

# Informal Workshop Notes

## Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Workshop

**Held:** 9:30 am, Friday 14 June 2024, 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:** Geoff Rolleston - Interim Chair; Dr Daryn Bean - Tumu Whakarae (Chief Executive); Haimona Te Nahu - Environment Manager; Soweeta Fort-D'Ath - Lakes Programme Coordinator; William Anaru - Biosecurity Manager (Via Zoom)

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

**BOPRC:** Cr Lyall Thurston; Helen Creagh - Rotorua Catchments Manager; Rosemary Cross - Senior Projects Manager, Rotorua Catchments; Melissa Williams - Communications Partner; Ashleigh Grant - Kaikarere (Communications Partner); Merinda Pansegrouw - Committee Advisor

**External:** Stewart Edward - Rotorua Trust Chairperson; John Gifford - Lakes Water Quality Society.

### Ngā Hōnea

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

## 1. Karakia Whakatuwhera Opening Karakia

Karakia whakatuwhera provided by Arapeta Tahana.

## 2. Workshop Purpose

Facilitated by: Elva Conroy, Conroy Donald Consultants.

Following the presentation of the Independent Review Report to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group (RTALSG), the purpose of Workshop No. 2 was to:

- Discuss outcomes of the recent desktop review of the Lakes Strategy
- Confirm the strategic priorities/focus areas for the Lakes Strategy (and as a result, for the RTALSG and Lakes Work Programme)
- Confirm next steps for the Lakes Strategy and other recommendations from the RTALSG review.

## 3. Lakes Strategy

### 3.1 PART 1 - Lakes Strategy Review

*Presentation 20240614 RTALSG Strategy Review Workshop Slides Elva Conroy - 14 June 2024: Objective ID A4697548*

#### **Key Points:**

- Re-cap of the 22 March 2024 Workshop No.1 outcomes:
  - Develop a pathway to implementing the recommendations from the RTALSG Review. This would:
    - Build on/improve what was already in place
    - Identify short and medium term actions to progress improvements
  - Focussed on two recommendations as a starting point: Recommendation 1: Terms of Reference/Purpose of RTALSG and Recommendation 5: Governance Oversight
  - Agreed that “you cannot keep doing the same thing, the same way and keep expecting something different to happen”
  - Looked at “what can we do together that we can’t do alone?” Collaborative governance could:
    - influence government decisions and enable large-scale actions that may not be achievable individually
    - enable shared responsibility projects/resourcing/funding
    - Result in connected action/greater environmental impact
  - Key elements of successful collaborative governance
  - Governance Oversight (direction vs. delivery)
  - Strategy as foundation
  - Resulting actions:
    - Refresh the Strategy/develop an action plan in 2024
    - Ensure the Lakes Programme delivered projects that aligned with the Strategy and Action Plan
    - Ensure all reporting aligned with the Strategy and Action Plan

- Ensure all new RTALSG members go through an induction process, in relation to the RTALSG purpose/the reason for its inception along with key foundational documents
- The existing Lakes Strategy had a lot of good content - required a simplistic approach to Strategy refresh.

**Desktop Review**




- Lakes Strategy was a product of its time but needed to be simplified significantly to be useful/fit for purpose
- Vision needed to remain unchanged, as it was embedded in the Settlement Act
- There were too many layers: 3 elements/outcome statements; 9 focus areas/11 goals. Many of the goals were not goals, but instead represented a way of working
- There were opportunities to shorten the length of the Strategy
- Opportunity to embed Te Tupapa o ngā Wai o Te Arawa/Te Arawa Cultural Values Framework
- A refresh could offer:
  - Simpler/straight forward/to the point/shorter
  - Outcomes focused/values/principles driven
  - Clarity for implementation via an action plan
- Suggested a refresh of the strategy via a simple and speedy process
- Cited Te Maru o Kaituna River Authority as co-governance partnership case study/example (10-year Action Plan, with actions grouped per activity/projected-based approach).

**Key Points - Members:**

- Highlighted the importance of establishing a sense of ownership/celebration/community connection
- All needed to be “in the same waka” - with an agreed travel of direction (establishing a common interest)
- Leading role by iwi/hapū was of critical importance
- Collaboration/mutual support
- Strategy Group to focus on “strategy” matters
- Required a simplified strategy.

**“Brain dump” - Strategic Priorities/Focus Areas**

- Thinking ahead (at least 50 years), with a successful strategy roll-out completed, looking at a favourite lake, what would be seen/heard/felt:

		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mokopuna swimming</li> <li>• Life</li> <li>• Ecotourism</li> <li>• Koura</li> <li>• Papakāinga</li> <li>• More native plants</li> <li>• Crystal clear water</li> <li>• Kai &amp; connection</li> <li>• More community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birds</li> <li>• Laughter</li> <li>• Splashing</li> <li>• Relative silence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tranquillity</li> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Connection</li> <li>• Re-connection</li> <li>• Feeling Proud</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed free/rubbish free</li> <li>• Happy whānau</li> <li>• People safe/secure</li> <li>• Cultural practices the norm</li> </ul>		
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**Where should we as a collective be focussing our efforts, with a focus on topics rather than projects/solutions (thinking wider - what “could” be done)**

**Key Points - Members:**

- Suggested framework: Wai Ora/Taiao (health and wellbeing of the taiao) /Wai Rua (connection to the lakes) / Mokopuna Decisions & Guidance
- Wai Ora (health and wellbeing of the taiao)
  - Water quality/wetland restoration/native forests restored/best practice land management implemented
  - Biosecurity/gorse removal/large scale weed spraying/defend against new aquatic incursions/surveillance for current and new threats/core to TALT as lakebed owners - removal of invasive weeds
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  - Compliance
  - Innovation
  - Community and iwi lead care groups
  - Nature based solutions
  - Local iwi and hapū consultation
  - Drinkable water
  - Other ways to improve water quality
  - Native replanting
  - Catchment approach
  - Actions that restored native regeneration and healthy/symbiotic relationships between lakes and people
  - Land use optimisation/fit for purpose
  - Addressing human created contaminants/silt/excess nutrients/no algae blooms/mauri of lakes and water
  - Native species protection/address introduced pests
  - Balance environment and community
  - Nature solutions by innovation/technology
- Wai Rua (connection to the lakes)
  - Food sovereignty/kai/revitalise cultural practices and knowledge
  - Recreation/enjoyment/sensitive urban development/economic values/community connection and involvement/tourism
  - Establishing meaningful relationships
  - Kids capable of doing manus (bombs)
  - Reflecting/being like nature
  - Reconnection/Identity/recognition
  - Community activities
  - Reconnecting people with lakes/nature
  - No threat to community
  - Purpose/meaning/fulfilment for daily life around lakes
  - Connection of community/sustainable recreation/liveability
- Mokopuna Decisions & Guidance:
  - Climate change - resilience/research & innovation/geothermal potential
  - Future leadership (Youth)
  - Education
  - Geothermal power
  - Capacity and capability building

- Leadership (future leadership)
  - Te Arawa Leading in water quality
  - Supporting iwi to look after the lakes
  - Support for iwi-lead Mātauranga mauri solutions
  - Aligning leadership behaviour and style with the way of water (life giving/humble/connected/adaptability)
  - Leadership/effective communication
  - Enabling/empowering iwi/hapū
  - Collectable capability skills/respective contributions/lift the vision beyond local community/promote to all visitors/global; indigenous environment champion
  - All to contribute to safeguard - beyond local - across New Zealand
  - Look for success stories - good examples/celebrate successes
  - Iconic taonga for Aotearoa
  - Required a perception change of what Rotorua and the Lakes were about - recapture past successes (community to feel valued)
  - Acknowledged that the Lakes needed to be seen as “the jewel in the crown”.

### **Where to from here?**

#### **Key Points - Elva Conroy:**

- Encouraged members to think about “what was the strength of each organisation in achieving the vision”
- To think about what our collective strengths were in achieving the vision. “What can we do together that we cannot do alone”
- To consider how long the process to review the strategy should take/level and consultation process that would be required.

## **1.2 Part 2 - RTALSG - Review what would be next**

#### **Key Points - Elva Conroy:**

- Summarised progress made to date in addressing the recommendations made following the Independent review of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group since December 2023
- Actions completed/in progress:
  - Recommendation 1: Vision and Strategy Document to underpin the Lakes Programme - agreed in principle
  - Recommendation 2: Carry out a refresh of the Vision and Strategy - have confirmed priority areas and in the process of review
  - Recommendation 3: Elevate the status and role of TALT within the Strategy Group and associated Lakes Programme - in progress
  - Recommendation 5: All Strategy Group members to wānanga potential solutions to the matters raised through interview feedback - addressed in March 2024 workshop
  - Recommendation 7: TALT to carry out a review of their Protocol Agreement with Ministry for the Environment and initiate a Mana Whakahono-ā-Rohe agreement with individual partner agencies - in progress
- Matters still to be addressed:
  - Recommendation 4: Future proofing Chair arrangement - to develop an approach

- Recommendation 6: Carry out a review of the Deed of Funding agreement by the Crown and all Strategy Group partners
- Recommendation 8: hold regular inductions with new Strategy Group members and staff from partner agencies – to develop an approach.

**Key Points - Members:**

- TALT:
  - Would be important not to work in silos
  - Values needed to be incorporated/embedded at a strategic level
  - To identify workstreams/key priorities/embedding TALT in workstreams and working more collaboratively/collectively
  - TALT to liaise with Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and other responsible ministries/ministers (Ministry for Primary Industries (on Biosecurity matters)/Department of Conservation/Climate Change Minister to navigate and development of an understanding of requirements, with the goal to replenish the Deed Funding
  - Elevating the status of TALT within the Strategy Group would also include Te Arawa iwi/hapū involvement (iwi/hapū fresh water statements/environmental plans)
- BOPRC
  - Highlighted the importance of relationships (i.e. analogy of the co-governance group being three-legged stool)
  - Required collective action – strength in common interest
  - Relationship based on commonality
- Lakes Water Quality Society (LWQS)
  - Process needed to engage communities much more strongly
  - Strategy Group needed to connect more with communities – at a grass-roots level – more friendly/more frequently
  - Required continued communication/informal engagement
- Pou Tākiwaiora
  - Supported the concept of independence for the Strategy Group Chair
  - Members needed to consider why relationships in the past had been challenging and what could be done to address this going forward; ultimately “needed to understand what we should be fixing”
- John Gifford referenced a previous model that had been successful and encouraged all to review the valuable documental history: LWQS Symposium 2006 *“Rotorua Lakes 2006, Wonderful Lakes – What Value? Who Pays?”*, *The Rotorua Lakes Protection and Restoration Action Programme, Proposals, Costs, Progress*, a paper by Paul Dell (Page 45). The article was available via this link:  
<https://lakeswaterquality.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/symposiums/2006-symposium-proceedings.pdf>
- A key issue that needed to be addressed with the Crown was the challenge that the original settlement deed funding model included four lakes only; this has since evolved to include kaitiakitanga over Te Arawa 14 lakes
- Critical that all partners needed to pull in the same direction
- RLC: Emphasised that water quality of the lakes had always being a top priority for Councils; pointed out that Councils were required to prioritise affordability, balance priorities, also for communities outside of funded schemes.

**Key Points - Elva Conroy:**

- Reminded that the intent of the treaty settlement was to (1) restore mana and rangatiratanga of Te Arawa; and (2) establish a meaningful relationship of mutual trust and co-operation between Crown and Te Arawa

- Goal was to ensure the intent of the Settlement Act was upheld

## **4 Conclusion**

Pou Tākiwaiora Arapeta Tahana thanked Elva Conroy for facilitating the discussion and Strategy Group members for the insightful kōrero:

### **Key Points:**

- Emphasised the importance of ensuring that communities “loved” the lakes in order to ensure that they saw the lakes as a priority too
- Real connection between this group and communities was critical
- Believed that the state of the lakes was a reflection of the behaviour of the people; fixing the lakes would be about fixing our relationships and our behaviours as people, starting with the Strategy Group.

**Next workshop: 20 September 2024**

**11:30am - Workshop closed.**