

AGENDA

RĀRANGI TAKE

Huihuinga O Te Kāhui Māori

O Taitokerau - Te Ruarangi

Thursday 14 August 2025 at

9.30am for the iwi and hapū caucus

11.00am for the formal meeting

Rārangi Take O Te Kāhui Māori O Taitokerau (TE RUARANGI)

Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei and via audio visual link
on Thursday 14 August 2025, commencing at 9.30am.

Please note: working parties and working groups carry NO formal decision-making delegations from council. The purpose of the working party/group is to carry out preparatory work and discussions prior to taking matters to the full council for formal consideration and decision-making. Working party/group meetings are open to the public to attend (unless there are specific grounds under LGOIMA for the public to be excluded).

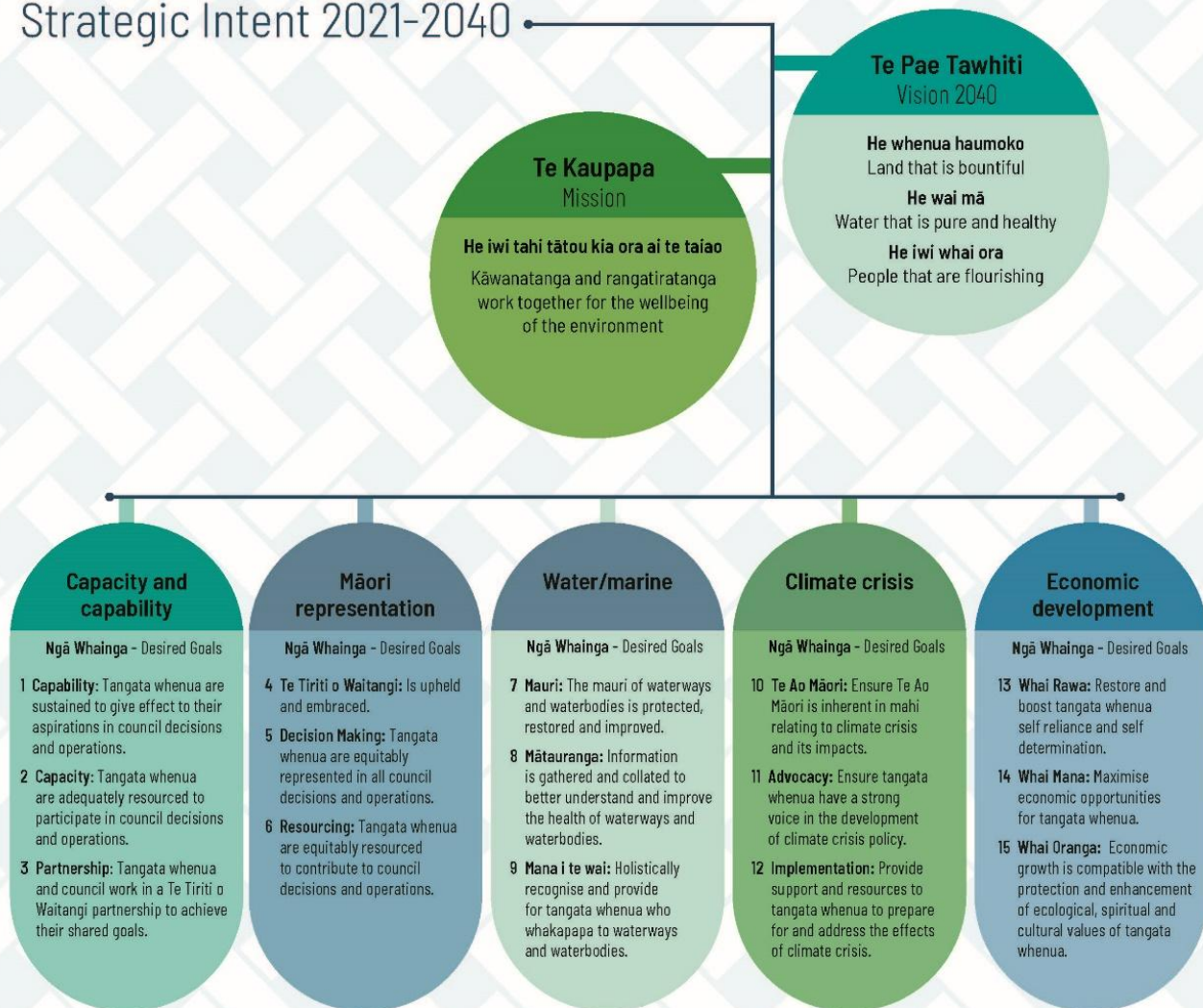
NGĀ MANA WHAKAHAERE (MEMBERSHIP OF TE RUARANGI)

Heamana Tokorua (Co-Chairs):

Tui Shortland, Councillor and Pita Tipene, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine

Abe Witana, Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa
Alan Riwaka, Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Whātua
Amy Macdonald, Councillor
Aperahama Edwards, Ngātiwai Trust Board
Delilah Te Aōrere Parore-Southon, Te Roroa
Geoff Crawford, Councillor (NRC Chair)
Georgina Curtis-Connelly, Te Uri o Hau Settlement Trust
Geraldine Baker, Kahukuraariki Trust Board
Jack Craw, Councillor
Janelle Beazley, Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi
Joe Carr, Councillor
John Blackwell, Councillor
Juliane Chetham, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board
Lynette Wharerau, Te Whakaminenga O Te Hikutu Hapu-Whanau
Mahue Greaves, Ngāti Tara
Marty Robinson, Councillor
Michelle Elboz, Ngāti Kuta
Mike Kake, Ngāti Hau
Mira Norris, Te Parawhau Hapū Authority Charitable Trust
Niki Conrad, Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri
Kipa Munro, Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Rehia
Nyze Manuel, Te Rūnanga O Whāingaroa
Peter-Lucas Jones, Councillor
Rick Stolwerk, Councillor
Dr Arvey Armstrong-Read, Te Waiāriki, Ngāti Korora, Ngāti Takapari Hapū Iwi Trust
Rowan Tautari, Te Whakapiko Hapū

Te Taitokerau Māori and council working party Strategic Intent 2021-2040



Ngā Tikanga Values

Titiro ki ngā taumata o te moana - Always remain strategic in our approach/intent/view
Mahi tahi tutuki noa - Identifying opportunities, increased collaboration and completion of projects
He whakatau mā roto i te kōrero - Resolution through conversation
Kaitiakitanga - Dedicated stewardship by tangata whenua of Te Taitokerau

NOTE In the context of He Whakaputanga me Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The significance and meaning of 'He iwi tahi tātou' (we are two people, one nation), as was used by Governor Hobson in 1840 at the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Tangata whenua = whanau, hapū and iwi

Commonly used terms and abbreviations	
AP	Annual Plan
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPCA	Community Pest Control Areas
DOC	Department of Conservation
FNDC	Far North District Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
IHEMP	Iwi/Hapū Environmental Management Plan
ILGACE	Iwi and Local Government Chief Executives Forum
KDC	Kaipara District Council
LAWA	Land, Air, Water Aotearoa
LEA	Local Electoral Act 2001
LGA	Local Government Act 2002
LGNZ	Local Government New Zealand
LIDAR	Light detection and ranging
LTP	Long Term Plan
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MOT	Ministry of Transport
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
MTAG	Māori Technical Advisory Group (a sub-group of Te Ruarangi)
NES	National Environmental Standards
NINC	Northland Inc. Limited
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmosphere
Non-elected member (Te Ruarangi)	One of the up to twenty-one appointed iwi and hapū members from Te Taitokerau. Members are appointed in accordance with the Terms of Reference .
NPS	National Policy Statement
NPS-FM	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RP	Regional Plan
Te Ruarangi caucus	Comprises the non-elected iwi and hapū members of Te Ruarangi
TKoT	Te Kahu o Taonui (Iwi Chairs)
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPK	Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry of Maori Development)
TTMAC	Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party (former name of Te Ruarangi)
TTNEAP	Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan
TWWAG	Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group
WDC	Whangarei District Council

KARAKIA / WHAKATAU

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TITLE: **Record of Actions – 8 May 2025**


From: Sally Bowron, Strategy, Governance and Engagement Team Admin/PA

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Record of Actions of the last meeting (attached) held on 8 May 2025 for review by the meeting.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Record of Actions 8 May 2025 (unconfirmed) [↓](#) 

Te Ruarangi
8 May 2025

Tuhituhi o ngā Mahi O Te Kāhui Māori O Taitokerau **Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party Record of Actions**

Meeting held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei and via audio visual link
on Thursday 8 May 2025, commencing at 9.30am - 3.00pm

Tuhinga (Present):

Co-Chair, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine, Pita Tipene
Councillor Amy Macdonald
Councillor Geoff Crawford
Councillor Jack Craw
Councillor Marty Robinson
Councillor Peter-Lucas Jones
Councillor Rick Stolwerk
Kahukuraariki Trust Board, Waitangi Woods
Ngāti Kuta Michelle Elboz
Ngāti Tara, Mahue Greaves
Te Parawhau Hapū Authority Charitable Trust, Mira Norris
Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Rehia, Kipa Munro
Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whatua, Sheila Taylor
Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, George Riley
Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa, Nyze Manuel
Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi, Janelle Beazley
Te Waiāriki, Ngāti Korora, Ngāti Takapari, Michelle Beattie
Te Whakapiko Hapū, Rowan Tautari

I Tae Mai (In Attendance):

Huihuinga i te katoa (Full Meeting)

Kaiāwhina Kaupapa Māori Technical Advisors
PA/Team Admin, Governance and Engagement
Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement
Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao – GM Biosecurity
Pou Tiaki Taiao – GM Environmental Services
Pou Whakaritenga – GM Regulatory Services
Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Huihuinga i te wahanga (Part Meeting)

Communications Specialist
Economic Policy Advisor
Economist
Kaiāwhina Tari
Ngati Kuta and Patukeha Hapū representative, Shane Witehira
Northland Inc, Chair, Suzanne Duncan
Northland Inc, Chief Executive, Paul Linton
Northland Inc, Head of Infrastructure and Investment, Vaughan Cooper
Policy and Planning Manager

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Policy and Planning Specialists
Principal Advisor, Environmental Services

The iwi and hapū caucus commenced at 9:30am with a karakia led by Co-Chair Pita Tipene. This was followed by a warm welcome to Kipa Munro, who joined as the representative for Ngāti Rehia, succeeding Nora Rameka after her 15 years of dedicated service on Te Ruarangi. Kipa Munro responded with a mihi, and the formal meeting began at 11:00am.

Karakia / Whakatau

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Co-Chair, NRC Deputy Chair Tui Shortland
Councillor Joe Carr
Councillor John Blackwell
Ngāti Hau, Mike Kake
Ngātiwai Trust Board, Aperahama Edwards
Te Roroa Delilah Te Aōrere Parore-Southon
Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri, Niki Conrad
Te Uri o Hau Settlement Trust, Georgina Connelly
Te Whakaminenga o te Hikutu Hapū-Whanau Lynette Wharerau
Patuharakeke Iwi Trust Board Julianne Chetham

Secretarial Note: The Co-Chair requested a review of the attendance record and follow-up on any non-attendances to ensure members remain committed to the kaupapa. This information will also support the upcoming Strategic Review of membership, which is yet to be scheduled.

Nga whakapuakanga (Declarations of Conflicts of Interest) (Item 3.0)

It was advised that members should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

Record of Actions – 13 March 2025 (Item 4.1)

It was agreed that the record of actions was an accurate record of the meeting.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 4.2)

The action sheet was received.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Waipiro Bay Marina – Fast-Track Approval

Michelle Elboz (Te Ruarangi representative for Ngāti Kuta), alongside Shane Witehira (on behalf of Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha), presented a tabled item seeking formal support from Te Ruarangi for the hapū position opposing the Waipiro Bay Marina Fast-Track approval application 229. The presentation was accompanied by a memo outlining the hapū's concerns. Te Ruarangi was invited to contribute a letter of support to the formal objection the hapū were submitting to Ministers Chris

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Bishop, Shane Jones, and Tama Potaka within the following days, which also included letters of support and a petition from across the rohe. Key discussion points included:

- Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū members had confirmed their support for Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha in opposing Fast-Track Application 229 in their caucus session.
- Members raised significant concerns about the Fast-Track process, including:
 - Lack of a proper Resource Management Act (RMA) process.
 - Exclusion of tangata whenua and local communities.
 - Prioritisation of economic outcomes over environmental and cultural values.
 - Potential breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Council's position is that they maintain a neutral stance on Fast-Track proposals until full information is available. This likely extended to projects not yet listed.
- Members who publicly oppose the application may be excluded from future decision-making panels due to perceived bias.
- Suggestions were made for NRC to reissue its submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill and/or provide a statement that supports the hapū position without compromising council neutrality.
- A pathway was identified for council to send a letter to Minister Bishop, reiterating its concerns about the Fast-Track process and including Te Ruarangi's iwi and caucus statements opposing the Waipiro Bay Marina proposal. This letter could then be included in the hapū submission.
- Hapū representatives will take the caucus support and letter back to their hui and consider additional strategies, including:
 - Signing a Mana Whakahono-a-Rohe agreement with NRC, which provides some involvement in the Fast-Track approvals process.
 - Establishing a symbolic mooring (pou) within the proposed development site to prevent Fast-Track progression.

Agreed action points:

- The CEO will canvass councillors for direction on contributing a letter of support to the hapū submission, to be provided by 8 July 2025. The letter will reiterate council's concerns about the Fast-Track Approvals process and include the following caucus motions:

Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus supports Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha in their opposition to Waipiro Bay Marina Fast-Track approval Application 229 (as detailed in the attached memo).

Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus supports Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha in considering a Mana Whakahono-a-Rohe agreement with Northland Regional Council.

Secretarial Note: "Memo to Te Ruarangi from Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha Hapū re: Waipiro Bay Marina – Application to Fast-Track Approvals" was tabled at the outset of the meeting and prioritised for discussion

Tāiki ē - Report on Priority Actions (Item 4.3)

It was agreed that, due to time constraints, this item would be deferred and held over until the next meeting.

Agreed action points: Nil.

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Te Ōhanga Māori - Māori Economy Statistics & Report (Item 4.4)

The Chair and Chief Executive of Northland Inc (NInc) joined the discussion on Māori economic development (MED) in Te Taitokerau, informed by a presentation on insights from Infometrics, BERL (reports on Te Ōhanga Māori 2023 and research on Māori tourism), Te Puni Kōkiri, and Statistics NZ | Tatauranga Aotearoa.

Key discussion points:

- Māori entrepreneurialism is strong, with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) central to MED but limited by scaling challenges (e.g. aquaculture, tourism), infrastructure barriers (including Māori-led investment), and access to capital.
- A need for more granular data on growth-oriented SMEs vs sole operators, unemployment, zero-hour contracts, gender pay equity, and the impacts of layoffs (e.g. Affco, Jobs for Nature) and education on employment and gender disparities.
- NInc's Chair acknowledged feedback that their draft Statement of Intent (SOI) lacked MED emphasis and committed to raising this with the Joint Regional Economic Development Committee via shareholder councils.
- Support for developing an economic sovereignty forum, similar to the kaitiaki-led Wānanga Waioara, in partnership with NInc and organisations like Te Puni Kōkiri.
- Interest in learning from migrant business models and addressing hesitancy around Treaty settlements.

Agreed action points:

- Staff to continue working with NInc to scope a Māori economic sovereignty forum, with hapū perspectives at the centre.

Igniting Northland's Potential: Light Touch Regional Deal Proposal - Update (Item 4.5)

This paper updated Te Ruarangi on the Regional Deal proposal submitted to central government on 28 February 2025 (also circulated via email on 3 April), and sought guidance on iwi and hapū engagement should Northland be selected. The Chair and Chief Executive of Northland Inc (NInc) attended the kōrero. Key discussion points:

- The Joint Regional Economic Development Committee (JREDC) holds delegated authority to lead negotiations on behalf of the four councils.
- While the structure of negotiations remains unclear, if Northland's bid is successful, iwi and hapū will be involved at the negotiation table from the outset.
- Negotiation roles are likely to be confidential, with a six-week window to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Negotiators will need to engage with Te Ruarangi and other iwi/hapū forums to ensure they can speak confidently to different interests.
- Concerns were raised by Te Ruarangi about the process to date, with a call for improved communication and transparency, particularly between formal meetings.
- There was a desire for visibility of the Terms of Reference for negotiation roles.
- The importance of aligning with long-term regional goals and strengthening JREDC's engagement with iwi and hapū was emphasised.

Agreed action points:

- NRC Chief Executive to follow up regarding iwi and hapū involvement in any regional deal negotiations and report back to Te Ruarangi.

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Central Government Legislative Changes (Item 4.6)

This paper provided an overview of recent, current, and upcoming central government legislative changes relevant to Northland Regional Council (NRC) and tangata whenua partners. The report included a summary of legislative changes and a presentation on the Resource Management ACT (RMA reform). Key discussion points included:

- The next 18 months will be challenging for local government, with central government signalling a need for reform. It's vital that council advocates both as a sector and in support of our Te Tiriti partners.
- Legislative changes are increasingly affecting iwi, hapū, and Māori communities.
- Cabinet's rejection of stronger Te Tiriti clauses in resource management reform was noted, though the previous RMA provisions were already limited.
- Short submission timeframes hinder joint advocacy with tangata whenua, though recent Fast-Track legislation submission shows it can be done.
- Need for joint strategy to improve coordination and ensure tangata whenua voices are included early and meaningfully.
- Concerns raised about the erosion of local voice and whether the council could make a case to the Waitangi Tribunal.

Agreed action points:

- Staff to continue highlighting legislation changes and identify upcoming submissions for joint advocacy with Te Ruarangi.
- Explore options for enhancing tangata whenua oversight and input into legislative responses.

Wastewater standards submission (Item 4.7)

This paper was provided due to Te Tiriti partners strong interest in the proposed wastewater standards. Taumata Arowai (Water Services Authority) released a discussion document on proposed standards and changes to the Resource Management Act (RMA) which could significantly reduce councils' ability to set wastewater discharge standards and limit public input on discharge applications. Key discussion points included:

- The need to formalise joint advocacy with Te Tiriti partners, beyond current workshop invitations.
- Strong support for council's submission language to Taumata Arowai, especially its alignment with Te Taitokerau values.
- Where upcoming consultations may not return to Te Ruarangi due to timing, Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) was identified as a mechanism for interim engagement and advice.
- RMA reform is foundational for Te Tiriti partners; it underpins environmental protection.

Agreed action points:

- Prepare a paper for the July Te Ruarangi meeting outlining a joint advocacy approach for RMA reforms, including options for Te Tiriti partner involvement in council workshops, use of MTAG for interim advice and engagement.

Wānanga Waiora - report and presentation (Item 4.8)

This report presented outcomes from the second Wānanga Waiora, held on 26 March at Waitangi and hosted by Whangaroa Taiao Ltd with council's support. Te Ruarangi representative Nyze Manuel

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shared feedback and highlights, including strengthened relationships between kaitiaki and NRC, shared mātauranga of te taiao, and the importance of kotahitanga in understanding the RMA and its functions. Key discussion points:

- Strong support for the kaupapa and its role in connecting NRC and kaitiaki through shared environmental mātauranga (knowledge).
- Many attendees, including those who don't usually speak publicly, contributed valuable insights (e.g. on septic tanks, soil, whale flensing).
- Feedback included a suggestions for either a two-day format or more frequent one-day events.
- Emphasis on the importance of kawanatanga and rangatiratanga working together for the environment. Chair Geoff Crawford's presence was noted as significant and appreciated by attendees.
- Suggestion to combine taiao and Māori economic development in future wānanga.
- Acknowledgement of budget constraints and the need to better support kaitiaki participation.
- General consensus to continue and strengthen the wānanga format, with potential recommendations to formalise future planning.

Agreed action points:

- Staff to work with the Māori Technical Advisory Group to identify next steps for the 2026 Wānanga Waioira.

Mōtatau marae-based hui - report (Item 4.9)

This paper provided a report on the Te Ruarangi marae-based meeting held at the Motatau marae, hosted by Ngāti Hine, on 10 April 2025. The hui showcased local taiao mahi and strategic alignment across catchment and environmental projects.

Council appreciated the manaaki shown, especially the involvement of tamariki from Te Kura Reorua o Motatau. The hui was recognised as valuable, with strong kaitiaki participation. There was also shared disappointment that a whakawatea could not be held to formally acknowledge Nora Rameka's departure as Ngāti Rehia representative on Te Ruarangi, following over 15 years of dedicated service.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Local government elections 2025 (Item 4.10)

This paper provided an overview of the upcoming local elections in October 2025, including the poll on Māori constituencies, and sought feedback from Te Ruarangi on how best to support awareness and participation. Key discussion points included:

- Strong commitment to Māori representation and the importance of getting communications right, especially around the poll.
- Need for clear, culturally appropriate engagement strategies to support Māori candidates and voters.
- Acknowledgement of barriers such as postal voting and the need to better educate communities, especially rangatahi, about local government and the poll process.
- Emphasis on council's neutral role in the poll, while supporting informed decision-making by iwi and hapū.

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- Suggestions included supporting iwi and hapū-led hui, drawing on lessons from past elections, and acknowledging that tangata whenua are mobilising participation through trusted community-led networks like Toitū te Tiriti.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Te Ruarangi meeting schedule 2025 (Item 4.11)

This paper sought to confirm the proposed schedule for Te Ruarangi's formal meetings and marae-based hui for the remainder of 2025, in line with the Terms of Reference.

Agreed action points:

- That member Mira Norris will check the availability of marae at Kohukohu for the 14 August Te Ruarangi hui, recognising the importance of holding a hui in Hokianga.
- That Ngunguru Marae is proposed as the host location for the final marae-based hui, to be held on either 13 November or 11 December, subject to confirmation following the October 2025 local government elections and any resulting changes to the governance framework.

Working Party Updates Report (Item 4.12)

The working party updates were taken as read. The reports of flooding mitigation were noted and interest was expressed in Wai 3325 (Climate Change) and a request to explore evidence from Kaero demonstrating kawanatanga and rangatiratanga working together.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Chief Executive's Report to Council (Item 4.13)

This paper was taken as read.

Agreed action points: Nil.

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 2.24pm with karakia by Kipa Munro.

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Sally Bowron, Strategy, Governance and Engagement Team Admin/PA

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to enable the meeting to receive the current action sheet.

Nga mahi tutohutia / Recommendation

That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Action sheet [↓](#) 

TTMAC actions as at 31 July 2025

C&C	Capacity and Capability	Capability – Capacity - Partnership
MR	Māori Representation	Te Tiriti o Waitangi - Decision Making - Resourcing
W/M	Water / Marine	Mauri – Mātauranga - Mana i te wai
CC	Climate Crisis	Te Ao Māori – Advocacy - Implementation
ED	Economic Development	Whai Rawa - Whai Mana - Whai Oranga

Completed: The action has been completed. No further work is required or the work is now considered BAU. These actions are archived after a month.
In progress: The action is currently being worked on and is not yet completed.
Stationary, Overdue: The action is stalled or overdue and action is needed to get back on track.
Pending start / Upcoming tasks: actions that are scheduled to start in the future and have not yet begun.

Meeting date	Action(s)	Tāiki ē reference	Status	C&C	MR	W/M	CC	ED
14/11/2024	Resourcing Māori Technical Expertise That the Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) assist in in proposing a process for establishing a supplier panel and bring their recommendations back to TTMAC.	Actions 24, 25. Priority 3	Progressing. This action has evolved to focus on supporting technical expertise through procurement and staff are utilising Tāiki ē as a guide to appropriate remuneration based on our procurement policy.	✓				
13/02/2025	TTMAC Strategic Review That the TTMAC Review Working Party be reconvened to review membership options for clause 7 and bring the recommendations back to a TTMAC meeting.	N/A	In progress. To progress this we wil be providing information about attendance to the Co-Chairs. Then we will be reviewing the membership for the next triennium.		✓			
13/02/2025	Annual Report process Staff to create an engagement plan for gathering stories from the following nominated iwi and hapū for inclusion in the Annual Report: - Michelle (Barb) Elboz – Caulerpa, Predator Free - Nora Rameka – Ngāti Rehia, Mana Whakahono a Rohe - Pita Tipene – Jobs for Nature, Te Papa Pa Orooro - Nyze Manuel – Wananga Waiora, Kaitiaki network - Niki Conrad – mahi with Te Aupōuri.	Action 31, Priority 2	Completed. Draft of Tāiki ē Year in Review being presented at 14 August Te Ruarangi meeting.	✓	✓			

Meeting date	Action(s)	Tāiki ē reference	Status	C&C	MR	W/M	CC	ED
13/03/2025	Te Taitokerau economic development forum The 20 Feb workshop action for staff to develop ideas for an Economic Development Summit, focused on Te Rerenga was endorsed at the 13 March formal meeting. Additionally, a subgroup comprising Co-Chair Pita Tipene, and members Mira Norris and Nyze Manuel, to convene to explore potential options for a Te Taitokerau economic development forum, and then work with staff to consider next steps.	Action 29. Priority 2	In progress. Initial discussion held with the iwi and hapū subgroup comprising Pita Tipene, Nyze Manuel and Mira Norris on 23 April 2025. At the 8 May Te Ruarangi meeting, the action was for staff to continue working with Northland Inc to scope a Māori economic sovereignty forum, with hapū perspectives at the centre. July 2025: Northland Regional Council are discussing with Northland Inc how this suggestion could be supported both with resources and funding.					✓
13/03/2025	Resource consent review report - 12-month action plan Provide Te Ruarangi with progress updates of the 12-month implementation plan to give effect to the report and recommendations, “Tāiki ē – Regulatory Services Review – Resource Consent Process”.	Action 9, Priority 1	In progress. A project manager has been assigned and is working towards the milestones.	✓	✓	✓		
13/03/2025	Guidelines for appointment of Māori Commissioners That staff work with the Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) to develop and draft proposed changes to the guidelines for Te Ruarangi approval before returning to the Audit and Risk Committee for their consideration.	Action 5, Priority 2	In progress. A review of the guidelines from a technical expert has been received. The next step is a meeting to discuss the review and bring an update on the review and wider Resource Consent Review Action Plan to MTAG.	✓	✓	✓		
13/03/2025	Marine protected areas That staff bring a further update on implementation progress to a future meeting, provide a paper on fishing control legislative provisions following conclusion of the law reform process, and organise a workshop on marine protection at a future Te Ruarangi workshop.	Action 30, Priority 3	In progress. Two actions have been completed: 1. To provide a fisheries contact for Ngāti Rehia. 2. Contact Nyze Manuel re increasing fisheries forums awareness of rāhui tapu and marine protected areas.			✓		
13/03/2025	Fast-track Approvals Act That Nyze Manuel, Abe Witana and Sheila Taylor be involved in council workshops relating to Fast-track Approval proposals. That the Māori Technical Advisory Group provide technical advice and guidance on the Fast-track Approvals Act to the Policy and Planning Team.	Action 13, Priority 1	Completed. MTAG provided advice at the 3 April MTAG meeting re the Fast-track Approvals Act. Nyze, Abe and Sheila were invited to the council workshop on 29 April re fast track Approvals "projects of Interest" and Resource Management Reforms, and to the council workshops on the National Directions Package on 24 June and 9 July 2025.	✓	✓	✓		
13/03/2025	Central government legislative changes	Action 30, Priority 3	Completed. Draft submission on Wastewater	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Meeting date	Action(s)	Tāiki ē reference	Status	C&C	MR	W/M	CC	ED
	The Pou Tiaki Taiao – GM Environmental Services will approach the council to undertake a similar process for the Wastewater Standards submission as proposed for the Fast Track Approvals Bill in Item 4.10 and will email Te Ruarangi with the council’s response.		standards shared with Te Ruarangi members on 11 April 2025. The draft was prepared following a workshop with councillors and nominated iwi and hapū Te Ruarangi reps on 9 April 2025.					
8/05/2025	Waipiro Bay Marina – Fast-Track Approval The CEO to canvass councillors for direction on contributing a letter of support to the hapū submission regarding their opposition to Waipiro Bay Marina Fast-Track approval Application 229.	Action 13, Priority 1	Completed. Letter sent to Minister Bishop on 8 May 2025 which included the iwi and hapū caucus' motions regarding Waipiro Bay and a copy provided to the hapū.		✓	✓		
8/05/2025	Central Government Legislative Changes Staff to outline a joint advocacy approach for RMA reforms, including options for Te Tiriti partner involvement in council workshops, use of MTAG for interim advice and engagement.	Action 13, Priority 1	Completed. Paper prepared for 14 August Te Ruarangi meeting.		✓			
8/05/2025	Wānanga Waiora Staff to work with the Māori Technical Advisory Group to identify next steps for the 2026 Wānanga Waiora.	Actions 7, 8, 27. Priority 1	In progress. On agenda for next MTAG meeting.		✓	✓		
8/05/2025	Igniting Northland's Potential: Light Touch Regional Deal Proposal The CEO to canvass councillors for direction on contributing a letter of support to the hapū submission regarding their opposition to Waipiro Bay Marina Fast-Track approval Application 229.	Action 29, Priority 2	Completed. A communication was sent to Te Ruarangi advising that Northland was unsuccessful in it's application for a regional deal.		✓			✓

TITLE: Northland Corporate Group

From: Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Darryl Jones, Economist

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

The purpose of this agenda item is for Lindsay Faithful, Managing Director, McKay Limited, to provide Te Ruarangi with an update on the recent and future activities of the Northland Corporate Group (NCG). The NCG is a consortium of large businesses in Northland with a shared vision of fostering economic prosperity in the region. Members of the consortium are Channel Infrastructure NZ, Culham Engineering, Marsden Maritime Holdings, McKay Limited, Northpower and Top Energy.

The NCG have undertaken two significant initiatives. In 2024, they commissioned a report by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) on the potential economic value of a high-quality Northland Expressway between Auckland and Whangārei. The report and call to action is available online: <https://www.ncg.co.nz/projects/northland-expressway-business-case>.

On 23 July 2025, the NCG, in partnership with Tupu Tonu – Ngāpuhi Investment Fund and supported by NorthChamber, launching a new economic insights report at The Beehive's Banquet Hall, Wellington. *Te Tai Tokerau Northland Delivers: Tirohia Tokerau*, also prepared by NZIER, highlights Northland's strategic strengths, GDP growth potential, and its capacity to drive impact locally and nationally. The report, media release and video are available online: <https://www.ncg.co.nz/projects/te-tai-tokerau-northland-delivers>.

Lindsay Faithful will brief Te Ruarangi on the outcome of this latest event and outline future work that the NCG are planning over the next year.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Northland Corporate Group' by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Darryl Jones, Economist and dated 1 August 2025, be received.

Tuhinga/Background

Not relevant.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: Economic Development - update

From: Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Darryl Jones, Economist

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

Te Ruarangi has recommended that a Wananga Ōhanga Māori, a one-day workshop on Māori economic development and strategic partnerships with iwi and hapū that benefit and advance Te Taitokerau, be held in 2026 by end June 2026. This recommendation has been a continuum that follows the success of Wananga Waiora (a one-day workshop exploring the leadership of tangata whenua and kaitiaki in water quality and resource management programmes) and the aspirations of Te Ruarangi to strength and support Māori economic development in the region that is cognisant of the environment and taiao.

Staff have meet with Northland Inc CE Paul Linton and Piripi Moore who are very willing to support such an event with in-kind contributions and drawing on their networks. It has been suggested that connections be made with Te Kahu o Taonui and that support is sought from those leading economic development such as Walter Wells, Pita Tipene, Toa Faneva. It was recognised that council will need to inform the Joint Regional Economic Development Committee of the intent of the wananga as the purpose of the committee is to represent council's commitment to economic growth opportunities for the region.

The next steps will be to provide a proposal of the wananga with more specifics, identify funding for the wananga, and work with Te Ruarangi and Northland Inc to co-ordinate with the potential to run a wananga in 2026.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Economic Development - update' by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Darryl Jones, Economist and dated 1 August 2025, be received.

Tuhinga/Background

Not applicable.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: **Te Tiriti Health Check**

From: Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Kim Peita, Māori Relationships Manager

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to present the final draft of the Te Tiriti Health Check 2025 to receive Te Ruarangi feedback and input. Given that this is an independent report, Buddle Findlay will be in attendance to present the findings and recommendations in the report.

In preparing the report, workshops were conducted with the following groups to obtain their feedback on the council's implementation of the recommendations in the Stage One report, Tāiki ē, and the council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations more broadly:

- elected members
- Te Ruarangi
- Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG)
- council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and
- other key council staff, including:
 - Te Kāhui Hautū o Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti steering group)
 - Te Tiriti Partnerships and Engagement Team;

It is recommended that Te Ruarangi endorse the draft Te Tiriti Health Check report, with any feedback received from Te Ruarangi to be incorporated into the final version of the report, which will be presented at the next formal council meeting.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Te Tiriti Health Check' by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and Kim Peita, Māori Relationships Manager and dated 15 April 2025, be received
2. That the Tiriti Health Check report be endorsed by Te Ruarangi, subject to any feedback being received from Te Ruarangi to be included in the final report and submitted for presentation to the formal council meeting on Tuesday 26 August 2025.

Tuhinga/Background

The Stage Two Draft Tiriti Health Check Report has been completed by Buddle Findlay. A two-yearly independent Treaty Health Check is one of council's key performance indicator (KPI), with recommendations from the Health Check being implemented.

For the Tiriti Health Check process, Buddle Findlay engaged with the Group Manager – Governance and Engagement, and the Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) to confirm the scope and approach for the review. That included:

- Confirming the schedule of workshops

- Preparing for and attending workshops with MTAG, the Te Tiriti Steering Group, ELT, and the council's Te Tiriti Partnerships and Engagement team
- Reviewing relevant documentation, and
- Undertaking work on the draft Stage Two Report.

Following this, Buddle Findlay facilitated workshops with both council and Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus, focusing on key questions regarding the relationship between council and iwi/hapū:

- What is working well?
- What are the challenges and opportunities?
- How is council progressing against the recommendations made in Stage One?


Current Status and Remaining Steps

Buddle Findlay is now seeking feedback at this Te Ruarangi meeting and will update the draft report to reflect any feedback and prepare the final report to be presented to the next formal council meeting. The final report will include:

- A review of the effectiveness of existing mechanisms such as Te Ruarangi
- If relevant, a broad discussion of alternative models for Māori representation
- A high-level summary of council's statutory obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its responsibilities in engaging with Māori

Implementation of recommendations from the report will contribute to council's measures and targets under the Long-Term Plan 2024–2034.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check - Stage Two - Final Draft Report 8 August 2025 [↓](#) 

Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check

Stage two report
Completed for Northland Regional Council

Final draft – 8 August 2025

BUDDLE FINDLAY

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI HEALTH CHECK – STAGE TWO

BY

BUDDLE FINDLAY

FOR

TE KAUNIHĒRA Ā ROHE O TE TAITOKERAU / NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

DRAFT REPORT 8 AUGUST 2025

draft

08 Aug 2025

1. PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Buddle Findlay has been engaged by Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Te Taitokerau / Northland Regional Council (**council**) to undertake stage two of Te Tiriti health check. Te Tiriti health check is an independent assessment by Buddle Findlay of how the council implements its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations including through engaging with tāngata whenua and mana whenua.

Background

- 1.2 Buddle Findlay and Whāia Legal carried out the stage one Te Tiriti health check during 2022.
- 1.3 The stage one health check involved workshops and consideration of feedback from the following groups:
- (a) Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party (**TTMAC**, now known as **Te Ruarangi**);
 - (b) the Māori Technical Advisory Group (**MTAG**);
 - (c) kaitiaki identified by council;
 - (d) council's executive leadership team (**ELT**) and other council staff; and
 - (e) councillors.
- 1.4 A draft report was prepared and presented to TTMAC, MTAG and ELT for feedback.
- 1.5 The report was then finalised – Te Tiriti health check report dated 23 September 2022 (**stage one report**). For ease of reference, the stage one report is attached to this report as **Appendix One**.
- 1.6 The stage one report identified significant progress in the council's relationship with Māori, while noting there remains *"a long way to go to achieve genuine partnership in a way that reflects and respects Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and the mana and rangatiratanga of iwi and hapū."*
- 1.7 The stage one report also made a number of recommendations, which are addressed further in this report.
- 1.8 The council has since instructed Buddle Findlay to undertake a stage two Te Tiriti health check and prepare a final stage two report.

Scope and process of the stage two health check

- 1.9 Working with council staff, and with input from MTAG at a series of meetings, the purpose and scope of stage two of Te Tiriti health check was confirmed as follows:
- (a) review council's progress against the recommendations in the stage one report;
 - (b) review council's implementation of Tāiki ē, the council's Te Tiriti strategy and implementation plan;
 - (c) assess broadly how the council implements its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations in engaging with tāngata whenua and mana whenua, including by identifying what is working well and any key challenges;
 - (d) in particular, review the effectiveness of existing council mechanisms that provide for Māori participation (including Te Ruarangi); and

- (e) provide further recommendations in light of the above.
- 1.10 We also worked with council staff and MTAG to develop the process for the stage two health check as follows:
- (a) review relevant council documentation provided by council staff and other relevant information on the council website;
 - (b) conduct workshops with the following groups to obtain their feedback on the council's implementation of the recommendations in the stage one report, the Tāiki ē strategy, and the council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations more broadly:
 - (i) elected members;
 - (ii) Te Ruarangi;
 - (iii) MTAG;
 - (iv) council's ELT; and
 - (v) other key council staff, including
 - (1) Te Kāhui Hautū o Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti steering group); and
 - (2) Te Tiriti partnerships and engagement team;
 - (c) prepare a draft report summarising our findings and setting out recommendations;
- [Drafting note – The following two steps have not yet been completed at the time of providing this draft report.]*
- (d) present the draft report to Te Ruarangi and elected members and considered any feedback provided; and
 - (e) prepare a final report.]
- 1.11 The workshops conducted as part of stage two were an essential part of this assessment. The approach taken to these workshops was not formulaic, rather, the workshops asked participants for feedback on the council's implementation of the recommendations in the stage one report, the Tāiki ē strategy, Te Tiriti obligations more broadly, what is working well, and what some of the challenges and opportunities are. We found the workshops insightful and thank the participants for their contributions to this process.
- 1.12 We also note that, although this report is focused on the council, there are also council-controlled organisations / entities, whose functions are significant for Te Taitokerau communities. As such, the findings and recommendations in this report will also be relevant to, and will need to be considered by, those organisations / entities.

Report structure

- 1.13 To reflect the structure of our workshops and the stage one report, our report addresses:
- (a) **Part One:** Introduction
 - (b) **Part Two:** Stage one report and recommendations

- (c) **Part Three:** Te Taitokerau context/current state of relationship
 - (d) **Part Four:** Progress against the recommendations in the stage one report
 - (e) **Part Five:** What is working well?
 - (f) **Part Six:** What are the challenges / opportunities?
 - (g) **Part Seven:** Recommendations.
- 1.14 We recognise and understand that Te Tiriti health check, and this report, is just one part of the journey of the relationship between council and Te Taitokerau Māori.

draft
08 Aug 2025

2. PART TWO: STAGE ONE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The stage one Te Tiriti health check was undertaken in 2022, and the report was finalised on 23 September 2022.
- 2.2 The stage one process included conducting various workshops, reviewing relevant council documentation and addressing six priority areas identified by MTAG.
- 2.3 The report itself was structured as follows:
- (a) Te Taitokerau context
 - (b) What is the current state of the relationship between Māori and the council?
 - (c) What is working well?
 - (d) What are the challenges/opportunities?
 - (e) Recommendations.
- 2.4 These are summarised briefly below, including how these matters are relevant to the stage two process and this report.

Te Taitokerau context in 2022

- 2.5 The stage one report reflected on the importance of understanding the unique context of the area serviced by the council. A brief summary was provided of this unique context at that time, including the population structure and demographics, iwi and hapū rangatiratanga, and the history and relevance of He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi together as well as of Treaty settlements. In summary, the report recorded the following:
- (a) Māori make up a higher percentage of the population in Northland than in New Zealand generally (at that time, 36 percent in Northland, in comparison to 16.5 percent in New Zealand).
 - (b) Within the Northland region, there are a number of different collectives of iwi and hapū who held and continue to hold rangatiratanga – hapū autonomy remains an important and distinct feature of the Northland region.
 - (c) By He Whakaputanga, rangatira from Te Taitokerau declared their own independence and the independence of their country, and asserted their own sovereignty, independent of any other purported law-making power. While He Whakaputanga is not referenced in Te Tiriti, the two documents together are an essential statement on the sovereignty of Māori in Northland.
- 2.6 The unique context of Te Taitokerau has not changed since the stage one report, and remains equally important. This has been considered in our stage two assessment and report. This is addressed in part 3 of this report (including updated statistics from the 2023 Census).

How did the stage one report describe the current state of the relationship between Māori and the council at that time?

- 2.7 In summary, the stage one report found the following:

- (a) **Legislative context:** There is no one coherent framework of statutory obligations for the relationship between Māori and local government; rather, discrete obligations have been developed on a statute-by-statute basis and are framed in different ways. The inconsistencies and gaps can present challenges for Māori and councils.
 - (b) **Governance and relationship structures:** The report summarised the governance and relationship structures in place at that time.
 - (c) **Strategic direction:** The report also provided an overview of planning and other documents that had started to shape the strategic direction for the relationship between Māori and the council, such as Tāiki ē.
- 2.8 These matters remain relevant and have been considered as part of the stage two process and this report. There have been some developments in relation to these matters since the stage one report was finalised. This is addressed in part 3 of this report.
- 2.9 The stage one report also provided an assessment of the council's performance against six competencies identified in a framework prepared by Te Arawhiti. These competencies have not been assessed again during this stage two process, rather, the focus has been on progress in implementing the initial stage one recommendations.

What did the stage one report conclude is working well?

- 2.10 The stage one report found that the partnership was in a strong place relative to many of the iwi/hapū and local authority relationships across the country. However, it was also acknowledged that there is still a long way to go on the journey and more to do.
- 2.11 The stage one report highlighted some very positive aspects of the partnership between council and tāngata whenua that were communicated during the workshops held for stage one. In summary, the report found:¹
- (a) The relationship had developed significantly since 2014.
 - (b) There had been a huge amount of work going on from both partners to support and develop the partnership.
 - (c) There was a genuine desire emerging in the leadership structure of council to take the next step in the partnership journey, to better understand and embrace Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and tikanga Māori and to deliver something meaningful. There was also strong commitment from the leadership of iwi and hapū.
 - (d) There were very positive structures in place to support the partnership. We heard positive comments about the valuable role that TTMAC had played as well as a number of other structures and committees which had been designed to move closer to a partnership approach.
 - (e) There had been excellent work done on Tāiki ē on the back of TTMAC's strategic intent document. We found that Tāiki ē was an impressive document that was co-designed through a series of workshops where robust discussions were had, and clear actions and

¹ See para 4.2.

accountability/timeframes and budgetary matters were identified. In summary, it was clear to us at that time that there was already a clear plan in place to implement Tāiki ē.

- (f) The role of the Pou Manawhakahaere (group manager governance and engagement) was considered very valuable and to help guide the council.

2.12 We have reflected on these findings as part of this stage two process. Overall, our findings are very similar to those we recorded in stage one. We expand on what we heard is working well in part 5 of this report.

What did the stage one report identify as the challenges/opportunities?

2.13 The stage one report also identified a number of challenges and opportunities for the relationship between council and tāngata whenua. In particular, the report identified:²

- (a) The importance of continuing to support a culture shift and increasing staff capability and capacity in Te Tiriti and te ao Māori.
- (b) The importance of the council understanding the Māori tribal landscape and the need to protect and safeguard Māori representatives in council structures.
- (c) The importance of ensuring governance and operations align within council.
- (d) The need to consider the trajectory of the relationship over the long-term, noting that while significant progress had been made, there was still a long way to go.
- (e) An opportunity to consider the delegation of decision-making to Māori and co-designing frameworks.
- (f) The significant challenge of funding and resourcing to support delivery of Te Tiriti obligations.
- (g) There can be legislative uncertainty as to what can be achieved in the partnership.
- (h) There were sometimes challenges with information not being shared in a timely or efficient manner.

2.14 We have reflected on these findings during this stage two process. We have found that these challenges/opportunities remain relevant today, although there have also been some developments that have addressed (at least in part) these challenges/opportunities since the stage one report was completed.

Recommendations

2.15 In the stage one report, 14 specific recommendations were made. These recommendations broadly related to:

- (a) further development and understanding of the partnership;
- (b) implementation of Tāiki ē;
- (c) resourcing and funding;
- (d) engagement and consultation;
- (e) building capability and capacity within council;

² See para 5.2.

- (f) treatment of mātauranga Māori; and
 - (g) consideration and granting of resource consents.
- 2.16 In addition, it was also recommended that the stage one report and its recommendations be presented to the incoming council. We understand that the stage one report was received by the outgoing council along with a recommendation for the incoming council to adopt it and implement its recommendations.
- 2.17 In part 4 of this report, we provide a high-level summary of the progress that has been made against these recommendations. This should be read alongside parts 5 and 6, which provide a thematic summary of what we heard is working well and what the challenges are, and which provide further detail.

draft
08 Aug 2025

3. PART THREE: TE TAITOKERAU CONTEXT – UPDATES SINCE 2022

- 3.1 As noted above, the stage one report addressed Te Taitokerau context, including by providing an overview of the governance structures and relevant policy and planning documents. This section builds on that part of the stage one report and identifies the key developments in those areas since the stage one report was completed. This is based on our review of relevant documentation, together with feedback received at workshops.

Te Taitokerau context

- 3.2 The 2023 census shows that the Māori population in the Northland region continues to grow. The 2023 census found that the overall population of Northland was over 194,000, and 77,475 (or 39.9 percent) of that population were Māori. Comparatively, the 2023 census found that Māori make up 17.8 percent of the total population of the country.³
- 3.3 As set out in the stage one report, He Whakaputanga is a key document that provides context for the relationship between iwi and hapū and government agencies in Northland. By He Whakaputanga, rangatira from Te Taitokerau declared their own independence and asserted their own sovereignty. This document, along with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is an essential statement of sovereignty of Māori in Northland. The Waitangi Tribunal found that Te Taitokerau rangatira did not cede sovereignty to the Crown at the time they signed Te Tiriti⁴ and we understand that Taitokerau Māori continue to maintain that they have not ceded their sovereignty to either central or local government.
- 3.4 While this health check focuses on consideration of Te Tiriti, we recognise the importance of He Whakaputanga as a formal statement of the sovereignty and unity of rangatira in Te Taitokerau. We also acknowledge its essential relevance to the unique context of Taitokerau and have taken this into account in our assessment.
- 3.5 There are a number of different collectives of iwi and hapū who held and continue to hold rangatiratanga in Northland. Te Puni Kōkiri has identified 12 iwi whose takiwā fall, either partially or wholly, within the region. These are Ngāi Takoto, Ngāpuhi, Ngāpuhi / Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa, Ngāti Kurī, Ngāti Whātua, Ngātiwai, Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa, Te Roroa and Te Uri o Hau.⁵
- 3.6 The context in Northland is underpinned by strong rangatiratanga at the hapū level. We understand that there are more than 300 hapū in the region exercising their own separate autonomy.
- 3.7 Some iwi and hapū have settled their historical Treaty of Waitangi claims against the Crown through deeds of settlement and consequent settlement legislation. There are also iwi and hapū groups who have not yet settled their historical Treaty claims with the Crown, including Ngāti Kahu, Ngāpuhi and Ngātiwai. Since the stage one report, no further Treaty settlement deeds have been entered into in the region. However, we understand that on 15 July 2025, the Crown recognised the mandate of Te Whakaaetanga Trust to enter into negotiations with the Crown for the settlement of

³ As noted above, the earlier census results were that Māori comprised 36 percent of the Northland population in Northland, and 16.5 percent of the New Zealand population.

⁴ Waitangi Tribunal *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti* (Wai 1040, 2014) at 2.

⁵ Te Kāhui Māngai, Directory of iwi and Māori organisations ([TKM | Regional Authority | Northland Regional Council | Te Kāhui Māngai](#)).

the historical Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi claims of ngā hapū Te Whakaaetanga.⁶ This includes four Ngāpuhi hapū groupings: Ngāti Manu (and their associated hapū Te Uri Karaka and Te Uri o Raewera), Patukeha, Ngāti Kuta, and Ngāti Torehina ki Matakā.⁷

3.8 The relevant Treaty settlement legislation includes:

- (a) Te Uri o Hau Claims Settlement Act 2002;
- (b) Te Roroa Claims Settlement Act 2008;
- (c) Te Rarawa Claims Settlement Act 2015;
- (d) Te Aupouri Claims Settlement Act 2015;
- (e) Ngāi Takoto Claims Settlement Act 2015;
- (f) Ngāti Kuri Claims Settlement Act 2015; and
- (g) Ngātikahu ki Whangaroa Claims Settlement Act 2017.

3.9 There are also several Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 (**Takutai Moana Act**) applications within the Northland region and some of these have proceeded to hearing stage. In particular, applications in relation to the Whangarei Harbour and Coast were heard in 2024 and a decision is expected imminently. Looking ahead, there are further hearings set down in other parts of Northland region out to 2027. If these hearings confirm that the tests for customary marine title and/or protected customary rights are met under the Takutai Moana Act, the relevant applicant groups will have important rights under the Takutai Moana Act and related legislation, including, importantly for local government, the Resource Management Act 1991 and Local Government Act 2002.

Legislative context

3.10 There is no one coherent framework of statutory obligations for the relationship between Māori and local government. Rather, discrete statutory obligations have been developed on a statute-by-statute basis over many years, and they are framed in different ways depending on the statute in question.

3.11 These statutory obligations arise under a range of statutes, including:

- (a) local government legislation (such as the Local Government Act 2002);
- (b) planning and environmental legislation (such as the Resource Management Act 1991);
- (c) Treaty settlement legislation;
- (d) customary rights legislation (such as the Takutai Moana Act); and
- (e) other legislation (such as the Reserves Act 1977).

3.12 There are also other obligations to Māori that arise, for example, under the RMA national policy statements such as the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 or the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (**NPSFM**).

⁶ Te Tari Whakataū website ([Te Tari Whakataū - Te Whakaaetanga](#)).

⁷ Te Whakaaetanga Deed of Mandate ([Te-Whakaaetanga-Trust-Deed-of-Mandate-July-2025.pdf](#)).

3.13 The specific legal obligations on the council vary depending on the statute and context, and those differences are important. Obligations may focus on (for example):

- (a) Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi;
- (b) recognition of tikanga Māori, values, culture and traditions;
- (c) understanding of tikanga and mātauranga Māori;
- (d) customary rights (for example in the Takutai Moana Act context);
- (e) participation for Māori in local authority decision-making;
- (f) recognition of areas or resources of particular significance to Māori; and
- (g) processes such as consultation.

3.14 Since the stage one report, there have not been significant changes to the statutory obligations to Māori, but there have been a number of reforms and proposals that potentially impact the relationship between Māori and councils. These include:

- (a) reform to the RMA;
- (b) the introduction of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024;
- (c) proposed amendments to the NPSFM; and
- (d) proposed new national direction relating to infrastructure, development and the primary sector.

Governance structure

3.15 As set out in the stage one report, the governance structure for the council is made up of:⁸

- (a) a full council comprising of nine elected councillors (as the ultimate decision-making body for council matters) who represent the following constituencies: Te Raki Māori, Far North, Mid North, Kaipara, Bay of Islands-Whangaroa, Coastal Central, Whangārei Central and Coastal South;
- (b) joint committees;
- (c) committees; and
- (d) working parties.

3.16 Māori are represented at different levels of this governance structure through the following mechanisms:

- (a) The full council includes two councillors elected from Te Raki Māori, which is the council's Māori constituency, and which was established following the 2022 local body elections. Two of the nine councillors are from this constituency. In 2024, the council voted to retain its Māori constituency. The council is required to hold a poll on whether this constituency should be retained under the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards Constituencies) Amendment Act 2024.

⁸ Northland Regional Council "Council and committees" [Council and committees - Northland Regional Council](#)

- (b) At the joint committee level, there is representation for Māori on:
- (i) Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Board, which was established through Treaty settlements and is a joint committee for the management of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe (90 Mile Beach). The Board includes four members appointed by iwi, two members appointed by the council and two members appointed by the Far North District Council.
 - (ii) The Joint Climate Change Adaptation Committee, which is a standing committee made up of elected members from the council as well as the territorial authorities within the region and representatives of Northland hapū and iwi. The committee's role includes providing direction and oversight of the development and implementation of climate change adaptation activities by local government in Te Tai Tokerau.
 - (iii) The Kaipara Moana Remediation Joint Committee, which is a joint committee established by the council and Auckland Council in partnership with Kaipara Uri (the relevant iwi of Kaipara Moana). The purpose of the committee is to carry out decision-making in relation to the allocation of funds for the Kaipara Moana remediation programme. It comprises of six members appointed by Kaipara Uri, three members appointed by the council and three members appointed by Auckland Council.
- (c) At the committee level, there is representation for Māori on:
- (i) The Infrastructure Committee, which includes two independent tāngata whenua members. The purpose of this committee is to oversee planning and delivery of infrastructure and related work programmes.
 - (ii) The Audit and Risk Committee, which includes two independent tāngata whenua members. The purpose of this committee is to manage risk, financial performance and health and safety.
 - (iii) The Investment Committee, which includes one independent tāngata whenua advisor. The purpose of this committee is to monitor and improve the performance of the council's investment portfolio.
- (d) At the working party level, there is representation for Māori through:
- (i) Te Ruarangi, which was previously known as Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party (or TTMAC) but has been renamed since the stage one review. This is a key mechanism that provides for Māori participation and is discussed further below.
 - (ii) Natural Resources Working Party. This working party includes four members from Te Ruarangi. Its purpose includes providing oversight on council's resource management planning and regulatory activities.
 - (iii) Biosecurity and Biodiversity Working Party. This working party includes four members from Te Ruarangi. Its purpose includes to provide oversight on council's biosecurity and biodiversity activities.

3.17 In addition, to the above, we also heard about the following groups:

- (a) Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG). This is a subgroup of Te Ruarangi and provides technical advice and guidance to the non-elected members of Te Ruarangi (iwi and hapū representatives).
 - (b) Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group. This group is made up of tāngata whenua technical experts with a wide range of freshwater kaitiaki experience and expertise. It was established by the council in 2020 on the recommendations of TTMAC (now named Te Ruarangi) and is focused on the recognition and provision for tāngata whenua rights, interests and responsibilities in relation to the council's draft freshwater plan change.
- 3.18 In addition to the above, it is important to note the following further bodies, which represent the iwi of Te Taitokerau and with which there is an opportunity for the council to develop strong relationships at a leadership/governance level:
- (a) Te Kahu o Taonui (the Iwi Chairs Forum) was formed in 2006 as a collective of Te Taitokerau iwi chairs to create opportunities to benefit whānau, hapū and marae. The following 12 iwi are now represented in this collective: Ngātiwai, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kahu, Ngai Takoto, Te Roroa, Ngāpuhi, Kahukuraariki Trust Board, Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Whātua.
 - (b) The Iwi and Local Government Agency Chief Executives Forum (**ILGACE**). We understand that the council has a regional-level relationship with iwi authority managers and chief executives through ILGACE.
- 3.19 The council's current long-term plan records a commitment to foster Māori participation by promoting and supporting information sharing and consultation among iwi and council in the region through both Te Kahu o Taonui and ILGACE.⁹

Strategic direction

- 3.20 In the stage one report we summarised relevant strategic direction provided in the following key plans and documents that have started to shape the relationship between Māori and the council. These included:
- (a) long term plan 2021-2031 (which has now been superseded by the long term plan 2024-2034);
 - (b) TTMAC's strategic intent 2021-2040;
 - (c) Tāiki ē (the council's Te Tiriti strategy and implementation plan);
 - (d) council policy documents, such as Te Whāriki (Māori responsiveness policy framework);
 - (e) mana whakahono ā rohe under the RMA; and
 - (f) iwi / hapū environmental management plans.
- 3.21 Since the stage one report, we understand the following additional or new plans and documents have been developed:
- (a) long term plan 2024-2034;

⁹ Long-term plan 2024-2034, page 171.

- (b) annual report 2024;
 - (c) updates to Tāiki ē to include new whaingā (goals) relating to water/marine, climate crisis and economic development;
 - (d) various reports prepared pursuant to the actions identified in Tāiki ē;
 - (e) new council policies and strategies, such as the kaupapa Māori employment outcomes framework and He Toa Takitini (community engagement strategy), and operational documents such as Te Puna Reo (guide to using Te Reo Māori); and
 - (f) new documents developed by non-council organisations, which the council has formally endorsed in some way, such as Te Rerenga (Taitokerau economic wellbeing pathway).
- 3.22 We have set out a brief summary of these documents below, including relevant updates since our stage one report was completed.
- Long term plan 2024-2034*
- 3.23 The long-term plan 2024-2034 includes a section on 'He kaupapa here mō te oho rangapū ā-Tiriti me te Māori / Policy on Te Tiriti Partnerships with Māori'. This section is provided in te reo Māori and English and describes the unique context in Te Taitokerau, including having a higher proportion of Māori in Aotearoa and being the place for the signing of He Whakaputanga. The plan records a clear commitment regarding Te Tiriti as follows:¹⁰
- "Cognisant of this history and legacy, council commits to have regard in its work to the rights and interests of Māori under Te Tiriti, and to consider the relevance and application of Te Tiriti and / or its principles as prescribed in relevant legislation and national policy statements".
- 3.24 The plan also records that "*with statutory obligations to empower Māori to participate in local government processes, a key focus area for council is fostering meaningful partnerships with tāngata whenua under Te Tiriti*".¹¹
- 3.25 The plan sets out a number of actions that the council has committed to carry out in order to strengthen Te Tiriti partnerships and foster Māori participation in council processes, including:¹²
- (a) continue to prioritise and deliver on Tāiki ē;
 - (b) ensure that council's governance structures reflect a commitment to Māori representation and independent tāngata whenua experts;
 - (c) continue to support and resource the operation of Te Ruarangi, MTAG and the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group;
 - (d) promote and support information sharing and consultation among iwi and council chairs / councillors in the region through Te Kahu o Taonui and ILGACE;
 - (e) continually enhance the cultural competency of council staff;
 - (f) distribute copies of resource consent applications lodged with council to marae, hapū and iwi entities that may have an interest in the applications or be affected by those consents; and

¹⁰ Long-term plan, page 169.

¹¹ Long-term plan, page 170.

¹² Long-term plan, pages 171-172.

- (g) provide opportunities for Māori businesses and experts in accordance with the council's Māori services procurement policy.
- 3.26 The plan also includes the council's significance and engagement policy. This policy has been adopted in accordance with the requirements of the LGA.¹³ The policy sets out the council's approach to engagement and includes as a guiding principle: *"continue to improve how we engage with Māori and enable input into our decisions"*.¹⁴ This policy includes a commitment to always consider the following matters:¹⁵
- (a) the impact on Māori and their relationship with ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga;
 - (b) the role of Māori as kaitiaki in their rohe; and
 - (c) how to engage Māori in a way that is meaningful and appropriate to them.
- 3.27 In addition, the plan includes specific levels of service, measures and targets for Māori participation. The measures include:¹⁶
- (a) completion of an independent Treaty health check bi-annually;
 - (b) percentage of councillors and executive leadership participating in annual core cultural competency training;
 - (c) percentage of council employees that undertake cultural competency training;
 - (d) percentage of mana whakahono ā rohe agreements that meet key statutory obligations;
 - (e) level of satisfaction of tāngata whenua with council's relationships and partnerships;
 - (f) percentage of priority actions in Tāiki ē that are commenced; and
 - (g) percentage of tāngata whenua environmental funding allocated to enable mātauranga Māori outcomes to inform council policy development and decision making.

Annual report 2024

- 3.28 The annual report 2024 records that *"as always, council remains committed to building meaningful relationships reflective of a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership"*.¹⁷
- 3.29 The report records that the highlights of 2023/24 include:
- (a) council unanimously adopting the newest iteration of Tāiki ē in April 2024;
 - (b) signing new mana whakahono ā rohe;
 - (c) entering into a relationship agreement with Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Roto Ōmāpere to establish a formal working relationship between the iwi and council;
 - (d) supporting hāpori Māori climate change resilience
 - (e) submitting in opposition to signalled changes for Māori seats on council;

¹³ LGA, section 76AA.

¹⁴ Long-term plan, page 173.

¹⁵ Long-term plan, page 174.

¹⁶ Long-term plan, page 68.

¹⁷ Annual report, page 5.

- (f) bringing together tāngata whenua, local government, government agencies and various organisations to raise awareness of water related reforms and projects and policy developments;
- (g) the re-establishment of TTMAC; and
- (h) building capability and capacity.

TTMAC's strategic intent 2021-2040

- 3.30 In our stage one report, we noted that a critically important document developed by TTMAC is the strategic intent 2021-2040.
- 3.31 TTMAC developed the strategic intent which sets out:
- (a) te kaupapa / mission "*He iwi tahi tatou kia ora ai te taiao – Kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga work together for the wellbeing of the environment*";
 - (b) te pae tawhiti / vision 2014; and
 - (c) ngā whainga / desired goals for:
 - (i) capacity and capability;
 - (ii) Māori representation;
 - (iii) water / marine;
 - (iv) climate crisis; and
 - (v) economic development; and
 - (d) ngā tikanga / values.

- 3.32 The TTMAC strategic intent formed the basis for Tāiki ē which is discussed below.

Tāiki ē (Te Tiriti strategy and implementation plan)

- 3.33 Tāiki ē is a jointly agreed strategy of the council and Te Ruarangi. Its purpose is to provide a clear roadmap towards giving effect to Te Tiriti obligations and making the council and Te Ruarangi accountable in achieving them. As we recorded in the stage one report, Tāiki ē was endorsed by TTMAC (now Te Ruarangi) on 14 July 2022 and was initially adopted by the council on 26 July 2022. Tāiki ē was updated in 2023 to include actions for water, marine, climate crisis and economic development. In April 2024 the council adopted the latest iteration of Tāiki ē.¹⁸
- 3.34 As recorded in the stage one report, the actions identified in Tāiki ē are significant and broad ranging – from actions at the strategic / overarching framework level to the development of tools and resources 'on the ground'. By way of example, some of the actions include to:
- (a) establish the Te Tiriti health check and review framework (part of which includes the carrying out of this independent review);
 - (b) continue to develop Tāiki ē;

¹⁸ Northland Regional Council "Tāiki ē: Te Tiriti strategy and implementation" [Tāiki ē: Te Tiriti strategy and implementation plan - Northland Regional Council](#)

- (c) support and increase uptake of iwi and hapū environmental management plans and mana whakahono ā rohe;
 - (d) develop and fund culturally appropriate council environmental monitoring programmes;
 - (e) deliver specific projects within agreed priority areas of interest;
 - (f) develop and embed a cultural awareness and competency framework for councillors, staff and relevant consultants;
 - (g) invest in building tāngata whenua capacity and capability;
 - (h) develop and maintain a digital tāngata whenua contacts database that spatially identifies indicative iwi and hapū rohe boundaries;
 - (i) ensure the successful and ongoing implementation of Māori constituencies; and
 - (j) review council procurement policies and processes and ensure there are fair and equal opportunities for tāngata whenua consultants and contractors to obtain council contracts.
- 3.35 On 8 May 2025, the latest 'Tāiki ē – report on priority actions' was received by Te Ruarangi. The purpose of these reports, which we understand are provided bi-monthly to Te Ruarangi, is to provide regular updates on progress on the 31 actions in Tāiki ē. The report also sets out the ranking of the actions by priority according to their ability to give effect to te kaupapa / mission statement in TTMAC's strategic intent document.
- 3.36 This report highlighted that:
- (a) one action has been completed (action 26: long-term plan / annual plan);
 - (b) 28 actions are on track to being completed (meaning all tasks and milestones are being completed on time and within scope); and
 - (c) two actions "*need attention*" (action 29: sustainable economic development and action 30: marine protection and development).
- 3.37 In addition to the above, a number of reports have been commissioned pursuant to the strategic direction and actions identified in Tāiki ē. These include:
- (a) The Tāiki ē – regulatory services review – resource consent process report was prepared for the council and Te Ruarangi in June 2024. It was endorsed by Te Ruarangi on 11 July 2024 and subsequently approved by the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee. The purpose of the report is to review the council's resource consenting processes and identify areas for improvement. It was developed in consultation with iwi and hapū representatives and sets out the challenges from both iwi and hapū perspectives and the council's perspective. The report sets out key areas for improvement at all stages of the resource consent process. To further the recommendations within the report, we understand a 12-month action plan has also been prepared by council.
 - (b) The Hāpori Māori (Māori communities) Te Taitokerau resilience action plan was endorsed by Te Ruarangi on 12 September 2024. Its purpose is to enhance community resilience for Hāpori Māori throughout the region. The plan sets out three aspects of resilience including, everyday resilience, resilience in emergencies and climate adaptation.

Council documents

3.38 There are a range of policies, strategies and operational documents that have been developed by the council. These include the following:

- (a) Te Whāriki (Māori responsiveness policy framework) was developed in 2019. As we recorded in the stage one report, the purpose of Te Whāriki is to *"influence, enhance and guide the council's responsiveness to Māori"*.
- (b) He Toa Takitini (community engagement strategy) was adopted in 2024. The strategy's purpose includes to increase and improve engagement with the communities of Northland. The strategy is portrayed as a whāriki (woven mat) supporting the core idea of *"kia manahau hei tiaki"*. This idea speaks of mutual respect for the taiao and for each other and being able to withstand changes and challenges together. The strategy draws on te ao Māori principles and aims to include Māori voices, values and leadership in the way council communicates and engages.
- (c) Te Puna Reo (guide to using te reo Māori) was presented to the council on 28 November 2023. This guide acknowledges that te reo Māori is a taonga tuku iho and sets out the council's commitment to upholding and promoting te reo Māori me ōna tikanga and to encouraging its use across the council's communications.¹⁹ The guide provides a range of information about mihi, whakataukī / whakataukā, when it is appropriate to use te reo Māori and Māori designs, different dialects, translations and further Māori language resources.
- (d) The kaupapa Māori employment outcomes framework was approved by ELT on 11 March 2025. The framework records that the council is committed to working in partnership with iwi and hapū in its rohe and delivering effectively for Māori. The framework sets out three intertwined strategic goals including to increase Māori representation in council's workforce; to understand and value Māori expertise; and to create a workplace where people are at home in te ao Māori.

3.39 Another document referred to us is Te Rerenga (Taitokerau economic wellbeing pathway). This is not a council document but a strategy developed by Northland Inc. This is an aspirational strategy that was endorsed as the key strategy for advancing economic development in the region by the council on 27 August 2024. This strategy was developed in collaboration from various groups in the community including iwi / Māori. It is focused on achieving a wellbeing economy and sets out three focus areas: environment, people and economy. The strategy has a section on 'He Whakaputanga me Te Tiriti o Waitangi' and records that *"our collective responsibility to Te Tiriti o Waitangi can be achieved through each of these focus areas ..."*.²⁰ At a Te Ruarangi hui earlier this year, it was agreed that this strategy *"provides a good basis of our economic approach and has strong Te Tiriti foundations within it and safeguards to guide decision making and collaboration"*.

Mana whakahono ā rohe

3.40 In the stage one report we recorded that the council had entered into two mana whakahono ā rohe with Te Patuharakeke Iwi Trust Board and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia.

¹⁹ Te Puna Reo, page 4.

²⁰ Te Rerenga, page 5.

3.41 Since the stage one report was completed, two further mana whakahono ā rohe have been entered into:

- (a) Te Pouwhenua o Tiakiri Kukupa Trust on behalf of Te Parawhau; and
- (b) Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine on behalf of Ngāti Hine Iwi.

Iwi / hapū environmental management plans

3.42 In the stage one report we recorded that there were 14 iwi/hapū environmental management plans that had been developed and recognised by an iwi authority and formally lodged with the council.

3.43 There are now 18 iwi/hapū environmental management plans listed on the council's website²¹ and we understand further are under development.

Specific projects and initiatives that provide for Māori participation

3.44 Through the documentation review, we noted a number of specific council projects and initiatives that have provided for Māori participation. A number of these were referred to in workshops with council and iwi/hapū representatives. Some of the significant examples that were referred to are summarised below.

Te Wānanga Waiora

3.45 The second Wānanga Waiora was held at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds Tahuaroa Function Centre on 26 March 2025. This event provided an opportunity for Te Taitokerau kaitiaki and hapū to come together and share te mātauranga o te taiao (knowledge of the environment) with a range of other stakeholders. The event was hosted by Whangaroa Taiao Ltd with support from the council. The purpose of the event was for *"kaitiaki and convenors to foster kotahitanga (unity in purpose) and provide a measurable tool for understanding the relationships between wai and kaitiaki (guardians, trustees), as well as NRC's operational capability and positive outcomes with tāngata whenua"*.²²

3.46 We understand that presentations were given by iwi and hapū representatives and the event concluded with a guest panel of experts and representatives from the council (including the deputy chair and chief executive), iwi and hapū and the Far North District Council.

3.47 The wānanga was reported to be a great success and received positive feedback from attendees.

3.48 This wānanga was identified by council as an example of receiving positive acknowledgement and appreciation from iwi and hapū for the way the council is actively partnering with iwi and hapū on the ground.

Flood mitigation project

3.49 The flood mitigation work is an example of partnership between the council and iwi and hapū. This involved collaboration between council and Māori, including raising awareness amongst kaumatua and tamariki and providing jobs for iwi and hapū.

3.50 One of the landowners involved in this project gave strongly positive comments about the council's role in this project and said that *"they need to be an example for every other regional council around*

²¹ As noted on the Council's website: [Plans held by council - Northland Regional Council](#)

²² Wānanga Waiora – report and presentation (2 May 2025).

*New Zealand, they empowered us as the landowners, as the people from here, they empowered us to be a part of this project."*²³

- 3.51 The Otiria spillway project is a partnership between the local community and council to restore the Otiria and Waiharakeke streams' natural flows by replacing the existing bridge with a new single-lane bridge. A local kaitiaki involved in the project said that the project has "*demonstrated and shown us what a true partnership looks like from a hapu mana whenua point of view when referring to Te Wakaputanga 1835 & Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840*".²⁴
- 3.52 We received feedback from an elected member that this work (particularly in relation to the Otiria spillway project) is an example of the council showing national leadership in terms of working with iwi and hapū landowners and building trust with them.

Biosecurity response

- 3.53 The council has partnered with mana whenua, Biosecurity New Zealand and other partners to work together to prevent and control the spread of exotic caulerpa.²⁵ This can spread rapidly and presents a risk to recreational, cultural and commercial marine activities. A controlled area notice has been put in place in Te Rāwhiti Inlet with legal restrictions placed on some boating and fishing activities. Mana whenua have placed a rāhui on this area with the same restrictions. The council and mana whenua are also planning trials of suction dredging in the Te Rāwhiti inlet.
- 3.54 We received feedback from elected members that the response to caulerpa has been successful due to the collaboration between council and iwi.

²³ Flood Mitigation Project – Additional benefits to the community [Flood Mitigation Project - Additional Benefits To The Community](#)

²⁴ Resilient Rivers "Otiria Spillway Project" [Otiria Spillway Project - Northland | Resilient River Communities](#)

²⁵ Northland Regional Council "Exotic Caulerpa" [Exotic caulerpa - Northland Regional Council](#)

4. PART FOUR: PROGRESS AGAINST THE STAGE ONE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In the stage one report, 14 specific recommendations were made. These recommendations broadly related to:
- (a) further development and understanding of the partnership;
 - (b) implementation of Tāiki ē
 - (c) resourcing and funding;
 - (d) engagement and consultation;
 - (e) improving the cultural awareness and competency of council;
 - (f) treatment of mātauranga Māori; and
 - (g) consideration and granting of resource consents.
- 4.2 We received feedback during the workshops that there has been substantial progress, however, there remains more to be done.
- 4.3 In parts 5 and 6 of this report we provide a summary of what we heard is working well and what the challenges are during this stage two process. This summary overlaps with a report on progress against the recommendations in the stage one report. Therefore, this part of the report provides a high-level summary of progress against the recommendations in the stage one report and more detail is provided in the following parts 5 and 6 of this report.

Further development and understanding of the partnership

- 4.4 Our stage one report included a number of recommendations as to how the council, iwi and hapū could consider and further develop the partnerships between them. This included considering what partnership means, developing a plan to move closer to partnership, considering where the partners can work together on issues of shared concern, and considering further the type of partnership that is enabled under the current statutory regime.
- 4.5 We consider this matter is particularly relevant to the formal structures in place within council to provide for Māori participation. In particular, this is relevant to the role of Te Ruarangi. It is also relevant to the approach that council takes to its engagement on projects and initiatives. We comment further on these matters in parts 5 and 6 below.
- 4.6 In summary, we heard that Te Ruarangi is a powerful and respected mechanism that provides the opportunity for a relationship that reflects genuine partnership. However, we also heard that Te Ruarangi does not currently embody true partnership. We consider, there is significant potential in Te Ruarangi to move closer to a partnership relationship, if the partners commit to this.
- 4.7 In terms of how council engages on projects and initiatives, we heard of several very positive examples where the council had worked very closely with iwi and hapū, in a spirit of partnership, and that had delivered significant benefits for both council, iwi, hapū and the broader community. However, there remain inconsistencies in how council approaches engagement.

Implementation of Tāiki ē

- 4.8 Our stage one report recommended that Tāiki ē should continue to be implemented. This has been addressed above in part 3 and is further discussed in in parts 5 and 6 below. In summary, it is clear that an enormous amount of work has been done to implement Tāiki ē. We understand that out of the 31 actions in the strategy, one has been completed and 28 are on track to being completed on time. We received very positive feedback that Tāiki ē is an enduring strategy that is driving meaningful change. In particular, we received feedback that the specific actions and targets provided within Tāiki ē were helping to drive change and helping to ensure accountability against commitments.

Resourcing and funding

- 4.9 In stage one, we recommended that resourcing of iwi and hapū is carefully considered. In this stage two, we have heard that considerable investment has been made, including an additional \$250,000 for the implementation of Tāiki ē; an increase in tāngata whenua environmental monitoring funds of \$100,000; and the creation of four new positions within Te Tiriti partnerships and engagement team. We also heard though that resourcing continues to be a challenge, particularly for iwi and hapū. We comment on this further below in parts 5 and 6.

Engagement and consultation (including in relation to resource consents)

- 4.10 In stage one, we included a number of recommendations about how the council could improve its approach to engagement and consultation, including in relation to resource consents. In this phase, we heard of several positive examples where engagement had gone well. However, we also heard there are inconsistencies and opportunities for further improvement. This is discussed in further detail in parts 5 and 6.

Improving the cultural awareness and competency of council

- 4.11 In stage one, we made a number of recommendations about how the council could improve its cultural awareness and competency, including through consideration of recruitment processes and development of Te Whāriki. In this stage two, we heard that there has been a noticeable improvement in this area, but there remains more to do.

Treatment of mātauranga Māori

- 4.12 We recommended that the council develop a framework for the identification and treatment of mātauranga Māori within council operations. This is not a matter that was covered in great detail in our workshops, and so we do not address it further in this report. However, we acknowledge that the long-term plan 2024-2023 records a commitment to enhancing and enabling mātauranga Māori outcomes to inform policy development and decision making.²⁶

Resource consent processes

- 4.13 We recommended that work was carried out to understand the issues of concern to Māori in the council's resource consenting processes. There has been significant work completed in relation to this matter, which we discuss in further detail in parts 5 and 6 below.

²⁶ Long-term plan, page 68.

5. PART FIVE: WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

Overarching comments

- 5.1 This part 5 of the report records what we heard is working well during this stage two review process.
- 5.2 Our comments about what is working well need to be viewed in the context of both the history of the relationship between local authorities and iwi/hapū in Aotearoa and Te Taitokerau, and the fact that there is a long way still to go to achieve genuine partnership in a way that reflects and respects Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and the mana and rangatiratanga of iwi and hapū.
- 5.3 Subject to that overall comment, the following key themes emerged through our workshops and documentation review about what is currently working well and where there has been meaningful improvement in the relationship between council and Māori:
- (a) Tāiki ē remains a crucial document and is driving meaningful change and improvement.
 - (b) Te Ruarangi continues to be a very important forum and continues to foster and strengthen positive working relationships between council, iwi and hapū.
 - (c) There has been a noticeable improvement in the cultural competency of council staff.
 - (d) There are several examples of projects/initiatives that have been helpful in developing relationships and supporting the partnership between the council, iwi and hapū.
 - (e) There is still strong support among leadership both at councillor, ELT and iwi/hapū level for embedding respect for Te Tiriti into council's practices and developing strong partnerships.
 - (f) A huge amount of work has been carried out and this is leading to improved outcomes.
- 5.4 Overall, we consider that the relationship between the council, iwi and hapū remains in a strong place relative to many of the iwi/hapū and local authority relationships across the country. The dial continues to move in a positive direction. That said, there are still challenges, and there is still much more to do. In addition, legislative and policy changes create new challenges that need to be navigated. These and other challenges are addressed further in the following part 6 of this report.

Implementation of Tāiki ē

- 5.5 Tāiki ē was adopted in 2022 and was an important feature of the stage one report, being described as an "*impressive document*". One of the key recommendations in the stage one report, was that the implementation of Tāiki ē and its actions was supported.
- 5.6 Since the stage one report, we understand Tāiki ē was updated in 2023 and the latest version endorsed by council in April 2024 by unanimous vote to reflect a change in priorities.²⁷
- 5.7 We heard that significant progress has been made in terms of progress against the actions. We understand that almost all of the 31 actions in Tāiki ē are on track in terms of achieving the relevant milestones for each action.²⁸ Some of the progress in relation to certain actions was discussed during the workshops, for example:

²⁷ Northland Regional Council Meeting Minutes, Council Meeting (23 April 2024) [Minutes of Council Meeting - Tuesday, 23 April 2024](#)

²⁸ The 'Tāiki ē – report on priority actions' (8 May 2025) recorded that of the 31 actions, 1 action has been completed, 28 actions are on track to being completed and 2 actions need attention.

- (a) Action 4 is to support and increase the update of mana whakahono ā rohe and agreements. As noted earlier in this report, two additional mana whakahono ā rohe agreements have been entered into since we completed our stage one report. In addition, the number of iwi/hapū management plans lodged with council has also increased.
 - (b) Action 9 is to review, update and embed how the council delivers its regulatory services to ensure regulatory activities (eg resource consents and compliance monitoring) are undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner. As noted above in part 3, we understand that a review was carried out in 2023 and provided 11 recommendations. In order to progress these recommendations a project plan has been prepared.²⁹ We also understand a project manager has been appointed from the regulatory team and is progressing the actions in the plan. There has therefore been significant work carried out to further this action. We note that the draft plan sets out key milestones that are relevant to the recommendations in the stage one report, including developing guidance for selecting Māori hearing commissioners, improving iwi and hapū spatial mapping and updating the iwi and hapū database.
 - (c) Action 20 is to develop and maintain a digital tāngata whenua contacts database. We heard that this work has commenced and while there have been some difficult technological challenges to navigate, significant progress has been made.
- 5.8 The feedback we received about Tāiki ē during the workshops was very positive. We received feedback at all levels (including council staff, ELT, MTAG, Te Ruarangi and councillors) that Tāiki ē was a powerful document that was leading to meaningful change and improvement.
- 5.9 Particular features of Tāiki ē that were reported as important were its specificity, including the 31 specific actions. This has enabled progress against those actions to be measured and has ensured that there is accountability against those commitments.
- 5.10 We also received feedback that Tāiki ē was empowering staff to work in a way that is respectful of Te Tiriti and its principles because it provides a clear direction and mandate to work in that way. It therefore appears that Tāiki ē is helping to drive a culture shift within council.
- 5.11 Another key theme that was reported to us is that Tāiki ē has provided a clear direction that is robust and enduring and helps the council stay on track, including in the face of legislative and policy changes.
- 5.12 While Tāiki ē has driven significant change and improvements, this has also involved an enormous amount of work, particularly from within Te Tiriti partnerships and engagement team. We heard the commitment and workload has been significant. However, it was also reported that the strategy is starting to be better embedded throughout all parts of council, meaning that responsibility for delivering the strategy does not sit within Te Tiriti partnerships and engagement team only.
- 5.13 We also heard that there remain challenges with the implementation of Tāiki ē as well as opportunities to take the strategy further. We comment further on these matters in part 6 below.

²⁹ Resource Consent Review 12-month Action Plan, draft project plan for TTMAC (4 February 2024).

The importance of Te Ruarangi and other mechanisms that provide for Māori participation

- 5.14 In our stage one report, we commented on the importance of TTMAC. Since then, TTMAC has been renamed Te Ruarangi. We received feedback that this renaming is significant in itself and demonstrates the council's increasing desire and willingness to incorporate te reo into its practices.
- 5.15 Consistent with our earlier findings, we heard again during this stage two process that Te Ruarangi is an incredibly important partnership which is helping council and iwi/hapū to develop a strong and positive working relationship.
- 5.16 We received feedback that the relationship provided for through TTMAC / Te Ruarangi has developed and is now, generally speaking, in a stronger place than at its establishment. One participant commented that in earlier times, the atmosphere in TTMAC could be quite challenging, however, that has changed. This person commented that Te Ruarangi has helped develop trust between the parties, and this has enabled more positive discussions to take place. This strong relationship has also enabled the parties to work together on issues of shared concern, such as legislative amendments.
- 5.17 Another theme is that Te Ruarangi has been critical in protecting the relationship, including in the face of legislative and policy changes.
- 5.18 It is important to record that this feedback was reported to us at all our workshops, including with council staff, ELT and councillors. One councillor stated that he believed Te Ruarangi was helping to ensure that council works positively with iwi/hapū. This councillor provided several examples of where that positive working relationship had delivered significant benefits for the region, such as on civil defence and the caulerpa response.
- 5.19 In addition to Te Ruarangi, we also received feedback that the other groups that provide for Māori participation have been of significant value, including MTAG and the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group. A common theme was that these groups help to develop strong relationships and better understanding, and from there, it is possible to work together on issues of shared concern, in a spirit of partnership. These relationships take time to develop but when they are established, are powerful and should be protected and embedded because of the value they provide to both council, iwi/hapū and the wider community as demonstrated by some of the examples provided to us during the workshops. We consider that these groups and Te Ruarangi demonstrate that there are strong relationships and enduring partnerships that have developed between council and iwi/hapū over time.
- 5.20 It is important to note that we also received feedback that there are challenges with Te Ruarangi and other mechanisms and there is also an opportunity to do more. We comment further on these matters in part 6 below.

Improvements in council's cultural awareness and competency

- 5.21 In our stage one report, we reported on the need for the council to continue to invest and make improvements in the cultural competency of its staff, and to support councillors in their understanding of Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga and tikanga Māori.
- 5.22 We heard that there has continued to be a noticeable improvement in this area. We received feedback that there have been improvements in terms of specific recruitments that have increased

the cultural competency of the council as a whole, and also in terms of the skill set of the existing council workforce in this area.

- 5.23 Several participants commented that they considered the Kaupapa Māori employment outcomes framework had helped in this regard. We received feedback that this framework helped to make clear to all council staff what is expected and what is expected at each level. The contribution of the earlier Te Whāriki framework was acknowledged but this newer document is considered to be more powerful as it is more specific and directive as to the council's expectations of staff.
- 5.24 While there have been improvements, it is clear there is still more that can be done to improve council's cultural awareness and competency and we comment on this further in part 6 below.

Specific projects and initiatives that have supported and developed the relationship

- 5.25 Through our workshops there were a few examples of projects and initiatives that were reported to us several times as 'success stories', where the council and iwi/hapū had worked together in a positive way and that had delivered significant benefits for both council, iwi/hapū and the broader community.
- 5.26 These projects include flood mitigation, civil defence responses, work to combat caulerpa and others. Another key initiative was the work led by the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group in relation to the council's draft freshwater plan change.
- 5.27 One council staff member reported that in relation to a particular project, a hapū representative had commented that there was a noticeable difference in how the council was engaging, which was appreciated.
- 5.28 There was also a great deal of feedback provided on the Wānanga Waiora (referred to above in part 3). A member of ELT noted the level of appreciation that was expressed through that forum for the work that is happening between council, iwi and hapū.

Commitment from leadership

- 5.29 Our impression is that there remains a strong commitment from the leadership of iwi/hapū and the council to build a stronger partnership.
- 5.30 Since the stage one report was completed, there has been a change in governance at council. During our workshops, it was acknowledged that this change in leadership had led to some different views on Te Tiriti and the direction the council should take. However, while there was a range of views expressed, all councillors seemed to acknowledge that the council has important statutory obligations in relation to Te Tiriti and that it is important for the council to have good relationships with iwi/hapū. Moreover, several councillors spoke in detail about the benefits they see in council developing a strong relationship with iwi/hapū and the benefits being delivered through the implementation of Tāiki ē and mechanisms like Te Ruarangi.
- 5.31 The importance of the leadership of council's ELT and Te Tiriti partnerships and engagement team was also raised during the workshops. In particular, it was commented that those teams have played an integral role in maintaining momentum, including in the face of legislative and policy changes.

- 5.32 It was also clear to us that the iwi/hapū leadership remain committed to developing the partnership with council and ensuring this is enduring. In particular, the role of Te Ruarangi remains highly valued. We received feedback that iwi and hapū would like to see this mechanism taken even further and embedded into the council in a meaningful and enduring way.

Ongoing mahi and developments to support the partnership

- 5.33 Another key finding is that a huge amount of work has been done since the stage one report was completed. This work has been alluded to already in this report, but it is worthwhile summarising again here that work so that it can be considered as a whole.
- 5.34 The work reported to us includes:
- (a) A significant programme of work has been carried out to implement Tāiki ē, as noted above. We heard that this work is highly valued and appreciated, including at all of our workshops. We also understand that Tāiki ē has been reviewed and updated to ensure it remains current. It has also been reported on and progress has been measured.
 - (b) A number of new Council policies, strategies and operational documents have been developed, which demonstrate a commitment to strengthening relationships with iwi/hapū and improving council's cultural competency. These include He Toa Takitini, the kaupapa Māori employment outcomes framework, and Te Puna Reo.
 - (c) There have been investments in tools such as a contact database of iwi/hapū contacts, which is intended to be hosted on a GIS system. We heard that there have been some challenges with this project, including challenges with finding the best technology solutions for the task. However, the resource is expected to be of significant value to the council and iwi/hapū when it is completed.
- 5.35 These examples demonstrate that there is a genuine commitment by council and practical steps are being taken. Our overall impression is that this is leading to meaningful improvements, however, there is still more to do.

6. PART SIX: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES?

Overarching comments

- 6.1 In our stage one report, we identified a number of challenges and opportunities for the relationship between the council, iwi and hapū. It was clear to us through this stage two process that many of these challenges remain relevant, and there are some new challenges as well.
- 6.2 In this part 6 of the report, we summarise the challenges and opportunities we heard about through our workshops. Many of these challenges have been alluded to above in part 5 as in many areas there have been improvements, however, challenges still remain.
- 6.3 In summary, the challenges and opportunities we heard about include:
- (a) There have been a number of legislative and policy changes.
 - (b) There are still some issues with the implementation of Tāiki ē and there are opportunities to take that strategy further.
 - (c) There is an opportunity to further embed and strengthen Te Ruarangi's place within council as a forum where council and iwi/hapū can work together in a true spirit of partnership.
 - (d) There is still more that can be done to improve council's cultural awareness and competency.
 - (e) There are inconsistencies in how council engages with iwi and hapū.
 - (f) There are opportunities for even stronger relationships at leadership level between council and iwi and hapū.
 - (g) Resourcing remains a challenge, both for council and iwi and hapū.
 - (h) There remains more to do to improve how the council engages with iwi and hapū on resource consent applications.

Legislative and policy changes

- 6.4 A common theme reported was that legislative and policy changes have created a number of challenges, including:
- (a) Proposed legislative changes have required a lot of resource and time for both council, iwi and hapū to respond to. This has diverted energy and attention from work that was previously planned.
 - (b) Proposed legislative changes also have significant implications for the council's functions, and that is requiring a reset. For example, the council's role in relation to consenting under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 is very different to its standard role as consent authority under the Resource Management Act 1991. This can result in confusion and misalignment of expectations as to what the council can realistically do in a fast-track scheme.
 - (c) Proposed legislative and policy changes have also necessitated a change to existing work programmes. For example, proposed amendments to the NPSFM mean that planning work in relation to freshwater needs to be reconsidered.
 - (d) There have sometimes been questions raised about how to view the council's Te Tiriti obligations and whether the current direction is the right one. That has created challenges in

delivering strategies that were already agreed to. This does not appear to have stopped the direction that was clear in our stage one report, but it has made the implementation of this direction more challenging at times.

- 6.5 At all of our workshops, legislative and policy changes and their impacts were acknowledged. In light of this, there were discussions about how to embed or secure positive relationships that have developed between council, iwi and hapū, but which could be undermined by these changes.

Challenges and opportunities with the implementation of Tāiki ē

- 6.6 Along with the positive aspects regarding the implementation of Tāiki ē as noted above, we also heard of some challenges.
- 6.7 One comment was that there have been some challenges to the commitments made in Tāiki ē and that has slowed delivery.
- 6.8 Another comment was that while there has been a review and report of the progress in implementing the actions in Tāiki ē, the reporting has not necessarily captured the positive impact that these actions are having. This person suggested that in future reporting it would be good to ensure that the impacts of these actions are clearly reported as well as simply their completion, so that the positive benefits being delivered are clear to all. We understand that an annual panui is being developed to address this and will be presented at a formal Te Ruarangi meeting on 15 August 2025.
- 6.9 There was also feedback that there are inconsistencies in terms of how different areas of council approach Tāiki ē. In some areas, the strategy is not well understood and as a consequence it is not being implemented as it should be. We also heard, however, that the managers' wānanga in April 2025 had helped to support implementation of Tāiki ē across council.

Opportunity to strengthen Te Ruarangi

- 6.10 As noted above, Te Ruarangi is an important mechanism that strengthens the relationship between council, iwi and hapū and we heard it is highly valued by both council staff, councillors and iwi and hapū.
- 6.11 However, we also heard that there is an opportunity for Te Ruarangi to do more. In particular, there was feedback that Te Ruarangi's agenda does not always cover all relevant matters. This means there can be lost opportunities for council, iwi and hapū to work together on issues of shared concern.
- 6.12 There was also consistent feedback from Te Ruarangi and MTAG in particular that Te Ruarangi could be further strengthened to do more. There are many examples from around the country as to how this committee could be strengthened, if both council, iwi and hapū agree. This includes:
- (a) It is open to the council to resolve that Te Ruarangi is a standing committee so that it is not disestablished and re-established following every local government election. This commitment could be strengthened through partnership agreements between council, iwi and hapū that record an ongoing commitment to Te Ruarangi.
 - (b) There is an opportunity for the council to strengthen how it works with Te Ruarangi on environmental management matters. For example, some councils have committees that

work together on the development of resource management plans and policy statements and/or resource consenting matters, sometimes supported by independent technical planning expertise to help iwi and hapū engage in these processes.

- (c) Opportunities for joint decision-making could also be explored. One comment we received was that currently the way in which Te Ruarangi fits into the overall council structure does not reflect true partnership, as the ultimate decision-making power sits with the nine elected councillors and is not shared.

- 6.13 The future of Te Ruarangi will need to be carefully considered and discussed by council, iwi and hapū directly and it is up to the partners how they want this mechanism to evolve over time. However, given the strength of Te Ruarangi and how highly it is valued by both council staff, councillors and iwi and hapū, there is significant potential to further strengthen its role in the council's governance structure.

Opportunity for continuing improvement in the council's cultural awareness and competency

- 6.14 As noted above, we heard through our workshops that there has been a notable improvement in the council's cultural awareness and competency, supported by new recruitment and policies that prioritise and encourage council staff to continually upskill in this area.
- 6.15 However, it is clear that there is more that can still be done. We note that Tāiki ē includes an action to *"develop and embed a cultural awareness and competency framework for councillors, staff and relevant consultants"*. This is still an appropriate action, which will be measured through the relevant long-term plan measures (referred to in part 3 above).

Inconsistencies in council practices

- 6.16 In part 5 above, we noted that there are some very positive examples of where council has worked very closely and in a spirit of partnership with iwi and hapū. We also noted our understanding that a huge amount of work has been done to implement Tāiki ē and this is starting to drive a culture shift in council.
- 6.17 However, we also heard that there are inconsistencies in council practices. In particular, in regards to Tāiki ē, we heard that there are still some parts of council that are not familiar with the strategy or the commitments made by council within it. As a consequence, some parts of council have not yet considered what Tāiki ē requires and opportunities for progress are being missed.
- 6.18 In some instances, we heard that matters are slipping through the cracks. For example, the council has developed guidelines for appointing Māori commissioners, however, this was not discussed with Te Ruarangi or MTAG, despite being of obvious relevance to those groups and being one of the identified actions in Tāiki ē.
- 6.19 We also heard that there are inconsistencies regarding the implementation of iwi and hapū environmental management plans and mana whakahono ā rohe, with some parts of council not having a good understanding of these. There is therefore an opportunity to ensure that these documents are properly recognised within council and properly implemented.

Opportunities for stronger relationships at leadership level

- 6.20 Above in part 5 we noted that there is a strong commitment at leadership level, both within council and iwi and hapū to the relationship and working in partnership.
- 6.21 We also heard that there are opportunities to build stronger relationships with Te Kahu o Taonui and ILGACE, which are entities that represent some of the different iwi and hapū groups in Te Taitokerau. We acknowledge that the long-term plan includes a commitment to promote and support information sharing and consultation among iwi and council chairs through these two fora.

Resourcing remains a challenge

- 6.22 In the stage one report, we noted that resourcing is a key challenge, for council, but particularly for iwi and hapū. In many cases, iwi and hapū are not resourced adequately for the contributions that council asks of them.
- 6.23 This was a common theme in this stage two process as well. We heard that too often, the contributions of iwi and hapū are not recognised in an appropriate way. We also heard that where resources are provided, they are often limited and short-term, so iwi and hapū find it difficult to plan and build resources in an enduring way.
- 6.24 There is an opportunity for council to consider the workload required from iwi and hapū and to resource this in a deliberate and planned way.

Engagement on resource consent processes

- 6.25 In the stage one report, we recommended that the council consider its processes for considering and granting resource consents and develop a plan and review mechanism to respond to issues raised by iwi.
- 6.26 Tāiki ē also includes actions to review, update, and embed how the council delivers its regulatory services to ensure regulatory activities (eg resource consents and compliance monitoring) are undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner and include iwi and hapū to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.27 In this stage two process, we have heard that some improvements are occurring, however, there is still much more to do. In particular, we heard that:
- (a) Hapū are not always resourced to consider and provide comments on resource consent applications.
 - (b) Hapū may not have access to appropriate technical expertise (eg planning and other specialists) to be able to provide meaningful comments on resource consent applications.
 - (c) The resource consent application process can also be difficult for hapū and marae to navigate as applicants.
 - (d) In some instances, iwi and hapū are concerned about the approach taken to monitoring and compliance, particularly in relation to freshwater and wetlands where environmental degradation is a concern.
 - (e) We also heard that some iwi/hapū have the impression that council staff sometimes prioritise engagement on resource consents with groups that have agreed a mana whakahono ā rohe

with the council. However, the Resource Management Act 1991 requires persons acting under the Act to recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga (section 6(e)); to have particular regard to kaitiakitanga (section 7(a)); and to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi), regardless of whether a group has negotiated a mana whakahono ā rohe or not.

draft
08 Aug 2025

7. PART SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 We have reflected on the findings in this report to develop a new set of recommendations that reflect the current situation. Some of these recommendations are similar to those set out in our stage one report.
- 7.2 We note that we received feedback during our workshops that while the recommendations in the stage one report were very helpful and have led to improvements, they were also quite broad, and it would assist to have more specific recommendations in this stage two process. We have endeavoured to provide more specific recommendations in this stage two report.
- 7.3 Our recommendations are structured to respond to the eight areas of challenge and opportunity we identified in the preceding part 6 of this report, which were as follows:
- (a) There have been legislative and policy changes.
 - (b) There are still some issues with the implementation of Tāiki ē and there are opportunities to take that strategy further.
 - (c) There is an opportunity to further embed and strengthen Te Ruarangi's place within council as a forum where council and iwi/hapū can work together in a true spirit of partnership.
 - (d) There is still more that can be done to improve council's cultural awareness and competency.
 - (e) There are inconsistencies in how council engages with iwi and hapū.
 - (f) There are opportunities for even stronger relationships at leadership level between council and iwi and hapū.
 - (g) Resourcing remains a challenge, both for council and iwi and hapū.
 - (h) There remains more to do to improve how the council engages with iwi and hapū on resource consent applications.

- 7.4 In response to these themes or topics, we make the following recommendations:

Responding to legislative and policy changes

- 7.5 Legislative and national policy change is outside the council's control to some extent. However, these matters can have a significant impact on the relationship. We acknowledge that the council and iwi and hapū have already worked together on such matters since our stage one health check. We recommend that this process continues. In particular, we recommend that:
- (a) The council continues to discuss relevant legislative and policy changes with iwi, in particular, with Te Ruarangi but also with other representative entities where appropriate (such as Te Kahu o Taonui and/or ILGACE and/or individual iwi/hapū). The purpose of this engagement would be:
 - (i) to share information;
 - (ii) to understand the views of iwi and hapū;
 - (iii) to help the council decide whether to respond to matters through submissions and/or to put in place any processes to respond to changes; and

- (iv) how the council can work with Te Ruarangi and/or other representative entities on those matters, if appropriate.

Continuing with the implementation of Tāiki ē

- 7.6 As in stage one, we consider that Tāiki ē is an impressive document and, if implemented, will lead to significant and positive change. We note that the actions in Tāiki ē cover a range of matters including:
- (a) supporting the uptake of iwi/hapū environmental management plans and mana whakahono ā rohe;
 - (b) consideration of resource management matters (both planning, consenting and compliance);
 - (c) investing in council's cultural awareness and competency;
 - (d) supporting iwi and hapū to engage in council processes;
 - (e) reviewing council's processes for engagement;
 - (f) consideration of opportunities for joint decision-making;
 - (g) procurement matters; and
 - (h) supporting broader Māori outcomes.
- 7.7 The list of actions is comprehensive, specific and measurable. We recommend that the council continues to implement Tāiki ē and to monitor progress.
- 7.8 We have the following specific recommendations to assist with the implementation of this important document:
- (a) The council should ensure that each council department is considering Tāiki ē, how it relates to the work of that department, and what the department can do to help implement the actions. Each department could be requested to provide a report on how it intends to implement the actions and to report on its progress ahead of the next review of Tāiki ē.
 - (b) We recommend that the council and Te Ruarangi review Tāiki ē and progress in implementing the actions at regular intervals and, if necessary, update Tāiki ē to ensure that it remains up to date and focussed on the key priorities. That is, we endorse the process that was undertaken in 2023 and 2024 to review and update Tāiki ē. If the strategy is regularly reviewed in this manner, that will help in ensuring there is consistent progress in the direction that the partners agree.
 - (c) The long-term planning process should specifically consider the resourcing implications of implementing Tāiki ē, including council resourcing and iwi/hapū resourcing.

Considering the next steps for Te Ruarangi

- 7.9 We heard that Te Ruarangi is an important and highly valued and respected mechanism to support and develop the relationship between council, iwi and hapū.
- 7.10 We recommend that the council work with Te Ruarangi to ensure that its terms of reference are appropriate and reflect a partnership approach. Specific topics to consider as part of this include:

- (a) How to ensure that Te Ruarangi is embedded into council's governance structure in an enduring way. One option would be for council to resolve that Te Ruarangi is a standing committee and for reference to Te Ruarangi to be included in individual iwi/hapū relationship agreements.
- (b) That the scope of matters coming to Te Ruarangi is appropriate. This could include review of how the agenda for Te Ruarangi meetings is set, including how this is integrated with the agenda for full council meetings. It should also include ensuring that actions taken to implement Tāiki ē are developed with appropriate oversight and input from Te Ruarangi.
- (c) The council and Te Ruarangi could also discuss the options for improving iwi/hapū participation in resource management processes, including through the Natural Resources Working Party. There are examples around the country where a committee like Te Ruarangi is involved very closely in the development of resource management planning documents, including with access to appropriate technical expertise (eg. planning). In making this recommendation, we acknowledge that the council has worked closely with iwi and hapū on significant resource management matters to date (for example, through the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group). If the partners wish, they could discuss Te Ruarangi's remit being expanded to formal involvement in the resource management planning process.
- (d) That opportunities for joint decision-making are explored.

Continuing investment in council's cultural awareness and competency

- 7.11 The council should continue to invest in cultural awareness and competency programmes, for both staff and councillors.

Lifting the standard of engagement across council as a whole

- 7.12 We recommend that the council develops a policy on engagement to ensure consistency across council teams. This policy could include case studies of some of the success stories we heard about during our workshops as well as guidance on how to engage well and in a spirit of partnership.
- 7.13 The council should also continue to develop the iwi and hapū contacts database. This will be an important resource for the council, iwi and hapū.
- 7.14 As part of that work, or alongside it, the council should consider how information about mana whakahono ā rohe, other relationship agreements and iwi/hapū environmental management plans is held within council, to ensure that relevant departments are aware of these important documents and give them due consideration in delivering their work.

Opportunities for further relationships at governance level

- 7.15 The council should discuss with Te Ruarangi whether it would be appropriate to put in place some standing relationship mechanisms with Te Kahu o Taonui and ILGACE in order to deliver on the existing commitment in the long-term plan, and to develop strong relationships between council and iwi/hapū at governance level.

Resourcing

- 7.16 The council should continue to consider how it can support iwi/hapū to work with council. There are a number of options to consider, including:
- (a) developing clear guidelines for proactive resourcing and reimbursement;
 - (b) engaging independent technical specialists to support iwi and hapū in resource management processes where needed (ie expert planning support); and
 - (c) ensuring that implementation of Tāiki ē is carefully considered in the long-term planning process, including the resourcing implications for both council and iwi/hapū.

Resource management matters

- 7.17 The council should continue with the implementation of the action plan developed in response to the independent review of resource consent processes (refer above at paragraph 3.37(a)).
- 7.18 In addition, as mentioned above, the council and Te Ruarangi should consider the approach to resource management planning and whether there is an opportunity to strengthen how the council works with iwi and hapū on the development of those policy statements and plans.

APPENDIX ONE: STAGE ONE REPORT

draft
08 Aug 2025

TE TIRITI HEALTH CHECK REPORT

BY

WHĀIA LEGAL AND BUDDLE FINDLAY

FOR

TE KAUNIHĒRA Ā ROHE O TE TAITOKERAU / NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2022

23 September 2022

1. PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Buddle Findlay and Whāia Legal,¹ were engaged by Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Te Taitokerau / Northland Regional Council (**Council**) to undertake a Te Tiriti health check. The purpose of the Tiriti health check is to provide an independent assessment as to how the Council understands and implements its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations in engaging with tangata whenua and mana whenua.

Scope and process

- 1.2 In March 2022, the Māori Technical Advisory Group (**MTAG**) provided initial direction by using the Te Arawhiti framework and identified the following six priority areas for the Tiriti health check:
- (a) Governance: Understanding of Māori council relations priorities;
 - (b) Relationships with Māori: Relationship management;
 - (c) Relationships with Māori: Engagement, partnerships and empowerment;
 - (d) Relationships with Māori: Procurement;
 - (e) Structural: Addressing institutional racism; and
 - (f) Policy and services: Evaluation.
- 1.3 As part of the work plan developed with the Council, we agreed on proposed questions for the workshops to address the six priority areas. However, it became clear during the course of the workshops, that to allow free and frank discussions between ourselves and participants and to gain the most insight from these workshops, these were better facilitated through broad scope questions, and we could then focus on key issues and challenges / opportunities. The broad scope questions included the following:
- (a) What are the Council's strengths in working with Māori?
 - (b) What are the Council's strengths in working in a manner that is consistent with Te Tiriti and its principles?
 - (c) What can be improved?
- 1.4 The discussions naturally addressed MTAG's six priority areas, noting that some groups spoke to different aspects of the six priority areas.
- 1.5 In undertaking this assessment, we have:
- (a) followed the work plan and scope developed with the Council;
 - (b) focused on the six priority areas identified by MTAG;
 - (c) used the Te Arawhiti framework to assess Council's performance in the six priority areas;
 - (d) reviewed Council documentation provided by the Council as relevant to the six priority areas;
 - (e) conducted workshops with (or received written feedback from) the following groups to obtain feedback on the Council's performance in the six priority areas:

¹ Tai Ahu, Rahera Douglas (Whāia Legal) and Paul Beverley, Frances Wedde, Cerridwen Bulow (Buddle Findlay).

23 September 2022

- (i) Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party (**TTMAC**) and MTAG;
 - (ii) kaitiaki;
 - (iii) Council Executive Leadership Team; and
 - (iv) Councillors and Council staff;
- (f) prepared a draft report summarising our findings and setting out our recommendations;
- (g) presented the draft report to MTAG, the Executive Leadership Team (**ELT**) and TTMAC and considered any feedback; and
- (h) prepared a final report.
- 1.6 We also note that, although this report is focused on the Council, there are also Council-controlled organisations / entities, whose functions are significant for Te Taitokerau communities. As such, the findings and recommendations in this report will also be relevant to, and will need to be considered by, those organisations / entities.

Report structure

- 1.7 To reflect the structure of our workshops, our report addresses:
- (a) **Part One:** Introduction.
 - (b) **Part Two:** Te Taitokerau context.
 - (c) **Part Three:** What is the current state of the relationship between Māori and the Council?
 - (d) **Part Four:** What is working well?
 - (e) **Part Five:** What are the challenges / opportunities?
 - (f) **Part Six:** Recommendations.
- 1.8 We have addressed the six priority areas, and the Te Arawhiti framework, in our recommendations section. The Te Arawhiti framework was a useful reference point, but we developed a specific framework for this process, which is reflected in the structure of this report.
- 1.9 We recognise and understand that the Tiriti health check, and this report, is just one part of the journey of the relationship between Council and Te Taitokerau Māori.

2. PART TWO: TE TAITOKERAU CONTEXT

- 2.1 In undertaking this Tiriti health check, it is important to understand the unique context of the area serviced by the Council. By unique context, we mean:
- (a) population structure and demographics;
 - (b) iwi and hapū rangatiratanga; and
 - (c) the history and relevance of He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi together, and Treaty settlements.
- 2.2 We consider each of these elements below.

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- 2.3 We heard that Crown and local government structures have been designed to maintain the 'status quo' and colonial hierarchy where institutions remained in the centre with the power and authority, and others were kept on the outside with little or no influence (not being able to vote was one example). Māori have long been ignored or treated as a party to be consulted, rather than being at the decision-making table as a Tiriti partner. There is a need to ensure that local government and Māori are moving beyond that colonial history and more towards partnership, and we saw positive signs of the beginning of that movement through this health check process.

Population structure and demographics

- 2.4 The 2018 census put the population count for the Northland region at over 179,000 people spread over an area of 12,500 km.² Of that 179,000 over 64,000 (or 36%) of the population were Māori. Comparatively, the 2018 census found that Māori make up 16.5% of the total population of the country.

Iwi and hapū rangatiratanga

- 2.5 Within the Northland region, there are a number of different collectives of iwi and hapū who held and continue to hold rangatiratanga.
- 2.6 Te Puni Kōkiri has identified 12 iwi that have been formally recognised by the Crown whose Tākiwa fall, either partially or wholly, within the region. These are Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kuri, Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngāi Takoto, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa, Ngāpuhi/Ngati Kahu ki Whaingaroa, Ngāpuhi, Ngātiwai, Te Uri o Hau, Te Roroa and Ngati Whātua.
- 2.7 In its report "He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti", the Waitangi Tribunal recognised the rangatiratanga of hapū at the time of the signing of Te Tiriti. The Tribunal stated that:³

They came from a world in which each hapū was autonomous and exercised power over its own territories, retaining that autonomy even when acting in alliance or concert with other hapū. The rangatira brought also their own individual experiences and concerns, based on the interests of their hapū...

- 2.8 Hapū autonomy remains an important and distinct feature of the Northland region to this day. During interviews, it was noted that the most recent communication between Council staff and hapū leaders identified more than 300 hapū. A number of hapū actively engage with the Council on their own terms and to represent the interests of their hapū members in the rohe where they hold mana whenua.
- 2.9 Some iwi and hapū have entered into deeds of settlement and consequent settlement legislation with the Crown, others have not. Those who have settled have formal arrangements with the Council in accordance with their settlement legislation.

He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti

- 2.10 The unique context of hapū autonomy in Northland is intertwined with views on He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti. By He Whakaputanga, rangatira from Te Taitokerau declared their own independence and the independence of their country, and asserted their own sovereignty, independent of any other purported law-making power. The Waitangi Tribunal acknowledged that historical accounts

² <https://statsnz.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6f49867abe464f86ac7526552fe19787>.

³ Waitangi Tribunal *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti* (Wai 1040, 2014) at 2.

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from the time support the position that He Whakaputanga was an assertion of sovereignty in accordance with Māori political understandings of the time, that is, when hapū were the main political unit.

- 2.11 While He Whakaputanga is not referenced in Te Tiriti, the two documents together are an essential statement on the sovereignty of Māori in Northland. The Waitangi Tribunal found that Taitokerau rangatira did not cede sovereignty to the Crown at the time they signed Te Tiriti and our understanding through this process is that Taitokerau Māori continue to maintain that they have not ceded their sovereignty to either central or local government.⁴ That position of sovereignty, as envisioned by the rangatira at the time He Whakaputanga was signed, is something that Taitokerau Māori are still striving to achieve.
- 2.12 In our interviews with interested Māori parties, we heard how political and legal structures inherited under the colonial system have alienated Māori participation in governance. In particular, the local government system was designed to maintain English ideals of class structure. To that end, only landowners could vote for a long period of time; women and Māori were excluded from participation in local government. This history of Māori exclusion has resulted in ongoing low participation from Māori.
- 2.13 We heard there needs to be a system change to enable those who have genuine passion for Māori empowerment to be effective. While Māori represent a high proportion of the population of Northland, the system has not been built to account for Māori participation nor for the isolation that occurs with rural communities.
- 2.14 While the Tiriti health check is limited to consideration of Te Tiriti, we recognise the importance of He Whakaputanga as a formal statement of the sovereignty and unity of rangatira in Te Taitokerau. We also acknowledge its essential relevance to the unique context of Taitokerau and have taken this into account in our assessment.

3. PART THREE: WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MĀORI AND THE COUNCIL?

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of:
- (a) the legislative context for the relationship between Māori and local government;
 - (b) the existing governance / relationship structures between Māori and the Council; and
 - (c) the existing strategic direction / frameworks for the relationship between Māori and the Council.
- 3.2 Our assessment of what is working well, and what the challenges and opportunities are, is addressed in parts four and five of this report.

Legislative context

- 3.3 There is no one coherent framework of statutory obligations for the relationship between Māori and local government. Rather, discrete statutory obligations have been developed on a statute-by-

⁴ Waitangi Tribunal *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti* (Wai 1040, 2014) at 2.

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statute basis over many years, and they are framed in different ways depending on the statute in question.

- 3.4 There are different obligations that may apply to a council depending on the circumstances. For example, under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) there are certain obligations that are relevant to a council in its regulatory capacity; and others when acting as an applicant for resource consent (eg when seeking consents for three waters infrastructure). The statutory obligations arise under a range of statutes, including:
- (a) local government legislation (such as the Local Government Act 2002);
 - (b) planning and environmental legislation (such as the RMA);
 - (c) Treaty settlement legislation;
 - (d) customary rights legislation (such as the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011); and
 - (e) other legislation (such as the Reserves Act).
- 3.5 There are also other obligations to Māori that arise, for example, under RMA national policy statements such as the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 or the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.
- 3.6 The specific legal obligations vary depending on the statute and the context, and those differences are important. Obligations may focus on (for example):
- (a) Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi;
 - (b) recognition of tikanga Māori, values, culture and traditions;
 - (c) understanding of tikanga and mātauranga Māori;
 - (d) customary rights (for example in the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act context);
 - (e) participation for Māori in local authority decision-making;
 - (f) recognition of areas or resources of particular significance to Māori; and
 - (g) processes such as consultation.
- 3.7 The inconsistencies and gaps in the legislation present challenges to both Māori and councils in terms of understanding what is required in the relationship context.
- 3.8 One important matter to be explored further is the extent to which the legislation is enabling or constraining in terms of advancing the partnership aspirations of the parties.

Governance / relationship structures

- 3.9 The governance structure for the Council is made up of:
- (a) a full Council comprising of nine elected Councillors (as the ultimate decision-making body for Council matters);
 - (b) joint committees;
 - (c) statutory bodies;

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- (d) co-governance bodies;
 - (e) sub-committees; and
 - (f) working parties.
- 3.10 All joint committees, sub-committees and working parties are required to regularly report progress on their functions to the Council. In addition to those governance structures, there are also a number of collaborative community working groups.
- 3.11 Māori are currently represented at governance level through representation / membership on:
- (a) certain joint committees, including:
 - (i) Joint Climate Change Adaptation Committee;
 - (ii) Kaipara Moana Remediation Joint Committee; and
 - (iii) the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group;
 - (b) a statutory body, being the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Board, which was established through Treaty settlements and is a joint committee for the management of Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe (90 Mile Beach);
 - (c) working parties, including:
 - (i) TTMAC Working Party;
 - (ii) Climate Change Working Party;
 - (iii) Planning and Regulatory Working Party;
 - (iv) Biosecurity and Biodiversity Working Party; and
 - (v) Water and Land Working Party; and
 - (d) other groups, such as:
 - (i) MTAG;
 - (ii) Local Government Elections subgroup;
 - (iii) Strategic (Priorities) Intent subgroup 2021; and
 - (iv) Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group.
- 3.12 Members of TTMAC make up the representation / membership on the other working parties and the other groups.⁵ The working parties and groups do not have any formal decision-making delegations from the Council.
- 3.13 The Local Government Elections subgroup, and Strategic (Priorities) Intent subgroup are examples of groups formed for specific projects or pieces of work throughout a triennium to ensure the Council has iwi and hapū expertise and perspectives.
- 3.14 Māori will also be represented in the full council following the 2022 local body elections. In October 2020, the Councillors agreed to establish Māori constituencies and formally introduce Māori seats to

⁵ A TTMAC member is also a representative on the Joint Climate Change Adaptation Committee.

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the full council. We understand it is intended that two of the nine Councillors elected will be from the Māori constituencies.

3.15 In addition there is:

- (a) Te Kahu o Taonui, the Iwi Chairs Forum which is autonomous from Council; and
- (b) the Iwi and Local Government Agency Chief Executives Forum (**ILGACE**).

Kaipara Moana Remediation Joint Committee

3.16 The Kaipara Moana Remediation Joint Committee oversees the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme. The committee is made up of six Kaipara Uri and six council representatives (three from Auckland Council and three from Northland Regional Council). A memorandum of understanding was signed in October 2020 by central government, councils and Kaipara Uri to formalise the equal partnership between Kaipara Uri and the councils to undertake the remediation programme.

Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Board

3.17 The Board is a co-governance partnership established through the Te Hiku Treaty settlement legislation. The board comprises of members from four iwi and members from the Far North District Council and Northland Regional Council. The purpose of the board is to provide governance and direction to those with a role or responsibility relating to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.

TTMAC

3.18 TTMAC was established in 2014, and initially operated as a standing committee (Te Tai Tokerau Māori Advisory Committee). Due to limitations of standing orders and how the committee could operate, it was decided that TTMAC would better operate as a working party. Prior to 2014, TTMAC (or similar constructs) operated / participated in Council processes. New Terms of Reference were agreed in April 2020 (**ToR**). By way of summary, the ToR provide as follows:

- (a) the Te Kaupapa / Mission statement;
- (b) He Tirohanga Māori / Vision Statement 2030;
- (c) Ngā Ture / Values and Ngā whainga / Objectives;
- (d) membership of TTMAC consists of:
 - (i) 21 appointed iwi and hapū members (one representative per iwi and hapū); and
 - (ii) nine elected members (Councillors);
- (e) TTMAC meets up to 10 times a year (either formally or for workshops at marae focusing on local issues) and provides a summary report to the Council after each meeting;
- (f) the Council pays the costs for meeting, mileage and attendance at other working parties for non-elected members of TTMAC (iwi and hapū representatives) in accordance with its relevant policy and the ToR; and
- (g) currently TTMAC has no delegated authority from the Council.

3.19 The Te Kaupapa / Mission Statement in the ToR states that TTMAC provides:

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- (a) a forum that emphasises and advocates te Ao Māori; the Māori world view;
- (b) a means by which the Māori perspective is valued, influences and challenges processes and policy;
- (c) a stable platform for whānau, hapū and iwi to connect and communicate with each other;
- (d) a safe haven for open and forthright discussion; and
- (e) strong leadership in consultation with tāngata whenua and Māori communities.

MTAG

- 3.20 MTAG is a sub-group of TTMAC and provides technical advice and guidance to the non-elected members of TTMAC (iwi and hapū representatives).
- 3.21 MTAG (previously the Māori Technical Working Party) was endorsed in 2015 to assist the then Te Tai Tokerau Māori Advisory Committee.
- 3.22 MTAG does not have formal delegations or terms of reference.

Te Kahu o Taonui and ILGACE

- 3.23 Te Kahu o Taonui was formed in 2006 as a collective of iwi and their Chairs in Te Taitokerau to create opportunities to benefit whānau, hapū and marae. Since its establishment there are now 12 iwi represented in this collective recognised by the iwi authorities of Te Taitokerau independently. These are Ngāti Whatua, Te Roroa, Ngātiwai, Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi, Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa, Kahukuraariki Trust Board, Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngai Takoto, Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kuri.
- 3.24 Accordingly, TTMAC has eight mandated iwi members actively representing Ngātiwai, Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi, Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa, Te Roroa, Te Uri o Hau, Ngāti Whātua and four iwi memberships that are currently vacant. These are Ngāti Kuri, Ngai Takoto, Ngāti Kahu and Ngāti Kahu ki Whaingaroa.
- 3.25 In 2019, Whanaungatanga ki Tauranga – the Relationship Agreement was signed by seven iwi and three local body authorities. The intent of this agreement was to establish a more cohesive governance to governance relationship between Te Kahu o Taonui and local government.
- 3.26 The relationship agreement sets out the common goals and meeting arrangements for the partners.
- 3.27 The ILGACE meets regularly to work on shared goals and outcomes.

Strategic direction

- 3.28 A number of planning and other documents have started to shape the strategic direction for the relationship between Māori and the Council. For example:
- (a) *Te Mahere Roa - Long Term Plan 2021 – 2031* and *Te Pae Tawhiti – Our Vision 2021-2031*, Council;
 - (b) *Strategic Intent 2021-2040*, TTMAC;
 - (c) *Tāiki ē (NRC Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan)*, Council and TTMAC;
 - (d) Council policy framework documents, such as *Te Whāriki – Māori Responsiveness Policy Framework* (2019);

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- (e) Mana whakahono a rohe under the RMA; and
- (f) Iwi / hapū environmental management plans.

3.29 These are summarised briefly below.

Te Pae Tawhiti – Our Vision 2021-2031

3.30 The Council developed *Te Pae Tawhiti – Our Vision 2021-2031* (**Te Pae Tawhiti**), which is a strategic summary document that focuses on community outcomes that the Council wants to achieve and shows the work the Council does, or plans to do, through its Long Term Plan 2021-2031. In particular:

- (a) healthy waters for the environment and our people;
- (b) resilient and adaptable communities in a changing climate;
- (c) protected and flourishing native life;
- (d) meaningful partnerships with tangata whenua;
- (e) a strong and sustainable regional economy; and
- (f) safe and effective transport networks connecting our region.

TTMAC Strategic Intent 2021-2040

3.31 A critically important document developed by TTMAC is the *Strategic Intent 2021 – 2040* (**TTMAC Strategic Intent**).

3.32 TTMAC developed the TTMAC Strategic Intent which sets out:

- (a) Te Kaupapa / Mission "*He iwi tahi tatou kia ora ai te taiao – Kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga work together for the wellbeing of the environment*";
- (b) Te Pae Tawhiti / Vision 2014; and
- (c) Ngā Whainga / Desired Goals for:
 - (i) capacity and capability;
 - (ii) Māori representation;
 - (iii) water / marine;
 - (iv) climate crisis; and
 - (v) economic development; and
- (d) Ngā Tikanga / Values.

3.33 The TTMAC Strategic Intent formed the basis for Tāiki ē which is discussed below.

Tāiki ē (NRC Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan)

3.34 *Tāiki ē (NRC Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan)* (**Tāiki ē**) was endorsed by TTMAC on 14 July 2022 and adopted by the Council on 26 July 2022. Tāiki ē was prepared by a group including TTMAC representatives.

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- 3.35 Tāiki ē focuses on actions to achieve desired goals for capability and capacity and Māori representation from the TTMAC Strategic Intent (two of the five Ngā Whainga / desired goals identified in the TTMAC Strategic Intent).
- 3.36 Tāiki ē provides that, "*Ina tere ngā kapua, he hau kei muri – progress is built on applying shared values*". When Tāiki ē was presented to Council for adoption it was described that the ingoa or name Tāiki ē denotes the intent to a collective commitment that, "*we come together collectively to get the mahi done*".
- 3.37 Tāiki ē identifies for each action:
- (a) who is responsible;
 - (b) a timeframe, ranging from underway, commencing within 12 months, 1-3 years and ongoing;
 - (c) the budget allocated to the action (sometimes the action is 'unbudgeted' or within existing resources);
 - (d) the Ngā Whainga / Goals it will achieve (identified in TTMAC Strategic Intent including, capability, capacity, partnership, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, decision-making and resourcing); and
 - (e) priority according to the actions ability to give effect to Te Kaupapa / Mission.
- 3.38 The 26 actions identified in Tāiki ē are significant and broad ranging – from actions at a strategic / overarching framework level to the development of tools and resources to assist 'on the ground'. By way of an example, some of the actions include:
- (a) establishing the Te Tiriti health check and review framework (part of which includes the carrying out of this independent review);
 - (b) continue to develop Tāiki ē;
 - (c) support and increase uptake of iwi and hapū environmental management plans and mana whakahono a rohe;
 - (d) develop and fund a culturally appropriate Council environmental monitoring programme;
 - (e) deliver specific projects within agreed priority areas of interest;
 - (f) develop and embed a cultural awareness and competency framework for Councillors, staff and relevant consultants;
 - (g) invest in building tangata whenua capacity and capability;
 - (h) develop and maintain a digital tangata whenua contacts database that spatially identifies indicative iwi and hapū rohe boundaries;
 - (i) ensure the successful and ongoing implementation of Māori constituencies; and
 - (j) review Council procurement policies and processes and ensure there are fair and equal opportunities for tangata whenua consultants and contractors to obtain Council contracts.

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Council policy framework documents

- 3.39 The Council developed *Te Whāriki: Māori Responsiveness Policy Framework (Te Whāriki)* in December 2019. The purpose of Te Whāriki is to "influence, enhance and guide" the Council's "responsiveness to Māori".
- 3.40 Three Ngā Pou (goals) were identified, being:
- (a) Te Pou Wāhi – resilient Māori communities;
 - (b) Te Pou Tāngata – effective Māori participation; and
 - (c) Te Pou Huarahi – a culturally competent organisation.
- 3.41 Shared principles were also identified that underpin and provide guidance on how to implement Te Whāriki.
- 3.42 For Te Pou Huarahi – a culturally competent organisation, a core cultural competencies framework and training programme was developed. This identifies different competency levels for Te Reo Māori, Tikanga Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The training programme then identifies which staff within Council are expected to be at which competency level, and establishes a training programme, such as completing specific modules or courses, in order to achieve those competencies.
- 3.43 More specific policy documents have also been prepared, for example *Engaging Cultural Monitors for consented earthworks / land disturbance* (2021). This policy provides clarity and guidance on the processes involved when engaging cultural monitors and is to be read in conjunction with Te Whāriki. This policy framework provides practical guidance to Council staff working in this space and builds on Te Whāriki and other strategic direction.

Mana whakahono a rohe

- 3.44 The Council has entered into two mana whakahono a rohe with Te Patuharakeke Iwi Trust Board and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia.
- 3.45 The purposes of mana whakahono a rohe are to:
- (a) enable iwi authorities (and hapū authorities where agreed) and local authorities to agree on ways in which tangata whenua (through their iwi authorities) may participate in resource management processes; and
 - (b) assist local authorities in complying with their statutory duties under the RMA, including through the implementation of sections 6(e), 7(a), and 8 of the RMA.
- 3.46 Mana whakahono a rohe are binding statutory arrangements that provide for a more structured relationship under the RMA between iwi and/or hapū authorities and councils. The intention was to improve working relationships between tangata whenua and local authorities, and to enhance Māori participation in RMA resource management and decision-making processes.

Iwi / hapū environmental management plans

- 3.47 There are 14 iwi / hapū environmental management plans that have been developed and recognised by an iwi authority and formally lodged with the Council.

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- 3.48 The purpose of these documents is to describe resource management issues of importance for tangata whenua and are relevant to both RMA planning and consenting processes.
- 3.49 The Council has specific funding for these plans.

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4. PART FOUR: WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

Overarching comments

- 4.1 The 'what is working well' comments below need to be viewed in the context of both the history of the relationship between local authorities and iwi/hapū in Aotearoa and Te Taitokerau, and the fact that there is a long way still to go to achieve genuine partnership in a way that reflects and respects Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and the mana and rangatiratanga of iwi and hapū. As noted earlier, the local government legislation and structures are not designed in a manner that drive stronger partnership with Māori. However, that legislation is more enabling than is often appreciated.
- 4.2 In overall terms, we consider there are some very positive aspects of this partnership between tangata whenua and the Council including:
- (a) the relationship has developed significantly since 2014;
 - (b) there is a huge amount of work going on from both partners to support and develop the partnership – there are high levels of commitment from the iwi/hapū members of the various structures such as TTMAC – although there are some questions about the sustainability of the approach given the huge workloads and demands on those members (commented on further below);
 - (c) there is a genuine desire emerging in the leadership structure of Council to take the next step in the partnership journey, to better understand and embrace Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and tikanga Māori and to deliver something meaningful. The 'hearts and minds' of elected members and senior management are moving in the right direction to deliver some meaningful change. There was a real sense of excitement among Council leadership as to this journey they are on, but there can be challenges for elected members in terms of bringing the community with them;
 - (d) there are very positive structures in place to support the partnership – we heard positive comments about the valuable role that TTMAC has played, and there are a number of other structures and committees in place which are designed to move closer to a partnership approach; and
 - (e) there has been excellent work done on Tāiki ē on the back of the TTMAC Strategic Intent – Tāiki ē is an impressive document that was co-designed through a series of workshops where robust discussions were had, and clear actions and accountability/timeframes and budgetary matters identified.
- 4.3 We consider that this partnership is in a strong place relative to many of the iwi/hapū and local authority relationships across the country. For the reasons outlined above there has been impressive work done particularly over the last few years, and most importantly there is increasingly a leadership level commitment to genuine partnership. We heard that the dial has moved slowly in the right direction, but commitment to keep progressing and tangible outcomes and actions are needed, as is a movement towards genuine partnership where the parties sit equally at the table.
- 4.4 There is still a long way to go on the journey but the discussions we had and the documentation such as Tāiki ē demonstrated that there is commitment to success and to working together. Implementing the actions in Tāiki ē will be one critical element of that success.

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The journey

- 4.5 Iwi/hapū have been patient in terms of building strong partnership with the Council. For generations iwi/hapū have not been appropriately included in Council business and have observed many negative consequences as a result, including to the whānau and to the taiao.
- 4.6 Iwi/hapū have had to endure a local government system that was designed to maintain the status quo, from which they were effectively excluded. There have been very low levels of respect for, and understanding of, tikanga Māori and the mana, rangatiratanga and perspectives of iwi/hapū.
- 4.7 We heard that the dial is shifting in Te Taitokerau, with stronger levels of understanding and respect in the elected member and management/staff levels of the Council. There are some strong examples of partnership-based approaches emerging, but there is still a long way to go before true partnership is realised in a manner that reflects and respects Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and the mana and rangatiratanga of iwi and hapū.
- 4.8 There has been impressive work undertaken between tangata whenua and the Council. Clearly the partners in recent times have come together determined to forge a new pathway based on partnership. The work done by TTMAC in relation to the TTMAC Strategic Intent and the subsequent agreement of Tāiki ē are powerful examples. What was apparent was the sense of celebration around how Tāiki ē was developed together, how robust conversations were held, and how the parties emerged as partners committed to Tāiki ē and the implementation plan.
- 4.9 There is also a recognition that the parties are at a point in an important journey, but not the end point. There is much work still to do, including the successful implementation of Tāiki ē, but also reflecting on what the ultimate goals and next steps in the partnership may look like. The role of tangata whenua in the decision-making processes of Council will be one important consideration on that journey.

Commitment from leadership

- 4.10 There is clearly a strong commitment from the leadership of iwi/hapū and the Council to build a stronger partnership between the parties.
- 4.11 It was clear that the iwi/hapū leadership are committed to developing a stronger partnership with Council. That was clear from the fact that, despite the generations of being effectively excluded from Council business, iwi/hapū leaders continued to show leadership in terms of how a partnership could be developed and the importance of that partnership for not only iwi/hapū but for all of Te Taitokerau. That commitment must be acknowledged as a central ingredient in the positive gains that have been made.
- 4.12 We observed a strong desire within the Council leadership structures to continue the journey that the partners are on. There was a recognition that the requisite standards had not been met in the past and that there was still a lot to do. There was, however, a clearly discernible desire within the Council leadership to form genuine partnerships and to move forward in a meaningful way.
- 4.13 There were comments made to recognise the strong leadership shown by the chair of the Council and the chief executive who is about to finish at the Council. The same was said of the incoming chief executive who similarly had a strong understanding and motivation to develop strong partnerships. That leadership is also critical.

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4.14 There is also a sense of celebration in the Council leadership in terms of the work that had been done to date, and the collaborative way in which that work was done between the parties.

4.15 That commitment is significant as it is not always apparent in local government leadership.

Commitment to embracing Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and tikanga Māori

4.16 It was clear that the partners had worked together to assist the Council to develop a stronger understanding of Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and tikanga Māori. Elected members and staff spoke extremely highly in terms of the opportunity to visit marae and to be educated on tikanga Māori, including through the adoption and implementation of Te Whāriki.

4.17 We also heard from Council leadership of the strong intention to focus on Te Tiriti (rather than the Treaty) and to see the partnership through the tangata whenua lens.

4.18 There is a desire to respect He Whakaputanga, but clearly the partners need to work through how to do that in the Council context.

Strong structures have been implemented

4.19 As noted earlier in this report, there are a number of different structures in place to guide the partnership. That is a positive sign, as it is important to embed the partnership in all of the governance, management and operational layers of the Council.

4.20 We heard positive comments about the valuable role that TTMAC and MTAG have played, and there are a number of other structures and committees in place which are designed to move closer to a partnership approach.

4.21 One matter that was particularly apparent though was the significant personal commitment from the iwi/hapū members that participate in these Council structures (many members are in multiple roles). There is a real need to better support those members including through resourcing.

A plan is in place

4.22 As noted, there has been excellent work done on Tāiki ē that has now been adopted by the Council.

4.23 Tāiki ē was developed following the important foundational work undertaken by TTMAC in its strategic intent document.

4.24 Tāiki ē is an impressive document that was co-designed through a series of workshops where robust discussions were had.

4.25 There are clear actions and accountability/timeframes and budgetary matters identified in Tāiki ē, and there were very positive comments made as to the co-design process for preparing Tāiki ē, and the fact that Council and tangata whenua have a clear action plan they are committed to. The successful implementation of Tāiki ē will be a critical determining factor in the future success of the partnership.

The Council team

4.26 We also heard very positive comments on the role of Pou Manawhakahaere – Group Manager Governance and Engagement and that team in guiding the kaupapa within the Council and within the partnership structures.

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- 4.27 The significant impact that that team is having was plainly visible to us through this process, and must be acknowledged.

There is still a lot to do

- 4.28 While we heard very positive comments on the progress that is being made and the structures and documents in place (such as TTMAC and Tāiki ē), there was a consistent view that this was a starting point and there is a lot more to do. Importantly, the current approach must be secured through and beyond the local government elections this year.
- 4.29 Beyond the elections, there are opportunities to implement Tāiki ē effectively, and look to stronger partnerships and structures in the future, particularly in the areas of, for example, shared decision-making and transfers of powers.

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5. PART FIVE: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES?

- 5.1 Our assessment identified a number of challenges and opportunities for the relationship between the Council and Māori Tiriti partners and collectives. While many of the Māori focussed groups had indicated a strong support, there were differences in perspective about implementation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 5.2 In this part, we consider a number of challenges and opportunities:
- (a) the importance of continuing to support a culture shift and increasing staff capability and capacity in Te Tiriti and te ao Māori;
 - (b) the importance of understanding the internal Māori landscape and the need to protect and safeguard Māori representatives in Council structures;
 - (c) the importance of ensuring governance and operations align within Council;
 - (d) the trajectory of the relationship between Māori and the Council over the long-term;
 - (e) opportunities to support the delegation of decision-making to Māori and co-designing frameworks;
 - (f) the level of funding and resourcing to deliver on Te Tiriti obligations;
 - (g) the 'who' question – opportunity for the Council to develop a better understanding of who to deal with and in what context; and
 - (h) legislative uncertainty as to what can be achieved in the partnership.

A culture shift – increasing staff capability and capacity in Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga

- 5.3 A number of Māori groups emphasised that there is a need to continue to support a culture shift within Council. A number of TTMAC members commented that Council do not always fully understand the Māori worldview and the mindset of having to ensure tino rangatiratanga is upheld. Although there have been positive developments over a number of years, many felt that staff capability and capacity within Council remains an issue for improvement.
- 5.4 Some mana whenua groups supported involving hapū or iwi (perhaps through TTMAC):
- (a) to be involved in the recruiting and appointment processes for key staff positions in Council, and to encourage secondments between iwi and the Council (and vice-versa) to enable each party to understand the unique context in which each party operates;
 - (b) to be involved or have direct input into setting key performance measures for key roles within Council, and monitoring ongoing progress or achievement;
 - (c) in a secondment framework, so that iwi and hapū could spend a designated amount of time working within the Council structure. Some kaitiaki groups supported the idea of having Council staff be required to work within iwi and hapū groups on secondment, so that Council staff learn of the constraints and limitations that iwi and hapū work within; and
 - (d) have an open-door policy to allow Māori to raise issues with relevant staff rather than just the Iwi Relationship Manager. Some groups offered to run some 'hapū 101s' which have not been taken up.

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- 5.5 We received comments that Council staff needed to continue to familiarise themselves with mana whakahono a rohe and their respective hapū management plans. There were concerns expressed that certain mana whakahono a rohe had 'not eventuated into much'.
- 5.6 Some considered that there is an internal lack of understanding as to the role of the Council as a Tiriti partner. It was also commented that there was inconsistent engagement by the consents team with them as mana whenua, and the type of engagement depended on the particular project at hand and the Council staff working on the project.
- 5.7 ELT commented that, in respect of He Whakaputanga, the Council does not have a strong understanding of He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti even though Council staff have had Te Tiriti training. Members of ELT noted there is a need to understand how Te Tiriti aligns with He Whakaputanga and how those principles can be articulated to Council and embedded throughout the Council's key strategic documents and operations.
- 5.8 ELT commented that it is important for Council to develop the confidence to navigate Te Tiriti relationships and expectations properly. In addition, concerns were also raised around the understanding of what can be achieved within the statutory framework in the context of partnerships with Māori, as it had been suggested that the statutory framework was constraining the ability to move to the next level of partnership (which is not necessarily the case).
- 5.9 Some MTAG members felt as though internal staff were not always familiar with Māori dynamics and structures.
- 5.10 Some kaitiaki felt it was positive that the Council has a good understanding of the maramataka, and increased focus on karakia and mātauranga. However, learning and embedding is a long journey.

Understanding the internal Māori landscape and tensions for Māori representatives in Council structures

- 5.11 We heard from a number of Māori representatives in Council structures, that there are often difficulties in managing hapū and iwi interests / expectations within those Council structures. Māori representatives are required to make decisions on behalf of Māori often within quick timeframes, and sometimes it is difficult to have an opportunity to engage with hapū and iwi when operating within Council timeframes.
- 5.12 We consider it is important for the Council to be aware of that internal landscape and the challenges that can have for Māori representatives on Council structures. This is something to be borne in mind when setting agendas or in the context of certain action points / work programmes, and the Council should ensure there are sufficient safeguards for those representatives to manage those challenges, such as providing appropriate timeframes for engaging with hapū and iwi and responding to matters.

Ensuring governance and operations align within Council

- 5.13 Some kaitiaki groups commented that the discussions that take place at a governance level between Māori representative groups and Council do not always filter down to the operational staff. For example, discussions with Councillors are positive but projects are often controlled by key Council contractors or planners who make the operational decisions that can exclude some Māori.

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- 5.14 It was commented that the Councillors are receptive during presentations, but the traction does not filter to an operational level. At the ELT meeting, one member commented that there may be a certain disjunct between governance and operations and that was a 'fair assessment'.
- 5.15 TTMAC members commented that there is sometimes little awareness of what is happening 'on the ground' and that the Council needs to ensure it maintains a presence at hapū and iwi occasions.
- 5.16 Some Councillors noted that the process of consents is 'fraught' because there are certain things Māori expect that cannot always be done within the statutory framework. Comments were made that the Council tries to give Māori a longer 'heads up' but the level of discretion the Council has over granting consents is not as much as Māori sometimes think. One ELT member commented, for example, that the legislation does not allow for hapū and iwi to consult forever. However, if Māori had more capacity and resources, they may be able to contribute in a more meaningful way.
- 5.17 One Councillor at the Councillor's meeting noted that there are structural barriers and there is a 'hands-off' approach to consenting which might not pass the 'partnership' principle under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 5.18 Some kaitiaki noted that governance discussions can sometimes be characterised as 'lip service and fluffy duck stuff' that do not always 'filter down' into operations.

The trajectory of the relationship over the long-term

- 5.19 A number of groups we interviewed commented on the positive developments that have occurred in the relationship generally with Council and Māori. However, many noted the steps taken should be viewed with a long-term lens, and in that respect there is still a long way to go to fully embed Te Tiriti and to lay a foundation for working forward together (as discussed in part four).
- 5.20 The Councillors generally considered that good progress has been made to embed Māori frameworks into Council, particularly through the work TTMAC and MTAG are doing. At a governance level, the Councillors considered that it is positive that there will be Māori Councillors, which will support the willingness to listen and learn for consensus at the Council. Some Councillors cautioned against being lulled into a false sense of security in terms of how the Council is implementing Te Tiriti.
- 5.21 ELT commented positively that the Council has a willingness and openness to work with Māori. While the Council might not always get it right, there is a genuine desire to do the right thing for Māori. The challenge was that the pace of change is sometimes slower than what Māori might expect.
- 5.22 ELT were positive about the ability and willingness of the Council to front up when it needed to, and that Council was not 'faceless' but have a direct relationship with Māori. However, Council was not always confident or consistent in their approach but had made some positive developments.
- 5.23 ELT commented that the Council now has 'reasonable governance systems and processes in place', particularly in relation to TTMAC. ELT commented that, to ensure TTMAC remains influential, it is not perceived as a Council construct by hapū and iwi. There is also a need for better alignment of expectations.
- 5.24 Relationships were broadly conceived, and included as directing actions, to obtaining funding, facilitation and engagement.

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- 5.25 A Councillor noted that the Council needs to take the time and invest resources to work with mana whenua to do more joint work together. For example, putting in a submission to government on three waters, resource management law reform etc.
- 5.26 One kaitiaki noted that there is a need for the Council to know 'who is in the hood', who to consult with and ensure that the Māori liaising teams are trained in the basics of a consent process.

Supporting the delegation of decision-making and co-designing frameworks

- 5.27 Many Māori commented that there needs to be increased decision-making given to appropriate Māori within the Council structures. Overall, Māori and senior executive management spoke positively about the influence and intention of the Council, but that expectations were not always clear or being met in terms of decision-making of Māori.
- 5.28 TTMAC in particular made strong comments that TTMAC only making recommendations to Council was not always satisfactory. The level of influence that TTMAC has is positive, but there may need to be more delegations. This was consistent with ELT's view that TTMAC has been a 'good platform' supported by a strong Māori engagement team and frameworks. Some of the TTMAC members are on other working groups, such as the Biodiversity Working Party, Water and Land Policy and Co-Governance.
- 5.29 Some TTMAC members were positive about the influence that TTMAC has had over the long-term but noted that the challenge is to ensure it has impact across Te Taitokerau generally.
- 5.30 ELT noted there could be earlier co-design of solutions for hapū in certain areas, for example flood schemes and stop banks. Ultimately, however, the success of these initiatives can come down to resources.
- 5.31 MTAG commented that their role is largely determined by the Council's agenda and framework, and they do not get the chance or the resources to consider matters of their own motion that are important to Māori. MTAG members considered they also need a space to create their own agenda. Some MTAG members considered that the agenda for MTAG meetings has been pre-determined and resolutions are already drafted. It was also noted that the Council did not clearly communicate back to iwi/hapū how their input has been addressed.

The level of funding and resourcing to support delivery of Te Tiriti obligations

- 5.32 Nearly all Māori groups within Council (TTMAC and MTAG), and kaitiaki outside of the formal Council structure, raised the issue of funding and resourcing to support capability for and delivery of Te Tiriti obligations. There are a number of threads to consider:
- (a) The internal funding of key Māori structures within Council: Members of TTMAC and MTAG noted that the pay for daily fees is low. For TTMAC, there is a set meeting fee for members but the fee only remunerates for attendance at meetings. The meeting fee does not recognise or remunerate for the significant amount of work preparing for meetings or subsequent work post-meetings. Similarly, MTAG members considered the fee structure was not fair given the sometimes very lengthy agendas.
 - (b) The funding of external kaitiaki groups to deliver on their own aspirations for te taiao and how they want to work with the Council: We received comments that kaitiaki are not well resourced, particularly where they do not have a Treaty settlement unlike some of the other

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Te Taitokerau tangata whenua. Also, kaitiaki individually were not always paid on particular consent projects or applications. Concerns were raised about the level of funding and resourcing and it was noted that kaitiaki staff are involved in the field work but do not want to lead their 'on the ground' projects. It was emphasised that the Council cannot be said to be complying with the spirit and intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi if it is not resourced and Māori are not given opportunities to lead projects.

- 5.33 TTMAC commented that the strategic intent and aspirations of the Council also need to be reflected in budget setting across the Council's work programme.
- 5.34 It was also commented that while resourcing and capacity remained an ongoing issue, there were some positive developments. For example, those sitting on the Tangata Whenua Advisory Panel were finally being paid at a 'normal rate'.

Sharing of information

- 5.35 Some Māori felt as though information was not shared in an efficient or timely way.
- 5.36 MTAG members considered that they did not always feel fully briefed, have limited time and do not want to miss opportunities for tangata whenua.
- 5.37 Some MTAG members commented that the 'feedback loop' does not always exist. Some MTAG members feel as though they do not always know the outcome of a particular issue they have recommended to Council, and if those recommendations were adopted by Council. For example, an insufficient amount of time was provided prior to the Long-Term Plan being reviewed by MTAG.
- 5.38 Some TTMAC members commented that internal communication between Council staff is not always consistent, and that there needs to be a clear agreed communications strategy internally and externally.

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6. PART SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Our recommendations are set out below:

- (a) the partners should develop a shared view of what successful partnership looks like in the immediate, medium and long-term, and plot a pathway towards that, including where appropriate through the evolution of the current structures and the movement towards shared decision-making models and other models (including transfers of powers);
- (b) the current state is a positive point in the journey, but it should not be seen as the end point – that must be clearly conveyed, including to the incoming Council, as there is still significant work to be done;
- (c) that an agreed work programme be developed that allows the Council and its Treaty partners to identify areas where they share a common objective or view, and then a process for working towards a joint outcome (for example, on major legislative reform such as the RMA or the three waters reform);
- (d) the issue of the extent of legislative constraints should be addressed and tested, so the partners have a clear view of what is possible in terms of the future shape of the partnership (in other words, the legislation does not necessarily operate as an impediment to the partnership aspirations of partners);
- (e) Tāiki ē should continue to be implemented, funded and reviewed with key performance and review measures that Council and TTMAC can agree on – that is an excellent plan for moving forward and will support a successful long-term partnership;
- (f) consider how tangata whenua members of the various structures can be fully resourced and supported to contribute and participate – the current demands on a small number of people are too high and that is not sustainable (including, for example, by partnering on applications for funding from the Crown);
- (g) set clear parameters for funding Tiriti partners to participate in Council processes and projects involving mana whenua;
- (h) ensure that the Council is clear on which iwi/hapū/other entities it should be talking to in each context and prepare a clear strategy / direction for this. This could also involve building off some of the Tāiki ē actions, for example action 20 and the development of spatial maps etc;
- (i) ensure that tangata whenua feedback on proposals (eg through TTMAC and MTAG) is clearly recorded and reported back on;
- (j) consult with and/or involve Māori in processes for recruitment and appointment of Council staff (which has been the practice in relation to senior appointments), and to explore opportunities for secondment of Māori to Council or vice versa, as appropriate. In the first instance the Council could undertake a review of its process for appointments and seek further direction / input from tangata whenua on how that could be improved and informed by tangata whenua. For example, the options could include feedback on job description criteria and demonstrating an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi;

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- (k) implement a regular review of processes for internal communication and planning between governance and operations staff at the Council, to ensure consistency of engagement and delivery on projects and Te Tiriti objectives;
 - (l) develop (or continue to develop and implement through Te Whāriki) an agreed work plan on building the capability and capacity of Councillors and Council staff in Te Tiriti (as set out in Te Whāriki) and He Whakaputanga, and implement regular reviews of the work programme. The scope of the capability and capacity training programme could be agreed with TTMAC and/or kaitiaki as appropriate, and would include both the historical circumstances surrounding the signing of Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga as well as contemporary views and perspectives on how those obligations apply today;
 - (m) develop a clear framework for the identification and appropriate treatment of mātauranga Māori within the operations of the Council and how it can be protected and developed in Tāiki ē. The methodology for the mātauranga Māori framework could be developed in conjunction with TTMAC and informed by the Waitangi Tribunal's Wai 262 report; and
 - (n) identify the specific issues of Māori in relation to the considering and granting of resource consents and develop a regular plan and review mechanism to respond to issues raised by hapū and iwi.
- 6.2 We also recommend that this report and its recommendations be presented to the incoming Council. We acknowledge that the priority for the Council was to complete and receive this report prior to the 2022 elections and that the implementation and adoption of the recommendations in this report will need to be considered by the incoming Council.
- 6.3 Below we set out a table identifying the six priority areas identified by MTAG and, based on the matters outlined in this report, provide a summary assessment of each of those areas. We also provide a competency level for each priority area – the competency levels identified in the Te Arawhiti framework range from 'unfamiliar', 'comfortable', 'confident' to 'capable'.

Summary assessment of six priority areas identified by MTAG (based on Te Arawhiti framework)	
1. Governance: Understanding of Māori council relations priorities	
For the reasons explained in this report, we consider the Council to be moving towards 'confident' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, but there is a way still to go.	
2. Relationships with Māori: Relationship management	
For the reasons explained in this report, we consider the Council to be moving towards 'confident' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, but there is a way still to go.	
3. Relationships with Māori: Engagement, partnerships and empowerment	
For the reasons explained in this report, we consider the Council to be moving towards 'confident' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, but there is a way still to go.	

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4. Relationships with Māori: Procurement
We note that this is covered in part in actions 24 and 25 of Tāiki ē, but it will need to be implemented. We consider the Council to be moving from 'unfamiliar' towards 'comfortable' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, provided those actions are implemented.
5. Structural: Addressing institutional racism
We note that this is covered in part in action 17 of Tāiki ē – this report discusses the need for ongoing work on cultural competency and understanding of and respect for tikanga and mātauranga Māori in the work of the Council. We consider the Council is moving from 'unfamiliar' towards 'comfortable' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, but there is a way still to go.
6. Policy and services: Evaluation
We consider there is more work to do in the area of evaluation and implementing Tāiki ē effectively will be key to that (noting the 'monitoring and review' section at the end of Tāiki ē). We consider the Council is moving from 'unfamiliar' towards 'comfortable' in terms of the Te Arawhiti framework, but there is a way still to go.

TITLE: Tāiki ē Year in Review - Draft Report

From: Tamara Lee, Communications Manager and Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

This report presents a draft of the inaugural *Tāiki ē Annual Highlights* for feedback and outlines the process for its finalisation. It responds to council's commitment to develop, monitor, and report on key performance indicators (KPI) that measure progress against the desired outcomes (*Ngā Whainga*) for tāngata whenua, as set out in the Strategic Intent. These Whainga include:

- Capacity and Capability
- Māori Representation
- Water/Marine
- Climate Crisis
- Economic Development

The report also aligns with the ongoing completion of Stage 2 of the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check*, conducted by independent consultants. This process is a critical mechanism for monitoring council's performance and ensuring accountability to its Te Tiriti commitments. The Health Check, along with the implementation of its recommendations, also helps to identify priority areas for improvement and supports meaningful reporting and engagement with Te Ruarangi and councillors.

The final, graphically designed document will be presented to council in September and released post-election in October with a launch of video series that showcases the value of our Te Tiriti partnership. Te Ruarangi members will have the opportunity to preview one of the videos at the upcoming meeting — a feature showcasing Whaea Nora Rameka of Ngāti Rēhia.

This report replaces the usual Tāiki ē – Report on Priority Actions, providing a comprehensive review of the full year's activities and outcomes.


Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Tāiki ē Year in Review - Draft Report' by Tamara Lee, Communications Manager and Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement and dated 30 July 2025, be received.
2. That staff incorporate final feedback from Te Ruarangi members prior to presenting the Tāiki ē Annual Highlights to council in September.

Tuhinga/Background

Not applicable.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Draft Tāiki ē Annual Highlights [↓](#) 

Tāiki ē: Te Tiriti Strategic Intent and Implementation Plan

Ngā tino kaupapa o te tau kua hipa

Highlights of the past year

Ina tere ngā kapua, he hau kei muri

The clouds float across the sky driven by the wind

Mihi

Tuia ngā pae maunga o tēnā kokonga, o tēnā kokonga o ngā Tai o Tokerau,
Huihuia ō tātou mate kia mihia, kia poroporoakitia.

Anei rā ngā whakamānawatanga o te wā ki a koutou e pānui mai nei.
Tēnei te mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

Mā whero, mā pango, ka oti ai te mahi!

*Bring together the mountain ranges from all corners of Te Taitokerau.
Assemble those who have passed on, to be acknowledged and farewelled.*

*We are greatly honoured to have you join us.
Greetings to you all.*

Through collaboration, the work shall be achieved.



Nā Pita Tipene (iwi representative) and Tui Shortland (council representative)
Co-chairs of Te Ruarangi (formerly known as TTMAC Māori and Council Working Party)

[About te unaunahi, which will form part of the design for this document]

Te unanunahi I whakapiripiri ki te Ikanui ā Maui
The scales that cling to the Great Fish of Maui

Te Unaunahi is a whakairo (carving) design originated from the descendants of Manaia and shared widely throughout Tai Tokerau. This Tai Tokerau whakarei (surface pattern) represents fish scales, and also symbolises safety and protection. The extended name of the unaunahi design (above) refers to the deeper mātauranga carried in the symbol. The unaunahi is represented by four scales that each represent an aspect of the physical world.

Te Unaunahi Tuatahi refers to the minerals and substances which make up the earth and sky.

Te Unaunahi Tuarua refers to the flora which cloak the earth.

Te Unaunahi Tuatoru refers to the animal world.

Te Unaunahi Tuawha refers to the human elements.

The fifth line of the unaunahi pattern represents the aho tapu connecting the physical world and humanity to a higher spiritual energy. Te aho tapu as it appears in the unaunahi is an element that threads through each aspect of the physical world, but is visually connected to the scale representing humanity. Humanity is depicted by the fourth scale to remind us we are teina to all of the physical world. The aho tapu is connected to humanity to remind us of our responsibility to protect our environments.

This pūrākau is shared with the approval of Tohunga Whakairo Te Warihi Hetaraka.

DRAFT

Kaupapa Purpose

He iwi tahi tātou kia ora ai te taiao

Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau / Northland Regional Council and Te Ruarangi are proud to present highlights from the last year, underpinned by Kawanatanga and Rangatiratanga working together for the wellbeing of te taiao.

We invite you to explore the inspiring stories and significant work happening around the rohe as we continue to honour and give effect to our Te Tiriti commitments.

About Tāiki ē

He whenua haumoko, he wai mā, he iwi whai ora – Land that is bountiful, water that is pure and healthy, people that are flourishing. This is the vision for our future that guides Tāiki ē.

Tāiki ē is our Te Tiriti o Waitangi strategy and implementation plan. It is our roadmap towards fulfilling our Te Tiriti obligations, ensuring both council and Te Ruarangi are accountable in achieving these goals.

The vision and commitments within Tāiki ē influence all of council's mahi. From achieving better flood protection outcomes for communities to strengthening pest management and better water quality monitoring, Tāiki ē drives improved Te Tiriti partnerships across the work we do throughout the region.

In April 2024 an updated Tāiki ē was adopted by council to include more actions under the five focus areas – water, marine, climate crisis, and economic development. The stories we share here have been brought together under each of these focus areas.

The name 'Tāiki ē' itself is a unifying statement and a call to action, emphasising a shared commitment to collective work.

www.nrc.govt.nz/taiki-e

He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti

Tāiki ē acknowledges the relationship between He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga Nu Tireni and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which are together essential to understanding the position of tāngata whenua in Te Taitokerau.

The deep tāngata whenua connection to He Whakaputanga and enduring hapū sovereignty shapes the context in which council operates

Te Ruarangi

Te Ruarangi is a council working party which aims to reflect true partnership that respects the mana and authority of tāngata whenua and council. It is made up of councillors together with 21 hapū and iwi representatives.

Formerly known as TTMAC (Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party), Te Ruarangi is the group's new ingoa following a revision to the Terms of Reference for the rūpū. The ingoa represents 'an expression of the vision where the principles of Kawanatanga and Rangatiratanga come together in a harmonious partnership for the benefit of the taiao.'

Together, we are striving for positive outcomes for all people of Taitokerau and the environment through shared values and active partnership.

DRAFT

Ngā reo o Te Ruarangi Voices of Te Ruarangi

In June 2025 several Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū representatives shared their whakaaro on Tāiki ē, Te Ruarangi, and the partnership between Kāwanatanga and Rangatiratanga.

Watch the full videos at [URL to be inserted here]



“Tāiki ē is a journey we asked for as Māori - for representation and to have a voice around the table. Our voice wasn't being heard. We have different issues on whenua. They might be similar, but from the perspective of Māori. We wanted to do things our way and be about our mātauranga Māori.

“It's the learning of our young people. We want them to have the capabilities, the capacity. We wanted them to learn their connections to the whenua, their dreams for themselves on Māori whenua.”

Nora Rameka, Ngāti Rehia



“I believe [Tāiki ē] brings massive value because we're at the decision-making table when it comes to our taiao.

“In the past you wouldn't see our whānau in this space because it was a system that was never designed for us to be in. Now that we sit in this space and we are working hand in hand, it works really, really well.

“The partnership itself — what we can learn is don't be afraid. You don't have to be afraid to look at Māori to participate.”

Nyze Manuel, Te Rūnanga O Whāingaroa



“Honesty is the key thing for us. If we sign up to something, we want to achieve that. A partnership can’t be formed by yourself; it takes two or three parties to make a partnership. We wanted to nail the partnership relationship, and we did that.

“To us, it means our aspirations are achieved... that’s the importance of the relationship. If you’re working together well, you can’t stray too far. Everything’s tika.”

Niki Conrad, Te Aupōuri



“The value that I think Tāiki ē brings — and Te Ruarangi bring to the region — firstly, because it provides that network of hapū practitioners, people at the coalface.

“Being able to understand what council’s processes are, where their plan making and policy making is at, learn about those things early so we can prepare ourselves, go back to the whānau and talk about what’s going on.

Juliane Chetham, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board



“I think it’s finally starting to uphold what was envisaged by our tūpuna when they put their tā moko on that parchment.

“While it’s been lost over many a time, people have been struggling to see how it can actually work. But in this case, I think Te Ruarangi does work.

“And we’ve still got a long, long way to go, but hey — we’ve got a pretty good foundation now.

Pita Tipene, Ngāti Hine

Ngā whainga Desired goals

He iwi tahi tātou kia ora ai te taiao. Kāwanatanga and Rangatiratanga work together for the wellbeing of the environment.

TE RAUKAHA ME TE ĀHEITANGA CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

01 Capability Tāngata whenua are supported to give effect to their aspirations in council decisions and operations.

02 Capacity Tāngata whenua are adequately resourced to participate in council decisions and operations.

03 Partnership Tāngata whenua and council work in a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership to achieve their shared goals

TE KANOHI MĀORI MĀORI REPRESENTATION

04 Te Tiriti o Waitangi Is upheld and embraced.

05 Decision making Tāngata whenua are equitably represented in all council decisions and operations.

06 Resourcing Tāngata whenua are equitably resourced to contribute to council decisions and operations.

TE WAI / TE MOANA WATER / MARINE

07 Mauri The mauri of water is protected, restored and improved.

08 Mātauranga Information/knowledge is gathered and collated to better understand and improve the health of water.

09 Mana o te Wai Partner with tāngata whenua to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai.

TE TAIRARU ĀHUARANGI CLIMATE CRISIS

10 Te Ao Māori Te Ao Māori is inherent in mahi relating to climate crisis and its impacts.

11 Advocacy Tāngata whenua and council work together in the development of climate crisis policy.

12 Implementation Partner with tāngata whenua by providing support and resources to prepare for and address the effects of the climate crisis.

TE WHANAKETANGA OHAOHA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

13 Whai Rawa Council advocates for and supports economic development for tāngata whenua.

14 Whai Mana Tāngata whenua self-reliance and self-determination is supported by council.

15 Whai Oranga Economic growth is compatible with the protection and enhancement of ecological, spiritual and cultural values of tāngata whenua.

Ngā tino kaupapa o te tau kua hipa Highlights of the last year

TE TUARI MĀTAURANGA, TE WHAKANUI I NGĀ EKENGA ANGITU SHARING MĀTAURANGA, CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Wānanga Waiora



The second Wānanga Waiora was held at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds on March 26 2025, as part of a commitment to wānanga that highlight the experiences of kaitiaki across the region and the partnership with council to enable a better understanding of the Resource Management Act and its functions.

Hosted by Whangaroa Taiao Ltd with support from Northland Regional Council (NRC), the event provided a unique opportunity for Te Taitokerau kaitiaki and hapū to come together and share te mātauranga o te taiao (knowledge of the environment).

Wānanga Waiora is about kotahitanga and having a measurable tool for understanding the relationships between wai and 'waitiaki', as well as council's operational capability and positive outcomes with tāngata whenua.

Among those sharing their knowledge and experience on the day were special guest Hokianga and māmataka tohunga Rereata Makiha; Ngāti Hine Manu Taupunga Roopu; Ngāti Rehia; Te Runanga o Te Rarawa iwi; Whangaroa Taiao Ltd CEO, Nyze Manuel and Taiao Advocate/Hearing Commissioner Dallas King; Oturu Marae; Ngāti Tara me Parapara Marae; Te Rūnanga o Te Aupōuri;

Te Taumata Arowai; Te Uri o Hīkīhiki; Nga Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori; and Nga Kaitiaki – ngā hapū me ngā hapori o Whangaroa.

This year's event highlighted how the relationship between council and the kaitiaki has grown. Enduring relationships ensure that these connections continue to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Overall, the kaupapa and the day were a great success with approximately 150 people in attendance.

Te Aupōuri wins big at 2025 Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards



Te Rūnanga Nui O Te Aupōuri's kaitiaki arm, Oranga Whenua Oranga Tangata Taiao, were the big winners at this year's Northland Regional Council Whakamānawa ā Taiao – Environmental Awards.

The team took out not only the Kaitiakitanga award, but also the overall Te Tohu Matua-Supreme Award.

The Whakamānawa ā Taiao – Environmental Awards, held for the sixth time, recognise individuals, groups and organisations making a difference for te taiao.

Held this year at Waitangi during Matariki, the spirit of collaboration and community leadership in the room was powerful and uplifting as rōpū from across the rohe came together to recognise and celebrate kaitiakitanga in action.

This year's awards saw many entries across different categories from iwi, hapū and kaitiaki groups, with marked increase in entries in the 'kaitiakitanga' category.

One of the powerful themes shared was of community groups increasingly strengthening their relationships and partnerships with iwi and hapū to drive better environmental outcomes for the whole community.

TE RAUKAHA ME TE ĀHEITANGA CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Tū i te ora Scholarships helping build Māori capacity and capability



The 2025 scholarship recipients from top-left: Aakash Chatterji, Nehana Griffiths, Riana Lane, Isaac Morrow, Raine Ross, William Trubshaw.

The six recipients of this year's Tū i te ora Scholarships will receive financial support and paid work experience at council next summer.

Each includes \$4000 to assist with study costs, plus paid full-time work experience with council from mid-November 2025 to mid-February 2026.

The scholarships have a specific aim to build Māori capacity within Te Taitokerau, with three of the six scholarships earmarked for Māori who whakapapa to Te Taitokerau.

Now in its sixth year, the scholarships recognise, encourage and support students to undertake study that relates to council's environmental and regulatory functions.

www.nrc.govt.nz/scholarship

Joint Advocacy to Central Government

This action was established to develop an efficient process for responding and advocating on behalf of the region with Te Ruarangi on key priority areas. The subsequent change of government has been followed by a raft of legislative changes, many of which have raised significant concerns about the undermining of Te Tiriti obligations by iwi and hapū of Te Taitokerau.

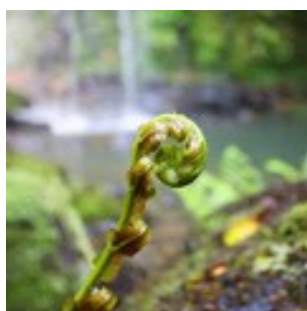
As Tāiki ē provides a clear framework for joint advocacy around impacts for tāngata whenua, iwi and hapū representatives have worked diligently with council to reflect a commitment to joint advocacy to central government. Over the past year council's submissions to government have included:

- fundamental concerns with the attempt to re-define the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi;

- strong opposition to changes requiring councils to hold a binding poll on the future of Māori constituency seats;
- strong opposition the limited ability for tāngata whenua affected by fast-track applications to participate in the decision-making process; and
- concern that the Regulatory Standards Bill does not recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi nor uphold its principles.

Read council's submissions: www.nrc.govt.nz/NRCsubmissions

Supporting environmental planning and monitoring



The development of Iwi/Hapū Environmental Management Plans (IHEMPs) in Te Taitokerau was boosted in 2025 through the latest contestable funding round. A total of \$30,000 of funding was allocated for environmental management plan development and updates by iwi, hapū, and other eligible tāngata whenua entities.

IHEMPs provide an important opportunity to influence resource management processes. These planning documents will help hapū/iwi become more involved in resource management processes by building their capacity and at the same time capturing their current environmental knowledge, passion and practice.

In the last three years three IHEMPs have been funded and submitted – by Ngāti Hine Tirairaka, Ahipara Takiwā and Te Runanga o Whaingaroa – supporting council to have a clear understanding of the environmental aspirations and implementation plans of iwi from across the region.

Meanwhile, the Tāngata Whenua Environmental Monitoring Fund saw a further \$130,000 allocated to support tāngata whenua to undertake their own environmental monitoring within Te Taitokerau. This has boosted opportunities for iwi and hapū to share their mātauranga (traditional knowledge) with council enabling a more collaborative approach to protect indigenous species, flora and fauna, and monitor the benefits of restorative ecological programmes in the region.

www.nrc.govt.nz/funding

TE KANOHI MĀORI MĀORI REPRESENTATION

Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements with Ngāti Hine, Te Parawhau



Ngāti Hine and NRC signed the first-ever iwi-council Mana Whakahono-a-rohe resource management agreement in Taitokerau at a large gathering at Otiria Marae in December 2024. This was recognised as a milestone of the ongoing relationship with Ngāti Hine; however, it was acknowledged that there were many hapū that aspire to have a Mana Whakahono-a-rohe agreements with NRC.

While several Northland hapū-NRC agreements have already been signed, this most recent agreement is a first for a recognised iwi of Te Taitokerau, Northland

Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements were introduced into the RMA in 2017 by the Crown to improve working relationships among tāngata whenua and councils, and to provide more opportunities for tāngata whenua involvement in RMA decision-making processes.

In April 2024 Te Parawhau ki Tai on behalf of Te Parawhau hapū joined an existing Mana Whakahono multi-hapū agreement that had previously been signed in December 2020 with Te Patuharakeke Iwi Trust Board and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia.

NRC has the highest number of Mana Whakahono-a-rohe agreements in the country and have been working with Papa Pounamu (NZPI) to provide support and direction for other councils to implement these agreements.

Te Tiriti health check

Te Tiriti health check is an independent assessment of how council understands and implements its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations in engaging with tāngata whenua and mana whenua.

The first comprehensive Te Tiriti health check was undertaken in 2022, identifying that while significant progress had been made there remained *"a long way to go to achieve genuine partnership in a way that reflects and respects Te Tiriti, He Whakaputanga, and the mana and rangatiratanga of iwi and hapū."*

During 24/25 a second comprehensive Te Tiriti health check was scoped and commissioned, with findings scheduled for endorsement and adoption in August 2025. An implementation plan will then be developed to guide next steps for council to work towards.

The scope of the Te Tiriti Health Check for 2025) involves an independent review of NRC's obligations and performance against Te Tiriti o Waitangi standards. This two-yearly check, conducted by Buddle Findlay, aims to assess progress on the recommendations from the 2022 Te Tiriti Health Check

Biosecurity partnerships



Across Te Taitokerau there are many biosecurity partnerships involving or led by hapū and kaitiaki, helping to get rid of pests and restore health to the ngahere and the rich biodiversity within.

Predator Free Pēwhairangi Whānui is one of these partnerships, spanning across three peninsulas in the Bay of Islands. This collaborative project works with community groups, hapū, and various agencies, with the goal of making these peninsulas predator free.

Another is the programme to eradicate wild deer from Russell Forest, in partnership with iwi and hapū, other agencies and landowners – a big job that council can't do alone.

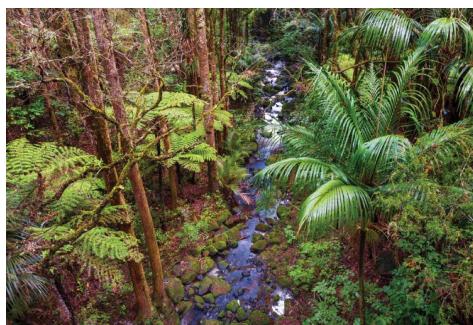
For both of these examples, and the many other biosecurity partnerships council is involved in together with iwi, hapū and kaitiaki, success lies in leveraging the strength of unity and Te Tiriti-based relationships to achieve a shared vision.

Strengthening tāngata whenua participation in council

Te Ruarangi – formerly known as Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party – is continuing to build enduring relationships between Māori and council. It is made up of twenty-one appointed iwi and hapū members from Taitokerau Māori (one representative per iwi and hapū), plus all nine members of council.

Te Ruarangi iwi/hapū representatives also make up 50% of council's 'Natural Resources' and 'Biosecurity and Biodiversity' working parties, helping to provide insights and foster balanced decision-making.

Independent tāngata whenua advisors with voting rights also sit on each of council's 'Infrastructure', 'Audit and Risk', and 'Investment' committees, further empowering Māori voices in council decision-making.



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TE WAI / TE MOANA WATER/MARINE

Tāngata Whenua and Catchment Fund

[Image to be inserted]

Me He Wai Mobile Lab, a co-funded collaboration with Te Rarawa covering 23 marae on the west coast of the Far North, is a mobile water testing lab that is enabling marae to test for contamination and take action to prevent further degradation of waterways.

It is just one example of the type of project that is being funded under council's new freshwater quality improvement fund, the Tāngata Whenua and Catchment Fund, recognising that there has been huge loss to the mauri of wai māori and ecosystems that rely on it.

The fund is designed to be flexible across a range of projects including on-the-ground mahi, fostering community engagement and awareness, kaitiaki engagement, and relevant training and professional services.

The fund supports freshwater improvement initiatives in Te Taitokerau led by tāngata whenua entities, community groups or catchment group entities.

The funding round for 2024/25 saw \$474,000 of funding allocated. Applications for the 2025/26 funding year have closed with a further \$523,000 of funding to be allocated.

Te Hā o Tangaroa Rāhui Tapu (Rākaumangamanga and Mimiwhangata Rāhui Tapu)



Staff member Nicola Hartwell with Te Uri Hikihiki – Ngā Wai Tiaki o Tangaroa

Implementing the region's newly established marine protected areas in partnership with local hapū is a great example of Tāiki ē working in practice.

The two rāhui tapu marine protected areas at Mimiwhangata and Rākaumangamanga (Cape Brett) were established in 2023 following concerns of local hapū Te Uri o Hikihiki and Ngati Kuta about the impact of overfishing on local marine ecosystems.

Since then, council has been working with local hapū Te Uri O Hikihiki ki Whangaruru, Te Whanau Whero ki Whananaki, Ngāti Kuta, and Patu Keha to implement the new no-fishing rules.

Working together has been key to successful implementation of protection measures for these sensitive ecological and culturally significant areas.

Successful implementation is a direct result of the close collaborative partnership between the council and local hapū, including Te Uri O Hikihiki ki Whangaruru, Te Whanau Whero ki Whananaki, Ngāti Kuta, and Patu Keha. This collective effort signifies a commitment by council to support hapū and kaitiaki to work together for future generations.

Caulerpa response continues

[Image to be inserted]

A collaborative response to the highly invasive exotic caulerpa seaweed has seen the ongoing and tireless efforts of Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha hapū, who have worked closely with council and MPI since the invasive species was originally discovered in Northland.

Surveillance and community education have been critical throughout 24/25, to monitor for new locations and urge boaties, fishers, and divers to check their equipment to avoid unintentional spread. Hapū have led much of this work, with support from council and MPI.

Funding was also secured from MPI to initiate trials of suction dredging to remove the seaweed, with a larger prototype currently in development.

The fight against caulerpa is an enormous challenge, but the partnership built between council and hapū throughout this response means we can face this – and future challenges – with strength and unity.

Collaborative efforts on water quality monitoring

[Image to be inserted]

Meaningful action continues on the ground to improve water quality monitoring across Te Taitokerau, driven by strong partnerships with tāngata whenua.

One example is a collaboration with Ngāti Kuri, who are leading water quality monitoring at six recreational bathing sites across three estuaries within their rohe.

This initiative aims to develop predictive water quality models for Safeswim (safeswim.org.nz), helping communities make informed decisions about when and where it's safe to swim.

Ngāti Kuri kaitiaki rangers are at the heart of this mahi, carrying out field data collection. Council is supporting the kaupapa by funding laboratory analysis and model development.

Other examples include:

- Staff have been working closely with Kaitiaki ki Whangaroa, to integrate iwi/hapū monitoring data into council's environmental data portal.

- Through a partnership with Lake Ōmāpere Trust, council provided grant funding to support the purchase of a boat for Kaitiaki to complete monitoring and surveys on Lake Ōmāpere.
- Kaitiaki from Ngati Rehia, Patuharakeke and Te Uri O Hau worked alongside council staff to complete 10-yearly estuary monitoring in the Kaipara, Ruakākā and Kerikeri harbours.
- Monitoring advice, funding options and water testing kits were provided to hapū and kaitiaki rūpū across Te Taitokerau via NRC's Environmental Monitoring Officer (Māori Relationships), who also attended over 25 hui during the 2024/25 financial year.

These partnerships reflect the power of working together – where council and tāngata whenua align their strengths to create locally-grounded approaches to water quality monitoring.

DRAFT

TE TAIRARU ĀHUARANGI CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate Resilient Communities Fund

[Image to be inserted]

Workshops and maara kai that integrate mātauranga Māori, sustainable, low-carbon and para kore practices, and intergenerational knowledge sharing to grow and feed whānau with local are just some of the projects that have received funding through Council's Climate Resilience Communities Fund.

The fund supports Te Taitokerau communities to build resilience in the face of our changing climate. Aimed at projects that connect communities, build capacity, and initiate action, the fund focuses on five impact areas: Food resilience (Te Kai), Water resilience (Te Wai), Energy resilience (Te Ngao), Nature-based resilience (Te Taiao), and Planning for Resilience (Ngā mahi whakamahere).

Launched in 2024, the fund immediately connected with the community, with high interest from tāngata whenua. Twenty-two projects received a share in \$600,000 of funding, with the majority going to tāngata whenua groups.

A second funding round, which closed on 3 June 2025, has continued to attract lots of interest, with 75 applications. The fund, which opens annually, will invest \$9.2 million over 10 years, to support and enhance community resilience in Te Taitokerau.

Flood-resilient marae

[Image to be inserted]

A small, flood-prone Northland community withstood a major rainfall event for the first time in April, thanks to new flood protection works led by council.

Around 300ml of rain fell on the Matangirau catchment during Ex-Tropical Cyclone Tam, the most rain recorded in the area in a decade and almost twice the rainfall recorded across Northland.

Flood protection measures were installed last year at Matangirau as part of the region-wide \$5.735 million Flood-Resilient Māori Communities and Marae project.

The project (funded by the Local Government Flood Resilience Co-Investment Fund and NRC) aims to reduce flood risks for six flood-affected Māori communities (Kawakawa, Otiria-Moerewa, Kaeo, Matangirau, Whirinaki and Punuruku) and 35 marae across Te Tai Tokerau.

Partnership at heart of major flood protection project



“This is what genuine partnership looks like,” said a hapū member at the opening of the \$7M Otiria–Moerewa Spillway in August 2024. This award-nominated project is a powerful example of how co-design between Northland Regional Council and Ngāti Hine hapū – Ngāti Kōpaki and Ngāti Te Ara – can lead to transformative outcomes.

Originally met with resistance, the project evolved over time through deepening relationships, wānanga, co-design and shared decision-making. The result is a community-led, culturally aligned flood mitigation scheme that blends Mātauranga Māori with modern engineering.

The spillway has reduced flood severity by 75% through “re-wilding” waterways, restored natural flows, and upheld *Te Mana o te Wai* – the intrinsic value of water. It also empowered local hapū and whānau, setting a new precedent for ethical land use and indigenous-led infrastructure.

This initiative is more than flood protection – it’s a living example of what enduring Te Tiriti partnerships can achieve.

Strengthening hapori Māori resilience

[Image to be inserted]

In response to community calls for readiness following Cyclone Gabrielle, the Hapori Resilience Action Plan – supported by funding from the Ministry for Social Development – delivered 250 survival bags and 500 whānau booklets across Te Taitokerau.

Designed with kaupapa Māori values and local knowledge, these resources empowered “end of the road” communities with practical tools and values, and ensures they resonate with the communities they serve.

Across the rohe, whānau shared insights and experiences that revealed a shift in preparedness and mindset since Cyclone Gabrielle – including stocking emergency supplies, checking on kaumātua, and growing local kai.

This mahi directly aligns with the plan’s pillars: everyday resilience, resilience in emergencies, and climate adaptation. More than just resources, the initiative fostered connection, visibility, and proactive planning, supporting ongoing work of strengthening resilience at both the household and community levels across Te Taitokerau. The Hapori Māori resilience plan was endorsed by Te Ruarangi to support council’s broader strategy *Nga Taumata o te Moana* and encompasses the voices of hapori Māori leaders and kaitiaki networks.

TE WHANAKETANGA OHAOHA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Taitokerau economic wellbeing pathway released

The economic wellbeing pathway for Te Taitokerau, 'Te Rerenga', was released in late 2024. Led by Northland Inc – Northland's economic development agency which is jointly-owned by all four Northland local authorities – the strategy was developed with guidance from Te Kahu o Taonui, business and industry, and many others, including Te Ruarangi.

Co-designed through a collaborative process, Te Rerenga sets a vision for a sustainable, innovative, and prosperous economy focusing on the wellbeing of people, the economy, and the environment. Te Rerenga acknowledges the historical and cultural significance of He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and stands as a model for future economic development strategies that prioritise holistic wellbeing alongside traditional economic measures.

Recognising its consistency with the desired goals and values of Tāike Ē, it was endorsed by Te Ruarangi.

Te Rerenga will help guide council's economic development activities, including those undertaken by Northland Inc. For example, it was key input in drafting the light-touch regional deal proposal – Igniting Northland's Potential – submitted by the four councils to central government in February 2025.

The conversation around Te Rerenga also marks the beginning of a deeper dive as Te Ruarangi seeks to 'make the waka go faster' in economic terms, recognising that further discussion and potentially dedicated budget is needed to continue progressing actions under the 'economic development' whaingā of Tāiki ē.

Find out more: www.northlandnz.com/tererenga

Empowering jobseekers, restoring te taiao



Te Ohonga o Mahuri is a newly launched five-year restoration project spanning 1200 hectares of whenua Māori near Kaikohe.

Led by Te Korowai Arahi Trust, the kaupapa employs former jobseekers to restore te taiao through pest control, weed management and biodiversity monitoring and is supported by council, Ministry for Social Development and SkyCity Trust.

Working under the guidance of Trust kaimahi, ten former jobseekers are in full-time employment - helping to restore te taiao (the environment) while gaining skills such as chainsaw operation, track and infrastructure construction and maintenance, pest control, and tikanga Māori.

Council is supporting this kaupapa with funding, pest control and biodiversity monitoring expertise, training, and mapping.

It builds on the success of the recent multi-agency Punakitere Tumaha project, which offered ten local jobseekers the opportunity to enter a six-month river restoration contract to clear pest plants from the banks around the confluence of the Otaua River, Punakitere River and Tāheke River.

DRAFT

Ngā putanga o te mahere mahi Action plan outcomes

Our vision for the future is only as good as the actions we set in place to achieve it.

Tāiki Ē contains 31 actions, and this section covers how council is tracking against each of these actions, recognising that many actions span a longer time period than the one-year focus of this annual report.

Action	Status	Commentary
<p>1. Establish Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check and Review Framework by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. carrying out an independent review of council’s obligations and performance against Te Tiriti o Waitangi performance standards utilising the Te Arawhiti Framework in a Taitokerau context;b. identifying and implementing priority areas for improvement based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check;c. reporting to and seeking views and input of Te Ruarangi and councillors as part of the review;d. reviewing the implementation of the recommendations annually; ande. undertaking a full Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check every two years.	<p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>Good progress made on identified areas of improvement from 2022 report and relationships largely positive, but still lots of work to be done.</p> <p>Two-yearly Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check scheduled for endorsement and adoption in August 2025, with recommendations for ongoing improvement.</p>
<p>2. Continue developing a Tāiki Ē (NRC Te Tiriti o Waitangi Strategy and Implementation Plan) that includes, as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. what it means for NRC to uphold its Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations (e.g., what will success look like) and how NRC will live them through decision-making and operations;b. NRC’s overarching positions are clearly articulated on important matters such as transfer of powers under the resource management legislation, payment for kaitiaki, recognition of mātauranga Māori and tāngata whenua participation in decision making; andc. incorporate the findings and recommendations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check.	<p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>Revised Tāiki Ē adopted April 2024, with additional actions relating to Water/Marine, Climate Crisis and Economic Development whaingā and encompassing Te Tiriti o Waitangi Health Check recommendations.</p> <p>Revised Te Ruarangi terms of reference adopted February 2025, regarding meeting frequency and attendance, and a new name, Te Ruarangi.</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
3. Support and increase the uptake of the development of Iwi and Hapū Environmental Management Plan (IHEMP) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. allocating existing staff time towards assisting iwi and hapū with b and c below; b. developing a bespoke communication plan for increasing awareness and visibility of existing or future funding and support for IHEMPs, including targeting communications to iwi, hapū and whānau networks (including reaching out to specific iwi and hapū who may need extra support); and c. increasing the amount of funding and staff capacity in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan to respond to the potential increase in shared work programmes. 	ON TRACK	<p>Targeted communications and dedicated staff time ensured a successful funding round. There was an increase in applications received from the previous year and the \$30,000 funding pool for 2025/26 has been fully allocated.</p> <p>Additional staff capacity in place to support increase in shared work programmes.</p> <p>www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2024</p>
4. Support and increase the uptake of Mana Whakahono-ā-rohe agreements and commitments made within them by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. allocating existing staff time towards assisting iwi and hapū with b, c and d below; b. making it clear that NRC is open to receiving invitations and having discussions regarding entering into a Mana Whakahono-ā-rohe process with iwi and hapū; c. developing a bespoke communication plan for increasing awareness and visibility of existing or future funding and support for Mana Whakahono-ā-rohe, including targeting communications to iwi, hapū and whānau networks (including reaching out to specific iwi and hapū who may need extra support); and d. increasing the amount of funding and staff capacity in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan to respond to the potential increase in shared work programmes. 	ON TRACK	<p>In April 2024 Te Parawhau ki Tai on behalf of Te Parawhau hapū signed a Mana Whakahono-ā-rohe agreement with council.</p> <p>In December 2024 Ngāti Hine became the first iwi in Northland to sign a Mana Whakahono-ā-rohe agreement with council.</p> <p>A total of four hapū and iwi have signed agreements in Te Taitokerau.</p>
5. Support and increase the number of Māori Resource Management Act Hearing Commissioners by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing and implementing a consistent process and policy for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the identification of suitable candidates by tāngata whenua to become certified resource management hearing commissioners; ii. establishing when Māori commissioners will be utilised in council RMA resource consent and plan change decisions and operations; iii. how iwi and hapū will be consulted on the appointment of hearings commissioners within their rohe; and b. provide a dedicated funding stream to support the formal certification of Māori commissioners; c. identifying external funding sources (e.g., central government or territorial authorities) to maximise opportunities for tāngata whenua; and 	ON TRACK	<p>There are now 13 newly-accredited RMA commissioners from November 2024 cohort as a result of providing a dedicated funding stream to support formal certification of Māori commissioners.</p> <p>A guideline has been drafted for the identification and appointment of suitable Māori hearings commissioners.</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
d. identifying cohorts of whānau, hapū and iwi to complete the training to encourage a supportive learning experience.		
6. Ensure the delivery of targeted educational noho (training programmes) on resource management processes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing and implementing a programme in particular areas of interest with TTMAC (e.g. Ngā Whainga of TTMAC Strategic Intent); and b. allocating existing or new staff time towards delivering the programme and providing targeted assistance to whānau, hapū and iwi through council's RMA processes. 	ON TRACK	<p>Led through Te Ruarangi representatives, the second Wānanga Waioira held in March 2025 provided a forum for kaitiaki to share mātauranga (knowledge).</p> <p>Additional council kaimahi are providing assistance to whānau, hapū and iwi to navigate council's RMA and consent processes.</p>
7. Taking into account the existing tools and models available, develop and fund a culturally appropriate council environmental monitoring programme that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. addresses iwi and hapū interests and concerns in the monitoring of the environment; b. includes the incorporation of mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and recognition of the role of tāngata whenua as kaitiaki; c. recognises and provides for any cultural monitoring tools endorsed by iwi and hapū; d. is consistently implemented as a component of NRC environmental monitoring and reporting practices and processes; and e. is reviewed and updated every three years for its effectiveness and efficiency. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>Work on an independent review of current monitoring approaches initiated to address iwi and hapū concerns.</p> <p>Work examples include working with Ngāti Kuri to support monitoring programmes, and engaging Ngā Kaitiaki Ngā Waimāori to undertake fish passage monitoring.</p> <p>Kaitiaki network identified and established through Wānanga Waioira.</p>
8. Taking into account the existing tools and models available, develop and fund a culturally appropriate programme that enables and supports tāngata whenua to undertake their own freshwater monitoring aspirations that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. addresses iwi and hapū interests and concerns in the monitoring of the environment; b. includes the incorporation of mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and recognition of the role of tāngata whenua as kaitiaki; c. recognises and provides for any cultural monitoring tools endorsed by iwi and hapū; d. is consistently recognised and incorporated where appropriate as a component of NRC environmental monitoring and reporting practices and processes; and e. is reviewed and updated every three years for its effectiveness and efficiency. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>Tāngata Whenua and Catchment Fund - \$500,000 per year to support freshwater initiatives led by community groups, catchment group entities or tāngata whenua entities.</p> <p>Tāngata Whenua Environmental Monitoring Fund – \$130k per year to support hapū/iwi led monitoring programmes.</p> <p>Increase in council kaimahi to support hapū and iwi initiatives.</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
		Work underway to better support kaitiaki network. Support for kaitiaki and hapū sharing at Wānanga Waioira.
<p>9. Review, update and embed how NRC delivers its regulatory services to ensure regulatory activities (e.g. resource consents and compliance monitoring) are undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner and seek to include iwi and hapū to the greatest extent possible, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing an efficient and consistent framework for notifying and involving iwi and hapū with resource consent applications; b. providing suitable opportunities for iwi and hapū to provide feedback within statutory timeframes; c. taking into account the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The legislative constraints of the RMA; ii. Where legislative conflicts arise, advocate for change to central government in accordance with Action 12 of this Implementation Plan. d. committing funding to consistently resource iwi and hapū for undertaking this work. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>A review of council's resource consents processes was completed and a 12-month Action Plan was received in March 2025.</p> <p>Work to continue with council's Māori Technical Advisory Group to implement the action plan over the next 12 months.</p> <p>Internal GIS system for identifying interested iwi and hapū groups nearing completion.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with FNDC consultants on external public facing GIS viewer to identify consent applications for both councils to facilitate better and more accurate engagement.</p>
<p>10. Advocate to, and where appropriate, actively support, local and regional education providers, businesses and institutions to address existing skills shortages by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. engaging with tāngata whenua involved in existing projects to identify skills shortages in priority areas for NRC and TTMAC to focus on (e.g., planning, environmental monitoring); b. identifying programmes and opportunities that deliver education programmes in priority areas for NRC and TTMAC; and c. identifying opportunities to develop work programmes that fill skills shortages in priority areas for NRC and TTMAC. 	ON TRACK	<p>Making Good Decisions RMA 101 course completed by 30 whānau, iwi and hapū.</p> <p>Webinar support provided for the NZ Planning Institute for Mana Whakahono a Rohe.</p>
<p>11. Ensure tāngata whenua are consistently resourced to participate in governance, decision-making and operational activities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. reviewing different funding models used elsewhere in Aotearoa that could be applied, adapted and enhanced in Te Taitokerau; b. taking into account the findings of (a), develop and implement an agreed methodology and policy regarding consistent resourcing of tāngata whenua. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action</p> <p>Council's governance working parties include 50/50 representation of tāngata whenua.</p> <p>Council's committees include independent tāngata whenua members with voting rights.</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
		Council's procurement policy factors in equitable fees for technical expertise and operations. Te Ruarangi and Māori Technical Advisory Group include hapū and iwi representation from across Te Taitokerau. Work underway to establish a Rangatahi Executive Panel to express voices of young people at governance level.
12. Support iwi and hapū in their endeavours to obtain further funding and support through external sources (e.g., central government or territorial authorities). Specific actions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. allocating existing staff time and resources towards assisting iwi and hapū in applying for funding; and / or b. creating a new role and employing someone dedicated to assisting iwi and hapū in applying for funding. 	ON TRACK	Council kaimahi resourcing in place to assist iwi and hapū to apply for funding.
13. Undertake joint advocacy to central government on agreed priorities and interests, including on new legislation and initiatives such as the Future of Local Government Reforms, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. establishing the agreed priorities areas with TTMAC (e.g., water/ marine, climate crisis and economic development); b. developing and implementing an agreed process with TTMAC to effectively and efficiently respond and advocate on behalf of Te Taitokerau on the agreed priority areas identified in (a). 	ON TRACK	Priority 1 action Updated Tāiki Ē adopted April 2024 to include Water/Marine, Climate Crisis and Economic Development whaingā. Advocacy for the interests of our Te Tiriti partners across council submissions including the future of Māori seats, Fast Track processes, Te Tiriti principles, regulatory standards and MACA changes. Commenced development of a clear process to ensure alignment with hapū and iwi priorities.
14. Collaborate with, and advocate to other territorial authorities (such as Auckland Council and Whangārei, Kaipara and Far North district councils) where there are cross-boundary overlaps and duplication for iwi and hapū to improve and streamline engagement processes and resourcing where possible. Note: For example Kaipara Moana Remediation	ON TRACK	External funding sources identified, in collaboration with FNDC. Climate Resilience Wānanga held in May 2025 by Te Taitokerau councils.

Action	Status	Commentary
		NRC and FNDC continue to collaborate to support Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Board and the implementation of the beach management plan. Strategic priorities established for the ILGACE partnership.
15. Identify opportunities within legislation for tāngata whenua members of TTMAC to: a. join or participate in other council governance structures; and b. where appropriate, have formal voting rights on sub-committees.	ON TRACK	Priority 1 action Independent tāngata whenua advisors appointed to council's Audit Risk & Finance committee. Te Ruarangi members represented in council's Long Term Plan deliberations.
16. Deliver specific projects within agreed priority areas of interest (e.g. water/marine, climate crisis, economic development) to tāngata whenua and NRC by: a. undertaking a stocktake of existing projects and work programmes being progressed with the agreed priority areas of interest; b. establishing and implementing a joint TTMAC and NRC work programme that identifies new opportunities for joint projects; and c. seeking resourcing through the 2024 – 2034 Long Term Planning cycle.	ON TRACK	Working in series of collaborative projects with iwi and hapū, including initiatives such as rāhui moana, Caulerpa management, marae preparedness, and flood mitigation.
17. Develop and embed a cultural awareness and competency framework for councillors, staff and relevant consultants and contractors that includes, at a minimum: a. creating an induction process that explains the cultural context of Te Taitokerau, recognising that each hapū have their own tikanga; b. presents the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / and He Whakaputanga / The Declaration of Independence to NRC in all activities; and c. provides an understanding of and empathy for tikanga Māori (e.g., mauri, kaitiakitanga and mātauranga).	ON TRACK	Managers wānanga was held in May 2025 at Ngaiotonga marae focussing on Te Tiriti o Waitangi frameworks. Councillors' wānanga was held at Kawiti Marae to focus on Te Tiriti competencies with experts presenting on the benefits and opportunities of the Māori economy. All staff undertake an induction that includes basic te reo Māori and tikanga to support their roles. Development of a Māori Employment Framework underway to ensure responsive and inclusive employment processes.

Action	Status	Commentary
18. Invest in building tāngata whenua capacity and capability, by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing council's existing scholarship/internship programme to ensure that it supports the following outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> tāngata whenua undertaking their role as kaitiaki; or Increasing tāngata whenua participation in jobs that are directly relevant to council's activities; or Includes governance training, such as associateships. maintaining and increasing where appropriate in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, scholarship/internship programmes for tāngata whenua who whakapapa to Te Taitokerau iwi/hapū. 	ACHIEVED	<p>Successful implementation of this priority has resulted in scholarship recipients moving into paid employment in their fields.</p> <p>There were 58 applicants for the Tū i te Ora 2025 scholarship. The scholarship also includes the opportunity to gain work experience in different parts of the organisation.</p>
19. Develop an engagement policy and framework that formalises engagement procedures with iwi and hapū on Annual Plan, Long Term Plans, Regional Planning, and Regional Policy Statements.	ON TRACK	<p>Work towards formalising the successful involvement of iwi and hapū in the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan and 2025/26 Annual Plan has begun.</p> <p>Awaiting recommendations from the Stage 2 Te Tiriti Health Check to inform the development.</p>
20. Develop and maintain a digital tāngata whenua contacts database that spatially identifies indicative iwi and hapū rohe boundaries that can be utilised to guide engagement processes (e.g. resource consents), that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> takes into account overlapping iwi and hapū boundaries; recognises the sensitivity and accuracy of information; and uses the best available information (e.g., within IHEMPS); and mātauranga). 	ON TRACK	<p>Ongoing as part of the resource consents review action plan – see Action 9.</p>
21. Investigate and identify opportunities for the transfer or delegation of decision-making powers or operations (e.g., pursuant to section 33 of the Resource Management Act 1991) in areas of interest/concern to iwi and hapū, by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> identifying actions needed by NRC to implement the transfer or delegation and how these will be implemented; and providing assistance (e.g., staff assistance or funding support to engage an independent facilitator) to the iwi or hapū that are seeking the transfer or delegation. 	ON TRACK	<p>Development of council position regarding transfer of powers is being impacted by central government overhaul of RMA currently underway.</p>
22. Ensure the successful ongoing implementation of Māori constituencies by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> promoting and raising awareness of Māori seats and encouraging Māori to stand for local government; and 		<p>Priority 1 action</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
b. engaging with iwi and hapū to undertake a review of Māori constituencies within the first triennium following implementation to measure success and the representativeness of the constituencies.	ON TRACK	Council made a submission to central government opposing changes to the Local Electoral Act which would require a referendum on Māori constituencies. Council is now required to run a poll on the future of Māori constituency seats alongside the 2025 triennial council elections.
23. Providing ongoing support to ensure an equitable and culturally safe working environment for councillors.	ON TRACK	Priority 1 action First formal council meeting held September 2024 at Mokau marae. Two marae-based workshops held and hosted by Te Ruarangi at Motatau Marae (Ngāti Hine) and Tākou Bay (Ngāti Rehia). Translation te reo Maori for council by qualified translator. Use of karakia and reo practiced at every council meeting. Councillors' wānanga was held at Kawiti Marae to focus on Te Tiriti competencies.
24. Review council procurement policies and processes to ensure fair and equal opportunities for tāngata whenua consultants and contractors to obtain council contracts.	ON TRACK	NRC has registered with Amotai (a supplier diversity intermediary) to connect to more Māori and/or Pasifika owned businesses who service Te Taitokerau. A review is in progress of the Māori Expertise Procurement Policy.
25. Identify opportunities in council activities for tāngata whenua consultants and contractors to apply for council contracts. a.	ON TRACK	See also Action 24. Progressive procurement to be explored and benefits for tāngata whenua and council under the economic whainga.

Action	Status	Commentary
<p>26. During each review of the Annual Plan or Long Term Plan, consider and implement appropriate financial and other support for specific actions outlined in this Implementation Plan.</p>	ACHIEVED	<p>Priority 1 action Long Term Plan 2024-34 process complete and significant effort and resource allocated to the implementation of Taiki Ē. Additional kaimahi and budgets are now starting to positively influence the pace and scale of council's ability to implement the actions contained within Taiki Ē.</p>
<p>27. Continue to support the active involvement of tāngata whenua in the Freshwater Planning Instrument for Te Taitokerau under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. acknowledging the special relationship tāngata whenua have with wai, and te mana me te mauri o te wai; b. ensuring that NRC exercise its role and functions to give effect to this special relationship; and c. giving effect to the recommendations in Ngā Roimata o Ngā Atua Report. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action Incorporation of Ngā Roimata o Ngā Atua Report into the draft Freshwater Plan. Ongoing advice and technical expertise of Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group to address challenges faced by central government changes to the National Freshwater Policy Statement on Freshwater and the Freshwater Farm Plans.</p>
<p>28. Support tāngata whenua to address the effects of the climate crisis and strengthen the resilience of their communities to natural hazard events by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. identifying opportunities for tāngata whenua led approaches to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. mitigating the adverse effects of the climate crisis; ii. immediately respond to adverse weather events and natural hazards within their rohe; and iii. recover from adverse weather events and natural hazards within their rohe; and b. implementing priority actions in Ngā Taumata o Te Moana Implementation Plan (www.nrc.govt.nz/CC-implementation-plan) and Taitokerau Climate Adaptation Strategy (www.ttcn.nz/resources/ttcas/); c. supporting advocacy associated with the Taitokerau Resilience Action Plan (www.nrc.govt.nz/ResilienceActionPlan); and d. providing resources and mandate for local Māori leaders to support community safety and wellbeing before, during and after natural hazard events. 	ON TRACK	<p>Priority 1 action Kaupapa Māori resilience plan is being implemented to support rural and isolated communities through staff relationships with communities and provision of resources such as Whanau and Whenua Activation Plans. Response and recovery programme includes work to fund and support 35 flood resilient marae (plus CDEM group plan marae preparation). Funding through the Climate Resilient Communities Fund to support hapū planning in response to climate adaptation strategies.</p>

Action	Status	Commentary
29. Ensure strong tāngata whenua self-reliance and self-determination through sustainable economic development by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. supporting tāngata whenua to develop and implement their own economic development plans; and b. co-designing regional plans for economic development in Te Taitokerau (e.g. Te Taitokerau Economic Action Plan, and Te Rerenga) and ensuring that these include clear, measurable and achievable actions. 	ON TRACK	<p>A Te Ruarangi workshop held to explore future principles and opportunities to partner with tāngata whenua to guide and support council in responding to iwi and hapū economic wellbeing. Iwi and hapū representatives reiterated the Te Rerenga Strategy encapsulates iwi and hapū aspirations. Further discussions with Northland Inc and potentially additional budget may be required to fully implement this action. Discussions underway regarding a Māori economic development wānanga (similar to Wānanga Waiora).</p>
30. Support tāngata whenua aspirations associated with marine environmental protection and economic development opportunities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identifying opportunities for tāngata whenua led approaches (e.g. customary practices such as rāhui) within Taitokerau to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify and implement marine protected areas; ii. Undertake restoration and enhancement programmes within the coastal marine areas; iii. Review and implement marine biosecurity policies and measures; and iv. Progressing with culturally and ecologically appropriate economic development opportunities within the coastal marine area (e.g., aquaculture activities). 	ON TRACK	<p>Several reports have been presented to Te Ruarangi and interest has been received from iwi and hapū representatives to progress this action. Current budget and staff capacity is focused on implementation the new marine protected areas. The outcome of the current RM reform package needs to be known before progressing this action further.</p>
31. Develop, monitor and report on a key performance indicator framework to assess NRC delivery of outcomes for tāngata whenua against Ngā Whainga within the Strategic Intent.	ON TRACK	<p>Annual report developed to monitor and report on key performance indicators within Tāiki Ē.</p>

TITLE: **Te Ruarangi representation at council workshops**

From: Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 08 August 2025
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

This report seeks to formalise attendance at council workshops by non-elected members of Te Ruarangi. It is recommended this be progressed on the basis that:

- It supports a Te Tiriti based partnership approach to council decision making and operations as envisaged by Tāiki ē
- It is aligned with goals in Tāiki ē relating to tangata whenua participation and representation in council decisions and operations (capacity and capability goals 1-3 and Māori representation goals 4-6)
- Future council workshops will likely cover matters of interest to Māori (e.g. resource management and local government reforms) and attendance by non-elected members of Te Ruarangi will ensure tangata whenua have the opportunity to inform council of their views
- The current approach to seeking Te Ruarangi representatives to attend council workshops is ad hoc and inefficient (and often constrained by meeting schedules).

To address the above, it is recommended that Te Ruarangi endorse a more formal approach to non-elected members attendance at council workshops. It is suggested that Te Ruarangi identify a 'pool' of 4 non-elected members nominated to attend and participate in council workshops and recommends to council that these members have a standing invitation to attend council workshops unless council explicitly states the workshop is for elected members only.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Te Ruarangi representation at council workshops' by Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist and dated 29 July 2025, be received.
2. That Te Ruarangi endorse a more formalised approach to non-elected members attendance and participation in council workshops.
3. That Te Ruarangi recommend to council that a 'standing invitation' is made to a pool of 4 members of non-elected members to attend and participate in council workshops (except where council explicitly states the workshop is for elected members only).
4. That Te Ruarangi nominate 4 non-elected members to receive standing invitations to attend council workshops.

Tuhinga/Background

Council and Te Ruarangi have committed to giving effect to their responsibilities to tāngata whenua of Te Taitokerau under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The 'roadmap' to achieve this is set out in Tāiki ē which includes a suite of goals and actions, including goals relating to building tangata whenua capability

and capacity to participate in council decisions and tangata whenua representation in council decision making.

Workshops are an important part of council business and are a key way for councillors to keep informed of operational matters and issues of importance to council functions and to provide direction to staff. Council has in the past invited non-elected members of Te Ruarangi to attend various workshops where topics were of particular interest to tangata whenua – this has been very valuable for council but has been somewhat ad hoc. It has also been difficult at times to seek Te Ruarangi nominees to attend workshops at short notice as Te Ruarangi only meets every two months (workshops can be scheduled at short notice constraining the ability to seek Te Ruarangi nominees at a formal meeting).

This is expected to be even more problematic in the short to medium term as the government advances its ambitious programme of resource management and local government reforms – both of which are likely to be of particular interest to Te Ruarangi members and tangata whenua in general. The scope of government reforms include areas of focus identified by Te Ruarangi (such as participation arrangements for Māori, water/marine, climate change, and economic development) – it is important to council that its submissions to government are informed by tangata whenua views on these reforms and attendance at workshops by Te Ruarangi members is an effective way to achieve this.

It is therefore recommended that Te Ruarangi endorse a more formal (and efficient) approach to representation at council workshops. One option to achieve this would be for Te Ruarangi to:

- nominate a ‘pool’ of 4 non-elected members to attend and participate in council workshops and represent the views of Te Ruarangi
- Recommend that council extend a standing invitation for those nominees to attend and participate in council workshops (including receipt of pre-circulated workshop materials) – unless council explicitly states that the workshop is for elected members only.
- That Te Ruarangi nominate 4 non-elected members to attend and participate in council workshops.

Having a pool of four non-elected members to draw on would better enable availability and provide for a range of Te Ruarangi members expertise and interests inform council workshops. It is not anticipated that all (or necessarily any) nominees would attend every workshop.

It is anticipated that the above would:

- a) ensure Te Ruarangi members are briefed on operational or other matters of interest
- b) enable tangata whenua views to be considered by council in operational decisions or feedback to government
- c) deliver on the capability, capacity and partnership goals in Tāiki ē
- d) be more efficient than the current approach.

It is difficult to anticipate how many workshops Te Ruarangi members would attend but it is considered that at least 10 workshops would likely be of interest in the short term. There is sufficient budget available in this financial year to reimburse four non-elected Te Ruarangi members for attendance at this number of council workshops.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: **Draft submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill**

From: Julian Hansen, Kaiārahi Kaupapa Māori - Senior Māori Technical Advisor and Kyla Carlier, Corporate Strategy Manager

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Bruce Howse, Pou Taumatua – Group Manager Corporate Services and Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

The purpose of this paper is to offer an opportunity for Te Ruarangi to provide input into council's submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill, prior to formal adoption and lodgement.

A verbal overview of the council workshop discussion held on 13 August 2025 will also be provided to Te Ruarangi. Council's decision on its submissions will be taken at its 26 August meeting.

The council workshop memo and draft submission is attached. Additional aspects relating to the impact of the Bill in relation to iwi/hapū/whānau in Te Taitokerau are highlighted for consideration by Te Ruarangi below.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions

1. That the report 'Draft submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill' by Julian Hansen, Kaiārahi Kaupapa Māori - Senior Māori Technical Advisor and Kyla Carlier, Corporate Strategy Manager and dated 8 August 2025, be received.
2. That feedback provided by Te Ruarangi members be incorporated, where appropriate, into council's submission on the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill in a way that aligns with the submission's overall intent and timeframes.

OR

3. That, alternatively, where differing views are expressed, staff may support Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus to prepare a separate submission to ensure those perspectives are appropriately represented.
-

Tuhinga/Background

There are a number of issues that Te Ruarangi members may wish to consider more closely which haven't been focused upon in the draft council submission. A number of these are highlighted below.

The removal of the four wellbeings

There is the potential for this to have significant impact for Māori (and all) communities. There are legitimate justifications for councils having a "broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities" (existing Purpose in s.3(d)).

Standardised code of conduct

There is a risk that approval and issuance of a standardised Code of Conduct by the Secretary for Local Government may result in the omission or weakening of direction on values, standards of behaviour or responsibilities of elected members relating to such things as:

- fulfilling Te Tiriti obligations
- embracing tikanga Māori and reo Māori
- ensuring that council services are provided in a culturally appropriate way that recognises and supports the expression of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, and
- generally upholding a Tiriti-based relationship of partnership with hapū and iwi, including decision-making and the design and delivery of work programmes.

These aspects are all included in NRC's current Elected Members Code of Conduct. There is a legitimate argument for councils retaining the ability to approve and issue their own Code of Conduct, relevant to their specific region and context.

Removing requirements for councils to publish public notices in daily newspapers

In the Regulatory Impact Statement on discrete interventions, paragraphs 54-56, it is noted that Māori could be among those more disadvantaged and digitally excluded by not publishing notices in daily newspapers, due to less internet access. Consideration may thus need to be given to this aspect in context of Te Taitokerau.

Removal of s.57(3) on considering knowledge of tikanga Māori in relation to the governance of council-controlled organisations (CCOs)

It is generally accepted practice in Aotearoa New Zealand that considering tikanga Māori as part of governance is integral to maintaining trusted and enduring Treaty-based partnership with tangata whenua.

Under Council's Code of Conduct, it is considered important to council governance and its effective performance for council members to conduct their dealings with each other in a manner that respects and embraces the practice of tikanga Māori in its governance practices (see Code of Conduct, section 5.1). Similarly, if Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of CCOs do not have a knowledge of tikanga, there is potentially the risk of tikanga Māori being less supported, affecting CCOs performance of their services to local communities, including tangata whenua.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Memo and Draft submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill



Workshop Memorandum

Workshop Date: 13 August 2025

GM Sponsor: Bruce Howse – GM Corporate Services

Reporting Officer: Kyla Carlier – Corporate Strategy Manager

Subject: Draft submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill.

Purpose:

This discussion will offer an opportunity to provide input into council's submission to the Local Government Act (System Improvements) Bill, prior to formal adoption and lodgement.

The draft submission is attached to this memorandum.

Next Steps:

- Staff will finalise draft submission with input provided
- Submission will be presented to council meeting 26 August for formal approval
- Submission will be lodged with parliament by closing date of 27 August

Background:

Central government released the Local Government Act (System Improvements) bill for public submissions on 27 July 2025. The bill seeks to:

- Refocus the purpose of local government with the removal of the four well-beings and a focus on core services to support local economic growth.
- Change the way that council performance is measured and publicised.
- Focus financial management on core services and increase reporting requirements.
- Introduce a standardised code of conduct and set of standing orders and facilitate the sharing of information and transparency.
- Provide regulatory relief to councils by removing some requirements and providing clarification around some matters.

The proposed bill, including general policy statement and explanatory notes can be found on the New Zealand Legislation website:

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2025/0180/latest/whole.html>

Staff have drafted a submission on the bill which is presented to council for discussion prior to finalisation and lodging with parliament by 27 August.

It is intended that Te Ruarangi will also provide input and help to shape council's submission. The process by which this will be achieved was still being finalised at the time of writing this memo.

Attachments:

DRAFT Submission to the LG System Improvements Bill



Submission

To: Committee Secretariat
Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
ga.legislation@parliament.govt.nz

By: The Northland Regional Council
On: Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill

Introduction

The Northland Regional Council (NRC, or 'Council') appreciates the opportunity to submit on the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill. Council's submission is made in the interest of promoting the sustainable management of Northland's natural and physical resources and supporting its people and communities both economically and in terms of wellbeing.

Council is supportive of the government's focus on reducing the cost of living and sees value in the streamlining elements proposed in the bill, balancing service delivery with cost and regulatory requirements. However, some clauses of the bill lack the clarity required to realise the intended benefits, and council is concerned that the broad-brush approach may not account for the unique requirements of individual regions, and the knowledge of the members elected to represent them.

Submission

1. Interpretation

- 1.1. Council sees logic in amending the definition of community outcomes to align with the purpose of local government, subject to Council's submission below on the amendment of the purpose of local government.



Private Bag 9021, Whangārei 0148



- 1.2. Council supports the removal of a requirement to use newspaper advertising as part of providing public notice, and by extension the ability of individual councils to assess the usefulness of newspaper notices for their communities.

2. Purpose of local government:

- 2.1. Council acknowledges that the amendment to the purpose of local government, with the removal of the four well-beings and a focus on cost-effectiveness and the core functions of councils, is intended to provide clearer direction. However, Council is concerned that the purpose lacks sufficient clarity to realise this intention.
- 2.2. Further clarification is needed regarding what are considered to be 'local public services' and 'services'. 'Good quality' and 'most cost effective' also need to be defined, with the latter potentially leaving council open to challenge if not properly clarified.
- 2.3. Council considers itself already aligned to the purpose 'to support local economic growth and development'. The language is not sufficiently defined to necessitate any change in current Council operations.

3. Core services

- 3.1. The re-introduction of core services includes two services delivered by Council: public transport and civil defence emergency management. Council questions where environmental protection, regulatory services, maritime functions and flood protection and control works sit in the assessment of 'core services'. These form a significant part of the work carried out by regional councils, primarily under the Resource Management Act 1991, the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941. It is noted that 'Flood protection and Control works' have until this amendment been considered to be a 'group of activities' in developing an annual plan under Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act. While these may fall under the 'performance of regulatory functions' this is not included in new section 11A – this could lead to regional councils being challenged when undertaking these activities despite the clear benefits for communities (and the mandates under other Acts).

We recommend either including reference to 'performance of regulatory functions' in new s11A or expanding the list to explicitly reference core services performed by regional councils (the former seems preferable).

- 3.2. The requirement to have 'particular regard' to the contribution that the core services make to its communities' lacks clarity, and it is unclear how council could use this as a test when working to prioritise its activities.



Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau

3.3. The Explanatory Note to the Bill states that one of the intentions of the Bill is to deter councils from spending on activities that “stray from core services” which has caused rates rises which are being “exacerbated by a lack of fiscal discipline among councils”. From a Regional Council perspective it is unclear what activities and spending might be considered as ‘straying’ from core services and demonstrating a lack of fiscal discipline, and further guidance on this would be useful.

3.4. Council is concerned that an overly narrow interpretation of "core services" may inadvertently exclude projects that are financially prudent and deliver significant value to communities. Implementation needs to be managed to ensure that high-impact initiatives are not precluded solely on the basis of a constrained definition.

4. Service delivery review

4.1. The removal of the mandatory requirement for a local authority to carry out a periodic review of the cost-effectiveness of service delivery (S17A) offers some benefits in terms of administrative relief and the ability to tailor reviews to specific operating environments.

5. Governance

5.1. Council supports the addition of governance principles for elected members as a way to help to foster a collaborative council environment and adherence to proper process, and notes the requirement to report on how these principles are being realised as part of the triennial local governance statement. It is noted that providing a statement on how council is fostering these principles will likely need to rely on adherence to council's code of conduct.

5.2. Council supports the requirement for a general explanation of the code of conduct at the first meeting of a council following a general election.

5.3. While not opposed to a standardised code of conduct and standing orders being issued by the Secretary, it is noted the mandatory requirement for a Code of Conduct has been removed and replaced with an option (“may”) to the Secretary to approve and issue a code of conduct. We also note the removal of the requirement that when adopting a code of conduct it is to be considered whether a member must declare if they are an undischarged bankrupt. Considering that the Bill is concerned with good financial management, Council considers this to be information that Council should be aware of.

5.4. Council supports the addition of a clause that elected members have a right of access to documents held by council, and notes that guidance may be required for determining what type of information is reasonably necessary to enable a member to perform their duties. Council notes that this information could currently be requested



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under LGOIMA, and this clause may assist in reducing these types of queries from elected members.

6. Performance management

6.1. The enablement of regulations in relation to council performance and reporting have the potential to be useful and provide guidance to councils on these matters. It is important that any regulations relating to the prescription of groups of activities in long-term and annual plans, and annual reports, be issued with sufficient time for councils to deliver on these requirements, without having to undercut best practice.

6.2. Council acknowledges the amendment to Section 261B in relation to performance measures as a widening of the scope of what the Secretary can apply mandatory rules to, and notes that these may be applied to individual local authorities. Council is concerned with the removal of the mandatory requirement to consult with local authorities during this process and seeks retention of this. Consultation will help to ensure that if measures are being applied to groups of local authorities, these are not too broad brush, potentially resulting in measures that are meaningful in one region and less so in another. Council supports the removal of this as a mandatory requirement, and notes that to date the requirement has only driven performance measures in relation to council's flood risk management activity.

Council supports the removal of this as a mandatory requirement, and notes that to date the requirement has only driven performance measures in relation to council's flood risk management activity.

6.3. Council notes the intention to develop a performance measurement framework administered by the DIA, and sees the benefit of performance measures across councils being able to be viewed in one place. This may result in a reduction in LGOIMA requests. The presentation of performance measures across and between councils need to be considered carefully to avoid losing the context of those councils, their structural form (district/city, regional or unitary) and their unique situations, communities and constraints, which could result in a dilution of meaning and misleading information.

6.4. We also note that comparing financial performance across equivalent councils may paint those that do little in a better light than those that choose to invest significantly (or have to in order to address infrastructure deficits). This sort of context needs to be understood for a fair comparison.

6.5. We recommend that any new rules relating to performance measures are proposed, that consultation must be undertaken with those parties subject to the rules – this will avoid impractical unworkable rules. We therefore recommend s261(3) be amended accordingly to require active consultation with relevant local authorities (replace 'may'



with 'must'. We recommend the same change is made in relation to regulations developed under section 259 (new clause 4A).

7. Financial Management

7.1. The requirement to have particular regard to the purpose of local government and core services when determining Council's approach to financial management will create an extra layer of administrative consideration in decision-making, and requires clarity in order to implement. Consideration should be given to how this requirement will be monitored, to ensure that it does not result in increased audit fees that negate the intended financial efficiencies of the bill.

7.2. We also consider it may be particularly difficult for a regional council to demonstrate how it has given 'particular regard' to the core services as defined in new section 11A (given these don't reflect regional services well).

7.3. The requirement to report on all operating and capital expenditure on consultants and contractors will require further guidance, to ensure clarity on what level of reporting needs to occur, and clear definition of what is considered to be a consultant or contractor. For example, it is not clear if legal costs would fall under this umbrella, or would be considered separately as a professional service. While some councils already have their own definitions, these would need to be standardised. It is assumed that this information would be disclosed as part of current note 4 (Other expenditure) to the financial statement of council's annual report.

7.4. The bill strives to address cost of living concerns, with concern raised that rates are driving household inflation. This must be considered in the historical context of long periods of under-investment in local infrastructure. Rates reductions may not provide the required relief, and have very minimal impact for a significant cost in terms of service provision and potentially constraints on development due to infrastructure lag / deficit.

8. Regulatory requirements

8.1. Council notes the removal of the mandatory requirement to consider the relevance of knowledge of tikanga Māori when appointing directors of CCOs. While removing a requirement to 'consider' may result in little impact practically, the messaging of this and the impact on Māori participation in local government decision-making needs to be considered.

8.2. The council has no objection to the extension of the maximum length of a chief executive's second term, as this may provide continuity of leadership.



- 8.3. Council has no objection to the clarification provided by the bill around the authority of an acting or interim chief executive to sign certificates of compliance for lending, or in relation to third-party contributions to capital projects.

The Council does not wish to be heard in relation to its submission.

Signed by the Executive Leadership Team on behalf of Northland Regional Council

Jonathan Gibbard

Chief Executive Officer

Dated: XX August 2025

DRAFT

TITLE: Te Ruarangi iwi and hapu caucus on National Directions Package

From: Sally Bowron, Strategy, Governance and Engagement Team Admin/PA

Authorised by Auriole Ruka, Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement, on
Group Manager/s: 08 August 2025

Whakarāpopototanga/Executive summary

This report is to provide an update regarding the outcomes from the Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū workshop on proposed changes to National Policy Statements (NPS) and National Environmental Standards (NES) held on 10 July 2025.

The workshop outlined the feedback received to date from the Maori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) and the Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Group (TWWAG) on the National Directions Reform Packages and also council's position on the National Directions Reform Packages (following on from the council workshop on 9 July 2025).

The workshop sought feedback to inform the preparation of submissions, particularly for Package Three (Freshwater), which closed on 27 July 2025. A council submission covering all or parts of Packages One, Two, and Three was considered at the 24 July 2025 council meeting. The council's and the Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus's respective submissions are attached.

Key discussion points included:

- Overall advice was to keep the NPS-FM and Te Mana o Te Wai as it is.
- Concerns raised about the removal of *Te Mana o te Wai* (TMOTW) and the shift toward property rights in national policy. Members emphasised the cultural and environmental implications and the undermining of Te Tiriti-based partnerships.
- Members discussed the need for stronger language and framing of hapū and iwi views. For example, change "Agree with need for changes" to "we agree with continuous improvement or need for review", "hapū rights and interests" versus "mana" and "rangatiratanga".
- Support for Te Ruarangi and TWWAG to submit a separate, independent submission alongside the council's, to ensure Māori voices are not diluted.
- Concerns about the permissive approach to marine aquaculture and its potential to create tensions between iwi, hapū and council regarding mana moana and commercial interests.
- Risks identified in the proposed changes to planning frameworks, including weakened protections for sites of significance and increased pressure on conservation land.
- Acknowledgement of the ongoing burden on hapū to engage in voluntary, under-resourced processes.
- Members agreed that the council and the Te Ruarangi iwi and hapū caucus could submit separate but supportive submissions on the National Direction Packages. This reflects a joint advocacy approach where different voices and perspectives are acknowledged and respected.

Actions:

- Staff to finalise the draft to the 22 July council meeting, incorporating feedback where possible, especially around Te Mana o Te Wai and Tāiki ē, consistent with what was done for the Waipiro Bay letter to the Minister.

- Te Ruarangi and Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Group can lodge a separate submission reflecting the Māori caucus position. Following precedent, the submission can be signed off by Te Ruarangi Co-Chairs.
- Pou Tiaki Taiao - Group Manager Environmental Services to communicate the outcome to councillors and request their endorsement.


Ngā mahi tūtohutia/Recommended actions


1. That the report 'Te Ruarangi iwi and hapu caucus on National Directions Package' by Sally Bowron, Strategy, Governance and Engagement Team Admin/PA and dated 31 July 2025, be received.

Tuhinga/Background

Not applicable.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Te Ruarangi Maori caucus submission on Package 3 Freshwater [↓](#) 

Attachment 2: Council submissions on the National Direction Reforms (Packages 1, 2 and 3) [↓](#) 

25 July 2025

Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
WELLINGTON 6143
via email: freshwaterND@mfe.govt.nz

Submission Opposing the National Directions Reforms Package 3 Freshwater

This submission is made by the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group (TWWAG) on behalf of the Māori caucus of Te Ruarangi. TWWAG was established at the end of 2019 by Northland Regional Council (NRC) to provide independent advice, from a Te Ao Māori perspective, on the development of the council's freshwater plan change. This was in part to meet the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM), but was also a part of a wider programme of Tiriti based improvements being undertaken by the council.

TWWAG is a diverse rōpū including kaitiaki, engineers, planners, accountants and farmers—all united in our understanding that true freshwater management must be grounded in our enduring relationships with wai and our obligations to future generations.

For over five years, we have nurtured relationships with Northland Regional Council, primary sector groups, tangata whenua, and our wider community across Te Tai Tokerau. Together, we have been developing a collective understanding of how to care for our wai—recognising that healthy waterways are fundamental to the wellbeing of all life they sustain and activities they enable.

Irrespective of legislative basement level rules and standards, our approach has always been holistic — understanding that the health of our wai is inseparable from the health of our communities, our whenua, and our cultural practices. Constant policy changes fragment this understanding and weaken our ability to exercise proper kaitiakitanga and assist our wider communities in living together.

As kaitiaki, we firmly oppose the government's proposed changes to freshwater policy and the diminishing of principled and tikanga based concepts such as Te Mana o Te Wai. These reforms fundamentally misunderstand the nature of our work, which is built on our communities long-term commitment to our waterways and to each other.

We strongly oppose rebalancing Te Mana o te Wai, as it does not require rebalancing. In fact, Te Mana o te Wai is balanced, as it enforces obligations through its principles for both tangata whenua and tangata tiriti/all New Zealanders. The hierarchy of obligations should remain intact and not be removed. Regional councils should retain the discretion to determine how these obligations apply in consenting decisions. Progressive improvement over time should be left to regional councils to enforce (as is the case now). Councils could also clarify the application of Te Mana o te Wai at local and regional levels. It is essential to keep tangata whenua actively involved in freshwater management to the extent they wish to be involved - including decision making.

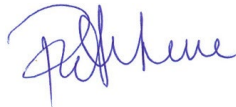
We fail to see how these reforms assist our Tiriti based societies in; influencing resource management decision making, uplifting order and predictability, protecting rights and interests, balancing competing interests, enabling collective action, reflecting cultural and societal tikanga, morals and values or supports communities to effectively and sustainably adapt to change. We believe these reforms will lead to the most vulnerable, te taiao, being open to exploitation to the detriment of all our mokopuna.

We cannot comprehend how these reforms provide fair pathways that will assist us to navigate the complexities of living together.

We call on the government to withdraw these proposed reforms in their entirety and to allow us to continue walking the path we have been building together—one that honours both our ancestral responsibilities and our collective commitment to ensuring that our mokopuna inherit waterways that sustain all life, as they have for countless generations before us.

Whilst we will continue to work with the Northland Regional Council on freshwater management to advance the strategic intent of Tāiki ē and its whainga for freshwater, in no way should this collaboration be seen as an acceptance of any part of these reforms.

We do not wish to be heard.



Pita Tipene (Co-Chair Te Ruarangi)

On behalf of the iwi and hapū caucus of Te Ruarangi and the Tāngata Whenua Water Advisory Group

E: pita@nhht.co.nz

Council Meeting
22 July 2025

ITEM: 4.9
Attachment 1



27 July 2025

Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
WELLINGTON 6143

via email: ndprogramme@mfe.govt.nz

RE: National Direction Reforms (Packages 1 & 2 Infrastructure, Development and Primary Sector)

Northland Regional Council (NRC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed new and amendments to existing National Policy Statements (NPS) and National Environmental Standards (NES) that make up Packages 1 and 2 of the national direction reforms covering Infrastructure, Development and the Primary Sector.

It is noted that this feedback relates to issues from a Te Taitokerau Northland perspective. Matters of particular importance to the regional sector will be lodged separately by Te Uru Kahika. We endorse that submission.

In general terms, NRC:

- notes the importance of ensuring that changes are integrated and coherent across all reforms, and that they are enduring. One of the biggest challenges local government and our communities face is uncertainty and delays to acting when national policy is constantly rewritten;
- supports review and continuous improvement to increase efficiency and reduce costs while achieving environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing outcomes;
- highlights that economic sustainability requires a healthy environment and a focus on long-term economic viability, to ensure a balance between short-term gain and the long-term costs borne by future generations;
- stresses the need to consider all activities subject to the proposal collectively without prioritising some activities over others;
- highlights the commitments¹ NRC has made to partner with tāngata whenua and notes the importance of giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi obligations as part of resource management decision-making;

supports an approach which enables a regional voice and variation where appropriate — a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not always the most appropriate solution;

¹ NRC's Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan Tāiki ē sets out NRC's commitment to giving effect to its responsibilities to tāngata whenua of Te Taitokerau under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi. Key strategic goals "Te Tiriti o Waitangi is upheld and embraced", "the mauri of water is protected, restored and improved" and "partner with tāngata whenua to give effect to Te Mana o Te Wai".



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- is concerned about implementation cost that will be borne by ratepayers, hapū and iwi², implementation timeframes, and restrictions on councils having more stringent rules to address regional issues; and
- notes that there is a real risk of ‘engagement fatigue’, with our communities, particularly tāngata whenua, disengaging with planning processes because of continued changes in national direction.

We set out more detailed responses to the key topics raised in relation to Packages 1 and 2 below.

NPS Implementation Options

1. We support minimising the need for councils to have to undertake changes to existing plans under the RMA given that the new resource management legislation is due to replace the Resource Management Act (RMA) in 2026.
2. Regarding options for NPS implementation, NRC prefers Option 3: require all plan changes to fully implement each NPS before or at plan review, in addition to any specific implementation provisions in each proposal.
3. It is however unclear whether this refers to the 10-year plan review under section 79(1) of the RMA, and the implications would depend on where the relevant council is in the planning cycle. However, this option would in principle provide councils with the greatest flexibility and certainty, and is the least-costly and most efficient option, as councils have the ability to incorporate multiple changes in one planning process rather than potentially requiring multiple plan changes.
4. In the interests of efficiency, we also recommend that the government utilise section 55(2A) RMA (direct insert) where nationally consistent direction in NPS is to be included in plans, to avoid the need for plan changes and associated Schedule 1 processes.
5. We understand Regional Policy Statements are unlikely to be a feature in the new resource management system, and therefore urge central government to avoid requiring amendments to Regional Policy Statements.
6. NRC seeks the following relief in regard to implementation options:
 - a. Require full implementation of NPS in plans on or before the 10-year review required under section 79(1) RMA, with some exception provided for those councils where this would be impractical (i.e. those where 10-year plan reviews are required in the very short term).
 - b. Utilise section 55(2A) in NPS where practical to streamline the process and limit costs.
 - c. Avoid national direction requiring amendments to Regional Policy Statements.

Package 1: Infrastructure and development

National Policy Statement for Infrastructure

7. NRC supports the aligning of definitions across multiple NPS and NES for consistency and to provide certainty. However, NRC notes the government’s proposal to expand the list of activities which are considered to be “infrastructure” to include “supporting infrastructure activities” and

² We note that hapū and iwi representatives often have to provide their input to RMA processes, including consents, on a voluntary basis. Lack of resourcing for hapū and iwi is an ongoing barrier to their equitable participation.

“additional infrastructure”³. The list of activities is limited. For example, critical infrastructure assets owned by councils, such as civil defence facilities or flood protection schemes, are not included.

8. We recommend that that it is made clear in the NPS that the definition of additional infrastructure activities is not exhaustive and that other activities can be considered by councils. Failing to do so creates a risk of excluding regionally critical infrastructure that warrants consideration under the NPS.
9. We note that the inclusion of these activities is within the context of providing a more enabling⁴ planning framework for infrastructure activities, particular in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) and in wetlands as proposed in amendments to the NPS for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM), NES-F and New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS). With that context in mind, it is unclear how the more enabling framework will benefit “additional infrastructure” such as schools, hospitals, correction facilities, resource recovery/waste disposal given the low likelihood of such being located in the CMA or wetlands and therefore the relevance of including these activities within a definition of “additional infrastructure”.
10. It is also unclear as to which “infrastructure supporting activities” (e.g. quarrying) are to be provided for in decision-making as the proposed Policy P4(3) refers only to “some” infrastructure supporting activities that may have a functional or operational need to be in “particular environments and locations”. The unclear provisos “some” and “particular” proposed in Policy P4(3) create a significant level of ambiguity which will undoubtedly result in expensive and time-consuming litigation. We are also concerned that the “infrastructure supporting activities” provisions are too broad and need to be restricted to those specifically supporting the main infrastructure project or activity. We also note the link to “infrastructure” and the inclusion of “operational need” which will enable more infrastructure activities in sensitive environments and locations over and above other activities.
11. We strongly support the proposed requirement to consider spatial plans and other strategic plans (e.g. Long-Term Plans) in decision-making on infrastructure, including Regional Land Transport Plans prepared under the Land Transport Management Act.

Recognising and providing for Māori rights and interests

12. NRC supports the inclusion of Policy 5 ‘Recognising and providing for Māori rights and interests’, and the application of a consistent approach across the NPS on Urban Development (NPS-UD), the NPS on Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG), and the NPS on Electricity Networks (NPS-EN).
13. Clause 1(c) of proposed Policy 5 provides for involvement of tāngata whenua ‘in appropriate circumstances’ in relation to Sites of Significance to Māori and issues of cultural significance. The term ‘in appropriate circumstances’ is ambiguous, and our view is that any circumstance in which Sites of Significance to Māori and issues of cultural significance are affected warrant involvement of tāngata whenua. Also, the proposed wording does not provide for consultation with tāngata whenua nor their participation in decision-making, both key components of recognising and providing for Māori rights and interests, the stated purpose of proposed Policy 5.
14. We support the intent of clause 1(d) of P5 to provide for operating in a way consistent with legislation that provides for iwi participation but note that the clause as worded would likely disadvantage those hapū and iwi yet to reach settlement or who don’t have an agreement under

³ School or education/training institution, hospital care institution, fire & emergency facilities, Defence Force facilities, Correction facilities, stormwater network, resource recovery/waste disposal facilities.

⁴ “Enabling” has specific meaning in a planning context and would generally make activities either permitted or controlled.

s.58L of the RMA. The requirement to take into account the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (s.8 of the RMA) is also absent from the policy.

15. Policy 7 (operation, maintenance and minor upgrade of existing infrastructure) enables these activities provided that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated “where practicable”. This phrase is highly ambiguous and contrary to s.5(2)(c) of the RMA and will lead to substantial legal debate and uncertainty due to its reliance on subjective interpretation of what is ‘practicable’. We recommend retaining the ‘avoid, remedy, mitigate’ hierarchy as is.

16. Relief sought:

- a. Amend the definition of additional infrastructure activities to make clear that the list is not exhaustive and that other ‘social infrastructure’ activities can be considered by councils⁵, or do not define “additional infrastructure activities” and rely on the RMA definition of Infrastructure.
- b. Amend the definitional of infrastructure supporting activities so these relate only to activities specifically required to support a primary infrastructure activity or project.
- c. Amend Policy 5(1)(b) to recognise “and provide for” the opportunities tangata whenua may have in developing and operating their own infrastructure.
- d. Remove “in appropriate circumstances” from Policy 5(1)(c) in regards to involvement of tangata whenua.
- e. Amend Policy 5(1)(d) to provide for tangata whenua participation in accordance with the Principles of Treaty of Waitangi, in addition to that provided for in iwi participation legislation (as defined in section 58L of the RMA), or alternatively, add in a new clause to Policy 5(1) requiring the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi to be taken into account.
- f. Remove “where practicable” from Policies 7 and 8 so that the ‘avoid, remedy, mitigate’ hierarchy still applies.
- g. Include policy direction on increasing resilience of infrastructure to climate change and natural hazards.

National Policy Statements for Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Networks

17. NRC is generally supportive of the government's efforts to enable renewable electricity generation (REG) and update our electricity transmission network to handle a more decentralised power system. Recent weather events and network failures have emphasised that multiple sources of energy generation distributed throughout New Zealand are advantageous where connections to the national grid are compromised. Renewably generated electricity is also advantageous due to cost efficiencies, national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the ready availability of sunlight, wind, and other natural elements that can be utilised to generate electricity renewably. NRC is of the view that REG from geothermal resources should not be included in this NPS due to the complex environmental interconnectivity and potential for environmental impacts resulting from its development.
18. The proposed amendments to existing policies provide more clarity and directive than the previous NPS from 2011 and 2008 respectively and give more certainty to decision-makers and applicants on what considerations will be had in any new proposal.
19. The proposed new policies are also generally supported by NRC, noting our comments above on Policy 5 (NPS Infrastructure), particularly:
- a. REG Policy 1 (and EN Policy 3) Policies related to Māori rights and interests,

⁵ Such as flood management and land drainage infrastructure provided by regional councils.

- b. REG Policy 3 Providing for the operation and maintenance of existing REG assets, and
 - c. REG Policy 4 Reconsenting, upgrading, and repowering existing REG assets.
20. Together, these policies provide some protection to existing aspirations of tāngata whenua in land development and other opportunities as it relates to community-scale electricity generation. The tāngata whenua participation policies also need to be consistent with the proposed NPS-I Policy 5, and therefore we seek amendments to these (in line with our relief sought in paragraph 13 above).
21. The protection of existing REG assets against reverse sensitivity and enabling upgrades of existing facilities give more certainty in the long-term with respect to locating REG assets and compatible land uses nearby.
22. NRC supports enabling REG activities; however, REG Policy 2⁶ limits a decision-maker from considering anything outside of 'environmental values' set out in section 6 of the RMA. It is not clear from this wording if 'environmental values' also include those 'cultural' and 'social' values that are set out in section 6 (clauses b, d, e, f, g, and h).
23. Policy 2 as worded may also have unintended consequences. The use of "where practicable" following the avoid-remedy-mitigate hierarchy is not consistent with section 5 of the RMA. It is also likely to lead to uncertainty and lengthy debates on what is 'practicable'. For example, existing stands of regenerating and/or established native forest may not necessarily be scheduled in a Regional or District Plan and therefore would not be given s.6 value status, and thus a decision-maker will be limited in their ability to manage the actual and potential adverse cumulative effects associated with loss of habitat, soil stability, and carbon sequestration from a proposal to develop REG assets and infrastructure. Such effects could extend beyond the footprint of a REG facility from ancillary construction activities.
24. **Relief sought:**
- a. Clarify that the NPS REG does not apply to geothermal resources.
 - b. Amend REG Policy 1 and EN Policy 3 to read the same as Infrastructure Policy 5, with proposed amendments (see paragraph 13 above)
 - c. Amend REG Policy 1 clause c) to remove "in appropriate circumstances"
 - d. Amend REG Policy 2 wording to remove the terms "environmental" and "where practicable".
 - e. Amend EN Policy 6 by deleting "where practicable" and adding "and issues of cultural significance".

National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities

25. NRC is generally supportive of the government's efforts to strengthen national direction for electricity infrastructure. Enabling a more robust and resilient national grid is essential to support regional growth, electricity security, and the transition to a low-emission economy. We welcome initiatives that streamline planning processes while maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards.

Scope of the NES

26. NRC supports the proposal to widen the scope of the NES to include all electricity transmission assets operating at or above 110kV, not just those owned by Transpower. This approach would provide greater consistency in the management of transmission infrastructure across the country

⁶ Decision-makers must enable REG activities, provided that adverse effects on environmental values not in section 6 of the RMA or covered by national direction are avoided where practicable, remedied where practicable, or mitigated where practicable.

and better reflect the evolving nature of the electricity sector, where non-Transpower entities may also operate high-voltage networks, that provide significant benefit to our communities.

Low voltage networks

27. NRC acknowledges the extensive footprint of low voltage electricity distribution networks across the region, including infrastructure located within the coastal marine area (CMA), freshwater bodies, and wetlands. These environments are often highly sensitive and context specific. The nuanced ecological, cultural, and planning considerations of these areas are not easily captured through a one-size-fits-all national standard. In this regard, NRC considers that local authorities are best placed to manage the environmental effects of maintenance and new infrastructure associated with low voltage networks.
28. Importantly, the Regional Plan for Northland already provides an enabling framework, particularly for maintenance activities, that strikes a balance between network reliability and environmental protection.

EV charging infrastructure

29. We support the intent behind the proposed changes to streamline EV charging infrastructure, particularly the introduction of a “no consents” regime for certain installations. Enabling a more efficient rollout of this infrastructure is a positive step toward accelerating the transition to low-emissions transport in our region.
30. **Relief sought:**
 - a. Amend national direction to maintain flexibility for councils to regulate low voltage infrastructure where appropriate, especially in environmentally sensitive or high-value areas.

National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards

31. NRC supports national direction on managing the risks of natural hazards; however, the proposed provisions for the new NPS for Natural Hazards (NPS-NH) do not advance current practice to a significant degree nor link specifically with adaptation planning.
32. We have concerns that the provisions would not apply to infrastructure. Infrastructure resilience is critical in Northland and infrastructure can be lifelines for our communities, such as telecommunications, water and wastewater and transport networks. Exempting infrastructure from natural hazard risk assessment risks perverse outcomes, and lifelines being vulnerable to hazard risk, increasingly so with climate change.
33. We also note the discussion document states that the NPS-NH will apply to “all activities managed under the Resource Management Act 1991”. It is unclear how this would occur in practice, because it would capture all activities requiring resource consent and many of these would be low risk (e.g. moorings, discharges to air, land or water, water takes and earthworks). We recommend that the scope be narrowed so that the NPS-NH applies to subdivision and built development rather than ‘all activities’ managed by the RMA. This could also be clarified through development of a complementary NES for natural hazards, or by adding relevant definitions into the NPS-NH.
34. The introduction of the risk matrix for classifying hazards is noted, however there is no corresponding policy or rule framework to support this. Leaving more substantive controls on development in hazard prone areas until the introduction of the replacement RMA legislation does not assist councils to avoid or minimise development in hazard prone areas.

35. Due to the disproportionate exposure of Māori land to natural hazards⁷, owners of whenua Māori may be more likely to experience more restrictive development controls than other members of the community. To assist in remedying this inequitable position, we recommend that the NPS-NH provide for targeted support to owners of whenua Māori who are assessed to be subject to significant risks and consequences of a natural hazard event, to assist them to implement adaptation measures.

36. Relief sought:

- a. Ensure infrastructure that serves as a lifeline in emergencies is subject to some form of natural hazard risk assessment.
- b. Limit the scope of the NPS-NH to subdivision and built development rather than 'all activity managed under the RMA'.
- c. Provide for targeted support for assessing and managing hazard risk on whenua Māori.
- d. Include a policy framework to support the application of the risk matrix in resource consent decision making.
- e. Allow for consideration of adaptation plans.

National Environmental Standards – Papakāinga

37. NRC supports the purpose of the National Environmental Standards - Papakāinga to enable papakāinga on Māori land, noting that the details of the proposed standards and thresholds mainly relate to territorial authorities. We support the development of standards for papakāinga to be co-designed with tāngata whenua to ensure cultural appropriateness and practical implementation.

Package 2: Primary Sector

National Environmental Standards – Marine Aquaculture

38. NRC supports the proposed amendment to Regulation 18 to ensure consent authorities have discretion to consider effects on Māori access to coastal areas of cultural significance, with regard to the layout, colour, positioning, density, lighting, and marking of marine farm structures within a marine farm.
39. NRC supports the proposed amendments to Regulations 33, 36, and 39 to ensure consent authorities have discretion to consider the effects on Māori access to coastal areas of cultural significance, with regard to the layout, colour, positioning, density, lighting, and marking of marine farm structures within a marine farm when considering applications for replacement coastal permits.
40. NRC supports amending Schedule 6 so that the process for seeking views of tāngata whenua on draft applications also applies to a person applying for a change or cancellation of consent conditions or research and trials under relevant new regulations.
41. There is potential for impacts on Māori values, customary access, rights, and interests from research and trial aquaculture activities that are proposed to be permitted and controlled (as well as restricted discretionary). Accordingly, NRC supports matters of control and discretion including the effects of the activity on tāngata whenua values.
42. The proposal for permitted research and trial activities in new space does not take into account the potential for effects on Māori customary access, rights and interests; nor does it provide

⁷ Much of the land which remains in Māori ownership is in low-lying and estuarine and coastal areas, on steep slopes and often identified as high Erosion Susceptibility (e.g. coastal dunes).

opportunity for tāngata whenua to have a say on those permitted activities. NRC therefore supports the addition of provisions requiring permitted activities in new spaces not to be located within a Site or Area of Significance to Tāngata Whenua identified in a regional plan, unless these are associated with marae-based aquaculture or Māori commercial aquaculture.

43. NRC questions the classification of research and trials activities as 'controlled' activities, given the government's prior indication that such a class of activities will not be included in future resource management systems.
44. NRC notes the proposed amendments to the NZCPS (see below) and the proposal requiring councils to provide for aquaculture within gazetted Aquaculture Settlement Areas (ASAs). It is unclear how the proposed permitted, controlled and restricted discretionary research and trial activities interface with the existing and proposed requirements for regional councils to provide for ASAs where the activity is not being undertaken by or with tāngata whenua, and how the provisions will interface with s.165E of the RMA⁸. This is a particular concern for Te Taitokerau Northland, where there are many unresolved Treaty claims over the marine and coastal area and few gazetted ASAs in the region,⁹ and where there is high interest from tāngata whenua in marine aquaculture. There is a real risk that by the time ASAs are gazetted in Northland, the space will have already been allocated through the consenting process, and the intended purpose of the changes to the NZCPS will be highly limited until more ASAs are gazetted.
45. It is also unclear how permitted aquaculture research and trials activities impact upon new space settlements under the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004, or on rohe moana, mātaihai, taiāpure and other customary fisheries/oyster reserves. Tāngata whenua in Te Taitokerau have long expressed interest in and fought for the ability to undertake marae-based aquaculture¹⁰.
46. NRC notes that the proposals are currently framed in terms of whether there is existing consented aquaculture, or whether such aquaculture is in a new space. Many of the locations where existing aquaculture exists¹¹, or where it is likely to be proposed in Northland, have restrictions in place to protect other values of significance such as anchorages and significant ecological areas, so the actual potential for research and trial activities to meet the thresholds for permitted activities could be limited.¹²
47. NRC supports the overall intent of the proposed changes to the NES-MA to enable aquaculture where that is appropriate. However, we note that successful aquaculture requires high water quality, which may be compromised by other proposed amendments (such as provisions that are more enabling for other priorities including housing growth, mining and quarrying, national standards for wastewater network discharges and resource extraction). There are already well documented examples where commercial aquaculture has not been viable due to poor coastal water quality, with years of harvesting restrictions and closures on oyster farms in Waikare Inlet being just one example. There are links here to Package 3 Freshwater and the need to improve water quality (and where not already degraded, maintain its quality).

⁸ Given that s. 165E sets out that only someone holding authorisation from the Trustee can apply for a resource consent for aquaculture activities in an ASA.

⁹ 96.79ha in the Kaipara Harbour and 8ha in Whangaroa Harbour.

¹⁰ Northland's Regional Plan provides for marae-based aquaculture within significant areas as a discretionary activity (other new aquaculture within significant areas is prohibited).

¹¹ There are currently 33 consented marine farms covering almost 106ha in Te Taitokerau (MPI data NABIS).

¹² NRC notes that of the nine proposed locations in the Muriwhenua Aquaculture proposal, six would be prohibited under the regional plan because the locations are identified as either aquaculture exclusion areas, regionally significant anchorages, and/or significant ecological areas.

48. We are concerned that the government has indicated its intentions to address competing priorities for infrastructure and other priority activities (e.g. between aquaculture and resource extraction) and environmental values in the future new resource management system, rather than in this package of national direction reforms. In the intervening period, councils and applicants will be left with uncertainty which adds complexity to decision-making in light of s. 5 and 6 of the RMA.

49. Relief sought:

- a. Provide for notification of tāngata whenua, and remove the preclusion of limited notification for research and trial applications.
- b. Include Sites and Areas of Significance to Tāngata Whenua to locations where research and trials are not permitted in new spaces (unless the research and trials are associated with marae-based or Māori commercial aquaculture).
- c. Provide for research and trials associated with marae-based aquaculture as well as Māori commercial aquaculture.
- d. Clarify the permitted activity status for research and trials where this is not being undertaken by or in partnership with Māori.
- e. Remove the controlled activity status for research and trials activities (these could be restricted discretionary as an alternative).

National Environmental Standards – Commercial Forestry

50. We have significant concerns about the proposal to restrict regional council discretion under Regulation 6(1)(a) whereby councils can currently be more stringent to achieve freshwater objectives under the NPS-FM.
51. We acknowledge that default NES-CF controls are likely to contribute positively towards freshwater objectives, particularly those related to sedimentation. However, we believe that such controls may not be sufficient for achieving all freshwater quantity outcomes. Water quantity objectives, such as maintaining natural lake levels, aquifer recharge rates, and minimum flows, are equally important components of the NPS-FM framework.
52. There is scientific evidence from New Zealand research showing that plantation forestry can alter hydrological regimes in certain catchments. These effects can be most pronounced in areas with porous soils (e.g. sand country), shallow groundwater tables, or strong connectivity between surface waters and underlying aquifers. For example while there are no direct estimates of the water balance effects of converting dunes to pine forest, the conversion of pasture to pine forest is estimated to increase evaporation by at least 20%, delay flow by 17%, and decrease stream flow by at least 20% after 8–10 years, with some estimates suggesting that stream flow could decrease by 30–50% following this change in land use (Fahey & Rowe, 1992)¹³. Where water drains to groundwater, afforestation under full pine cover could reduce groundwater recharge by as much as 70% (Duncan, 1993).
53. Northland has around 400 dune lakes, which can be particularly sensitive to hydrological changes from afforestation and forestry activity generally. There are also significant areas of Northland where surface water and groundwater are fully allocated, where afforestation at scale could impact on the security or reliability of water supply. The proposed changes to Regulation 6(1)(a) would restrict the ability of councils to manage such impacts, as these are not confined to erosion risk. Restricting discretion solely to erosion risk may therefore prevent councils from responding

¹³ From [Ross, P. M. et al \(2017\) The biology, ecology and history of toheroa \(Paphies ventricosa\): a review of scientific, local and customary knowledge. New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research](#)

appropriately in hydrologically sensitive environments, where even partial afforestation could have disproportionate impacts on water availability for ecosystems, cultural uses, or human needs. In summary, the scope for greater stringency should not be limited to erosion risk only. If any change is to be made, we recommend Regulation 6(1)(a) be amended to allow more stringency to achieve a target state for an NPS-FM attribute.

54. Repealing Regulation 6(4A) that allows rules in a plan relating to afforestation to be more stringent or lenient, for a variety of reasons in addition to those listed in Regulation 6(1) – 6(4), unnecessarily restricts the ability of councils to take into account locally specific but significant factors. It also may reduce the input of tāngata whenua to forestry management in areas over which they are kaitiaki. We therefore seek to retain this regulation so that regional plans can include more stringent rules to control aspects of afforestation, for reasons other than mapped severe erosion risk and the existing specific matters and environments listed in Regulations 6 (1-4). In Northland, for example, NRC may need to manage impacts on water levels in highly allocated areas, high-value dune lakes, and Sites and Areas of Significance to Tāngata Whenua.
55. While, on balance, we support the proposal to amend Regulation 69(5) – (7) to require a Slash Management Risk Assessment (SMRA) for all forest harvests, we are concerned that it could impose greater costs on Māori landowners involved in forestry relative to other groups within the sector. This is because Māori land tends to be lower capability land-use classes compared with general land¹⁴ and therefore is at higher risk for slash management.
56. The SMRA is not clear when the assessment is completed whether only the risk indicators that meet the high-risk threshold requires a resource consent, or the entire assessment. There is no risk rating for the whole assessment, which would support compliance of the assessment and clear conditions in resource consents. The SMRA does not provide actions for mitigation to support better environmental outcomes for receiving environments, infrastructure and property. The SMRA is provided to councils as part of the harvest management plan which should still be assessed by council's compliance officers to ground truth information provided to avoid environmental impacts from slash mobilisation.
57. We also have concerns that the SMRA hinges largely on Erosion Susceptibility Classification (ESC) – this may not always be a good proxy for slash mobilisation risk. For example, there may be areas of steep land (e.g. >25 degrees) that are not within High or Very High ESC classes. As it stands if the site is not within a red or orange ESC zone, then no further assessment appears to be needed, despite the fact that land may still be relatively steep (e.g. >25 degrees slope) and slash could still present a risk. This could mean no risk assessment is required for parts of the Northland region despite land being comparatively steep.
58. We also note that ESC red zone in Northland captures areas where risk of slash is likely low such as Pouto and Aupōuri dune systems which have relatively gentle contour and very few rivers. The erosion risk in these areas relates to the effects of wind or the sea and the SMRA is likely to have little benefit.
59. We oppose the introduction of a permitted activity standard for the removal of slash, as councils need to retain the ability to require slash management measures that are appropriate for the specific local conditions. We recommend that all indicators be assessed regardless of ESC class. If this is not accepted, we recommend slash mobilisation risks must be assessed for land >25 degrees regardless of ESC class.
60. Repealing 10A, the requirement to provide afforestation plans to council, will cause a range of issues for compliance and enforcement of the NES-CF, and legacy issues in 20-30 years when the forest will be ready to harvest. If the management plans are not provided, councils will only

¹⁴ 65% of Māori land is in Land Use Capability (LUC) 6 and 7 compared with 50% of general land

receive basic notification information and will be more time consuming and costly to assess compliance with the NES-CF (i.e. it is likely to generate more site visits to confirm setbacks, and other requirements are being met).

61. We oppose the alternative option of increasing the size and volume thresholds for sound wood slash removal in the current regulations, as even the existing thresholds pose significant risks to local communities and environments in a slash mobilisation event.

62. Relief sought:

- a. Amend the current wording of Regulation 6(1)(a) to allow more stringency to achieve a target state for an NPS-FM attribute¹⁵ and in relation to water quantity outcomes in catchments identified as hydrologically sensitive (such as dune lakes, areas of high/full allocation for water quantity or unconfined/shallow aquifers).
- b. Retain Regulation 6(4A) and the ability for councils to be more stringent in relation to afforestation.
- c. Retain the requirement to provide afforestation plans to councils.
- d. Support the repeal of the requirement to provide replanting plans.
- e. Where there is a high level of risk identified by an SMRA, retain the requirement for a resource consent to manage slash on the cutover.
- f. Remove “no further assessment” wording in the SMRA and require that all 10 risk indicators need to be assessed to support mitigation of slash mobilisation. If this is not supported by government, ensure that the risk assessment is mandatory for slopes >25 degrees regardless of ESC class.
- g. Remove the permitted activity standard for the removal of slash and retain the ability of councils to require slash management measures that are appropriate for the specific local conditions.

National Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Policy 6 – Enabling Priority Activities

63. The proposal to amend Policy 6 to give priority activities¹⁶ a more lenient consenting pathway in the CMA by broadening the tests to include, for example, an operational need, could reduce the development potential for non-priority activities that, while potentially being more appropriate and of higher value (such as tourism) in those locations, may be incompatible with the priority activities. There is also the potential for some priority activities (e.g. resource extraction) to preclude other priority activities (e.g. aquaculture).
64. This risk is lowered when the existing functional need test is applied in conjunction with the avoid, remedy, mitigate hierarchy¹⁷. Proposed changes will enable activities with an “operational” rather than functional need and limit how the ‘avoid’ policies may be applied. These changes in conjunction with removing the requirement for the activity to be important for social, economic or cultural well-beings in Policy 6(1)(a) could impact on economic livelihoods

¹⁵ We note that some of the significant waterbodies in our region, such as dune lakes, are particularly sensitive to nutrients, and the linkage here with the proposal to remove the 190kg/ha/yr nitrogen fertiliser cap in Package 3 Freshwater.

¹⁶ We note that the government is also proposing to expand the definition of infrastructure to include “additional infrastructure” including schools, hospitals, defence facilities, stormwater networks and waste disposal facilities, among others.

¹⁷ Noting that “operational need” includes “technical, logistical or operational characteristics or constraints (e.g. time, cost, safety)”.

and growth as well as on social, cultural and environmental values such as navigation and public recreation in the CMA.

65. NRC is of the view that the allocation of (or preservation of the ability for) space in the CMA for priority activities would be better addressed through spatial planning and incorporated into the future resource management system, rather than through changes to the NZCPS at this time.

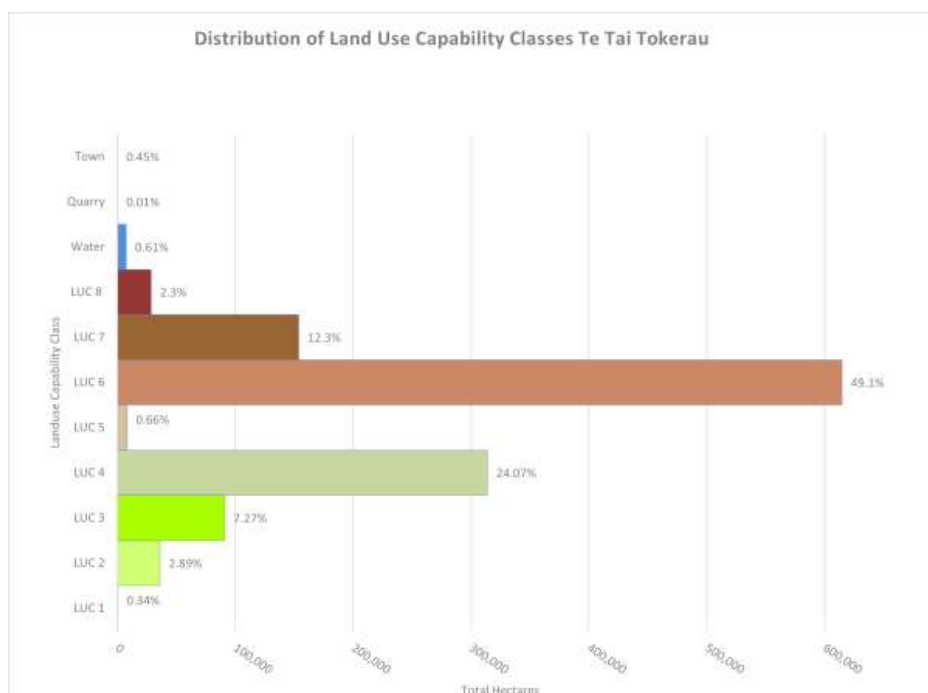
Policy 8 - Aquaculture

66. The proposed amendments to Policy 8 are designed to enable Māori commercial aquaculture in some regions (i.e. those with gazetted ASAs). As there is less than 100ha of gazetted area in Northland, the effectiveness of the proposed amendments to Policy 8 will be highly limited in this region unless more ASAs are gazetted. This is despite the strong interest tāngata whenua have had – and continue to have – in both commercial and marae-based aquaculture. It is essential that Māori aquaculture specifically (including marae-based aquaculture) be provided for, rather than aquaculture generally. Our regional plan already provides for marae-based aquaculture within significant areas as a discretionary activity (which would otherwise be prohibited). NRC therefore requests that additional wording be added to include marae-based aquaculture.
67. NRC supports the addition of “cultural and environmental benefits of aquaculture” to Policy 8(b).
68. **Relief sought:**
- Withdraw proposed amendments to Policy 6.
 - Include specific reference to marae-based aquaculture as well as Māori commercial aquaculture in Policy 8.

National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

69. Northland has a comparatively small proportion of high-quality productive soils (about 12% by area is classed as 1, 2 or 3 under the Land Resource Inventory), which in several cases has been the historical focus of settlements (e.g. Kerikeri and parts of Whangarei). This association is logical in that such settlements were established in proximity to good soils for primary production purposes. However, there are instances where these settlements have since expanded onto Highly Productive Land (HPL) and resulted in both loss of primary production capacity and reverse sensitivity effects¹⁸.
70. As the figure below shows, in Northland we have a much higher proportion of class 3 than classes 1 or 2. Of the total area of HPL in the region (classes 1-3), the proportion of class 3 land is approximately 72%. A lot of this class 3 land is highly productive and is used for horticulture - kiwifruit, avocados etc. The class 3 land with volcanic, sand and peat soils are all suitable for horticulture so removing them from the NPS-HPL will make it easier for such land to be permanently lost under development. The loss of this land would be a significant issue for Northland and therefore we oppose the removal of LUC3 from the NPS-HPL.
71. NRC supports retaining the flexibility for councils to map and develop policy at the regional level, enabling a more nuanced approach to managing HPL reflecting the regional circumstances and characteristics based on more detailed analysis of LUC units and sub-classes.
72. We support the extension in timeframes for mapping of HPL to 2028.

¹⁸ For example, in Northland only 7% of lifestyle blocks are on high-class land (LUC 1, 2 and free-draining and/or flood-free Class 3 land), but this amounts to 28% of all such land in the region (based on 2011 data). If this rate of subdivision were to continue (1.67% per year), all of Northland's LUC 1-3 land will be subdivided in 60 years.



73. We note the link with proposed changes in Package 3 for commercial vegetable growing and special agricultural areas which are intended to protect land for food production purposes into the future, and the proposal to remove LUC3 appears to be counterproductive to this intent. We also note that having sufficient commercial volumes of good quality freshwater is essential if the productive capacity of LUC3 is to be realised and the link to Package 3 Freshwater.

74. Relief sought:

- a. Retain LUC3 in Highly Productive Land definition.
- b. Retain the ability of councils to undertake bespoke mapping of HPL in their region and to develop policy for Highly Productive Land at a regional level.
- c. Retain the ability of councils to decline private plan changes to rezone LUC3.

Stock Exclusion Regulations

75. We acknowledge the challenges and uncertainty that Regulation 17 presents for landowners, however wetlands that are of sufficient size to support populations of threatened species are likely to be of significant value and warrant protection from grazing. We recommend Regulation 17 be amended so that it operates in a similar manner to Regulation 16 and would apply once the wetland has been identified in a regional plan. Alternatively, Regulation 16 could be amended to include the requirements of Regulation 17.

76. We note repealing Regulation 17 would be at odds with retention of threatened species as a compulsory value under the NPS-FM (National Directions Package 3).

77. Relief sought:

- a. Retain and amend Regulation 17 so that it applies once wetlands are identified in regional plans.

Mining & Quarrying

78. Council recognises the importance of mineral extraction for achieving infrastructure and housing growth aims and therefore supports greater alignment of the mining and quarrying provisions in multiple national policy instruments.
79. We also support greater clarity provided by additional definitions and the amendments to allow consideration of regional benefits and remove the requirement for 'public' benefits from mineral extraction which are not always easy to identify or quantify.
80. The proposed changes do not include definitions for some key terms such as of "significant regional benefit" and "ancillary activities".
81. We do have significant concerns about the inclusion of "operational need" to the 'gateway' tests for mining and quarrying and ancillary activities in wetlands. Given that "operational need"¹⁹ can include factors such as cost, and that recent case law²⁰ has highlighted the ambiguity and 'blurring' between what is a "functional" versus "operational need, we recommend that "operational need" be removed from the 'gateway' test for mining and quarrying and ancillary activities.
82. We also note the potential for more enabling provisions for mining and quarrying to have adverse effects on Sites or Areas of Significance to tāngata whenua and that this must be factored into the decision-making for mining and quarrying.
83. **Relief sought:**
- a. Remove the wording "operational need" from proposed changes to NPS-FM and NES-F for mining and quarrying and ancillary activities.
 - b. Provide definitions of "significant regional benefit" and "ancillary activities".
 - c. Provide for tāngata whenua participation including in decision-making (e.g. in accordance with co-governance/joint-management arrangements and Mana Whakahono a Rohe agreements) and impacts on Sites of Significance and tāngata whenua values.

NRC wishes to be heard.

For further information, please contact Tami Woods, Policy & Planning Manager, tamiw@nrc.govt.nz
phone: [09 470 1200](tel:094701200)

Geoff Crawford
Chair
Northland Regional Council

¹⁹ As defined in the National Planning Standards as "the need for a proposal or activity to traverse, locate or operate in a particular environment because of technical, logistical or operational characteristics or constraints".

²⁰ E.g. the Mt Messenger case *Poutama Kaitiaki Charitable Trust v Taranaki Regional Council*.

Council Meeting
22 July 2025

ITEM: 4.9
Attachment 2



27 July 2025

Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
WELLINGTON 6143

via email: freshwaterND@mfe.govt.nz

RE: National Direction Reforms (Package 3 Freshwater)

Northland Regional Council (NRC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to existing National Policy Statements (NPS) and National Environmental Standards (NES) that make up Package 3 of the national direction reforms covering Freshwater.

It is noted that this feedback relates to issues from a Te Taitokerau Northland perspective. Matters of particular importance to the regional sector will be lodged separately by Te Uru Kahika. We also endorse that submission.

In general terms, NRC:

- notes the importance of ensuring that changes are integrated and coherent across all reforms, and that they are enduring. One of the biggest challenges local government and our communities faces is uncertainty and delays to acting when national policy is constantly being rewritten;
- supports review and continuous improvement to increase efficiency and reduce costs while achieving freshwater outcomes, building on the work already done;
- highlights that economic sustainability requires healthy freshwater and a focus on long-term economic viability, to ensure a balance between short-term gain and the long-term costs borne by future generations;
- stresses the need to consider all activities subject to the proposal collectively without prioritising some activities over others
- highlights the existing strategic intent and commitments NRC has made to partner with tāngata whenua on freshwater management (see para 3 below); and notes the importance of recognising and providing for iwi/hapū mana and tino rangatiratanga, and partnership with iwi and hapū, in freshwater decision-making;
- supports an approach which enables a regional voice and variation where appropriate — a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not always the most appropriate solution;
- is concerned about the implementation costs that will be borne by ratepayers, hapū and iwi;¹ implementation timeframes; and restrictions on councils having more stringent rules to address regional issues; and
- notes that there is a real risk of 'engagement fatigue', with our communities, particularly tāngata whenua, disengaging with planning processes because of continued changes in national direction.

We set out more detailed responses to the key topics raised in the Package 3 discussion document below.

¹ We note that hapū and iwi representatives often have to volunteer their input to RMA processes including consents. Lack of resourcing for hapū and iwi to be involved in resource management is an ongoing barrier.

Implementation Options

1. NRC's position is that any freshwater national direction changes should be incorporated into or made under the upcoming replacement resource management legislation, at a future date. This will provide councils with the greatest certainty and allow us to focus on implementing our existing policies and rules at least cost to ratepayers and partners. It will also enable clear alignment and integration across the new legislation.
2. Implementing changes earlier under the Resource Management Act (RMA) would result in additional costs to ratepayers and partners and the likely need for further plan changes (again with cost implications).

Key Issues for Te Taitokerau Northland & Feedback on Proposals

3. The Regional Plan for Northland became operative in 2023, with many freshwater provisions yet to be fully implemented; therefore, we have not seen the full impacts of our existing regional plan provisions in terms of improving freshwater quality in Te Taitokerau Northland.
4. NRC recognises that it will take time to see the results of these goals, policies and rules on the ground, and notes that improving freshwater health remains a key priority for landowners and communities in the region.
5. NRC's Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan Tāiki ē is our regional strategy for implementing our commitments and honouring our relationships with tāngata whenua. Tāiki ē articulates the commitments NRC has made to partner with tāngata whenua and the importance of giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi obligations as part of resource management decision-making. Central goals (whāinga) relating to freshwater include that the mauri of water is protected, restored and improved and the NRC partner with tāngata whenua to give effect to Te Mana o Te Wai. A related goal is ensuring that economic growth is compatible with the protection and enhancement of ecological, spiritual and cultural values of tāngata whenua.²
6. NRC sees it as vital that the changes proposed through the National Direction package do not undermine its commitments through Tāiki ē, especially as they relate to changes to Te Mana o Te Wai.
7. The long-term economic viability of existing activities, and the development of economic potential in the region, are linked with having access to healthy water. It is important that short-term economic gains do not compromise long-term sustainability, including for future generations.
8. We have continued to see declining freshwater quality³ and wetland loss⁴ and face major challenges from erosion and discharges resulting in high concentrations of sedimentation and *E. coli*.

² Tāiki ē also includes specific actions e.g. "continue to support the active involvement of tāngata whenua in the Freshwater Planning Instrument for Te Taitokerau under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management by a) acknowledging the special relationship tāngata whenua have with wai, and te mana me te mauri o te wai; b) ensuring that NRC exercise its role and functions to give effect to this special relationship; and c) giving effect to the recommendations in Ngā Roimata on Ngā Atua Report"

³ Over 75% of Northland river sites are in D or E state for *E. coli* (n=35, 2020-2024) with a declining *E. coli* trend observed in 80% of sites analysed (n=20, 2015-2024). Source tracking points to bovine as a predominant source. A declining trend in turbidity (proxy for sediment) at 70% of river sites has been observed (n = 22, 2015-2024).

⁴ Since 2020, NRC has undertaken dozens of investigations into wetland disturbance, drainage and destruction involving negative impacts on and loss of many hectares of wetland habitat. Predicted increased drought, higher temperatures and strong winds increase the risk of wildfires, which have already significantly impacted wetland habitat over this period. As an example, in 2022 a 2800ha fire in Kaimaumau

coli in all catchments, which is exacerbated by climate change. A recent report⁵ estimates suspended sediment loads in Northland could increase by as much as 113% by 2040 and 233% by 2090 (under a high emissions climate change scenario). We have also seen landowners and communities put in considerable effort to fence freshwater bodies and to undertake riparian planting and pest control projects, some of which were recognised at our recent regional [Environmental Awards](#).

9. The key freshwater contaminants in our region are sediment and *E. coli* – sediment accumulation rates in harbours and estuaries are elevated and *E. coli* in most rivers is in the D or E band in terms of the NPS-FM measures³. In terms of water quantity, there are significant areas that are fully allocated, putting more importance on water storage and high-flow takes.
10. NRC also notes the considerable time and effort that the primary sector, tāngata whenua and our communities have put into working with us on how to implement the NPS-FM 2020, and the strengthening of relationships that has occurred. It is critical to maintain and continue to enhance these relationships and shared understandings of the freshwater challenges faced in the region. It is extremely hard to motivate participation and maintain the progress on freshwater management when the national direction changes regularly – not to mention the significant costs for all involved. We urge the government to obtain cross-party support for any revision of national direction for freshwater.
11. We also note that a significant portion of our region (around 11%) is Māori land (whenua Māori), and that Māori make up a higher proportion of the population (39.9%)⁶ than in other regions. This poses both challenges and opportunities for freshwater management, and makes Te Mana o Te Wai a fundamentally important concept for our region.

Rebalancing Te Mana o Te Wai

Single objective v. multiple objectives

12. NRC notes that the hierarchy of obligations in the existing single objective has not been interpreted to mean that freshwater bodies must be pristine before other water uses can be allowed, nor that the pace of change, costs and where those costs fall are not being considered.
13. NRC also notes that we have been working with representatives from the primary sector and tāngata whenua since 2020 to define what Te Mana o Te Wai means for Te Taitokerau Northland, focusing on improving the mauri (life force) of water over time. We submit that it is not necessary to clarify in the NPS-FM that it will take time to achieve freshwater outcomes, as this is something that we already factor into our freshwater planning, and is covered in NPS-FM 2020.⁷
14. NRC's strong preference is to keep the one objective. However, if the government decides to progress with multiple objectives, we support inclusion of the following proposed objectives:
 - a. That direct councils to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of freshwater and the health of people and communities, while enabling communities to provide for their social, cultural and economic well-being.
 - b. Providing for vegetable growing for domestic supply and water security (see also below).

produced 515,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions ([Radio NZ \(2022\) Massive fire in Kaimaumau accidental - cost \\$7m to fight](#); [NZ Herald \(2024\) Massive Far North wetland](#))

⁵ [Neverman, A. et al \(2023\) Climate change impacts on erosion and suspended sediment loads in New Zealand](#)

⁶ [Stats NZ 2023 census data \(usually resident population\)](#).

⁷ We note that the NPS-FM 2020 clause 3.3 already requires councils to develop "long-term" visions and objectives, as well as requiring councils to identify timeframes for achieving goals (with an example being provided of 30 years after commencement).

- c. Requiring maintenance or improvement in water quality – this should also include freshwater ecosystem health, which should be considered as a main outcome of freshwater management.
 - d. An objective that supports integrated catchment management (ki uta ki tai).
15. While we are not opposed to a new objective requiring councils, when setting targets and controls on resource use, to consider the anticipated costs or to inform our communities about these costs, we see it as unnecessary, because this is something we already have been doing and continue to do, and moreover, under s32 RMA, a cost/benefit analysis is required to support any plan change. We have also considered the pace of change and have not previously interpreted the existing one objective in NPS-FM 2020 to require that bottom lines must be achieved or complied with immediately. So again, while we are not opposed to a new objective requiring councils to consider the pace of change, we do not see it as necessary (we note that the existing NPS-FM clause 3.3(2) explicitly addresses long-term visions and Clause 3.11(6) also allows targets to be long-term, therefore it already recognises that improvements will take time).
16. Whilst on the matter of timeframes, we note that two key challenges we faced in implementing the NPS-FM 2020 were the detailed NOF process and the time taken to do this properly across the region and the timeframe by which we had to notify our freshwater plan change.

Te Mana o Te Wai

17. NRC notes the considerable time and effort put in by members of our community, in particular by tāngata whenua and primary sector representatives over the past five years, to define what Te Mana o Te Wai looks like for Te Taitokerau Northland and to implement the NPS-FM 2020.
18. NRC agrees with the government's assessment that frequent change to the NPS-FM is inefficient, and that national policy must be enduring.
19. NRC is committed to working with tangata whenua to give effect to Te Mana o Te Wai. Partnering with tangata whenua to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai is a key goal in Council's *Tāiki ē: NRC Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan*, which sets out the strategic intent reached between NRC and iwi and hapū representatives for Te Taitokerau Northland.
20. NRC's preference is, therefore, to build on work that has already been done in a positive and constructive manner, and to avoid invalidating the considerable amount of time and effort already expended by tāngata whenua, landowners, the public and the primary sector.
21. We highly value maintaining our ability to express a 'regional voice' and to develop and implement freshwater policy that is appropriate and relevant to Te Taitokerau Northland.
22. Should the government decide to rebalance how Te Mana o Te Wai is expressed in the NPS FM, of the three options proposed in the discussion document,⁸ NRC's preference is for Option 1: to remove the hierarchy of obligations and clarify the purposes of the NPS-FM and retain process steps for councils to apply Te Mana o Te Wai for their region. We support the retention of the six principles of Te Mana o Te Wai (NPS-FM 2020).
23. We note that our iwi and hapū partners in Northland wish to keep Te Mana o Te Wai 2020, and to focus efforts on implementation rather than on restarting the regional freshwater planning process all over again.

⁸ Option 2: Reinstate Te Mana o Te Wai provisions from NPS-FM 2017; Option 3: Remove Te Mana o Te Wai provisions completely.

24. We support the retention of clause 3.4 (tāngata whenua involvement) which is a key requirement that provides opportunity for tāngata whenua involvement in the development of regional freshwater provisions, and in decision-making on freshwater management.

National Objectives Framework (values, attributes, targets, bottom lines and monitoring)

25. NRC supports an increase in flexibility in the NOF process for regional councils to determine values and attributes, and associated targets at regional level through consultation with tāngata whenua and communities.

Values

26. In terms of the values and whether these should be compulsory or optional, NRC supports retaining the compulsory and optional values in the NPS-FM 2020, with the exception of making drinking water supply a compulsory value — given the issues experienced across New Zealand.
27. We emphasise that any proposed changes to Māori values should only be made with the involvement and support of Māori.

Attributes & Bottom Lines

28. NRC supports retaining attributes and national bottom lines for the four key contaminants (sediment, *E. coli*, N and P), but wants government to allow councils the flexibility to adjust them (with justification) where they are inappropriate in specific locations.
29. National bottom lines must include an assessment of costs and benefits so that they do not have to be 'relitigated' at a regional level.
30. We support more discretion being given to councils to prioritise the attributes of most relevance to our communities to address the most significant issues and locations in our region.
31. We also support a simplified suite of attributes for lakes and rivers — 22 attributes is too complex.
32. We do not see a need for action plans for every attribute in Appendix 2B; one option could be to only require action plans for Appendix 2B attributes, where a target or national bottom line is not being met, or in response to degrading trends.
33. We understand that a review of recreational water quality guidelines is underway, and recommend that this inform a simpler approach for *E. coli* metrics.
34. We suggest further consultation on potential attributes for managing drinking water in source water risk-management areas (SWRMA), if drinking water supply is added as a compulsory value (water availability seems an obvious candidate).
35. We support more flexibility in the NOF process, whereby it directs councils to work with tāngata whenua and community, but it does not prescribe the level of detail that is currently required at Freshwater Management Units (FMU) level.
36. We question the need to identify FMUs within a region at all, as this can cause unnecessary complexity and debate, and we note that there are alternatives (e.g. hapori wai) which may provide more appropriate freshwater management boundaries. We recommend that identification of FMUs be optional, allowing for the use of other freshwater management approaches (e.g. hapori wai) where appropriate, and that such identification should only be required when needed to implement different management approaches within a region.

Commercial vegetable production for domestic supply

37. Should the government proceed with making commercial vegetable production a permitted activity, NRC supports the use of an NES for addressing commercial vegetable growing for domestic supply⁹ (this will be faster and more cost-effective than using an NPS mechanism).
38. We note that permitted activities should be those with no or only minor adverse effects, and that s.70 of the RMA also applies to permitted activity rules for discharges in regional plans. Therefore, if the government proceeds with an NES permitting commercial vegetable growing, the NES will need to clarify how discharges will meet s.70 RMA requirements. Cost recovery provisions will also be needed for monitoring, compliance and enforcement of permitted activities.
39. An NES could also be withdrawn (expire) once freshwater plan changes are in place, enabling regional freshwater planning processes to provide for commercial vegetable growing for the domestic market that recognises the niche local environments that exist (such as Waimate North, Kerikeri, Ruawai, and our region's sub-tropical climate).
40. NRC also notes that for commercial vegetable growing to be viable, water supply of sufficient quality and quantity is required, in addition to various other factors (such as access). We therefore support councils having the ability to address commercial vegetable production at a regional level through regional plans and spatial planning.
41. We note the link with the identification of Special Agricultural Areas and the proposal to remove LUC3 from Highly Productive Land (Package 2 Primary Sector). Both these proposals may result in reduced protections for land that is suitable for future commercial vegetable production, due to inappropriate subdivision and development.

Water security and off-stream storage

42. NRC supports explicitly linking water security and climate change resilience, and supports the inclusion of national direction around the importance of water security and storage as part of climate change resilience.
43. We note that while the proposal is focused on the primary sector, water security is also important for other uses — such as those of communities, marae and papakāinga — and for cultural purposes.
44. We are concerned that water allocation is not considered in this package of national direction reforms, despite its link to water security.
45. In principle, we also support off-stream water storage, however we are of the view that rules should be set at a regional level, due to variable hydrology and potential environmental impacts. We are not convinced of the need for, or benefit of, national standards for off-stream storage — as we understand it, most regional rules enable this and many also provide for high-flow harvest. For example, the Regional Plan for Northland enables damming and diversion of water for off-stream storage as a permitted activity, subject to conditions (Rules C.3.1.1 and C.3.1.2), including standards and terms to protect downstream water users. We also consider that small-scale and large-scale water storage need to be treated differently, again managed by rules at the regional level.
46. Cumulative impacts of multiple off-stream storage structures that intercept rainfall run-off can potentially impact the natural hydrological regime of the catchment. These cumulative impacts can include effects on instream values and existing authorised water users, especially in areas of

⁹ We are unclear as to how it will be ensured that vegetable crops grown as permitted activities will be only for domestic supply and not export.

high or full allocation. These cumulative impacts need to be considered at a regional level, considering the local values.

47. The effectiveness of any national rules intended to enable off-stream water storage will be highly dependent on access to water, and would ideally be designed in conjunction with enabling provisions for high-flow harvesting (i.e. ability to fill water storage structures during high flow events) – this would be challenging at a national level and is more appropriately designed at the regional scale.
48. We note that there are already several major off-stream water storage initiatives in the Northland region, as well as smaller water storage schemes that are filled during high-flow events. These high-flow takes, and storage initiatives, are a direct result of limited water being available during low-flow events, and the need to improve water security.
49. If a national approach is to be adopted, we recommend strengthening standards, particularly proposed standards 1-3, to better align with the rationale of avoiding impacts on wetlands resulting from changes to water levels. Standard 1 should also preclude construction of water storage within a river (as defined in the RMA). Standard 3, regarding protected archaeological sites, should also be expanded to include Sites or Areas of Significance to tāngata whenua identified in regional and district plans. In addition, standard 11 requires notification of council no less than two weeks prior to construction. It is important for the council to be aware of the locations of these structures (especially if dam safety and Building Act thresholds are triggered), however, the rationale for this notification is that it provides the council with the opportunity to assess any risks. It is not clear whether the intention is for councils to undertake a risk assessment for each off-stream storage dam. If so, it would make more sense for the new clauses in the new NES to require a risk assessment which would inform the activity status (e.g. permitted activity if risks are low with resource consent required for moderate - high risk).

Wetlands

Mapping of Natural Inland Wetlands

50. NRC has made considerable progress in mapping natural inland wetlands and we consider mapping is essential to monitor changes in wetland extent and condition. The proposal to remove the requirement to map these is therefore of little benefit to NRC, given the extensive work already undertaken.
51. We note that the mapping of wetlands is highly useful in reducing uncertainties for plan users and landowners (one of the key challenges faced and which the mapping requirement was intended to address). By removing the requirement for councils to map natural inland wetlands, it is not clear to us what alternatives the government is considering to provide more certainty for landowners as to where natural inland wetlands are located?
52. If the government does not intend to map natural inland wetlands, then we recommend that the requirement for councils to map natural inland wetlands be retained as this mapping will improve certainty to landowners/consent applicants.

Wetland Definitions

53. NRC supports the clarification to the natural wetland definition to exclude some induced wetlands and the removal of the pasture exemption, on the proviso that regional councils retain the ability to identify and include provisions to protect nationally and regionally significant wetlands regardless of whether they are induced or not.

54. We also note that the proposal for induced wetlands refers to wetlands created where there were none previously. It is unclear what point in time is meant by “previously” – as much of Northland was covered by wetlands prior to human settlement¹⁰.

Permitted farming activities in and around wetlands

55. NRC is unclear as to exactly which farming activities would be permitted in or around wetlands. Whilst the discussion document mentions fencing and irrigation these are provided simply as examples and there is no exhaustive list of what farming activities are considered to have no adverse effects on wetlands and therefore to be permitted.
56. We note that fencing is already provided for in relation to wetlands (e.g. the NES-F definitions of earthworks and vegetation clearance already specifically exempt disturbance associated with fencing). The Regional Plan for Northland also enables fencing wetlands as a permitted activity (Rule C.2.2.2 1).
57. We request that it be made clear exactly which farming activities are to be considered as permitted activities which are not already covered by existing legislation or plans.
58. We recommend the term irrigation be defined to refer to water for irrigating crops or pasture (not application of farm dairy effluent).
59. We also note that there may be difficulties in permitting activities in wetlands, such as vegetation clearance or earthworks for farming purposes, when the same activities for a different purpose would not be permitted although their effects might be the same.

Fish passage

60. NRC supports removal of unnecessary information requirements and specifically removing (1), (2), and (3)(a) & (b) from s.63 – 67 and adding to s.62 of the NES-F. In our experience the current information requirements are not laborious¹¹. NRC, however, has found difficulty in obtaining the information from some landowners/land users where they are not familiar with freshwater ecology/fisheries science.
61. In regard to the proposed changes to permitted activity conditions:
- NES-F s.70(2)(e)** - Box culverts should be allowed for as the minimum 25% embedment condition is impractical in some situations, particularly with very large box culverts. However, there should be a minimum embedment requirement of the greater of 300mm or twice the median substrate size as recommended in the New Zealand Fish Passage Guidelines V2 (Franklin et al, 2024).
 - NES-F s.70** - Section 70’s purpose is to ensure fish passage is provided for and each condition is relevant to different factors that impact on fish passage. This specificity is important for applicants to ensure they are installing structures that comply with 70(2)(a). 70(2)(a) on its own is vague as wider understanding of specific factors that can impact fish passage at culverts are limited. Conditions (b) – (g) each address a factor that is a known risk to fish passage at culverts. Removal of any condition risks the installation of structures that do not meet 70(2)(a)¹².

¹⁰ See for example <https://data.mfe.govt.nz/layer/52677-prediction-of-wetlands-before-humans-arrived/>

¹¹ Collecting information on a structure takes an average of 20 minutes which is a fraction of the total planning, preparation, construction, and clean up time. Minimum tools required are a measuring tape and an item that floats. There is a free and dedicated app (NIWA FPAT) which anyone may use to satisfy s.62 & 63 of the NES-F.

¹² For example, condition (c) is important as due to the uniform nature of culvert surfaces providing less friction and complexity than adjacent reaches, water velocities can increase to an extent that significantly

62. NRC therefore opposes removing any condition from s.70. Removing conditions has the potential to result in a laborious process for councils and landowners/users as a result of the increased potential for breaches of 70(2)(a) and associated reconstruction or retrospective resource consenting which leads to increased costs and delays to projects.
63. NRC particularly opposes removal of the water velocity conditions for culverts. It would negatively impact an ability to adequately provide for fish passage under permitted activity rules. The condition is broad yet if met, it is likely that fish passage can be achieved without a scientific or technical understanding of fish movement which varies by species, age and area. Fish passage is complex, and removing water velocity would very likely reduce the potential to achieve the intent of the rule.
64. NRC supports temporary structures being treated differently to permanent, similar to the NES-CF, but would encourage a clearly defined timeframe.

Nitrogen cap and reporting (farmer facing regulations)

65. NRC supports aligning reporting dates with the farming calendar, noting that nitrogen loss is not a key issue for Te Taitokerau, although we do have 'hot spots' such as Maungakarama and Taipa where nitrogen application has been managed using non-regulatory methods. We also note that some freshwater bodies, such as Dune Lakes, are particularly sensitive to nutrients such as nitrogen.
66. The proposal to remove the 190 kg/ha/yr cap is not supported, as this provides a national standard that can be used where non-regulatory methods fail/are ineffective.

Drinking water source area mapping

67. NRC notes that the requirement to map source water risk management areas within 5 years could be a costly exercise, especially where knowledge of groundwater resources is limited (we have yet to assess it fully though).
68. It is not clear how the maps will be used and what the implications are for landowners. Without a clear understanding of how the maps will be used (e.g. whether rules are to be applied to each SWRMA in national direction) NRC finds it hard to comment whether such mapping will result in reduced risk of contamination of drinking water sources, because clearly mapping alone will not bring about any change.
69. NRC is unsure of the implications of reducing the thresholds from 500-persons to 100-persons but is concerned that without assessment at national level as to how many water supplies would be captured by the reduction in threshold, the costs and benefits of the proposal are difficult to understand. We are concerned that there could be many local facilities (e.g. schools, marae, papakāinga) that may be captured by the change in the threshold and what the implications might be on marae and papakāinga. For example, reducing the threshold to 100 persons or more could result in a significant percentage of Northland being managed for source water protection especially given that SWRMA 3 is essentially the entire catchment. We are also dubious about the merits of requiring mapping of SWRMA 3 given the extent and it is unclear what the management purpose and approaches would be in SWRMA 3. We recommend this be subject of a case study or pilot in a few regions before confirming any national direction on this mapping requirement.

impact fish passage. High velocities across uniform surfaces can impede fish passage, particularly with sloped sites and longer culverts. Even when compliant with other conditions in s.70, increased velocities alone could impact the ability of fish to pass the structure leading to non-compliance with s.70(2)(a) Having this condition informs applicants and enables them to take measures from the outset to provide for velocities congruent with adjacent reaches (e.g. incorporating appropriate baffling into the design), and ensuring compliance with s.70(2)(a), thus avoiding potential enforcement action, retrospective remediation, and work delays.

Freshwater Farm Plans

70. Council supports the Freshwater Farm Plan regime as a means to improve the state of freshwater and complement other freshwater planning initiatives. We support a simpler more cost-effective system.
71. Council also sees a good case for FWFP acting as an alternative to resource consents for some farming activities (such as stock exclusion), provided councils have discretion to include provisions in regional plans to ensure FWFP robustly assess risks and address the most critical contaminants in a region or catchment and bring about meaningful improvements.
72. Council also notes that it is important to understand the effectiveness of FWFPs as a tool before deciding when this will be the preferred mechanism for addressing other freshwater management issues (e.g. commercial vegetable growing).

Māori Rights and Interests and Treaty Settlements

73. We note that the discussion document seeks specific feedback on the potential for the proposed freshwater reforms to impact on Māori rights and interests in freshwater and on Treaty Settlements.
74. We note the Crown's reiteration of its position that no-one owns water, with Māori Treaty claims over freshwater (e.g. WAI 2358 and WAI 1040¹³) remaining unresolved. We further note that in Northland we do have waterbodies where the ownership lies with Māori (e.g. Porotī Springs, Lake Ōmāpere) and Statutory Acknowledgements that identify specific waterbodies of interest to tāngata whenua (e.g. Lake Humuhumu and Awanui River). There is clearly the potential for the proposed reforms to impact negatively on these rights and interests given the more permissive and enabling approach proposed for certain activities that have potential to impact on freshwater bodies (e.g. certain farming activities and mining and quarrying in wetlands).
75. We also note that there are freshwater bodies and receiving environments (coastal/estuarine waters) which are identified in our Regional Plan as Sites or Areas of Significance to Tāngata Whenua. The proposed reforms that would override the specific protections of those Sites and Areas of Significance (e.g. policies that provide for mining and quarrying in particular environments and locations) could result in adverse effects on the values, qualities and characteristics of these freshwater Sites of Significance.
76. As noted above, any proposal to either remove or limit the consideration of Te Mana o Te Wai will be viewed negatively by tāngata whenua and will impact on their freshwater rights and interests. NRC also notes that Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi guarantees that Māori can perform their responsibilities as kaitiaki according to tikanga; therefore, there is potential for the proposed freshwater reforms to negatively impact on those rights.

NRC wishes to be heard.

For further information, please contact Tami Woods, Policy & Planning Manager, tamiw@nrc.govt.nz
phone: 09 470 1200.

Geoff Crawford
Chair
Northland Regional Council

¹³ The Te Paparahi o Te Raki (Northland) inquiry includes claims over freshwater.

TITLE: Chief Executive's Report to Council

From: Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Authorised by Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer, on 08 August
Group Manager/s: 2025

The Chief Executive Officer's monthly report to council is provided for members information so they can get a broad view of activity across the council.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'Chief Executive's Report to Council' by Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer and dated 31 July 2025, be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Chief Executives Report, 24 July 2025 council meeting [↓](#) 

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TITLE: Chief Executive's Report to Council

From: Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Authorised by Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer, on 15 July
Group Manager/s: 2025

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'Chief Executive's Report to Council' by Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer and dated 1 July 2025, be received.

7.4.3 CORPORATE SERVICES

Fraud, Corruption and Dishonesty Statement

There are no new fraudulent investigations to report or any new incidents or suspected incidents of fraud at this time.

Property

The Property Team will be applying for an amendment to the consent which allows controlled discharge from the stormwater pond at Fertiliser Road, given the very low risk environmental impact downstream. Council's consultant, Williamson Water and Land Advisory, is undertaking monitoring and a risk assessment to confirm there are unlikely to be any effects of passive discharge. They then will prepare a technical document to support a Section 127 application for change to conditions of the discharge consent.

7.4.4 REGULATORY SERVICES

Current Legal Proceedings

Department	Description	Status
Consent decision appeal	Proposed port expansion project to include reclamation and port activities	The applicant provided an update to the Court advising that all parties, except Te Parawhau, have resolved their issues with the appeal. The presiding Judge has directed that Te Parawhau are to advise the Court by 21 July 2025 if it has any issues with the proposed conditions and that the applicant is to file an update report to the Court by 22 August 2025. If resolution is not reached by all parties by 30 September 2025, then a hearing will be scheduled.
Consent decision appeal	New groundwater take at Tautoro (south of Kaikohe) for irrigation of a proposed avocado orchard	One appeal was received from Te Riingi Marae. The Environment Court has agreed to postpone Court assisted mediation until mid October 2025 to allow the applicant and appellant to continue to engage in discussions to resolve the appeal. The applicant is to advise the Court whether parties wish to proceed or not proceed with mediation.

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Consents Update

During June 2025, a total of 135 Decisions were issued. These decisions comprised:

Moorings	1
Coastal Permits	11
Coastal Discharge Permits	3
Air Discharge Permits	1
Land Discharge Permits	20
Land Use Consents	81
Water Takes	9
Bore Consents	9

Forty applications were received in June 2025.

Of the 135 applications in progress at the end of June 2025:

- 30 were received more than 12 months ago;
- 12 were received between 6 and 12 months ago (most awaiting further information from the applicant);
- 93 less than 6 months.

Appointment of Hearing Commissioners

- No commissioners were appointed in June 2025.

Consents Decisions and Progress on Notified Applications in Process, Objections and Appeals

The current level of notified application processing activities at the end of June 2025 is (*by number*):

Applications Publicly/Limited Notified During Previous Month	1
Progress on Applications Previously Notified	2
Appeals/Objections	2

The results of compliance monitoring for the period 1 to 30 June 2025 (and year-to-date figures) are summarised in the following table and discussed below.

Classification	Total	Full compliance	Low risk non-compliance	Moderate non-compliance	Significant non-compliance
Air Discharge	26	25	1	0	0
Bore Consent	12	6	6	0	0
Coastal Discharge	22	16	5	1	0
Coastal Permit	42	33	9	0	0
FDE - Discharge permit	84	84	0	0	0
Land Discharge	142	105	27	10	0
Land Use Consent	142	135	7	0	0
NES-F	322	61	48	213	0
Water Discharge	61	44	6	11	0
Water Permit	112	109	1	2	0
Water Take	86	69	14	3	0

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Classification	Total	Full compliance	Low risk non-compliance	Moderate non-compliance	Significant non-compliance
Total	1051	687	124	240	0
Percentage		65.4%	11.8%	22.8%	0.0%
Year to date	7188	5163	851	1102	72
Percentage		71.83%	11.84%	15.33%	1.0%

Municipal wastewater treatment plant compliance/enforcement

WWTP/Consent Status	Compliance for last 12 months	Compliance for last 3 months	Enforcement Action/Response
Ahipara Expires 2033			<u>Under ANs</u> (reissued in September 2022). Compliance is based on a median FC concentration of 12 consecutive samples and a 90 th percentile limit. As the latter limit requires 9 out of 10 consecutive samples to be compliant the 12-month compliance pie chart will continue to show (red) for at least another three months.
Kohukohu Expires 2026			<u>Under AN</u> Self-monitoring not being undertaken correctly. Issue being addressed. FC and ammoniacal nitrogen exceed consent limits. Desludging and maintenance have been undertaken.
Hikurangi Expires 2025 (replacement consent application being processed)			<u>Under AN</u> TSS, BOD5 and E. coli results are above RC limits for median and 90 th percentile. WDC undertaking remedial action and providing regular updates.
Whatuwhiwhi Expires 2025 (replacement consent application being processed)			Moderate non-compliances for TSS exceeding RC limits. Self-monitoring not being undertaken in accordance with consent requirements.

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WWTP/Consent Status	Compliance for last 12 months	Compliance for last 3 months	Enforcement Action/Response
Taipā Expires 2029			Moderate non-compliances for FC exceeding 85 th percentile and TN exceeding RC limits. Working group trialling options to improve treatment.
PaihiaE Expires 2034			<u>Under AN</u> Moderate non-compliances due to ammoniacal nitrogen exceeding RC limits for 90 th percentile. Some results missing.
Opononi & Omāpere Expires 2027			<u>Under ANs</u> Moderate non-compliances for BOD, E. coli, and TSS. Remedial action undertaken. Results are improving.
Rāwene Expired 2023 (replacement consent application being processed)			Discharge volumes exceed RC limits. FC, ammoniacal nitrogen and TSS exceed consent limits. Remedial work scheduled.
Kawakawa Expires 2036			Moderate non-compliance due to 90 th percentile for E Coli being exceeded in historic sample. Has been trending downwards since.
Kaitiāia Expired 2021 (decision on replacement application consent due soon)			<u>Under AN</u> (for reticulation overflows). Ongoing works on reticulation system. Some sample results missing. RC limits exceeded for percentiles.
Hihi Expired 2022 (replacement consent application being processed)			Ammoniacal nitrogen and E. coli exceeding RC limits. Most recent visit was fully compliant.
Russell Expired 30 April 2024 (replacement consent application being processed)			<u>Under AN</u> Leachate volumes discharged to treatment plant have exceeded RC limits.
Kaiwaka Expires 2049			Median and 90 th percentile exceedances for FC. E. coli also exceeded RC limits.
















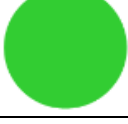



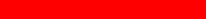
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WWTP/Consent Status	Compliance for last 12 months	Compliance for last 3 months	Enforcement Action/Response
Kaikohe Expired 2021 (replacement consent application being processed, also listed Fast-track proposal)			<u>Under AN</u> Discharge volumes not being reported. Water quality exceeding RC limits.
Kaeo Expired 2022 (replacement consent application being processed)			Some exceedances of RC limits, however most recent monitoring fully compliant.
Rangiputa Expires 2032			None currently. Moderate non-compliance for sampling not undertaken in accordance with RC conditions in 2024.
Maungaturoto Expires 2032			<u>Under AN; IN issued September 2024</u> Low risk non-compliance for missing sample results in March 2025.
Ruakaka Expires 2046			Elevated ammoniacal nitrogen levels in some sampling bores, however investigations showed that no elevated levels were found in the receiving environment.
Mangawhai Expires 2042			<u>Under ANs; IN issued September 2024</u> Enforcement relates to odour. No other issues currently.
Te Kopuru Expires 2044			None currently.
Waipū Expires 2030			None currently.
Dargaville Expires 2043			<u>Under ANs</u> None currently.

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WWTP/Consent Status	Compliance for last 12 months	Compliance for last 3 months	Enforcement Action/Response
Tutukaka Expires 2054			Moderate non-compliance for elevated E. coli in February 2025. Fully compliant since March 2025.
Whāngārei City Expires 2045			<u>Under AN</u> for odour from plant. Additional odour controls being implemented. Moderate non-compliance for ongoing incorrect reporting.
Ngunguru Expires 2035			None currently. Historic result still affecting 95 th percentile for E. coli.
Oakura Expires 2025 (replacement consent application being processed)			None currently.
Portland Expires 2054			None currently. Non-compliance for late data in 2024.
Glinks Gully Expires 2034			None currently.
Kerikeri Expires 2036			None currently.
Waiōtira Expires 2030			None currently.
Compliance Status			
Full compliance			
Low risk non-compliance			
Moderate non-compliance			
Significant non-compliance			

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Court Cases Update

Litigation	Next Court Event/Action
Prosecution District Court Discharge of sediment. Now <u>Crown</u> case.	On 18 February 2025, the judgement on the defendant's application for the dismissal of charges was released, in which the Court granted the defendant's application to dismiss the charges. As a result of the decision, all four defendants were dismissed from all charges. Status: awaiting the decision on the costs application.
Prosecution District Court Discharge of raw farm dairy effluent to a stream; wastewater washed into stream; and overflow from pond. Now <u>Crown</u> case.	On 13 June 2025, the Crown filed a memorandum with the District Court seeking to withdraw all charges. The Crown had assessed that the test for prosecution against all the defendants and concluded that it no longer met the Solicitor General's Prosecution Guidelines. On 16 June 2025, the Court confirmed that the charges had been dismissed administratively, and no appearance was required.
Interim Enforcement Orders Environment Court Discharge to air from the manufacturing of Asphalt and open burning	On 23 June 2025, the parties filed and served a joint memorandum advising that the respondents plan to dismantle and remove the asphalt plant from the site permanently and are no longer pursuing a resource consent for bitumen batching activities on the site. The respondents requested additional time to complete the dismantling process. The matter was accordingly adjourned until 23 January 2026 . The parties are directed to file and serve a reporting memorandum with the Court on or before 23 January 2026, including an update on the site works and the position on the undertaking and orders sought.

7.4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

LAND MANAGMENT

Hill Country Erosion Programme

The MPI co-funded Hill Country Erosion Programme met or exceeded all KPIs over the January 2025 to June 2025 reporting period. A summary of key outcomes include:

- Total area of retirement fencing 129ha (KPI 73ha)
- Total length of fencing built 14.1 km (KPI 12km)
- 36 ha of native planting (KPI36ha)
- Attendance at multiple hui aimed at improving uptake of the fund by Tangata Whenua

BIODIVERSITY

Coastal Biodiversity - CoastCare

Several dune planting days were held this month with plants provided through Northland Regional Council CoastCare.

Spinifex and pingao plants were provided for two planting days on Mangawhai Sandspit, the first organised by Tern Point Society and the second by the Department of Conservation.

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CoastCare staff attended a planting day at Long Beach, Russell, with Russell Landcare Trust.

Staff also attended two Matariki planting days: Ruakākā Wildlife Refuge and Pātaua South. Both events were well attended. Planting days were also held at Matapōuri and Uretiti.



Photo above: Some of the volunteers and staff share a cup of tea after the Ruakākā Wildlife Refuge planting day organised by Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust.



Photo above: A great turn out at the Pātaua South planting day, organised by Aki Tai Here.

Lakes

Pines were felled at Rototuna on the Poutō Peninsula by Nga Manga Atawhai (Te Roroa) with the support of Te Uri O Hau and their cultural advisor. Te Uri O Hau Environs are organising a whānau planting day to plant natives at the top of the hill to replace the pines, with the support of Kaipara Moana Restoration.



Photo left:
Rototuna after
pine felling
June 2025

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Photo left: Nga Manga Atawhai team with Snow Tane (Te Roroa) and Colin French (Te Uri O Hau) at Rototuna after the pine felling.

A drone was used to control pampas around Rototuna and Karaka. This method proved very quick and cost effective for areas that are very hard to reach on foot.



Photo left: Drone controlling pampas at Karaka



Photo left: Drone controlling pampas at Rototuna

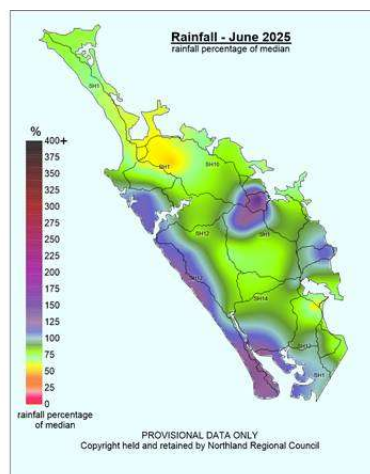
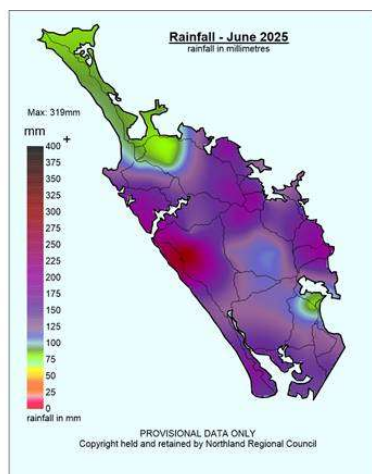
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NATURAL RESOURCES

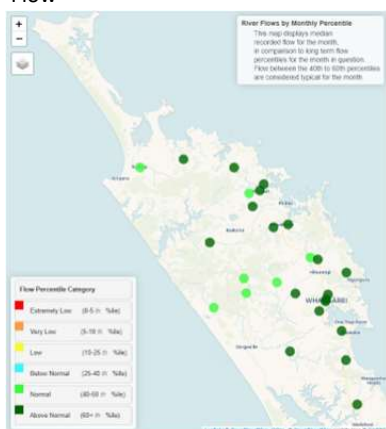
Hydrology

Rainfall



- Northland Region averaged 133.5mm of rainfall for the month, which is 85% of the long-term median (normal expected) for June.
- The highest rainfall total for June was recorded at the Waimamaku at Wekaweka Road station in the South Hokianga, with 319.5mm, for 109% of normal expected. The highest percentage of normal expected rainfall was recorded at the Waitangi at McDonald Road station with 155%, and a total of 199.5mm.
- The lowest rainfall total for the month was recorded at the Ōruru at Bowling Club station, inland from Doubtless Bay, with 82.5mm, for 65% of normal expected. The lowest percentage for June was recorded at the Te Puhi at Mangakawakawa Trig station, south of Kaitia, with 50% of normal expected, with a total of 84 mm.

Flow

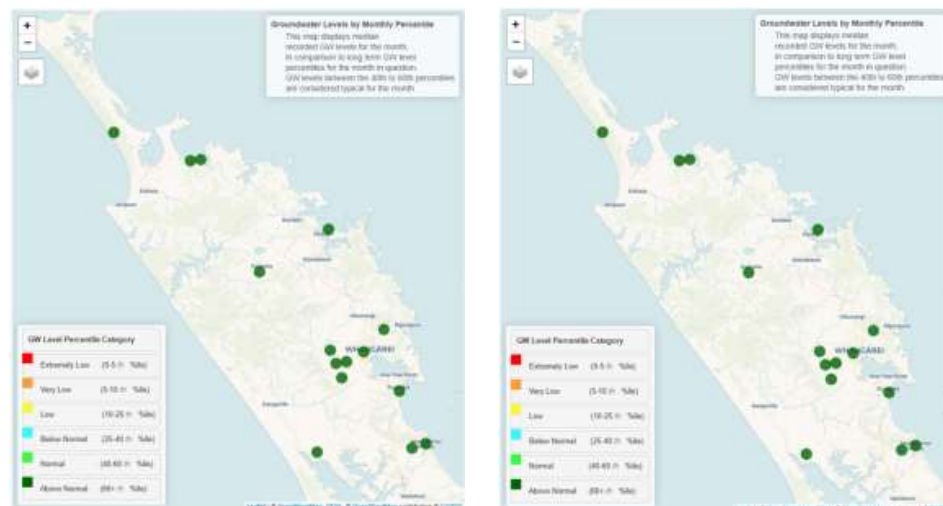


- River flows for all of Northland's monitored catchments were all either "Normal" or "Above Normal" for June.
- There is still some capacity in the rivers, however along with wet soils, significant rainfall is likely to result in flooding in low lying areas.

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Groundwater



Groundwater levels in all of Northland's key monitored aquifers 'were "Above Normal" for June.

Science

The science team recently published the report '[Risks of elevated aluminium concentration in surface waters of Northern Wairoa catchment](#)'. The report is a technical assessment of data collected by the compliance monitoring team and state of the environment water quality data from the Northern Wairoa River system to identify the origin and potential risks of elevated aluminium levels in the catchment.

The report concludes that elevated aluminium concentrations are most probably associated with catchment soil chemistry, erosion prone geology and overland flow following heavy rainfall events. The aluminium in the surface waters is mostly contained in particulate matter associated with suspended sediment in the river. The report was proactively released to the Dargaville Ratepayers Association and Environs Te Uri o Hau.

Water Quality

Reporting

The Water Quality team published the '[Recreational Swimming Programme Safeswim Summer Review 2024/25](#)' report. This report provides an overview of council's recreational bathing programme, which includes predicting water quality at popular swimming sites across Northland through Safeswim, www.safeswim.org.nz and ongoing sampling to underpin the site-specific models.

Throughout the swimming season (December to February) it was predicted to be safe to swim 97.6% of the time across all of Northland's coastal sites, and 90.7% of the time across all freshwater sites. 30 sites were predicted to be safe 100% of the time.

Dissolved Oxygen Logger Maintenance

As part of our continuous improvement/maintenance programmes, a number of river monitoring sites had new structures built and all lake sites had improved rigging setups installed to ensure the loggers are at the correct depths.

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Māori Engagement

Staff attended a wananga for environmental projects from Hokianga through to Te Roroa. Presentations included: Kaipara Moana Contractor strategy, Reconnecting Northland consultants update, Tiaki Nga Wai O Hokianga nursery support and Kaitiaki roopu progress, NRC funding options/support from Environmental Services and Land Management.

POLICY AND PLANNING

Proposed Kaipara District Plan Submission

A council workshop was held on 4 June to confirm a submission to the Kaipara District Council Proposed District Plan. The submission was approved by Council at the 24 June Council meeting. The submission was then lodged on 30 June.

Regulatory Standards Bill

A Council workshop was held on 11 June to confirm a submission on the government's Regulatory Standards Bill. The submission was lodged on 23rd June. Retrospective approval for the submission has been sought at this Council meeting.

National Directions Packages

The Council has had two workshops on the government's National Directions Packages on the 24th and 9 July. The draft submission for Council approval is being sought at this meeting.

Upcoming Local Government Systems Improvements Bill

The Local Government Systems Improvements Bill is expected to enter Parliament in July 2025. The Bill will include changes to the purpose of local government to require Councils to "get back to basics", publish key council performance indicators, limit council rates rises or expenditure on 'non-core' activities and reviewing the transparency and accountability rules that apply to councils.

7.4.6 BIOSECURITY

INCURSIONS

Wild Deer Free Te Taitokerau

Operations at our second site – the Kai Iwi Lakes project area is almost complete, with no signs or sightings of deer so far. NRC, the contractors, and Te Roroa Development Group are planning a wānanga to help remove goats that were found during the deer surveillance work in this area.

Surveillance using TADS (Thermal Animal Detection System) has been completed at four further locations (Kaitaia, Purerua, Kaimaumau, and Tutamoe/Wahui). Final reports are expected by the end of July. Deer were detected in the Kaitaia area, while the other sites—being historical—showed no recent deer presence. The information for this surveillance helps support effective and efficient operational planning. A further site at Poutō is scheduled to be completed before the end of August.

Following the recent removal of three deer in Kaitaia South, we are now preparing to engage with local hapū/iwi and surrounding landowners to develop an eradication plan. This next phase marks the programme's third operational area and will target the management of the known fallow deer population.

Russell Forest Sika Eradication

With only three known animals—two stags and one hind—remaining in the project area, we are now entering the final stages of our eradication operations. Contractors recently removed a mature sika hind, and tissue samples have been sent to Ecogene (Landcare Research – Manaaki Whenua) to confirm whether this was the last known hind. The outcome of this genetic analysis will guide the deployment of the next eradication tools and strategies. The primary aim of the project remains the complete removal of all known animals from the area.

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Trail cameras deployed in the project area have been used to identify home ranges and successfully captured images of the hind shortly before her removal.

RĀHUI TAPU/MARINE PROTECTED AREA

Changeable weather conditions have impacted the on-water mahi in the Rāhui Tapu, however occasional calm weather windows have allowed us to achieve some significant milestones in council's marine protection programme.



Hapū kaitiaki and marine biologist retrieve a BUV during species monitoring at Mimiwhangata



Baseline ecological monitoring has progressed with the majority of the fieldwork now complete. Baited underwater video surveys have occurred in both Rāhui Tapu focussing on species counts and biomass measurements of snapper/tāmure (key indicator species), and species biodiversity generally. Each survey took approximately 4 days to complete, involving a collaborative team of marine biologists, NRC staff and hapū kaitiaki. We are still awaiting detailed analysis of the survey results, but the footage collected has given a unique glimpse into the underwater action that goes on in these special areas which we were able to share with the public on social media, receiving almost 55k views. Initial observations in both Rāhui Tapu suggest a large presence of snapper/tāmure and over 19 different fish species.

A kōura/crayfish (key indicator species) survey has commenced with a team of marine ecologists from University of Auckland's Marine Science Institute, NRC divers, and hapū kaitiaki.

The arrival of winter sees the end of NRC's first summer season formally enforcing the marine protection rules. There was a heavy on-water presence between October and June to ensure the public are aware of the no-take rules and the values they intend to protect, however the months of April and May were particularly quiet due to large weather systems impacting boating conditions.

As at 1 June 2025 we have had a total of 96 surveillance trips, approaching 422 vessels, with 24 instances of fishing within the Rāhui Tapu. One infringement notice, one abatement notice, and 22 directions notices have been issued.

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Mimiwhangata Rāhui Tapu

Rākaumangamanga Rāhui Tapu

	On-water trips	Fishing	Not Fishing	Total		On-water trips	Fishing	Not Fishing	Total
Oct-24	3	1	3	4	Oct-24	4	-	1	1
Nov-24	5	-	4	4	Nov-24	5	2	27	29
Dec-24	6	1	33	34	Dec-24	10	1	96	97
Jan-25	6	6	36	42	Jan-25	10	3	62	65
Feb-25	7	5	42	47	Feb-25	12	-	40	40
Mar-25	6	5	18	23	Mar-25	6	-	14	14
Apr-25	-	-	-	-	Apr-25	4	-	2	2
May-25	3	-	-	-	May-25	9	-	20	20
Total	36	18	136	154	Total	60	6	262	268

PEST PLANTS

At the end of June, a new sea spurge site was discovered at Kapowairua, Spirits bay. This is the first site discovered on the northern coastline of New Zealand, with all previous sites being confined to the west coast. Nineteen adult plants and thirty-two juvenile and seedlings plants were removed. The site was found by the Ngāti kuri 'Haumihi Team' undertaking sea spurge surveillance work, funded through the Ministry for Primary Industries Long Term Management Programme for sea spurge. Following training with staff, the team have been progressively undertaking survey work at key sites and higher risk sites in their rohe. The discovery highlights the value of the proactive surveillance work being undertaken by local teams; Taiao teams and hapū groups from Te Aupōuri and Te Rarawa have also been engaged to deliver both the ongoing management of known sites and surveillance work in their rohe.

Staff also undertook training and survey with Uri O Hau kaimahi on the Pouto peninsula to enable them to take on sea spurge surveillance work contracts with the Department of Conservation in the new year.

The discovery at Kapowairua brings the total number of locations where sea spurge has been found in Northland to seven. This includes Te Kopuru, Poutō peninsula (three subsites), the Waipoua River mouth (and single plant detected), Mitimiti (2 very large sites), Ahipara (single plant), Waipapakauri (10 subsites over 10 kilometres), and Hukatere (1 medium and one small subsite).



Map showing approximate location of sea spurge site found at Kapowairua, Spirits bay.

Across other pest plant work programmes, after the very wet and windy weather in April impacted planned work, staff have been busy completing inspection and control work for the year for our low-incidence programmes, as well as delivering community partnership work.

Staff have been really pleased to have kaimahi from Te Uri O Hau working with them on the spartina programme in the Kaipara harbour. There are very limited weather and tide windows each year

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suitable to treat these sites, and having a larger team tackling the work means sites can be completed faster and more sites can receive treatment. Over the course of the last month, for the 16 hour tidal window available, a total of 105 hours were spent controlling spartina. This additional capacity has been a significant boost for the programme and will be continued and expanded next season.

Staff also inspected several potential sites identified from a desktop review of Photoblique imagery. Two out of three suspected areas were confirmed as new infestations. A drone survey was also undertaken, locating a further new spartina site.

Follow up inspection and control at one of the larger mile-a-minute sites showed great progress after two years of consistent control, with only seedling plants found where there was previously rampant adult foliage.



Photos taken December 2023 (left) and June 2025 (right) showing the reduction in the infestation level of mile-a-minute at one of the Baylys beach sites after consistent control over 2 years.

After pursuing the necessary approvals and permissions from NZTA, new signs are now being installed at Kaeo and Puketona. They encourage everyone to 'tackle weeds together' and feature members of local volunteer groups. More signs are planned for SH12 and SH14 for the coming year.

The pest plant team also helped deliver the Matarau Primary Schools Enviro Day, with a total of 260 primary aged kids, across nine classes, learning about dispersal pathways of common weed species.



Children at Matarau Primary Enviro Day sharing what they know about pest plants and how they spread

7.4.7 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

Economic Development

- Ngawha Innovation and Enterprise Centre – allocation of funding approved as per the Underwrite Commitment Agreement between NRC and Northland Inc.

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- Economic information provided to assist with other council activities including planning and policy (Taumarere business case) and biosecurity (commence work on updating benefit cost analysis for Top of the North (TON) clean hull plan).

Te Tiriti Partnerships and Engagement

National Direction and Policy Engagement

Te Tiriti Partnerships and Engagement and Te Ruarangi are currently focused on reviewing and responding to a suite of National Policy Statements (NPS) and National Environmental Standards (NES), including the ongoing freshwater reforms. These instruments, such as the NZ Coastal Policy Statement and proposed changes to marine aquaculture are part of a broader shift in national direction that will significantly influence council-level planning and tangata whenua decision-making.

Many of these policies have been recently amended or released in draft form. Alongside the Tangata Whenua Water Advisory Group (TWWAG), Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG), Te Uru Kahika and Te Ruarangi we are preparing coordinated submissions to ensure tangata whenua voice and whakaaro are embedded.

Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening the recognition of Te Mana o te Wai and ensuring tangata whenua roles are not diminished in freshwater management.
- Responding to proposals that would permit marine aquaculture research and trials without consent, raising concerns around kaitiakitanga and local oversight.
- Strategically contributing to the submissions made by Te Uru Kahika, which will prioritise key kaupapa across the 11–12 national packages currently open for feedback.

Submissions are open to the public, and Te Ruarangi is supporting engagement across hapū and iwi to ensure their voices are heard in the select committee process.

Additionally, the IHEMP draft for Te Kowhai (Kaipara) has been received, with Ngāti Korokoro in review process of their draft IHEMP submission.

Te Tiriti Partnerships and Engagement

Our team continues to support and deliver key initiatives that strengthen Tāiki ē, Te Tiriti partnerships and deepen engagement across Te Taitokerau:

- Tāiki ē Annual Report – The Tāiki ē Annual Report is currently in development and will feature several video profiles. The report will reflect the collective impact and stories of change from across Te Taitokerau.
- Supporting the upcoming local elections campaign development, including team members undergoing Electoral Officer training. Our involvement reinforces our commitment to and ensuring tangata whenua are informed, engaged, and represented throughout the electoral process.
- Tāne Māori ki Kaitia, we supported the delivery and attended a wānanga in Kaitia, focused on tāne Māori and grounded in storytelling and whakawhanaungatanga. Giving time to our commitment as Te Tiriti partners and engagement continues to build trust and connection in the Te Hiku region.
- Te Whāriki E-Learning Module (Level 1 Refresher) development is underway. This is an evolution of Te Whāriki which will provide accessible, self-paced learning for those who have previously completed the programme and want to revisit key kaupapa and principles.

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Community Engagement

2025 Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards

The biennial Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards were held on June 26, 2025, at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, celebrating excellence in environmental protection across Te Taitokerau.

The kaitiaki arm of Te Rūnanga Nui O Te Aupōuri, Oranga Whenua Oranga Tangata Taiao, was the standout winner, receiving Te Tohu Matua – Supreme Award and Kaitiakitanga Award.

Their recognition reflects years of dedicated mahi restoring native ecosystems, protecting endangered species, and strengthening iwi connections to whenua through holistic environmental stewardship.

Category Award Winners:

- Bay of Islands International Academy – Environmental Action in Education
- Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust – Environmental Action in the Community
- Tū Mai Rā Energy – Environmental Action in Business
- Piroa Conservation Trust – Environmental Action in Water Quality and Kiwi Coast Special Award
- Project Island Song – Protecting Native Life
- Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust - Te Pou Taiao – Climate Change Action
- Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust – Environmental Leadership
- Earth Buddies – Youth Environmental Leader

The event was livestreamed, with the Facebook post receiving strong engagement from the community. A photographer/videographer has been commissioned to capture content from each of the winners to help tell their stories and amplify the impact of their mahi. More information about the winners is available in the [media release](#) or on the [website](#).

He Poutama Taitamariki Event

We were proud to take part in the youth-focused He Poutama Taitamariki event held in Whangārei, hosted by the Ministry of Social Development. Nearly 900 rangatahi aged 16–25 attended.

A key focus of our presence was to educate rangatahi about our mahi and encourage them to enrol to vote. With the Electoral Commission onsite, we got 135 rangatahi sign up to enrol.

Digital engagement

Overall performance across social media platforms:

Profile	Audience	Net audience growth	Published posts	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate (per impression)	Video views
Reporting period 1 – 30 June	22,101 ↑1.2%	263 ↑73%	94 ↑213.3%	243,453 ↑180.7%	17,872 ↑547.1%	7.2% ↑134.8%	89,426 ↑123.1%
Compare to	21,844	152	30	87,792	2,762	3.1%	40,086

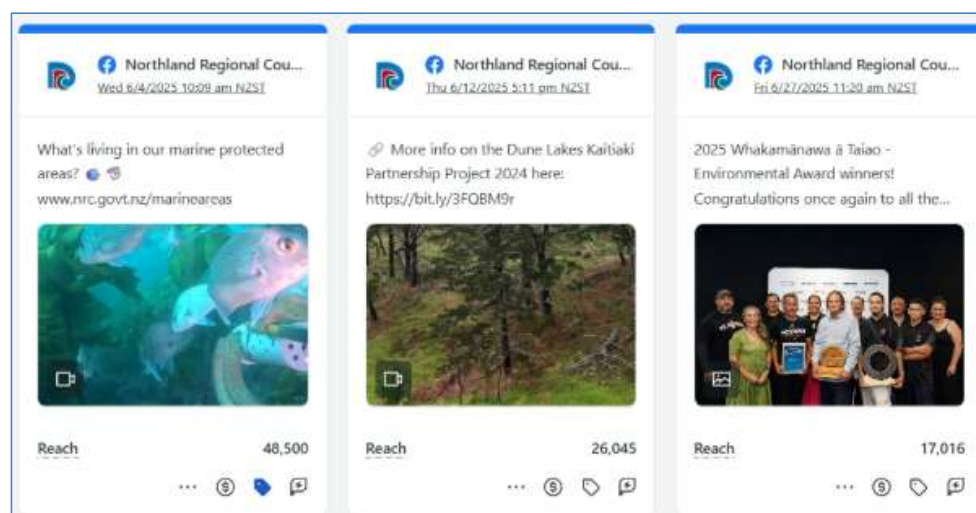
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Profile	Audience	Net audience growth	Published posts	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate (per impression)	Video views
1 – 31 May							
Facebook	15,357	138	24	222,927	15,542	7%	76,579
LinkedIn	3,668	110	7	11,549	2,036	17.6%	1,075
Instagram	2,482	10	16	11,977	269	2.2%	9,095
YouTube	594	5	47	N/A	25	N/A	2,677

Top three posts reaching the most people:

A reel with footage from the [MPA monitoring](#), a reel with footage of the pine felling as part of the [dune lakes project](#) and the wrap up post from the [environmental awards](#).

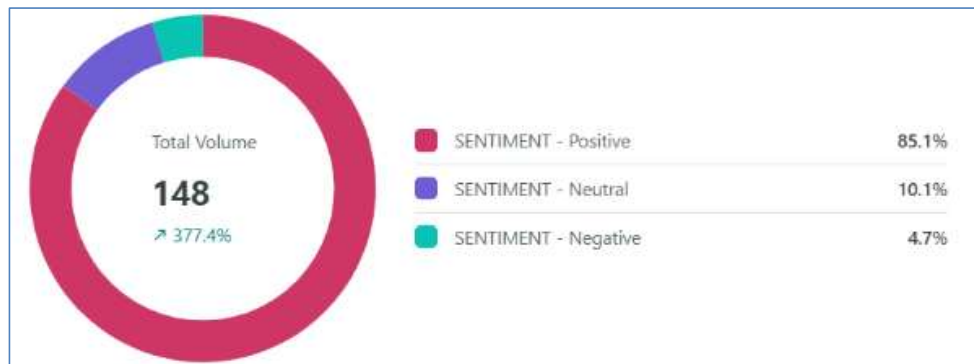


***Reach: total number of people who saw the content.**

Sentiment: Most positive responses were received on the environmental awards post congratulating winners. There were few negative responses, but they were mostly around 1080 and general dislike of council.

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eNewsletters distributed during this period:

- [Hills to Harbour | Issue 25](#): Subscribers: 632, Open-rate: 50%
- [Navigation Safety Bylaw review pānui](#): Subscribers: 539, Open-rate: 44.8%
- [Navigation Safety Bylaw review have your say](#): Subscribers: 383, Open-rate: 46.7%

Top three website pages:

- [Environmental Data Hub](#)
- [Pest Control Hub](#)
- [Kaeo webcam](#)

Key Performance Indicators	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apl-25	May-25	Jun-25
WEB					
# Visits to the NRC website	44,139	54,382	81,162	39,111	34,494
E-payments made	8	12	15	13	14
# subscribed web alerts (cumulative)	1,662	1,676	1,690	1,709	1,722
# subscribed to eNewsletters (cumulative)	5,532	5,536	5,595	5,586	5,588
CDEM SOCIAL MEDIA (CUMULATIVE)					
# CDEM Facebook fans	36,861	37,149	38,595	38,813	38,823
# CDEM Overall Facebook Reach (30D)	30,436	336,937	863,803	273,378	78,620

Media liaison

In total six Northland Regional Council media releases were created and distributed throughout Te Taitokerau and beyond during June. Topics included:

- Nominations for Northland Regional Council open 04 July
- Te Aupōuri wins big at 2025 Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards
- 3.54% rates rise adopted
- CityLink, BusLink fares to increase from August
- Follow kauri dieback hygiene rules, NRC urges
- Follow the burning rules, urges NRC

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A number of media enquiries were also received and responded to during June. Combined, this activity helped generate 105 items mentioning Northland Regional Council as reported by media monitoring agency Truescope.

Community engagement support for the business

Throughout June, the Community Engagement team provided support to help achieve council objectives including:

- **Navigation Safety Bylaw review** – communications and promotional activity to support a second public feedback period on the Navigation Safety Bylaw, which runs until 28 July.
- **Elections 2025** – Over the past month, we've been working closely with an external agency to develop and launch a promotional and marketing campaign aimed at boosting participation in the upcoming elections. Our focus has been on encouraging enrolment and inspiring individuals to stand as candidates. We also partnered with district councils to host three joint information sessions for prospective candidates in Whangārei, Maungaturoto, and Kaikohe. These events were well attended, both in person and online.
- **Transport** - planning and delivery of public communication campaigns supporting key public transport updates in Te Taitokerau, including fare increases, restored bike access on CityLink buses, Matariki service changes, and the introduction of a T2 lane in Whangārei.
- **Marine protected areas** – Hosted annual communications planning hui with hapū partners.
- **Vehicles on Beaches** - continued to work with Compliance and Coastcare on the Vehicle Exclusion Zones information and education project, including production of replacement signs and an information flyer.
- **Biodiversity** - supported biodiversity initiatives by creating educational and promotional materials for the Dune Lakes Kaitiaki Partnership Project at Lake Rototuna, including signage and digital content, and developed new Coastcare signage for dune areas at Waipū and Langs Beach.

Education

Whangārei Project Pest Control skills courses

This year two, 2-day Whangārei Project Pest Control courses were held at Kiwi North. Around 70 secondary school students attended. Tuition was provided by Biosecurity Partnerships, Predator Free, Animal Pest NZ and Health NZ. Highlights included new theory assessment activities, an interactive presentation of trapping technology by Predator Free and the fact that both possums and rats were caught overnight.



Ship rat destroyed via a kill trap.



Health and safety theory activity.

Enviroschools action snapshot

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Learning and action	School / Centre
Climate action – whole school for Term 3 incorporating VR and 'Ripple Effect' game	Kaitia Intermediate
Waste management – student envirogroup leading visioning and mahi around composting, recycling and edible gardens	Otamatea High School
Avian Day – whole school and linked to the NZ Garden Bird Survey	Matarau School
Envirogroup – student led mapping to advance their sustainable environment	Riverview School
KMR – planting natives to increase biodiversity and clean up the Kaipara Harbour	Aranga, Arapohui, Kaihu Valley, Ruawai Primary and Tangowahine schools
Wetland restoration	Aranga School
Animal and plant pests, seed-sourcing, planting and bird identification	Parua Bay School
Wetland macroinvertebrate investigation	Hurupaki School



Enviroschools and Bream Head Conservation Trust collab with Parua Bay School.

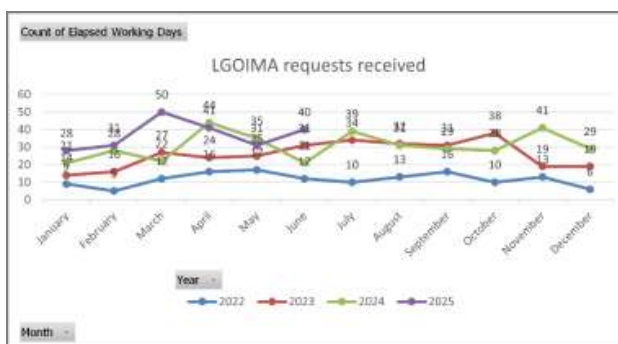


Enviroschools and Whitebait Connection collab with Hurupaki School.

Facilitating Enviroschools communities

Enviroschools Facilitators visited or held specific online interactions with over 70 enviroschools communities.

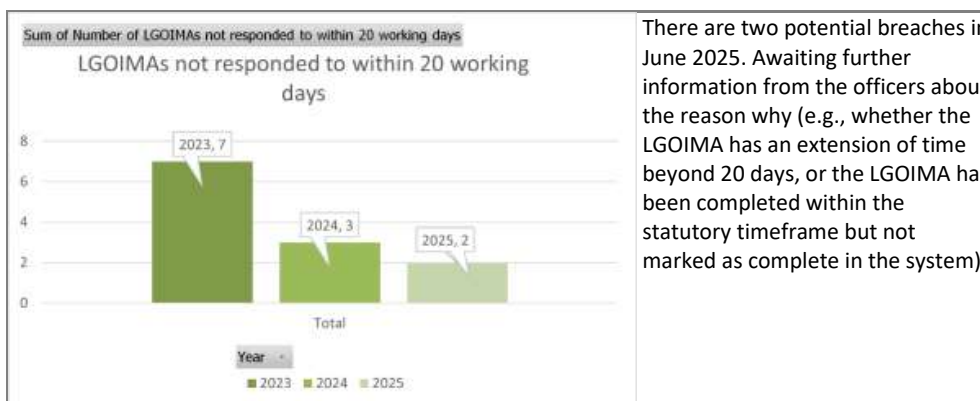
Local Government Official Information Requests (LGOIMA)



In June 2025, we received 40 LGOIMA requests, 19 more than in June 2024. Despite this slight decrease, the overall trend shows an increase in LGOIMA requests each year, with 50 more requests compared to the same period in 2024.

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There are two potential breaches in June 2025. Awaiting further information from the officers about the reason why (e.g., whether the LGOIMA has an extension of time beyond 20 days, or the LGOIMA has been completed within the statutory timeframe but not marked as complete in the system).

Triennial Elections 2025

Three future candidate information sessions were held in June in conjunction with the district councils. These events were interactive in format with a panel of experts (including representatives from council, Election Services Limited, and the Māori community).

Statistics from these events are as follows:

Candidate Information Session	Date	Location	Number of attendees	Other key information
NRC - WDC	11/06/2025	Whangārei	50 in person	More than 1000 online viewers stopping in to watch during the event and currently 268 views
NRC - KDC	19/06/2025	Maungaturoto	16 in person	Up to 20 people were watching online and over 2000 views of the video post event
NRC - FNDC	25/06/2025	Kaikohe	5 in person	127 views on Youtube channel

Nominations opened on Friday 5 July 2025 and close noon on Friday 1 August 2025. All relevant information is available on the NRC website: <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/elections2025>

7.4.8 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Transport

Fares Increase

Following approval from Council, staff commenced advertising through the press and social media about the fares increase set for 1 August 2025. Staff have also delivered pamphlets to the rural service operators for distribution on the buses. Pamphlets will be placed on buses and at termini during July 2025.

Whangarei T2 Lanes

Work continues on the Kamo to Whangarei T2 Lane project scheduled to be operational on Friday 4 July 2025. There are several items to be completed, including pedestrian crossing lights, installation of cameras and approval from the Whangarei District Council on the bylaw to prosecute for infringements. Staff will monitor the services on Friday 4 July 2025 and again when the schools reopen to gauge the impact on the running times of the buses on this route.

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Rose Street Bus Terminus

The Rose Street Bus Terminus new building was scheduled to become operative on Friday 4 July 2025. The Whangarei District Council has advised that this will be delayed due to the work not being completed. A new date is yet to be confirmed.

Total Mobility Scheme (TM)

Total mobility Trips and client travel for June 2025:

- Whangarei – 1,576 clients undertaking 4,210 trips
- Far North – 412 clients undertaking 344 trips

Total Mobility Scheme National Meeting

Staff organised and attended the national Total Mobility Scheme (TM) meeting at Auckland Transport on, Wednesday 18 June 2025. Agenda items covered included: -

- Progress on the Whitelisting of the TM cards recently introduced to allow for greater control over card use.
- SmartPay alternatives including the option of having EFTPOS machines linking directly to the present RIDEWISE system.
- The feasibility of the new national swipe card system being fully funded by NZTA.
- TM budgets.
- An in-depth discussion around the different regions views on moving from a 75% subsidy back to a 50% subsidy to allow existing budgets to cover the increase in client travel.

Maritime

16 maritime incidents were reported in June; the majority related to accidents and drifting vessels in the various storms. The team conducted 5 skipper assistance trips supporting other departments.

The summer safety programme “Nobody’s stronger than Tangaroa” has been concluded following another successful year. This is the 8th year the programme has run, this year saw the introduction of Wananga held at marae and in communities throughout Northland, the wananga were designed to deliver education and practical boating safety skills. These were run in conjunction with attendance at key events to promote key safer boating messages.



Wananga at Kowharewa Bay



Wananga at Ngatiwai Marae

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In one serious incident Police Search and Rescue (SAR) contacted the Harbourmaster requesting assistance. A couple had called for help from a capsized boat outside Whangarei harbour. Coastguard were going to take a while to mobilise and reach the couple. The Commercial Deputy Harbourmaster called port services who advised the pilot boat was in the area and a rescue was coordinated. The couple were wet and very cold but otherwise unharmed. Both were wearing lifejackets which saved their lives when the vessel rolled over suddenly and sank. After the rescue other vessels in the vicinity were advised to look out for the wreck, while the NRC maritime team were mobilised. The capsized vessel was recovered and towed back to a beach for the owners.

In another incident a pontoon had drifted loose from a property in Whangaroa and ended up on an inaccessible beach south of Taupo Bay. The pontoons were constructed of concrete surrounding polystyrene blocks, which when they break up can spread tiny plastic balls over a huge area. In an all hands-on-deck response NRC staff from multiple departments, a local contractor and a helicopter cleared up the larger debris just in time before the next storm hit the area.

Maintenance work on buoys and beacons continues between weather events. A major upgrade of the Tutukaka leads was undertaken, with new and much more visible lead lights and the beacons repainted. This will significantly improve nighttime entry to the harbour. The Bay of Islands wave buoy broke its mooring in one storm, but by luck snagged before reaching the rocks and was salvaged by the maritime team before any damage resulted. It's now onshore for its annual maintenance.

Civil Defence

Operational Update

The CDEM team continues to strengthen its engagement with stakeholder groups and communities through a variety of initiatives, including Marae Preparedness workshops and Community Response Group hui. These efforts are complimented by a focus on internal collaboration, highlighted by the team's participation in the NRC Community Resilience Mid-Year Hui in Ōpua and a strategic planning session with NRC's Organisational Development team to help refine long-term direction.

To build capability and capacity, team members have undertaken Function Manager and Response Manager training at the WDC. In support of professional development and team cohesion, the team also attended Part 1 of the *Dealing with Conflict* workshop facilitated by Winsborough. Collectively, these initiatives contribute to a broader strategy aimed at enhancing strategic alignment, strengthening relationships, and fostering a more cohesive and resilient working environment.

Section 17A Review

Initial engagement has commenced to procure the services of an external organisation to undertake a Section 17A Review of Civil Defence arrangements in Northland. A proposal has been received and is currently under evaluation.

Climate

Climate Resilient Communities Fund

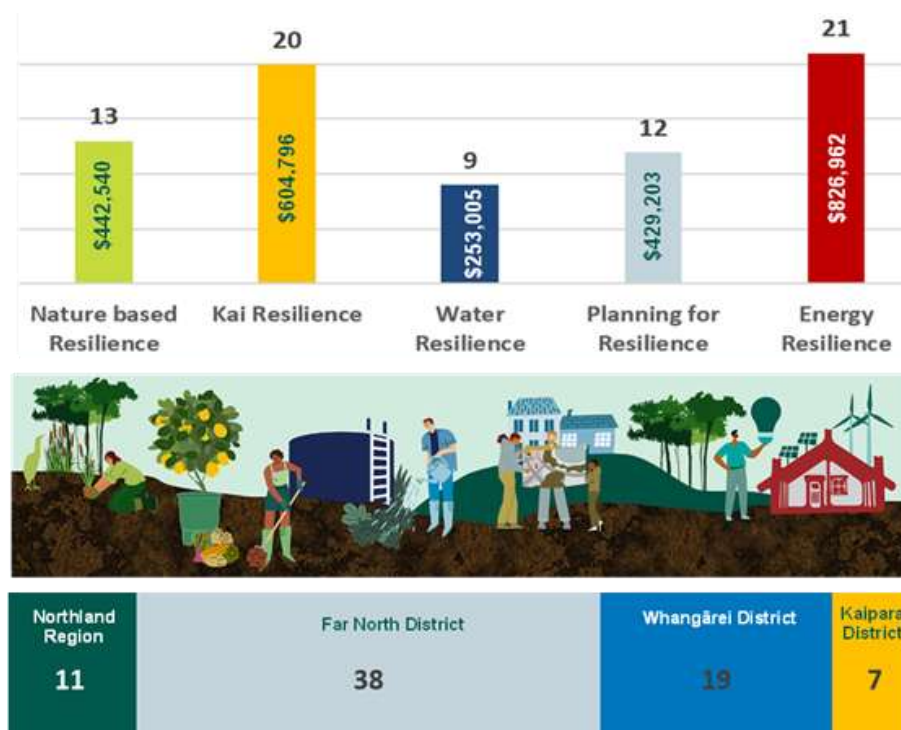
The 2025 Climate Resilient Communities Fund (CRCF) received a total of 75 applications, requesting \$2.8 million (incl. GST). This is a moderate decrease from the 2024 round, with 96 applications seeking \$3.2 million. The fund was open for applications from 28 April to 3 June 2025.

All applications are currently being reviewed by staff using a structured assessment process. Each proposal is scored against a rubric aligned with the CRCF criteria, accompanied with general comments and recommendations. We are now in the due diligence phase, engaging directly with shortlisted applicants to refine project deliverables and contract terms. Successful recipients are

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expected to be announced by the end of July 2025. A breakdown of applications received per impact area and district is below.



NRC Staff Induction on Climate action

To facilitate our delivery of Ngā Taumata o Te Moana (how we will deliver our strategy for tackling climate change) Climate Action is now included in the staff induction process. The session outlines NRC's roles and actions in climate action as laid out in our implementation plan.

Natural hazard information for LIMs

In line with the updates to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and associated regulations, from 17 October 2025 district councils must provide natural hazard information in Land Information Memorandum and regional councils must provide district councils with hazard information. This information must be provided "as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances". NRC best practice is to share hazard information with district councils as soon as it is published.

The associated regulations further clarify that where information is held by a regional council on its publicly accessible website, this meets the access requirements. NRC has a well-established and maintained hazard portal and online hazard maps, and is in a good position to comply with these new requirements. Staff are reviewing newly published guidance to ensure compliance.

For further reading, a good summary of the implementation requirements can be found on the Simpson Grierson website at: <https://www.simpsongrierson.com/insights-news/legal-updates/practical-suggestions-for-all-councils-preparing-natural-hazard-information-for-lims>

In June NRC hosted a regional hui of all councils in Northland to discuss compliance with the LGOMIA requirements associated with the new regulations and how NRC can support the district councils in meeting these new requirements. Staff have organised monthly regionwide catchups through the

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rest of 2025 to support the implementation of these new requirements and to allow district councils to share their learnings and implementation strategy.

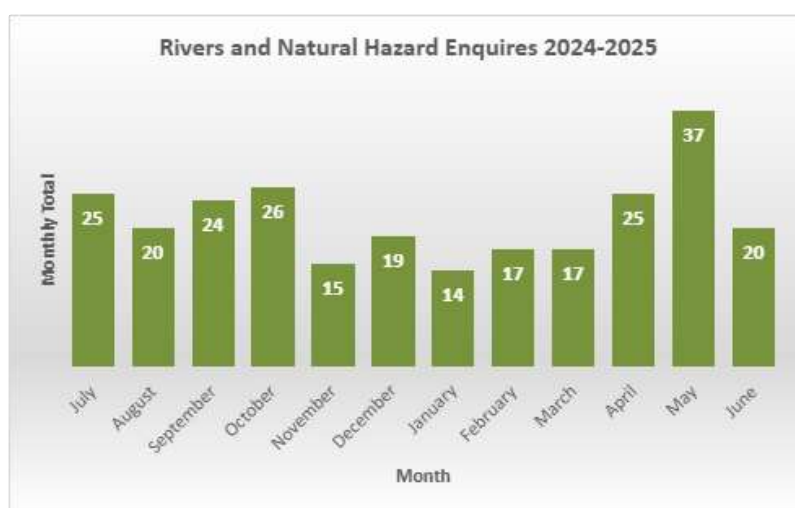
Dargaville Presentation

On Monday 23 June 2025 the Natural Hazards and Rivers Team presented on the draft of the new Wairoa Flood Hazard Maps and the bathymetric cross sections of the Wairoa River undertaken in support of the project.

The cross sections of the Wairoa River show that there was a significant amount of scour in the river after Cyclone Gabrielle and a small amount of sediment accumulation in the past two years in areas of low flow. This is expected behaviour for a sediment heavy river such as the Wairoa. The new flood maps were shared with attendees and the importance of ground truthing the results so that locals can be confident in the model outputs was discussed. NRC staff will work with KDC to draw up a plan to undertake ground truthing with the community.

Rivers and Natural Hazard Enquiries

The Rivers and Natural Hazards Teams received 20 enquiries for June. The majority of these were related to flood depth information, with several enquiries focused on coastal hazards.



Rivers

Kaeo Stage 2

Over the next month staff expect to receive the resource consent for this project and to have completed the purchase of the land blocks required for the project. Rock from a nearby subdivision is being procured which will be delivered once the land is purchased, saving the construction budget around \$60,000. Environmental civil additions are being added to the design and tender documents will be ready to go live on GETS once finalised.

Rivers & Hydrology staff have scoped a new river gauge site on the corner of Omaunu Rd and State Highway 10 to confirm a suitable location for the gauge and camera prior to construction start date.

Upper Kawakawa Catchment Nature Based Solution Project

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This project is complete and a story map has been created to show the outputs which includes the various options available for a nature based solution. The land management team will take ownership of the data from this project as it more closely aligns with their work. Staff are presenting a webinar on the project on Wednesday 9th July.

Otiria Swale Drain - Kingi Road Works

Contamination testing of the site is being undertaken to inform staff if the excavated material can remain onsite or if it will have to be removed. Savings can be made if the excavated material can remain on site. An application has been made for the resource consent and the community have confirmed that they are happy with the current plan.

Northland Flood Affected Marae – Mangamuka Marae

There has been steady progress with flood mitigation works through June despite the weather and ground conditions. Benching and rock revetment are 98% complete and the deflection bund 85% complete. Works are on track to wrap up main components around mid-July. The site will be put into over-wintering status and a crew will return to reinstate fencing in early spring. NRC staff are working closely with hapū to keep them informed of progress.



NFAM – Mangamuka Marae Rock Revetment

Quarry Road Bridge

A major milestone was reached on Thursday 26 June 2025, with a blessing held for the opening of the Quarry Road bridge extension. The road is now open under an active traffic management system much to the relief of the local community. Mana whenua representing Ōturū marae (Ngāti Kahu) generously provided karakia and unveiled the name 'Waiokiore' for the bridge. The name 'Waiokiore' holds historical significance, reflecting a time when the awa and surrounding whenua were abundant with Kiore, a river delicacy remembered by our tūpuna.

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Quarry Road Bridge (Waioikiore) - Blessing Ceremony



Quarry Road Bridge (Waioikiore) - Cross-section (before)



Quarry Road Bridge (Waioikiore) - Cross-section (after)

7.4.9 KAIPARA MOANA REMEDIATION

KMR wins another award

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Kaipara Moana Remediation was recently recognised at the 2025 Kaipara District Environmental Awards, winning the Environmental Action in the Community Award. This Award recognises individuals or groups who show leadership in collaborative work within the community to improve the environment.

KMR was particularly acknowledged for the scale and pace of our efforts to protect and restore the Kaipara harbour, both in the Kaipara District and across the wider catchment in Northland and Auckland. We would like to thank our co-nominators Phil Halse (Whangārei Deputy Mayor) and Jack Craw (Northland Regional Councillor) for their support.

This Award, the fourth award KMR has won in 3½ years of operations, now hangs proudly in our office space. KMR remains in the running for the prestigious international Earthshot Prize 2025, with an announcement about whether we have made it through to the global finals expected in late August or early September.

Winter 2025 Planting

As at 11 June 2025, almost halfway through the winter planting season, KMR has planted or contracted to plant a total of 686,333 stems (trees / plants) this winter, 623,279 of which are natives. A further 63,054 stems are awaiting contract.

KMR is therefore well on track to exceed our overall planting targets for winter 2025, as well as meet our pre-allocation commitments to KMR's accredited nurseries. As always, we expect there to be 'unders' and 'overs' in terms of individual nursery allocations. However, we are tracking roughly 6 weeks ahead of last winter in terms of contracted numbers, and remain confident that we can effectively manage any 'unders' at the end of the planting season. Currently, only three of our nurseries are 'under' their allocation with two of these expected to exceed their allocation if contracts in the pipeline are confirmed.

KMR Performance

As at 30 June 2025, 3½ years into operational delivery, KMR has delivered the following results on the ground:

Nature & Resilience

- 2.67 million plants in the ground or contracted to plant this winter
- 1,422 hectares planted or contracted, or regenerating into native forest
- Over 1,000 km of fencing completed or contracted – the same distance as from Cape Rēinga to Wellington!
- Over 144,000 hectares managed under KMR plans.

Jobs & Skills

- 390,000 hours of new work – a year's work for over 252 people
- >\$26 million invested in restoration projects
- 51 local businesses and nurseries accredited to supply KMR
- 217 people trained and mentored, many from local iwi/hapū, to advise on project design and delivery.

Participation

- 1,321 landowners/groups have expressed interest in KMR
- 862 plans completed with landowners/groups
- 132 more plans in development
- 93 projects led by hapū, marae, community groups, catchment groups and other collectives.

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Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Nil