

Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group

Ngā Meneti Open Minutes

Commencing: Friday 22 March 2024, 12:00pm following the conclusion of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group 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))

Ngā Kopounga Members:

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT)

Rangitihi Pene (Alternate)

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC)

Cr Gregg Brown; Phill Thomass – Lakes Community Board Chair (Alternate)

BOPRC

Cr Te Taru White (Alternate)

Ministry for the Environment (MfE) (Observer)

Eugene Berryman-Kamp, Director Te Mana o Te Wai and Implementation, Partnerships

Te Hunga i Tae Ake In Attendance:

TALT: Geoff Rolleston- Interim Chair; Soweeta Fort-D'Ath - Lakes Programme Coordinator

RLC: Andrew Moraes – Chief Executive; Stavros Michael – Deputy Chief Executive Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions

BOPRC: Chris Ingle – General Manager, Integrated Catchments; Helen Creagh – Rotorua Catchments Manager; Rosemary Cross – Senior Projects Manager, Rotorua Catchments; Melissa Williams – Communications Partner; Merinda Pansegrouw – Committee Advisor

Presenters: Angus McKenzie – Environmental Consultant/Director, Place Group Limited

External: Chris Sutton – Rerewhakaaitu Incorporated Society; Don Atkinson – Member Lakes Water Quality Society

Ngā Hōnea

Apologies:

Mayor Tania Tapsell (RLC); Chairman Doug Leeder (BOPRC);
Mariana Te Rangī (TALT); Nuki Nicholson (TALT)

Declaration of Public Recording

Committee members and the public were reminded that 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 - 22 March 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.bayofplenty.govt.nz/rotorua-te-arawa-lakes-strategy-group-22-march-2024)

1. Karakia Whakatuwhera Opening Karakia

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

Pou Tākiwaiaora Arapeta Tahana acknowledged and welcomed newly appointed Rotorua Lakes Council Chief Executive, Andrew Moraes.

2. Ngā Hōnea Apologies

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Mayor Tania Tapsell, Chairman Doug Leeder, Mariana Te Rangī and Nuki Nicholson tendered at the meeting.

Brown/Thomass
CARRIED

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

None.

4. Ngā Meneti Minutes

Kia Whakaūngia Ngā Meneti Minutes to be Confirmed

4.1 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 September 2023

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Confirms the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Minutes - 22 September 2023 as a true and correct record.

Winters/White

CARRIED

5. Ngā Pūrongo Reports

Ngā Whakatau e Hiahiatia Ana Decisions Required

5.1 Correspondence received for information: previous Minister David Parker (Incentive Funding Transfer)

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Correspondence received for information: previous Minister David Parker (Incentive Funding Transfer).**

**Brown/Thomass
CARRIED**

5.2 Correspondence received for information: Lakes Water Quality Society Letter to Chair, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Correspondence received for information: Lakes Water Quality Society Letter to Chair, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group.**

**Brown/Thomass
CARRIED**

5.3 Effectively addressing the aquatic weed challenge in Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes

*Presentation 1 - Angus McKenzie Place Group PowerPoint - Weed BC PDF:
Objective ID A4636933 [↗](#)*

Presented by BOPRC Rotorua Catchments Manager, Helen Creagh and Angus McKenzie, Environmental Consultant/Director, Place Group Limited.

Key Points:

- TALT, BORPC, RLC, Lakes Water Quality Society (LWQS) and Waikato Regional Council (WRC), with the support from Toitū Te Whenua - Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), had commenced work on developing a business case to explore options for enhancing the management of lake weeds in the Te Arawa Lakes catchments
- Was seeking support from the Strategy Group to continue with Phase 2/complete the remaining four cases, and to elevate the importance of addressing the lake weed problem with the relevant Crown agencies
- Highlighted key issues faced and benefits of developing a business case

- Emphasised the long term cost savings/fulfilment of Treaty settlement obligations and realising of mana whenua aspirations to restore the health of the Rotorua Te Arawa lakes
- Was important to act swiftly as the window for restoration was closing with concerns around native seed bank viability.

In Response to Questions:

- LINZ was supportive of the business case and had previously invested in weed control within Te Arawa Lakes, in partnership with TALT. However, there was uncertainty around ongoing funding from LINZ, hence the importance of the business case
- The current level of investment by BOPRC, LINZ, RLC and TALT was \$730k per annum; this allowed for both trimming the hedges and removing weeds washed up on the foreshore
- Looking at the removal and/or reduction of potential policy and regulatory roadblocks/restrictions to enable operational efficiencies would form part of the business case
- Biodiversity impact was yet to be assessed
- Key learnings from successes achieved at Lake Ōkāreka with regard to weed control/management would be considered as part of developing the business case
- Was important to keep the business case/scope tight, with a focus on weed management.

Key Points - Members:

- Acknowledged that continued underfunding of weed control/management over the years had contributed to the long standing challenge/was also the key driver for the establishment to the Lakes Water Quality Society (which was originally formed in 1961 as the Lakeweed Control Society)
- Required a holistic approach to water quality improvement/weed control
- As part of the business case, the relativity of funding by region could be considered/funding of the Lakes as a strategic resource/taonga should be within the total quantum of the Lakes areas/funding to be equitable
- Emphasised the importance of magnifying the impact of collaborative/cohesive partnership, and demonstrating ability to deliver
- Acknowledged that the Strategy Group was in the process of reviewing its purpose/strategy but accepted that it would be important to have a business case ready for when funding opportunities became available.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Effectively addressing the aquatic weed challenge in Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes;**
- 2 Supports the continuation of this business case through to the final stages of completion, which includes exploration of options for delivery through the development of the: economic, financial, commercial and management cases;**
- 3 Supports the business case partners to elevate the importance of the issues addressed in the business case with the relevant Crown agencies (our funding partners).**

**Winters/Thomass
CARRIED**

5.4 Mahere Mahi ā-tau (2024-2025), Purongo ā-ono Marama (2023-2024), Deed Funded Project Status Updates

Presentation 2 - Strategy Group Update - 22 March 2024: Objective ID A4636938 ➡

Presentation 3 - Winiata Rural Drain Wetland Update to RTALSG 22 March 2024: Objective ID A4636933 ➡

Presented by BOPRC Rotorua Catchments Manager, Helen Creagh and Rosemary Cross - Senior Projects Manager, Rotorua Catchments.

Key Points - Presentations:

- Outcome of Lake Rotorua Science Review (Required 5-yearly)
 - Undertaken by Professor Warwick Vincent, Quebec (Laval University)
 - Was highly complementary of the programme/seen as a world class programme
- Key Findings – Science Review
 - Long-term water quality trends appeared to be improving
 - Alum had been effective in reducing phosphorus loads from the Utuhina and Puarenga inflows
 - Nitrogen load to land had reduced from 982 tonnes to 761 tonnes between 2017 to 2022
 - Needed to better explain variability of lake water quality
 - Needed to review internal nutrient loading and the fate of (dosed) alum in the lake
 - Ongoing support for catchment management activities was critical to the programme
- Key Programme Updates
 - Winiata Rural Drain Wetland (refer PowerPoint Presentation 3)
 - 9 hectare constructed wetland (engineering solutions)
 - construction completed
 - planting had commenced
 - Progress on weed harvesting at Okawa Bay
 - Puarenga riparian restoration partnership
 - Update on progress made by the Climate Change Technical Working Group
 - Overview of lake algae blooms over summer 2023
- Update on deed of funding reporting.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted the reference made in the Mahere Mahi ā-tau (page 49 of the agenda) to Rotorua Lakes Council's reimbursement of the Deed funding for Regional Council's Incentives Scheme for Lake Rotorua; that Rotorua Lakes Council had intended to include a rate in their Long-Term Plan 2024-2034; and on confirmation of this rate, changes would be made to Schedule 2 of the Deed to transfer an additional \$10,000,000 to Rotorua Lakes Council to complete the Lake Rotoiti Reticulation Scheme which would be paid back to the Crown in annual instalments
- Highlighted the importance of funding to be available to secure 100 tonnes of nitrogen reduction from Lake Rotorua via the Incentives Scheme (required to meet the sustainable nitrogen load for Lake Rotorua by 2032).

Key Points - Staff:

- BOPRC: Planned to schedule a site visit for Strategy Group Members to view the Winiata Rural Drain Wetland
- RLC: Suggested that a letter be drafted for submission to the Minister for the Environment to express the Strategy Group's support for the transfer of the \$10,000,000 to Rotorua Lakes Council to complete the Lake Rotoiti Reticulation Scheme.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group:

- 1 Receives the report, Mahere Mahi ā-tau (2024-2025), Purongo ā-ono Marama (2023-2024), Deed Funded Project Status Updates;**
- 2 Adopts the Mahere Mahi ā-tau 2024-2025 and Purongo ā-ono Marama 2023-2024 for provision to the Ministry for the Environment, in accordance with the requirements of the Deed of Funding for the Programme;**
- 3 Agrees to defer the development of the Three-Year Plan for the Programme (2024-2025 - 2025-2027) until the recommendations of the 2023 review of Strategy Group are resolved.**

**Thomass/Winters
CARRIED**

6. Ngā Take Tōmuri Hei Whakaaroaro Consideration of Items not on the Agenda

6.1 Verbal Update - Ministry for the Environment

Presented by Ministry for the Environment (MfE) representative Eugene Berryman-Kamp, Director Te Mana o Te Wai and Implementation, Partnerships:

Key Points - Observations:

- Highlighted changes in the political environment/context and outlined relevant legislative/perspective changes
 - The Spatial Planning Act (SPA) and the Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) had been repealed as part of the Government's coalition commitments for its first 100-days in office
 - Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) was still in place
 - Had introduced the Fast-track Approvals Bill to Parliament for Select Committee review on 7 March (to make it easier to consent new infrastructure including renewable energy and other developments)
 - Review and replacement of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 had begun and was expected to take 18-24 months
- Emphasised the need for resetting/reforming the Strategy Group, and its partners' relationship with the new Government
- Was important for the Strategy Group to demonstrate its collaborative/concerted focused approach/strong relationships and ability to generate evidence based outcomes
- Outcome of the Review of the Strategy Group would be important.

6.2 Verbal Update - Essential Freshwater Programme

Noted that electronic correspondence had been sent to members of the Strategy Group to provide them with an update on the Essential Freshwater Programme

following changes in resource management and freshwater policy direction from Central Government. The BOPRC Strategy and Policy Committee, at its meeting held on 20 February 2024, had resolved to extend the notification date for the freshwater plan change to September 2025.

7. Karakia Kati Closing Karakia

Karakia kati provided by Eugene Berryman-Kamp.

1:30pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

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