



# WORKSHOP AGENDA

**Date:** Wednesday, 29 April 2026

**Time:** 1.00pm

**Location:** Council Chambers  
Waikato Regional Council  
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

**Workshop Details:** Waikato Regional Council Workshop

- Waikato-Tainui Proposed Collective Framework
- ICM (Intergrated Catchement Management) Induction: Biosecurity and Biodiversity Programmes

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**1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA**

**Whakataka te hau ki te uru**

**Whakataka te hau ki te tonga**

**Kia mākinakina ki uta**

**Kia mātaratara ki tai**

**E hī ake ana te atakura**

**He tio**

**He Huka**

**He hau hū**

**Tīhei mauri ora!**

**Cease o winds from the west**

**Cease o winds from the south**

**Bring calm breezes over the land**

**Bring calm breezes over the sea**

**And let the red-tipped dawn come**

**With a touch of frost**

**A sharpened air**

**And promise of a glorious day**

**Behold we live**

## 2 WORKSHOP PAPER(S)

### 2.1 WAIKATO-TAINUI PROPOSED COLLECTIVE FRAMEWORK

**Rā | Date:** 29 April 2026

**Kaituhi | Author:** Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** Chris McLay, Chief Executive

#### TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this workshop paper is to provide councillors with an overview of the Waikato-Tainui proposed collective framework for responding to reform impacts on Treaty settlement obligations and existing partnership arrangements, and to enable discussion on whether there is appetite for Waikato Regional Council to continue engaging in a coordinated regional partnership response. Specifically, the workshop is intended to:
  - support a shared understanding of the Waikato Tainui proposal and its underlying intent
  - clarify how the proposed framework differs from, and relates to, other regional work underway
  - test councillor appetite for continued engagement and early alignment
  - surface opportunities, concerns, and potential risks
  - inform next steps, including a further workshop with Waikato River Iwi scheduled for 5 May 2026.
2. No decisions are sought at this workshop. Any future direction or endorsement would be the subject of a separate report to Council, informed by the outcomes of both workshops.

#### HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

3. Waikato Regional Council has recently participated in a series of engagements focused on the implications of resource management reform and broader system change for the Waikato region.
4. On 4 March 2026, Waikato-Tainui hosted a hui with councils that hold Joint Management Agreements (JMAs) with Waikato-Tainui, including Waikato Regional Council, Waikato District Council, Hamilton City Council, and Waipā District Council. That hui focused on the proposed Natural Environment and Planning reforms and the potential impact on Treaty settlement-grounded arrangements in the Waikato, including co-management and co-governance frameworks.
5. Waikato Tainui developed and shared a proposed framework intended to guide how it, together with partner councils, might respond in a coordinated way to reform while protecting existing settlement obligations and partnership arrangements.
6. On 10 March 2026, Waikato Regional Council convened a hui involving councillors and Waikato River Iwi governance representatives from Waikato River Iwi, including Waikato-Tainui, Raukawa, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust, Te Nehenehenui, and Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board. That hui provided an opportunity to test early thinking on partnership continuity and regional coordination in the context of reform.
7. On 8 April 2026, the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee considered the Waikato-Tainui framework. The Committee supported the overall direction signalled and requested that a Council workshop be scheduled as soon as practicable to:

- provide councillors who sit outside the co-governance committee with an opportunity to understand and discuss the proposal, and
- explore how a regional approach might sit within Waikato Regional Council's broader statutory role and responsibilities.

8. This paper responds directly to that request.

### **Reform Context**

9. The Government is progressing significant reform of the resource management system, including the replacement of the Resource Management Act 1991 with new Natural Environment and Planning legislation. At the same time, discussions relating to potential changes to local government structures are occurring nationally and regionally.
10. For the Waikato, these reforms are significant not only in terms of planning future local government structures, but in how existing Treaty settlement-grounded arrangements are recognised and carried forward through system change.
11. While settlement legislation remains in force, there is uncertainty regarding how existing partnership tools and practices, such as Joint Management Agreements, co-governance committees, and integrated planning processes, will be recognised, carried forward, or replicated within reformed legislative settings.
12. In broad terms, the reform context is characterised by:
- legislative change proceeding ahead of detailed implementation design
  - a likely transition period during which clarity is still emerging
  - potential inconsistencies in interpretation or application if regions respond in an uncoordinated manner
13. This environment presents both risk and opportunity:
- risk that long-standing and mature partnership arrangements could be weakened or displaced by nationally uniform approaches; and
  - opportunity for the Waikato to demonstrate leadership by articulating how settlement-grounded arrangements can be preserved and future-proofed through reform.
14. Waikato Regional Council has recently made detailed submissions on both the Simplifying Local Government proposals and the Natural Environment and Planning Bills. Across those submissions, Council has consistently emphasised that Treaty settlements are the responsibility of the Crown, while also recognising that Parliament has conferred specific statutory obligations on councils to give effect to settlement legislation, including Te Ture Whaimana and associated joint management arrangements.
15. The Waikato-Tainui proposed framework aligns with the positions previously advanced by Council, insofar as it is focused on partnership continuity, coordinated implementation, and managing governance and delivery risk through a period of legislative change, rather than redefining or assuming Crown responsibilities.

### **Overview of the Waikato-Tainui Proposed Framework**

16. The framework is not a proposal for local government reorganisation. It is focused on maintaining continuity, durability, and clarity of existing Treaty settlement-grounded partnership arrangements during a period of legislative reform.

17. The proposal identifies four core actions:

1. **Agree a Regional Position** – establishing shared principles to guide how councils give effect to existing Treaty settlement obligations during reform.
2. **Preserve Partnership Through Agreements** – maintaining and strengthening existing JMAs, memoranda of understanding, and partnership protocols as primary mechanisms for engagement and shared decision-making.
3. **Advocate for Targeted Amendments** – jointly advocating for legislative and policy settings that recognise and protect existing settlement arrangements, including mana whakahaere and co-management mechanisms.
4. **Establish a Regional Design Function** – creating a leadership forum to support coordinated regional thinking, future-proof partnership arrangements, and align responses to reform over time.

18. The full Waikato-Tainui position statement is attached to this paper for reference (**Attachment 1**).

### Practical Implications

19. To assist councillors to understand what the proposal would mean in practical terms, the table below outlines the indicative implications of engagement and non-engagement for each proposed action.

Proposed Action	Implications of Engagement	Implications of Inaction
Agree a regional position	Opportunity to help shape shared regional principles; early alignment with Treaty settlement obligations; stronger, more consistent regional advocacy	Fragmented or inconsistent regional positions; reduced collective influence during reform
Preserve partnership through agreements	Continued reliance on established JMAs and protocols during transition; opportunity to strengthen agreements where needed	Greater exposure to legislative uncertainty; reliance on future statutory clarity alone, with increased risk of inconsistent application of existing statutory obligations during transition.
Advocate for targeted amendments	Coordinated engagement with central government; clearer articulation of Waikato-specific needs	Individual councils advocating separately; increased risk that regional arrangements are overlooked
Establish a regional design function	Ongoing forum for leadership, coordination, and future-proofing; adaptable responses over time	Reactive, issue-by-issue responses; reduced capacity to shape long-term outcomes

### Regional Application and Inclusion

20. While the Waikato-Tainui proposed framework is grounded in Waikato-Tainui settlement arrangements, the Waikato Regional Council rohe includes multiple iwi with diverse settled and unsettled Treaty claims, statutory arrangements, and governance frameworks.

21. While many of the principles identified may be broadly relevant, they are not assumed to be universally transferable. Wider regional application would require tailored approaches that reflect local context and the specific interests of individual iwi.
22. A further Council workshop with Waikato River Iwi is scheduled for 5 May 2026 to enable similar discussion and to inform any subsequent advice to Council.

### **Relationship to Mayoral Forum Mahi**

23. Work currently underway through the Waikato Mayoral Forum is focused on local government functions and how these might shape institutional design, and potential reorganisation across the Waikato.
24. The Waikato-Tainui proposed framework is grounded in Treaty settlement obligations and is focused on ensuring continuity, durability, and integrity of established partnership, co-governance, and co-management arrangements through a period of reform.
25. While distinct in purpose and scope, the two pieces of work are complementary rather than competing. Both involve collaborative engagement between councils and iwi, and both seek to position the Waikato to provide leadership through change, with councils and iwi at the helm.
26. In particular the Mayoral Forum work is oriented towards future local government form and function; whereas the Waikato-Tainui framework is concerned with protecting and future-proofing settlement-grounded relationships and decision-making frameworks that already exist within the region.
27. Both arise from the same reform environment and reflect a shared aspiration for the Waikato to respond proactively, rather than reactively, to national change. This paper focuses specifically on the Waikato-Tainui proposal and does not seek to pre-empt, duplicate, or substitute for discussions occurring through the Mayoral Forum.

### **Matters for Councillor Discussion**

28. Councillors are invited to consider and discuss:
  - Is there appetite for Waikato Regional Council to continue engaging in and exploring this proposed approach?
  - What opportunities do councillors see for regional leadership in this context?
  - What concerns or risks should be addressed early?
  - What information or assurance would councillors need before any future decision-making?

### **Next Steps**

29. Following this workshop:
  - a further Council workshop with Waikato River Iwi will be held on 5 May 2026.
  - feedback from both workshops will inform advice on next steps.

### **ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS**

1. **Waikato Tainui Proposed Framework (Doc # 35537775)** [↓](#)



Waikato-Tainui hosted our four JMA partner councils at our annual All Council hui on 4 March 2026. CEO Donna Flavell presented on the proposed Natural Environment and Planning reforms (see her presentation attached) and voiced the iwi's grave concerns with these proposals.

Donna proposed a framework to be considered by our Council partners in response, centred on our collaboration since the JMA committees were established, our history of co-operation, engagement and growth and the opportunity to lead as a region rather than simply to respond to central government.

Waikato-Tainui have completed further work on the framework for consideration by our partner councils to develop our next steps and co-ordinated approach going forward. This paper sets out that further work for consideration, input and direction.



## FRAMEWORK

### ACTION 1: AGREE A REGIONAL POSITION

#### **Proposed Draft Regional position statement.**

Waikato-Tainui, Waikato District Council, Hamilton City Council, Waipaa District Council and Waikato Regional Council are committed to continuing to work together for the benefit of our respective communities across te rohe o Waikato and for our tupuna awa, Waikato. Our relationship is grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Waikato River Settlement framework, with **Te Ture Whaimana as the primary direction-setting instrument.**

As partners we acknowledge our unique Treaty settlement arrangements, established partnerships, and bespoke governance structures already in place. Together, we will retain and continue to build on existing collaborative tools and co-management arrangements, recognising the significant progress we have already achieved together since the Waikato River Settlement in 2010. We agree that environmental and economic outcomes will continue to need to be balanced in a way that prioritises the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, consistent with Te Ture Whaimana.

This approach is grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Waikato River Settlement Act 2010 and Te Ture Whaimana, which collectively affirm Waikato-Tainui's mana whakahaere, require the restoration and protection of the Waikato river, and provide for enduring co-management and shared decision-making arrangements. Irrespective of any current or future legislative and policy reforms, these obligations apply across all legislative and policy frameworks and must be upheld.



## **ACTION 2: PRESERVE PARTNERSHIP THROUGH AGREEMENTS**

The Partnerships between Waikato-Tainui and our JMA Council partners will be maintained and strengthened to ensure continuity regardless of any proposed national legislative reforms. Existing agreements (including Joint Management Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding) will be actively implemented, strengthened where required and used as the primary mechanisms for partnership delivery.

We will continue to work proactively as partners utilising our agreed partnership protocols that set clear expectations for:

- early engagement
- co-design and
- shared decision-making.

Te Ture Whaimana and Tai Tumu, Tai Pari, Tai Ao (Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan), alongside relevant iwi and council planning documents, will be actively applied to guide regional priorities, planning, and investment decisions.

## **ACTION 3: ADVOCATE FOR TARGETED AMENDMENTS**

Waikato-Tainui and our partner councils will jointly advocate for targeted legislative and policy settings that uphold existing Treaty settlement arrangements and environmental protections.

This includes ensuring the ongoing recognition and application of:

- Waikato-Tainui rights and interests, including mana whakahaere;



- clear direction-setting provisions that give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
- co-management and joint management arrangements and;
- the already established decision-making and transfer of powers mechanisms that currently exist within our settlement.

Our joint Waikato leadership supports maintaining a joint committee approach to plan development, policy direction and decision-making processes. We are firm in our position that any future reform must recognise and give full effect to existing Treaty settlement arrangements, including the intent and application of Te Ture Whaimana, as the primary direction-setting framework for the Waikato River.

#### **ACTION 4: ESTABLISH A REGIONAL DESIGN GROUP**

We will establish a regional Waikato-Tainui and Partner Council leadership forum to co-design and confirm future co-governance and co-management arrangements. This group will meet at least twice annually to discuss regional issues and provide leadership, a co-ordinated strategic direction and regional responses to government proposals that threaten or undermine the regional arrangements. These discussions will continue via the already scheduled JMA meetings with each specific council to enable council specific discussions with Waikato-Tainui.

The Leadership Forum will ensure that any directions and / or proposals align with Te Ture Whaimana, the Waikato River Settlement framework, and existing co-management arrangements. The Leadership Forums purpose will be to:

- build on and strengthen existing governance and partnership frameworks;



- future-proof arrangements across changing legislative and policy environments;
- maintain, evolve and where possible improve co-management and co-governance arrangements in line with settlement intent;
- design regionally appropriate solutions that reflect the Waikato context and uphold mana whakahaere;
- provide an opportunity to develop strong regional joint position statements on matters of relevance.

ENDS

DRAFT

## 2.2 ICM INDUCTION: BIOSECURITY AND BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

**Rā | Date:** 23 March 2026

**Kaituhi | Author:** Patrick Whaley, Manager - Biosecurity And Biodiversity

**Kaituku | Authoriser:** Greg Ryan, Director, Integrated Catchment Management

### TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this workshop is to provide Councillors with an overview of the council's biosecurity and biodiversity programmes using selected case studies.

### KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. A presentation will be delivered outlining the council's biosecurity and biodiversity programmes. This will include:
  - (a) How biosecurity and biodiversity outcomes are achieved, illustrated through selected case studies.
  - (b) The mandate for this work, including relevant legislation, policy and strategic drivers.
  - (c) Key emerging issues and opportunities.
3. The presentation will be supported by interactive, hands-on activities designed to provide practical demonstrations of programme delivery and outcomes.
4. The workshop will conclude with a question and answer session, enabling Councillors to seek clarification and discuss matters arising from the presentation and activities.

### ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

### 3 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Unuhia, unuhia

Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui

kia wātea, kia māmā,

te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,

i te ara takatū

Koia rā e Rongo

e whakairia ake ki runga

kia tina! TINA!

Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!

Draw on, draw on,

Draw on to the supreme sacredness

To clear, to free

our heart, body and soul

Our pathway prepared

Lo, there is peace

suspended high above

manifest!

draw together!

Affirm!