

Executive summary

This report reviews the Taranaki Regional Council's performance and achievement on its land management functions for the 2005/2006 year.

The implementation of the Sustainable Land Management Programme continues to be the Council's operational focus. This programme focuses upon the provision of advice and advocacy through property planning services whereby plans are prepared addressing sustainability issues on a site-specific basis within individual properties. The success of this extension programme and the Council's essentially non-regulatory approach to addressing land management issues in the region is reflected in the number of requests received by the Council and the action taken by the farming community to address land stabilisation and riparian issues.

Set out below is a summary of the main land management activities carried out by the Council in 2005/2006:

- Prepared 19 comprehensive farm plans covering an additional 11,737 hectares of hill country. As at 30 June 2006, a total of 251 comprehensive farm plans and agroforestry plans have been prepared covering 144,328 hectares;
- Prepared 303 riparian management plans covering 1,462 kilometres of streambank. As at 30 June 2006, the Council has prepared 1,396 riparian management plans, which cover 9,236 kilometres of streambank;
- Monitoring confirms that land occupiers are implementing the recommendations set out in riparian management plans – as at 30 June 2006 planholders had fenced an additional 288 kilometres of streambank and planted 256 kilometres of streambank since their plans were prepared;
- Prepared 10 conservation plans addressing site-specific soil conservation and water quality issues;
- Liaised with and provided supplementary advice to property plan holders on 1,684 occasions;
- Responded, within ten working days, to 572 requests for general advice and assistance on sustainable land management, soil conservation and riparian management practices; and
- Provided 157,565 plants for soil conservation and riparian enhancement purposes, at cost, to 471 landholders.
- Through the Council's sustainable land management programme, the Council is working with land holders to adopt land use practices and techniques that avoids or minimise soil erosion in the hill country and which maintain and improve water quality in ring plain streams. With continued land holder and community support for this programme and other land management activities, the Council believes it will continue to meet its land management objective of promoting sustainable land and riparian management.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Purpose	1
1.2. Background	1
1.2.1. Objective	2
1.2.2. Performance measures	2
2. Report on progress	3
2.1. Comprehensive and agroforestry plans	3
2.2. Riparian management plans	4
2.3. Conservation plans	6
2.4. On-going liaison	6
2.5. Requests for general advice and assistance	7
2.5.1. Planting material	7
2.5.2. Taranaki Tree Trust	8
3. Conclusion	11
Appendix I: Coverage of agroforestry and comprehensive farm plans	13
Appendix II: Coverage of riparian plans	15

List of figures

Figure 1: Conservation plans completed	6
Figure 2: Liaison and the provision of supplementary advice to plan holders over time	6
Figure 3: Requests for advice and assistance to plan holders over time	7
Figure 4: Numbers of plants supplied	7
Figure 5: Number of plants supplied	8

List of tables

Table 1: Comprehensive and agroforestry plans completed	4
Table 2: Riparian management plans completed	5
Table 3: Implementation of riparian management plans	5
Table 4: Number of plants supplied	8

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

This report reviews the Taranaki Regional Council's performance and achievements on its land management functions for the 2005/2006 year.

1.2. Background

The Taranaki Regional Council has responsibilities for sustainable land management in the Taranaki region derived from the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941.

Over 60% of Taranaki's total land area of 723,610 hectares has been developed for pastoral farming. The rest is mainly indigenous forest cover (half of which lies in the Egmont National Park and other Crown reserves) with some exotic forest cover. Good management of the region's land resource is essential for Taranaki's environmental and economic future. The soil resource, which supports the flora and fauna, and is the base for the region's primary production, must be carefully managed.

Under the Resource Management Act, Council has prepared the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* (1994), the *Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki* (2001), and the *Regional Soil Plan for Taranaki* (2001). These policy documents, amongst other things, promote sustainable land use, soil conservation and appropriate riparian management.

The Council promotes sustainable land management through advisory and regulatory methods. The focus is on the use of non-regulatory methods whereby advisory and extension services are provided to land occupiers to promote voluntary change towards sustainable land management practices.



Space planting trees on erosion prone parts of the slope will reduce erosion significantly

The property planning service involves Council, on request from interested land occupiers, preparing four types of farm plans. These are:

- **Comprehensive farm plans:** These are prepared for properties in erosion prone parts of the eastern hill country and look at all aspects of a farming operation including land and stock management and specifically address management practices that protect soil and water resources while maximising

the productive capability of the property. If forestry is seen as part of the property's future viability, this plan can also include an agroforestry plan.

- **Agroforestry plans:** These are prepared primarily for properties in the hill country but on occasion can be applied to other parts of the region. These plans are based upon a computer programme designed to model the physical and financial effects of a sustained planting to felling regime on a property.
- **Conservation plans:** These are prepared primarily for properties with individual site-specific soil or water conservation problems that do not require long term input and planning. Examples include shelterbelts and sand drift control.
- **Riparian plans:** These are prepared primarily for properties on the ring plain but on occasion can be applied to other parts of the region. These provide advice on the retirement or re-vegetation of land along the banks of rivers and streams for the purpose of enhancing water quality.

Set out below are the objectives and programmes with respect to the Council's significant land management activities, including the Council's operational response.

1.2.1. Objective

The two overall objectives for land management activities for 2005/2006, as set out in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual Plan*, are:

"To promote sustainable land and riparian management by providing property planning services that identify actions for land use and management on an individual property basis".

"To promote sustainable land and riparian management to the regional community through advocacy and facilitation".

1.2.2. Performance measures

In response to the above objectives, the Council adopted the following performance measures in its *2005/2006 Annual Plan*:

- Provide property planning services to landholders including:
 - comprehensive, agroforestry and conservation farm plans covering not less than an additional 15,000 hectares from an estimated 45 properties;
 - and
 - riparian management plans covering not less than an additional 1,250 kilometres from an estimated 350 properties.
- Liaise with and provide supplementary advice to the 1,200 landholders with existing plans.
- Respond to all requests for general advice and assistance on sustainable land management, soil conservation and riparian management practices within ten working days.
- Provide servicing and support to the Taranaki Tree Trust and assistance to other organisations involved in promoting sustainable land management.
- Provide, on a cost-recovery basis, an estimated 200,000 plants for soil and water protection.

2. Report on progress

2.1. Comprehensive and agroforestry plans

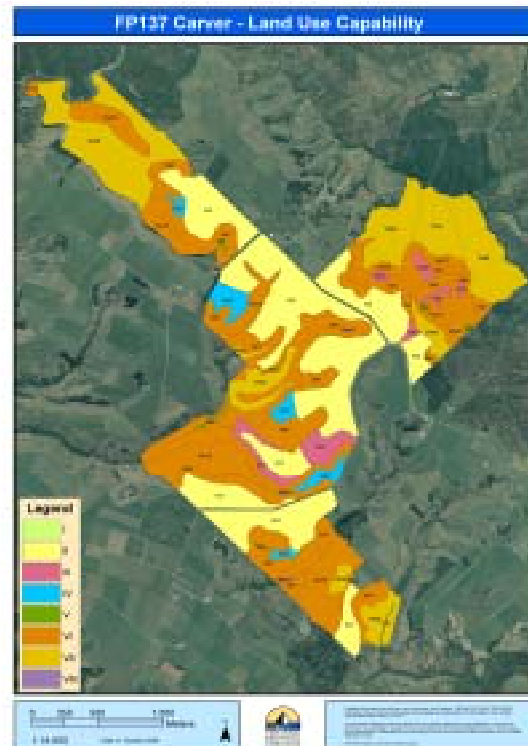
Each year, the Council receives requests from land occupiers to prepare comprehensive farm plans or agroforestry plans for their properties.

Comprehensive farm plans cover all environmental aspects of a farming operation including land and stock management while maximising the productive capability of the property. The plans are based upon a detailed land resource inventory and include an analysis of soils, geology, vegetation, slope and erosion. Land use and management recommendations promoting the stabilisation and protection of the productive capability of the soils within the property are also included in the Plan. The comprehensive farm plan format has evolved over the past two years to indicate production potentials for the different land units and provide some basic economic analyses.

In 2005/2006, the Land Management Section of the Council prepared 19 comprehensive farm plans covering an additional 11,737 hectares of farmland in the hill country and on the coastal terraces.

The Council may also receive requests from land occupiers to prepare agroforestry plans for their properties. The Council prepares these plans for land occupiers interested in diversification by establishing woodlots or plantations.

Agroforestry plans involve the use of the Agroforestry Estate Model to generate a number of scenarios taking into account land use capability and the nature and extent of forestry in which the land occupier is interested. However, in 2005/2006, there were no requests for Council to prepare an agroforestry plan.



Comprehensive farm plan showing land use capability units on a property, which enables a land holder to farm to the property's strengths and weaknesses



Taranaki hill country – the key to sustainable land management is matching land use with land type

As at 30 June 2006, a total of 251 comprehensive farm plans and agroforestry plans have been prepared covering 144,328 hectares (Table 1). The most 'at risk' area in terms of soil erosion occurs on steep slopes in the hill country and on the coastal terraces – particularly, pasture land on Class VIe, VII and VIII land. As at 30 June 2006, 40% of 'at risk' area in the hill country and coastal terraces were covered by either comprehensive farm plans, agroforestry plans, or both.

Table 1: Comprehensive and agroforestry plans completed

Year	Comprehensive plans		Agroforestry plans		Total	
	No. of plans	Ha	No. of plans	Ha	No. of plans	Ha
Prior to 2000/01	91	55,708	20	11,444	111	67,152
2001/2002	23	11,516	0	0	23	11,516
2002/2003	17	14,532	2	812	19	15,344
2003/2004	37	14,917	1	412	38	15,329
2004/2005	41	25,827	0	0	41	25,827
2005/2006	19	11,737	0	0	0	11,737
Total	228	134,237	23	12,668	251	144,328*

* Excludes 2,577 ha of the area covered by both agroforestry plans and comprehensive farm plans. This figure is already accounted for under the comprehensive farm plan statistics.

The coverage of the comprehensive plans and agroforestry plans throughout Taranaki is shown in Appendix I.

Hill country discussion groups

In addition to the preparation and implementation of property plans, in 2005/2006 Council staff supported farm discussion groups established in the hill country. Farm discussion groups have been established in the Waverley/Waitotara, Mangamingi, Huiroa/Makahu and Tarata areas.

The Council was also involved in supporting the Taranaki Monitor Farm at Tikorangi. A workshop on the 'effects of intensifying your farm' was also organised by Land Management officers

2.2. Riparian management plans

Each year, Council targets and receives requests from land occupiers to prepare riparian management plans for their property. Riparian management plans focus upon the protection of watercourses, primarily on the ring plain. These plans set out recommendations for the retirement or re-vegetation of land along



The retirement and planting of riparian margins reduces the impacts of adjacent land use activities on water quality

As at 30 June 2006, approximately 99,000 hectares (or 56%) of dairy farmland has been covered by the riparian plans. The coverage of the riparian plans throughout Taranaki over time is shown in Appendix II.

2.3. Conservation plans

Each year, the Council receives requests from land occupiers to prepare conservation plans for their property.

Conservation plans are prepared primarily for properties with localised site-specific land or water conservation problems eg, shelter establishment, sand restoration, wetland protection, and erosion control. The advice set out in conservation plans do not require long term or on-going input and planning.

In 2005/2006, the Council prepared 10 conservation plans. As at 30 June 2006, the Council has prepared 203 conservation plans (Figure 1).



Conservation plans focus on property-specific issues such as shelterbelt establishment

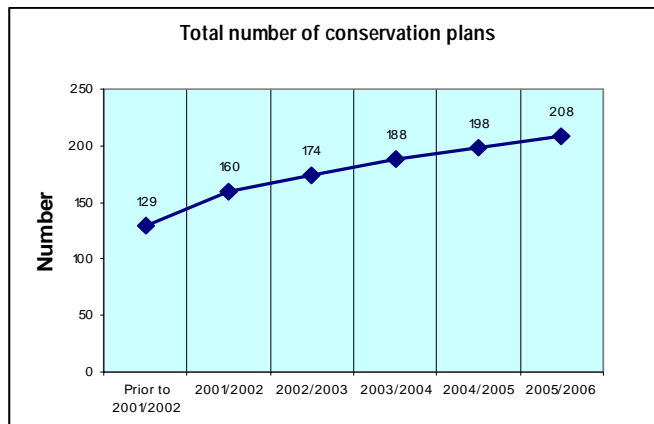


Figure 1: Conservation plans completed

2.4. On-going liaison

On-going liaison between Council and property plan holders is the most important component of ensuring that the plan holders implement the plans' recommendations over time.

In 2005/2006, the Council liaised with and provided supplementary advice on 1,684 occasions to landholders with existing property plans.



Figure 2: Liaison and the provision of supplementary advice to plan holders over time

2.5. Requests for general advice and assistance

2.5.1. Planting material

Each year the Council receives and responds to numerous requests from the public for information on sustainable land management. Public requests may relate to vegetation clearance, native logging, implementation rate of the sustainable land management programme and riparian management strategy, aerial photography, planting advice and new property plan enquiries.

Council officers also distribute a large number of pamphlets and other educational material to interested individuals and organisations in relation to sustainable land management.

In 2005/2006, the Council received and responded to 572 requests for advice and assistance on a wide variety of land management related issues (compared with 594 information requests the preceding year). Most of these requests related to sustainable land management practices, and, to a lesser extent information requests from other agencies. All requests for general advice and assistance were responded to within ten working days.

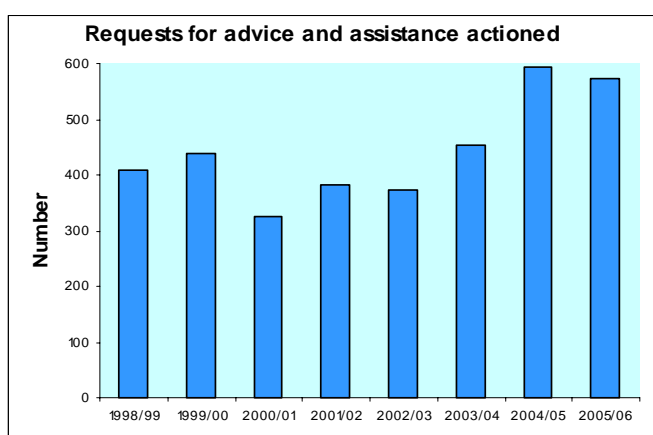


Figure 3: Requests for advice and assistance to plan holders over time

2.5.2. Planting material

The Council has two plant production schemes whereby it grows or obtains quality conservation planting material and makes these plants available to property plan holders at cost. The provision of planting material at cost is a key component in the success of the Council's soil conservation and riparian management programmes.

The first scheme involves Council supplying low cost poplar and willow plants for soil stability purposes. During the 2005/2006 year the Council provided 6,874 poplars and willows to 87 landholders.

The second scheme is the 'Riparian Plant Scheme'.



Land occupiers picking up riparian plants from the Hawera depot

This scheme involves the Council contracting nurseries to supply suitable native riparian planting material. By bulk purchasing these plants, the cost of the plants is reduced and the Council then passes on these savings to riparian management plan holders.

In recent times there has been a significant upward trend in land occupier interest in riparian planting. In 2005/2006 the Council supplied 150,691 plants to 384 property plan holders (14 nurseries supplied plants to the scheme).

Table 4: Number of plants supplied

Year	Poplar & willows	Riparian plants	Total
1996/1997	0	15,655	15,655
1997/1998	7,094	25,000	32,094
1998/1999	9,918	32,630	42,548
1999/2000	10,458	51,320	61,778
2000/2001	8,691	69,400	78,091
2001/2002	9,700	92,000	101,700
2002/2003	9,500	115,000	124,500
2003/2004	0	95,018	95,018
2004/2005	12,700	219,000	231,700
2005/2006	6,874	150,691	157,565
Total	74,935	865,714	940,649

In 2005/2006, the Council supplied a total of 157,565 plants. Since 1996/1997 the Council has supplied 74,935 poplar and willow plants and 865,714 riparian plants (refer Table 4 and Figure 5).

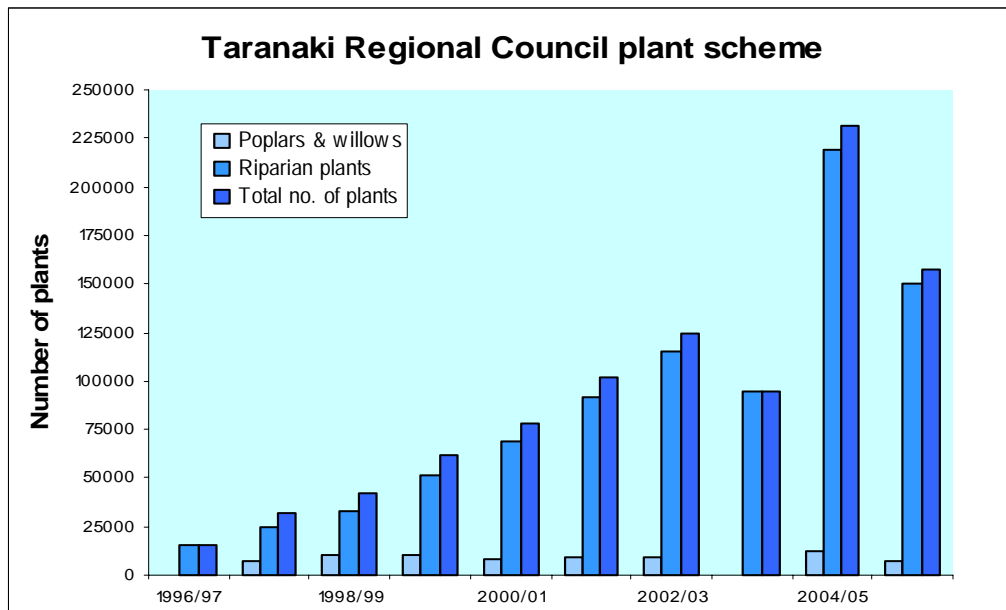


Figure 5: Number of plants supplied

2.5.3. Taranaki Tree Trust

The Council continues to administer and service the Taranaki Tree Trust – a charitable trust dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the region’s ecosystems and landscapes. It also donated \$30,000 to the Tree Trust from the Environmental Enhancement Grant.

The Trust met five times during the year to consider potential projects. The annual report of the Trust was approved at the Annual General Meeting held on 1 November 2005.

The Taranaki Tree Trust continues to receive contributions and attract sponsorship. It is therefore in a position to financially support a number of projects. In 2005/2006 the Taranaki Tree Trust undertook to assist with projects including:

- Herekawe Stream walkway project
- *Treescaping Taranaki* field day
- Te Wera Arboretum restoration
- Wetland Enhancement
- Amenity Plantings for display
- Oakura Boardriders coastal restoration
- Rapanui Petrel colony
- School environmental educational projects
- School Arbour Day plantings
- Assisted with QEII covenants.



Mutual benefits arise from sharing information and experiences in discussion groups.

Further to the above, the Taranaki Tree Trust continued to provide financial assistance to land owners for riparian planting in 17 catchments on a 50% share cost basis.

2.5.4. Regionally significant wetlands

Wetlands, such as lagoons, estuaries, bogs, swamps, shallow lakes and farm dams, have a vital role in maintaining the health of the region's natural environment.

The Council promotes wetland protection through education, advice and information and financial incentives. In particular, the Council focuses on protecting 77 significant wetlands or group of wetlands, covering 2,844 hectares.

Where possible, the Council advocates for the protection of significant wetlands with a particular focus on



Kahikatea and kamahi swamp forest wetland

fencing and covenanting the wetlands for their long-term protection.

Grants are made to land occupiers to cover the costs of enhancement and protection. There are two legal protection mechanisms available – a Covenant (with either the QEII National Trust or the Department of Conservation) or a Memorandum of Encumbrance with Council. The 77 significant wetlands are classified into regionally significant wetlands (48), wetlands over 5 hectares (18) and wetlands with rare or uncommon indigenous species (11). As at 30 June 2006, of the 48 wetlands classified as regionally significant 34 are completely protected legally and 4 are partly protected legally. Of the 18 wetlands over 5 hectares 3 are completely protected legally. Of the 11 wetlands with rare or uncommon indigenous species 3 are completely protected legally and one is partly protected legally. That is, 52% of the significant wetlands are completely legally protected and another 6.5% are partly legally protected. 13 significant wetlands have QEII covenants, 25 significant wetlands have Department of Conservation covenants, and 8 significant wetlands have Council memorandums of encumbrance, covering part or the whole of the wetlands.

In 2005/2006, two new QEII Covenants were registered on two significant wetlands. That year, the Council spent some \$40,983 on works to protect these 2 significant wetlands. Protection works included weed control, restoration planting, and fencing. In total land management staff have been working on initial or follow up protection works in 2005-2006 on 8 of the regionally significant wetlands, 2 of the wetlands over 5 hectares and 1 of the wetlands with rare or uncommon indigenous species.

In 2005/2006, the Council reviewed and updated its Inventory *Regionally Significant Wetlands of Taranaki*. This review updated information in the Inventory and in supporting databases and should greatly assist the Council in its planning and implementation programmes addressing significant wetlands. The review also resulted in the development and commencement of an annual monitoring programme of significant wetlands. The wetland monitoring programmes includes site visits for all significant wetlands, liaison with land owners, the monitoring and recording of information relating to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the wetlands, including following up on protection works initiated.

3. Conclusion

In summary, the Council substantially met its objectives and performance measures for land management activities as set out in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual Plan*.

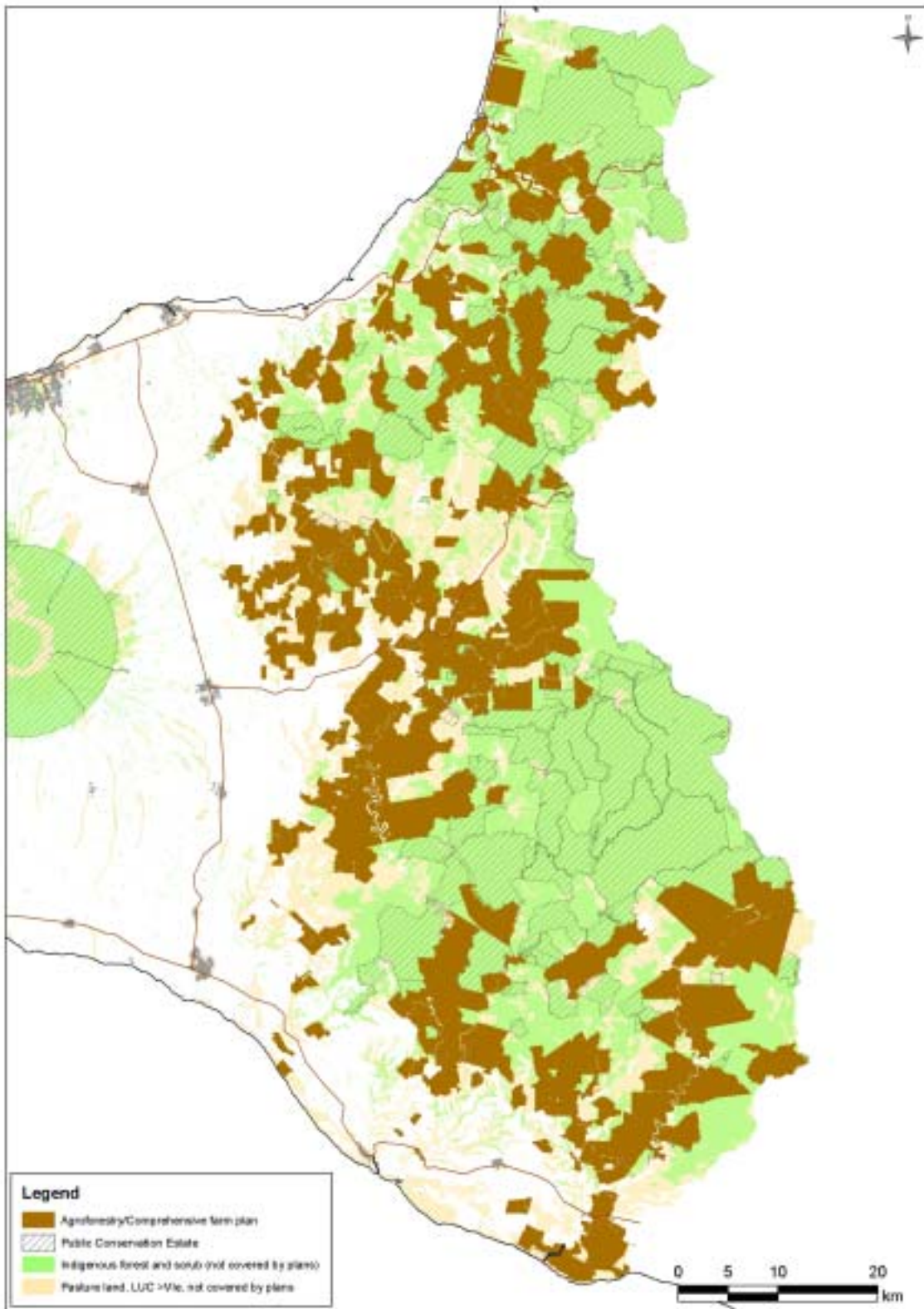
The implementation of the Sustainable Land Management Programme continues to be the Council's operational focus. Through this Programme, significant parts of Taranaki's erosion prone areas are being sustainably managed and soil erosion minimised or avoided. Likewise, the fencing and planting of riparian margins through intensively farmed land on the ring plain is making a significant contribution to avoiding, remedying or mitigating the effects of land use practices on water quality.

Programmes and performance measures

1. Prepared 19 comprehensive farm plans (covering an additional 11,737 hectares of farmland) and 10 conservation plans
2. Prepared 303 riparian management plans covering 1,462 kilometres of streambank.
3. Monitoring confirms that land occupiers are implementing the recommendations set out in riparian management plans – as at 30 June 2006 planholders had fenced an additional 288 kilometres of streambank and planted 256 kilometres of streambank since their plans were initially prepared.
4. Liaised with and provided supplementary advice to property plan holders on 1,684 occasions;
5. Responded, within ten working days, to 572 requests for general advice and assistance on sustainable land management, soil conservation and riparian management practices; and
6. Provided 157,565 plants for soil conservation and riparian enhancement purposes, at cost, to 471 landholders.
7. The Council continued to provide servicing and support to the Taranaki Tree Trust and other organisations involved in promoting sustainable land management.

This report will be forwarded to interested stakeholders for land management.

Appendix I: Coverage of agroforestry and comprehensive farm plans



Appendix II: Coverage of riparian plans

