Minutes of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group Meeting held in The Council Chamber, Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Administration Building, 1061 Haupapa Street, Rotorua on Tuesday, 20 December 2016 commencing at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Chairman: Sir T Curtis (Chairman, Te Arawa Lakes Trust)
Deputy Chairman: Mayor S Chadwick (Rotorua Lakes Council)
Appointees: W Emery (Te Arawa Lakes Trust), Councillor K Hunt (Rotorua Lakes Council), Chairman D Leeder (Bay of Plenty Regional Council), Councillor K Winters (Bay of Plenty Regional Council)

In Attendance: Te Arawa Lakes Trust: R Mihinui; Rotorua Lakes Council: G Williams (Chief Executive); Ministry for the Environment: S Lewis; D Atkinson (Chairman, Lake Water Quality Society); G Dohnt (Lake Rotoehu Water); C Sutton (Project Rerewhakaaitu Inc.); T White (Lake Rotorua Incentives Board); Dr T Kingi (Chairman, Lake Rotorua Stakeholder Advisory Group); Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Councillor N Bruning; A Bruere (Lakes Operations Manager), A Grayling (Principal Advisor, Rotorua Catchments), C Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), F McTavish (Group Manager Strategy & Science), H Ngatai (Marketing and Communications Advisor), L Mason (Integrated Catchments Programme Manager), L Goldsmith (Rotorua Catchments Manager), R Garrett (Committee Advisor)

Apologies: Nil.

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed new member Councillor Kevin Winters and acknowledged the recent passing of Awanui Black, noting his contribution to the Bay of Plenty community, his leadership role within iwi and his work as a Bay of Plenty Regional Councillor. W Emery then opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 General Business and Tabled Items

Resolved

That pursuant to section 46A of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the following items be considered at this meeting:

1 Chairmanship: the meeting agreed that Sir Toby Curtis would remain in the chair for the meeting, with the formal appointment of the Chairman to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Chadwick/Leeder
CARRIED
3 Public Forum

The Chairman invited Mr Chris Sutton, Chairman of Project Rerewhakaaitu Inc, to speak to the meeting.

Refer Tabled Document 1: Project Rerewhakaaitu report to Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group meeting 20/12/16; Objective ID A2520651; and Tabled Document 2: Project Rerewhakaaitu: Waimangu & Rerewhakaaitu communities working with Councils and Te Arawa; Objective ID A2537979.

Mayor Chadwick acknowledged Mr Sutton’s recent success in being appointed to Rotorua Lakes Council Rural Community Board.

Mr Sutton presented his report summarising achievements and challenges for Project Rerewhakaaitu during 2016, noting the delay in obtaining scientific information during the year and some misunderstanding around the wording of the proposal regarding farm plans agreed between Project Rerewhakaaitu members and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Mr Sutton also expressed concern about the need to replace current farm nutrient management plans and the expense this could incur, noting that part of the Rerewhakaaitu community is in the upper river catchment, not the lakes catchment, and do not have plans; and that there may be a need to consider reorganising available funding.

In response to a question from a member, Mr Sutton noted that there were similar groups operating all over the country, and extending the Project Rerewhakaaitu model into other lake catchments was being looked at.

Members acknowledged the significant contribution made by Rerewhakaaitu farmers through their participation in this totally voluntary group. The Chairman thanked Mr Sutton for his presentation and noted that the suggestion for a funding reshuffle would be considered and feedback provided at the next Group meeting.

4 Declaration of conflicts of interest

Nil.

5 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group minutes - 30 August 2016

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group under its delegated authority:

1 Confirms the minutes of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group meeting held 30 August 2016

Chadwick/Hunt
CARRIED
6  Reports

6.1  Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Status Report

Lake Operations Manager Andy Bruere spoke to this report which updated members on progress made in the Te Arawa Lakes Programme since the previous Strategy Group meeting. Mr Bruere drew members’ attention to Paragraph 2.6 of the report, *Lake Rotoehu Restoration Projects*, noting that this section was in response to questions asked at the last Strategy Group meeting regarding the timeframe for transition from short term to long term interventions. Mr Bruere explained that due to the complexity of variables and research involved, there was too much uncertainty to be able to give definitive predictions around the timeframe of the interventions; and emphasised the need to think long term as the key factor of sustainable land use change will take decades to impact on lake water quality. He also noted that one size does not fit all – an intervention successful and appropriate in one lake may not be so for another lake.

A member asked for an update on the Tikitere diversion; Mr Bruere responded that construction is scheduled to occur in 2018/19, with the detailed design work to take place in 2017.

A member asked how quickly the Regional Council could respond if there was an extraordinary event of lake weed in Rotoehu; staff were not sure, noting such any response could not conflict with other weed harvesting obligations.

A member asked for clarification around Paragraph 2.3 of the report, *Lake Rotorua Incentives Board*, regarding the status of the Board as a Council Committee rather than a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO). Staff confirmed the Board’s status as a committee of Council, noting that two new members had been appointed, and that recent amendments to the Board’s Terms of Reference included an annual review clause and the addition of consideration of economic impact.

**Resolved**

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group under its delegated authority:

1  Receives the report, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Status Report;

Hunt/Winters
CARRIED

6.2  Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund - 2017

*Refer Powerpoint presentation: Objective ID A2538149*

Principal Advisor Rotorua Catchments Ms Anna Grayling presented this report which sought approval for the operational approach outlined and recommended for the Low Nitrogen Land Fund in 2017. Ms Grayling acknowledged the assistance of Te Arawa Lakes Trust and Rotorua Lakes Council in compiling the presentation.

Ms Grayling summarised funding objectives and progress on applications received to date; and then outlined the approach recommended to be taken for the Fund in 2017. Key recommendations included a hiatus being taken in 2017 with no major funding
members asked questions of clarification regarding existing and potential projects, and possible funding sources. The Ministry for the Environment representative noted that the Ministry had been working with the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation examining how people might be able to access a broader range of project funding and the possibility of joint agency funding for biodiversity projects.

General Manager Integrated Catchments Chris Ingle acknowledged Ms Grayling for her excellent work. Mr Ingle also introduced Ms Linda Goldsmith who would be in the role of Rotorua Catchments Manager while Ms Helen Creagh was away on parental leave.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group under its delegated authority:

1 Receives the report, Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund - 2017;

2 Supports funding minor projects in 2017 to the value of $200,000.

3 Delegates responsibility to the Partnership Steering Group to procure and approve Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund projects in 2017 to the value of $200,000.

4 Notes that the Partnership Steering Group can consider additional projects on their merits throughout 2017 and make recommendations back to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group if required.

Leeder/Winters
CARRIED

6.3 Lake Rotorua Incentives Board: Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes report
20 December 2016

Lake Rotorua Incentives Board Programme Director Te Taru White spoke to this report which updated members on Incentives Board activities since the previous Strategy Group meeting. Mr White introduced newly appointed Incentives Board Chairman, Regional Councillor Norm Bruning. Councillor Bruning thanked the Strategy Group for the invitation to attend the meeting and spoke briefly about the purpose and function of the Incentives Board, noting that after a comprehensive selection process, two new directors had recently been appointed to the Board, Ms Elizabeth Hughes and Councillor Kevin Winters.

Mr White acknowledged the work of past Incentives Board Chair Judith Stanway, and noted that the re-establishment of the Board after the triennial elections had also involved amendments to its Terms of Reference, which now included the consideration of economic impact and the inclusion of phosphorus.

Mr White informed members that the Board was currently in negotiation for two small and one larger deal; with one of the small deals likely to be signed before the end of the year. He noted that even a relatively small deal takes considerable work, using the same template as a large agreement; and that an Expressions of Interest process has
been developed as a more efficient way to manage small applications. Mr White also noted the impact the uncertainty around proposed Plan Change 10 was having on landowners and that interest in the Incentives Scheme was expected to increase once the Plan Change was confirmed.

A member stated that there were still concerns about the structure of the Incentives Board, its administrative costs and whether it is the best method to achieve the target; and noted the need for a review of the Board at the end of the financial year. The Chairman requested that a letter of thanks be sent to the previous Incentives Board Chair Judith Stanway from the Strategy Group.

Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group under its delegated authority:

1. Receives the report, LRIB Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes report 20 December 2016

Emery/Hunt
CARRIED

6.4 Terms of Reference for Te Arawa Mana Whenua Group December 2016

Te Arawa Primary Sector Group Chairman Dr Tanira Kingi spoke to this report, supported by Mr Roko Mihinui from the Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT). Dr Kingi outlined the purpose and background to the formation of the Te Arawa Mana Whenua Group (TAMWG), noting it was a joint initiative between Te Arawa Primary Sector Group and Te Arawa Lakes Trust which would provide a mechanism for landowners within Te Arawa to engage with the Strategy Group and its partners on relevant issues. Dr Kingi explained that the establishment of the TAMWG was an opportunity to provide a more substantial framework for Te Arawa landowners to engage in a purposeful way with policy and plan changes as currently many Te Arawa landowners – particularly small landowners – do not engage.

A member asked for clarification about the role of TAMWG, particularly around how it interfaces with TALT and other Te Arawa groups. Dr Kingi explained that while TALT had a clear role to represent Te Arawa interests in the lakes, no existing group had a mandate to speak for landowners, and noted that landowners may not always hold the same view as TALT on specific issues. He considered that although its role was partly to inform TALT, TAMWG itself should be represented wherever land owning representation was requested and relevant.

A member considered that currently there was no clear way for iwi landowners with little knowledge to access planning and policy processes and that this framework could enable collective responses from small landowners with lack of experience in these processes.

Members expressed reservations about supporting the formation of TAMWG until they had had the opportunity to consult with the Te Arawa groups that their appointing organisations already had ongoing relationships with, to ensure the interface between the various groups was clearly understood. The Chairman suggested that the report be held over and presented again at the next Strategy Group meeting.
Resolved

That the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group under its delegated authority:

1. Defers receiving the report, Terms of Reference for Te Arawa Mana Whenua Group December 2016, until its first meeting in 2017;

Curtis/Chadwick
CARRIED

6.5 Te Arawa Lakes Trust update

TALT Strategic Manager Environment and Freshwater Mr Roko Mihinui provided this report, which updated members on TALT activities since the last Strategy Group meeting. Mr Mihinui outlined the joint research initiative with Ministry for the Environment scientists which involved working with Te Arawa students to establish a cultural monitoring programme and data management system which can be incorporated into the resource consent process; this programme will lead to an NCEA qualification for the students involved.

Mr Mihinui informed members that due to restructuring within the Ministry for Primary Industries, a response to the proposed freshwater fishery bylaws had only recently been received and the formal notification process should take place in early February. He also noted that TALT had been working with Waikato Regional Council and Ministry for the Environment to assist in the development of joint programmes with farmers around two lakes in the Waikato region.

Mr Mihinui briefly summarised the results of the research surveys carried out in Lake Rotorua in conjunction with the Navy, noting that the surveys will be repeated in 2017. High levels of hydrothermal activity had been detected in Lake Rotorua and elevated levels in Lakes Rotoehu, Ōkataina and Tarawera.

7 General Business

The Chairman invited Mr Don Atkinson, Chairman of the Lake Water Quality Society, to address the meeting.

Mr Atkinson noted that the presence of catfish in the lakes was of serious concern and thanked the Regional Council for its commitment to eradication, and urged that a programme of DNA testing be undertaken to help identify areas where netting should take place. Mr Atkinson also noted that there was a question around the accuracy of the statement in the annual plan that Lake Tarawera had no algal blooms; residents considered this incorrect and that there had been a major bloom.

Mr Atkinson then informed members of a symposium the Society was planning to hold in July or August 2017; the two main areas of focus would be the degradation of the littoral zone and the restoration of the greater Tarawera catchment.

Mayor Chadwick suggested that the Society work together with Rotorua Lakes Council as it might be possible to coincide the dates of the Symposium with the Mayor's Speakers Forum.
8 Public Excluded Section

Resolution to exclude the public

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under s48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:


Grounds

That the public conduct of the whole or relevant parts of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist.

Reason

Please refer to the relevant clause in the meeting minutes.

Leeder/Chadwick
CARRIED

9 Confidential business to be transferred into the open

Nil.

The Chairman provided a closing karakia and wished everyone well for the New Year.

The meeting closed at 12.40 pm.