

Coastal environment

*Environment Canterbury's role is as the lead agency for resource management and hazard management and regional marine oil spill response**



What we achieved this year

Within the coastal environment portfolio we contribute towards achievement of four community outcomes:

Our contribution

- We continued to monitor coastal water quality and biology at representative sites along the coast, including recreational bathing beaches. Water quality at 83% of monitored bathing beaches was satisfactory for swimming all or most of the time.
- We also monitored long-term wave patterns at a deep-water site and at sea level at two coastal sites (Sumner Head and Timaru), in partnership with other agencies. This work assists with investigation of coastal erosion and in planning of port activities.
- 28 resource consents were issued with conditions to protect coastal areas. 198 resource consents had their conditions monitored for compliance. One instance of significant non-compliance with resource consent conditions was found in the Coastal Marine Area or in Coastal Hazard Zones.
- Eleven marine oil spills (at sea or in harbours) were responded to and remediated, with no long-term environmental impact. We maintained a high level of readiness to deal with oil spills*, with ongoing training of response staff, maintenance of equipment and stores of dispersant.
- Our monitoring of coastal erosion patterns showed that there was no loss of residential or non-residential buildings to coastal erosion this year.

Community outcome

- Air, beaches and ocean and land are all in a healthy condition**
- Recreational needs are met**
- Business and farming activities do not harm the environment**
- People feel safe at all times**

In this portfolio we report on four levels of service to illustrate our achievements this year.

Effect on the four well-beings



Our coastal monitoring programme contributes positively to environmental and economic well-being by preventing development in coastal hazard zones. Although the cost of complying with consent conditions for activities in coastal zones could negatively affect the economic well-being of some individuals and businesses, this cost is offset by wider gains to environmental well-being.



Environment Canterbury acknowledges and thanks the volunteers who gather water samples for analysis from around the coast. This important work helps us to understand what is happening in the environment so we can manage it better. Also, the contribution made by members of community coast care groups on addressing coastal issues is greatly appreciated.

*Environment Canterbury responds to regional tier two oil spills. Maritime New Zealand responds to larger tier three oil spills.

Other key achievements this year

- We responded to 57 calls about coastal water quality and oil spills on the 24-hour Pollution Hotline. All cases were investigated and clean-up and remedial action implemented as required.
- We supported community coastcare groups in Akaroa Harbour, Lyttelton Harbour/Whakaraupo, Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai, Northern Pegasus Bay and South Canterbury. These groups advocate and undertake work in their community including dune restoration, wetland planting, and water quality monitoring.
- We provided resource material for schools about Canterbury's coasts and supported the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai Trust.
- We undertook a baseline study of the bathymetry and soft sediments of the bed of the Upper Akaroa Harbour so that any future changes in these environmental factors can be assessed.
- We prepared a report on what factors, such as human activities or natural processes, affect water quality in Lyttelton Harbour/Whakaraupo.
- A community non-statutory plan for Northern Pegasus Bay was developed and a Governance Board and Steering Committee to progress the plan was formed.

Levels of service

This section reports on performance for 2008/09 against Annual Plan targets.

1. Limiting the risk of damage from coastal hazards, to protect life and property

Measure

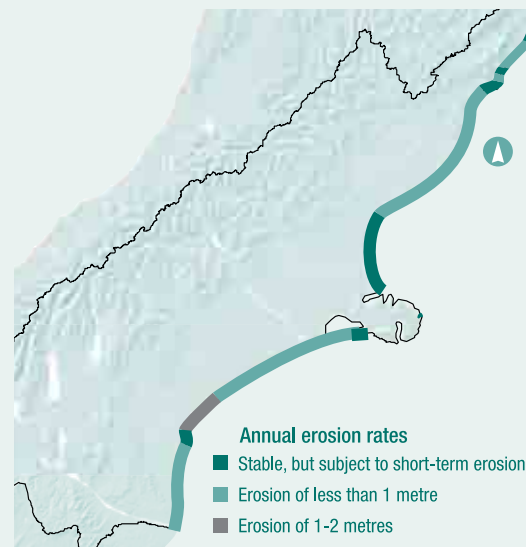
The amount of new development occurring within coastal hazard zones, other than that which is provided for in the Regional Coastal Environment Plan 2005.

Target 2008/09

No unplanned development.

Achieved.

Coastal erosion hazards



Source: Regional Coastal Environment Plan 2005.

2. Improving the aquatic health of estuaries

Measure

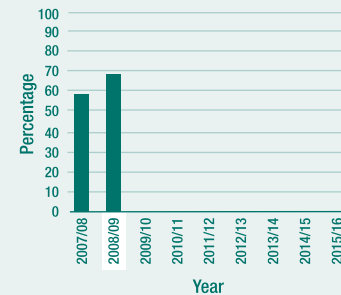
The percentage of water quality monitoring sites meeting water quality standards for the maintenance of aquatic ecosystems defined in the Regional Coastal Environment Plan 2005.¹

Target 2008/09

The percentage is increasing.

Achieved.

Percentage of monitoring sites in the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai with dissolved oxygen saturation greater than 80% in all samples at all times.



Source: Environment Canterbury.

¹ The percentage of dissolved oxygen (DO) is one of a number of water quality determinates used as a measure of the maintenance of aquatic ecosystems. Sampling of DO is primarily undertaken in the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai. DO is essential for all aquatic life and if the recorded DO saturation is lower than 80% there is the potential for marine life to be affected.

3. Improving water quality at swimming beaches

Measure

The percentage of monitored beaches complying with the Microbiological Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Freshwater Recreational Areas during the summer recreational season, all or most of the time.

Target 2008/09

The percentage considered satisfactory for swimming, all or most of the time, is increasing.¹

Not achieved (83%, compared with 85% in 2007/08).

Percentage of monitored beaches considered satisfactory for swimming, all or most of the time



Source: Environment Canterbury.

Note: Saline estuaries, such as Avon-Heathcote/Ihutai, are included in the above results. Estuaries that are predominantly freshwater, such as the Waimakariri and Ashley river mouths, are included in the water quality, quantity and ecosystems group of activities.

4. Authorising resource users to use natural and physical resources so that the environmental effects remain acceptable to the community

Measure 1

The percentage of resource consent applications processed in compliance with the statutory timeframes set down in the Resource Management Act 1991.

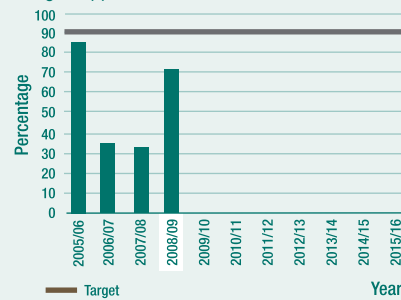
Target 2008/09

90%.

High demand for consents from water, dairy & property development-related activities, coupled with increased numbers of notifications and hearings required in water resource constrained areas, and for some large individual applications, has resulted in many consents applications across all portfolios not being able to be completed within statutory timeframes. Difficulties in recruiting staff have compounded this problem. Recent process improvements, coupled with reductions in demand for consents and improvements in recruitment, are starting to show significant improvements in timeframe performance.

Not achieved (71%).

Processing of applications



Source: Resource Management Act Database.

Measure 2

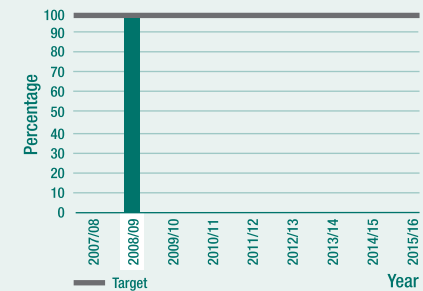
The percentage of resource consents consistent with Resource Management Act 1991 requirements, including proposed and operative regional plan requirements.

Target 2008/09

100%.

Achieved.

Consents consistent with RMA



Source: External audit of sample of issued consents.

¹ Results were reassessed in 2006/07 in line with "Microbiological Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Freshwater Recreational Areas (2003)". A site is considered suitable for contact recreation when it receives a "Suitability For Contact Recreation Grade" of fair, good or very good. Previous results included only the good or very good categories. Grading is reassessed at the end of each summer bathing season, based on the most recent five years' individual sample results as well as an assessment of risk factors. This gives a grade that reflects likely water quality at any time, not just when samples were collected. It allows for occasional exceedence of single sample trigger values, such as after heavy rain, at otherwise good quality sites.

Measure 3

The percentage of significant or major non-compliance¹ with resource consent conditions resolved.

Target 2008/09

80% are resolved in six months.
95% are resolved in 12 months.

100% of non-compliances were resolved in six months.
Achieved.

Note that in 2007/08 no non-compliances could be resolved as all instances related to off-site marine farms where a legislative change is required before resolution is possible.

Consent conditions – non-compliance resolved



Measure 4

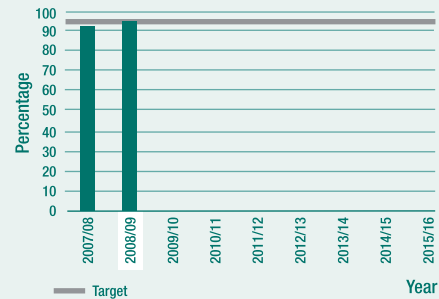
The percentage of environmental incidents resolved.

Target 2008/09

95% of incidents resolved.

Achieved (99 incidents resolved, 96%).

Incidents resolved



¹ Significant non-compliance means there have been moderate, serious or persistent adverse environmental effects. This also includes repeated minor non-compliance with nil or short-term adverse environmental effects, and unauthorised activities.

Financial summary

\$000	Actual 2008/09	Budget 2008/09	Actual 2007/08
Total Expenditure	1,863	2,051	1,704
<i>Funded by:</i>			
General rates	1,557	1,556	1,500
Targeted rates	-	-	-
Grants	98	99	-
User pays and other	175	357	275
Total Funding	1,830	2,012	1,775
Reserves Increase/(Decrease)	(33)	(39)	71

Investigation of a large oil spill in November 2008 and some costs associated with ongoing enforcement and legal action could not be recovered, which has resulted in a small deficit for the year.

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure associated with this group of activities was funded from general funds and included as depreciation expense.