

# OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**We aim to achieve year on year improvements in our sustainable practices**

We have an obligation to act sustainably, both as an organisation and as a service provider to the community. One of the city's key strategic goals – adopted as part of our vision, *Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital* – is to be an eco-city. To meet this goal, Council is taking an environmental leadership role, proactively responding to environmental challenges and setting an example for others. This section provides an assessment of our corporate 'environmental footprint'.

We have measured our performance using corporate sustainability indicators that follow Global Reporting Initiative Sustainability Reporting Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. The indicators are:

- greenhouse gas emissions
- energy use
- water use
- paper use
- waste produced and recycled.

## **Greenhouse gas emissions**

The corporate emission reduction targets adopted by the Council are:

Year	2003	2010	2020	2050
Target (against base year)	Base year	Stabilise (0% increase)	-40%	-80%

Council's corporate greenhouse gas inventory covers all of the activities of the Council and its Council controlled organisations, in line with reporting requirements of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. This includes emissions from water supply, stormwater and wastewater activities, as well as methane emissions generated by the collection and disposal of the community's waste in Council used landfills.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org).

## 2011 Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Activity	Tonnes CO <sup>2</sup> -e emitted
Waste*	11,840
Buildings and facilities	6,831
Water and waste water	3,907
Vehicle fleet	2,621
Streetlighting and traffic signals	1,145
Compost	1,252
Transmission losses	1,078
Employee travel	481
Total emissions	29,155

\* Includes emissions generated from both Council produced waste and from the collection and disposal of the community's waste.

Our 2011 inventory is more comprehensive than our base measurement year (2003) making a direct comparison of emissions levels difficult. However, matching the sources common to both years shows our corporate emissions have fallen by 31% between 2003 and 2011 (from 22,677 to 15,701 tonnes). These sources indicate we have achieved the first target of stabilising our emissions in 2010 and Council emissions remain on track for a 40% reduction by 2020.

The Council has had an independent assessment of our greenhouse gas inventories carried out by CarboNZero Ltd. We have also developed a 'Carbon Management Policy' and gained income from earning and selling carbon credits.

### Energy use

We have undertaken a range of projects aimed at improving the energy efficiency of our operations<sup>2</sup> which, for the most part, have achieved positive results. However, despite our efforts, our overall use of electricity and gas increased from 2010/11 to 2011/12.

Weather is a key variable in our 'business as usual' electricity and gas usage and is a factor behind the increase over the past year. For example, unseasonably cold weather can result in more gas being used to heat swimming pools to an acceptable temperature. Above average rainfall or more episodes of intense rainfall can mean storm water pumps have to operate for longer than is typical. Conversely drier weather in summer can mean having to pump more fresh water to our reservoirs to compensate for increased use (eg for watering gardens).

We have also expanded the range of facilities that we operate including the ASB Sports Centre in Kilbirnie, a major energy user, which has increased both electricity and gas usage.

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<sup>2</sup> Data reported in the rest of this section is for Council owned and run properties only unless otherwise stated.

### Corporate energy use

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Electricity (kWh)*	34,554,618	33,529,962	34,123,913
Gas (kWh)*	21,338,047	19,319,453	20,711,710

\* Currently includes usage by Council properties and some Council controlled organisations: Wellington Waterfront Limited, Wellington Venues Limited, Wellington Museums Trust and the Zoo.

### Fuel use

There has been a declining trend in the use of fuel in our vehicles. Since 2008/09, there has been a 25% reduction in petrol use and a 14% reduction in diesel use. These decreases have been driven by changes to the size and configuration as well as the introduction of an electric car, to the Council's vehicle fleet. The electric car has zero drive-time emissions and is part of a city-wide trial to demonstrate the viability of electric vehicles in Wellington and identify any barriers to their widespread adoption

### Corporate fuel use

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Petrol (litres)	188,806	168,906	155,276
Diesel (litres)	726,469	699,257	653,282

### Resource use

Nine percent less water was used in 2011/12 compared to 2009/10. This reduction in water usage was due to leaks being identified and repaired, a concerted effort to conserve water normally used to irrigate garden beds, and a smaller portfolio of City Housing apartment buildings requiring water (as a result of us upgrading our social housing portfolio, see 5.5. Housing [page xx](#)).

Since 2009/10, we have achieved a 17% decrease in paper usage within Council. However, this figure is likely to underestimate our total paper savings. Due to our limited storage space we have been opting to print more documents internally on demand, instead of completing large external runs. Doing less large, external print jobs accounts for our largest decline in paper usage.

### Corporate resource use

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Water-use (m3)	511,117	517,970	466,706
A4 paper (reams)	18,225	16,042	15,118

For 2011/12 the organisation produced 248.75 tonnes of waste of which 134.99 tonnes was recycled (54%)<sup>3</sup>. Compared to the previous year we reduced our total waste by 16%. However, we did not meet our additional aim of achieving a year on year increase in the amount of corporate waste that we recycle.

### Ongoing Projects

We have a range of projects in progress that will help to reduce our environmental footprint further.

These include:

- optimizing our air conditioning
- reducing heat loss at facilities such as swimming pools
- using LED lighting in streetscape upgrades
- participating in a trial converting sewage sludge to energy.

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<sup>3</sup> We do not keep a record of the cardboard we recycle, so recycling figures are likely to be underestimated.