

17. RESULTS OF THE 2003/04 NATIONAL WASTEWATER INDUSTRY REVIEW

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the results of the seventh Price Waterhouse Coopers survey of the Councils performance in the delivery of wastewater services compared with other supply authorities in New Zealand

BACKGROUND

Benchmarking of water supply and wastewater services in New Zealand was initially undertaken for the 1996/97 year by Coopers Lybrand for the NZ Water and Waste Association. Christchurch has participated in the survey every year and the results are reported to this Committee. Participation in the survey is voluntary and each participant receives a report comparing its performance with the average of all participants.

The supply authorities that participated in this year's wastewater survey were:

Supply Authority	Number of Customers
Christchurch	131,356
North Shore City Council	76,374
Wellington City Council	62,355
Tauranga District Council	38,070
Palmerston North City Council	26,436
New Plymouth District Council	22,206
Kapiti Coast District Council	17,301

Once again Christchurch is the only South Island authority taking part.

RESULTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2003

A copy of the full report is tabled and available to Councillors.

A summary of the key findings of the report showing how Christchurch compares is shown in attachment 1 including some specific comments.

As with previous years, a degree of care is needed in the interpretation of some results, In the few areas where it would appear at first glance that the Christchurch system performs unfavourably, such as costs of customer service/customer, analysis of the spending shows that it is investment in service improvement that has caused a rise in costs and not a decline in efficiency.

FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN SURVEY

As indicated above only seven authorities took part this time, and the size of them varies considerably. Christchurch is the largest (131,356 customers) then North Shore with 76,374 customers reducing to the smallest with 17,301. This has reduced the benchmarking validity of the results. Accordingly it is not intended that Christchurch will participate in future surveys unless the dwindling number of supply authorities increase significantly, including more of a similar size and/or nature to Christchurch.

SUMMARY

The results of the most recent benchmarking review for our wastewater system are pleasing. The strategic planning done by staff is focussed on forecasting future internal and external challenges to maintaining a quality wastewater system in Christchurch and this benchmarking provides valuable insights on how to enhance the wastewater system. However, the dwindling number of service authorities involved with the survey has reduced the benchmarking validity of the results to the point where participation is no longer considered worthwhile.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.