

Maori Perspectives Of The Environment

A Review of Environment Waikato Iwi Environmental Management Plans

Technical Report No. 2

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to gather, summarise, analyse and distribute information held by Environment Waikato (EW) on Maori and the environment. To achieve this we evaluated and summarised the Ngaati Te Ata Iwi Policy Statement, Iwi Environmental Management Plans and iwi contributions made toward the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998) using a Maori values framework¹.

This report has been prepared to contribute towards developing a resource for Environment Waikato's Strategic Plan Review Teams. The report itself refers to values and beliefs sourced from iwi documents held by EW and are presented using a Maori values framework providing the reader with an introduction to the environmental perspectives of tangata whenua in the Waikato region.

The scope of this report is limited to iwi information held by EW; no further information was gathered from stakeholders internal or external to EW.

2 Maori Environmental Perspectives

The natural environment is an important component of Maori society. Maori maintain a continuing relationship with the land, environment, people and with related spiritual and cosmological entities. Land, mountains, valleys, rocks, water and sea ways are viewed as not only as resources, but more importantly, as the primary sources of collective identity. They are the essential roots that entwine the component parts of what it means to be Waikato, Tuwharetoa, Hauraki and the like. Such resources are vital taonga to be protected. The role of kaitiaki reflects the individual and collective role to safeguard nga taonga tuku iho² for present and future generations (Minhinnick, 1989; Crengle, 1993; James, 1993; Tomas, 1994).

¹ Refer to Appendix 1 for a brief synopsis of the Maori values identified during the review of iwi information.

² Translated literally as "those treasures that have been passed down."

2.1 Taonga

Taonga is a broad concept and include physical and meta-physical assets such as, te reo, intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge and use, social organisation and the arts (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.59; Raukawa Trust Board, 1998, p.6; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.2; Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 2003, p.17). Objects can become taonga through the formal attention paid to them by tikanga Maori, and may include any material or non-material object having cultural or spiritual significance for a given iwi or hapu (Te Puni Kokiri, 1993; Waitangi Tribunal, 1993).

Iwi firmly believe that they have an important role in the active management and protection of taonga (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.59; Raukawa Trust Board, 1998, p.6; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.2). Iwi such as Ngati Maniapoto stress that significant efforts are required to protect and nurture native species of flora and fauna that are still present in the Maniapoto region or all will be lost (Kowhai Consulting Ltd, 2002, p.12). Ngaati Te Ata has developed policy that ensures the protection, maintenance and enhancement of their tribal taonga (Awaroa ki Manuka, 1991, p.52).

2.2 Mauri

The management of taonga is based on a set of principles and values inherent in the Maori belief system. Mauri is the fundamental anchor stone of this belief system. It refers to the life principle instilled in all objects by the Atua. Mauri is also the life principle that gives being and form to all things in the universe (Barlow, 1991; Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1999, p.6).

A primary goal for Hauraki Whanui³ is to sustain and enhance the mauri of ecosystems, habitats, species and natural resources in the Hauraki rohe (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1999, p.6). The maintenance of mauri was also expressed in environmental management plans of other iwi. The restoration and enhancement of the mauri of the Manukau and the well being of its people requires holistic management that embraces environmental, spiritual, political, social, economic and cultural components (Huakina Development Trust,

³ Refers to all hapu and iwi within the Hauraki region

1993, p.118). For Huakina Development Trust, there is no ritual to stop man made contamination from desecrating the life giving essence of water. Therefore, the more specific kaitiaki obligation falls to the hapu of Waikato in the Manuka region (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.8). The depletion and/or the destruction of natural resources are unacceptable in normal resource management practices. Certain customary lore's and practices regulate activities concerning the conservation and the use of natural resources in order to protect the mauri inherent in all objects. Essentially these concepts govern the wise management of iwi resources (Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa and Waipa District Council, 1998, p.4).

2.3 Tikanga

Tikanga can be described as lore, custom, practice or commonsense thoughts that are based on the Maori belief system (Gray, 1990). The application of Tikanga is diverse and can vary depending upon when and where an event takes place (Harmsworth, Warmenhoven, Pohatu, and Page, 2002). For example, rituals pertaining to "fishing ground A" are specific to that location and may not necessarily apply to "fishing ground B." From a resource management perspective, Tikanga provides a framework for rules that govern harvesting, the care and respect for customary resources and the environment (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1999). Some key Maori values that are interwoven within the concept of tikanga are described below.

2.4 Ritenga

Ritenga are the inherent laws, rules, regulations, protocols, and obligations that include tapu, noa, and rahui. They determine responsibilities and relationships between people, and regulate the use of natural resources. Maori resource management endeavours to achieve a balance between people and the environment through the recognition of ritenga such as tapu, rahui and noa (Gray, M., 1990; Te Wai-Puanga-Aqua-Rigel, 1993; Harmsworth, G et al, 2002).

Tapu

Tapu for Maori signifies the sacred, dedicated, protected, or that which is not ordinary or everyday. Tapu is the state or condition of a person or objects, placed under the patronage of the Atua. It is directly related to the mauri of a person or object and recognises an appreciation of and a respect for another life force and other life in general (Jackson, 1987).

This view is consistent with the view of Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa with regard to tapu. Tapu is referred to by Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa as a protective measure, a social control, a means for developing an understanding and awareness of spirituality and of the divine origins of all things (Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa et al, 1998, p.4).

Waahi Tapu

When tapu is applied to places of significance to iwi, hapu, or whanau, they are deemed waahi tapu. The literal translation of waahi tapu is sacred place. Waahi tapu are areas that provide physical and metaphoric links to tribal ancestors. In some instances they signify ahi kaa⁴, and are sources of identity (Tau, Goodhall, Palmer, and Tau, 1990a; Manatu Maori, 1991; Tau, Goodhall, Palmer, and Tau, 1990b; Garven, Nepia, and Ashwell, 1997). Ahi kaa refers to the active participation and taking of responsibility for the care of heritage place, space, kinship relations and resources. Central to this concept is the notion of occupation. This can take the form of an individual or their relative(s) occupying a place (physical and metaphoric) within their hapu and iwi to maintain a representational presence on the part of their whanau, and in the case of border territories, their hapu and iwi.

There were various types of waahi tapu: some burial grounds, others places for ritual cleansing, or of healing, or were simply where passed incidents occurred. Some waahi tapu are places or landscapes considered tapu because of their magnitude, or symbolic representation of a hapu or iwi. Because of their diverse nature, only hapu or iwi can determine their particular waahi tapu, and acknowledge their existence or be considered

⁴ The right of occupation and use, literally "keeping the fires burning."

kaitiaki of them (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.9; Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa et al, 1998, p.5; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 2002, pp.26-28).

The majority of iwi environmental plans reviewed for the current study described the desecration of their waahi tapu, most having been desecrated as a result of historic development and use (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.57; Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.18; Kowhai Consulting Ltd, 2002, p.57; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 2002, p.26-28).

A consistent theme within the majority of iwi environmental plans is that iwi believe that their involvement in the management and protection of waahi tapu in their respective rohe is essential (Awaroa ki Manuka, 1991, p.53; Maniapoto Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.9; Kowhai Consulting Ltd, 2002, p.25). A specific management role identified by iwi included efficient and effective resource consent consultation processes with local authorities (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.57; Tainui Maori Trust Board, 1997, p.3; Kowhai Consulting Ltd, 2002, p.25-28). Another role included assisting resource use owners to identify and protect waahi tapu within forests and on farmland. Working closely with the Department of Conservation to ensure that the conservation estate is appropriately managed is also an important role for iwi and hapu (Kowhai Consulting Ltd, 2002, p.20). Some iwi envisage that an inventory of waahi tapu be developed by iwi. With permission, Environment Waikato might then hold a confidential 'early warning' plan that shows the general areas of significance to iwi (Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa et al, 1998, p.5; Raukawa Trust Board, 1998, p.70). In this way, Environment Waikato may be alerted to the presence of waahi tapu and proceed with due diligence.

Rahui

Rahui is a tool used by kaitiaki to manage natural resources. Rahui were declared by kaitiaki to restrict access to and use of natural resources, for various reasons. Rahui is a form of temporary restriction relating to the condition of a resource and the nature of the tapu in or around a specific area. Indeed, rahui are not unlike prohibitions on the taking of shellfish, the fishing for trout or other species, or on swimming in contaminated or toxic water ways.

Three main functions underly rahui. First, to conserve or replenish a resource; second to prohibit non-sustainable practices exploiting the environment and its resources; and third on a place where an accidental death had occurred. Rahui were instituted for whatever period was deemed necessary (Marsden, 1989). Rahui can only have effect where tangata whenua have the ability to enforce compliance (Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa et al, 1998, p.4).

Noa

Noa is the opposite of tapu. The term reflects the status of people, places or objects free from the restrictions of tapu. Noa is that which is ordinary, everyday, and safe to be in contact with. Indeed, noa is a much more healthier condition than tapu. With regard to resource growth (for example, kumara, kereru) reached a sustainable level for harvesting, restrictions on the access and use of natural resources such as rahui were relaxed and replaced with noa (Shirres, 1994; Harmsworth, G et al, 2002). Tapu and noa are complementary; one cannot exist without the other.

2.5 Kaitiakitanga

Kaitiaki and the recently introduced term kaitiakitanga refer to the responsibility that certain entities, not exclusively people, have to protect and guard the mauri of particular people, groups, objects, resources, traditions, practices and places. A practical philosophy, the kaitiaki role is a process that is locally defined and owned. The kaitiaki role is not a process of ownership but an individual and collective role to safeguard nga taonga tuku iho⁵ for the present and future generations (Minhinnick, N, 1989; Awaroa ki Manuka, 1991, p.11; Crengle, D, 1993; James, B, 1993; Tomas, 1994; Ngaati Te Ata, 1997, p.11).

Only persons sanctioned by iwi through whakapapa, through ahi kaa, inherited responsibility, or through election and instruction by kaumatua can be regarded as kaitiaki (Awaroa ki Manuka, 1991). Everybody has a limited kaitiaki function – a responsibility to protect the environment. However, tangata whenua and certain individuals within whanau and hapu are mandated to fulfil the role as specific to particular places, resources, and the like.

⁵ Translated literally as “those treasures that have been passed down.”

Iwi and hapu of the Hauraki area, regard themselves as kaitiaki of customary resources and the inventors of traditional knowledge and practice within their respective tribal rohe (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1998). Iwi and hapu of Hauraki acknowledge their responsibility as kaitiaki of the Hauraki region. Protection of the harvesting of natural resources for tribal communities is conducted according to Hauraki tikanga. (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 2003, p.5). Similarly, Tuwharetoa asserts kaitiakitanga over Taupo-nui-a-Tia. The exercise of kaitiakitanga is central to the Tuwharetoa philosophy of sustainable management. Tuwharetoa's duty is to ensure that the mauri of natural resources are maintained, protected and enhanced (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 2002, p.10). Likewise, the descendants of the Manuka exercise kaitiakitanga of the harbour. These people have an intimate knowledge of the harbour and its ecosystems, thus they are the people who rely on its resources for sustenance not just for the whanau and hapu of the Manukau, but for Waikato whanui (Huakina Development Trust, 1993, p.8).

Iwi believe that they have an important role to play in the resource management decision-making process with local government. Waikato-Tainui consider it important to be involved in resource management issues, decision-making and the monitoring of natural and physical resources within their tribal rohe (Tainui Maori Trust Board, 1997,p.2). Tuwharetoa are responsible to undertake their duties of kaitiakitanga over their lands, lakes, resources and taonga. The Kaitiaki principle applies in respect of all Tuwharetoa taonga whether in the ownership of Ngati Tuwharetoa or not (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.2). The objectives of Ngati Te Ata kaitiaki are to restore the mana of the iwi, plan long-term usage of taonga, protect sensitive features of the environment and plan for the provisions of kai (including kaimoana) for future generations (Awaroa ki Manuka, 1991, p.11).

2.6 Rangatiratanga

Rangatira are the living faces that manifest the mana, tapu, the autonomy and self-determination of a whanau, hapu or iwi. Rangatiratanga is often referred to as leadership yet 'leadership' does not quite capture the real essence of the concept. Rangatiratanga carries with it a large dose of authority, respect and the will of a people. Rangatira and

rangatiratanga provide a pivot point for a people to protect themselves, their customary practices and taonga, and to ensure that future generations inherit a better world.

Rangatiratanga facilitates and enhances a peoples cultural and spiritual relationship with the natural environment (Ngaati Te Ata, 1997, p.10; Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.5; Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa et al, 1998, p.1; Raukawa Trust Board, 1998, p.7-9). Rangatiratanga influences iwi decisions with regard to contemporary management of natural and physical resources. As tangata whenua of the Raukawa rohe, Raukawa has an obligation to work with all people to ensure that goodwill and positive development takes place for the betterment of tangata whenua. (Raukawa Trust Board, 1998, p.7-9) Rangatiratanga is expressed in decisions, which reflect Ngaati Te Ata iwi's priorities and values, and is given practical effect in the application of customary regulatory practices and controls (Ngaati Te Ata, 1997, p.10).

Some iwi believe that a lack of recognition of Rangatiratanga by Environment Waikato has dire consequences for the environment. Hauraki Whanui state that non-participation in decision-making processes relevant to the management of Hauraki natural and physical resources has limited their capacity to exercise Rangatiratanga. As a result Hauraki Whanui has concerns for the Hauraki natural environment and the future generations of iwi in Hauraki (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1998, p.5).

3 Discussion

In this report, we have developed a Maori values framework to organise and assess that information provided to Environment Waikato by iwi via:

- Iwi Policy Statements
- Iwi Environmental Management Plans
- Iwi Contributions to the Proposed Waikato Regional Draft Plan
- Iwi information documents

From the documents examined, it is clear that iwi, in their attempts to influence local government activity, have asserted and acted in a patterned and predictable manner clearly premised on a Maori value base that is known, consistent and continuous.

We have suggested the parameters of a Maori values framework based on those values apparent in information provided by iwi. This is outlined in Appendix 1. It is our intention to further develop this framework through our analysis of iwi submissions on consents, and on policies. The predictability and explanatory nature of such a framework for Environment Waikato is its greatest asset.

In our examination of information provided by iwi, we noted a number of issues worth documenting.

In many cases Maori information held by Environment Waikato is old and in most cases were relevant 5 – 10 years ago. We could not determine the extent to which iwi environmental issues and concerns had, or had not been addressed.

There is no central storage or management facility for iwi information⁶. Storage of iwi information is currently fragmented and difficult to access outside of PowerDocs. Iwi information is not stored according to EW internal guidelines and can be found in diverse locations throughout EW. This leads to an inadequate use of information and can cause

⁶ Refer to Technical Report no. 1

problems when determining the extent to which Tangata Whenua participate in EW processes. It is pertinent that EW recognise the importance of gathering, developing or modifying storage systems that are able to “tag” iwi specific information.

Iwi Contributions reviewed often mentioned that limited resourcing and time constraints had impacted on their ability to conduct consultation throughout their tribal territory. Furthermore, limited resourcing was highlighted as a factor for the presentation of limited information relevant to current iwi environmental issues. Working with iwi and hapu to produce iwi contributions and Iwi Environmental Management Plans might also minimise various barriers to producing documentation of Maori environmental perspectives. EW seems to have established a “need to know” relationship with iwi. Therefore, developing relationships where information is shared with iwi rather than taken would prove beneficial to both parties.

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Appendix 1 : Maori Values Framework

Maori Values Framework

Traditional Maori beliefs, custom, and values are derived from a mixture of cosmogony, cosmology, mythology, and anthropology. Maori values are instruments through which Maori make sense, experience and interpret the modern world. These values are based on a mixture of the traditional and contemporary, and form the basis for explaining a Maori world-view.

Some important Maori values relevant to environmental resource management include:

- **Rangatiratanga:** Rangatiratanga is often referred to as leadership yet ‘leadership’ does not quite capture the real essence of the concept. Rangatiratanga carries with it a large dose of authority, respect and the will of a people. Rangatira and rangatiratanga provide a pivot point for a people to protect themselves, their customary practices and taonga, and to ensure that future generations inherit a better world.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Kaitiaki and the recently introduced term kaitiakitanga refer to the responsibility that certain entities, not exclusively people, have to protect and guard the mauri of particular people, groups, objects, resources, traditions, practices and places. A practical philosophy, the kaitiaki role is a process that is locally defined and owned. The kaitiaki role is not a process of ownership but an individual and collective role to safeguard nga taonga tuku iho (those treasures that have been passed down) for the present and future generations.
- **Tikanga:** Tikanga can be described as lore, custom, practice and commonsense thoughts that are based on the Maori belief system. Tikanga is taught and learnt within an appropriate context. In other words, rituals pertaining to “fishing ground A” may not necessarily apply to “fishing ground B.” From a resource management perspective, Tikanga provides a framework for rules that govern harvesting, the care and respect for customary resources and the environment.
- **Ritenga:** Ritenga are the inherent laws, rules, regulations, protocols, and obligations that include tapu, noa, and rahui. They determine responsibilities and relationships between people, and regulate the use of natural resources. Maori resource management endeavours to achieve a balance between people and the environment through the recognition of ritenga such as tapu, rahui and noa.
- **Mauri:** The management of taonga is based on a set of principles and values inherent in the Maori belief system. Mauri is the fundamental anchor stone of this belief system. It

refers to the life principle instilled in all objects by the Atua. Mauri is also the life principle that gives being and form to all things in the universe.

- **Taonga:** Taonga is a broad concept and include physical and meta-physical assets such as, te reo, intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge and use, social organisation and the arts. Objects can become taonga through the formal attention paid to them by tikanga Maori, and may include any material or non-material object having cultural or spiritual significance for a given iwi or hapu.
- **Tapu:** Tapu for Maori signifies the sacred, dedicated, protected, or that which is not ordinary or everyday. Tapu is the state or condition of a person or objects, placed under the patronage of the Atua. It is directly related to the mauri of a person or object and recognises an appreciation of and a respect for another life force and other life in general.
- **Rahui:** Rahui is a tool used by kaitiaki to manage natural resources. Rahui were declared by kaitiaki to restrict access to and use of natural resources, for various reasons. Rahui is a form of temporary restriction relating to the condition of a resource and the nature of the tapu in or around a specific area. Indeed, rahui are not unlike prohibitions on the taking of shellfish, the fishing for trout or other species, or swimming in contaminated or toxic water ways.
- **Waahi Tapu:** When tapu is applied to places of significance to iwi, hapu, or whanau, they are deemed waahi tapu. The literal translation of waahi tapu is sacred place. Waahi tapu are areas that provide physical and metaphoric links to tribal ancestors. In some instances they signify ahi kaa, and are sources of identity.
- **Noa:** Noa is the opposite of tapu. The term reflects the status of people, places or objects free from the restrictions of tapu. Noa is that which is ordinary, everyday, and safe to be in contact with. Indeed, noa is a much more healthier condition than tapu. With regard to resource growth (for example, kumara, kereru) reached a sustainable level for harvesting, restrictions on the access and use of natural resources such as rahui were relaxed and replaced with noa. Tapu and noa are complementary; one cannot exist without the other.