
8 Resource Management Issues of Significance to Iwi

8.1 Introduction

This chapter canvases resource management issues of significance raised and presented by tangata whenua and other iwi. The chapter highlights Maori/iwi values toward the environment in general, as well as in some particular areas, such as water quality. The majority of these values complement, rather than contradict, the ethos of sustainable resource management contained in the Resource Management Act 1991. For example, Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau²³ have clearly stated:

Sustainability is a modern European catch phrase for something which has been fundamental to Maori for generations – tikanga.

The Resource Management Act 1991 gives a number of specific directives to take into account or have regard to matters of particular concern to Maori/iwi (sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8 in particular). The *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement* contains discussion on general issues of significance to iwi and Maori. It discusses the Maori resource management system which promotes the sustainability of the mauri of resources. The *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement* should be consulted for a perspective of general Maori/iwi concerns towards the environment, as well as an elaboration of principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Tarawera River catchment overlaps with the rohe of at least four separate iwi authorities. They are Ngati Awa (Mataatua), Ngati Rangitahi (Te Arawa), Tuhourangi (Te Arawa), and Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau (Te Arawa). Tuhourangi cover that area of the Tarawera Lakes catchments, while Ngati Awa and Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau include parts of the Upper and Lower Reaches of the Tarawera River catchment areas. Ngati Rangitahi is concentrated on the western side of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River, around Matata, and in the upper river and lakes catchments around Lake Tarawera.

A range of traditional and contemporary resource management issues are significant to these iwi authorities. Resource management matters of significance to iwi are based on spiritual and cultural beliefs, understandings of creation by which their role as kaitiaki was created, and the Treaty of Waitangi. Included in their concerns are contemporary issues relating more particularly to the day to day and future social and economic wellbeing of Maori. Many of the contemporary issues raised by iwi are similar to, but often more pressing than, those raised by the wider community, such as concern about unemployment, health and housing.

From a Maori perspective, sustainable management can be achieved only by protecting, preserving, and enhancing the mauri (life force) of natural and physical resources. The correct maintenance of this mauri guarantees the ongoing life and development of that resource. As traditionally practised, it ensures that resources are kept safe for the benefit of future generations. This is often achieved through the use of tapu and rahui. Ultimately, iwi consider that action which causes distress to the mauri of a resource should be stopped or contained²⁴.

²³ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

²⁴ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

8.2 Issues

8.2.1 Resource Management Issues Raised by Iwi

The four iwi noted in the introduction to this chapter were all consulted at various times during the preparation of this regional plan. Staff and councillors have had a number of hui and discussions with these iwi relating to the preparation of both this regional plan and the *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement*, as well as more general resource management issues. Four iwi were represented on the Tarawera River Liaison Group and three: Ngati Awa, Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, and Ngati Rangitahi, made presentations to the Liaison Group on resource management issues of significance to them.

The specific resource management issues identified by the four iwi whose rohe includes areas covered in this regional plan are as follows:

8.2.1(a) Pollution of Water

The traditional Maori belief is that water contains a mauri, a life force, that must be respected and cared for, as one would care for any living thing. Water is considered a cleansing agent, and with the proper karakia will remove tapu. The mauri is directly impacted on when subject to pollution. Any impact on the mauri of the water has an impact on waahi tapu sites, and areas used for healing and cleansing, tohi and purification rites. Local iwi have expressed concern about the adverse effects of discharges to water on aquatic life taken for human consumption, and the degradation of waahi tapu sites alongside polluted water bodies. Any impact on the mauri of the water has an impact on waahi tapu sites, and areas used for healing and cleansing, tohi and purification rites.

A stretch of river or body of water is considered sacred (tapu) if it is guarded by a taniwha (protective spirit) and may only be used for tapu rituals such as purification rites. In effect the taniwha is tapu and the water is noa. There are rituals symbolising both the spiritual and cleansing values of water. These two values are interwoven in the categories or states of water. Traditionally, there are five states or categories of water, which derive from the environmental and social realities in which Maori found themselves. These are:

(a) Waiora:

The purest form of water, like the rain. It has the potential to give life, to sustain the wellbeing of all things and to counteract evil. Waiora is used in sacred rituals to purify and to sanctify. It can remain pure only if contact with humans is protected by appropriate ritual prayers.

(b) Waimaori (fresh water):

Water that has come into contact with human beings. It has become ordinary and has no particularly sacred associations.

(c) Waikino (water containing disease or organisms):

Can be potentially harmful in that it conceals its intention or deceives a user by its habit. This category of water may hide boulders and snags that can cause damage. In a spiritual sense, this is water that has been polluted, debased, spoilt or corrupted.

(d) Waimate (dead poisonous water):

Water that has lost its mauri or life force. The power to rejuvenate itself or any living thing has gone; it is so damaged as to be considered dead.

(e) Waitai (salt water):

The term used for the sea, the surf and the tide. It represents the end of the water cycle from its inception through all states to the sea. From the sea, it is lifted back into the heavens and is purified to fall again as waiora.

Within the Tarawera catchment wastewater is discharged, through point-source outlets, directly to water bodies. This is a common practice sanctioned, through regional plans and resource consents, by Environment Bay of Plenty. These discharges are most evident in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River and to drains and canals on the Rangitaiki Plains. The discharge of human sewage is considered to be extremely offensive, adversely affecting the mauri of the water. The discharge of dairy shed effluent and industrial wastes has also been expressed as a matter of concern to iwi. These discharges degrade the quality of the water and result in it being considered in a spiritual sense, as Waikino.

All four iwi, in keeping with the Maori philosophies relating to the mixing of waters, consider these practices to be offensive. The concern of local iwi is summed up in a paper presented to the Tarawera River Liaison Group by Ngati Awa²⁵, which states:

Water provides Ngati Awa with food and spiritual resources. These resources are directly impacted on when subjected to various degrees of pollution, especially with regard to the mauri of those resources. Any impact on the above resources seriously restricts Ngati Awa's use of them, e.g. (polluted) cannot be used for hui with respect to manaaki ki nga manuhiri, forcing tangata whenua to buy food for the marae, thus placing an economic burden on tangata whenua to purchase food. Any spiritual impact on mauri of the water has an impact on waahi tapu areas used for healing and cleansing, tohi and purification rites.

The iwi authorities do not accept that the water bodies should continue to be used to transport or treat contaminants. The iwi in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River and Rangitaiki Plains areas in particular, namely Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Ngati Awa, and Ngati Rangitihia have called for the cessation of the discharge of human bodily waste, either untreated or treated to local water bodies. Human waste is currently discharged into the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River by Carter Holt Harvey Tissue, and on the Rangitaiki Plains, from the Whakatane District Council's Edgecumbe Community Sewage Plant.

The concern of the iwi authorities about the adverse effects of pollution of water bodies for spiritual and human health reasons was mirrored by a high level of concern expressed by Maori who took part in the survey of *Community Attitudes Towards the Tarawera River and its Catchment*, undertaken for Environment Bay of Plenty in March 1993. The survey shows that 23% of Eastern Bay Maori considered the environment as being poor or very poor. The survey indicated that 75% of Maori in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River catchment were concerned about the colour of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River, 71% were concerned about the smell of the river, and 80% about possible contamination of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River. When presented with a range of activities, which did not include the discharge of sewage to water bodies, Maori respondents considered that industrial waste and tree felling operations posed the greatest environmental hazards within the catchment.

Iwi consider that the quantity and quality of fish and shellfish from the Tarawera River, such as kakahi (freshwater mussels), tuna (eel), koura (freshwater crayfish), inanga (whitebait) is poor as a result of the aquatic environment being under severe stress²⁶. It is the consideration of iwi that the mauri of the Lower Reach of

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Te Runanga o Ngati Awa, Ngati Awa Policy Statement – Tarawera River (1994), Unpublished Report.

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Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

the Tarawera River must be restored and balance maintained, and the life supporting capacity of the river returned to its natural state.

The consideration of all iwi, as expressed to Environment Bay of Plenty during the preparation of the *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement* and this regional plan is that the mauri of the water, the ability to harvest kai moana, and human health generally, should not be adversely affected by discharges to water bodies. Iwi are concerned that the integrity of waahi tapu is not compromised. On the whole, the iwi authorities do not consider an ocean outfall to discharge industrial waste and sewage currently being discharged to the Tarawera River, as a practical solution to current discharge problems. Iwi generally consider that while an ocean outfall would result in a cleaner Tarawera River, it would not solve the problem of pollution of the ocean, and the adverse effects on the mauri of ocean waters. Iwi have stated their requirement that the discharge or leaching of industrial pollution into the Tarawera River cease, and have advocated a continued reduction in industrial discharges. The option favoured by iwi authorities for achieving this appears to be the movement to appropriate land based application of wastewater in conjunction with modern environmentally acceptable changes to the production process.

Refer to Chapter 15 (Surface Water Quality) for objectives, policies and methods designed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the above issues.

8.2.1(b) Water Quantity

Iwi have called for the maintenance of water quantity in the Tarawera catchment. For Ngati Rangitahi and Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau in particular this relates to maintenance of appropriate water levels within the lagoons and wetlands on the Rangitaiki Plains. For example, adequate water levels in the Matata Lagoon and other wetlands in the catchment of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River are crucial for the maintenance of bio-diversity and the control of plant infestation. Ngati Rangitahi also raised the possibility of re-diverting or partially re-diverting the Tarawera River to its original course.

Iwi, in particular Ngati Rangitahi, have also expressed concern about sedimentation in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River and associated wetlands. Their concern is that such sedimentation will adversely affect fishing grounds and impede boat access from the Tarawera River to the open sea. As a result of these concerns a technical report was prepared by Environment Bay of Plenty dealing with the issue of sedimentation.

Iwi have also raised concerns about the draw-off of water as the result of large scale exotic afforestation across extensive parts of the Upper Reach of the Tarawera River and Tarawera Lakes catchments. This issue was the subject of a report prepared by Environment Bay of Plenty in 1993 entitled *Tarawera River Flow Analysis*²⁷.

Refer to Chapter 14 (Surface Water Quantity) for objectives, policies and methods designed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the above issues.

Tuwharetoa Ki Kawerau believe they are unable to uptake any of the water above the industrial discharge points due to the need for the river to be at peak assimilative capacity when it reaches the industrial area. As the water quality and quantity is depleted, polluted and under stress along the lower reach of the river, iwi are unable to establish economic activities there and this results in an opportunity cost against iwi.

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Pang, L, 1993.

8.2.1(c) Wetlands

Before the draining of the wetlands of the Rangitaiki Plains in the early 1990s, and the subsequent channelling of the Tarawera and Rangitaiki Rivers, the wetland or swamp area on the Rangitaiki Plains was a major source of food for local Maori.

Many pa tuna (eel weirs) were situated in the swamp and river. Koura, inanga and other kai [were] to be found in the whole of the surrounding area. The diversity of life found in the swamp is gone, hemmed into the few remaining wetlands and in some cases has disappeared altogether²⁸. [The remaining wetland areas, both private and public, are considered to be of the] ...highest cultural importance, not only for physical aspects but also the spiritual, not only for what lies underneath the surface of the water but also that which grows in and around the water²⁹.

A primary concern of iwi, especially Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau and Ngati Rangitahi, is to see the remaining wetlands in the catchment of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River preserved and protected from any future threats. Protection includes ensuring that water quantity in the wetlands is controlled within appropriate ranges³⁰.

Refer to Chapter 13 (Freshwater Ecology) for objectives, policies and methods designed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the above issues.

8.2.1(d) Land Management

The iwi authorities within the catchment have expressed concern about land use activities and practices undertaken without concern for the mauri of the resource. The greatest concern expressed by iwi with regard to inappropriate land use activities and practices is their potential effect on degrading food resources and with regard to land clearance and contouring, the potential effect on waahi tapu sites. Plantation forestry practices are a particular activity considered by iwi as leading to erosion and degrading of water quality.

Refer to Chapter 11 (Land Use) for objectives, policies and methods designed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the above issues.

8.2.1(e) Heritage Places

Heritage protection forms one of the key areas of iwi concern. Care for the maintenance of heritage places ensures that Maori people will continue to evolve with an integrity that unites them with their past, and ensure that Maori culture is preserved.

Waahi tapu (sacred sites) form an integral part of Maori life. They give Maori reference points for direction and growth and ensure a stable cultural development. Removal or destruction of waahi tapu causes great concern for iwi and threatens the integrity of that tribal identity and growth. As an example, Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau have expressed particular concern about the ongoing degradation of urupa sited in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River area as a result of "the plume of pollutants reaching into Te Moana o Toi"³¹.

Heritage issues are covered in the *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement*.

²⁸ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

²⁹ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

³⁰ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

³¹ Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau, Background on the Tarawera River, 1994 (May), Unpublished Report.

8.2.1(f) Social and Economic Development

All iwi consider that the discharging of contaminants into the environment, particularly those emanating from the pulp and paper mills at Kawerau, needs to be subject to the most stringent environmental standards and an acceptable timetable for elimination, and in the case of human sewage prohibited altogether. There are five marae directly affected by the discharges to the Tarawera River, those marae being the Tuwharetoa marae; Tohia-o-te-Rangi, Hahuru, Umutahi and Tuwharetoa, and the Rangitihī marae; Rangiaohia.

Tuwharetoa Ki Kawerau believe their day to day and future cultural wellbeing as tangata whenua is related to the health of the river. They and other local iwi recognise that the continued operation of industries of the area may affect their social and economic wellbeing. Iwi believe that the implementation of a long term reduction programme aiming to achieve zero contamination effects using environmentally sound alternative treatment options, will assist and ensure social, economic and cultural well being.

Refer to Chapter 7 (Community Attitudes and Perceptions) for objectives, policies and methods designed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the above issues.

8.2.1(g) Ownership and Management

Ownership and management of natural and physical resources are among the greatest concerns continually raised by iwi authorities. The issue of ownership or management usually arises in the context of lands which were, by one means or another, taken from the iwi, and vested with the Crown or sold privately. The concern of iwi authorities is that they either do not have rightful ownership of their resources or that they lack management input into traditional resources.

As the Crown's agent, local government authorities have the responsibility to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources, regardless of their ownership. Ownership is an issue which Environment Bay of Plenty considers largely to be between the Crown and Maoridom. The general request to local authorities by iwi is that they become more part of the decision making and management process together with local authorities. Specifically, iwi have requested that local authorities assist them in the development of iwi environmental plans aimed at assessing and prioritising resource management issues within their rohe, including the potential for the sustainable economic use of resources. Iwi have also requested that they be included on hearing panels for resource consents to ensure that their values and taonga are protected. The Maori Regional Representative Committees established by Environment Bay of Plenty in 1993 have requested that Environment Bay of Plenty meet these requests.

Ownership and management issues are considered further in the *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement*.

8.2.2 Actioning Issues

Environment Bay of Plenty has obligations under the Resource Management Act 1991 to ensure that iwi/Maori values and consideration are appropriately reflected in the promotion of the sustainable management of those natural and physical resources which this regional plan deals with. The *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement* has developed objectives and policies relating to issues of concern to Maori. The objectives, policies and methods of implementation developed in this regional plan are consistent with both the requirements of Part II of the Act, and the requirements of the *Operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement*.