

Ohiwa Harbour Strategy Communications Plan

Executive Summary

The Ohiwa Harbour Strategy Coordination Group (OHSCG) has seen a need to develop a plan for communications and engagement with people in and around Ōhiwa Harbour. A project team made up of representatives from all Ohiwa Harbour Strategy partner organisations researched and developed this communications plan for 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. Work on actions began earlier, in January 2010, and some may extend beyond to June 2013.

Through the project team, the agencies involved have been able to share their communications goals for Ohiwa Harbour and to establish a pathway for working together in the future.

Recommendation

That the Ohiwa Harbour Integrated Forum under its delegated authority:

Receives the report, Ohiwa Harbour Strategy Communications Plan

Background

In June 2008 the Ohiwa Harbour Strategy was approved by the Environment Bay of Plenty Strategic Policy Committee, and subsequently the Whakatāne District Council and Ōpōtiki District Council. The starting point for the communications plan has been the issues raised in the Ohiwa Harbour Strategy. Creation of a communications strategy was one of the actions identified in the Ohiwa Harbour Strategy (OHS) in Chapter 13: A More Informed Harbour Community.

Action 13.3.2 Develop a Communication/Education Plan

The community has identified communications and education as desirable actions to:

- increase awareness and knowledge about the cultural and ecological significance of the harbour and places around it
- gain more effective community involvement in ecological management and planning.

The OHSCG (Ohiwa Harbour Strategy Coordination Group) identified the priority areas requiring external communications on a year-by-year basis. The team will then plan and undertake appropriately-timed communications activities with the relevant audiences to enhance those areas.

Vision

The vision for the communications plan was developed by participants and is:

“We will work together to develop communications activities that help people to use and care for Ohiwa Harbour for its long-term wellbeing.”

Communications Plan

This communications plan enables us to size the various tasks for the coming year/s and to prepare for the work we will undertake. The plan itself and subsequent actions also provide us with opportunities to work together and build our trust in and reliance on each other.

The aims of this communications plan are to:

- identify clear and achievable actions;

- assign people/organisations to the required tasks;
- provide an estimate of the likely costs; and
- provide a rationale for the proposed actions.

It should be noted here that, as part of the planning process, the project team have identified a need for a dedicated communications coordinator. This role would require a person with communications and organisational skills to help the agencies work within the collaborative approach to managing Ohiwa Harbour.

Many communications issues were raised at the three hui that formed the basis of this plan. The issues have been grouped into the following themes:

- inter-agency communications can be improved;
- partner organisations' ability to participate is not equitable;
- information resources are difficult to access;
- there are low levels of understanding amongst the community and decision makers about the cultural and natural history of the harbour, including significant sites;
- land ownership and management is not well understood; and
- sustainable catchment management still has a long way to go.

Objectives have been established for each group of issues and a detailed communications plan has been devised to achieve the objectives. As the communications plan is implemented, the project team will work with many different stakeholders and partners to make the actions happen and each action will have clearly identified and well-researched audiences.

Strategic communications actions

The project team has established strategic communications actions and key messages to be used in any communications actions undertaken by the Ohiwa Harbour Strategy partner organisations.

Examples of actions include:

- identifying six to eight 'top sites' around the Ohiwa Harbour, significant for cultural and/or ecological reasons, on which to focus communications actions;
- integrating Te Reo in to all of our communications so that we increase collective understanding of the language;
- using animals, plants and birds as icons to tell the stories of the Ohiwa Harbour with each becoming a relevant symbol for different stories or themes;
- incorporating the relevant Maori icons to tell Maori history, such as the stories of Tairongo and Hinetahi; and
- speaking the language of our audiences, including farmers, fishermen, iwi, landowners, lifestylers .

Financial Implications

Current Budget

There are no financial implications for the current budget arising from this report.

Future Implications

There are no financial implications for the current budget arising from this report.

Ten Year / Annual Plan Implications

There are no financial implications for the current budget arising from this report.