

BEFORE THE

Waikato Regional Council Hearing
Commissioners

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Waikato Regional Proposed Plan Change 1 –
Waikato and Waipā River Catchments

**STATEMENT OF TOPIA RAMEKA ON BEHALF OF THE TUWHARETOA
MAORI TRUST BOARD REGARDING HEALTHY RIVERS WAI ORA
PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 1
(Submitter no. 74035 and 73356)**

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Topia Rameka and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board (the **Trust Board**). I am authorised to give this statement on behalf of the Trust Board.

PURPOSE

2. The Trust Board made a submission and further submission (**Individual Submissions**) in relation to Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 (**Proposed Plan Change 1**) and Variation 1 to Proposed Plan Change 1 (**Variation 1**).
3. The Trust Board made these submissions for and on behalf of Ngāti Tūwharetoa.
4. The Trust Board also made a joint submission, together with the other Waikato and Waipā River Iwi, on Variation 1 (**Joint Submission**).
5. The following statement is made in support of, and to expand on the points made in, our Individual Submissions. It is also provided in addition to, and in support of, the evidence and submissions provided by Waikato and Waipā River Iwi.

TŪWHARETOA MĀORI TRUST BOARD

6. The Trust Board was established pursuant to the Māori Land Amendment Act 1924 and Māori Land Claims Adjustment Act 1926. The Trust Board later became a Māori Trust Board under the Māori Trust Boards Act 1955.
7. By Deeds with the Crown dated 28 August 1992 and 10 September 2007 the Trust Board is the legal owner of Taupō Waters. The term Taupō Waters refer to property including the bed, water column and air space of Lake Taupō and the Waihora, Waihaha, Whanganui, Whareroa, Kuratau, Poutu, Waimarino, Tauranga-Taupō, Tongariro, Waipehi, Waiotaka, Hinemaiaia and Waitahanui Rivers and the Waikato River, from the outlet of Lake Taupō to a place known as Te Toka a Tia, downstream and inclusive of the Huka Falls. In the context

of the Waikato Awa, therefore, it is important to recognise that the Trust Board, on behalf of the relevant hapū of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, is the legal owner of part of the bed of the Waikato Awa.

8. The Trust Board's relationship to Taupō Waters is unique; it holds legal title as trustee and acts as kaitiaki for Taupō Waters. These fiduciary and whakapapa responsibilities over Taupō Waters to present and future generations underpin all the activities of the Trust Board.

NGATI TUWHARETOA

9. Ngā Hapū o Tūwharetoa are the descendants of Ngātoroirangi and Tia and other tupuna who have occupied the Taupō Region continuously since the arrival of the Te Arawa waka. Ngāti Tūwharetoa are linked by whakapapa to their lands and their taonga. This connection establishes their mana whenua, kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga, including their right to establish and maintain a meaningful relationship with our taonga.
10. As kaitiaki, we have an inherent obligation to ensure that the physical and spiritual health of our environment, inclusive of Taupō Waters and the Waikato Awa, is maintained, protected and enhanced.
11. Ngāti Tūwharetoa's primary interests in the Waikato River extend downstream as far as the confluence of the Waipapa River with the main stem of the Waikato River by virtue of the 1886 Taupō Nui a Tia boundary.
12. Our cultural connection to Waikato Awa starts on the Eastern slopes of 'Nga Kahui Maunga' (*The Prestigious Mountains*) including Tongariro, Ruapehu, Ngaruahoe and Pihanga. Beneath those slopes lies what is referred to as 'Te Wai Parahuka o Waikato' sometimes named 'Te Waiparahoaka o Waikato', the Waikato Glacier. The glacier is one of several sources that contributes to the beginning of 'Waikato Iti' which starts off as a mere trickle to eventually increases in volume to become a full flowing river. According to our traditions, therefore, the Waikato Awa starts upstream of Lake Taupō.
13. Because of its beginnings that stem from the sacred mountains, 'Waikato Iti' is also referred to as 'Te Aho Tapu', the Sacred Thread

flowing from the mountains. 'Waikato Iiti' eventually flows into 'Waikato Runga', more commonly referred to as the Tongariro River, to eventually weave its sacred thread into 'Te Korowai Tapu o Ngāti Tūwharetoa' (*The Sacred Cloak of Ngāti Tūwharetoa*) or Lake Taupō.

14. This korowai and its many stands are considered as an indivisible whole. Defining the Waikato Awa by Regional Council boundaries does not reflect how we see the river as and lake as a whole.
15. All our rivers that flow into and out of Taupō Moana contribute to the weaving of the korowai. If one awa becomes polluted, so does the cloak. It is up to all of us to ensure the health of our awa are maintained.
16. There is a saying that was quoted by one of our ancestresses who said *Kei te tuwhera tonu te awa ki Nukuhau - So long as the water flows out at Nukuhau, so will our relationships remain firm with neighbouring tribes.* It is the river that connects and binds us to our river iwi.
17. It is important that we maintain the health and wellbeing of the waters that come from Taupō to the Waikato awa before passing the waters on to river iwi. It is also important because it is a link to our ancestors who established our Mana wai and Mana whenua which is encapsulated in the pepeha:

Ko Tongariro te Maunga	Tongariro is the sacred mountain
Ko Taupō te Moana	Taupō is the lake
Ko Tūwharetoa te Iwi	Tūwharetoa is the tribe
Ko te Heuheu te Tangata	Te Heuheu is the man

RIVER SETTLEMENT AND JOINT MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

18. On 31 May 2010, the Crown and the Trust Board signed a Deed in Relation to Co-Governance and Co-Management Arrangements for the Waikato River (the Deed). The Crown and the Trust Board entered into this Deed on behalf of and with the mandate of Ngāti Tūwharetoa hapu of the Waikato River and its catchment and in Taupō Waters. The Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010 (the Upper Waikato River Act) was enacted to give effect to the Deed.

19. The Deed and subsequent Upper Waikato River Act acknowledged Ngāti Tūwharetoa's ownership of Taupō Waters, by providing that a joint management agreement established under the Upper Waikato River Act may extend to matters relating to the waterways within Taupō Waters.
20. For Trust Board we see the co-governance role as a meaningful way for Trust Board and the Waikato Regional Council to work together in true partnership.

TUWHARETOA CONTRIBUTION TO WAI ORA

21. Through Variation 5 (Lake Taupō Catchment) to the Waikato Regional Plan, Ngāti Tūwharetoa has direct experience with the design and impact of regulations necessary to achieve desired water quality outcomes. Through Variation 5, Ngāti Tūwharetoa land owners were significant contributors to ensuring the long-term protection of water quality within Lake Taupō and the tributaries within this catchment.
22. In making this contribution, these land owners have demonstrated their unwavering adherence to kaitiakitanga (stewardship) and the strength of their commitment to maintain their ancestral relationship with their taonga tuku iho. Significantly, they have agreed this in the knowledge that they would forfeit significant future development rights.
23. The implementation of Variation 5, therefore, has enabled the "clean and pure" water flowing from Lake Taupō into Te Awa o Waikato, to greatly enhance the achievement of Te Ture Whaimana. When this water reaches the sea, its life-enhancing properties are hugely diminished.
24. While accepting that lines on maps must be drawn for setting regulatory and policy regimes, Ngāti Tūwharetoa consider that the significant contribution already made to ensuring clean water flows from Lake Taupō into Te Awa o Waikato needs to be recognised. By artificially separating Lake Taupō and Te Awa o Waikato through Variation 5 and Proposed Plan Change 1, the contributions already made are ignored.

25. As will be highlighted in the evidence of Dr Olivier Ausseil who will appear for the Waikato and Waipā River Iwi, this issue is exacerbated by Proposed Plan Change 1 which disproportionately impacts the Upper Waikato Catchment through the proposed 80-year water quality states. The water quality states proposed require the Upper Waikato Catchment to achieve greater improvements in water quality than other catchments, despite our water already being of a higher quality. While we will defer to the evidence Dr Ausseil for a technical discussion of this problem, it is important for us to highlight that in combination, Variation 5 and proposed Plan Change 1 risk excessive and disproportionate impacts for Ngāti Tūwharetoa lands.
26. Ngāti Tūwharetoa are committed to doing our part, but we must ensure that Te Ture Whaimana is achieved in a way that is fair and equitable.

CONCLUSION

27. The Joint Submission from Waikato and Waipā River Iwi represents our collective views and demonstrates our strong commitment to the protection, health and well-being of all our connected ancestral water bodies. The Trust Board's own submission reinforces this.
28. The Trust Board acknowledges the cooperation and commitment of Waikato and Waipā River Iwi to collectively achieve the shared aspiration of Te Ture Whaimana and ensure that the well-being of our taonga becomes sustainable and enduring. Success in this aim is not optional: we must achieve Te Ture Whaimana. We must also ensure that success is achieved with the principles of equality and fairness guiding our path.