

Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group

Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

Commencing: Friday 21 April 2023, 1:30 pm

Venue: Waiariki Room, Corner Fenton & Pukaki Street, Rotorua and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)

**Pou Tākiwaiora
Independent Chair:** Arapeta Tahana

**Heamana Tuarua
Deputy Chairperson:** Cr Kevin Winters - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC)

**Ngā Kopounga
Members:**

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT)

Nuki Nicholson; Rangitihi Pene (via Zoom); Georgina Whata (Alternate) (via Zoom)

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC)

Mayor Tania Tapsell; Cr Gregg Brown; Phill Thomass - Lakes Community Board Chair (Alternate)

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC)

Chairman Doug Leeder; Cr Te Taru White (Alternate)

Ministry for the Environment (MfE)

Observer Lorena Stephen - Director, Investments, Policy, Implementation and Delivery

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

TALT: Geoff Rolleston - Interim Chairman; Nicki Douglas - Environmental Manager (via Zoom); Soweeta Fort-D'Ath - Lakes Programme Coordinator (via Zoom)

RLC: Stavros Michael - Deputy Chief Executive Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions; Gina Rangi - Deputy Chief Executive Te Arawa Partnerships

BOPRC Toi Moana: Fiona McTavish - Chief Executive; Helen Creagh - Rotorua Catchments Manager; Rosemary Cross - Senior Projects Manager - Rotorua; Jo Watts - Senior Planner (Water Policy); Steven Slack - Risk & Assurance Manager (via Zoom); Ashleigh Grant - Kaikarere (Communications Partner); Merinda Pansegrouw - Committee Advisor

MfE: Juscinta Grace - Manager, Funds; Eugene Berryman-Kamp; Director Te Mana o Te Wai and Implementation Partnerships

Other: John Gifford, Chair, Lakes Water Quality Society;
Chris Sutton - Rerewhakaaitu Incorporated Society

Declaration of Public Recording

Committee members and the public were reminded that the public section of the meeting was being recorded and would be made available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council website following the meeting and archived for a period of three years: [Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Recording - 21 April 2023 - YouTube](#)

Ngā Hōnea

Apologies:

Roana Bennett - TALT Alternate

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana Rotorua Catchments Manager, Helen Creagh opened the meeting and chaired proceedings until the new Poū Tākiwaiora had been elected.

1. Karakia Whakatuwhera Opening Karakia

Karakia whakatuwhera provided by Arapeta Tahana.

2. Wāhanga Tūmatanui Public Forum

2.1 John Gifford, Chair, Lakes Water Quality Society

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

Key Points: Lakes Water Quality Society (LWQS)

1. Followed-up on progress regarding proposals presented to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group in April 2022 regarding a science and technical review of the lakes programme; highlighted the importance of the matter
2. Presented key highlights from the Lakes Water Quality Society Symposium 10 - 11 November 2022
 - Was a highly successful event; acknowledged the support by both BOPRC Toi Moana and RLC
 - TALT Chair, Geoff Rolleston opened the symposium with a fitting message: we needed to be brave, courageous, formidable and fearless in our approach to restoration activities/needed to embrace the natural system and honour the wisdom of old/but also continuously seeking new ideas and knowledge
 - in terms of water quality mitigations, required clear evidence around cause and effect so as to develop appropriate policies
 - water quality data remained a key objective
 - needed to develop robust and predictive tools/strong plea for the continued development of integrated land management models
 - Recognised that mahi around the lakes was very much in the context of a coherent partnership
3. Outcomes arising from the LWQS Annual General Meeting held March 2023
 - Presentations by the following speakers:
 - Ian McLean, Life Member of the LWQS: "What is its Task?"
 - Dr Jonathan West, Environmental Historian: "The interaction between land, people and lakes - with reference to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes"

- o Key message – the Rotorua Lakes Restoration Programme was very much a national exemplar for lake restoration; getting it wrong in Rotorua could potentially compromise the restoration efforts in many other parts of New Zealand, particularly given the level of investment/scientific input/way communities were working together
- 4. Current state of Ōhau Diversion Wall
 - Expressed disappointment regarding the current state of the wall; was not containing water in the Ōhau Channel; required urgent action to solve the matter.

Key Points - Members:

- Thanked LWQS for their mahi around the health of the lakes
- Advised that divers had been tasked to assess the Ōhau wall as a matter of urgency; the outcome to be followed-up with the appropriate action.

**3. Raupapa o Ngā Take
Order of Business**

The first item on the agenda was item 8.1 “12th Triennium (2022-2025): Appointment of Pou Tākiwaiora, Election of Deputy Chair and other meeting matters”; once the Pou Tākiwaiora had been appointed and the Strategy Group established, items were considered as reflected on the agenda.

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

None

**5. Ngā Meneti
Minutes**

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

5.1 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 30 September 2022

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 30 September 2022.**

**Winters/Tapsell
CARRIED**

6. Ngā Pūrongo Reports

Ngā Whakataua e Hiahiatia Ana Decisions Required

6.1 12th Triennium (2022-2025): Appointment of Poū Tākiwaiora, Election of Deputy Chair and other meeting matters

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

Key Point - Members:

- Noted that as per the “*Guidelines for the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Poū Tākiwaiora (Independent Chair)*”, the Poū Tākiwaiora was a **non-voting member**. Accordingly, section 19.3 of Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana Standing Orders 2022-2025, which determined that “*the Chairperson, or any other person presiding at a meeting, has a deliberative vote and, in the case of an equality of votes, has a casting vote*” did not apply to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1. Receives the report, 12th Triennium (2022-2025): Appointment of Poū Tākiwaiora, Election of Deputy Chair and other meeting matters;**
- 2. Confirms the appointment of Arapeta Tahana as the interim Poū Tākiwaiora (Independent Chairperson) for the 2022 – 2025 Triennium until such time as the Strategy Group’s Terms of Reference are amended;**

**Leeder/Tapsell
CARRIED**

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana Rotorua Catchments Manager, Helen Creagh **vacated** the chair and the newly appointed Poū Tākiwaiora Arapeta Tahana **assumed** the chair.

- 3. Selects System B as the voting system to elect the Deputy Chairperson;**

**Tapsell/Nicholson
CARRIED**

Poū Tākiwaiora Arapeta Tahana called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson for the 2022-2025 local authority triennium. Chairman Doug Leeder nominated Councillors Kevin Winters as Deputy Group Chairperson; Mayor Tania Tapsell seconded the motion. As only one nomination was received for the role of Deputy Chairperson, no voting was required.

- 4. Elects Cr Kevin Winters as the Deputy Chairperson for the 2022-2025 Triennium;**

**Leeder/Tapsell
CARRIED**

5. **Notes the Strategy Group’s current Terms of Reference, attached as Attachment 1 to the report;**
6. **Confirms the Standing Orders to be used for the conduct of meetings to be those of the administrating authority (Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana) (Attachment 3);**
7. **Confirms its membership as:**
 - a) **Te Arawa Lakes Trust: Nuki Nicholson and Rangitihi Pene and Roana Bennett and Georgina Whata as alternates;**
 - b) **Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Chairman Doug Leeder and Councillor Kevin Winters with Councillor Te Taru White as alternate;**
 - c) **Rotorua Lakes Council: Mayor Tania Tapsell and Councillor Gregg Brown with Phill Thomass (Lakes Community Board) as alternate;**
8. **Confirms the following 2023 meeting dates:**
 - **23 June 2023**
 - **22 September 2023**
 - **8 December 2023.**

**Leeder/Winters
CARRIED**

6.2 Scoping paper for the Review of the Strategy Group Terms of Reference

Tabled Document 1 - 2023.04.21 Scope TOR Review_RTASLG: Objective ID A4356294 [↔](#)

Presented by Nicki Douglas, TALT Environment Manager.

Key Points:

- Provided the context of the scoping paper; was an outcome of the triennial audit of the Lakes Programme, with the view to:
 - Review the governance arrangements and confirm the roles and responsibilities of the Strategy Group;
 - Include all lakes initiatives in programme reporting for Strategy Group oversight;
 - Review the remaining delivery path;
 - Set up an independent panel to review the programme and any delivery or funding gaps;
 - Review/refresh the Trophic Level Index (TLI) Targets; and determine any changes to targets based on proposed changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)
- Introduced the proposed approach.

Key Points - Members:

- Emphasised the importance of complying with timelines – critical that the submission of reports to the Strategy Group remained within the agreed-timeline
- Reaffirmed the Strategy Group’s view of 20 April 2022, namely that Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT) lead the strategy programme/strategy group review
- Enquired about the intention of “independent panel” referred to in Step 2; the independent panel needed to be totally removed from

- governance/executive input, furthermore the science and Mātauranga Māori input would be key in terms of the capability of the independent panel
- Noted that the independent panel would be appointed by the Strategy Group at its 23 June 2023 meeting and that review of the programme would be completed by September 2023
 - However, based on the tight timelines and in order to progress the appointment of the panel as a priority, members supported that TALT make recommendations regarding the appointment of an independent panel, circulated by means of email for endorsement by all Strategy Group members, to be ratified retrospectively at the June 2023 meeting
 - Was important to obtain a view of what the role/work programme of the Strategy Group beyond the next 10 years would look like and plan accordingly.

Minute Note: RLC Staff, in agreement with TALT Staff, requested that the following context be added:

In key points, the following questions needed to be addressed by the review:

- *What was originally intended for the RTALSG and Lakes Restoration Programme*
- *Was the Terms of Reference still fit for purpose*
- *What would tomorrow's needs be and what should the programme of the future look like*
- *Independent panel to review what has been delivered to date and to determine the most effective programme(s) for the future as informed by gained experience and new knowledge informed by science and mātauranga as well as funding required and the possible funding sources.*

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1. Receives the report, Scoping paper for the Review of the Strategy Group Terms of Reference;**
- 2. In the interest of progressing as a matter of urgency, supports that a recommendation by Te Arawa Lakes Trust on the appointment of an Independent Panel be circulated to the Strategy Group members via electronic mail for endorsement prior to the June 2023 meeting; and**
- 3. Supports that the review be completed (phase 2) and reported back to the Strategy Group at its Friday, 22 September 2023 hui.**

**Winters/Brown
CARRIED**

6.3 Proposed submission to the Rotorua Lakes Council Annual Plan 2023-2024

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

Key Points - Staff:

- Memorandum had been prepared in response to the release of the Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) Annual Plan 2023-2024 (for consultation), and in

consideration of the commitments made last year to the Minister for the Environment by the Te Arawa Lakes Programme Partnership.

Key Points - Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC):

- Emphasised the importance of working together in a three-entity partnership. Asking RLC, as a partner in the Strategy Group, to make a submission to their own Annual Plan, did come as a surprise
- Acknowledged that reference in the RLC 2023-2024 Annual Plan could be expanded to further elaborate on the Te Arawa Lakes Programme Partnership and its intended outcomes
- RLC however was still on track to honour/fulfill the commitment as stated in its letter dated December 2022. This position had not changed and RLC remained committed to increase, at the appropriate time, the Lakes Water Quality Improvement Rate (payment could either be through rates or debt funding)
- The intention had been to rate this in the 2026/2027 financial year since this would be when the expected funding was due; was deemed premature to collect the rate in the current year (2023/2024)
- Reaffirmed RLC's commitment to the agreement and the repayment of the funding at the appropriate time
- Assured the Strategy Group that the health of Lake Rotorua/improving lakes water quality remained a priority of RLC: the 2023/2024 Annual Plan included significant infrastructure projects (i.e. Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme/upgrading Rotorua Wastewater Sewerage Plant) with substantial costs supporting the health of the lakes.

Key Points - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana:

- Acknowledged the comments/commitment by RLC
- The intention of submitting the memorandum on the proposed submission to the RLC Annual Plan 2023-2024 to the Strategy Group was in the spirit of partnership: to allow for proactive discussion, before making any submissions to RLC
- Was disappointed/frustrated about the change in direction after lengthy discussions; highlighted that previous commitments by the Partnership in April 2022 had confirmed clear actions going forward regarding the transfer of funding from the Lake Rotorua Incentive Scheme, supported by the Minister for the Environment in his letters of expectation, with a July 2023 targeted rate commencement; RLC had unilaterally changed the date without participation by other partners
- Pointed out that wording of the RLC Annual Plan referred to a "replenishment of diminishing funds" - this was due to the fact that the funds had been loaned to RLC to complete the Rotoiti reticulation project
- Highlighted the possible impact of the new Three-Waters Entity: assets and liabilities could potentially be transferred to a new entity, resulting in the Lake Rotorua Incentive Scheme losing funding for a key programme project.

Key Points - Members

- Acknowledged that there was goodwill amongst all partners to solve the challenges relating to the funding commitments to the Te Arawa Lakes Programme Partnership
- Noted that the Deed Variation that was to confirm the agreement with the Minister had not yet been signed (was due to be progressed at the March

2023 Strategy Group hui, which had been cancelled); for LRC to draw funds, the Deed Variation would need to be signed to enable payment.

Key Points - Ministry for the Environment:

- Clarified that the Deed Variation would need to be signed by the Minister for the Environment
- Any advice to the Minister for the Environment would be based on the expectations that had been in place previously/addressing the Minister's expectations stated in earlier letters and based on the 2023/2024 timeframe; but would however ultimately be at his discretion
- The Minister was aware of the Strategy Group's discussion on the subject matter today.

Item for Staff Follow-up:

- TALT, as part of the review of the Strategy Group's governance arrangements/roles and responsibilities, to also include best practice communication procedures/protocols to support the intent of good partnership amongst partners.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1. Requests the Executive Teams of three Strategy Group Partners, facilitated by Te Arawa Lakes Trust, to continue further discussion with the view of addressing the concerns relating to funding commitments to the Te Arawa Lakes Partnership and report back with a recommendation to the Strategy Group at its 23 June 2023 meeting;**
- 2. Writes a letter to the Minister for the Environment advising that the Strategy Group was currently working cooperatively to address further details related to the reallocation of funds under the Deed of Funding to Rotorua Lakes Council, to support the completion of the reticulation of Lake Rotoiti.**

**Brown/Winters
CARRIED**

2:35pm - Cr White withdrew from the meeting.

6.4 Programme Status Update, Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2023-2024, Pūrongo ā-ono marama 2022-2023

Tabled Document 2 - Programme Dashboard 24 March 2023: Objective ID A4358475



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

Key Points:

- Report was provided to meet the requirements of the Deed of Funding for the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme, which provided funding for four identified priority lakes: Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotoehu and Ōkāreka:
 - Status Update for the Programme as at March 2023, in Dashboard format
 - Pūrongo ā-ono marama (6 Month Report) for the Programme for the 2022/2023 financial year

- Mahere Mahi ā-tau (Annual Work Programme) for the Programme for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted that the Purongo ā-tau (Annual Report) for the Programme would provide detailed reporting on the deed funded activities/how the programme was progressing against the nitrogen budget spends/progress/plans going forward
- Enquired whether the review of the Work Programme would also include a review of the incentive scheme and its financial efficiency.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

1. **Receives the report: Programme Status Update, Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2023-2024, Pūrongo ā-ono marama 2022-2023.**
2. **Approves the Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2023-2024 and Pūrongo ā-ono marama 2022-2023, for submission to the Minister in accordance with the requirements of the Deed of Funding for the Programme.**

**Winters/Nicholson
CARRIED**

6.5 Te Arawa Lakes Trust Update

Resolved

Presented By: Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT) Lakes Programme Coordinator, Soweeta Fort-D'Ath

Key Points:

- Outlined the activities of TALT in the Rotorua/Te Arawa Lakes Programme and the wider Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy
- Updated on progress with Te Mana o Te Wai funding secured by TALT to establish a team to progress a collective impact framework for the Tarawera Lakes System; Tarawera Collective Impact Project Team commenced mahi late January 2023 and were based at the Tūhourangi Tribal Authority Office
- A variation to extend the Mauri Tu Mauri Ora - Jobs for Nature contract had been submitted to Department of Conservation and this programme would continue until June 2024
- Ruku Wai – Commercial Divers: 6-month update would be provided to all partners and relationships on the uwahi project; an update would also be provided to RTALSG
- The Second Te Arawa Led Te Tūkōhu Ngāwha 2023 School Science Fair Symposium was being planned for July 2023.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

1. **Receives the report: Te Arawa Lakes Trust Update**

Brown/Nicholson

CARRIED

6.6 Ministry for the Environment – Verbal Update

Presented By: Lorena Stephen - Director, Investments, Policy, Implementation and Delivery, Ministry for the Environment (MfE).

Key Points:

- MfE had mainly been focussing on supporting regions following the recent severe weather events, with a main focus on the Ministerial inquiry into Tairāwhiti/Gisborne and Wairoa land-use
- Involved in the Severe Weather Integrated Response to inform future policy design
- Ongoing consultations on Regional Engagement Resource Management reform – national planning framework
- Working alongside TALT (Nicki Douglas) regarding MfE mahi around the Lakes rohe
- Te Mana o Te Wai Symposium planned for Rotorua towards end of June 2023
- Introduced Eugene Berryman-Kamp, MfE Director Te Mana o Te Wai and Implementation Partnerships, appointed to oversee from a national perspective the implementation of Te Mana o Te Wai/oversee the establishment of implementation partnerships/better support on a local level various policy programs as part of the Resource Management Act reforms/support and build relationships.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1. Receives the verbal update by the Ministry for the Environment.**

**Winters/Brown
CARRIED**

6.7 Rotorua Lakes Council Update to Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group - 24 March 2023

Presented by: Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) Deputy Chief Executive Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions, Stavros Michael.

Key Points:

- Highlighted activities by RLC that relate to lake water quality
- The Tarawera Sewerage Scheme construction commenced March 2023; considered a significant milestone with a substantial impact on improving the health of the lakes. With the RLC’s sewerage reticulation programmes in their final stage, some 2.5 million litres of untreated sewerage no longer seep into the lakes every day)
- Rotoehu proposed wastewater reticulation scheme had been placed on hold until funding constraints could be addressed for the construction of the Otautu Bay Pump Station and the completion of reticulation. It would be regrettable if these properties were not reticulated with the current septic tanks continuing to seep into Lake Rotoehu that was in declining status)

- Indicated that a report would be presented to the next Strategy Group in June 2023 meeting, outlining the impacts and effects of very high lakes levels (impacting on infrastructure, economic efforts, lakes water quality); to highlight the need to adopt an all of system approach to climate change effects and its impacts on a number of objectives including infrastructure, environmental and cultural.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1. Receives the report, Rotorua Lakes Council Update to Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group - 24 March 2023.**

**Brown/Winters
CARRIED**

Hei Pānui Anake Information Only

6.8 Essential Freshwater Policy Programme Engagement Update

Tabled Document 3 - Draft EFPP Engagement Calendar: Objective ID A4358469 ⇨
Presentation 20230421 RTALSG presentation on EFPP comms and engagement: Objective ID A4358494 ⇨

Presented by: BOPRC Toi Moana Senior Planner (Water Policy), Jo Watts.

Key Points:

- Engagement approach for the 2023 Essential Freshwater Policy Programme
- Key focus would be the continued involvement of tangata whenua and public engagement, both face to face and online
- Was simultaneously continuing science/technical work, policy option development and plan drafting
- During April to September 2023, engagement would begin with three sub-regional hui around the region, to be followed by 2 - 3 community workshops in each Freshwater Management Unit (FMU)
- Draft engagement calendar was tabled
- Strategy Group members were invited to advise on the approach to the engagement
- Region-wide overview hard copies FMU Booklets were handed to members: booklets included descriptions of the FMU, issues, options for long-term vision, proposed outcomes for freshwater values, water quality and ecosystem health issues & targets, water take limits and minimum flows, the kinds of rules & methods that might need to be addressed.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

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

**Brown/Winters
CARRIED**

7. Karakia Kati Closing Karakia

Karakia kati provided by Arapeta Tahana.

3:50 pm - the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED 23 JUNE 2023

Poū Tākiwaiora, Independent Chairperson
Arapeta Tahana