



**Report**                    **06.290**  
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**Committee**            **Environment Committee**  
**Author**                **Tim Porteous Biodiversity Co-ordinator**

## **QEII National Trust programme update**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of progress in assisting private landowners wishing to legally protect biodiversity on their land by way of perpetual Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenants in the 24 month period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2006.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

Private landowners wishing to legally protect and better manage areas of biodiversity value on their land can enter into covenant agreements with the QEII National Trust (QEII). Such covenants bind existing and subsequent owners to manage the area in question (normally a block of indigenous forest or wetland) to protect and enhance the natural values.

The costs involved in establishing a covenant typically relate to the need to fence the area to exclude stock and define the area by survey to enable registration on the title. These costs are normally shared by the landowner and QEII. In 2000, Greater Wellington established a fund to enable the costs of establishing covenants in the region to be shared. The effect of this funding is two-fold. First the cost to the landowner of covenanting is reduced (but not eliminated) making it more attractive to landowners and, secondly, the per covenant cost to QEII is reduced, enabling the Trust to undertake more work in our region.

From 1 July 2003, Council agreed that a portion of the QEII fund could also be applied to a one-off “knockdown” of any significant pest animals or plants. Any Greater Wellington expenditure is matched by QEII. The opportunity is taken to provide the landowner with information and skills to enable them to manage the issue in the future. However, the need to use our funding for this purpose has diminished with the establishment by central government of the Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund (see report 06.297).

#### 4. What have we achieved?

From QEII’s inception in 1977, up to 2000 (23 years), a total of 108 covenants were established in the Wellington region, an average of 5 per year. Since Greater Wellington’s funding assistance has been available, the number of covenants established per year has risen to 15 or a total of 88. These 88 protect 1,245 hectares in perpetuity.

The following tables show what has been achieved in the last 2 years, with an annual budget of \$70,000:

##### 2004/05

Type	No.	Area (hectares)
Lowland forest remnants	11	126.2
Coastal or semi-coastal forest	4	123.0
Wetlands	2	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>254.0</b>

A highlight in the 2004/05 year was the securing of 5 coastal remnants on the Carrad property at Pukerua Bay, totalling 11 hectares. All previous investigations into remnant forest in the Wellington/Kapiti area had identified these areas as very high priority for protection. Porirua City Council is also contributing to this project.

##### 2005/06

Type	No.	Area (hectares)
Lowland forest remnants	7	112.1
Coastal or semi-coastal forest	3	79.4
Wetlands	3	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>205.5</b>

Highlights this year include securing the high profile 2.5 hectare lowland forest remnant at the Masterton Agricultural and Pastoral Showgrounds and 29.4 hectares of high value and rare beech/totara/broadleaf forest in South Wairarapa. This area had been identified as a “recommended area for protection” under the Department of Conservation’s Protected Natural Areas Programme.

## 5. Communication

The support provided by Greater Wellington is regularly acknowledged in QEII’s national magazine “Open Space”. However, as covenanted areas remain in private ownership, the opportunities for publicity are limited

## 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

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

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

**Tim Porteous**  
Biodiversity Co-ordinator

**Nicola Shorten**  
Manager, Environmental  
Policy

**Nigel Corry**  
Divisional Manager,  
Environmental Management