

MAORI PARTICIPATION IN MANAGING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND NEW ORGANISMS

Introduction

1. The HSNO Act 1996 was established *'to protect the environment, and the health and safety of people and communities, by preventing or managing the adverse effects of hazardous substances and new organisms'* (HSNO Act 1996, Part II : Purpose of Act).
2. The Environmental Risk Management Authority of New Zealand (ERMA New Zealand) was set up in 1998 to implement the HSNO Act, and to work with other agencies in ensuring it is applied appropriately and effectively. This is achieved by making decisions on applications to introduce new organisms or hazardous substances to New Zealand, taking full account of any potential harmful and beneficial effects.

What Does HSNO Act Cover?

3. The Act enables the Authority to approve or decline applications to import or develop, field test or release new organisms, or to import or manufacture hazardous substances. If it approves an application, this usually involves imposing certain conditions or controls to manage associated risks.
4. A new organism could be a plant, animal or micro-organism coming into New Zealand for the first time or a new organism developed through genetic modification.
5. A hazardous substance could be explosive (like fireworks), flammable, corrosive, toxic, eco-toxic or an oxidiser. To manage these hazardous properties, the Act takes a 'cradle to the grave' approach and allows the Authority to set controls on how substances are contained, labelled, stored, used, transported or disposed of. Substances may be reassessed if new information or increased usage warrants it.

Provisions for Māori

6. The HSNO Act 1996 and its 2003 amendments make specific provision for Maori participation in HSNO Act decision making.
7. Nga Kaihautii Tikanga Taiao is the Māori Advisory group established by the HSNO Act to provide advice on policy, process and on applications received by ERMA New Zealand.
8. In addition the Act includes extensive provisions for community involvement, and specific provisions for Maori involvement. Kaupapa Kura Taiao, the Maori Unit within ERMA New Zealand, is responsible for ensuring that the

specifically Māori sections of the Act are implemented appropriately, and manages a large range of new programmes for improving Maori involvement and participation.

Presentation Overview

9. Members of Kaupapa Kura Taiao will present some brief information including:
 - An overview of the HSNO Act and ERMA New Zealand;
 - The provisions of the Act pertaining specifically to Māori;
 - The importance of Maori involvement; and
 - Changes and new initiatives in improving Māori participation in the HSNO Act processes.

 10. In addition, there are a number of specific issues in the Wellington region that we hope to discuss at the meeting including:
 - Providing information on the types of research and other HSNO Act applications coming from the Wellington region;
 - Opportunities for the involvement of the iwi in the greater Wellington region; and
 - Information on upcoming applications that are likely to be of significant interest to iwi.

 11. A range of additional information will be provided for members, and staff will be available to answer questions.
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