

# Maori Perspectives Of The Environment

## A Review of Policy Submissions Made by Iwi to Environment Waikato

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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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# 1 Introduction

Environment Waikato maintains a number of policies and strategic plans that prioritise activities, the use of resources, and highlight issues to be addressed. Examples are the Waikato Regional Plan, the Waikato Coastal Plan and the Regional Policy Statement. From time to time, these policies and plans are reviewed and the public are invited to submit their views on how the policy or plan might be improved.

Anybody, person or party, may make a submission on the Regional Plan. A submission can only be made on the Regional Plan when it is advertised in the public notices section of the local newspaper, or by formal notification from Environment Waikato (EW). In recognition of Maori status as tangata whenua Environment Waikato often notifies various iwi, hapu and whanau groups of the Regional Plan and invites them to make submissions. Iwi policy submissions are written statements about a particular area(s) of the Waikato Regional Plan. It may either be in support of the plan, in opposition, or may just be an expression of iwi environmental perspectives (neutral submission). Submissions allow iwi, hapu and whanau to participate in environmental management and to make comment about issues that might have an impact on their relationship with the environment.

Iwi policy submissions further provide EW with information relevant to iwi environmental issues, concerns, and aspirations. Iwi, hapu or whanau that make submissions to the Waikato Regional Plan typically describe their relationship to the natural and physical resources that are situated in the tribal rohe. This information allows EW to gain a clear understanding of tangata whenua relationships with their natural and physical environment. Iwi submissions also signal a responsibility as kaitiaki.

When a submission is received by Environment Waikato, the submission is recorded in the Submissions Tracking System (alternatively named the Policy Submission Tracking database). This database allows EW staff to track the source of submissions such as individuals, community groups, iwi groups, corporate entities, and local government. Through the Submissions Tracking System it is also possible to sort submission data according to themes like air and water quality. The database is new to EW and has only

been released throughout the organisation recently. Therefore, the extent to which the information contained in the database will be used by staff is yet unknown.

## 1.1 Project Scope

As part of our broader brief to gather, summarise, analyse and distribute information held by Environment Waikato on Maori and the environment, we evaluated and summarised those iwi policy submissions made toward the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998). This report has been prepared as a resource for Environment Waikato's Strategic Plan Review Teams. The report itself refers to values and beliefs sourced from iwi submissions held by EW and are presented within a Maori values framework<sup>1</sup> to highlight environmental perspectives' of tangata whenua in the Waikato region.

The scope of the review is limited to iwi information held by Environment Waikato; no further information was gathered from stakeholders internally or externally of the organisation. The extent to which iwi environmental issues and concerns outlined in the iwi submissions have been attended to was not in our project brief.

## 1.2 Method

The Proposed Waikato Regional Plan 1998 was selected as the primary policy to review and analyse as it contained the most submissions by iwi groups. The Submissions Tracking System does not record the submitter's ethnic background. This causes problems when attempting to identify individual Maori submissions. In light of this, only policy submissions received from iwi groups have been used for the purpose of this report. A total of 712 matters or submissions from 17 iwi submitter groups<sup>2</sup> were made on the Waikato Regional Plan. Of the total sample of 712 submissions, 312 were in support of various policies, while 85 were neutral and 315 were in opposition. The sample data was exported from the Submissions Tracking System into Microsoft Access. A relational database was established to enable the research team to begin evaluating and summarising the information according to a Maori values framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 1 for brief definitions of Maori Values referred to in this report.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of iwi submitters.

## 2 Maori Environmental Perspectives

Below, we present our analysis of information obtained from the iwi policy submissions on the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998).

### 2.1 Taonga

Iwi made clear submissions about their active role in managing and protecting their taonga and were consistent in their desire to restore and enhance the mauri of taonga. Taonga included streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, geothermal resources, freshwater fisheries, land and native species of flora and fauna (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Ngati Maru Iwi Authority, WRP98-109; Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee, WRP98-110; Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71).

Iwi expressed dissatisfaction and frustration at Environment Waikato's failure to recognise the special relationship that iwi have with their taonga. As a result, iwi believe that Environment Waikato's lack of recognition limits their own ability to manage and protect tribal taonga (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Tainui Maori Trust Board, WRP98-154; Thompson, WRP98-169; Hauraki Maori Trust Board, WRP98-60; Ngati Maru Iwi Authority, WRP98-109; Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee, WRP98-110; Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu, WRP98-108; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-108).

Further assertions by various iwi regarding their role in the active protection and management of tribal taonga regarded intellectual property rights. In their view, research and information that related to taonga of particular iwi are the property of that iwi. These iwi groups were also of the view that research and information that focused on taonga within the tribal rohe should be provided to the iwi at no cost and that access by others should be approved by the iwi concerned (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111; Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu, WRP98-108; Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71).

## **2.2 Mauri**

The protection and restoration of the mauri of water is an important part of Maori resource management. Iwi believe that the mauri of water must be protected from negative impacts including pollution and waste (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Tainui Maori Trust Board, WRP98-154). To achieve this goal, iwi support resource management outcomes that avoid any adverse effects on the mauri of water. A path to achieving the mauri restoration and protection goal is to develop resource management processes alongside developers. In this way, developers can be assisted to better understand issues relating to the mauri of water and be more inclusive of iwi in resource management decision-making processes (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182).

## **2.3 Tikanga**

Iwi submitters made clear their desire for Environment Waikato to recognise and acknowledge tikanga of iwi and hapu as an integral and substantial factor in the management of natural resources. These submitters emphasised that it is essential for the management of natural resources to be undertaken by kaitiaki and that this management needs to be consistent with the tikanga and kawa of the tribal rohe (Ngati Karauia Hapu, WRP98-108; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111). Accordingly, iwi submitters were also clear about the need for EW to redraft the Waikato Regional Plan (1998) in a manner that recognises tikanga of tangata whenua (iwi and hapu) as an integral and substantial factor in the management of each natural, physical and historical resource.

## **2.4 Waahi Tapu**

Within their submissions, iwi stated that failure to recognise the significance of waahi tapu could have adverse effects on the relationship iwi, hapu and whanau have with their tribal environment. Submitters requested that increased respect for Maori values and maintenance of traditional rights of access and use of waahi tapu, would minimise if not eliminate the impacts to waahi tapu and archaeological sites which are of concern to tangata whenua. Further requests by submitters included, the general public notifying EW and tangata whenua of any discovered or disturbed waahi tapu (Hauraki Maori Trust

Board, WRP98-60; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Raukawa Trust Board, WRP98-131; Tainui Maori Trust Board, WRP98-154).

Iwi submitters also asserted that consultation must be undertaken with tangata whenua to enable EW to better determine whether an activity will have a significant impact on waahi tapu (Hauraki Maori Trust Board, WRP98-60; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182; Raukawa Trust Board, WRP98-131; Tainui Maori Trust Board, WRP98-154; Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu, WRP98-108; Lake Taupo Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111). Tainui Maori Trust Board (WRP98-182) suggested that EW provide an assessment of the extent to which an activity will effect tangata whenua values, waahi tapu and other sites that are of significance.

A number of iwi submitters were in support of tangata whenua developing a register for all waahi tapu (archaeological sites inclusive) (Thompson, WRP98-169; Ngati Karauia Hapu, WRP98-108; Lake Taupo Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111; Raukawa Trust Board, WRP98-131; Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee, WRP98-110). Despite cost concerns, submitters thought that the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive register that was accessible by iwi, hapu and EW would serve to minimise iwi concerns about the impacts upon waahi tapu. In contrast, Tainui Maori Trust Board (WRP98-154) made numerous submissions opposing the establishment of a waahi tapu register. This stance was based on Tainui's belief that waahi tapu sites should not be incorporated into a database for the convenience of developers.

Tainui Trust Board (WRP98-154) also stated that the establishment of a waahi tapu register would decrease tangata whenua participation in EW's decision-making processes. They suggested that information relevant to waahi tapu and other sites of cultural, physical and spiritual significance only be available on a case by case basis. According to Tainui Maori Trust Board (WRP98-154), the difficulty in establishing a waahi tapu register is that some of this knowledge should not be available to the general public.

## **2.5 Kaitiakitanga**

Iwi submitters clearly stipulate that kaitiaki and the obligation of kaitiakitanga resides with tangata whenua of the rohe and recommend that Environment Waikato take appropriate steps to formalise tangata whenua recognition. This would be beneficial and assist kaitiaki with the development and management of their natural resources. Recognition of the obligation of kaitiakitanga would also encourage the establishment of a partnership between EW and kaitiaki, while also promoting the inclusion of iwi and hapu in EW decision-making processes. Various iwi also requested that EW re-define their management procedures and processes to ensure that the tangata whenua duty of kaitiakitanga is acknowledged in decision-making processes that involve the management of taonga that is of significance to Maori (Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu, WRP98-108; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111; Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee, WRP98-110; Rereahu Regional Committee, WRP98-211).

Related to tangata whenua recognition, is the more specific recognition of hapu as kaitiaki and their rightful participation in decision-making processes. Submissions by hapu stress that Environment Waikato consult directly with the appropriate hapu concerned. Submissions by Ngati Karauia Hapu (WRP98-108), Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee (WRP98-110) and Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee (WRP98-111) requested that Environment Waikato continue to maintain and establish working relationships with relevant hapu and iwi representatives. Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee (WRP98-111) and Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee (WRP98-110) stipulate that they have their own defined rohe or area of interest over which they assert kaitiakitanga. Similarly, iwi groups such as Te Ahurei – Te Ahika (WRP98-163), Te Marae o Kirikiriroa (WRP98-164) and Te Runanga o Kirikiriroa (WRP98-165) asserted their role as kaitiaki for Nga Miro hapu and urban Maori of Hamilton.

## **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.

Degradation of water quality, depletion of flows and other disruption to water bodies has the potential to adversely affect the relationship tangata whenua have with water and the aquatic environment. Any impact on the mauri of water has direct negative impacts on the mana of the kaitiaki of the region. The Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board (WRP98-182) assert that Tuwharetoa are kaitiaki, and hold rangatiratanga over the waters that cover their lands. Therefore, contaminants of both physical and spiritual attributes will in turn affect the relationship that Tuwharetoa have with their taonga (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182).

A number of iwi made submissions stating that the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998) should recognise and provide for kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga in all sections. (Lake Taupo Forest Trust, WRP98-71; Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu, WRP98-108; Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee, WRP98-111; Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board, WRP98-182).

### **3 Discussion**

Submissions made by 14 iwi groups and 3 individuals were reviewed and found to reflect consistent Maori aspirations, values, knowledge and concerns in regard to environmental issues. The majority of the submissions reviewed, made no reference to the relevant Maori values, however, they did make direct reference to their concerns regarding specific policies within the plan. Iwi submitters also expressed numerous concerns regarding inconsistencies with the Resource Management Act (1991) and Environment Waikato's inability to consult or lack of consultation with various iwi groups.

The Local Government Act (2002) promotes increased participation of Maori in Local Government decision-making processes. In complying with this Act, EW has processes and procedures in place that encourage consultation with Maori communities of the

Waikato region. As part of such consultative processes, iwi from within the Waikato region were invited to provide input toward EW's Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998). Whilst many iwi and hapu accepted this opportunity they were clear that time constraints and lack of resourcing had caused limitations on their ability to provide sufficient feedback.

The major issues apparent in our review of submissions made by iwi to Environment Waikato on the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan (1998) are:

- Iwi continue to maintain a relationship and sense of rangatiratanga over those environmental resources – taonga – that relate to their iwi. Failure on the part of Environment Waikato to recognise these relationships has resulted in frustration and an emergent view that Environment Waikato has acted to limit the capacity of iwi to exercise their role as kaitiaki.
- Intellectual and cultural property rights are an issue. While most submitters are of the view that a waahi tapu register is a positive move, one particular iwi argued that such a register would serve to decrease tangata whenua participation in decision-making and consultation processes. The use of information for purposes other than that initially agreed to, that is, the registration of waahi tapu without the consent of the appropriate iwi and kaitiaki is problematic. If a waahi tapu register were to be established, these issues will need to be resolved.
- EW needed to acknowledge in their policies and processes, the tikanga and kawa pertaining to an iwi rohe; iwi and hapu as kaitiaki, and the need for appropriate and timely consultation. The establishment of partnerships between EW and iwi and hapu was advocated time and again.
- All matters covered in the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan were sent to be of significance to tangata whenua. However, EW persists in separating tangata whenua environmental perspectives from other environmental issues, rather than integrate this information within the plan.

- Participation costs money. Engaging in EW processes (e.g., policy submissions, consultation, partnerships) requires time and incurs expense. Moreover, it would appear that EW dominates and controls the process of participation to the detriment of necessary internal iwi and hapu consultation processes. Working with iwi and hapu to produce Iwi Contributions/Submissions and Iwi Environmental Management Plans might minimise various barriers to producing documentation of Maori environmental perspectives.

Submitters did not always provide a rationale for their dislike of particular policy. For example submitters often noted the relevant policy number and went on to write, “retain”, “oppose” or “delete”. We would suggest that further research investigate the process iwi encounter when making submissions to EW and gather information relevant to iwi perceptions of the use, relevance and effectiveness of their submissions.

Numerous iwi also made reference to the Resource Management Act (RMA) in their submissions. Iwi also felt that the policy content of section 2 of the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan, which relates to matters of significance to Maori was developed against a backdrop of limited resources and timeframes. Iwi signalled their intention to work with EW to promote awareness of the RMA and to progress Iwi Environmental Management Plans and agree that this is necessary. Various iwi also commented on their dissatisfaction with EW’s consultation processes, stating that they required EW to engage in regular, active and meaningful consultation with iwi and hapu. Furthermore, iwi stated that EW had made no clear acknowledgement of their commitment to the provisions of that RMA, as it is relevant to tangata whenua. Therefore, all iwi submissions requested that EW demonstrate how it has met the provisions of the RMA in regards to tangata whenua environmental knowledge, issues and concerns.

Our findings suggest that, while EW have systems in place to attend to the needs of Non-Maori constituents, a greater understanding of the needs of tangata whenua constituents is required.

# Reference List

Environment Waikato. (1998). Proposed Waikato Regional Plan. Hamilton, Environment Waikato.

# **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.

# **Appendix 2 : Iwi Policy Submitters List**

## **Proposed Waikato Regional Plan 1998**

<b>Submitter Id</b>	<b>Submitter Name</b>	<b>Number of Matters</b>
WRP98-60	Hauraki Maori Trust Board	15
WRP98-66	H Karaitiana	1
WRP98-71	Lake Taupo Forest Trust	16
WRP98-108	Ngati Karauia Hapu, Tokaanu	43
WRP98-109	Ngati Maru Iwi Authority	37
WRP98-110	Ngati Rauhoto Land Rights Committee	50
WRP98-111	Ngati Turangitukua Environment Committee	30
WRP98-131	Raukawa Trust Board	13
WRP98-143	Mr Samuels	9
WRP98-154	Tainui Maori Trust Board	350
WRP98-155	Tainui-a-Whiro Ngunguru Te Ao Ngunguru	7
WRP98-163	Te Ahurei – Te Ahika	6
WRP98-164	Te Marae o Kirikiriroa	6
WRP98-165	Te Runanga o Kirikiriroa	6
WRP98-169	Mr RR Thompson	6
WRP98-182	Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board	96
WRP98-211	Rereahu Regional Management Committee	24