# Using Dialogue to Develop a More Robust Regional Pest Management Strategy – Final Report 2005–06

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## Summary


### Project and Client

Project: Using Dialogue To Develop A More Robust Regional Pest Management Strategy
Client: Ministry of Research, Science and Technology

### Objectives

Our primary objective was to trial a dialogue process in a non-marae environment where real life problem-solving was required to achieve tangible outcomes. Secondary objectives included:

- Identifying and clarifying the reasons for having a Regional Pest Management Strategy.
- Deciding what the 'perfect' Regional Pest Management Strategy might look like.
- Examining the past experiences stakeholders may have had with earlier pest management strategies.
- Using our dialogue process to give each group an opportunity to present their perspective and work together to create novel solutions to pest problems.
- Developing a vision for pest management in Hawke's Bay.
- Developing alternative win:win approaches to achieve these goals, and
- Encouraging greater involvement of Maori and science groups in the Regional Pest Management Strategy review process.

### Methods

The Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) invited stakeholder groups to attend a dialogue meeting to begin a revision of the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS). The meeting was held at the Mission Estate, Taradale, Hawke's Bay, on 19–20 May 2005. A facilitator was used to ensure that all participants were able to contribute their perspectives to the discussion. All participants were asked to present their perspectives on the Hawke's Bay RPMS, including their understanding of 1) what a pest management strategy should cover, 2) what has/has not worked well previously, 3) what changes could be made and 4) what an ideal pest strategy would look like. A strong focus of the exercise was on highlighting the importance of listening, using listening skills throughout the meeting and working in small groups to understand the different aspects of a RPMS. At the end of the meeting participants were surveyed to see how they found the meeting. HBRC Biosecurity Managers were also asked for their impressions of the dialogue process and about subsequent progress with the revision of the RPMS using aspects of the process.

### Results and Conclusions

- This dialogue process worked successfully.
- Feedback from participants immediately after the meeting and from the HBRC as long as 5 months afterwards, was that the meeting had been surprisingly enjoyable and constructive.
- Participants expressed surprise at the power of simple facilitation techniques such as allowing everyone an opportunity to speak in a safe environment.
- Taking more time to scope out the issues at the development stage of the strategy ensured that the HBRC strategy development team was addressing the needs of its stakeholders.

- Taking this time also helped build goodwill and buy-in from stakeholders and ensured that all issues were tabled early in the process.
- HBRC staff were enthusiastic at the contribution scientists were able to make towards improving the new Hawke's Bay RPMS and expect to maintain professional contact with the scientists that attended.
- We reiterate the importance of an experienced facilitator to manage the proceedings.
- Hawke's Bay Biosecurity Managers indicated they would be comfortable using specific aspects of the dialogue process to improve listening, and to encourage meeting participants to speak about their perspectives at future RPMS meetings.
- The expense of the process and the difficulty of running a two-day long meeting meant that HBRC staff felt that they would only use parts of the dialogue process in the future.

**Recommendations**

- Organisations need to commit adequate resources and use a variety of techniques when inviting and encouraging stakeholder groups to attend dialogue meetings. The more diverse the stakeholders that attend the better.
- Conducting dialogue away from traditional meeting venues (such as Board Rooms and Council Chambers) with an independent experienced facilitator helps to create a safe environment that encourages open-mindedness to other perspectives.
- Setting the room up so participants face each other is conducive to enhancing dialogue.
- Creating elements of surprise (e.g. unusual objects) helps participants to step out of traditional roles and behaviours.
- There is great value in having scientists involved in dialogue on issues where scientific understanding can contribute. Scientists provide easy access to information that may otherwise lie buried in myriad different reports.
- There remain significant issues in communicating scientific information from science researchers to managers. There is a great deal of room for further experiments in bridging what has been called the "gully of death"
- Cultural changes are required at a range of levels if agencies and organisations are to make available the resources and develop the skills to undertake dialogue. Such dialogue is necessary for improving democratic decision-making to achieve better outcomes.

# 1. Introduction

Landcare Research, Lincoln, trialled a dialogue process in the review of Hawke's Bay Regional Council's regional pest management strategy to test whether such a process would be successful in a real-life situation outside the marae-based setting where the initial dialogue process had been developed. The New Zealand Science and Technology Dialogue Fund supported the work, which was carried out between July 2004 and December 2005.

# 2. Background

In 2003/04 Landcare Research devised a dialogue process that used elements of 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' in a marae-based environment. This proved immensely successful as a method for enhancing dialogue between stakeholder groups about controversial biosecurity issues such as the aerial use of compound 1080 for pest control, and biocontrol of weeds (Hayes *et al*. 2004, Lyver *et al*. 2004). However, at the four hui used to trial our process, no binding decision-making or outcomes were required. Therefore, two outstanding questions for the Landcare Research Dialogue Research team were would this type of dialogue process work in a scenario where real-life management outcomes were at stake and would this type of dialogue process work in an environment outside of the marae?

In August 2004 the Landcare Research Dialogue Team invited the Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) Biosecurity Managers to consider whether they would be prepared to trial our dialogue process as part of the upcoming review of their regional pest management strategy (RPMS). In the past, pest researchers have noted that some objectives included in regional strategies have been unrealistic or unworkable given current resources (e.g. the eradication of possums and eradication of privet from urban areas), possibly due to a lack of substantial scientific input during strategy development, and the influence of various political and statutory constraints. Many regional councils have also encountered opposition from ratepayers when implementing their strategies, e.g. requirements for controlling various weeds. Landcare Research was interested in seeing whether an RPMS could be improved when multiple stakeholder groups including scientists worked together to think about objectives and develop approaches to developing a RPMS.

We worked with the HBRC and local stakeholder groups to:

- Identify and clarify the reasons for having a RPMS.
- Decide what the 'perfect' RPMS might look like.
- Examine past experiences stakeholders may have had with earlier pest management strategies.
- Use our dialogue process to give each group an opportunity to present their perspective and work together to create novel solutions to pest problems.
- Develop a vision for pest management in Hawke's Bay.
- Develop alternative win-win approaches to achieve these goals, and
- Encourage greater involvement of Maori and science groups in the RPMS review process.

We hoped that using the outcomes from this meeting, the Hawke's Bay Regional Council could work towards strategy objectives that are achievable, make the best use of available resources, and are consistent with the needs of local groups and the latest scientific research. Council managers found that during the previous review process, they were sometimes unable to answer some questions from stakeholders because they did not have the most current scientific information available. The additional scientific input provided through our dialogue process was therefore also useful in the discussion about emerging issues such as the Farmer Self-Help Programme, and about multi-species, rather than single-species, approaches to management. At present, pest management strategies tend to focus on controlling single animal species (e.g. possums) rather than a whole suite of pests (e.g. possums, rats, and mustelids); weed management also tends to be species-focused rather than site-focused, which can result in one weed simply replacing another after control. If the level of understanding of the issues involved could be increased that may ease some of the negative publicity or lack of support that the HBRC has received in the past.

## 3. Objectives

Our primary objective was to trial a dialogue process in a non-marae environment where real life problem-solving was required to achieve tangible outcomes. Secondary objectives included:

- Identifying and clarifying the reasons for having a Regional Pest Management Strategy.
- Deciding what the 'perfect' Regional Pest Management Strategy might look like.
- Examining the past experiences stakeholders may have had with earlier pest management strategies.
- Using our dialogue process to give each group an opportunity to present their perspective and work together to create novel solutions to pest problems.
- Developing a vision for pest management in Hawke's Bay.
- Developing alternative win:win approaches to achieve these goals, and
- Encouraging greater involvement of Maori and science groups in the Regional Pest Management Strategy review process.

## 4. Methods: The Modified Dialogue Process

### 4.1 Invitation

Invitations, which included a summary of the meeting outline and objectives, were sent by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council Biosecurity Managers to stakeholder groups asking that they attend a Dialogue Meeting related to the revision of the Hawke's Bay RPMS. Follow-up phone calls were made to individuals from some stakeholder groups to further discuss meeting objectives and confirm their attendance.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Venue:** | Mission Estate, Taradale, Hawke's Bay (Fig 1) |
| Date of meeting: | 19–20 May 2005 |
| **Facilitator:** | Ms Wendy McPhail, Global Foresight |

### 4.2 Stakeholder groups that attended

- Hawke's Bay Regional Council (Biosecurity staff, Councillors and Planners)
- Pan Pac Forest
- Landcare Research scientists (3)
- AgResearch
- Federated Farmers
- Farmers
- Hawke's Bay Fruit Growers Association
- Department of Conservation
- Nga Whenua Rahui
- Napier Branch Forest and Bird
- QEII Trust
- Garden and Nursery Industry
- Biosecurity New Zealand
- Horizons Regional Council
- Napier City Council
- Private consultants (The Conservation Company)

**Fig. 1** Mission Estate: The venue for the Hawke's Bay pest management dialogue meeting.

### 4.3 Meeting structure – Day 1

**Introductory process**

The Dialogue Fund team introduced themselves and explained the reason for the meeting. Then each stakeholder participant was asked to provide their name, an explanation of the group they were representing, and one thing about themselves that no one else knew (to help break the ice).

**Small group exercises**

Small group exercises were used to set the scene for participants and have them determine the direction for the meeting and outline what they expected to achieve from the two days.

*(i) Expectations:* Participants were asked to separate into six groups and list what they expected to achieve over the next two days at the meeting. These lists were then reported back to the wider group via a spokesperson.

*(ii) Strategies:* Participants were asked to form six groups (with different members than before) and come up with five points relating to what they thought a 'perfect' RPMS would look like. A spokesperson for the group then reported these points back to the main group for general discussion.

**Ecosystem approach**

Wendy McPhail explained the need to think holistically and take an 'ecosystem approach' bearing in mind that whenever you tamper with one aspect of a system that has an impact on all the other parts. She talked about the need to look at stakeholder needs, results (i.e. those things that have and have not been achieved), culture and individual behaviour, systems and processes, and vision, as well as strategy.

**Listening exercise**

Wendy also presented an introduction to listening and handed out notes outlining key points about active listening before people began their talks. These points included:

- You may want to take notes on some of the key points you hear from other stakeholder group's presentations.
- If there is time available following any of the presentations we will only allow you to ask questions to clarify points you do not understand.
- Remember to try and listen with an open mind and not just with the intent to reply; you may hear something you have not heard before.
- Assume you don't fully understand; remember understanding comes through listening.
- And giving someone a good 'listening to' helps our own understanding.

**Presentations**

In no particular order, participants were asked to deliver their perspectives on the Hawke's Bay RPMS focusing on a number of points including:

- Their understanding of a pest management strategy.
- What has/has not worked well previously?
- What threats are there to a good strategy?
- What has been left out?
- What changes could be made?
- What would an ideal pest strategy look like?

Participants were given the key questions as part of the pre-meeting correspondence. Presentation of perspectives was a voluntary exercise, but as people heard others and gained confidence they also stood to speak. Many of the presentations were not formally prepared, so participants spoke off the cuff of the issues of most concern to them.

**Stakeholder needs**

Small groups then worked on elucidating the needs that different stakeholder groups have of the strategy. This was not focused on what people thought ought to be in the strategy but on some of the reasons why people were involved as stakeholders, and what results they might want to see if the strategy is working well.

**Evening hospitality**

A wine tasting with finger food was organised at the venue to allow people to stay on and mingle and talk freely. Again this proved to be a highly successful way of developing relationships and links between the participants.

## 4.4 Meeting structure – Day 2

**Communal breakfast**

A buffet breakfast was provided at the venue so the group could gather prior to the meeting and begin to focus on and undertake further discussion about the relevant issues in an informal setting. It was also used to allow further relationship building between participants.

**Walking and talking about the issues**

To review issues that were discussed on Day 1 or relevant issues that were of concern to a particular stakeholder group, participants paired up with someone else and walked around the Mission Estate premises. This exercise grounded participants back into the tasks at hand and provided an introduction to the listening exercise.

**Five themes from Day 1**

Participants were divided into three groups and asked to list the five most important themes to emerge from discussions on Day 1 (Fig 2). These were later reported back to the wider group by a designated spokesperson. Lengthy discussion around these themes emerged from this exercise.

**Fig. 2** Stakeholder dialogue: Farmers and scientists review themes

**Listening exercise**

Participants were paired up with someone from another stakeholder group. For approximately an hour, each person took a turn at explaining their perspective to their partner and have that partner faithfully relate that perspective back to the person. Participants were asked to give their partner a 'good listening to' and to ask 'why' a number of times until they were able to reach the source of any issues or problems. Due to the size of the group and time constraints (we needed to spend more time on outcomes than previously) we did not get people to report back someone else's perspective to the whole group.

**Needs and results**

Reporting back from the listening exercise was achieved by breaking participants into six groups to discuss the priority needs of stakeholders and the results that groups wanted from the strategy based on their new understanding of each others' perspectives. These needs and results were presented back to the main group.

**Guiding principles**

In the same small groups, participants established some guiding principles for continuing and developing dialogue around the RPMS in the future. Wendy pointed out that if 'you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got'. The group was asked to think differently and expansively about how they want to continue this dialogue and relate to the other groups present. These guiding principles would be used to engender respect for other perspectives and needs.

**Missing stakeholders**

As a large-group exercise participants were asked who they thought were missing from the meeting. This exercise emphasised to participants the large scale of potential perspectives that needed to be considered in an RPMS and the groups that would still need to be involved in the development of the new strategy. Missing groups included:

Tangata whenua
Port Authority/Airport Authority
Pet trade
Ratepayers
Wood Hawke's Bay
Fish and Game
Aviation
NZ Army
Pest control industry
Transit NZ
RSPCA
Educational institutes
Fur traders
Animal ethics societies
Viticulture industry
Herbicide companies
Agricultural companies
Marine farming companies
Sporting and recreation groups

**What would a fly on the wall be seeing/hearing?**

Participants were asked to think in small groups about 'what a fly on the wall would be seeing or hearing' if a perfect RPMS was in place. This was then reflected back to the wider group, and included things like: positive feedback, flexibility, teamwork, public meetings, cooperating willingly, an apparent leader, innovation, having fun, improvements, action, people doing things, agreement, open minds, learning, debate/consensus, people seeking feedback, happy ratepayers, and listening.

**Evaluation and closure**

Participants were asked for a brief verbal assessment of the meeting. Overall, people were very positive about the process, but some were a little unsure of what would and could happen from here on. Participants were also asked to provide an evaluation of the dialogue process using a questionnaire provided.

Participants were asked about:

- How they rated their experience at this meeting.
- Why was this meeting worth/not worth attending?
- What should have been done differently at this meeting?
- What did they like about this meeting?

- How did they rate this meeting against other pest management strategy development meetings they have attended?
- Were there any other comments they wanted to make?

### 4.5 Initial assessment

HBRC Biosecurity Managers were positive about the amount that they had learned and some were enthusiastic about what the process had uncovered for them in terms of writing the strategy. Initial follow-up with the HBRC Biosecurity Managers occurred immediately after the meeting to capture their initial impressions of the dialogue process.

### 4.6 Subsequent assessment

Longer-term follow-up occurred with HBRC staff five months after the meeting to see what lasting impressions the meeting had on them, to explore how the HBRC planned to implement the guiding principles requested by stakeholders for developing the revised RPMS, and find out what actions they had taken subsequently in revising their RPMS and addressing the needs identified by the stakeholders.

The following issues and questions were discussed at this meeting:
- What were the outcomes from meeting?
- What were your impressions of the process?
- What did you learn?
- Was there improved stakeholder input and satisfaction?
- What level of stakeholder contact has there been since the meeting?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?
- What do you need from us for future meetings?
- What approaches and techniques would you use from the dialogue process in future RPMS meetings?
- How do we get those groups that were not represented participating?
- Are you contemplating using this process for anything else?
- Any other issues you may have?

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Differences between this meeting and the hui

1. This meeting was not conducted on a marae or under marae-based protocol, so did not have Maori tikanga guiding the dialogue process.
2. Face-to-face invitation and explanation of process with individual stakeholder groups was not used much at this meeting. Instead, most participants were invited by letter from the HBRC with some follow-up phone calls. Some relevant stakeholder groups were unfortunately absent from the meeting (i.e. local iwi). Landcare Research asked the HBRC to invite the stakeholders since they were the hosts and had the prior relationships with the groups. The regional council managers were unable able to commit a large amount of time to inviting stakeholders to attend or explaining the

process or the purpose of the meeting, and we relied largely on stakeholder interest in the theme or process to get people to attend.

3. Tangata whenua were a major stakeholder group missing from the meeting. Representatives from the Taiwhenua and the Waikaremoana Hapu Restoration Trust were scheduled to attend but withdrew on the day because of other commitments.
4. The use of small-group exercises and discussions was more prominent in this dialogue process than in the hui.
5. We did not use waiata as energisers but instead used exercises and physical activities to wake up peoples' brains.
6. The meeting was conducted over two weekdays, because using a Saturday discouraged some participants from attending last time. Also, many of the participants were paid by their organisations or businesses to attend.
7. Objects of interest (unusual deck chairs, an inflatable dog, and soft sponge balls) in the centre of the floor were used to create an air of uncertainty and surprise amongst the participants. An explanation for the objects was not provided. They remained a point of curiosity and fun for the group throughout the meeting.
8. Lunch and finger food in the evening were conducted standing up, rather than seated at tables, to encourage participants to move around freely and talk.
9. Participants went home at the end of the day, so there was no communal sleeping arrangements and therefore less time for talking together during the evening, over dinner and over breakfast. However, some participants (85%) did return for a shared breakfast on Day 2.
10. The research team was focused on achieving an outcome (e.g. guiding principles for developing a new RPMS and needs of participants) by the end of the two-day meeting.

### 5.2 Similarities between this meeting and the hui

1. The Mission Estate was selected as the meeting venue because it had a large, spacious one-room floor plan so it was possible to arrange seating in a communal fashion similar to that of the marae. The design of the building (an old chapel) also helped to created a sense of being in a special and reverent place.
2. An evening of hospitality at the Mission Estate at the end of the first day allowed participants to again mingle freely, and converse in a pleasurable, non-structured environment.
3. The art of 'listening' and developing listening skills was a core focus for the meeting.
4. It was not possible to get all stakeholders to attend this meeting.
5. The process proved to be extremely constructive and enjoyable.

### 5.3 Participant evaluation of meeting

Most of the 16 participants rated the meeting as 'great' or 'good' and no one felt that it was 'not great' or 'bad' (Fig. 3).

**Fig. 3** Participants' rating of the meeting.

Comments (*n* = 21) provided by participants about why the meeting was worthwhile attending included:

| Reasons | % of comments |
|---|---|
| Broadening knowledge/increased understanding | 48 |
| Networking | 14 |
| Meeting produced outcomes | 14 |
| Meeting encouraged input | 10 |
| Fun | 5 |
| Meeting challenging | 5 |
| Meeting will assist HBRC | 5 |

There were only seven comments indicating that there should be modifications to the process. These were:

| Modification to process | No. of comments |
|---|---|
| Group could have sat closer together | 2 |
| Synthesize main points more regularly | 1 |
| Wider stakeholder involvement | 1 |
| Fewer individual presentations | 1 |
| More small-group work | 1 |
| Shorter meeting | 1 |

As an indication of the success of the dialogue process a much larger number of positive comments (*n* = 22) were received from participants about what they liked about the meeting. These included:

| Positive comments | % of comments |
|---|---|
| Positive and different input from participants | 32 |
| Networking opportunities | 27 |
| Opportunity to be heard | 14 |
| Well-structured meeting | 14 |
| Good venue | 9 |
| Not too many people | 5 |

When asked about how each person ($n$ = 16) rated this style of meeting against other RPMS meetings they had attended there was a mixed response. Half felt that the meeting was better than other RPMS meetings they had attended, and a third did not know. Reasons for why participants did not know were not explored, but some had not been involved in meetings to discuss pest management before (Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4** Participants' rating of meeting compared with other RPMS meetings.

## 5.4 Post-meeting follow-up

### Initial assessment

A teleconference was held on the Monday following the meeting so that Landcare Research staff could talk to the HBRC managers about how they felt the meeting had gone. They made the following observations:

- *'The process was an enjoyable one.'*
- *'It was one of those events that doesn't look highly organised on the surface but actually is.'*
- *'I was interested to see how the other participants would buy into the process and interact. They were well prepared and participated well.'*
- *'Those who stayed really enjoyed it. No one was turned off so that they didn't come back for the second day and one of the councillors enjoyed the first day so much he came back for part of day 2 (despite saying originally that he wouldn't).'*
- *'Some initially expressed some discomfort about coming to something without a concrete agenda.'*
- *'We have created an expectation in terms of ownership, buy in, goodwill and enthusiasm that we will need to deliver on, and keep up the momentum.'*
- *'We achieved a lot more in a shorter space of time. We are much clearer about what people want/expect.'*
- *'Sometimes when you have a series of meetings you can go off target and people sit quietly and don't speak up until the end of the process, which can be destructive. This way we have a higher level of confidence that we are on track.'*
- *'You can never get everyone you want to attend these sorts of meetings; however, those that did will have gone away and spoken to others.'*
- *'It was really good for the likes of forestry to hear what Forest and Bird and DOC have to say and understand their perspective, and for farmers to think beyond the farm boundary.'*

- *'We have received enough stakeholder input now to review the strategy, but also goodwill that you would have never generated with a more traditional process.'*
- *'The science providers there all really got into it and it was great for them to see that their input is needed.'*
- *'Ninety percent of what scientists produce never gets to see the light of day. Information is still too inaccessible. The best source of information is currently the Biosecurity Managers Group.'*
- *'The process is adaptable, could be used for lots of different things, and refined down further.*
- *'The things that were changed from the Dialogue Hui held in Hawke's Bay last year didn't matter; the key stuff was still there.'*

**HBRC five-month feedback about the dialogue process**

- *Stakeholders have reported that they were happy to be invited to the meeting.*
- *It was a safe environment in which to exchange ideas (freedom to speak without being 'shot down' or openly criticised).*
- *The venue (Mission Winery) suited people nicely, and was different to the usual formal meeting locations.*
- *The meeting was memorable as it was totally different to what people were used to. There was not much about the meeting that followed the standard routine.*
- *The style of the meeting with different activities kept people interested and focused.*
- *The seating arrangement was different to the usual format for meetings and encouraged interaction.*
- *People who are normally quiet spoke up. The process drew people out and allowed them to contribute.*
- *No negative feedback was received. Hawke's Bay councillors and council staff who attended, although initially dubious about the meeting, were quite excited afterwards and thought it was very worthwhile.*
- *Meeting scientists was a beneficial part of the process. HBRC managers now know where to go for advice and direction in some areas at least.*

**What has happened since?**

1. HBRC biosecurity staff reported back on the meeting to their councillors, including indicating broad themes that emerged.
2. HBRC biosecurity staff believe that they can use aspects of the process in subsequent RPMS meetings, but feel that conducting the exact dialogue process for all RPMS meetings would be not be achieveable or necessary given resources and that there appear to be no majorly contentious issues to deal with.

**What will happen next?**

A working paper addressing further proposed revisions to the RPMS will be taken to the HBRC. In late November 2005 a workshop was to be held with stakeholders to look at the revised strategy, although the HBRC indicated they would probably revert to a more traditional meeting approach for this workshop and subsequent meetings because they can not afford to hire a consultant to facilitate the meetings in a manner similar to this dialogue process. The HBRC staff do not feel confident they can conduct a similar style dialogue meeting on their own. However, the HBRC does have funding that could be used to allow its staff to undertake facilitation training. If they had major issues to deal with then they might consider spending money on a facilitator. Based on their experiences from this dialogue

process the HBRC propose to include at least one scientist in RPMS revisions to provide advice and answer questions, which is something they have not done before.

Even without training however, HBRC staff acknowledged they may be able to use/adapt particular aspects of the process, such as:

- Do not just talk 'at' the group, but rather encourage full participation.
- Ensure everyone has a say.
- Set the room up in a similar manner to a marae-based environment where everyone is facing each other.
- Breaking up the meeting so it is not monotonous.
- Encourage active listening.
- Use different meeting venues. For example, meetings held in the Council Rooms immediately have some historical 'baggage' attached. This venue is traditionally used for very formal meetings so may not be a good place to introduce a different meeting style.
- Make people feel more comfortable.

**Engagement of groups that were not present at the meeting**

- A report on the meeting was given to the HBRC Maori Committee (note most councils don't have a Maori Committee). The council often doesn't get any input from Maori on pest management issues unless they especially go out and solicit it, e.g. extensive discussions are occurring with Maori (Tūhoe) regarding aerial operations that occur near their land. The council has varying levels of engagement with Maori, and will talk to them about specific issues when they are the affected landowner and might use a slightly different process such as hui.
- The HBRC will not involve the Hawke's Bay port or airport authorities as they are more focused on biosecurity issues at the national rather than regional level.
- The pet trade is not prevalent in Hawke's Bay with only four outlets. The National Plant Pest Accord might be expanded to include animals in future. The HBRC will consult with them if they feel they need to. At present the HBRC does not feel they need to talk to the RSPCA.
- Fish and Game is an important stakeholder group with whom the HBRC have robust relations.
- Transit NZ is also an important stakeholder group with whom good relations exist so the HBRC will endeavour to involve them in the RPMS review.
- The viticulture community were invited to the meeting but didn't attend. The issues they have are generally around new incursions, not existing pest management.
- Marine farming in Hawke's Bay is managed by Ngāti Kahungunu and at present there is only one farm.
- Ratepayer representatives were involved last time but they didn't contribute a lot.
- The media like to create drama. The HBRC try to counter this with regular press releases that portray the council in a good light.

**Accessing scientific information**

HBRC reiterated that regional councils often struggle to access the science information they need or to be able to use its findings. They find it really useful if information is put up on the Web, and not just references, which can be difficult to track down, but whole documents. More thought needs to be given to how science in New Zealand can be made accessible to end-users.

## 6. Conclusions

The answer to our questions about whether this type of dialogue process would still work in a scenario where real-life management outcomes were at stake and in an environment outside of a marae was yes. Feedback from participants immediately after the meeting, and from the HBRC as long as 5 months afterwards, was that the meeting had been surprisingly enjoyable and constructive. Simple things such as allowing everyone to have a chance to speak in a safe environment and taking into consideration a range of viewpoints were positive and powerful experiences for participants. Taking more time at the development stage of the strategy to scope out the issues thoroughly appeared likely to pay off in the long term by ensuring that the HBRC strategy development team was addressing the needs of its stakeholders and building goodwill and buy in from stakeholders.

As a result of this dialogue process the final revised version of the Hawke's Bay RPMS will likely have greater scientific content than earlier versions, and the improved linkages between the scientists who participated and the HBRC are likely to allow ongoing interaction. In reality, while our dialogue process is an extremely useful and powerful tool, it seems unlikely to be widely used in full at this time. While the process itself is fairly simple it does require an experienced facilitator familiar with the dialogue procedures to manage the proceedings. Organisations like regional councils lack these kinds of skills in-house, and are reluctant to spend money hiring facilitators when they can get by using traditional meeting and consultation techniques for much of their consultation. It is likely that they would turn to a dialogue process like this one and specialist help only when they are faced with a major issue that is causing serious conflict and dissention in the community. However, Hawke's Bay Biosecurity Managers did indicate they would be comfortable using specific aspects of the dialogue process to improve the listening process and subsequent outputs in future RPMS meetings.

## 7. Recommendations

- Organisations need to commit adequate resources and use a variety of techniques when inviting and encouraging stakeholder groups to attend dialogue meetings. The more diverse the stakeholders that attend the better.
- An independent experienced facilitator is essential for running dialogue meetings between, especially when issues are controversial.
- Conducting dialogue away from traditional meeting venues (such as Board Rooms and Council Chambers) helps to create an environment that encourages open-mindedness to other perspectives.
- It is important to provide a safe environment for the dialogue to take place in to encourage full participation of all stakeholders. It is also important to provide opportunities for relaxed, unstructured interactions between participants and sharing food can help this.
- Setting the room up so participants face each other is conducive to enhancing dialogue.

- Creating elements of surprise e.g. unusual objects, helps participants to step out of traditional roles and behaviours.
- It is important to involve scientists in dialogue on topics involving science in order to have access to the most up to date information, someone who can answer questions about it and provide a human face for the science.
- New Zealand needs to improve the accessibility of scientific information to end-users
- When undertaking dialogue it is important to be clear about what outcomes are achievable from the meeting.
- Using a dialogue process rather than traditional consultation processes is likely to lead to improved decision-making and greater levels of goodwill trust and by in.
- Organisations need to be encouraged to make cultural changes so that they have the resources for and the skill to undertake dialogue, plus an on-going commitment to improving democratic decision-making to achieve better outcomes.

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