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Media Release

RMA Enforcement Report welcome but reveals some problems

EDS has welcomed a report that analyses the effectiveness of regional council enforcement performance under the Resource Management Act. The report, *Independent Analysis of the 2017/108 Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Metrics for the Regional Sector* was commissioned by regional councils and prepared by former EDS Senior Policy Analyst, Dr Marie Brown, now with The Catalyst Group.

“CME is a critically important area of resource management and if done poorly can lead to bad environmental outcomes,” said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

“It’s great that our 16 regional and unitary councils are being self-critical and the information provided by them for the report is useful. But there are major data gaps that need attention in the coming years: some councils will need to do better.

“One concern is that several councils allow the CE to be involved in decision-making on whether prosecutions should proceed. In our view this is inappropriate. Whether or not to take legal action on a given case is a technical decision.

“Another is that the planning that goes on around the country is only as good as its implementation, so it was concerning to note how low some councils’ staffing levels for CME were. This was particularly surprising when some of the lowest levels are in major cities such as Greater Wellington Regional Council.

“Looking to the future, there are many areas where councils could come together and develop more standardised approaches to common tasks and processes. The level of variation seems excessive and we would expect this report to provoke some standardisation, to ensure that the RMA is enforced in a similar way nationally.

“The report is the inaugural edition and is intended to be repeated annually. EDS supports more frequent, detailed and transparent monitoring of CME effectiveness and commends the regional sector for the initiative.

“As Dr Brown recommends, it would be good to see the scope of future environmental reporting expanded to consider whether the underlying rules and consent conditions actually protect the environment,” Mr Taylor concluded.

Link to full report here - <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/independent-report-on-regional-council-compliance-monitoring-and-enforcement/>