

# Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum

## Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

**Commencing:** Friday 12 November 2021, 9.30 am

**Venue:** Whakatāne District Council Chambers, 14 Commerce Street, Whakatāne

**Heamana  
Chairperson:** Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti (Bay of Plenty Regional Council)

**Heamana Tuarua  
Deputy Chairperson:** Mayor Lyn Riesterer (Ōpōtiki District Council)

**Ngā Kopounga  
Members:** Charlie Bluett - Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, Deputy Mayor  
Andrew Iles - Whakatāne District Council, Trevor Ransfield -  
Te Upokorehe, Josie Mortensen - Whakatōhea Māori Trust  
Board, Marewa Titoki - Alternate, Te Waimana Kaaku, Cr  
Nándor Tánczos - Alternate, Whakatāne District Council, Tu  
O'Brien (via Zoom) - Alternate, Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa

**Te Hunga i Tae Ake  
In Attendance:** Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Pim de Monchy - Coastal  
Catchments Manager, Tim Senior - Land Management  
Officer, Gemma Moleta - Senior Planner, Water Policy (via  
Zoom), Riki-Lee Ainsworth - Planner (via Zoom), Lisa Bevan  
- Environmental Data Officer (via Zoom), Amanda Namana  
- Committee Advisor

External: Gaylene Kohunui - Upokorehe (via Zoom), Ngaire  
Ngamoki - Upokorehe (via Zoom), Anita Lewis - University  
of Waikato (via Zoom), Mike Jones - Department of  
Conservation

**Ngā Hōnea  
Apologies:** Cr Debi Hocart - Alternate, Ōpōtiki District Council, Hori  
Hillman - Te Waimana Kaaku

## **1. Karakia Whakatuwhera Opening Karakia**

A karakia was provided by Charlie Bluett.

## **2. Ngā Hōnea Apologies**

### **Resolved**

**That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Cr Debi Hocart and Hori Hillman tendered at the meeting.**

**Riesterer/Iles  
CARRIED**

## **3. Ngā Take Tōmuri Items not on the Agenda**

### **Resolved**

**That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Accepts the late item, appointment of the Alternate member for Te Waimana Kaaku**
- 2 Agrees that the item cannot be delayed as the information has only just become available and this is the last meeting of 2021;**
- 3 Agrees that the late item will be considered under the Chair's Verbal update.**

**Iles/Riesterer  
CARRIED**

## **4. Whakapuakanga o Ngā Take Whai Taha-Rua Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

None declared.

## **5. Ngā Meneti Minutes**

### **Kia Whakaūngia Ngā Meneti Minutes to be Confirmed**

#### **5.1 Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum Minutes - 11 March 2021**

##### **Matters Arising:**

- Outlined the minute action process whereby any action items from each meeting were captured, monitored and progressed by staff.

## Resolved

### That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:

#### 1 Confirms the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum Minutes - 11 March 2021 as a true and correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- Remove 'Alternate' from Deputy Mayor Andrew Iles' title as he is the Primary Member.

**Bluett/Riesterer  
CARRIED**

## 10. Whakahoutanga Kōrero Verbal Updates

### 10.1 Update from Whakatāne District Council

*Presentation: Whakatāne District Council Update: Objective ID A3972243* [⇒](#)

Deputy Mayor Andrew Iles provided an update on matters relevant to the Forum, as the meeting's host.

#### Key Points:

- Thanked Upokorehe for consultation with the roading team on safety improvements to State Highway 2 between Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki as the route was now safer and more pleasant to travel
- Ongoing concern over state highway network flooding highlighted the need for another bridge into Whakatāne
- Expressions of interest had been sought from tourist operators and food/beverage vendors for the Ōhope Wharf reserve
- Ōhope Wharf was built in the 1950's and was undergoing an upgrade including underneath structural work (already completed) and replacement of the deck
- This was likely the last external meeting to be held in the current Whakatāne District Council Chambers, with the building undergoing significant upgrade. The first meeting in the new ground floor Chambers was scheduled for March 2023

#### In Response to Questions:

- Noted there was a temporary speed reduction over the holiday period for part of Wainui Road and the permanent speed limit was under review.,

### 5.2 Chairperson's Report – Verbal Update

*Tabled Document 1 - Te Waimana Kaaku letter appointing alternate member:  
Objective ID A3981538* [⇒](#)

Chair Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti presented this item.

## Resolved

- Noted the elevation of whakaaro Māori for treaty partnerships within the Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms
- A new Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff member, Melissa Saunders, had been appointed as a Land Management Officer to support Ōhiwa Harbour mahi
- The Tino Rangatiratanga flag was now flying every day from each Bay of Plenty Regional Council office in Whakatāne, Tauranga and Rotorua
- Welcomed Marewa Titoko to the Forum as the new alternate member for Te Waimana Kaaku
- Outlined Regional Council's Toi Tangata Plan.

#### **Key Points - Members:**

- It was a positive change to see Mātauranga Māori and Māori input being sought - this needed to be championed and employed in both operational work and policy so that it became second nature
- The utilisation of Mātauranga Māori, values and manaakitanga in everyday life was the seeking and finding of knowledge that Māori have which could assist in all aspects of mahi
- Whakatāne District Council also had Mātauranga Māori workstreams in progress.

### **Resolved**

#### **That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Chairperson's Report – Verbal Update;**
- 2 Confirms the appointment of Marewa Titoki as the alternate member for Te Waimana Kaaku to the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum.**

**Bluett/Ransfield  
CARRIED**

#### **Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- An update to be provided at a future meeting on the connection between Mātauranga Māori and State of the Environment reporting..

## **6. Ngā Pūrongo Reports**

### **Hei Pānui Anake Information Only**

#### **6.1 Engagement Opportunity - Values and Environmental Outcomes**

*Presentation: Engagement Opportunity - Values and Environmental Outcomes:  
Objective ID A3982074 [↗](#)*

Senior Planner (Water Policy) Gemma Moleta and Planner Riki-Lee Ainsworth presented this item.

**Key Points:**

- The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) had provisions that required greater tangata whenua participation and engagement with treaty partners. This included Te Mana o Te Wai being written into the NPS-FM; compulsory mahinga kai values and the opportunity for Mātauranga Māori to be used for measuring cultural values
- A key feature of the Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) was that there would be a vision in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) which would be specific to the Ōhiwa Harbour FMU, noting that the harbour was the receiving environment for fresh water
- The group of attributes which needed to be measured included nitrogen, e-coli and sediment
- Ambitious, but reasonable goals with timeframes would be set, informed by history and environmental pressures
- Mahinga kai and wāhi tapu sites were only displayed on the public site if there were no sensitivity or confidentiality issues
- There was much known about Ōhiwa Harbour, but less about the freshwater catchment and the values associated with this
- There was opportunity to provide feedback on what was valued about specific freshwater sites and what needed changing, e.g. riparian planting or required weed control\
- Noted that all information provided on the Participate website page was public, whereas none of the information from the tangata whenua page was shared publicly
- There were two ways for Māori to engage under Te Honongo (the Regional Māori Engagement Plan for Implementing the NPS-FM), and multiple ways under the NPS-FM engagement process. Kanohi ki kanohi, had been the preferred method so far, potentially due to the desire to keep particular Mātauranga information secure.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Suggested community groups or a science project through schools would create opportunities to reach people and obtain the input required
- Whakatōhea was heavily involved with freshwater as it influenced the health of the mussel farms and processing factory, including the study of water out of the rivers. Mātauranga involved Rongoa and taiao and affected all operations, not just those pertaining to the harbour - this was about recapturing the health of the water
- Kutarere school had science programmes underway carrying out water testing and monitoring, which included estuaries, the awa at Waiotaha and the Ōhiwa Harbour
- Farmers' practices around the tributaries feeding into Ōhiwa had downstream effects and the rules dictated how people utilised the land around Ōhiwa
- Recognition of historical tuna supply and where they had gone
- Acknowledged the continuous work of Care Groups around the waterways with fencing, riparian planting and working together for freshwater health.

**In Response to Questions:**

- There were other meetings underway with community and co-governance groups, notification in the Freshwater Flash, local

- newspapers, Facebook and Instagram, along with a number of other types of engagement
- Intensive community engagement was scheduled for 2023, when a clearer idea of implications was expected
  - There was a separate process for tangata whenua engagement
  - This stage of engagement was open until at least Christmas 2021, with opportunity for tangata whenua engagement to be further extended. It was anticipated that an NPS-FM draft document would be available in 2023, with an issues and options paper for community discussion
  - Drinking water supply was one of the compulsory values under the NPS-FM which may be captured under the Three Water Reform. Improving ecosystem health would have implications on where the limits were set for stormwater and wastewater.

#### **Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- The Forum to be informed if gaps were identified in the cultural values information required as Regional Council had further resources to facilitate cross cultural conversations
- Requested a more detailed report on declining trends within the harbour and what actions were being taken to combat this
- Arrange an opportunity for further discussion and highlighting the use of the engagement tool.

### **Resolved**

#### **That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Engagement Opportunity - Values and Environmental Outcomes.**

**Iti/Riesterer  
CARRIED**

10.57 am - The meeting **adjourned.**

11.18 am - The meeting **reconvened.**

## **6.2 Upokorehe pipi kaitiaki update**

*Presentation: Upokorehe iwi Kaitiaki update: Objective ID A3983625* [↗](#)

Gaylene Kohunui and Ngaire Ngamoki presented this item.

#### **Key Points:**

- Pipi monitoring had occurred continuously from July-October 2021 during the holiday periods, with random monitoring undertaken in recent weeks
- Over a 25 day period, there had been more than 2000 people observed collecting pipi, which could equate to 300,000 pipi taken within that timeframe
- Was considering how to more accurately capture qualitative data
- Critical that information on customary permit application forms was filled in correctly

- During follow up, it was discovered that pipi was not always making it to places stated on permit applications
- Several people being able to fill out a permit for customary takes was concerning – Fisheries New Zealand had been approached about this and a hui would be called with permit holders to learn how to fill out permit applications correctly
- Positive feedback had been received for the explanatory brochure on pipi harvesting in Ōhiwa Harbour
- Decline had been noted in the pipi bed – with likely reasons being the way in which they were harvested (over-harvesting and the number of pipi wasted
- There had been increasing disruption at the bird sanctuary from visitors and suggested improved signage
- Provided an update on Upokorehe kaitiaki resourcing – 12 applications had been made for honorary fishery officers – 6 of which went through to final assessment with full training occurring in 2022. This was important for kaitiaki succession planning
- Another ongoing issue was Upokorehe whānau having to pay for their own printing, kai, travel, equipment, time and reporting, in order to be able to carry out this mahi. They welcomed support from Bay of Plenty Regional Council and from Ōpōtiki District Council
- With the pipi monitoring volunteers providing education and increased understanding a decline in breaches had been observed
- Vehicles on Tokitoki Reserve continued to be an issue, however fixing bollards and erecting a chain to limit access could be considered
- The Management Plan identified returning the pohutukawa taonga that used to be situated on Tokitoki Reserve, which had a lot of history and was currently sitting below the reserve.

#### **Key Points - Members:**

- Abuse of customary permits was of serious concern - purpose was primarily for tangi and permit issuers would welcome feedback around breaches in this context
- Commended the ongoing work and acknowledged the need for assistance
- Ōpōtiki District Council would consider how to assist in the return of the pohutukawa taonga to Tokitoki Reserve, in co-operation with the Department of Conservation (DOC)
- Noted that permit authorities anywhere had the right to write a permit and this needed to change.

#### **Key Points - External:**

- DOC advised that they were currently working on the resource consent renewal required for Tokitoki Reserve and would follow up with Gaylene to ensure relevant concerns were being addressed.

#### **In Response to Questions**

- To date, 500 brochures had been printed, with more than 200 distributed to people at the pipi beds, and the remainder given to organisations to hand out. Once more were printed, costs permitting, they would be given to campgrounds etc in the area.

### **Resolved**

**That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Upokorehe pipi kaitiaki update.**

Iles/Riesterer  
CARRIED

**6.3 Awhi Mai Awhi Atu Update**

*Presentation: Awhi Mai Awhi Atu Update: Objective ID A3983579* [⇒](#)

Land Management Officer Tim Senior presented this item on behalf of Dr Kura Paul-Burke – University of Waikato.

**Key Points of Presentation:**

- \$3k of funding had been awarded from the Association of Sciences, Limnology and Oceanology (ASLO) to run sedimentation and water quality workshops in Ōhiwa Harbour
- Seastar bait trapping trials had begun in the harbour, with the purpose of identifying practical seastar management methods
- The third generation natural spat lines had been deployed during the Tangaroa phase of the maramataka
- Patangaroa project was progressing, preliminary results for collagen testing hoped to be available by early 2022. An article on this project would feature in NZ Seafood magazine in December 2021
- Mapping of the pipi and tuangi beds on the Western side of the harbour had commenced with purpose of compiling the first ever combined underwater and inter-tidal mapping of pipi and tuangi beds.

**In Response to Questions:**

- Suggested collaborating with the AgriSea Company in relation to extracting collagen from starfish for the purposes of cosmetics etc.

**Resolved****That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Awhi Mai Awhi Atu Update.**

Iles/Riesterer  
CARRIED

**6.4 Baseline investigation of microplastic pollution in sediment and bivalves in the Bay of Plenty**

*Presentation: Microplastics investigation in the Bay of Plenty: Objective ID A3979557* [⇒](#)

Anita Lewis, University of Waikato presented this item.

**Key Points of Presentation:**

- Microplastics were plastic particles smaller than 5mm in diameter

- Entered marine environments through urban wastewater and drainage systems – wastewater treatment plants only caught macro plastics
- Microplastics bioaccumulated in the food web, with impacts on wildlife, marine life and humans
- Research showed this could affect reproductive qualities and growth of fish and shellfish
- There was potential for economic impact on the aquaculture export industry
- Sediment sampling had been carried out in locations from Waihi Beach to Ōpōtiki, including Ōhiwa Harbour
- 75% of Microplastics detected were microfibrils from clothing, with 23% fragments and 2% film
- There were microparticles found in tuatua at each sampling location
- There was scope for future research and it was currently uncertain if the shellfish were mistaking microplastics for a food source.

#### **Key Points - Members:**

- Acknowledged the serious nature of the information and the importance of this research to start understanding the scale of the problem.

#### **In Response to Questions:**

- Microplastics were endocrine blockers and carcinogenic, with no safe level - the more ingested, the more potential for health issues
- Thresholds had not yet been established due to the early nature of this research
- Further research was being undertaken to look at Microplastic content in both the gut and the tissue of fish.

### **Resolved**

#### **That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Baseline investigation of microplastic pollution in sediment and bivalves in the Bay of Plenty.**

**Ransfield/Titoki  
CARRIED**

## **6.5 Ōhiwa Harbour Marshbird Survey 2020**

*Presentation: 2020 Marshbirds Survey: Objective ID A3983408* [⇒](#)

Environmental Data Officer Lisa Bevan presented this item.

#### **Key Points of Presentation:**

- Regular surveys had been conducted since 2010 after the Ōhiwa Harbour Strategy was established
- The survey focused on five birds: banded rail, marsh crake, spotless crake, bittern and fernbird
- Bittern was classified as nationally critical (the same as kakapo), with the other four species classified as at risk/declining
- Outlined where each bird was found within the harbour
- Due to nesting habits, they were vulnerable to predation or any changes/degradation to their habitat

- First marsh crake ever recorded in the survey and although little was known about them, it was a positive addition to the list of rare birds in Ōhiwa Harbour
- The most common threats to habitat included human activity, grazing and pests. Staff would follow up with landowners at the four sites where grazing had been identified as a threat
- Data from Nukuhou Saltmarsh Care Group highlighted how successful pest control could be for these species. The group recorded 10 fernbirds in their 2003 survey, compared to 93 in 2020.

**In Response to Questions:**

- Mangrove control was not contrary to bird habitat as it had a focus on seedlings and it was the larger mangroves that the banded rail used for cover.

## **Resolved**

### **That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Ōhiwa Harbour Marshbird Survey 2020.**

**Mortensen/Ransfield  
CARRIED**

## **6.6 State of Environment for Ōhiwa Harbour and Catchment - 2021 Interim report**

*Presentation: State of the Environment Interim Report for Ōhiwa Harbour and catchment 2021: Objective ID A3983407 [⇒](#)*

Environmental Data Officer Lisa Bevan presented this item, supported by Coastal Catchments Manager Pim de Monchy and Land Management Officer Tim Senior.

**Key Points of Presentation:**

- Advised that this was an annual interim report, with a comprehensive analysis provided in a State of the Environment report (SOE) every five years
- The biggest issue identified for Ōhiwa Harbour in the 2018 SOE was the estuary bed habitat health being moderate to poor due to the amount of fine mud. Monitoring over the summer period showed no change in the health of the estuary bed
- Five water quality parameters showed a worsening short term trend in the Nukuhou River
- The water quality monitoring for swimming and shellfish showed no exceedances, therefore swimming and shellfish consumption remained safe
- Short term trends in graphs were also impacted by short term climate changes that may affect water quality
- Nukuhou suitable whitebait habitat had been given a moderate score
- A collaborative new programme monitoring bittern across the Bay of Plenty used acoustic recorders, including five in Ōhiwa, for which there would be an update provided next year

**Key Points - Members:**

- Highlighted the importance of Pataua Island to Upokorehe
- Black swans in the harbour were an ongoing issue, they impacted the harbour by eating seagrass that was kai for fish species, including snapper.

#### **In Response to Questions:**

- Finding the right people at the right time for culling black swans had been a major challenge, combined with pressure from Fish and Game New Zealand who held a different opinion to the Forum around tolerable density when it came to black swans
- The current impact of black swans on the sea grass, and the wider impacts on other species in the harbour, were visible though not yet deemed significant
- Black swans were classified by Fish and Game New Zealand as a game bird and there was a special swan season weekend in February each year allowed through the Eastern Bay of Plenty Fish and Game Council that should be taken advantage of, noting permission from relevant landowners was required if private land was involved.

#### **Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- Report back to the Forum on the monitoring outcomes of the Nukuhou farm new effluent system and related downstream effects at Kutarere.

## **Resolved**

### **That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, State of Environment for Ōhiwa Harbour and Catchment - 2021 Interim report;**
- 2 Requests a report on the impact of the black swans on the Ōhiwa Harbour sea grass and food chain;**
- 3 Writes a letter to the Fish and Game Council requesting an extension to the hunting season for black swans under the Wildlife Act 1953 for Ōhiwa Harbour;**
- 4 Requests that the Regional Council carries out black swan control during any black swan hunting seasons to reduce the impact on seagrass.**

**Ransfield/Mortensen  
CARRIED**

## **6.7 Responses to Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum submissions on Council Long Term Plans**

Department of Conservation (DOC) Community Ranger Whitney Nelson responded to questions.

#### **Key Points:**

- Waste Minimisation Plan had to be submitted once publicly notified so that it could be correctly captured.

**Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- Staff to monitor progress on the actions and report back to the Forum at a future meeting.

**Resolved**

**That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Responses to Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum submissions on Council Long Term Plans.**

**Iles/Bluett  
CARRIED**

**6.8 Ōhiwa Harbour Strategy annual work programme report for the year ending 30 June 2021**

*Presentation: Ōhiwa Work Programme Report 2021: Objective ID A3979607*

Land Management Officer Tim Senior presented this item.

**Key Points:**

- Over the past year, staff had worked with farmers to fence off almost 35km of streams
- A demonstration was given of a new dashboard system that captured work undertaken, and could be filtered in a variety of ways, including by catchment.

**Key Points - Members:**

- It was important to understand why any actions were highlighted red in the work programme progress column (i.e. not completed), and requested accompanying reason/s in future reports to identifying what was not working and why
- Raised the issue of silt and mangroves causing flooding at Kutarere - the awa was narrower due to being blocked.

**In Response to Questions:**

- Noted that some improvements had been made at Kutarere, however the expertise required to unblock the stream was complex and involved an engineering assessment, which would be undertaken, although outside the scope of the Forum.

**Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- Follow up with the Rivers and Drainage team and liaise with Upokorehe regarding the flooding situation at Kutarere and options to identify a way forward for this significant problem.

**Resolved**

**That the Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Ōhiwa Harbour Strategy annual work programme report for the year ending 30 June 2021.**

**Iles/Riesterer  
CARRIED**

**7. Karakia Kati  
Closing Karakia**

A karakia was provided by Charlie Bluett.

**1.43 pm - the meeting closed.**

**CONFIRMED**

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Cr Toi Kai Rākau Iti  
Chairperson, Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation  
Forum