

Māori freshwater values

Ngā mātāpono waimāori

Overview | Tirohanga whānui

Waikato Regional Council is carrying out a Freshwater Policy Review in response to central government's Essential Freshwater package, which is about stopping further degradation of New Zealand's fresh water and improving its quality and ecosystem health.

A key element of the package is an update to the *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020* (NPS-FM) which places a strong emphasis on Māori having perspectives, obligations and values that approach freshwater management in a different way. These perspectives need to be considered and incorporated into regional freshwater planning and decision making.

To give effect to the NPS-FM and as part of this Freshwater Policy Review, we want your input to help identify and understand the

values you have for the areas of our rohe known as Freshwater Management Units¹. Knowing what freshwater values need to be protected will then enable us to set environmental outcomes which will be included as objectives in the *Waikato Regional Plan*, a policy tool used by the council and other authorities to manage the natural and physical resources of our rohe.

To do this, we'll be following central government's National Objectives Framework (see figure 1), a process connecting the values and aspirations for fresh water held by tangata whenua and communities with potential solutions to realise these values.

¹Refer to Information sheet 4 of 11 – Freshwater Management Units.

What is a freshwater value?

Mō ngā mātāpono waimāori

A value is what you consider important about fresh water. It can be anything from mahinga kai and other cultural practices to water quality and ecosystem health.

The NPS-FM has already identified four compulsory values which we are able to build on in recognition of local knowledge and traditional practices. These values are:

- ecosystem health (considering water quality, water quantity, habitat, aquatic life and ecological processes that indicate a healthy aquatic environment)
- human contact (enabling people to connect with and enjoy the water)
- threatened species (critical habitats and conditions necessary to support the presence, abundance, survival and recovery of threatened aquatic life)
- mahinga kai (providing food for the people that is safe to harvest and eat, and keeping the mauri of the place intact).

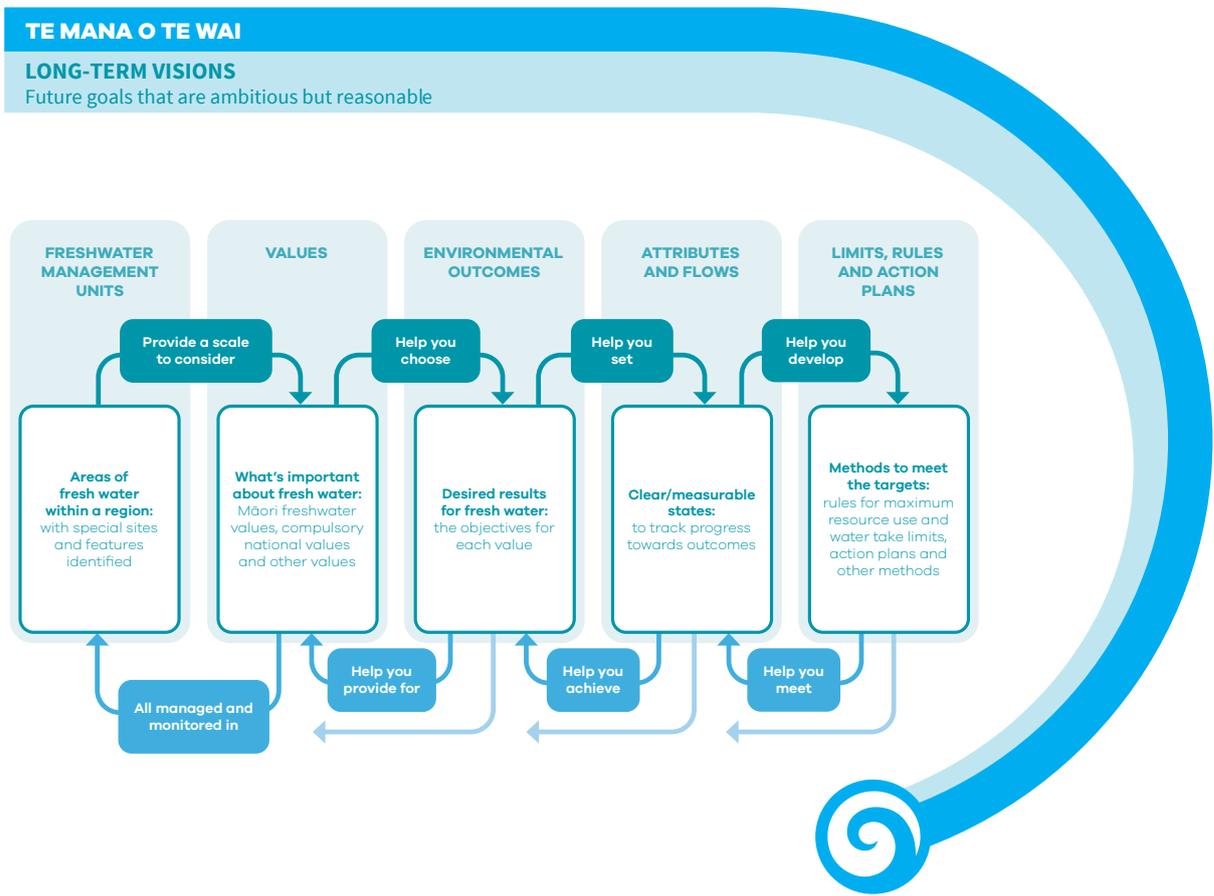
Under the NPS-FM, mahinga kai is identified as a Māori freshwater value as well as any other value identified through collaboration between council and tangata whenua. Similarly, there are also a number of other values we'll need to consider and see how they apply to your takiwā and across the rohe.

Why do we need to identify Māori freshwater values?

Mō te mōhio i ngā mātāpono waimāori

Traditional Māori practices have an inherently integrated and holistic approach to resource management. Integrating mātauranga Māori into freshwater management will provide greater understanding of our freshwater systems, improve the information available to regional councils and enable positive outcomes for fresh water that will benefit the whole community.

Figure 1



What do we want to know?

Mō te wāhi ki te tangata whenua

The NPS-FM requires Māori freshwater values to be identified and reflected in the management of fresh water in our rohe, including providing opportunities for tangata whenua to be actively involved in the decision-making process.

To do this, we will be working with tangata whenua, including iwi and hapū authorities as well as mana whenua groups to identify the freshwater values that need to be protected, maintained or improved. The way we measure how these values are provided for will also be determined in collaboration with tangata whenua.

But we won't be starting from scratch. Iwi have already expressed to us some of their freshwater values through iwi environmental management plans and other iwi-led or partnership initiatives. We will be building on this information as we carry out engagement for the Freshwater Policy Review.

Te Mana o te Wai – hierarchy of obligations

Te Mana o te Wai refers to the vital importance of water. It imposes a hierarchy of obligations by prioritising the health and wellbeing of waterbodies and ecosystems first. The second priority is the health needs of people (such as drinking water) and the third is the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

This concept underpins central government's direction on how to protect and improve our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. We still need to explore this concept to understand what it means for our rohe as it will inform how we develop and revise our freshwater planning documents, and how we will work with tangata whenua.

Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato

Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River is the primary direction-setting document for the restoration and protection of the Waikato and Waipā rivers. It captures the aspirations tangata whenua and communities have for these catchments, so we will be building on this information with you to help define your values for fresh water.

What do we already know?

Mō te mātauranga a ngā iwi

Iwi throughout our rohe have recorded and shared their values with respect to fresh water in environmental management plans, joint management agreements and Te Tiriti o Waitangi deeds of settlement.

Examples of the freshwater values shared in some of these documents are in the table below. We will use this information, as well as other documents that record iwi values, as the basis for our kōrero with you about fresh water in your takiwā.

<p>Hauraki Iwi Environmental Plan: <i>Whaia te Mahere Taiao a Hauraki 2004</i></p> <p>By Hauraki Māori Trust Board</p>	<p>Mauri is the life energy force or unique life essence that gives being and form to all living things in the universe. Tikanga has emerged around this duty, bringing with it an intimate knowledge and understanding about local environments and a set of rules that guide our way of life, both spiritual and secular. Rivers and streams provide a home, food source and migration pathway to and from the sea for native fisheries, provide people with food and water and are valued for their spiritual qualities. Hauraki Whānui still depend on these freshwater resources as a major food source. These rivers, streams and wetlands were buffered from land use impacts through forested margins and populations of tuna, kōkopu, kāeo, kēwai, wātakihiri, and bird life were abundant in former times.</p>
<p>Maniapoto and Waikato Regional Council Joint Management Agreement (2013)</p>	<p>Te Awa o Waipā is a taonga to Maniapoto. Maniapoto have a deep felt obligation and desire to restore, maintain and protect all of the waters that flow and/or fall within the Maniapoto rohe (Ngā Wai o Maniapoto), whether the waters are above, on or underground. Te Mana o Te Wai (the quality and integrity of the waters) is paramount. The obligation includes the waters that flow into and form part of the Waipā River. The relationship between Maniapoto and the Waipā River is historic, intellectual, physical and spiritual.</p> <p>Historically, Te Mana o Te Wai was such that it provided all manner of sustenance to Maniapoto, including physical and spiritual nourishment that has, over generations, maintained the quality and integrity of Maniapoto marae, whānau, hapū and iwi. To Maniapoto, the Waipā River has mana and in turn represents the mana of Maniapoto. The Waipā River is a single indivisible entity that flows from Pekepeke to its confluence with the Waikato River and includes its waters, banks and bed (and all minerals under it) and its streams, waterways, tributaries, lakes, fisheries, vegetation, floodplains, wetlands, islands, springs, geothermal springs, water column, airspace and substratum, as well as its metaphysical elements with its own mauri.</p>
<p>Maniapoto Environmental Management Plan: <i>Ko Tā Maniapoto Mahere Taiao 2018</i></p> <p>By Maniapoto Māori Trust Board</p>	<p>Fresh water has a deep spiritual significance to Maniapoto. Water is the wellspring of life. Historically, the waters were such that they provided all manner of sustenance to Maniapoto, including physical and spiritual nourishment that has, over generations, maintained the functions of marae and the health and wellbeing of whānau, hapū and iwi. The health and wellbeing of the people of Maniapoto is closely linked to the health and wellbeing of freshwater resources.</p>
<p>Raukawa Settlement Trust and Waikato Regional Council Joint Management Agreement (2012)</p>	<p>Over the generations, Raukawa has developed tikanga or protocols that embody a profound respect for their tribal area, flora, fauna, geography and all life within it. Their tikanga recognises that if people care for their environment, the environment will continue to sustain the people for generations to come.</p> <p>As kaitiaki within their rohe, Raukawa hold a unique and special responsibility under tikanga to preserve, protect and manage sustainably natural, physical and historical resources. The tribal aspiration is a future where cultural, social, environmental and economic objectives are balanced, not only for tribal members but for all those people living within the tribal rohe.</p> <p>Raukawa as mana whenua, are also farmers, foresters, geothermal developers, investors, ratepayers and providers of a wide range of services to the community. In carrying out these many roles and responsibilities, Raukawa recognises that only through partnership and collaboration will their tribal aspirations be realised.</p>

<p>Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa Iwi Environmental Management Plan: <i>Rising Above The Mist – Te Aranga Ake I Te Taimahatanga 2019</i></p> <p>By Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa Rūnanga</p>	<p>Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa had many kāinga, cultivations and burial caves along the banks of the Waikato River. The river provided many benefits to their people and was often used to transport produce that was traded with other iwi and early settlers. Paramount to Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa is participation in a co-management regime that protects, preserves and where possible restores our wāhi tapu and taonga. From our perspective, a co-management regime focused on the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River is one process by which to achieve their objective. The close connection Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa has with the Waikato River is illustrated by the significant number of places held sacred along the river from Te Waiheke o Huka to Pōhaturoa.</p>
<p>Ngāti Tūwharetoa Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims (2017) <i>Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki – Taupō catchment plan</i></p> <p>By Te Kōpu ā Kānapanapa</p>	<p>The vision of Ngāti Tūwharetoa for Te Kōpu ā Kānapanapa (post settlement governance entity) is founded on their relationship with the natural resources of the Taupō catchment, according to Ngāti Tūwharetoa tikanga. Ngāti Tūwharetoa are inextricably linked by whakapapa to their taonga tuku iho (ancestral treasures), including Tongariro Maunga, te mātāpuna o te wai (the source of the waters), Lake Taupō (Taupō-moana) and the rivers that flow into it, Te Awa o Waikato (the Waikato River), Te Ahi Tipua (the geothermal resources), and the whenua (the land). These natural resources have their own mauri (life force), which represents their spiritual and physical wellbeing.</p>
<p><i>Ngāti Tūwharetoa Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2003</i></p> <p>By Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board</p>	<p>Ngāti Tūwharetoa hold mana whenua and kaitiakitanga over the central plateau rohe and have a rohe boundary that has been supported by the Native Land Court in 1886, subsequently called the Taupo-nui-ā-Tia block. As kaitiaki, ngā hapū o Ngāti Tūwharetoa has an intrinsic duty to ensure that the mauri and therefore the physical and spiritual health of the environment is maintained, protected and enhanced.</p>
<p><i>Te Rautaki Taiao a Raukawa – Raukawa Environmental Management Plan 2014</i></p> <p>By Raukawa Settlement Trust</p>	<p>Raukawa are a people of three rivers: Waikato, Te Waihou, and the Upper Waipā. They have maintained our association with these taonga and their surrounds for over 500 years. We consider that water is not separate from people, is not separate from its surrounds and therefore cannot be separated, or assessed in isolation, from the environment as a total entity. We regard all water as a connected and living entity, including: constituent parts (i.e. surface, banks, bed, flood plains, etc.), intrinsic values and meta-physical being. Fresh water is essential to the physical, social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of Raukawa.</p> <p>Our rivers, groundwater, lakes, and wetlands have provided our people with food, spiritual nourishment, cleansing, modes of transport and communication, as well as medicinal, building and weaving materials. Water is a sensitive and complex taonga that Raukawa has a duty to respect, protect and restore. Our mana whakahaere is balanced by the inherent responsibilities that come as guardians of our waterbodies. This places the expectation that each generation leaves our waterbodies in a healthy and balanced state for future generations.</p> <p>The Raukawa landscape is notable for the health of its network of puna, roto, manga, repo and awa that connect and define our environment. Raukawa understand our tūpuna connection to wai in its many states and places, and these taonga nurture, cleanse and provide for Raukawa and the broader community. All waterbodies are significant within the Raukawa takiwā, and the mauri and mana of our waterbodies and all catchments are sustained and enhanced.</p>
<p>Te Arawa River Iwi Trust and Waikato Regional Council Joint Management Agreement</p>	<p>The Te Arawa River Iwi relationship with the Waikato River and its tributaries, and their respect for it, gives rise to responsibilities to protect the Waikato River and all it encompasses and to exercise mana whakahaere in accordance with long established tikanga to ensure the wellbeing of the Waikato River. Te Arawa River Iwi continue to exercise their mana along with customary rights and exert the rights and responsibilities of kaitiakitanga in relation to the Waikato River within their rohe.</p>

Waikato-Tainui and Waikato
Regional Council Joint Management
Agreement

Te mana o te awa (the spiritual authority, protective power and prestige of the river)

(i) To Waikato-Tainui, the Waikato River is a tuupuna (ancestor) which has mana (prestige) and in turn represents the mana and mauri (life force) of the tribe. The Waikato River has its own mauri, its own spiritual energy and its own powerful identity. It is a single indivisible being.

(ii) Respect for te mana o te awa (the spiritual authority, protective power and prestige of the Waikato River) is at the heart of the relationship between the tribe and their ancestral river. Waikato-Tainui regard their river with reverence and love. It gave them their name and is the source of their tribal identity. Over generations, Waikato-Tainui have developed tikanga (values, ethics governing conduct) which embody their profound respect for the Waikato River and all life within it.

(iii) The Waikato River sustains the people physically by providing kai (food) and enjoyment through traditional and contemporary activities. Spiritually, to Waikato-Tainui, the Waikato River is constant, enduring and perpetual.

Mana whakahaere (authority and rights of control)

(i) Mana whakahaere refers to the authority that Waikato-Tainui has established in respect of the Waikato River over many generations. Mana whakahaere entails the exercise of rights and responsibilities to ensure that the balance and mauri (life force) of the Waikato River are maintained. It is based in recognition that if we care for the river, the river will continue to sustain the people.

(ii) In customary terms, mana whakahaere is the exercise of control, access to and management of the Waikato River, including its resources, in accordance with tikanga (values, ethics, and governing conduct).

Health and wellbeing

(i) The principle of health and wellbeing reflects the overarching purpose of the settlement, which is to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.

(ii) The health and wellbeing of Waikato-Tainui and its special relationship with the Waikato River is inherently connected with the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.

Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan:
Tai Tumu Tai Pari Tai Ao 2013

By Waikato-Tainui

Water is a fundamental component for all dimensions of life. Water not only sustains life, but also serves an economic, social, cultural, spiritual and political purpose. Regardless of the significance of water, the increase in water contamination by cities, industries and agriculture/horticulture has led to the deterioration of the mauri of water. The degradation of the whenua and waterways affects the use (physical and metaphysical) of water resources, hauanga kai, and water's life supporting capacity. It is recognised that there are two major issues related to water: water quality and water quantity (allocation). These have significant impacts on the relationship between Waikato-Tainui and water.

A glossary of terms

He puna kupu

The NPS-FM uses specific terms with regard to Māori freshwater values which, for consistency, we will also use in the Freshwater Policy Review. A brief explanation of these terms is given below:

Kaitiakitanga	The obligation of tangata whenua to preserve, restore, enhance, and sustainably use fresh water for the benefit of present and future generations. Akin to “stewardship”: the obligation of all New Zealanders to manage fresh water in a way that ensures it sustains present and future generations.
Ki uta, ki tai	Ki uta, ki tai is a traditional concept representing kaitiakitanga (guardianship) from the mountains and great inland lakes, down the rivers to hāpua/lagoons, wahapū/estuaries and to the sea. Ki uta, ki tai encapsulates the need to recognise and manage the interconnectedness of the whole environment.
Mahinga kai	The value of natural (fresh water) resources that sustain life, including the life of people.
Mana whakahaere	<p>The power, authority and obligations of tangata whenua to make decisions that maintain, protect and sustain the health and wellbeing of, and their relationship with, fresh water.</p> <p>Akin to “governance”: the responsibility of those with authority for making decisions about fresh water to do so in a way that prioritises the health and wellbeing of fresh water now and into the future.</p>
Manaakitanga	The process by which tangata whenua show respect, generosity and care for fresh water and for others. For example, protecting kai from the awa that may be harvested for guests at marae gatherings. Akin to “care and respect”: the responsibility of all New Zealanders to care for fresh water in providing for the health of the nation.
Mātauranga Māori	The knowledge, comprehension or understanding of everything tangible or intangible (such as spiritual and metaphysical values) that exists across the universe from a Māori perspective. It takes many forms, including te reo (Māori language), taonga tuku iho (treasure handed down) and mātauranga (traditional environmental knowledge), and knowledge of cultural practices, such as rongoā (healing and medicines) and mahinga kai (hunting, fishing and cultivation of food).
Tauranga waka	Tauranga waka generally refers to places to launch waka and watercraft, and appropriate places for waka to land.
Te Mana o te Wai	<p>Te Mana o te Wai is a concept that refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of fresh water protects the health and wellbeing of the wider environment. It protects the mauri of the wai. Te Mana o te Wai is about restoring and preserving the balance between the water, the wider environment and the community.</p> <p>Te Mana o te Wai is relevant to all freshwater management and not just to the specific aspects of freshwater management referred to in the <i>National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020</i>.</p>
Wai tapu	Wai tapu (sacred waters) represent the places in a Freshwater Management Unit or part of an FMU where pure water rituals and ceremonies are performed, or where there is special significance to tangata whenua.

Where can I find more information? | Mō te puna kōrero

Check out waikatoregion.govt.nz/freshwater-policy-review to find:

- information sheets breaking down the Freshwater Policy Review
- how to share your views
- a summary of key milestones
- update on our progress.

You can also email us at policy@waikatoregion.govt.nz or call 0800 800 401 to speak to a member of our Freshwater Policy Review team.

