

Resource Management Committee 2025 Annual Report

Tena Koutou Katoa

The last 12 months have been challenging for a number of reasons.

The change in government has meant there has been a corresponding change in approach by the core agencies, such as Waka Kotahi and The Department of Conservation, and to a lesser extent, the territorial authorities.

Changes in central government policy have presented challenges in engagement, with a number of pieces of work being postponed or delayed. Pleasingly, the good relationships with many of these central government organisations as well as the territorial authorities which has been built over a number of years, has survived these outward changes in approach.

Engagement regarding Resource Consent Applications

There have been a number of requests by Otorohanga District Council (ODC) and Waipa District Council (WDC) regarding Resource Consent Applications by property owners. The Resource Management Committee (RMC) have relied upon the policies outlined in Te Tahuānui: Ngāti Hikairo Heritage Management Plan to guide our responses. While it has become more common for these applications to be referred to Ngāti Hikairo for a response, this engagement has been inconsistent overall. As a result, the Runanganui has met with both ODC and WDC to reinforce the need for engagement with Ngāti Hikairo about resource consent applications, particularly where the proposed activity impacts on, or is close to areas of cultural significance to the iwi.

Engagement with the Department of Conservation

Consultation regarding requests submitted by academic institutions, agencies and private organisations remain a continuing flow of work for the committee. These have included applications regarding the release of introduced species to support existing populations (pheasants), to phase two of the reintroduction of native mistletoe back to Pirongia National Park. The RMC has relied upon an iwi developed principles-based framework to assist with managing these requests.

Lake Mangakaware Restoration Programme

Whanau will recall that Ngāti Hikairo and Ngāti Apakura jointly completed a Cultural Impact Assessment for WDC for the restoration of Lake Mangakaware. There has now been a further step in the restoration planning which requires further consultation with Ngāti Hikairo. Sadly, the authors of the Cultural Impact Assessment were not initially consulted with in a timely fashion, however this oversight is being rectified going forward.

Ngaroto

There has been considerable conversation between WDC, Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hikairo regarding the names of the features in and around the peat lakes, including for moana that have been significantly changed and others that now no longer exist. From Ngāti Hikairo's

perspective, there are significant matters that require further discussion within the iwi and with our kaumatua and kuia before any response can be provided to WDC. This process is currently underway. Notably, whanau have made submissions to the council in their private capacity regarding the suggested name changes and the Runanganui have been supportive of the approach and recommendations they made in their submissions.

Te Kauri Ngahere

In conjunction with Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Hikairo have agreed to be involved with the ongoing management of the Ngahere. Malcolm Ormsby has agreed to sit on the DOC led committee responsible for the improvement of the health of the Ngahere to ensure the voice of the Ngati Hikairo hapu directly connected to the whenua is heard.

Conclusion

It is becoming clear to me that the amount of work flowing into the committee is requiring more and more resources in order to meet our responsibilities as kaitiaki of our rohe. This has become particularly apparent as we have increased our activity in the Waipa District as well as maintaining our activities within the Otorohanga District. In response, Committee Members Lees Seymour and Mahina-a-Rangi Manuel have agreed to support this increased activity in the Waipa District.

Our ongoing ability to navigate this space and ensure the interests of our iwi are protected and maintained is only possible because of the unstinting support of whanau members who give of their time, knowledge and expertise. The Committee would not be able to undertake this important work without the help of whanau members like Te Papi and Rangi Cunningham, Frank Thorne, Hano and Malcolm Ormsby, Hinga and Lloyd Whiu, Jane Anderson and many, many others. We are appreciative and grateful for their ongoing support.

Pipi Barton
Chair, Resource Management Committee