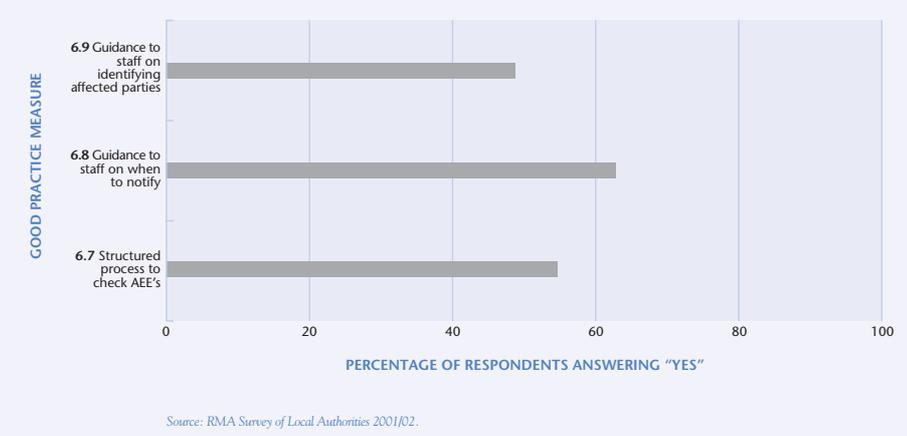
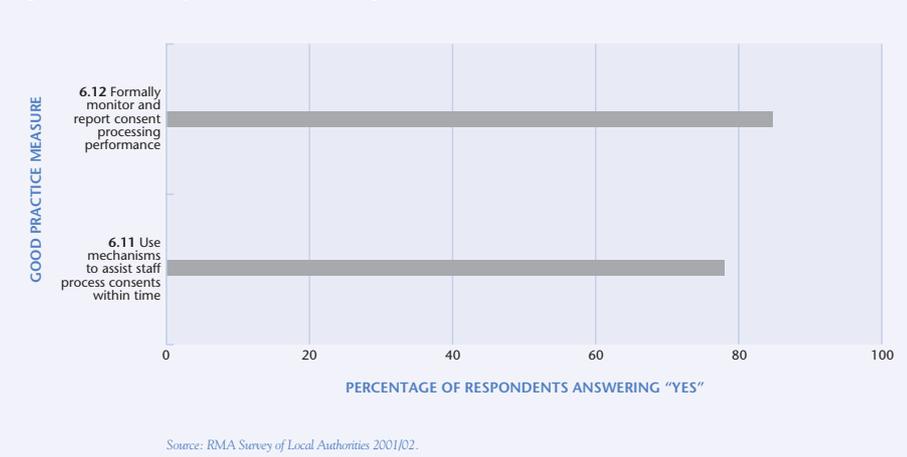


Figure 19: Good practice: Monitoring time frames



Customer satisfaction

Local authorities were asked a number of questions regarding the practice and usefulness of running satisfaction surveys for resource consent processes.

Thirty-two local authorities (37%) reported that they used customer satisfaction surveys in 2001/02 to establish what applicants think of their resource consent processes. This compares to 59% in 1999/2000 and 48% in 1997/98. The frequency with which these surveys were conducted varied. Fifteen local authorities said they conducted surveys annually, and nine said they included

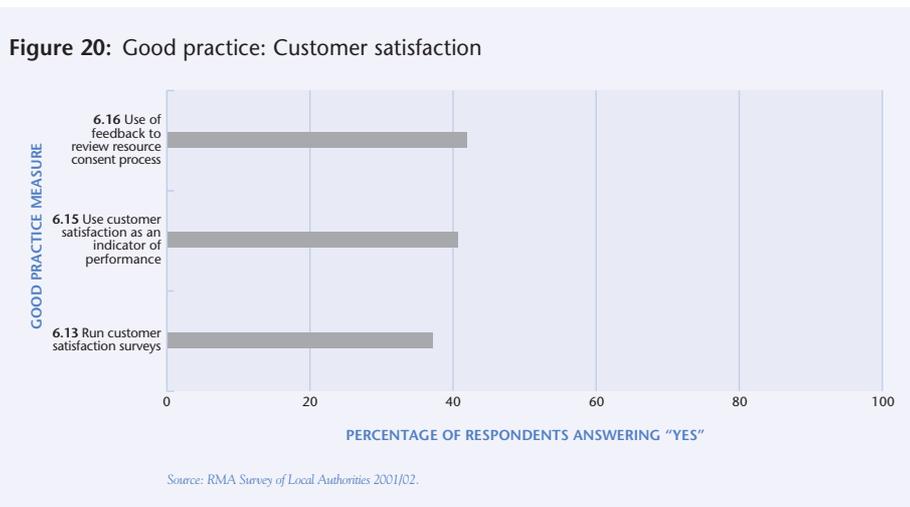
customer feedback forms with every consent decision (or asked every submitter who is heard to comment on the process). Others conducted surveys quarterly, biennially or one off. For those that specified, postal surveys were the most common with 12 local authorities using these, and five using phone surveys. One local authority reported that it does an annual over the counter survey.

Thirty-five local authorities (41%) advised that they use the level of customer satisfaction as an indicator of performance for their resource consent processes. This is a decrease from 1999/2000 (77%) and the same as in 1997/98.

Thirty-six local authorities (42%) advised that they use the feedback from customer satisfaction surveys to review their resource consent processes. This compares to 82% in 1999/2000 and 47% in 1997/98.

Of the 54 local authorities (63%) who advised that they did not carry out a consent processing customer satisfaction survey in 2001/02, 20 reported that they had one scheduled in the next 24 months. The other local authorities either did not state whether they had one scheduled or reported that they didn't. Reasons for this varied, including because they had conducted surveys in the past and had consistently good results, the council's consent numbers were low, or they already had general surveys in place and didn't consider it necessary to have one specifically for consent processing.

REFER FIGURE TWENTY





Monitoring, compliance and enforcement

This section reports on local authority responses to questions about the monitoring and enforcement activities that they are undertaking. Specifically in relation to:

- Section 35 monitoring
- Joint monitoring with other agencies
- State of the Environment monitoring
- Plan effectiveness monitoring
- Complaints and enforcement orders
- Compliance with resource consent condition monitoring
- Infringement notices.
- the State of the Environment
- the suitability and effectiveness of policy statements and plans
- the exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by the local authority
- compliance with resource consent conditions.

Section 35 monitoring

Monitoring policies, processes and environmental outcomes is an important aspect of the RMA and is a required function for local authorities under section 35 of the RMA. Section 35 outlines monitoring responsibilities of local authorities, including monitoring:

In 2001/02 all local authorities indicated that they were undertaking some type of monitoring described in section 35 of the Act. Table 17 compares the 2001/02 survey results with the findings from the 1999/2000 survey. There has been a 12% increase in the number of territorial authorities undertaking State of the Environment monitoring. There has also been a 7% increase in the number of territorial authorities monitoring the effectiveness of their plans and policies. Other forms of monitoring have remained relatively unchanged for all local authority types with the exception of regional council monitoring of plans and policies and delegated or transferred functions. These have shown 8% and 17% decreases respectively. Note that there are only five unitary authorities.

REFER TABLE SEVENTEEN

Table 17: Percentages of local authorities monitoring under section 35 in 1999/2000 and 2001/02

Local authority type	Monitor State of the Environment		Monitor plans/policies		Monitor delegated /transferred functions		Monitor consent conditions		Monitor complaints register	
	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02	99/00	01/02
Regional	100%	100%	83%	75%	67%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Territorial	36%	48%	54%	61%	45%	43%	96%	97%	87%	88%
Unitary	80%	80%	80%	60%	40%	40%	100%	80%	60%	80%

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 1999/00, 2001/02, Question 4.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

State of Environment monitoring requires gathering information on the condition or state of environment that an authority has responsibility for managing. This information provides a foundation for informed decisions to be made regarding management of natural and physical resources. State of the Environment reports may be produced as an output of this monitoring.

Joint monitoring

The results of the 2001/02 survey indicate that 38 (44%) of local authorities undertook some form of joint monitoring with other statutory authorities. This is a 7% increase from the 32 (37%) local authorities who reported joint monitoring activity in 1999/2000.

The majority of joint monitoring projects were carried out between regional councils and territorial/unitary authorities. The most common joint monitoring activities in 2001/02 were for monitoring of:

- consent compliance
- recreational water quality
- pollution control
- air and water quality
- state of the environment.

Several local authorities reported joint monitoring projects with district health authorities (water quality and shellfish monitoring) and the Department of Conservation (biodiversity monitoring).

State of the Environment monitoring and reporting

Nineteen (22%) local authorities produced a state of the environment report in 2001/02. In 1999/2000 25 local authorities responded that they had produced a state of the environment report. Typically these reports are not produced on an annual basis and there is often a focus on particular aspects of the environment. The number of reports produced is not a strict measure of local authority effort in State of the Environment monitoring. Table 18 provides a breakdown of SOE reporting by local authority type for the past three surveys.

REFER TABLE EIGHTEEN

When asked what type of state of the environment monitoring was undertaken the most commonly stated responses of local authorities (n=47) were:

- monitoring of Ministry for the Environment indicators
- monitoring of locally developed indicators
- monitoring of community environmental perceptions using surveys
- monitoring ecological health indicators.

Table 18: Local authority production of State of the Environment reports in 2001/02, 1999/2000 and 1998/99

Local authority type	Number who produced a State of the Environment report		
	1998/99	1999/00	2001/02
Regional councils	7	8	7
Territorial authorities	8	13	9
Unitary authorities	3	4	3

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02 Question 4.4, 1999/00 Question 4.6, 1998/99 Question 5.4.

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Section 35(2)(b) of the Resource Management Act requires all local authorities to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules or other methods of their policy statements or plans. This type of monitoring involves gathering information to assess the effects that policies and methods have on the environment, and to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the methods used to achieve the plan's anticipated environmental results. Section 35(2A) of the RMA (inserted by the Resource Management Amendment Act 2003) requires local authorities to prepare a five-yearly report of the results of this monitoring.

Plan effectiveness monitoring

47 local authorities (55%) stated that they monitored effectiveness of each regional/district plan/policy statement that they administer. Regional councils (75%) were more likely to monitor the effectiveness of their plans than territorial (61%) and unitary (60%) authorities.

When asked to describe how they were monitoring plan/policy statement effectiveness, local authorities (n=47) most commonly stated:

- development and monitoring of plan effectiveness indicators
- monitoring state of the environment indicators that reflect plan effectiveness
- implementation of formal monitoring strategies
- issue based projects reviewing plan effectiveness.

Enforcement and compliance

Complaints about breaches of the Resource Management Act (RMA)

Local authorities were asked to provide the number of complaints concerning alleged breaches of the RMA or other resource management incidents. In 2001/02 and 1999/2000 respondents were instructed to include complaints about excessive noise because in previous survey many local authorities indicated that they were unable to differentiate between the two. In 2001/02 109,609 complaints³ were recorded by the 84 local authorities able to provide this information. This is a 12% increase from the 97,722 complaints reported by the 81 local authorities able to provide this information in 1999/2000.

Table 19 compares the numbers of complaints recorded in 2001/02 with those recorded in 1999/2000 by local authority family group. The data reported in this table have a number of limitations. The interpretation of the survey question by local authorities has varied between surveys. The recent implementation of electronic recording systems for complaints in a number of local authorities has led to a greater capture of complaints data and an increase in the number of recorded complaints. Local authorities have also reported problems arising from the collection of complaints data that have impacted upon the accuracy of their responses. Most commonly these were:

- complaints data is being maintained by several staff members in a number of different systems
- changes to systems for recording complaints part way through the recording period
- some systems record both complaints and enquiries.

³ *Complaints include excessive noise complaints*

For a comprehensive description of the issues associated with recording and reporting complaints refer to Section 13 of the [audit report](#) - available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz.

REFER TABLE NINETEEN

Complaint resolution

A number of enforcement options are available for the resolution of complaints relating to breaches of the RMA. These are:

- enforcement orders
- abatement notices
- excessive noise directions
- infringement notices
- prosecutions
- informal means.

The majority of local authorities are now able to report noise complaints separately from other complaints regarding the RMA. The large proportion of noise complaints distorts the data and makes useful analysis of other complaint types difficult. It is planned to separate noise complaints from other RMA complaints in future surveys.

Excessive noise complaints were resolved using excessive noise directions – 19,434 directions were issued in 2001/02. There were 27 enforcement orders, 838 abatement notices, 394 infringement notices and 74 prosecutions in 2001/02.

The majority of complaints (75%) were resolved through informal means or were minor administrative matters not requiring further action. There has been a 3% decrease in the number of complaints resolved informally since 1999/2000. Unresolved complaints accounted for 1.6% of all complaints received by local authorities in 2001/02. This is an increase from 1999/2000 where less than 1% of complaints were reported as unresolved.

Compliance with resource consent conditions

Sixty-four percent of resource consents requiring compliance monitoring were monitored in 2001/02 (n=73). Of those that required monitoring the proportion of resource consents that complied with their consent monitoring conditions was 72% (n=68).

A total of 5,174 breaches of resource consent conditions were recorded in 2001/02 (n=69). There were different interpretations amongst local authorities about what constituted a material breach of consent conditions. This may have led to the misreporting of some information. 9,051 breaches were reported in 1999/2000 (n=54).

Breaches of resource consent conditions were resolved using informal means in 4,954 cases (95%) in 2001/02. This is an increase in informal resolutions from the 85% in 1999/2000. Breaches requiring formal resolution in 2001/02 included nine enforcement orders, 440 abatement notices, 162 infringement notices and seven prosecutions. Local authorities reported that 660 breaches were still in progress at the close of the financial year.

Table 19: Total number of complaints about breaches of the RMA recorded in 2001/02 and 1999/2000 by local authority family group

Local authority type	Total # complaints recorded		
	1999/00	2001/02	% change
Regional councils (n=12)	9,986	11,835	+19
Territorial authorities - family 1 (n=19)	1,639	3,378	+106
Territorial authorities - family 2 (n=22)	4,541	3,174	-30
Territorial authorities - family 3 (n=17)	7,896	12,462	+57
Territorial authorities - family 4 (n=11)	70,265	74,017	+5
Unitary authorities (n=5)	3,395	4,743	+40

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02 Question 4.6, 1999/00 Question 4.12.

Infringement notices

Infringement notices came into force on 1 February 2000 under the Resource Management (Infringement Offences) Regulations 1999. Eighty-five local authorities issued 620 infringement notices in the 2001/02 annual period. Table 20 describes the number of infringement notices issued by different local authority types.

REFER TABLE TWENTY

Offences for which an infringement notice can be issued relate to contraventions of particular sections of the Resource Management Act. These are defined in section 338 of the RMA. The greatest proportion of infringement notices are issued for offences related to discharge of waste or other matter (81%) [Section 338(1)(a)] and discharge of contaminant or harmful substance in the coastal marine area (14%) [Section 338(1)(c)]. Table 21 describes the number of infringement offences for which notices were issued in 2001/02.

REFER TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Of the 620 infringement notices issued in 2001/02, 47 were not proceeded with, while 326 were defended (appealed) in the Environment Court. The remainder were either paid directly or are still in progress.

Table 20: Total number of infringement notices issued in 2001/02 by local authority type

Authority type	Infringement notices issued 2001/02	
	Notices	% of total
Regional councils	335	54
Territorial authorities	250	40
Unitary authorities	35	6

Table 21: Notices issued by type of infringement offences by RMA definition in 2001/02

Infringement offences by RMA definitions 2001/02					
338(1)(a)	338(1)(c)	338(1)(d)	338(2)(a)	338(2)(c)	338(2)(d)
505	87	0	1	25	2
81%	14%	0%	0%	4%	0%



Maori participation in RMA Processes

LOCAL AUTHORITY BEST PRACTICE

Iwi Management Plans can be used for input into consents and plans. As at July 2001, the Ministry for the Environment document *Whakamaui ki Nga Kaupapa*, contained all known Iwi management plans and documents. The Resource Management Amendment Act 2003 altered the status of these documents. When preparing plans or policy statements local authorities are now required to take into account Iwi management plans, rather than have regard to.

The section reports on:

- Funding for Maori/Iwi participation in RMA processes
- Maori input into consents and plans
- Statutory acknowledgements.

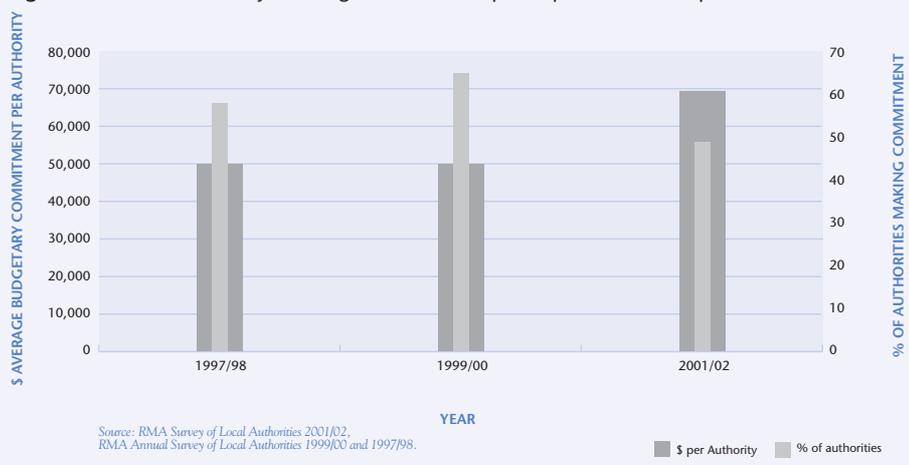
Survey questions on consultation with Iwi were not asked in 2001/02. Results over the previous four surveys have consistently shown that sending draft plans to Iwi for comment and holding hui on marae are the most common forms of consultation with Iwi by local authorities.

Funding for Maori participation in RMA processes

Forty-two local authorities (49%) reported a budgetary commitment to Maori/Iwi participation in RMA processes in 2001/02. This has decreased from 65% in 1999/2000 and 58% in 1997/98. The average amount budgeted for Maori participation was \$69,845, compared to \$49,981 in 1999/2000, and \$50,000 in 1997/98. A number of local authorities responded that they did not have an individually itemised budgetary commitment, but that funding for Maori/Iwi participation in RMA processes was made available in 2001/02.

REFER FIGURE TWENTY-ONE

Figure 21: Local authority funding for Maori/Iwi participation in RMA processes



Maori input into consents and plans

Fifty-one local authorities (59%) have criteria or provide guidance for their staff to determine when Iwi or hapu are likely to be affected parties in a resource consent application and should be notified of the proposal. This is a decrease from the 61% recorded in 1999/2000.

Local authorities were asked which aspects of the Iwi management plan/planning documents were of most value to them for informing RMA practices. Of the 58 (67%) local authorities aware of Iwi management plans in their rohe, the majority of local authorities indicated that they gained the most value from these when used as a reference for preparing their own documents. Several local authorities indicated that they are useful on an ongoing basis. Some local authorities reported that they find that personal contact with the Iwi is the best method for informing and involving them in RMA processes.

Statutory acknowledgements

Statutory acknowledgements were introduced in the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 and represent an innovative approach to improving existing RMA processes by incorporating Ngai Tahu interests into resource management decision-making.

There are 25 local authorities whose boundaries fall within the Ngai Tahu rohe. Eight of these local authorities received resource consent applications in 2001/02 that affected statutory acknowledgements, a decrease from 17 in 1999/2000.

Five hundred and eighty-nine resource consent applications were received in 2001/02 affecting statutory acknowledgements. Ninety-seven percent were received by regional councils – Environment Southland receiving 243 of them, Environment Canterbury 114, and Otago Regional Council 212. Three hundred and eighty-one resource consent applications were received in 1999/2000 affecting statutory acknowledgements.

Research questions and other issues

The Ministry collects information through the biennial survey (and other means) on a number of issues that it has a statutory responsibility to monitor (eg, transfers of functions under section 33), or wishes to evaluate at a national level (eg, the current development status of plans/policy statements).

This section reports on:

- Plan status
- Private plan changes
- Plan references
- Transfer of functions
- Designations.

Plan status

The Ministry maintains a register of plan and policy statement development on the [quality planning website](http://www.qp.org.nz) www.qp.org.nz. This provides a measure of local authority progress toward full implementation of the Resource Management Act.

Table 22 summarises the number of plans and policy statements at each stage in the development process. Ten district plans and 17 regional plans have become fully operative since 1 June 2001.

Note: This table records 80 district plans, more than one for each of the 74 territorial authorities. Some territorial authorities have chosen to produce their plans in sections, which are at different development stages. These have been recorded as separate plans for the purposes of this survey.

REFER TABLE TWENTY-TWO

Private plan changes

Territorial authorities reported that they received 35 applications for private changes to operative district plans in 2001/02. This is 12 more applications than were received in 1999/2000 when there were 10 fewer operative district plans (private plan changes cannot be requested on proposed district plans). One private plan change request was received by a regional council regarding a regional plan in 2001/02.

Plan references

Forty-four local authorities provided the number of references (appeals) lodged on their fully operative RMA plans, (five of these responses were estimated). Table 23 presents the number of plans for which data about references was supplied.

REFER TABLE TWENTY-THREE

Table 22: Summary of plan/policy statement status as at 1 March 2003

	Regional policy statements	Regional plans	Coastal plans	District plans
Fully operative	15	38	6	40
Before the Environment Court	1	15	7	31
In hearings	0	2	0	5
Notified	0	3	0	4

Source: Ministry for the Environment internal database of plan and policy status.

Note: Plans prepared by unitary authorities are included in this table according to the plan classifications used.

Table 23: References (appeals) lodged on operative RMA plans and policy statements

Plan type	Number of plans with reference data supplied	Number of references lodged on plans			Number of references that proceeded to a full Environment Court hearing		
		Total refs	Median	Range	No. plans	Total refs	Range
District plans	33	576	9	0–144	8	43	1–22
Regional policy statements	11	149	7	4–50	5	21	1–13
Regional plans	40	114	3	0–18	5	11	2–3

Source: RMA annual survey of local authorities 2001/02, Question 7.2.

Transfer of functions

Northland Regional Council and Far North District Council reported that they had transferred functions, powers or duties to another public authority under section 33 of the RMA during 2001/02.

Functions transferred from Northland Regional Council to Far North District Council:

1. The processing, administration, and enforcement of resource consents for the following activities:
 - a) sale of liquor activity from premises in the coastal marine area adjoining the Far North District
 - b) structures in riverbeds, construction, earthworks [land disturbance] and works in stream side management area and structures in watercourses within catchments where the Far North District Council holds urban catchment management plan resource consents
 - c) on-site discharges of (contaminants) effluent from dwellings and the like
 - d) minor structures which straddle the coastal marine area boundary.
2. The administration and enforcement of the control of unauthorised noise originating in the coastal marine area adjoining the Far North District, under Part II of the Act.
3. The control of contaminant discharges on the foreshore of the coastal marine area adjoining the Far North District, being those from live and dead stock, abandoned vehicles, rubbish and fires.

Functions transferred from Far North District Council to Northland Regional Council:

1. The processing, administration, and enforcement of resource consents for the following activities:
 - a) land use consents for construction earthworks for earth dams
 - b) land use consents for private jetties and boat ramps that straddle coastal marine area boundary.

Functions transferred from Northland Regional Council to Whangarei District Council:

1. The processing, administration, and enforcement of resource consents for the activity of sale of liquor in the coastal marine area adjoining the Whangarei District.
2. The administration and enforcement of the control of unauthorised noise originating in the coastal marine area adjoining the Whangarei District, under Part II of the Act.
3. The control of contaminant discharges on the foreshore of the coastal marine area adjoining the Whangarei District, being those from live and dead stock, abandoned vehicles, rubbish and fires.

Designations

City and district councils were asked to provide information about the number of notices of requirement for designations that were processed in 2001/02 and the number of new designations that were included in their district plan or proposed district plan.

Seventy-five local authorities reported that 190 notices of requirement for designations were processed in 2001/02. Seventy-five local authorities reported that 65 designations were included in district plans.

Appendix 1:

Number of applications for resource consent processed by each local authority (in local authority family groups)

Family group	Local authority	Resource consents processed		
		97/98	99/00	01/02
Regional councils:	Kawerau District Council	7	11	8
Group 1	Stratford District Council	63	32	36
	Wairoa District Council	41	41	38
	Opotiki District Council	59	58	40
	MacKenzie District Council	N/A*	74	43
	Waimate District Council	52	48	47
	Carterton District Council	52	82	49
	Waitomo District Council	52	55	51
	Otorohanga District Council	71	69	54
	Tararua District Council	57	55	59
	Grey District Council	90	86	61
	Ruapehu District Council	100	92	69
	Clutha District Council	85	72	75
	Gore District Council	100	98	83
	Buller District Council	56	57	86
	Westland District Council	85	58	93
	Rangitikei District Council	74	91	96
	South Waikato District Council	93	78	97
	Kaikoura District Council	73	58	104
Territorial authorities:	Waitaki District Council	160	91	116
Group 2	Central Hawkes Bay District Council	103	93	124
	Hauraki District Council	158	173	126
	Banks Peninsula District Council	187	160	137
	Masterton District Council	142	120	140
	Hurunui District Council	200	200	143
	Manawatu District Council	204	187	147
	South Taranaki District Council	185	131	164
	South Wairarapa District Council	127	192	170
	Ashburton District Council	170	141	177
	Horowhenua District Council	253	222	186
	Kaipara District Council	207	174	190
	Upper Hutt City Council	139	246	200
	Central Otago District Council	134	161	206
	Matamata-Piako District Council	216	193	214
	Wanganui District Council	290	242	215
	Whakatane District Council	290	294	229
	Invercargill City Council	297	306	232
	Southland District Council	187	176	246
	Papakura District Council	523	402	249
	Timaru District Council	364	293	286
	Kapiti Coast District Council	413	385	298

* N/A = did not supply a response in 1997/98.

Family group	Local authority	Resource consents processed		
		97/98	99/00	01/02
Territorial authorities:	Napier City Council	326	375	310
Group 3	Franklin District Council	475	422	314
	Porirua City Council	285	318	358
	Waimakariri District Council	385	604	402
	New Plymouth District Council	382	402	414
	Western Bay of Plenty District Council	737	421	414
	Palmerston North City Council	511	506	447
	Hastings District Council	483	514	466
	Waikato District Council	522	448	472
	Waipa District Council	566	453	484
	Taupo District Council	502	457	511
	Tauranga District Council	1,061	696	526
	Selwyn District Council	491	515	529
	Rotorua District Council	812	675	536
	Thames Coromandel District Council	528	472	565
	Hamilton City Council	1,806	963	588
	Hutt City Council	856	738	622
Territorial authorities:	Whangarei District Council	1,090	820	747
Group 4	Far North District Council	1,003	795	763
	Dunedin City Council	942	832	780
	Queenstown Lakes District Council	613	745	964
	Wellington City Council	1,451	1,550	1,323
	Rodney District Council	1,427	1,319	1,403
	Waitakere City Council	2,473	2,092	1,506
	Manukau City Council	2,620	2,013	1,808
	North Shore City Council	2,980	2,374	2,385
	Christchurch City Council	4,165	2,604	2,489
	Auckland City Council	9,324	6,183	5,649
Regional authorities	Auckland Regional Council	961	721	1,042
	Environment Bay of Plenty	495	393	732
	Environment Canterbury	2,032	1,801	2,390
	Environment Southland	511	414	731
	Environment Waikato	1,377	1,036	1,192
	Hawkes Bay Regional Council	541	540	811
	horizons.mw	369	490	450
	Northland Regional Council	732	632	931
	Otago Regional Council	898	620	675
	Taranaki Regional Council	322	261	478
	Wellington Regional Council	829	665	691
	West Coast Regional Council	443	607	1,520

Family group	Local authority	Resource consents processed		
		97/98	99/00	01/02
Unitary authorities	Chatham Islands Council	12	9	2
	Gisborne District Council	658	610	576
	Marlborough District Council	1,525	1,327	2,037
	Nelson City Council	513	467	408
	Tasman District Council	867	816	1,187
Total Consents Processed		58,060	48,045	49,012

Appendix 2:

List of local authorities whose 2001/02 survey responses to selected questions were audited by Audit New Zealand

Note: The Ministry for the Environment commissioned Audit New Zealand to provide assurance over the responses to selected questions included in the 2001/02 survey. As in previous years, participation in the audit process was voluntary. Given the results of the audits, no inference should be drawn as to the reliability of responses from those local authorities participating in the audit process, against those who chose not to participate. The full [audit report](#) is available on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz.

Auckland Regional Council
Buller District Council
Carterton District Council
Central Otago District Council
Clutha District Council
Dunedin City Council
Environment Bay of Plenty
Environment Canterbury
Environment Southland
Environment Waikato
Far North District Council
Grey District Council
Hamilton City Council
Hauraki District Council
Hawkes Bay Regional Council
Horowhenua District Council
Hurunui District Council
Hutt City Council
Kaikoura District Council
Kaipara District Council
MacKenzie District Council
Masterton District Council
North Shore City Council
Northland Regional Council
Otago Regional Council
Otorohanga District Council
Palmerston North City Council
Porirua City Council
Queenstown Lakes District Council
Rangitikei District Council
Rotorua District Council
Ruapehu District Council
South Waikato District Council
South Wairarapa District Council
Tasman District Council
Taupo District Council
Tauranga District Council
Waimakariri District Council
Waipa District Council
Waitakere City Council
Waitaki District Council
Wanganui District Council
Wellington City Council
Wellington Regional Council
Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Westland District Council
Whakatane District Council
Whangarei District Council

Other local authorities who were not audited in 2001/02 but whose surveys have been audited by Audit New Zealand since it was first offered in 1998/99*

Ashburton District Council
Auckland City Council
Banks Peninsula District Council
Franklin District Council
Gisborne District Council
Gore District Council
horizons.mw
Marlborough District Council
Matamata-Piako District Council
New Plymouth District Council
Rodney District Council
Selwyn District Council
Stratford District Council
Taranaki Regional Council
Thames Coromandel District Council
Timaru District Council
Upper Hutt City Council
Waikato District Council
Waikato Regional Council

* Note: Some local authorities have been audited more than once.

Appendix 3:

Percentage of resource consent applications notified by individual local authorities

Local Authority	Percentage Notified		
	97/98	99/00	01/02
Ashburton District Council	3.5	5.7	1.7
Auckland City Council	1.0	0.8	1.0
Auckland Regional Council	17.7	10.1	17.2
Banks Peninsula District Council	4.8	3.8	3.6
Buller District Council	14.3	3.5	3.5
Carterton District Council	34.6	0.0	18.4
Central Hawkes Bay District Council	0.0	0.0	0.8
Central Otago District Council	21.6	11.2	3.9
Chatham Islands Council	0.0	0.0	50.0
Christchurch City Council	3.6	2.4	1.7
Clutha District Council	3.5	5.6	1.3
Dunedin City Council	2.9	6.7	4.0
Environment Bay of Plenty	11.1	9.9	11.1
Environment Canterbury	9.4	6.2	5.3
Environment Southland	15.3	9.4	14.8
Environment Waikato	15.3	16.5	11.4
Far North District Council	19.6	7.5	7.7
Franklin District Council	3.8	4.3	5.1
Gisborne District Council	9.9	14.3	13.0
Gore District Council	3.0	2.0	0.0
Grey District Council	6.7	4.7	4.9
Hamilton City Council	2.6	3.2	2.9
Hastings District Council	1.0	1.6	1.3
Hauraki District Council	1.9	1.7	0.0
Hawkes Bay Regional Council	17.6	7.6	2.3
horizons.mw	26.8	23.5	33.1
Horowhenua District Council	1.2	1.8	2.7
Hurunui District Council	3.0	4.5	5.6
Hutt City Council	3.4	2.6	3.7
Invercargill City Council	3.4	0.7	0.9
Kaikoura District Council	2.7	0.0	5.8
Kaipara District Council	4.8	8.0	6.3
Kapiti Coast District Council	4.1	3.4	2.7
Kawerau District Council	0.0	0.0	0.0
MacKenzie District Council	N/A*	0.0	4.7
Manawatu District Council	1.5	1.1	2.0
Manukau City Council	0.8	1.5	1.3
Marlborough District Council	8.5	10.4	26.1
Masterton District Council	10.6	2.5	2.9
Matamata-Piako District Council	13.9	10.9	3.7
Napier City Council	1.5	1.1	5.2
Nelson City Council	5.3	3.0	1.7
New Plymouth District Council	1.8	2.7	2.2
North Shore City Council	1.2	1.6	1.0
Northland Regional Council	16.7	7.6	8.9
Opotiki District Council	6.8	0.0	0.0
Otago Regional Council	14.3	6.0	14.2
Otorohanga District Council	1.4	0.0	1.9
Palmerston North City Council	0.2	1.0	2.0
Papakura District Council	0.2	0.5	2.8
Porirua City Council	4.2	3.1	2.0
Queenstown Lakes District Council	7.7	8.6	8.8
Rangitikei District Council	5.4	0.0	4.2
Rodney District Council	5.7	6.6	5.9
Rotorua District Council	1.0	2.8	2.6

* N/A = did not supply a response in 1997/98.

Local Authority	Percentage Notified		
	97/98	99/00	01/02
Ruapehu District Council	1.0	5.4	1.4
Selwyn District Council	10.4	20.0	9.5
South Taranaki District Council	5.4	5.3	4.3
South Waikato District Council	2.2	2.6	0.0
South Wairarapa District Council	11.8	15.1	5.3
Southland District Council	3.2	1.1	4.1
Stratford District Council	4.8	9.4	0.0
Taranaki Regional Council	10.9	10.0	5.2
Tararua District Council	7.0	0.0	0.0
Tasman District Council	15.2	7.2	9.4
Taupo District Council	0.6	2.6	3.7
Tauranga District Council	1.0	1.3	1.1
Thames Coromandel District Council	3.6	6.8	3.0
Timaru District Council	4.4	3.8	3.1
Upper Hutt City Council	0.0	7.7	0.5
Waikato District Council	1.7	2.9	1.9
Waimakariri District Council	25.2	14.4	15.2
Waimate District Council	3.8	0.0	4.3
Waipa District Council	2.8	3.8	1.7
Wairoa District Council	2.4	4.9	0.0
Waitakere City Council	1.1	0.8	0.6
Waitaki District Council	4.4	6.6	8.6
Waitomo District Council	3.8	0.0	0.0
Wanganui District Council	2.1	2.5	1.4
Wellington City Council	2.6	2.6	2.6
Wellington Regional Council	14.1	6.0	12.9
West Coast Regional Council	7.2	23.0	6.8
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	1.8	2.9	2.9
Westland District Council	4.7	3.4	2.2
Whakatane District Council	6.2	3.4	3.9
Whangarei District Council	3.9	6.1	11.6

Appendix 4:

Percentage of resource consents processed within time by individual local authorities

Authority	Notified					Non-notified				
	Subdivision	Land use	Coastal	Water	Discharge	Subdivision	Land use	Coastal	Water	Discharge
Ashburton District Council	-	100				100	102			
Auckland City Council	-	74				53	70			100
Auckland Regional Council		85	79	74	70		79	76	73	65
Banks Peninsula District Council	0	67				62	73			
Buller District Council	-	100				90	92			
Carterton District Council	71	100				34	63			
Central Hawkes Bay District Council	100	-				98	99			
Central Otago District Council	100	100				97	96			
Chatham Islands Council	-	0				100	-			
Christchurch City Council	67	59				79	87			
Clutha District Council	-	0				72	100			
Dunedin City Council	100	100				100	100			
Environment Bay of Plenty		85	73	100	74		80	83	82	82
Environment Canterbury		31	39	55	25		83	77	46	40
Environment Southland		100	28	58	71		88	96	78	82
Environment Waikato		65	0	64	65		95	31	87	84
Far North District Council	49	55				69	88			
Franklin District Council	100	50				96	99			
Gisborne District Council	50	66	0	77	39	80	88	75	94	72
Gore District Council	-	-				85	93			
Grey District Council	-	67				64	90			
Hamilton City Council	0	70				94	100			
Hastings District Council	100	100				97	99			
Hauraki District Council	-	-				99	100			
Hawkes Bay Regional Council		-	100	75	88		100	100	25	68
horizons.mw		100	100	100	100		100	100	100	100
Horowhenua District Council	-	100				85	100			
Hurunui District Council	0	50				91	97			
Hutt City Council	100	100				94	99			
Invercargill City Council	-	100				73	97			
Kaikoura District Council	50	50				18	51			
Kaipara District Council	100	100				85	92			
Kapiti Coast District Council	67	20				66	88			
Kawerau District Council	-	-				100	100			
Mackenzie District Council	-	100				100	100			
Manawatu District Council	100	100				92	100			
Manukau City Council	50	48				94	97			71
Marlborough District Council	67	56	94	71	46	79	93	78	92	80
Masterton District Council	50	100				95	96			
Matamata Piako District Council	100	100				87	91			
Napier City Council	100	100				80	100			
Nelson City Council	0	100	-	-	0	33	89	-	0	25
New Plymouth District Council	83	0				89	99			
North Shore City Council	-	64				51	55			
Northland Regional Council		91	92	100	91		96	98	95	96
Opotiki District Council	-	-				0	76			
Otago Regional Council		0	17	13	2		95	88	86	63
Otorohanga District Council	-	0				100	100			
Palmerston North City Council	50	57				100	100			

NB: a blank space indicates N/A
 0 indicates 0% processed in time
 - indicates no consents of that type were processed
 * indicates time figures not supplied.

Authority	Notified					Non-notified				
	Subdivision	Land use	Coastal	Water	Discharge	Subdivision	Land use	Coastal	Water	Discharge
Papakura District Council	-	57				64	70			
Porirua City Council	0	83				88	95			
Queenstown Lakes District Council	14	24				65	81			
Rangitikei District Council	-	100				100	100			
Rodney District Council	49	44				82	89	65		100
Rotorua District Council	100	77				74	93			
Ruapehu District Council	-	0				15	83			
Selwyn District Council	88	100				100	96			
South Taranaki District Council	-	71				100	100			
South Waikato District Council	-	-				83	93			
South Wairarapa District Council	20	0				78	92			
Southland District Council	100	100				93	99			
Stratford District Council	-	-				100	100			
Taranaki Regional Council		100	100	100	100		100	100	100	100
Tararua District Council	-	-				98	85			
Tasman District Council	27	38	25	50	14	71	91	86	38	61
Taupo District Council	67	92				56	80			
Tauranga District Council	100	80				73	64			
Thames Coromandel District Council	78	75				59	85			
Timaru District Council	50	100				57	95			
Upper Hutt City Council	-	100				78	91			
Waikato District Council	71	100				76	86			
Waimakariri District Council	77	77				87	95			
Waimate District Council	-	100				100	100			
Waipa District Council	100	71				98	100			
Wairoa District Council	-	-				100	100			
Waitakere City Council	-	100				96	97			
Waitaki District Council	-	70				88	100			
Waitomo District Council	-	-				100	96			
Wanganui District Council	-	33				95	95			
Wellington City Council	60	68				99	97			
Wellington Regional Council		100	100	100	92		99	96	94	91
West Coast Regional Council		47	-	38	33		72	90	65	60
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	100	100				92	94			
Westland District Council	-	100				79	89			
Whakatane District Council	0	83				91	96			
Whangarei District Council	100	100				100	100			

Appendix 5:

Best practice local authorities

Box 1: Best practice – local authorities that check resource consent applications for completeness within one full working day

Ashburton District Council	Hutt City Council	South Taranaki District Council
Auckland City Council	Invercargill City Council	South Waikato District Council
Auckland Regional Council	Kaikoura District Council	Stratford District Council
Buller District Council	Kapiti Coast District Council	Taranaki Regional Council
Carterton District Council	Kawerau District Council	Tararua District Council
Chatham Islands Council	Mackenzie District Council	Tasman District Council
Christchurch City Council	Manawatu District Council	Tauranga District Council
Dunedin City Council	Manukau City Council	Timaru District Council
Environment Bay of Plenty	Marlborough District Council	Waimakariri District Council
Environment Canterbury	Masterton District Council	Waimate District Council
Environment Southland	Matamata–Piako District Council	Wairoa District Council
Environment Waikato	Napier City Council	Waitakere City Council
Far North District Council	Nelson City Council	Waitomo District Council
Franklin District Council	North Shore City Council	Wellington City Council
Gisborne District Council	Northland Regional Council	Wellington Regional Council
Grey District Council	Otago Regional Council	West Coast Regional Council
Hamilton City Council	Otorohanga District Council	Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Hastings District Council	Palmerston North City Council	Westland District Council
Hauraki District Council	Porirua City Council	Whakatane District Council
Hawkes Bay Regional Council	Queenstown Lakes District Council	Whangarei District Council
horizons.mw	Rotorua District Council	

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Box 2: Best practice – local authorities that formally receive resource consent applications within one full working day

Ashburton District Council	Horowhenua District Council	Ruapehu District Council
Auckland City Council	Hurunui District Council	Selwyn District Council
Auckland Regional Council	Hutt City Council	South Taranaki District Council
Banks Peninsula District Council	Invercargill City Council	South Waikato District Council
Buller District Council	Kaikoura District Council	South Wairarapa District Council
Carterton District Council	Kaipara District Council	Stratford District Council
Central Hawkes Bay District Council	Kapiti Coast District Council	Taranaki Regional Council
Central Otago District Council	Kawerau District Council	Tasman District Council
Chatham Islands Council	Manawatu District Council	Thames Coromandel District Council
Christchurch City Council	Manukau City Council	Timaru District Council
Clutha District Council	Marlborough District Council	Waikato District Council
Dunedin City Council	Masterton District Council	Waimakariri District Council
Environment Bay of Plenty	Matamata–Piako District Council	Waimate District Council
Environment Canterbury	Napier City Council	Waipa District Council
Environment Southland	Nelson City Council	Wairoa District Council
Environment Waikato	North Shore City Council	Waitakere City Council
Far North District Council	Northland Regional Council	Waitomo District Council
Franklin District Council	Opotiki District Council	Wanganui District Council
Gisborne District Council	Otago Regional Council	Wellington City Council
Gore District Council	Otorohanga District Council	Wellington Regional Council
Grey District Council	Papakura District Council	West Coast Regional Council
Hamilton City Council	Porirua City Council	Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Hastings District Council	Queenstown Lakes District Council	Westland District Council
Hauraki District Council	Rangitikei District Council	Whangarei District Council
Hawkes Bay Regional Council	Rodney District Council	
horizons.mw	Rotorua District Council	

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.

Box 3: Best practice – local authorities that do not reset the time limit clock to zero once further information is received

Auckland City Council	Invercargill City Council	Stratford District Council
Banks Peninsula District Council	Kaikoura District Council	Taranaki Regional Council
Buller District Council	Mackenzie District Council	Taranaki District Council
Carterton District Council	Manukau City Council	Tasman District Council
Central Otago District Council	Marlborough District Council	Taupo District Council
Christchurch City Council	Matamata–Piako District Council	Tauranga District Council
Clutha District Council	Napier City Council	Thames Coromandel District Council
Dunedin City Council	Nelson City Council	Timaru District Council
Environment Bay of Plenty	New Plymouth District Council	Upper Hutt City Council
Environment Canterbury	North Shore City Council	Waimakariri District Council
Environment Southland	Otago Regional Council	Waimate District Council
Environment Waikato	Otorohanga District Council	Waipa District Council
Far North District Council	Palmerston North City Council	Wairoa District Council
Franklin District Council	Papakura District Council	Waitaki District Council
Gisborne District Council	Porirua City Council	Waitomo District Council
Grey District Council	Queenstown Lakes District Council	Wanganui District Council
Hamilton City Council	Rodney District Council	Wellington Regional Council
Hastings District Council	Rotorua District Council	West Coast Regional Council
Hauraki District Council	Ruapehu District Council	Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Hawkes Bay Regional Council	Selwyn District Council	Westland District Council
Horowhenua District Council	South Taranaki District Council	Whangarei District Council
Hurunui District Council	South Waikato District Council	
Hutt City Council	South Wairarapa District Council	

Source: RMA survey of local authorities 2001/02.