

Tangata Whenua Engagement Plan

A draft proposal for your feedback

A proposed iwi engagement plan to support the implementation of Te Mana o te Wai as required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.



Whakarāpopototanga

Summary

The **kaupapa** of this mahi is **wai māori** within the Waikato rohe: our wetlands, lakes, rivers, streams, ground waters, the freshwater ecosystems and the coastal areas affected by freshwater. It includes water quality and quantity, and the management of activities which affect the water.

We would like to set before you this high-level summary which identifies Waikato Regional Council's initial proposal for how to engage with and involve tangata whenua in freshwater management decision making during the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and regional plan development process which the council is required to do by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.

We want your feedback about how you might be involved in this freshwater policy mahi.

We understand that iwi are grappling with a large amount of mahi – government reforms in addition to business-as-usual – and we also understand that fresh water is a significant taonga for Māori.

We also understand that assistance will be necessary to allow under-resourced groups to effectively participate in this mahi.

Overall approach to engagement

The freshwater policy review's overall engagement approach will provide ways to make connections and share stories about waterways and Te Mana o te Wai, hear about values and aspirations, and ask people how they think improvements could be achieved.

The goal is that participants will understand the challenges, have a chance to share their ideas, and feel confident that their views will be considered.

For catchment communities, two rounds of public engagement are suggested – the first to gather thoughts and perspectives, and the second to seek feedback on emerging policy direction. Focused engagement between these two rounds can be used to test ideas and options.

Iwi engagement will occur throughout the process and will likely require more intensive engagement than with the community to the extent that iwi wish to be involved. We will engage with hapū entities and iwi authorities within the Waikato region.

The engagement approach will include a mix of kanohi ki te kanohi hui to build relationships, virtual hui and wānanga and other survey mechanisms including digital means.

What is the kaupapa?

As we've said, the kaupapa is wai māori. Together with iwi and the community, we will develop policy that will improve and protect the region's freshwater taonga and restore the mauri, mana, and health and wellbeing of the wai.

This policy process sits in the context of the freshwater statutory framework and will align with co-governance and Treaty of Waitangi settlement obligations (current and pending). Over the next two years, we will be making changes to our RPS and developing a new regional plan and we want your input to help understand what you value about the rivers, streams, lakes and other freshwater bodies in your area, what your aspirations are for fresh water in the Waikato, and how we're going to get there.

The whakaaro and kōrero shared with us will help to inform the development of a new RPS and regional plan, which we anticipate will be notified for public submission in 2024 and operative by 2026.

Haratau

Why is this mahi relevant for you?

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 elevates **Te Mana o te Wai** as the fundamental concept. This is an opportunity to explore what Te Mana o te Wai means for you and your area, and how we can work towards it.

This project includes important elements which may be of interest to iwi, including:

- setting **long-term visions** for water – what needs and aspirations you have for the rivers, streams, lakes and other freshwater bodies in your area
- identifying and providing for **Māori freshwater values** – what you value and how these values can be protected
- looking after **mahinga kai/hauanga kai** – what you want for mahinga kai/hauanga kai in your catchment and how you would measure success
- attributes – how and where you measure the **health of the water**, and including **te ao Māori** and **mātauranga** ways of seeing and measuring things in addition to the water quality data we already collect.

To make sure outcomes are achieved, we will use **limits, rules and action plans**. So we want to know what good work is already occurring and which tools you want used within your takiwā to achieve your long-term vision for the wai.

Te Wero

What is proposed for tangata whenua engagement?

Currently, we propose tangata whenua engagement through four phases. The first will be to start the kōrero, introduce ourselves and the kaupapa, and understand how and where you might want to be involved throughout the entire process.

Your feedback will help us refine what the rest of the process might look like as we progress with our freshwater policy review. Consider Table 1 below and let us know what you think:

Table 1: Proposed phases of tangata whenua engagement

Initial phase	Second phase	Third phase	Fourth phase	Refine Policy
Hononga	Mātauranga	Puāwaitanga	Kaupapa here	Pre-notification
Overview and introductions	Knowledge gathering	Findings	Policy options	Refining policy
<i>Introducing the project and confirming how engagement shall be undertaken</i>	<i>Exploring the concept of Te Mana o te Wai locally and regionally</i>	<i>Sharing learnings of engagement, and current insights of the policy framework</i>	<i>Having direct input into elements of the National Objectives Framework</i>	<i>Providing direct comments to draft policy</i>
To August 2022	August – November 2022	April – September 2023	October – November 2023	2024

As you have already signalled to us, we have done our homework and will start with the work already completed by iwi, including iwi environmental management plans, Deeds of Settlement and redress documents to understand iwi perspectives.

We are proposing to undertake hui across the region. We are also intending to talk to iwi authorities, and hapū through those authorities where we can.

Engagement will be consistent with and meet obligations in all existing commitments and agreements with our iwi partners, including joint management agreements and deeds of settlement, and directions signalled in redress documents.

Te Karere

What next?

We would welcome any feedback, including on the engagement proposal, methods and what information and resources you might want to support engagement. We look forward to sharing ideas on further engagement and collaboration.

Waikato Regional Council is intending to host a series of freshwater wānanga at various locations through the Waikato rohe in the coming months. These wānanga will provide an opportunity for tangata whenua to get involved in this process and share their aspirations and values for freshwater.

We look forward to seeing you soon to advance this mahi.