

CREATING OUR FUTURE

Sustainable Development for New Zealand



Office of the
PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT
Te Kaitiaki Taiao a Te Whare Pāremata
PO Box 10-241, Wellington
June 2002

This report and other publications by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment are available on the PCE's website: <http://www.pce.govt.nz>

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Acknowledgements

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and his investigation team would like to thank all those people who took part in interviews and assisted with the research in the preparation of this report.

Bibliographic reference

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. 2002. Creating our future: sustainable development for New Zealand. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Wellington, New Zealand.

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Preface

Sustainability is ultimately about the interplay between people and ecologies. As individuals, families, communities and as a nation, we constantly seek to maintain or enhance our quality of life - a rich mix of basic and more abstract needs. We do this through an increasingly complex socio-political-economic system, the basic design of which is now centuries old.

It is a design that has evolved to increasingly isolate human endeavour from indigenous knowledge of our dependency on the ecological systems (soils, rivers, forests etc.) that sustain us. Ironically the design also impedes us from fully applying some of our new research based knowledge of complex natural, social and economic systems. As evidence of this consider the New Zealand and global struggle to reach consensus on how to address the blinding realities of climate change - a matter in which New Zealand has chosen to lead.

The fundamental task in front of us over the coming decades is to redesign our socio-political-economic system in ways that reintegrate the dependencies between people and our underpinning ecological systems. And redesign we must: firstly, in the way we think about the whole issue of sustainability; secondly, in the way we design for a more sustainable future; and thirdly, in the actions we take. This third step is the hardest since this is where current ideologies, beliefs, value systems, economic theory and ecological constraints ultimately conflict.

This may all seem rather abstract. However, it is the framework within which my team and I have assessed the progress New Zealand has made in implementing Agenda 21 and the sustainable development ideals that emerged from the Earth Summit in 1992.

My focus in this review is on the last decade, with an emphasis on ecologically sustainable development against a backdrop of major

environmental protection gains over the previous four decades. The analysis has been done from the perspective that New Zealand has the potential to make the transition to a sustainable development pathway. I believe that we have many of the necessary ingredients: innovative people, a robust democracy, a developed economy, abundant environmental resources, a love of 'team-play' as well as a growing sense of who we are - and there are less than four million of us! We believe this new but challenging development pathway is where New Zealand can and should go.

Our story in this review is New Zealand's journey from 1992 to 2002 in the context of what has been going on in the rest of the world - particularly OECD countries. It is a story that reveals real effort to think, design and do things in the spirit of Agenda 21 and sustainable development. The highlights are mostly community initiatives, some local government efforts and a few 'standout' business efforts.

The big gap in thinking, planning and taking appropriate action until 2000 has been in central government. The ideologies and policies that dominated central government in the 1990s, reinforced by some key business leaders, impeded exploration of new ways of meeting society's needs and developing our wealth creating opportunities in more sustainable ways.

In part, the sustainable development story of the 1990s is also one of confusion about what sustainability is all about. New Zealand made a flying start in the late 1980s with the crafting of the Resource Management Act (RMA), embedding the concept of sustainable management of natural resources into legislation. Ironically, this starting point has contributed to our now being behind many other nations. We are behind in our thinking and in the way we interpret the more holistic concept of sustainable development - a concept that embraces the human (social), environmental and economic dimensions of our

lives. The dominant role of the RMA in shaping New Zealand thinking about sustainability (i.e. it is an environmental matter) appears to have slowed the adoption of sustainability principles into economic and social policies.

Our review of the last decade concludes with the view that New Zealand could have been a leading light on sustainable development by now - but we are not. However, we do believe that the many small initiatives, by communities, leading businesses, local and recently central government, are a good foundation for progress over the next decade. In this report I have recommended actions in relation to a number of areas. These include a sustainable development strategy and framework, research priorities, and ongoing review of central government capacities to integrate activity across the many government agencies.

Finally, I have made a commitment to undertake a further review of New Zealand's sustainable development progress in 2006/7 as a contribution to New Zealand's efforts to reshape our development pathway.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J Morgan Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr J Morgan Williams
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

Executive Summary

In the South Pacific, a tiny multicultural nation Aotearoa-New Zealand is poised to make the transition to a sustainable development pathway. Dreams of what might be are the fuel of what can be.

New Zealand has most of the ingredients to evolve its social, economic and environmental policies to deliver the qualities of life we aspire to and would wish for our children's children:

- innovative people
- a robust democracy
- a developed economy
- abundant environmental resources
- a love of 'team play'
- a growing sense of who we are
- a low population density (only 4 million people).

This review is a contribution to getting onto the new pathway through the examination of thinking and actions over the last ten years within New Zealand and internationally.

The purpose of this report

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment considered that the lead up to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (26 August to 4 September 2002) would be an opportune time to review New Zealand's progress on sustainable development since 1992, and to explore future opportunities and challenges for further progressing sustainable development in New Zealand.

The Commissioner's interest in sustainable development stems from a number of investigations over the last ten years during which he has found that the linkages between social, environmental and economic policy have not been well developed.

In this review, the Commissioner drew on a number of environmental management performance reports, which he or his predecessor published, as well as a number of other relevant

reports and studies on sustainable development in New Zealand and elsewhere. **A set of criteria (or expectations) was drawn up as a means of assessing progress on sustainability in New Zealand.** This was necessary because of the absence of any Government policy objectives or targets for sustainability against which progress and performance could be determined. The preparations for this report also involved interviewing a range of people from various backgrounds who were asked for their views on sustainable development and factors influencing its implementation in New Zealand.

This report was primarily written for New Zealanders, however, it may also be of interest to international readers. For international readers, less familiar with New Zealand, two matters of 'context' are important. The first is that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment is independent of Government, empowered under the Environment Act 1986 to act as New Zealand's environmental watchdog or ombudsman (see www.pce.govt.nz for more information). The second is that this report is aimed at galvanising New Zealand's will to stride out down the sustainability road. To some readers it may seem overly critical of progress to date. From an international perspective New Zealand may be considered to be clean and green. However, as many New Zealanders know, this is a fragile image, one that owes more to our low population density than to New Zealand doing things very differently from other nations. New Zealand can and will make the transition to a more sustainable pathway.

Sustainable development

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was a significant event that marked the beginning of global partnerships for sustainable development. New Zealand, along with many other nations, adopted the 27 principles that constitute 'Agenda

21'. These principles encourage the integration of economic, social and environmental interests to guide decision making towards sustainable development. Sustainable development is a term that has been analysed and interpreted in a number of ways over the last decade, but the definition most commonly referred to, including by the New Zealand Government, is:

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987).

Sustainable development recognises:

- the finite reserves of non-renewable resources and the importance of using them wisely and, where possible, substituting them with renewable resources
- the limits of natural life-supporting systems (ecosystems) to absorb the effects of human activities that produce pollution and waste
- the linkages and interactions between environmental, social and economic factors when making decisions, emphasising that all three factors must be taken into consideration if we are to achieve sustainable outcomes, particularly in the long term
- the well-being of current and future generations as a key consideration.

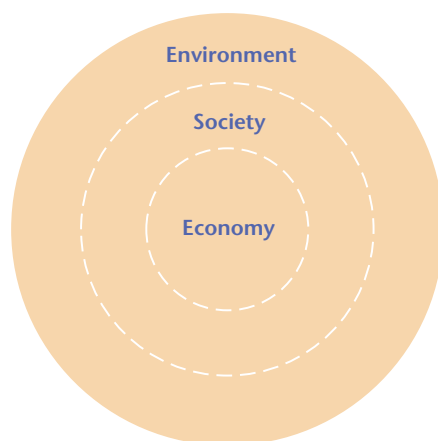
Measuring progress towards sustainable development is complex because it involves measuring a mix of biophysical and ecological realities as well as human values and aspirations. If sustainable development is to be a widely accepted concept and implemented by all sectors of society, it needs to reflect not only society's developmental interests, but also the ecological limits against which the sustainability of developments is determined.

An important aspect of the progression towards more sustainable development is the need for society and governments to clearly recognise the difference between 'environmentalism' and 'sustainable development'. The first can be defined as activism to protect nature from the ravages of

the economy while the second is about redesigning the economy itself. Put another way environmentalism can be considered a movement against pollution, degradation and serious loss of nature while sustainable development can be considered a movement towards new action and behaviours. Until the late 1990s the dominant focus in New Zealand has been 'environmentalism'. We are only now beginning to make the transition to sustainable development and it is generating tensions.

A number of models have been designed to represent the integration of environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. The one that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment supports as representing the limits within which the economy and society must operate if we are to function in a sustainable way is the strong sustainability model as illustrated below.

Figure 1 Strong Sustainability



This model recognises that the economy is a sub-set of society (i.e. it only exists in the context of a society), and that many important aspects of society do not involve economic activity. Similarly, human society and the economic activity within it are totally constrained by the natural systems of our planet. The economy may expand or contract, and society's expectations and values may change overtime, but to function in a sustainable way we must not

exceed the capacity of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities.

Sustainability trends and influences

An understanding of the history and nature of New Zealand and New Zealanders is a key component of understanding how sustainable development has been and can be implemented in New Zealand. **This country has many unique environmental, social and economic qualities.** Generally, New Zealanders highly value their environment, especially the ability to access clean water and air and pristine natural areas. A productive and healthy natural environment is a fundamental base to a healthy society and economy. All of this is often portrayed as New Zealand's 'clean and green' image. However, maintaining such an image becomes more and more difficult as economic and social pressures increase. There are significant economic risks for New Zealand if the reality does not live up to the image.

Values, cultural and ethical frameworks are all critical underpinning elements to the implementation of sustainable development.

Tangata whenua have strong cultural and spiritual connections with the environment, natural resources and places that need to be respected and provided for. The choices people make, the actions they take and, therefore, the rate of progress that is made towards sustainable development are all influenced by people's underlying values and beliefs. Sustainable development requires different attitudes and ways of thinking (e.g. holistic, systemic) about the nature of wealth, how to maintain natural capital, quality of life and the things that people value.

A variety of drivers (the economy, consumption and production patterns, the media, international commitments) **and various key trends** (globalisation, urban growth patterns, threats to human and ecological health, changes in land use, freshwater resources and air quality and global climate change) also **pose risks to our future environmental sustainability.**

For example, evidence exists that economic growth results in increased consumption and production patterns, increased demands for natural resources and adds to overall environmental stress.

Globalisation exposes New Zealand to a web of international commitments and outcomes over which New Zealand may or may not have direct control or influence. Trade and other activities and relationships bring benefits such as economic wealth, export opportunities and access to new ideas, but they may also bring costs such as biosecurity risks. Global problems such as climate change will affect New Zealand to some extent. However, the way we respond to these problems is partially determined by international agreements. In so doing we tackle the global as well as local impacts.

New Zealand's urban areas, where the vast majority of New Zealanders live and where some of the major effects on other ecosystems are generated, **have not received the attention they need to promote sustainable urban environments and infrastructures**. Demographic trends indicate that pressures on urban environments will increase over the 21st century, and highlight the need to tackle urban issues from a broad sustainability perspective.

A whole range of barriers are getting in the way of making better progress towards the implementation of sustainable development. One of the main ones is the concept of sustainable development itself. It is difficult to understand, especially for those people and organisations that tend to think and operate in quite narrow areas of interest (silo-thinking). Another impediment is insufficient knowledge and capacity to support the implementation of sustainable development. This is knowledge in its broadest sense - research, information, indicators and people with the technical and organisational capabilities. There appears to be a lack of accessible information and a gap in terms of translating information that does exist into material that can be used by the

community to facilitate debate and understanding of sustainable development issues. The lack of a full range of established environmental indicators and the absence of indicators for sustainable development has made policy development and measurement of progress in this area difficult so far.

The kind of thinking that has got us into this situation is not the kind that will get us out of it. Albert Einstein.

Leadership in all sectors is critical for any significant progress to be made on sustainable development. Leadership influences the vision and changes necessary to implement sustainable development. Examples of sustainable development initiatives and effective leadership highlighted in this review include:

- Waitakere City Eco-Hospital
 - Landcare Research and the Triple Bottom Line
 - Redesigning Resources
 - Macpac and The Natural Step
 - Agenda 21 Forum, Christchurch
 - The Big Clean up, Auckland Regional Council
- Education for sustainability plays an important role in raising public awareness about sustainable development. **Many participants in this investigation, including students, academics and business people, highlighted the need for better education for sustainable development across all sectors of society.** However, progress in implementing education for sustainability has been slow.

Sustainable development needs to be implemented across a complex network of places and time scales. Different types of actions work best at different levels of organisation and over varying timeframes. For example, waste minimisation initiatives operate well at the individual business and local authority level and produce benefits over a relatively short time frame. In contrast, strategies to deal with climate change are best tackled at the national and global levels to achieve very long term goals.

Initiatives contributing to sustainable development

A number of relatively recent 'environmental' statutes or proposed legislation in New Zealand have incorporated the concept of sustainability. These include:

- Environment Act 1986
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Fisheries Act 1996
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000
- Local Government Bill.

A scan of statutes that cover social and economic matters revealed that none of them incorporated the concept of sustainability, indicating that sustainable development may be perceived and categorised as only an environmental management issue.

The contribution that the Resource Management Act (RMA) has made to sustainable development in general, and sustainable management of natural and physical resources in particular, is difficult to determine in the absence of any comprehensive outcome evaluation since the RMA was enacted. Most of the RMA implementation efforts over the last ten years have gone into writing plans and interpreting the Act's provisions, with the result that we know little about its effectiveness to manage natural and physical resources in a more sustainable way. However the RMA has raised the awareness of sustainability of natural resource use.

The RMA has been of mixed benefit to tangata whenua. It recognises the importance of the many relationships between the culture and traditions of tangata whenua and the land. There is more awareness of the practical benefits of more effective involvement of tangata whenua, and the RMA gives recognition to consultation and the ongoing duties of kaitiakitanga. However, many iwi have lacked the capacity to participate effectively in RMA processes and the responses from central and local government agencies to

their responsibilities in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi and the interests of tangata whenua have been variable.

Acceptance and advancement of sustainable development by central government has been slow in New Zealand compared with many other OECD countries. It was not until August 2001, some nine years after the Earth Summit, that the Government announced its intention to produce a national strategy on sustainable development. In the meantime, a number of local authorities as well as business and community groups in New Zealand have introduced their own initiatives to implement Agenda 21 principles within their respective sectors. While sustainable development is supposed to be implemented at the local level, **the absence so far of a national strategy has meant that there has been no clear national vision or direction to guide and coordinate local efforts and get the maximum benefit from them.** For example, Local Agenda 21 initiatives can be effective means of implementing sustainable development to achieve local as well as national goals.

The Government has introduced, or has under consideration, a number of strategies and legislation (see figures 2 and 3) that contribute in some way to aspects of sustainable development. The Government's intention is to draw all these together under an overarching sustainable development strategy. In some cases the links between the individual strategies and sustainable development are not clear because they were not developed with sustainability in mind (see figure 4). It would have been more logical to have in place a sustainable development strategy before all other related strategies were considered, so that the links and direction were clear. **Nevertheless the production of a series of strategies in the last two years shows great promise for the implementation of sustainable development in New Zealand.**

Figure 2: Timeline of Strategies and Programmes Related to Agenda 21

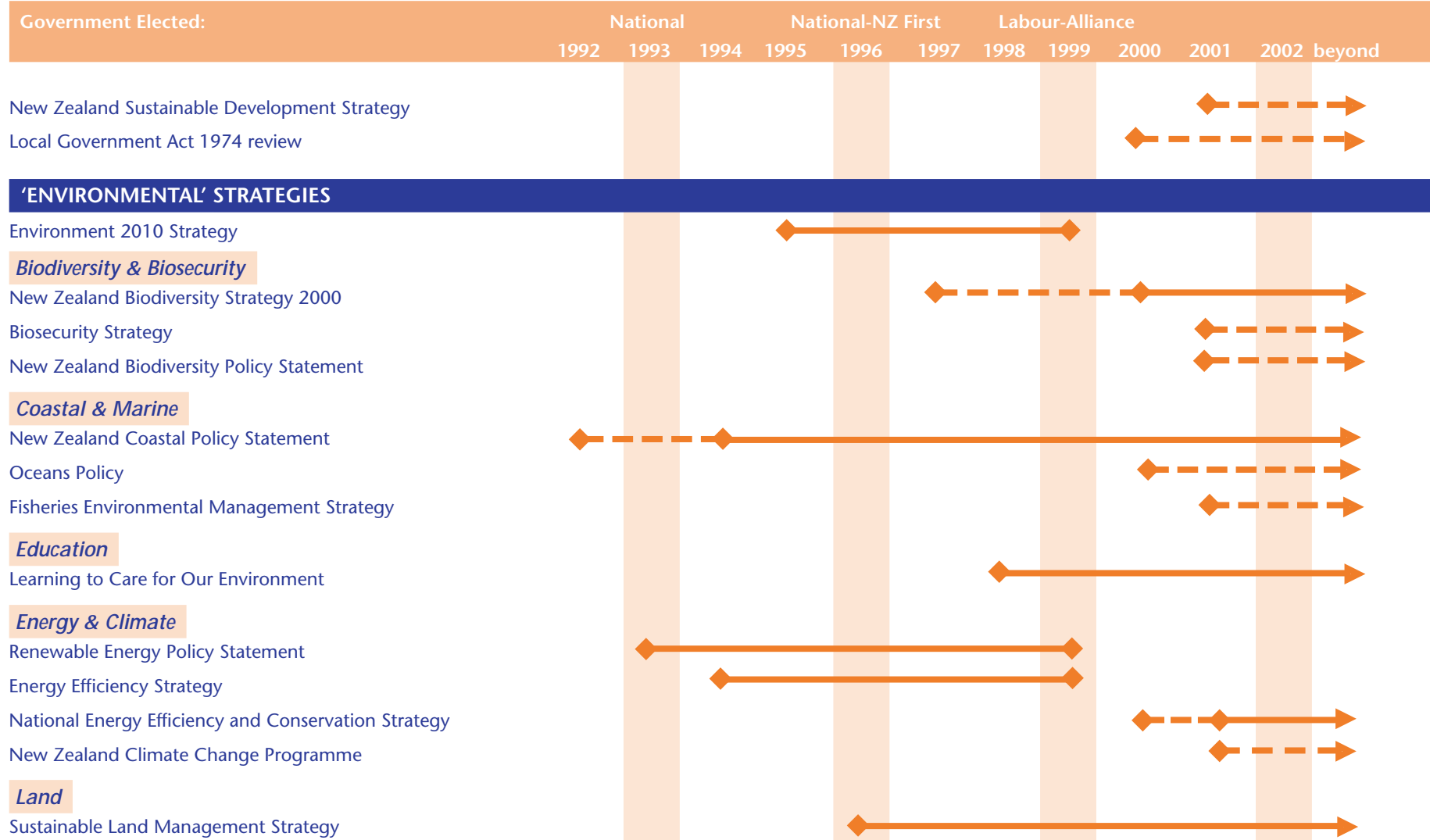


Figure 2: Timeline of Strategies and Programmes Related to Agenda 21 *continued*

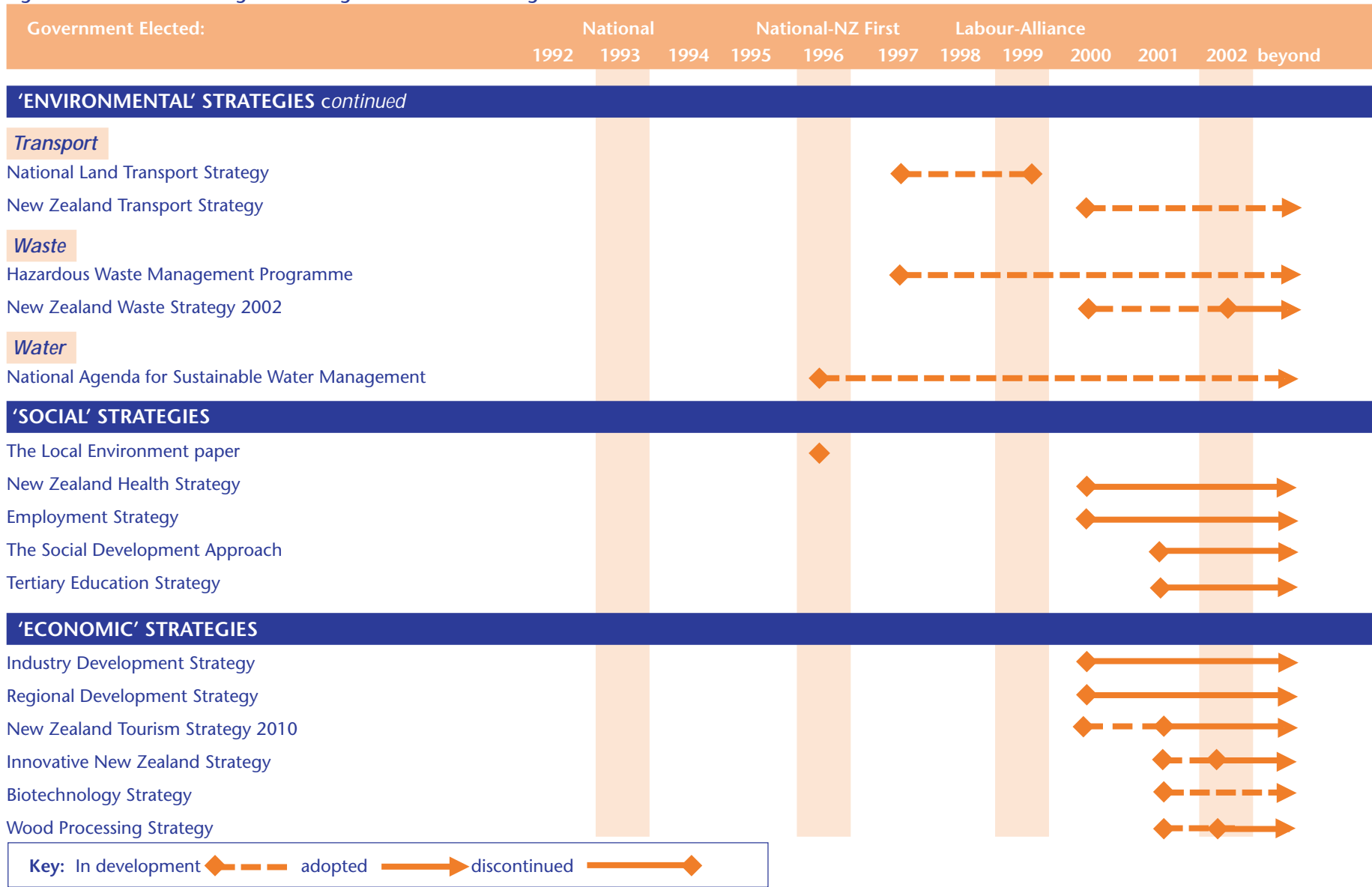
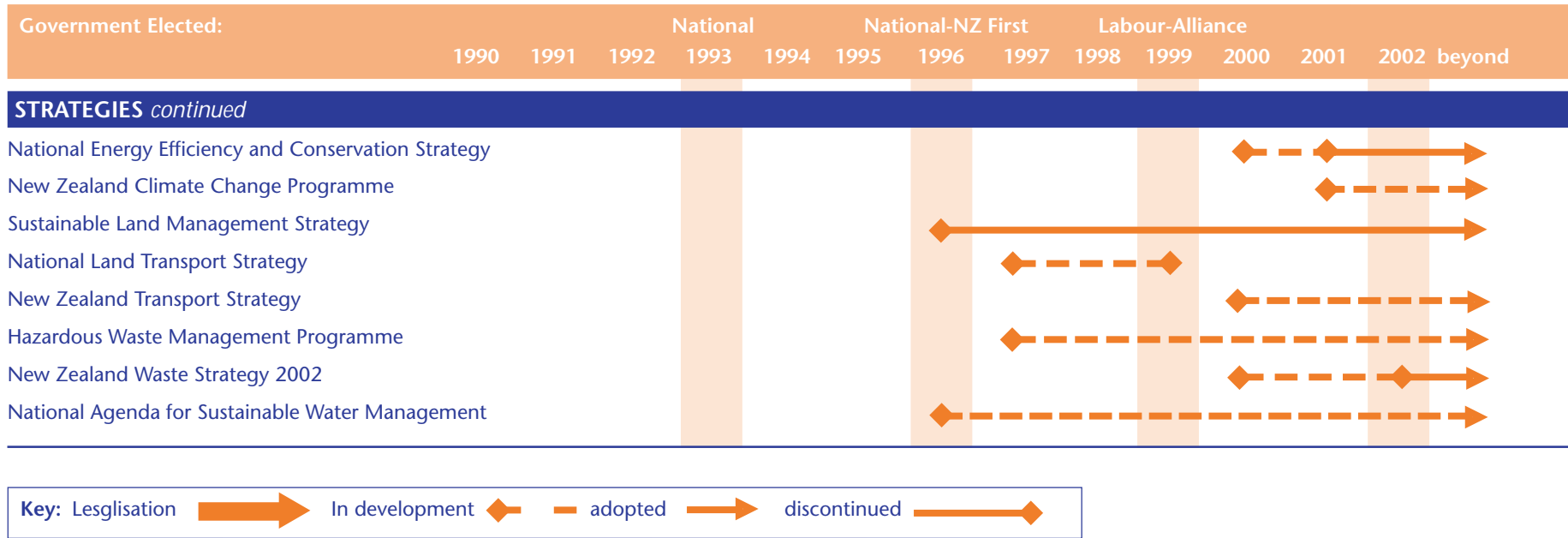


Figure 3: Environmental Management Legislation and Strategies 1990-2002 *continued*



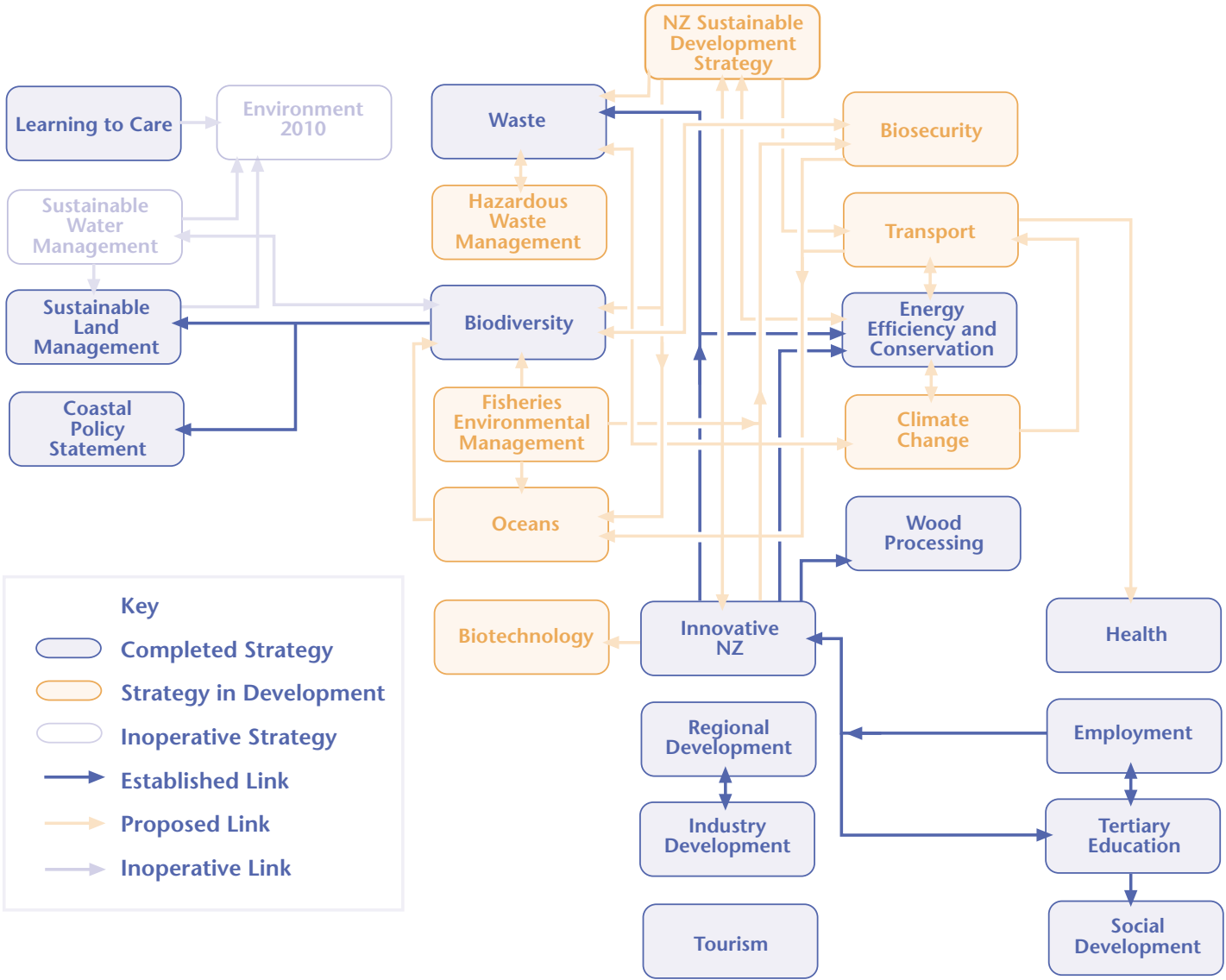
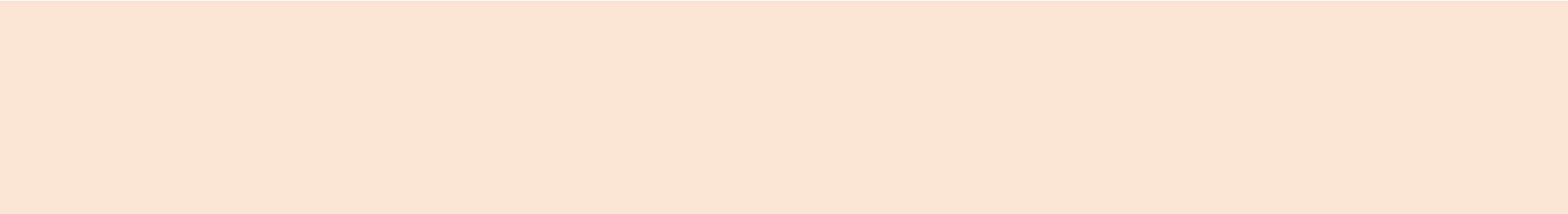


Figure 4: Linkages Between Government Strategies



Successful implementation of sustainable development initiatives among other OECD countries has been the result of efforts to gain public support, and achieve good coordination and integrated decision making. Having the commitment and the capacity to focus efforts towards actions over long-term time frames has also been a major factor. In countries such as the Netherlands, environmental management systems have evolved and broadened to cover sustainable development.

Progress on sustainable development in New Zealand

New Zealand could have been a leading light on sustainable development, given its relatively low population density, overall environmental quality, and its predominantly agricultural and marine-based economy. Instead, sustainable development has not progressed in New Zealand in a coordinated and meaningful fashion over the past ten years. Successive governments have largely ignored the Agenda 21 commitments made back in 1992 and, until very recently, have not provided the leadership necessary to support and guide sustainable development in New Zealand.

However, other sectors, including individual local authorities, business organisations and community groups have made progress with their own initiatives. They have endeavoured to incorporate sustainable development principles into their policies and activities, and have encouraged others to do likewise. It is the 'local initiatives' dimension of sustainability thinking and action that has made the biggest contribution to awareness of sustainable development over the last decade.

The stocktake of PCE investigations over the last decade (see appendix 2) has highlighted a number of problems exacerbated by 'silo' thinking (i.e. focusing only on narrow goals and failing to recognise and take into account the linkages between economic, social and environmental interests). These include:

- poorly integrated decision making
- inadequate cooperation and communication between sectors and agencies
- lack of structural and management incentives to work towards a more collective public good

Another point emerging from the stocktake relates to the sequencing of strategies and legislation that affect sustainable development. While the major environmental management Act (the RMA) was in place by 1991 a number of substantial and important initiatives to develop strategies relating to sustainable development have been initiated only within the last few years. This indicates that policy initiatives were more likely to be driven by reactive responses to relatively smaller issues, rather than by broader policy (sustainability) needs.

A substantial impediment that has existed for much of the past decade has been an ideological commitment to let market solutions and non-intervention by government resolve a wide range of environmental decisions on a case-by-case basis (within the RMA framework). 'Enabling' measures have been preferred over regulations, and little effort has been made to develop other policy alternatives. Market failures have not been adequately factored into policies. This has had the effect of inhibiting initiatives that could have provided broader strategic visions and directions over environmental management. For example, until the 2001 Oceans Policy initiative coherent management of our extensive ocean resources had not been addressed from a perspective of sustainable development.

It is only in recent years that central government has begun to develop various strategies related to sustainable development, and started work on a New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development. In retrospect, there is no reason why the process of developing such a strategy could not have commenced soon after the Earth Summit. **A sustainable development strategy is important but it is only a first step. It is a framework for action, not evidence of action.**

The same can be said about all the other environmental, social and economic strategies that have been, or are in the process of being, developed by the Government in the lead up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. That said, the development of a strategy for sustainable development and other strategies that incorporate sustainability shows great promise for the future in New Zealand.

It is time to look ahead for opportunities to convert strategies into actions and make genuine progress towards sustainability for the benefit of society, the environment and wealth creation in New Zealand.

Future challenges for New Zealand

The challenges and opportunities for progressing sustainable development in New Zealand can be categorised under three headings:

- establishing a vision and framework for sustainable development
- implementing sustainable development
- monitoring and reviewing progress towards sustainability.

Establishing a vision and framework

Sustainable development is not an easy concept to define or communicate, hence the plethora of definitions and interpretations that have evolved over the last fifteen or so years. To make it meaningful and generally acceptable in the New Zealand context, **sustainable development has to be supported by a strong vision and clear goals established through effective public participation processes.** Sustainable development needs to be relevant to, and demonstrate benefits for, all sectors of New Zealand society as well as the ecosystems that we rely on and value.

The Government has identified one of its major economic objectives is to return New Zealand's per capita income to the top half of the OECD rankings and maintain that standing. A major challenge for the Government will be to meet its economic objectives while also maintaining or

improving environmental conditions and the health of ecosystems on which so much of our wealth creation activities depend. The economy-environment linkage is strategically very important for New Zealand, as is maintaining the life-supporting capacities of ecosystems, and valuing natural assets in their own right, independent of their ability to supply human ends.

The continual emphasis by successive governments on economic growth as a priority has the potential to accelerate us towards unsustainability if it simply means escalating energy and materials consumption, waste and pollution problems. **Instead, emphasis should be shifted to development that improves quality of life, produces less waste, adds more value to goods and services, and manages in a sustainable way rather than 'quarries' resources.**

There are opportunities to break down barriers to achieving sustainability. These include changing the structure, funding and nature of government departments that encourage them to operate within a narrow focus and to compete in the policy advice they provide to the Government. Improvements have already been identified by a government review. These include integrating service delivery across multiple agencies, addressing fragmentation of the State sector, encouraging strong leadership, and setting up inter-agency teams to deal with operational matters that cross over into each other's areas.

The introduction of sustainability principles into recent legislation such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act and the Local Government Bill is an important step and should be encouraged in other environmental, social and economic legislative reviews or proposals.

Implementing sustainable development

Current trends in consumption of energy and natural resources, production of waste, growth in urban areas, biodiversity losses and biosecurity

threats, land-use and water issues in both rural and urban areas, and air quality in urban areas are all signs that New Zealand is not functioning in a sustainable manner.

Evidence in New Zealand and overseas suggests that one of the major drawbacks to implementing sustainable development has been a general lack of understanding of what the term means in practice. One way of dealing with this is to promote specific activities, such as waste minimisation or energy efficiency projects that in a particular way contribute towards sustainability. Such projects need to have clear, achievable and measurable targets that can be met within a realistic time frame. They need to demonstrate the connection between choice and consequence. Introducing organisations and individuals to such projects and what they can achieve would be more meaningful than endeavouring to influence behaviour by conveying the notion of sustainability in its broadest but vague sense. Other options include the business sector adopting models such as Triple Bottom Line reporting and The Natural Step that raise awareness about sustainable ways of doing business.

Ongoing leadership in all sectors has an important part to play in making progress on sustainable development. Effective leadership is needed to influence, coordinate, support and achieve results that will make a difference. While small groups working in isolation can achieve a lot in their own particular areas of interest, at a strategic level a more meaningful and overall shift towards sustainability is more likely to occur when there is a combined effort led by 'champions' of sustainable development. **Sustainability is not something that a government department, local authority or other public agency has sole responsibility for making happen**, although each one has significant leadership and guidance roles. Sustainability is achieved when organisations, businesses, communities and individuals all take responsibility for the amount

of resources they use, the energy they consume, the waste they produce, and the impacts they may have on biodiversity within a supportive and responsive policy framework.

Governments tend to rely on economic incentives to encourage behaviour modification towards more sustainable practices, but **economic instruments on their own are generally not totally reliable as a means of achieving sustainability outcomes**. A package of measures needs to be considered including economic instruments, education for sustainable development and voluntary codes of practice.

It is encouraging to see funding for sustainability research now being made available through the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. However, if sustainable development is to become a cornerstone of future economic, environmental and social policies, it will be necessary to ensure that within central and local government and within research institutes there is the capacity and people with the capability to make the links between all three dimensions of sustainability.

The forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) creates a timely opportunity for the New Zealand media to be catalysts for debate on sustainable development, to provide commentary on what sustainable development means for New Zealand, and to convey expressions of New Zealanders' values related to sustainability.

Monitoring and reviewing progress

Decisions about ecological sustainability rely to a large extent on good information, which in turn is the product of good monitoring and research.

Work is already under way to develop a set of sustainable development indicators for New Zealand. Among other things, sustainable development indicators need to be useful to local authorities that are likely to have increased responsibilities, under the Local Government Bill proposals, to plan for the sustainability needs of

their communities. Another matter that needs to be considered is the inclusion of a statement on the state of natural resources (natural capital) as part of the Statement of National Accounts. Such a statement on the state of natural resources would provide a picture of the extent to which natural capital has been affected by economic and social policy, and would identify critical pressure points that need to be addressed if we are to continue along a path towards sustainability.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment intends to undertake a further review of New Zealand's progress on sustainable development during 2006/07. This will include progress on commitments made by the Government at the Earth Summit in 1992 and those that will be made at the WSSD in 2002. Stakeholders at the preparatory meetings leading up to the WSSD have called for "action, not more talk".¹ The 2006/07 review by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment will focus primarily on New Zealand's response to such a challenge.

Recommendations

Responsibilities for sustainable development policies and actions come under a range of Ministerial portfolios and local government functions in the environmental, social and economic areas. For this reason, where a recommendation refers to the need to coordinate policy in all three areas, it has been directed to the Prime Minister. In other cases, recommendations have been directed to the relevant Minister or Ministers, or to local government.

Vision and framework for sustainable development

1. That, as part of the development of the proposed New Zealand Sustainable Development Strategy, the Prime Minister develops a range of policy, legislative, economic and voluntary measures designed to progress the implementation of sustainable development. These measures should include:
 - a. a position (or vision) statement outlining the goals and objectives of the Government's policy on sustainable development
 - b. a timeline for meeting objectives and measurable targets
 - c. a timeline and processes for reviewing the position (or vision) statement and associated goals and objectives
 - d. adoption of Agenda 21 principles into current and future environmental, economic and social legislation reviews.
2. That the Minister of Local Government, in consultation with Local Government New Zealand, develops guidelines for local authorities on preparing long-term community plans dealing with environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability, as proposed under the Local Government Bill. Such guidelines should be consistent with the principles of Agenda 21.

Implementation, monitoring and review of sustainable development

3. That the Prime Minister should establish an advisory body responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the Government's proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development, including:
 - actively promoting activities and education programmes that will increase public awareness of sustainable development
 - reviewing government departments' performances in working individually and collaboratively to meet sustainable development goals and objectives
 - providing support and guidance to local government and non-government organisations to ensure effective implementation of sustainable development at the local community level
 - encouraging sustainable development initiatives and partnerships among central and local government, private sector and non-government organisations
 - reviewing sustainability research priorities, capacities to undertake it and mechanisms for the application and adoption of the research.

- monitoring, reviewing and reporting on progress towards sustainable development goals and objectives.
 - encouraging local authorities to regularly review and report on the effectiveness of resource management policies and plans, as well as the proposed long-term community plans under the Local Government Bill, in achieving the goals and objectives of the proposed New Zealand Strategy on Sustainable Development.
4. That the Minister of State Services, in consultation with the Minister of Local Government and Local Government New Zealand, identifies the capacity and capability issues associated with implementing sustainable development, and introduces methods to improve skills in integrating environmental, social and economic policy analysis and implementation.

¹ See: <http://ens-news.com/ens/may2002/2002L-05-14-01.html>.

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Guide to the report

Chapter 1 outlines why the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment undertook this review and provides some background to the Earth Summit and Agenda 21. It also notes the purpose of the World Summit on Sustainable Development that will be held during August and September 2002. It sets out the terms of reference for the review, including its objectives, methodology and expectations.

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of sustainable development, including its various interpretations, and emphasises the linkages between its environmental, economic and social dimensions. It also highlights the importance of measuring progress towards sustainability.

Chapter 3 looks at trends and influences that affect sustainable development in New Zealand. In order to understand where we should be going, it is important to understand something of our history and the various characteristics of New Zealanders that have influenced and will continue to influence or drive the way we implement sustainable development. It is also important to understand and recognise global issues and trends that will impact on our capacity to implement sustainable development.

Chapter 4 outlines a number of initiatives undertaken by central and local government agencies and other sectors since the Earth Summit. It outlines some sustainable development-related strategies and initiatives underway in New Zealand and elsewhere. By drawing attention to some examples of approaches taken to promote sustainable development and put it into practice, it is intended to highlight the fact that there is support for the concept among a wide range of organisations.

Chapter 5 is a look back. It draws some conclusions about progress on sustainable development in New Zealand based on the review and analysis carried out in previous chapters. In addition, a summary of the report's findings against the expectations identified in chapter 1 is presented.

Chapter 6 is a look ahead. It explores issues that will have a significant influence on progressing sustainable development in New Zealand in the future, and makes recommendations to central and local government.