

# **Development of Māori Capacity to Contribute to Decision Making**

**Te Whakawhanake i te Whai  
Wāhitanga mai o te Māori ki te  
mahi Whakatau Take**

# Development of Māori capacity to contribute to decision making

## Introduction

Te Kaunihera o Horowhenua/Horowhenua District Council are committed to continually enhancing our relationships with Tangata whenua and Māori. Recognising the unique position of Tangata whenua in our district, Council are dedicated to fostering the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision making processes of the Council over the next 20 years. While it is a requirement in Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002, Council aims to extend beyond the legislative framework, to build and maintain strong and meaningful relationships with the Māori community. Council also acknowledges its own journey that is required to developing cultural competencies and knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles with all Council Officers in order to achieve the best outcomes when fostering Māori contribution to decision making processes over the term of the Long Term Plan 2021-2041.

## Background

The Local Government Act 2002 recognises and respects the Crown's obligations under the Te Tiriti o Waitangi by placing some specific obligations on councils. These obligations are intended to facilitate participation by Māori in local authorities' decision making processes. The Act includes requirements for councils to:

- ensure they provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision making processes
- establish and maintain processes for Māori to contribute to decision making
- consider ways in which they can foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to decision making processes

- provide relevant information to Māori to enable the above
- take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

The Local Government Act 2002 charges local authorities with a clear responsibility to be informed about how their decision making can impact on Māori community wellbeing. These provisions apply to all Māori. This means that local authorities need to understand Māori community values, issues and aspirations as they relate to economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing, just as they need to understand those of other communities. This includes understanding the challenges experienced by pre-settled Iwi as opposed to Iwi who have settled with the Crown – two of district Iwi are currently undergoing Treaty negotiations. The intent is for both local authorities and Māori organisations to move beyond engaging on matters of environmental or cultural importance only.

## Where Council are at today

Memorandum of Partnerships exist with: Muaūpoko Tribal Authority, Rangitāne O Manawatū, Te Iwi o Ngāti Tukorehe Trust – representing Ngāti Tukorehe, Te Mateawa, Ngāti Te Rangitawhia and Ngāti Kapu (Ngāti Raukawa), and Te Kotahitanga o Te Iwi o Ngāti Wehi (Ngāti Raukawa). Council does not have Memorandum of Partnership with Ngāti Apa or Te Runanga o Raukawa Inc. (the overarching mandated Iwi body) or with Ngāti Huia ki Matau, Ngāti Huia ki Poroutawhao and Ngāti Whakatere (Ngāti Raukawa); however, Council recognise that they are key stakeholders in the district, and are often involved in formal and informal consultation.

- Monthly hui are held with Ngāti Raukawa hapū representatives

appointed from each hapū in the Horowhenua district: Ngāti Huia ki Matau, Ngāti Huia ki Poroutawhāo, Ngāti Rakau, Ngāti Te Au, Ngāti Turanga, Ngāti Whakatere, Ngāti Kikopiri, Ngāti Ngārongo, Ngāti Wehi, Ngāti Takihiku, Ngāti Hikitunga, Ngāti Tukorehe, and Ngāti Pareraukawa.

- To support Iwi to build capacity and actively contribute to Council's work programme in a timely manner, including key infrastructure projects and consents, resourcing agreements are in place with: Muaūpoko Tribal Authority, Rangitāne O Manawatū, Te Iwi o Ngāti Tukorehe and Te Runanga o Raukawa.
- In August 2020, Council appointed a Cultural Outcomes Lead to further build the capacity and capability of Te Kaunihera o Horowhenua/Horowhenua District Council, to educate and help Officers understand how to engage appropriately and adhere to tikanga and kawa, as well as understand different cultural contexts. The role also sets out to assist Officers to understand Council's obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Kaitiakitanga and various other legislations.
- To enhance Māori engagement in local government, a number of opportunities are available to Council Officers: weekly Te Reo Māori lessons; waiata group membership, including practices and the opportunity to represent Te Kaunihera o Horowhenua at various events; introducing karakia at Council and staff meetings; and establishing our tikanga for new staff introductions.

## What's in play

- All resource consents are made available to Iwi early, to allow their input where they consider necessary or relevant.
- Alongside Iwi, a Māori Engagement Strategy is being developed to assist Officers to understand: who our Iwi are; why engagement with Iwi is important; and helping them to know when, where and how to engage with Māori. The strategy will also contain useful information to increase opportunities for two-way engagement.
- Learning about cultural development is an integral component for Council Officers to be able to effectively and meaningfully give effect to their obligations to Māori under various legislations. The focus areas identified for Officer development include developing

sound understanding of our Iwi, hapū and marae, key words and pronunciation, karakia and waiata; understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and other topics of importance.

- Support for Iwi to identify Sites of Significance. This adds to Council's understanding of what areas in our district have special meaning to Māori and assists with future planning.

Māori see people and the environment as closely interrelated – Ko au te taiao, ko te taiao ko au (I am the environment, the environment is me) – and share with Council a strong interest in maintaining and protecting the environment as well as developing the economic future of the area. Te Kaunihera o Horowhenua is committed over the period covered by this LTP and beyond to continuing the process of consultation and engagement with Māori.