

# Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group

## Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

**Commencing:** Tuesday 18 June 2024, 9:30 AM

**Venue:** Mataatua Room, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Building,  
5 Quay Street, Whakatāne and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)

### Heamana

**Chairperson:** Leith Comer (Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihi Trust)

### Heamana Tuarua

**Deputy Chairperson:** Dr Pouroto Ngaropo (Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa)

### Ngā Kopounga

#### Members:

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC):  
Chairman Doug Leeder, Cr Malcolm Campbell (Alternate)

Ngāti Mākino Iwi Authority:  
Awhi Awhimate, Laurance Tamati (Alternate)

Ngāti Tūwharetoa (BOP) Settlement Trust:  
Jim Schuster

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC):  
Cr Gregg Brown

Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihi Trust (TMONRT)  
Tiipene Marr (Alternate)

Whakatāne District Council:  
Mayor Victor Luca, Deputy Mayor Lesley Immink (Alternate)

### Te Hunga i Tae Ake

#### In Attendance:

BOPRC: Chris Ingle - General Manager Integrated Catchments, Kerry Brown - Kaitohutohu Taiao Matua (Senior Advisor), Gemma Moleta - Senior Planner (Water Policy) (Via Zoom), Shari Kameta - Committee Advisor

Presenters: as listed in the minutes

TMONRT: Miria Nicholls - Kaiawhina Hapori | Taiao Admin Support - Environmental & Social

### Ngā Hōnea

#### Apologies:

Mayor Faylene Tunui - (Kawerau District Council) (KDC),  
Deputy Mayor Aaron Rangihika (Alternate, KDC), Lakes

Community Board Chair Phill Thomass (Alternate, RLC),  
Manu Glen (Alternate, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa)

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

A karakia was provided by Pouroto Ngaropo.

## **2. Ngā Hōnea Apologies**

### **Resolved**

**That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Mayor Faylene Tunui, Deputy Mayor Aaron Rangihika, Manu Glen and Phill Thomass tendered at the meeting.**

**Ngaropo/Awhimate  
CARRIED**

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

None declared.

## **4. Ngā Meneti Minutes**

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

### **4.1 Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group Minutes - 16 February 2024**

#### **Resolved**

**That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

- 1 Confirms the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group Minutes - 16 February 2024 as a true and correct record.**

**Ngaropo/Comer  
CARRIED**

### **4.2 Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group Minutes - 27 March 2024**

#### **Resolved**

**That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

- 1 Confirms the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group Minutes - 27 March 2024 as a true and correct record.**

**Comer/Awhimate  
CARRIED**

## 5. Ngā Pūrongo Reports

### 5.1 Chairperson's Report

Presented by: Chair Leith Comer

#### **Key Points:**

- Welcomed Dr Emily Afoa to the meeting, noting that the Project team now had a full complement of roles required for the project
- Acknowledged the Strategy Group's partner councils for their Long Term Plan (LTP) Hearing processes and the effort that had gone into facilitating them
- The engagement held so far with stakeholders had been positive and looked forward to the next stage of releasing the Strategy Group's draft strategic objectives to the community
- Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitahi Trust had received the letter from the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Chris Bishop that had been sent to stakeholders with a high level of interest in nominating projects for inclusion as a 'listed project' in the Fast-Track Approvals Bill. As the Strategy Group was still in the preliminary stages of the project the Chairperson had declined the invitation to submit.

#### **Key Points - Staff:**

- Acknowledged the support of Strategy Group partner members that was enabling relationship building and discussions with key stakeholders
- Oji Fibre Solutions wished to engage further noting interest to carry out restoration work/activity along the Tarawera Awa
- Confirmed that in addition to the matters reported, a submission had been made to Kawerau District Council's Proposed Annual Plan 2024-2025 on behalf of the Strategy Group.

### **Resolved**

#### **That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Chairperson's Report.**

**Ngaropo/Brown  
CARRIED**

### 5.2 TARSG Draft Strategic Objectives

Presented by: Dr Frances Teinakore-Curtis - TARSG Project Manager  
Keri Topperwien - TARSG Strategy Document Writer

9:47 am – Jim Schuster **entered** the meeting.

#### **Key Points:**

- Thanked members for attending and providing their input into the Strategy Group workshops held on 27 March and 6 May 2024
- Outlined the seven draft objectives and associated actions to restore the mauri of the Tarawera Awa

- Strategic objectives and actions had been framed with community and stakeholder views in mind
- The intent of the Kotuku Agreement was to collaborate, foster relationships and seek agreement and a commitment between the Strategy Group and river occupiers/stakeholders to restore the mauri.

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

- Complimented the Project team and staff for their work in developing the draft strategic objectives and actions
- General consensus was that the draft strategic objectives and actions were fit for purpose for initial engagement with the community and stakeholders
- Provided the following feedback on the strategic objectives and actions:
  - The action under Strategic Objective 1 should include cost analysis
  - Explanatory text was needed to inform how the strategic objectives had been ordered and/or prioritised
  - Biodiversity risks (i.e. catfish, freshwater gold clams) needed to be captured, potentially as an action under Objective 6
  - Queried whether building relationships and ensuring engagement with stakeholders and the community needed to be identified as an action
- Acknowledged the varied perspectives of the Iwi Collective in regard to the state of mauri of Tarawera Awa ki te Awa o te Atua and the definition that had been previously agreed by the Collective
- Further background needed to be shared with stakeholders and community regarding Te Awa o te Atua and its ancestral name, identifying the catchment boundary and having appropriate language to alleviate any potential misconceptions
- Raised the need to shape economic benefit to aid and maintain funding leverages, acknowledge other iwi with an interest in the catchment and allow for future and emerging issues/projects.

### **Resolved**

#### **That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

**1 Receives the report, TARSG Draft Strategic Objectives;**

**Comer/Luca  
CARRIED**

**2 Approves the TARSG draft strategic objectives for stakeholder engagement, subject to the feedback provided at the meeting.**

**Comer/Brown  
CARRIED**

### **5.3 TARSG Project Team Update**

*Presentation - Dr Emily Afoa - Technical Planner Update: Objective ID A4697958 [⇨](#)*

Presented by: Dr Frances Teinakore-Curtis – TARSG Project Manager  
 Dr Emily Afoa – Consultant Engineer/Planner  
 Jane Waldon – Secretariat/Communications and Engagement  
 Adria Green – Grahn Creative

#### **Key Points - Dr Emily Afoa:**

#### **Proposed Feasibility Plan**

- Outlined the recommended pathway and timeline for providing preliminary recommendations toward achieving the three aspirations to restore the mauri, as follows:
- Aspiration 1 - Identify concept level options and feasibility (June 2024 - May 2025)
- Aspiration 2 - Catchment-scale overview of existing land use and analysis to inform strategic planning (June 2024 - May 2025)
- Aspiration 3 - Identify markers/measures of success (September - May 2025)
- Anticipated to have a high level understanding of data collation for the catchment by the next meeting.

### **Key Points - Jane Waldon:**

#### **Communications and Engagement Strategy**

- An initial draft Communications and Engagement Strategy was presented to the Strategy Group on 16 February 2024 and had since been updated to include levels of engagement, finalised branding and a draft Kōtuku Agreement template
- The draft Kōtuku Agreement template was legally non-binding and would enable and demonstrate the Strategy Group's commitment to long-term engagement with stakeholders towards restoring the mauri
- Recommended that each Kōtuku Agreement be legally reviewed
- Would provide an update at the next meeting on any Kōtuku Agreements that were under negotiation
- Noted that a stakeholder contact database had been compiled and circulated to members for feedback, and could be updated as appropriate.

### **Key Points - Adria Green:**

#### **TARSG Website Development**

- Provided an overview of the website under development and a video that had been created, based on the three aspirations
- The website would be overlaid with information and provide context of the Tarawera Awa catchment, various workstreams and activity, translating ideas into a visual format for community understanding.

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

- Technical feasibility work to reconnect and restore the mauri of Tarawera Awa ki te Awa o te Atua could potentially be science leading/cutting edge
- While different mauri models existed, the Iwi partners wished to ensure the model used for the Tarawera catchment reflected them and not another iwi model.
- Supported the Communication and Engagement Strategy approach, noting the importance of engaging efficiently so as not to overburden iwi, stakeholders and the community
- Suggested that the website have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page to provide clarity/understanding on various aspects and to allay any potential concerns within the community, i.e. historical background on Te Awa o te Atua, reconnection and re-channelling
- Noted the importance of taking an active engagement approach alongside the website and to highlight various activity workstreams, i.e. Matatā and Edgecumbe wastewater projects.

## Resolved

### That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:

- 1 **Receives the report, TARSG Project Team Update.**

**Comer/Luca  
CARRIED**

11:03am - The meeting **adjourned**.

11:22am - The meeting **reconvened**.

## 6. Ngā Whakamārama a Ngā Rōpū Update from Partners

### 6.1 Ngāti Rangitihi

- Ngati Rangitihi were currently challenged by onerous legislative administrative processes to administer Ngati Rangitihi scenic reserves and were seeking support from the Minister of Conservation to reduce this burden by using general covenants.

### 6.2 Ngāti Mākino

- No update to provide.

### 6.3 Ngāti Tūwharetoa (Bay of Plenty) Settlement Trust

- Investigations were currently being explored on options to convert contaminated waste from Tasman Mill that was located behind Kawerau into biomass.

### 6.4 Ngāti Awa

- The Rūnanga was currently exploring ways to further empower the role of hapū/marae
- The four marae in Matatā were working closely together to strengthen their relationships, develop capacity and support each other collectively.

### 6.5 Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC)

- Lake Tarawera Sewerage Scheme - a court injunction was currently in progress to stop protestors from interrupting the laying of pipeline
- Freshwater gold clams - a letter had been sent to the Minister of Primary Industries to raise concern about the sub-standard response given to the biosecurity threat.

### 6.6 Whakatāne District Council (WDC)

- The Long Term Plan process had been completed with a substantial list of projects of which more than 30 percent related to water
- Whakatāne township's drinking water was sourced from the Whakatane river and required a comprehensive water treatment plant. Alternative water sources were being considered, but would come at considerable cost.

#### **Edgecumbe and Matatā Wastewater Scheme Update**

Presented by: Glenn Cooper, Manager Three Waters

**Key Points:**

- Matatā wastewater project business case would be reported to WDC for direction in July 2024 with a consent for land application and a treatment plant to be submitted in September/October 2024
- Regarding the Edgecumbe wastewater scheme:
  - The consent was due to expire in October 2026
  - A working group and partnership approach had been formed between WDC, iwi (Ngāti Rangitahi, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau) and Fonterra Edgecumbe to consider and evaluate options for an integrated solution to manage industrial and municipal wastewater more efficiently
  - Time was a critical factor for Fonterra who would need to decide by July 2024 on a preferred option in order to lodge a consent variation for a treatment plant to meet conditions of their consent by October 2026
  - A standalone system for Edgecumbe and an integrated system for Edgecumbe/Awakeri/Whakatane were still being considered as options
  - Matatā's business case was well established and would proceed if a viable integrated solution was not forthcoming
  - The consent for treated effluent discharge into the Omeheu canal was due to expire in October 2026 and was currently inconsistent with environmental plan requirements, therefore the working group was also exploring alternative options for this.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Noted BOPRC's role as the consenting regulator, challenges relating to cost and consent timeframes and iwi/hapū's role to consider the environmental and cultural impacts of the options
- Whakatāne wastewater system had capacity to receive Edgecumbe and Matatā wastewater and expand its capacity further
- Considered that the Strategy Group needed to be involved in wastewater discussions that impacted the Tarawera catchment.

**Key Points - Staff:**

- Confirmed that any wastewater outfall discharges to sea would need to consider any implications under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011.

## **6.7 Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana**

- A meeting had been held yesterday with RLC and Lake Tarawera residents to discuss ratepayer concerns regarding proposed costs for the lake's reticulation scheme. It was noted that RLC and BOPRC Chief Executives would be discussing the issue further.

### **Resolved**

**That the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group:**

- 1 Receives the report, Rotorua Lakes Council - Tarawera Sewerage Scheme Monthly Report for April 2024;**
- 2 Receives the report, Whakatāne District Council Edgecumbe and Matatā Wastewater Scheme Update.**

**Luca/Brown  
CARRIED**

## **7. Whakahoutanga Kōrero Verbal Updates**

### **7.1 Essential Freshwater Programme Timeframe**

*Presentation - Essential Freshwater Programme Timeline: Objective ID A4707613* [⇒](#)

Presented by: Stephen Lamb - Environmental Strategy Manager and Gemma Moleta  
- Senior Planner (Water Policy) (Via Zoom)

#### **Key Points:**

- Outlined BOPRC's amended timelines for its Essential freshwater programme, following Council's decision to progress with notifying its proposed freshwater plan changes by September 2025
- Council was proceeding ahead of Central Government direction to address water quality issues, expiry of 25-year water consents in 2026 and allow time for tangata whenua/community to give feedback on draft plan changes before Council adopted the proposed plan change for formal submissions
- Staff were working through key priority areas regarding treatment of wetlands, how visions/values/targeted attributes would drive the rules, agricultural/farming policy and how Te Mana o te Wai would sit within the framework
- Staff were aware of the Strategy Group's aspirations and development of its draft strategic objectives
- BOPRC would adapt as necessary to Central Government reviews of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM), freshwater regulations and its future review of the Resource Management Act 1991
- Invited the opportunity to hold an informal freshwater workshop with the Strategy Group in August 2024 on the work that was progressing for freshwater
- Separate hui could also be arranged for specific partner organisations where desired.

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

- Accepted the invitation of an informal freshwater workshop in August 2024.

## **8. Whakaaturanga Presentations**

### **8.1 Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana - Data Sets for Tarawera Awa ki Te Awa o te Atua**

*Presentation - Tarawera Water Quality and Ecology - June 2024: Objective ID  
A4707614* [⇒](#)

Presented by: Paul Scholes - Environmental Scientist (BOPRC)



**Key Points:**

- The majority of surface water takes were returned to the awa
- Three main water quality sites and a range of ecological sites provided data for water quality and ecology monitoring
- Nutrient levels had been steadily declining since 1989, but were naturally high in phosphorus due to the volcanic system
- Ammonia and nitrate toxicity levels were required to be monitored under the NPS-FM and had an excellent rating, but slowly increased at industrial and farming locations, and during rainfall, which demonstrated a need to be managed on land. Long-term trend was good (reducing)
- Bathing suitability was generally good but decreased at the Matatā river mouth
- Invertebrate monitoring reflected a range of stresses and identified a decline in some fish species, which would require good policy to be put in place to help protect fish communities
- The data sets would feed into implementing the NPS-FM and the national objectives framework
- Online data and information sources were available on [www.lawa.org.nz](http://www.lawa.org.nz) and BOPRC live monitoring [www.boprc.govt.nz](http://www.boprc.govt.nz).

**In Response to Questions:**

- Had looked into using target level indicators (TLI) used for the Rotorua Lakes catchment, however had not found them useful for the NPS-FM
- Iwi were interested in site monitoring and incorporating Mātauranga Māori which was a developing space.

**Key Points - Members:**

- Queried the opportunity to receive a presentation on the upper lake catchment from water quality scientists and related disciplines.

## 8.2 Plan Change 11 Geothermal: Pre-Draft Engagement

*Presentation - Nga Wai Ariki i Te Moana a Toi: Objective ID A4697987* →

Presented by: Elsa Weir - Senior Planner and Freya Camburn - Senior Policy Analyst (BOPRC)

**Key Points:**

- Overview of Plan Change 11 and the current geothermal policy framework for the Bay of Plenty region and the Tarawera River Catchment Plan
- Staff were proposing to remove the geothermal provisions within the various plans and integrate them into the Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP) to reduce duplication
- Outlined the timeline and next steps for the plan change. A draft plan was anticipated for release in September 2024
- Notice of the plan change and a request to meet and discuss had been sent to iwi/hapū/stakeholders.

**In Response to Questions:**

- Best practice for Kawerau geothermal resource was re-injection
- A discretionary activity under the plan would enable BOPRC the ability to consider any matter that it thought important through those resource consents
- Within the plan change, iwi/hapu would have the opportunity to undertake cultural impact assessments as part of the resource consent process.

## **9. Karakia Kati Closing Karakia**

A karakia was provided by Pouroto Ngaropo.

**12:52 pm - the meeting closed.**

**CONFIRMED**

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Leith Comer  
Chairperson  
Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group