

# Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group

## Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

**Commencing:** Wednesday 20 April 2022, 09:30am

**Venue:** Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Waiariki Room, Corner Fenton & Pukaki Streets, Rotorua and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting) (Rescheduled from 8 April 2022)

**Heamana  
Chairperson:** Sir Toby Curtis (Poū Tākiwaiora)

**Heamana Tuarua  
Deputy Chairperson:** Mayor Steve Chadwick (Rotorua Lakes Council)

**Ngā Kopounga  
Members:**

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC):  
Deputy Mayor David Donaldson

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT):  
Arapeta Tahana (Via Zoom); Rangitihī Pene (Alternate)

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC Toi Moana):  
Chairman Doug Leeder; Cr Kevin Winters; Cr Te Taru White (Alternate)

Observer from Ministry for the Environment (MfE) (Via Zoom):  
Lorena Stephen - Director of Sustainable Land Use Delivery

**Te Hunga i Tae Ake  
In Attendance:**

TALT: Geoff Rolleston - Interim Chairman; Karen Vercoe - Chief Executive; Nicki Douglas - Environmental Manager; Mariana Te Rangi - Biosecurity Co-ordinator

RLC: Geoff Williams - Chief Executive; Stavros Michael - Deputy Chief Executive Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions; Gina Rangi - Deputy Chief Executive Te Arawa Partnerships; Regan Fraser - Infrastructure Business Manager (Via Zoom)

BOPRC Toi Moana: Cr Lyall Thurston; Cr Jane Nees (Via Zoom); Fiona McTavish - Chief Executive; Helen Creagh - Rotorua Catchments Manager; Andy Bruere - Lakes Operations Manager; Matt Hunt - Communications Team Leader (via Zoom); Nick Swallow - Legal Counsel (via Zoom); Gemma Moleta - Senior Planner (Water Policy); Reuben Gardiner - Senior Planner (Water Policy) (via Zoom); Jill

Owen – Planner (via Zoom); Merinda Pansegrouw – Committee Advisor  
Observers from Ministry for the Environment (MfE) (Via Zoom):  
 Juscinta Grace - Manager – Funds, Sustainable Land Use Delivery; Caytion Wineera - Senior Analyst Fresh Water Investments, Sustainable Land Use Delivery  
Other: John Gifford, Chair, Lakes Water Quality Society; Chris Sutton - Rerewhakaaitu Farmer/Lakes Water Quality Society; Representatives of Lake Tarawera Ratepayers Association

**Ngā Hōnea Apologies:**

Nuki Nicholson (TALT), Arapeta Tahana (Late arrival) (TALT)

With the unanimous agreement of members, the meeting was recorded and uploaded to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana website following the meeting:  
[Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Meeting - 20 April 2022 - YouTube](#)

**1. Karakia Whakatuwhera  
 Opening Karakia**

Provided by Rangitihia Pene.

**2. Ngā Hōnea Apologies**

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Nuki Nicholson and Arapeta Tahana (for late arrival) tendered at the meeting.**

**Winters/Donaldson  
 CARRIED**

**3. Wāhanga Tūmatanui  
 Public Forum**

**3.1 John Gifford, Chair, Lakes Water Quality Society**

*Tabled Document 1 - Lakes Water Quality Society Memo - Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group - 220420: Objective ID A4082355* [⇒](#)

Presented by: Chair of the Lakes Water Quality Society John Gifford.

**Key Points: Lakes Water Quality Society (LWQS)**

- Feedback from the LWQS Annual General meeting (AGM) held in March 2022: there was concern that restoration of the Rotorua Lakes was stalling and that ongoing progress in improving water quality, effective management of aquatic pest weeds, management of pest incursions and ongoing catchment management needed to be reviewed and refreshed for all Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes

- Highlighted indicators of restoration activities that may not be on course to achieve the outcomes expected
- Listed recent changes to freshwater management which also needed to be considered as part of the long-term restoration efforts for the Rotorua Lakes
- To address these issues, two recommendations were presented at the recent LWQS AGM relating to the ongoing activities of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group; LWQS recommended that the Strategy Group actioned the following two recommendations:
- *“1. The Terms of Reference of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group are formally reviewed to consider regulation changes (such as Three Waters, the implementation of Te Mana o te Wai, and revisions to the Land and Water plan due to the National Policy Statement-Freshwater). In addition, there are significant changes in public awareness of freshwater values and how these are affecting and influencing attitudes. Such changes need to be considered for implementing future management options for the long-term sustainable management, use and enjoyment of the Rotorua Lakes for present and future generations.*
- *2. A technical and scientific review is undertaken for the whole Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes programme and to consider the pathway ahead for the next 10 years for all the Rotorua Te Arawa lakes (accepting that some changes such as groundwater inputs will be long term, particularly for Lake Rotorua). The need for this review is driven by events that are occurring in the Lakes that are unexpected such as the recent reoccurrence of algae blooms in Lake Rotorua and Rotoiti, and TLIs not reducing (i.e., improving) as fast as was originally considered possible or likely. This situation most likely reflects that we do not know quite what is happening in the Lakes. In addition to these changes, we are seeing increasing influences from climate change, greater pressures raising from urban development, and other land use changes all of which now need to be more formally recognised in the context of the technical and scientific programme for the lakes. The focus of this review needs to address if there are additional pragmatic measures that can be undertaken in the short to medium term to support the overall objective of sustainable management of the Lakes.”*

**Key Points - Members:**

- The proposed technical/scientific review of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme could potentially be addressed alongside other processes; it did raise questions relating to funding implications which needed further consideration
- TALT welcomed the LWQS and all other parties interested in contributing to the mahi required for the sustainable management of the Lakes. TALT would be happy to meet with LWQS to discuss opportunities.

**Item for Staff Follow Up:**

- Staff of all partners to consider the two recommendations presented by the Lakes Water Quality Society and provide feedback to the Strategy Group at a future hui.

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the memorandum dated 20 April 2022 tabled by Public Forum Speaker John Gifford, Chairman of the Lakes Water Quality Society.**

**Winters/Chadwick  
CARRIED**

#### **4. Raupapa o Ngā Take Order of Business**

Item 10.1 “Appointment of New Representative for Te Arawa Lakes Trust on the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group” was considered as the first item on the agenda, welcoming Arapeta Tahana as newly appointed member to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group.

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

None

#### **6. Ngā Meneti Minutes**

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

##### **6.1 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 October 2021**

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

Noted that in relation to Minute Item 6.2 on Page 14, an update on “Sustainable Forest Alternatives” had been included in the Rotorua Lakes Council Quarterly Update Report under item 9.6 of the agenda.

###### **Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Confirms the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 October 2021 as a true and correct record.**

**Winters/Chadwick  
CARRIED**

#### **7. Ngā Pūrongo Reports**

**Ngā Whakatau e Hiahiatia Ana  
Decisions Required**

##### **7.1 Appointment of New Representative for Te Arawa Lakes Trust on the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group**

Members welcomed the newly appointed representative for TALT on the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group, Arapeta Tahana.

## **Resolved**

### **That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Appointment of New Representative for Te Arawa Lakes Trust on the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group.**

**Winters/Chadwick  
CARRIED**

## **7.2 Te Arawa Lakes Trust Report for Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group - April 2022**

Presented by: TALT Environment Manager Nicki Douglas.

### **Key Points:**

- Acknowledged BOPRC Toi Moana and the University of Waikato’s recent appointment of Dr Deniz Özkundakci to the position of Toihuarewa – Waimāori Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chair in Lake and Fresh Water Science
- TALT had recently hosted Dr Deniz Özkundakci at a meeting of Komiti Taiao. Was looking forward to working with him to expand the current research programme and consider the long-term health and wellbeing of the Lakes
- TALT had been engaged in the Resource Management Reform programme and the Three Waters Entity B discussions as well as supporting the participation of Chief Executive Karen Vercoe in the Three Waters Working Group. TALT’s position and the impact of these initiatives on the settlement would be detailed under item 10.2
- Ministry for the Environment Te Mana o Te Wai Funding for the Tarawera Collective Impact Project had been approved; commencement date would now be 1 May 2022.

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

- Acknowledged the successful outcome of the Uwhi Trial (harakeke weed mats) laid in Lake Rotoiti and Lake Tarawera in December 2021 as part of a collaborative trial led by TALT with support from Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand through its Jobs for Nature programme
- Highlighted the value of the Rotorua Lake front as an ecological active science learning “classroom” space for kids – suggested that using harakeke weed mats at the Rotorua Lake Front could be an excellent learning opportunity for children
- Noted the Mātauranga - Science and Design Fair 2022, to be hosted by TALT and BOPRC Toi Moana and scheduled to be held from June 30 to July 2nd at Motion Entertainment, Rotorua. Categories included Mātauranga Māori, Biodiversity, Water Quality and Sustainability (design), with 45 kura currently registered.

## **Resolved**

### **That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1. Receives the report, Te Arawa Lakes Trust Report for Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group - April 2022.**

**Winters/Chadwick  
CARRIED**

**Item for Staff Follow Up:**

- Staff to facilitate a letter of appreciation/recognition and certificates to be sent to Lynmore Primary School on behalf of the Strategy Group congratulating them as National Kura Award Winner in the 2021 Biosecurity Award for their mahi in the Catfish Volunteer Programme.

## **8. Whakahoutanga Kōrero Verbal Updates**

### **8.1 Ministry for the Environment Verbal Update**

Lorena Stephen – Director of Sustainable Land Use Delivery, MfE, advised that a detailed operational update would be provided at the next meeting of the Strategy Group, highlighting progress on reform work underway as well as progress on resource management, climate change and biodiversity.

### **8.2 Letter from Ministry for the Environment - 23 March 2022 - Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme**

Presented by: Lorena Stephen, Director of Sustainable Land Use Delivery - MfE.

**Key Points:**

- MfE Jobs for Nature Funding, Te Mana O Te Wai Programme of \$30 million was almost fully allocated; 32 proposals were currently being assessed
- In conjunction with the Te Mana O Te Wai Fund, was also working through the allocation of the Essential Freshwater Fund (\$175 million targeted towards building capability/capacity to help implement the essential freshwater reforms and supporting tangata whenua in terms of catchment communities)
- Ongoing discussion with staff of Strategy Group Partners had taken place following Minister David Parker's decision to rescind the Freshwater Improvement Fund allocation for Lake Tarawera. Subsequent feedback received from staff had been conveyed to the Minister, advising him of a likely request to follow, which would seek a decision to reverse his decision. He had confirmed that he was comfortable with this happening, but would require assurances around satisfactory governance oversight being put in place alongside a detailed workplan and signed deed
- Regarding the East Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation Scheme, the Minister had indicated that Jobs for Nature Funding was not available for support in this area and that no further money was available for this scheme
- As the next step, feedback on direction going forward was required which would be provided to the Minister once received from the Strategy Group.

## **Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Letter from Ministry for the Environment dated 23 March 2022 - Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme .**

**Donaldson/Winters  
CARRIED**

### **8.3 Rotorua Lakes Council - Update Report to Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group 8 April 2022**

Presented by: Stavros Michael, Deputy Chief Executive Infrastructure & Environment, RLC.

10:26pm - Arapeta Tahana **joined** the meeting.

**Key Points:**

- Highlighted RLC activities currently underway impacting the Lakes Programme including wastewater treatment, stormwater projects and planning policy.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Clarified that the assessment work in terms of connections to the Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme had been completed; noted that each individual property had been visited as each property required a detailed design to be developed
- Noted that should the Minister’s indicative decision to withdraw from the funding decision for the proposed Tarawera Sewerage Scheme proceed, planning/consultation would possibly have to commence afresh
- Acknowledged that RLC had allocated \$2.5 million for detailed design work/appointment of a Project Manager for the Tarawera Sewerage Scheme. This decision by RLC was taken in good faith at a time when the \$6.5 million subsidy was not under threat. Highlighted that the project had been well managed and that public consultation had been ongoing.

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Rotorua Lakes Council - Update Report to Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group 8 April 2022.**

**Leeder/Pene  
CARRIED**

10:45am - The meeting **adjourned**.

11:00am - The meeting **reconvened**.

### **8.4 Rotorua Lakes Council Report: East Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation Scheme - Funding Balance**

*Tabled Document 2 - Memorandum to Strategy Group - Agreed Updated Resolutions re Rotoiti Scheme Funding: Objective ID A4078896 [⇒](#)*

Presented by: Stavros Michael, Deputy Chief Executive Infrastructure & Environment, RLC.

**Key Points:**

- The tabled document with updated recommendations had replaced the recommendations in the original report as contained in the agenda under item 9.5 “*East Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation Scheme - Funding Balance*”
- Since the preparation of the report, the partners of the Programme had met and agreed the joint recommendations to this hui to meet the requirements of the Ministry for the Environment’s letter in terms of seeking further Ministerial consideration of the decision outlined in the letter (*refer item 9.2 of the agenda*)
- Updated recommendations to the Strategy Group were agreed by all partners at a hui held on 13 April 2022
- Provided further background on the process to date
- The key points for consideration by the Strategy Group were (1) the Rotoiti/Rotomā sewerage scheme funding shortfall and (2) the Tarawera Sewerage Scheme Funding; although separate, they were interlinked.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Acknowledged that further detailed discussion on the funding arrangements would be required (i.e. how to fund the \$10 million shortfall; the reimbursement thereof, both for the short and medium term)
- Reminded of the requirements/implications of Plan Change 10
- Noted that the Minister for the Environment would require additional detail on the delivery/management of the objectives of the programme/further details relating to the process to follow, given the time constraints and with the impending Local Government elections in October 2022
- Noted that MfE did not fund activities retrospectively; accordingly, the work programme would need to be revisited to remove activities that had already occurred
- It was important for all partners of the Strategy Group to provide input on the scope for the review of the Strategy Group and Work Programme; strongly suggested the inclusion of an independent/objective overview as part of the process
- Concurred that it was critical to commence with the scoping (with independent input) of the review of the Strategy Group and Programme as a matter of priority. Noted that MfE, from a central government perspective, had offered to provide assistance in this regard to get the process on its way soonest (prior to the October 2022 Local Government Election).

**Key Points - Staff:**

- Reminded members of direction given by the Strategy Group at a Workshop held in August 2021 regarding a review of the Strategy Group following the audit by Independent Quality Assurance NZ (IQANZ). This would be superseded by the direction given by the Strategy Group today on the proposed review of the Strategy Group and Programme.

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**



- 1 **Receives the report, Rotorua Lakes Council Report: East Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation Scheme - Funding Balance and tabled document “Under separate Cover Item”;**
- 2 **Recognises the importance of the Lakes to our people and communities;**
- 3 **Recognises the importance of the Lakes Programme moving forward;**
- 4 **Seeks the Minister to agree to \$10m of deed funding to be reallocated from the incentives Fund to the Rotoiti/Rotomā sewerage scheme funding shortfall on the basis that the Rotorua Lakes Council commits to being part of the funding solution for the ongoing Lakes Water Quality Programme through the investigation and consultation of a new Rotorua Lakes Council targeted rate with proposed implementation for July 2023 (including for the purpose of reimbursement of the land use incentives scheme);**
- 5 **Notes the need for a strategy group review and agrees to a future review of the work programme; Te Arawa Lakes Trust to lead the strategy programme and strategy group review with funding support from council partners and the Ministry for the Environment (*with the inclusion of an independent/objective overview as part of the process*). The scope to be provided to a future meeting of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group;**
- 6 **Seeking the Minister to rescind his decision and retain \$6.5m for Lake Tarawera for Freshwater Improvement Funds; and**
- 7 **Agreeing to improved project oversight with all partners involved.**

**Chadwick/Winters  
CARRIED**

**Items for Staff Follow Up:**

- Urgent follow-up meeting with the Minister for the Environment to be arranged as soon as possible
- Correspondence from all partners to MfE regarding East Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation Scheme - Funding to be shared with all the members of the Strategy Group
- Lakes Water Quality Society to be consulted in the review of the Strategy Group and Lakes Programme Review.

**8.5 Programme Status Report, Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2022-2023 and 2021-2022 Pūrongo ā-ono Marama**

*Presentation 1 - Programme Status Report: Objective ID A4090512* [↗](#)

Presented by: Helen Creagh Rotorua Catchments Manager, BOPRC Toi Moana.

**Key Points:**

- Highlighted items for approval
- Provided an overview of the dashboard
- Noted that the change requests required were adaptations which needed to be made to the approved annual work plans for the financial year (i.e. underspend on alum dosing to weed harvesting - Lake Rotoehu - to take weed harvesting budget to \$200,000)
- Purongo ā-ono Marama
- Mahere Mahi ā-tau
- Sustainable Land Gains 2017-2022

- Paid tribute to the late Geoff Ewert and his significant contribution/work to the Programme, particularly with regard to Lake Rotorua sustainable land gains.

**Key Points - In response to Questions:**

- With the higher lake level following the recent cyclone, it would be easier for a harvester to get closer to any washed up weed; however since a digger would be more effective in removing weed at low lake levels staff were currently investigating obtaining consent to operate a digger in future weed wash ups
- Regarding investigation into algae bloom patterns/possible causes, staff were currently investigating long term trends
- In terms of water quality for swimmability, acknowledged that further qualification/definition was required in the Dashboard to enable a better understanding of the measures used.

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Programme Status Report, Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2022-2023 and 2021-2022 Pūrongo ā-ono Marama;**
- 2 Approves, for submission to the Ministry for the Environment, the Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2022-2023;**
- 3 Approves, for submission to the Ministry for the Environment, the 2021-2022 Purongo ā-ono Marama; and**
- 4 Approves Change Request 70 to move funds between phosphorous locking and weed harvesting interventions on Lake Rotoehu, for the current financial year.**

**Winters/Leeder  
CARRIED**

**Item for Staff Follow Up:**

- An internal Lessons Learnt review regarding the Rural Wetland Pilot Project be undertaken by staff.

**Hei Pānui Anake  
Information Only**

**8.6 Essential Freshwater Policy Programme Update 2022**

*Presentation 2 - Visions and Environmental Outcomes PDF: Objective ID A4090516*



Presented by: BOPRC Toi Moana Senior Planner (Water Policy) Gemma Moleta supported by Senior Planner (Water Policy) Reuben Gardiner.

**Key Points:**

- Provided an update on progress to date; collated values across the region and received feedback online
- Staff were working on environmental outcomes for the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) values and using iwi

management plans, community groups and catchment strategies, online feedback and NPS bottom lines as a starting point

- Online engagement with communities was ongoing until late April-June on environmental outcomes and goals for visions
- Outlined the timeline for the Essential Freshwater Policy Programme (EFPP) and early 'without prejudice' feedback that was being sought prior to preparing draft policy
- Key tasks for 2022 would be the development of draft measurable targets, limits and policy options to achieve them
- Online Engagement "Participate" to be launched in late April 2022 - seeking to engage with the community on long term visions and outcomes
- [Essential Freshwater Visions and Outcomes | Participate BOPRC](#) (Members were welcome to share link with wider networks)
- Council has also released a water quality and ecology reporting tool demonstrating the current state and trends for the attributes to be used under the NPSFM:  
[WET - Bay of Plenty Regional Council \(shinyapps.io\)](#) -  
*(Click on Map on the left hand side to zoom into the lakes area and pick the information you were interested in. Need to select a dataset (e.g. lakes water quality), select an indicator and select a state (baseline state overall band, current state overall band and trend were most relevant at the moment) before it will give you the information you want)*
- Informal hui held on 8 April 2022 with Iwi members and wider Iwi representatives to discuss vision setting for the Lakes.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Measuring the recreational use/access to the Lakes a possible matter for future consideration.

**Resolved**

**That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Essential Freshwater Policy Programme Update 2022.**

**Winters/Donaldson  
CARRIED**

**9. Wāhanga Tūmataiti  
Public Excluded Section**

**Resolved**

**Resolution to exclude the public**

- 1 Excludes the public from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting as set out below:**

**The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:**

Item No.	Subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution	When the item can be released into the public
9.1	Public Excluded Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 October 2021	As noted in the relevant Minutes.	As noted in the relevant Minutes.	To remain in public excluded.
9.2	Resource Management Reforms and Three Waters Implications for Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act	Withholding the information is necessary to enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations); Withholding the information is necessary to enable the local authority to deliberate in private on its decision or recommendation in any proceedings to which this paragraph applies.	48(1)(a)(i) Section 7 (2)(i); 48(1)(d).	On the Chief Executive's approval.

**Chadwick/Donaldson  
CARRIED**

## **10. Karakia Kati Closing Karakia**

Provided by Rangitihī Pene.

**1:15 pm - the meeting closed.**

**CONFIRMED 10 JUNE 2022**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sir Toby Curtis  
Chairperson, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy  
Group