

Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group

Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

Commencing: Friday 14 June 2024, 11:30 am, following the conclusion of the RTALSG Workshop

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

**Heamana
Chairperson:** Pou Tākiwaiora Arapeta Tahana

**Heamana Tuarua
Deputy Chairperson:** Deputy Chair Kevin Winters (Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC)) (via Zoom)

**Ngā Kopounga
Members:**

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT)
Nuki Nicolson; Mariana Te Rangi

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

BOPRC
Cr Te Taru White (Alternate)

Ministry for the Environment (MfE) (Observer)
Lorena Stephen, Director, Investments, Policy, Implementation and Delivery (via Zoom)

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

TALT: Soweeta Fort-D'Ath - Lakes Programme Coordinator

RLC: Stavros Michael - Deputy Chief Executive Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions

BOPRC: Cllr Lyall Thurston; Helen Creagh - Rotorua Catchments Manager; Rosemary Cross - Senior Projects Manager, Rotorua Catchments; Gemma Moleta - Senior Planner (Water Policy) (via Zoom); Merinda Pansegrouw - Committee Advisor

Presenters/Public Forum Speakers: As listed in the minutes

**Ngā Hōnea
Apologies:** Chairman Doug Leeder (BOPRC)

Declaration of Public Recording

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 Meeting - 14 June 2024](#)

1. Karakia Whakatuwhera Opening Karakia

Karakia whakatuwhera provided by Arapeta Tahana as part of the workshop preceding the meeting.

2. Ngā Hōnea Apologies

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Accepts the apology from Chair Leader tendered at the meeting.**

**White/Nicholson
CARRIED**

3. Wāhanga Tūmatanui Public Forum

3.1 Karen Walmsley and Libby Fletcher - Tarawera Sewerage Working Group / Lake Tarawera Ratepayers Association (LTRA)

Key Points: Karen Walmsley (Tarawera Sewerage Working Group, Committee Member LTRA):

- Drew attention to the current status of the Tarawera Sewerage Reticulation Scheme
- Provided mana whenua perspective; representative of collective Ahu Whenua Trusts (representing over 10 trusts with 4500 shareholders)
- Highlighted the important role mana whenua had in overseeing the lake beds; protecting lake water quality was the first priority
- Stressed that the Tarawera Sewerage Project was imperative; would ultimately preserve health of the lakes, with seven lakes feeding into Lake Tarawera
- Was conscious that any increase in nitrate levels/pathogens would alter the balance/well-being of the lakes
- Tarawera Sewerage Reticulation Scheme would be the answer to assist with managing the health of the lake - for current and future generations
- Scheme would also contribute towards/support the aspirations/visions of Tarawera mana whenua iwi.
- Expressed support for the Tarawera Sewerage Reticulation Scheme; wanted to convey to the Strategy Group that communities were united on the view that the reticulation scheme was critical.

Key Points: Libby Fletcher (Chair - LTRA):

- Supported Tarawera Sewerage Reticulation Scheme; septic tanks were not supportive/advantageous to improving the health of the lakes

- Project had been a long/slow process, but would ultimately be worth it – for both the lake and the community.

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

None advised.

5. Ngā Meneti Minutes

Kia Whakaūngia Ngā Meneti Minutes to be Confirmed

5.1 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 March 2024

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Confirms the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 March 2024 as a true and correct record.**

**White/Nicholson
CARRIED**

6. Ngā Pūrongo Reports

Ngā Whakatau e Hiahiatia Ana Decisions Required

6.1 Growing Hedged Mānuka in the Lake Rotorua Catchment - Verbal Update

Presentation 20240614 Growing Hedged Manuka Learnings Presentation - 14 June 2024: Objective ID A4697482

Tabled Document 1 - 20240614 Final Report - Growing hedged Manuka Lake Rotorua Catchment - 14 June 2024 - Tabled item: Objective ID A4697478

Presented by: BOPRC Senior Projects Manager – Rotorua Catchments, Rosemary Cross, Andy Dick, Director Logjiztix Limited and Bill Young, Te Arawa Primary Sector (TAPS).

Key Points:

- Was a 3-year research effort funded by the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Restoration Programme to provide a land use change option for small block landowners in the Lake Rotorua catchment
- Looked at crop options which would be less harmful to the environment while potentially generating an income for landowners
- Mānuka was identified as a crop which could possibly fulfil both requirements

- Highlighted the learnings from two demonstration sites/presented the results
- Purpose/background: Plan Change 10
- Highlighted the production process followed
- Summarised cost and related issues
- Outcomes:
 - Uneconomic at a wholesale level
 - Potential retail option, but with added complexity and cost
 - “No go” at this stage
- Transitioning from oil to tea:
 - Demonstration management team became aware of an alternative end-use for mānuka leaf: Waikato based Tea company, Ōku
 - Ōku had an established market for mānuka leaf tea
 - Had provided Ōku with dried and sieved product from both demo sites
 - Ōku was interested in entering into a commercial relationship with Mangorewa Kaharoa Z Trust
 - Current price point for mānuka tea made growing mānuka for tea production profitable
 - Only issue was scale.

Key Points - Members:

- Commended the project team on the mahi undertaken in investigating land use change options in the Lake Rotorua catchment and demonstrating that mānuka could be grown/hedged in the Lake Rotorua catchment
- Recognised Rosemary Cross, BOPRC Senior Projects Manager, Rotorua Catchments for her valued contribution to the project and the Rotorua catchments mahi over the past years, and wished her well with her retirement.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Growing Hedged Mānuka in the Lake Rotorua Catchment - Verbal Update.**

**Tapsell/Brown
CARRIED**

12:10 pm - Mariana Te Rangi **withdrew** from the meeting.

6.2 Draft Golden Clam Letter to Ministers for approval

*Tabled Document 2 - 20240614 Tabled Item 8.2 - Mayor Tapsell - Golden Clam
Comments on Response Letter: Objective ID A4697939*

*Tabled Document 3 - 2024-06-14_ Tabled Document 8.2 Golden Clam Fish and
Game Letter and response by RLC: Objective ID A4697921*

Presented by: BOPRC Rotorua Catchments Manager, Helen Creagh.

Key Points:

- Following the 3 May 2024 Informal Briefing of the Strategy Group in relation to the risk of a Gold Clam spread from the Waikato River System where an incursion had been confirmed, Strategy Group members had requested that staff prepare a draft letter to relevant Ministers seeking further support to prevent the spread of Gold Clam to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes

- Draft letter was presented for approval.

Key Points - Members:

- Suggested that in order to ensure a long-term solution for pest management in future, the letter not only be distributed to Ministers, but also be copied to opposition parties to ensure cross-party support
- Received additional proposed wording (Tabled Document 2) provided by RLC to strongly emphasise the need for urgent/coordinated action at national/regional level to prevent and mitigate the potential impact of a Gold Clam invasion of the lakes. Suggested the following comments be incorporated into the draft letter:
 - *To call upon the Minister responsible of biosecurity to strengthen surveillance and monitoring efforts to detect, prevent and respond to cases of gold clam spread outside the Waikato River catchment in a timely manner;*
 - *To urge the Minister to enhance collaboration and information-sharing mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of data, expertise, and resources related to gold clam issue;*
 - *To encourage the Minister to allocate adequate funding and resources to support research and development efforts aimed at understanding the nature of the gold clam issue and developing effective prevention, control, and treatment measures;*
 - *To call for the establishment of a taskforce under the governance of the Strategy Group, composed of experts from relevant disciplines, to coordinate efforts to address the gold clam issue and to provide guidance on best practices for prevention and control; (dedicated working group);*
 - *To call upon all the partners of the Group to raise awareness among the public about the risks associated with the gold clam issue and promote behaviour change measures to reduce transmission and lakes biosecurity risks; and*
 - *To request officers from the partner group including the Ministry for Biosecurity report to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group on the implementation of this resolution and to provide regular updates on the status of the gold clam issue at the regional and local levels. (Standing Item on the agenda)*
- Supported that the draft letter be updated/strengthened to include appropriate wording to strongly reflect the urgency of the matter/view of the Strategy Group, calling for action
- Maintained that the Strategy Group needed to express its determination to take concerted action to address the risks of the possible Gold Clam invasion/call upon all partners to demonstrate solidarity and cooperation in the face of this common threat.

Key Points - TALT:

- TALT had been diligent and focussed in addressing the invasion; supported the suggestion of a local task force; urged that government develop a national long-term plan
- Important for generalised principles to be developed that would apply to all new invasions beyond Golden Clam - required a general template to enable future actions against any invasion/threat.

Key Points - RLC:

- Provided Tabled Document 3 for the information of Strategy Group members: (1) letter received from Fish & Game dated 10 June 2024

expressing concern about the lack of ownership/management of a public roadway under the jurisdiction of RLC, namely the Lake Ōkātina boat ramp, and (2) a draft letter of response prepared by RLC

- Expressed disappointment as the matter related to a serious threat to the Rotorua Lakes which required urgent biosecurity measures to keep the pest out of the Te Arawa lakes
- Assured that measures taken had suggested that there was not a significant impact on public access to the Lake and the biosecurity controls implemented for the protection of the lake had not extensively inconvenienced the public.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Draft Golden Clam Letter to Ministers, for approval.**
- 2 Supports that the draft letter to Ministers in Attachment 1 of this report, be updated with the inclusion of the information tabled (refer Tabled Document 2) and thereafter be circulated to Strategy Group members for final sign off before circulation;**
- 3 Supports that the letter be circulated (copied) to all political parties;**
- 4 Reaffirms its commitment to the principles of biosecurity, including the protection of human, animal, and plant health, as well as the preservation of our environmental integrity.**

**White/Nicholson
CARRIED**

- 5 Receives Tabled Document 3 for the information of the Strategy Group: Letter by Fish & Game, addressed to Rotorua Lakes Council, dated 10 June 2024 expressing concern about the lack of ownership and management of a public roadway under the jurisdiction of Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC), alongside a draft letter of response as prepared by RLC.**

**Brown/Tapsell
CARRIED**

7. Verbal Updates

7.1 Ministry for the Environment - Verbal Update

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

Key Points - General MfE Matters:

- Recent budget announcements had impacted both departmental and non-departmental funding
- An organisational review was currently underway, aiming to reduce around 300 MfE roles by 2025/2026. A new organisational design would be implemented from November 2024, with a possible realignment of working arrangements
- Some programmes, such as the Community Environment Fund/Environmental Hub Aotearoa had ended following a review of non-

departmental funding. Environmental Legal Assistance funding would also no longer be available from 1st July 2024

- Government had broadened the allocation of the waste levy: would now fund programmes around restoration, remediation, and climate mitigation
- Had repealed the previous Natural and Built Environment Act and the Spatial Planning Act. New legislation for the Resource Management regime was expected to be introduced around mid-2025
- Had approved Fast-Track Approvals Bill (FTA) - to provide a fast-track decision-making process that facilitated the delivery of infrastructure and development projects. Schedule 2 would provide a list of potential projects
- The National Policy Statement for Fresh Water Management was under review: the deadline for councils to notify on the freshwater plans had been extended to 2027
- Government was also looking at the Freshwater Farm Plans as a key tool for managing risks for fresh water. Work was underway to integrate existing farm environmental and industrial assurance programmes into the Freshwater Farm Plans
- Development of a second Emissions Reduction Plan was underway, expected to be finalised by the end of 2024
- Also working closely with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on the Housing Growth Program, which included a review of the National Policy Statement for Highly Protective Land. Was looking at introducing legislation focused on these areas over the coming months.

Key Points - Annual Work Programme:

- Minister had approved the following projects identified in Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme Annual Work Plan 2024/25:
 - Bay of Plenty Regional Council’s Lake Rotorua Wetland Engineering Solutions
 - Bay of Plenty Regional Council’s Lake Rotorua Incentives Schemes
- Minister approved in-principle the interim transfer of \$10 million from BOPRC Incentives Scheme to Rotorua Lakes Council’s Lake Rotoiti Sewerage Reticulation project, pending:
 - Rotorua Lakes Council’s approval to recover the funding from Lake Enhancement Rates or other revenue streams within their Long-term Plan
 - The deed of funding being varied to address:
 - Changes to Schedule 2
 - Updating portions of the Deed related to the new Rotorua Lakes Council payment responsibilities
- The Minister had requested that an independent review of the cost overruns be conducted.

Key Points - RLC:

- Supportive of providing all information required for the review; noted that many factors had contributed to the cost overruns which were outside of RLC’s control: such as required cultural impact assessments/complexity of the matter/cost of inflation for significant infrastructure projects
- Since conception, continuous updates had been provided to all key stakeholders throughout the project.

Key Points - BOPRC:

- Acknowledged that a review would offer a learning opportunity
- Signalled a willingness to share the costs of the review

- Expressed interest to participate in the process/contribute to the terms of reference
- Highlighted the importance of respectful relationships/urged that relationships be maintained/harnessed.

MfE - In response to Questions:

- All documentation provided by RLC to date was still in hand; should any additional information be requested by the independent reviewers, further requests would follow/pointed out that a collaborative approach would be followed in any response
- MfE would provide further clarification relating to the costs/responsible party to pay for the independent review requested by the Minister
- Timeframe for the review to be provided as well as confirmation whether the review needed to be independent
- Next step would be to provide an amended variation to the Funding Deed for sign-off by the Strategy Group, noting that the next meeting was scheduled for 20 September 2024.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

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

**Brown/White
CARRIED**

7.2 Essential Freshwater Programme Status - Verbal Update

*Presentation RTALSG Essential Freshwater Update - Gemma Moleta - 14 June 2024:
Objective ID A4697485*

Presented by: Gemma Moleta – BOPRC Senior Planner (Water Policy) (via Zoom)

Key Points:

- Outlined the amended timeline for BOPRC’s Essential Freshwater Policy Programme which had been extended to September 2025
- Signalled a possible workshop in September 2024 as an opportunity to provide feedback on BOPRC’s draft approach for the catchment before October 2024 when Council would meet to approve a targeted release for the plan changes
- Possible workshop topics would include: visions and environmental outcomes, farming and forestry provisions, and targets for the lakes
- Workshop could potentially include other related topics - members were invited to provide particular topics of interest.

Next Step:

- A future date for an Essential Freshwater Workshop for the Strategy Group to be confirmed once the agenda item list for the September 2024 meeting had been confirmed.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

1 Receives the Essential Freshwater Programme Status - Verbal Update.

**Tapsell/Winters
CARRIED**

7.3 Climate Change Technical Working Group - Verbal Update

Presented by: Helen Creagh – BOPRC Rotorua Catchments Manager

Key Points:

- Provided an update on the activities of the Climate Change Technical Working Group
- Reminded that the terms of reference for the Technical Working Group was to examine the impacts of climate change on lakeside communities
- A community group of residents had been set up to work alongside the Technical Working Group on matters relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation options
- Current focus was particularly on communities around Lakes Rotomā and Rotoehu
- Should this model be successful, could be rolled-out further.

Key Points - Members:

- Suggested that the priorities for the Climate Change Technical Working Group be reviewed to include Lake Rotorua within the project timeframe
- Acknowledged that priorities would be determined based on availability of resources
- Noted that the BOPRC Engineering Team was currently undertaking modelling work to consider the effects of climate change on lake levels.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

1 Receives the Climate Change Technical Working Group - Verbal Update.

**White/Nicolson
CARRIED**

**8. Karakia Kati
Closing Karakia**

Karakia kati provided by Arapeta Tahana.

1:17 pm - the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Pou Tākiwaiora Arapeta Tahana
Chairperson, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy
Group