



Ūawa Catchment Working Group

Meeting notes and actions

Hui 5 – 15 October 2024

Held at Tolaga Bay Fire Station at 09:30 AM

Chair	Pat Seymour
Working Group members present	Kel Blackman, Richard Powell, Andre Van Haandel, Phil Hope, Mere Tamanui, Victor Walker, Shaun Mitchel, Tim Jefferd, Desmond McGrannachan, Horiata Raihania
GDC Staff and consultants	Janic Slupski, Ariel Yann le Chew Lois Easton
Apologies	Karauria Ratapu, Tiahn Hooper

Agenda

1. Karakia and housekeeping	9:30AM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies, housekeeping • Previous minutes and actions • Update: Wellbeing survey approach (Tolaga Bay, Tokomaru Bay) 	
2. BAS/TAS, Outstanding and Scheduled Waterbodies, Action Plans	9:50AM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring sites • Current state and trends – Baseline Attribute States (BAS) • Target Attribute States, timeframes • Outstanding and Scheduled Waterbodies • Action Plans 	
3. Wrap up	11:50AM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of session • Next steps • Thoughts, questions 	
Lunch	12:00PM

Supporting documentation

- Draft Hui 4 Official minutes
- Briefing paper: State of Environment, Baseline and Target Attribute States
- Briefing paper: Outstanding and Scheduled Waterbodies
- Briefing paper: Action Planning

Minutes

Welcome and housekeeping

1. The hui commenced with a karakia at 9:40 AM. The Chair welcomed the Group and noted apologies.

2. The Chair led the discussion on the draft Hui 4 minutes. The minutes were taken as read, and the Group did not have any amendments to be made to the minutes.
3. The Group discussed various items in the draft Hui 4 minutes:
 - 3.1. **Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) approach** – A member wanted to ensure that the values of the subcatchments are recognised within the 2-FMU approach (i.e. Ūawa-Hikuwai FMU and Mangahauini FMU) for this catchment.
 - 3.2. **Item 26.2 on the role of Transition Advisory Group (TAG)** – A member sought clarification on the role of TAG. The Chair noted that item 30 explained the purpose and role of TAG. Staff added that a briefing paper outlining the role and any progress update on TAG will be provided to the Group at the next hui.
 - 3.3. **Item 13.1 on the definition of tangata whenua and mana whenua** – Members discussed what would the best term be so as to ensure that non-Māori residents (born and raised) in the Ūawa catchment area are included in the catchment plan. The Group collectively agreed it is important that everyone in the catchment should be included.
 - 3.4. Subsequent to the hui over lunch, the term “kaitiaki whenua” was proposed as the term for landowners in the catchment.
4. Staff will process the notes in the appendices of the draft Hui 4 minutes, and provide an updated briefing paper on **Long Term Vision, Values and Environmental Outcomes** at the 11 December hui.
5. Staff updated the Group that the Four-Wellbeing survey for the Ūawa catchment to inform the economic model was now live. The survey closes on 7 November 2024. In-person survey will be carried out in Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay.
 - 5.1. Staff later shared the survey link with the Group when the Group wrapped up for lunch.

Session: Freshwater

Water Quality Attributes: Setting Target Attribute States and Timeframes

6. Staff recapped the Baseline Attribute State (BAS) and Target Attribute State (TAS) that was previously covered in Hui 4.
7. Staff noted a correction on the definition of Reference State. At Hui 4, Reference State was defined as the modelled data showing the state of water quality pre-land clearance.
 - 7.1. Following conversations with Council Science team, Reference State is defined as the modelled data showing the state of water quality if the land use is 100% native vegetation.
8. Staff proposed the following approach to setting targets for the identified attributes:
 - 8.1. Focus on halting degradation and maintaining water quality where it is not degrading.
 - 8.2. **Medium term targets (5 – 10 years)** – see some improvement in attributes that are degrading.
 - 8.3. **Long term targets (15 – 30 years)** – see significant improvements in water quality.
9. Key discussion points from the Group are captured as follows:
 - 9.1. For medium term, 5 years is about right, but 10 years is too long.

- 9.2. **Questioned if Council has information on the state of the environment dating back to the 70s** – Staff responded that Council do not hold state of the environment information dating back to the 70s.
- 9.3. **Questioned if other Council teams will support the targets and aspirations set through this catchment planning process.** Staff responded that all Council teams and Crown agencies must comply with the rules set in the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP).
- 9.4. **Aligning long term target with the duration of the Long Term Vision** – the Group are collectively keen for a 100-year Vision.
- 9.5. Questioned how to ensure actions highlighted through this catchment planning process remain Council priority when seeking funding through the Long-Term Plan (LTP). The LTP is a key Council document that outlines how Council budget is allocated within Council. Staff noted that the Group has the opportunity to identify actions and the corresponding budget required for input into the next LTP cycle.
- 9.6. Suggestion to, with this forum, establish a direct communication channel with central government to avoid the uncertainty that comes with changing government.
- 9.7. **Suggestion to add more Council monitoring sites to the catchment, noting there is none in the Mangahauini FMU** – Staff responded the possibility of adding community monitoring sites, which enables communities to partner with Council on data collection. As a first step, staff suggested to identify potential community monitoring sites, such as contact recreation and mahinga kai sites.

Action plans

10. Staff explained that once the approach and targets are set, there are 3 main sets of tools to achieve the targets:
 - 10.1. **Region-wide rules** in the Regional Freshwater Plan.
 - 10.2. **Catchment-specific rules**, which could be extra rules, or more stringent rules for specific matters.
 - 10.3. **Action Plans**, which was introduced in National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) 2017 to outline improvement pathways for attributes found in declining or degrading state.
11. Staff commented that action plans can include both regulatory and non-regulatory actions, but we must be able to demonstrate that the proposed actions are likely to achieve the water quality targets.
12. Staff provided an example of the non-regulatory projects implemented in the Waipaoa Catchment in 2015. Not all 10 projects were progressed, though some have made more progress than others. The most successful project was the Rere Falls and Rockslide water quality improvement project, which focused on improving e. coli levels for contact recreation (i.e. swimming).
13. The Group briefly discussed the proposed actions in Appendix 1 of the briefing paper **Action Planning**.
14. Key discussion points from the Group are captured as follows:

- 14.1. **Activity 1 “Stock exclusion from riverbanks”** – Suggestion to replace the word “riverbanks” with “waterways and river systems”. The member explained that farmers had allowed their stock to cross river systems following the weather events.
 - 14.2. **Activity 4 “Native planted riparian environment or native/willow combination” and Activity 21 “Retirement of unproductive farm land to natives”** – Member sought clarification on the benefits and negatives of natives-only approach. Staff responded that a native/willow combination would be the recommended approach, with natives planted closer to riverbanks to ensure the natural composition of species and insects will thrive, with the support of fast-growing exotics to stabilise and support the slow-growing natives to establish its roots.
 - 14.3. **Activity 10 “Wetland restoration – small wetlands”** – Member sought clarification on how wetland restoration should be carried out, and what is a reasonable target for wetland restoration. Staff responded that the action could involve setting a target of X% of wetlands restored in the Ūawa catchment.
15. Staff asked that members working in the forestry sector to discuss actions that are more tailored to the terrain that forestry operates within the catchment.
 16. Staff also asked members living in Tolaga Bay to consider actions tailored to the Tolaga Bay community.

Closing, next steps

17. For the next hui, staff will revisit and continue the discussions on action plans and discuss Outstanding Waterbodies and Scheduled Waterbodies with the Group. As mentioned in item 3.2, staff will also provide an update on TAG.
18. The hui closed at 12:18 PM with a karakia and a shared lunch. Hui 6 is scheduled for 12 November 2024.