

Tairāwhiti Tangata Whenua and water: a preliminary background

About this background document

This background document has been initially compiled by Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti – Gisborne District Council with the intention of being developed under the guidance of the KIWA group.

The intention of the background document is for it to be a common resource for Māori¹ collectives and Council, as a tool to incorporate Māori perspectives appropriately into any decision making about wastewater overflows into city rivers (the Waimiata, Taruheru and Turanganui) and private property.

Effectively incorporating Māori perspectives into Council decision making requires Māori to have an appropriate level of input, influence and information. Achieving this means the capability and capacity of Council staff and decision makers needs to be developed to ensure they have an understanding of the unique and distinct world views of Māori and their cultural protocols and identity. It also means that the capability and capacity of Māori needs to be supported and nurtured.

It is hoped that this background document provides the foundation for building that capability and capacity, and enables Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti to provide a better service to Māori and reflect a partnership approach.

It is a starting point for ongoing discussions. It can be looked at as a baseline (meaning – a thing that can be built upon) showing what written knowledge Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti holds about the relationship that iwi of Te Tairāwhiti (Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki) have with these rivers.

We have included historical information in this background document about the formal working and advisory groups that have been established between Te Kaunihera and Māori over the years and their shared water kaupapa.

The end of the background document has a brief description of some of the challenges (in 2020) to working together on this stormwater and wastewater management kaupapa.

Moving forward let's reflect -

Ki te kore te tangata e manaaki i tōna taiao, ka kore te tangata e whai oranga

If people do not take care of the environment, we are not taking care of our own health and wellbeing.

¹ For the purpose of this protocol 'Māori' is taken to mean tangata whenua, mana whenua, iwi, hapū, marae, whanau or Māori collective organisational entities

An acknowledgement:

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti recognises that the Māori perspective about the significance of particular water bodies varies and differs between different iwi, hapū, marae, and whānau, and that special roles in the management and protection of water (kaitiaki) are inherited through whakapapa².

We also acknowledge that Māori have a unique perspective (Mātauranga Māori) on environmental issues that has developed over many generations, through observation and experience, and that there are inherent difficulties describing concepts and values of te ao Māori using scientific language and scientific frameworks.

As a way to be clear about Te Kaunihera's understanding of the significance of waterbodies to Māori we write it here. That according to Te Ao Māori:

- Water is perceived as a living entity, the source of life for all things – wai ora.
- Water has a cultural, historic and spiritual importance to iwi and hapū of the region.
- The mauri of a waterbody represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life.
- It is an important element of the spiritual relationship between tāngata whenua and the natural environment.
- While waterways can vary in expression from iwi to iwi and rohe to rohe -the common theme amongst all iwi is the holistic view that it encompasses both economic/consumptive and cultural/no-consumptive values.

Mauri is the essence that has been passed from Ranginui (Sky father) and Papatuanuku (Earth mother) to Ngā Atua Māori, Tane Mahuta (Atua of the forests), Tangaroa (Atua of the oceans) and others and down to all living things through whakapapa (genealogy) in the Māori notion of creation. Mauri is considered to be the essence or life force that provides life to all living things.

Where Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti gets its information from:

Over many decades Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti has grown its understanding of Mātauranga Māori through various formal relationships with Māori. These have included including co-governance and co-management arrangements, advisory and leadership boards, technical working groups and reference groups.

Many of these avenues were established under legislative direction, for example the Resource Management Act, Local Government Act and Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement legislation and process. And most wrestled with the challenge of communicating mātauranga Māori and stressing its importance within a science dominated collaborative arena.

Often the prevailing (pakeha) world view is unaccommodating of alternative and indigenous views and values. However, these formal arrangements - when both parties were working towards a common vision or set of goals - have created opportunities for innovation (for example Turanga

² Whakapapa ties are a unique attribute for drawing on economies of scale, and underpinning Māori capacity to act on some of the priorities whānau, hapū, and iwi identify as important in this programme of work.

biological trickling filtration wastewater treatment plant), relationship building and knowledge sharing.

Examples of knowledge sharing and relationship building come in many different forms – informal and formal.

Statutory acknowledgments (a formal acknowledgement by the Crown of the mana of tangata whenua over a specified area), might be considered to be the height of formal information exchange, whereas stories shared in hui and on marae considered less formal – but nonetheless important.

This example of knowledge sharing and relationship building – that cuts straight to the point - is taken from a report titled Tangata Whenua Perspectives of Wastewater, prepared for GDC in January 2000 by Matua Ihaka and Deanna Harrison (Te Kauere Partnership) and Shaun Awatere (Kiwa consultants) cites the Waitangi Tribunal finding that the level of effluent is irrelevant to Maori, if it is to be discharged into waterways – linking the finding to an interviewee comment that scientifically the water may be “fine... but you won’t find a Māori drinking it.”

We have included extracts from the Statement of Association from Ngāti Porou Claims Settlement Act 2012 and Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012 in this background document for the purpose of clearly articulating the relationship iwi have with the region generally, and the affected water bodies specifically. The full version of Nga Whakaaetanga a Ture mo Te Tairāwhiti – Statutory Acknowledgements for the Gisborne district are available <https://www.gdc.govt.nz/statutory-acknowledgements/>

At the time of preparing this document Te Aitanga a Mahaki remain to achieve settlement on their claim.

Ngāti Porou, the Turanganui River and the Waimata River

The Turanganui River and the Waimata River that flows into it, form the south-western most extent of the Ngāti Porou tribal boundary, at Turanga (Gisborne). Successive generations of Ngāti Porou have occupied and utilised the land adjacent to the rivers on the eastern banks. Important Ngāti Porou ancestors are associated with and exercised kaitiekitanga over this area. They include Hamoterangi, the wife of Porourangi, Ueroa, Taiau himself, and his son Tamahinengaro and grandson Mokaiaporou, Rakaiatane, and Hauiti.

Ngāti Oneone, the hapū acknowledged by Ngāti Porou as occupying the eastern banks of the Turanganui River and lower Waimata River, descends from all these Ngāti Porou ancestors. Ngāti Konohi and Te Aitanga a Hauiti are associated with the upper reaches of the Waimata River.

The rivers have over time been a source of fish, shellfish and other sustenance for the resident hapū. They have provided a means of access to places along their banks and into the interior Ngāti Konohi and Te Aitanga a Hauiti lands. They were also a base for trading and commerce. The rivers were and continue to be places of recreation and sport.

The Turanganui River and the Waimata River are of great spiritual, cultural, traditional, historical and commercial significance to Ngāti Porou. They are integral to the identity of Ngāti Porou and the hapū traditionally associated with lands along their banks. The rivers are natural features which Ngāti Porou regards as part of the boundary with neighbouring iwi of Turanganui-a-Kiwa.

Rongowhakaata and the Turanganui River

The traditions of Rongowhakaata confirm the cultural, historical and spiritual importance of the Turanganui River to them. These traditions represent the links between the world of the Atua and

present generations, reinforce Rongowhakaata tribal identity, and are continually expressed in whakapapa, waiata, korero and mahi toi.

The mauri of Turanganui River represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Rongowhakaata whanui to the Turanganui River to this day.

The Turanganui River, though very short, was profoundly rich in kaimoana. Te Wai Wehe Rua, the river of two estuaries, was the original name given to the Turanganui River. These watery corridors provided Rongowhakaata a transport route along and into the fertile plains of Turanganui a Kiwa. It was the sacred waters from Te Wai Wehe Rua which were used to bless the whare Matatuahu, on the western side of the Turanganui River.

The Waikanae Stream and the numerous rock formations sit within the Turanganui River, such as Te Toka a Taiao, combined with the tidal flows to make a habitat for a variety of; tuna, inanga, kahawai, fish, kina, paua, koura, pipi, kanae, patiki and kutae flourishing abundantly in its reef like environment.

Many generations of Rongowhakaata hapū have drawn sustenance from the Turanganui River. The hapū who occupied the land on the banks of the river are, Ngai Tawhiri and Ngai te Kete and Whanau a Iwi who shared these lands with their Turanga whanaunga.

The Turanganui River was the gateway into the fertile inland plains and was an integral part of the new Tairāwhiti economy'. Ngai Tawhiri, Whanau a Iwi and Ngai te Kete and the other Rongowhakaata Hapū have exercised their custodial rights.

The Turanganui River is the repository of kōiwi tangata Urupa and wahi tapu are places holding the memories, traditions, victories and defeats of Rongowhakaata tipuna and are frequently protected in secret locations.

Rongowhakaata consider that the values of mana, whakapapa, tapu and mauri are central to their relationship with the Turanganui River. Mana defines the kaitiakitanga responsibilities of Rongowhakaata, within which Rongowhakaata is charged with protecting the Mauri or life force of Turanganui River. Whakapapa defines the genealogical relationship, while Tapu describes the sacredness of the relationship between Rongowhakaata and Turanganui River. These values remain important to the people of Rongowhakaata today.

Rongowhakaata tipuna had considerable knowledge of whakapapa, traditional trails and Tauranga waka, places for gathering kai, rongoa Maori and other taonga and ways in which to use the resources of the Turanganui River. Rongowhakaata understood the dependence people had on the area and Tikanga for the proper and sustainable utilisation of resources. All of these values remain important to the people of Rongowhakaata today.

Te Aitanga a Mahaki and the Taruheru River

At the time of preparing this document Te Aitanga a Mahaki remain to achieve settlement on their claim. An Iwi management Plan (IMP) submitted by Te Aitanga a Mahaki helps Council:

- understand what is important to Te Aitanga a Mahaki, including matters outside the RMA;
- gain a clearer insight into what 'sustainable management ' means from a tangata whenua perspective, and how this can be delivered within their rohe;
- identify and understand the expectations of Te Aitanga a Mahaki (e.g., how they would like to be involved in the work of Council);
- understand how significant environmental resources identified by Te Aitanga a Mahaki might be managed both within and outside the RMA framework;

- guide a potential applicant for resource consent on what information is required for assessing potential environmental effects, including understanding effects on the cultural values of Te Aitanga a Mahaki.

Council's policy position on interactions with Māori collectives

Council's interactions with Māori collectives (for example Whanau, hapu, marae, Iwi and Māori as communities with cultural perspectives) are evolving constantly. In part this is because we know we need to - as well as want to - move away from transactions into more relationship-based partnering.

Tairāwhiti is a tightly connected network so one Council work programme engaging with Maori partners will almost certainly be connected to another. We describe our commitment to fostering Māori participation in Council decision-making in our Tairāwhiti Piritahi policy - within the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan.

The policy articulates, amongst other things, the importance of acknowledging the Māori values described here, but it has been commented that the interpretation of these values - regardless of any proposal or resource consent process - is not something that Council does particularly well³.

While there are mātauranga Māori values referenced in the Tairāwhiti Piritahi policy, we acknowledge in this background document that attempts to manipulate, assimilate or interpret a Māori world view using pakeha language or scientific methods are fraught with difficulties.

As Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti move into developing its next Long Term Plan (2021-2031) we will be revising this policy. It may be more appropriate to include a commitment in the policy about the types of structures and agreements that will need to be developed when sensitive information is shared to be collected so that mātauranga Māori is not at risk of being misappropriated aka intellectual property is protected in a manner that iwi and hapū feel comfortable with.

This issue raises the question about the dimensions of power between various user groups and stakeholders, including local and central government, and iwi and hapū, and about the need to understand the complex processes and dynamics between stakeholders – often with various agendas – before finding and determining long-term equitable solutions and implementing effective management strategies to sustain freshwater resources.

Outside drivers such as Government policy and legislation, Māori wish to play a greater role in the management of resources because of their values and responsibility to their ancestors to uphold, express and articulate Māori culture and values in modern society (Nelson and Tipa, 2012, Harmsworth, 2005). The importance of working with Māori groups, particularly around issues affecting the natural environment, therefore goes beyond considering Māori as just another stakeholder.

On the ground – our relationships with Māori collectives

The 4 Waters Infrastructure group, within Council's Community Lifelines hub, have standing relationships with many Tairāwhiti Māori collectives, most commonly at Iwi and Whanau level. These

³ Dr Nick Roskrige (Te Atiawa/Ngati Porou) Peer review of the Gisborne Managed Aquifer Recharge Cultural Impact Assessment, February 2017

are described here sequentially because it is useful to understand the way our relationships morph and develop relative to emerging issues surrounding water and its economic and cultural value.

The Wastewater Technical Advisory Group (WTAG) was established in 2005 this group has an active membership that includes representatives from Te Runanga O Turanganui A Kiwa (represents the interests of Rongowhakata, Ngai Tamanuhiri and Te Aitanga a Mahaki) and Ngati Oneone (hapu of Ngati Porou), Medical Officer of Health, Tairāwhiti District Health Board, Department of Conservation, environmental groups, industry representatives, Council staff and others who may have a contribution to make to the workings of the group.

This relationship created a platform for council and tangata whenua to have a continued dialogue (read: frank and robust discussions) relative to the water-related projects. For example in December 2006 the Wastewater Adjournment Review Group (WARG) endorsed a [position statement on water quality as it related to discharge of treated wastewater into Turanganui a Kiwa \(Poverty Bay\) as part of the resource consent application process.](#)

The statement is available to view online, but it is useful to summarise because it demonstrates the application of Te Ao Māori values in the context of an RMA process where a standing relationship between council and iwi representatives afforded an alternative option to be settled upon.

“3. The outcomes of the (WARG) review process was an agreement between those parties that instead of the activated sludge treatment plan, it would be culturally preferable to treat human wastewater through a low load biological trickling filter followed by additional treatment.... The main reason for this is the biological trickling filter, to some extent mimics the natural biological processes of traditional Māori ‘through-land’ practices of human waste disposal.

5. The parties recognise that the alternative proposal does not fully and immediately address the fundamental cultural issue to Māori of human waste disposal into the sea. The sea is regarded as representing life force (Mauri) and is a current and potential source of seafood (kai moana). To Māori, these roles are fundamentally inconsistent with receiving water for the discharge of human wastewater, even if this has been treated to remove its potential damage to human and environmental health, effects on kai moana and ecology.

11. the parties agree that the concepts of ‘feasible’ and ‘best endeavours’ should be interpreted against the background of cultural unacceptability of marine discharge to Māori who are kaitiaki (stewards) of the marine environment and... agree that these concepts should be interpreted alongside the wider goals of promoting economic and social opportunities for all communities living in the Gisborne urban area.”

A requirement of the resource consent that was consequently granted for the upgrade and discharge of Gisborne’s municipal wastewater, was to establish a wastewater management committee as a standing committee of Council.

The Gisborne Regional Freshwater Plan (2015) (Freshwater Plan) was developed in collaboration with the **Freshwater Advisory Group (FWAG)**; a stakeholder group with vested interests in the management of the regions freshwater resources.

It was the stated view of the FWAG that (extract from Section 32 report to the then-proposed Fresh Water Plan) that “Requiring a resource consent for Wastewater Overflows by 2020 is not seen as acceptable to Turanga iwi.” They sought that a consent be required by 2016 instead. The 2020 date was reached based on feedback from the Council Leadership Team and Wastewater Utilities that there would be difficulty in delivering a good standard of resource consent application, with a good level of understanding of actual environmental effects, by the 2016 date. This is partly because of budget, as well as time constraints. By bringing wastewater, water supply and stormwater utilities into sharper focus in the Freshwater Plan, additional financial requirements on planning, capital works and maintenance are across all utilities.

Wastewater Management Committee (WMC)

The WMC are a standing committee of Council whose membership comprises four elected members and four Iwi members who meet four times per year under Terms of Reference. The purpose of the WMC is specific to the implementation, commissioning and monitoring of the municipal wastewater treatment plant, in accordance with resource consent conditions – but as observed in the policy - Tairāwhiti is a tightly connected network so one Council work programme engaging with Maori partners will almost certainly be connected to another, so cross over into Drainwise programme is not unusual. This said, outside of the development of a Mauri compass (Ruru, I & Kanz, W 2019) neither the WMC or WTAG have been engaged in river overflows.

KIWA Group - Turanganui a Kiwa Water Quality Enhancement Project

Originally established in X by the WMC as a vehicle for integrated research, monitoring, planning and specific projects aimed at improving the mauri and the water quality of Turanganui a Kiwa, the KIWA group comprises representatives from Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa (TROTAK), Rongowhakaata iwi, Ngai Tamanuhiri iwi, Te Aitanga a Mahaki iwi, Ngati Oneone hapu and Gisborne District Council.

The purpose of the KIWA Group is to provide expert cultural advice, stakeholder liaison and technical support in the development of Gisborne District's wastewater management. The KIWA Group provides regular updates on its work to the WMC and revised its ToR in November 2019 to better express its responsibilities, guiding principles, membership, operational arrangements and delegations. Their responsibilities are to:

- provide advice to Gisborne District Council's Wastewater Management Committee relating to integrated research, monitoring, planning and specific projects that will aim to improve the mauri and the water quality of Turanganui A Kiwa
- guide the development of wastewater management for the Gisborne District
- help identify knowledge gaps
- facilitate the sharing of information between group members, their respective organisations and the community.

Iwi Management Plans Iwi or hapū Management Plans

Are a policy statement that describe resource management issues important to tāngata whenua. The plans provide iwi resource management strategies for sustainable development of natural and physical resources. They may also have information relating to specific cultural values, historical accounts, descriptions of areas of interest, hapū and iwi boundaries (rohe) and consultation and engagement protocols for resource consent and plan changes. The plans are not a substitute for consultation or partnership. Iwi Management Plans provide a mechanism for tāngata whenua interests to be considered in Council processes. There are specific legislative requirements which place a duty on Council staff to take these plans into account. In practice, Councils must balance a number of competing interests including hapū and iwi plans.

The Council has formally received Iwi Management Plans from Nga Ariki Kaiputahi and Te Aitanga a Mahaki.

What's the Future Tairāwhiti (WTF) – 2018-2018 Long Term Plan consultation document

In 2017 Council undertook targeted consultation with whanau about the Drainwise programme and the issues it seeks to resolve as one component of the WTF campaign to develop the LTP.

Over seven weeks, council staff, councillors and Rangitahi travelled to schools, marae, waka ama and surf lifesaving venues in the urban area to gauge their thoughts on how we proposed to reduce wastewater overflows into rivers.

The feedback gained – both verbal and (92) written submissions contributed to Council adopting its new LTP with a budget of \$5.4m (over 10 years) to public drains on private property alongside identified major pipelines upgrades and renewals and a high priority to delivering all seven streams of the Drainwise programme.

Drainwise education and awareness campaign January – August 2019

The Drainwise Awareness and Education campaign aims to inform and challenge the people of Te Tairāwhiti about wastewater discharges and drainage issues in the Gisborne district.

It is crucial that our community understands the causes of our wastewater discharge problem and also how they can be part of the solution to control it. A5 part mini-series, made up of five separate key messages derived from the 2016 Drainwise Plan, was developed - aimed at engaging the public and demonstrating Council's genuine desire to fix this problem together as a community.



Each key message is woven together by scripted dialogue from members of the community using sharp, no-nonsense graphics and confronting images, with strong calls to action.

The key messages relate to a city wide problem so the campaign aimed to be relatable for all parts of our community. Strategically the “face” of each message in the campaign represents a sector of people -from tradesmen to businessmen, youth to the older generation, Maori and non-Maori, intergenerational families, health professionals and scientists.

Next steps – a summary of opportunities and challenges

As previously mentioned, Te Kaunihera has started the process to develop the 2021 Long Term Plan. This means there is opportunity to refresh priorities, budgets and policies. Revising the Tairāwhiti Piritahi- fostering Māori participation in Council decision-making is likely to be one of those priorities, particularly given the recent Office of Auditor General⁴ (OAG) findings that “more can be done to involve Māori in water management.”

The OAG found that the commitment required to establish relationships and processes (with Maori), and to build and maintain a shared understanding of what everyone is trying to achieve, is significant and often underestimated. The OAG recommend that continued Crown engagement and resourcing is needed for the current and future arrangements that enable Māori involvement in managing water resources to remain effective. This recommendation has been echoed by the Waitangi Tribunal⁵ who also recommended that:

⁴ February 2020 OAG report titled Reflecting on our work about water management

⁵ Waitangi Tribunal report into National Freshwater and Geothermal Resources, August 2019

- the Crown provide more funding to restore freshwater bodies and to help Māori participate in the Resource Management Act process;
- co-designing policy involving Māori interests with Māori be a standard process; and
- the Crown monitor councils to ensure that they meet their obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In late 2019, Māori Development Minister Hon Nanaia Mahuta announced that a whole-of-government approach, called Te Pae Tawhiti, is being developed to address the issues raised by the WAI 262 claim and the Waitangi Tribunal report, Ko Aotearoa Tēnei. This means that the Government is shifting its focus to what this relationship should look like in a post-settlement environment. This includes ensuring that the strong foundations created through Treaty settlements are maintained and built on, into the future.

Resourcing

The importance of Council supporting kaupapa Māori meaningfully and financially is clear – especially when considering that iwi and hapū have multiple demands on their time and resources – not only from Council. And that the resources and capacity to undertake the sort of monitoring iwi aspire to is not always available.

There are a range of tools, frameworks and methods available to iwi and hapū, and their council partners. These range from decision-making tools, to digitally-based assessments, to mapping approaches for understanding and recording cultural knowledge, preferences and monitoring requirements, to research around important species, through to kaupapa Māori assessments of the state and health of a waterbody.

In their 2019 report: *Kaupapa Māori Freshwater Assessments: A summary of iwi and hapū-based tools, frameworks and methods for assessing freshwater environments*, Rainforth & Harmsworth (Perception Planning Ltd) observe that

Monitoring using mātauranga Māori needs to meet Māori aspirations and requirements, and answer questions that are important to iwi and hapū. It needs to be undertaken by Māori, for Māori, based on kaupapa Māori.

Most of these tools, frameworks and methods are able to be adapted to suit local priorities, preferences and protocols. Many are inter-related. The various approaches can be used in tandem to meet different aspects of kaupapa Māori-based monitoring needs.

Given the developments in recent years (recent changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) now require that councils include mātauranga Māori in their monitoring plans) and the resourcing now being put into mātauranga Māori-based assessment approaches, it is likely that even more tools, frameworks and methods will become available in the near future.

Challenges

Loss of indigenous knowledge and barriers to the transmission of knowledge are significant issues well documented in New Zealand (Williams, 2001, Pihama, 2012, Royal, 2012). Council has a role to play, particularly in making sure barriers to accessing information and participation (also a source of knowledge) don't exist. Sharing what information we hold (as in this background document) about indigenous affiliations with waterbodies within Te Tairāwhiti is a small way that we can contribute to building capacity within groups. Shared knowledge and experience are very important in collaborative processes and can lead to innovative solutions to address specific issues.

Ultimately the effective inclusion of Māori values and mātauranga Māori in freshwater planning will have wide reaching benefits to all stakeholders and the community.