

SUBMISSION:

Te Kawa o Te Urewera

18 July 2017



The Whakatāne District Council offers sincere thanks to Te Urewera Board for the opportunity to make a submission to Te Kawa o Te Urewera – The Te Urewera Management Plan.

This document outlines the Council's thoughts in relation to Te Kawa, which we perceive to be a natural and logical outcome to the Te Urewera Act 2014. The Act changed the previously designated status of Te Urewera National Park to give Te Urewera its own unique identity. Council acknowledges that Te Kawa o Te Urewera begins the journey of understanding towards the articulation of that identity; and sets out the philosophy and guiding principles for the future management of people, for the benefit of the land. This Council applauds the spirit, direction and respect for the whenua (land) which is implicit throughout Te Kawa.

Chapter 1: *Te Marae – Te Urewera*

Whakatāne District Council acknowledges and accepts that the natural environments of Te Urewera are enduring and supports the notion of Te Kawa focusing on the management of people, as opposed to land management.

Te Urewera is the homeland of Tūhoe and the Council recognises the role the iwi holds as kaitiaki (guardians) of the sustainable management of resources and taona.

Through the "Our Special Places" strategic objective policy included in our Long Term Plan, Council also recognises the cultural and historic relationship Tūhoe have with Te Urewera as the living embodiment of their ancestral lands, waters, waahi tapu (sacred places), and other taona (treasures).

Chapter 2: *Te Kawa – Traditions and Beliefs*

Council understands that Te Urewera has her own identity and that Te Kawa looks to articulate this identity through the traditions and beliefs of the Tūhoe people, who have a definitive relationship with the Mauri (Life Force) of Te Urewera. Council would like to support Te Urewera Board in engaging with Te Urewera; and its goal to inspire tanata whenua (local people) and manuhiri (visitors) to connect with the natural environment and respect the integrity of its lands, waters, and heritage.

Chapter 3: *Na Tanata – The People*

We fully understand that the people and communities of Tūhoe are now ready to build and foster relationships that support the viability, health, wellbeing and future of the Iwi living within Te Urewera.

Whakatāne District Council has a positive working relationship with Te Urewera Board and we wish to continue and enhance this relationship. Underpinning our partnership is the willingness to share a common vision, and to explore new relationships for the benefit of all, within the guiding principles of Te Kawa.

Chapter 4: *Na Kōrero a Na Ranatira – Responsibilities*

Our organisation seeks to work with tanata whenua, as kaitiaki, and with the people or organisations applying for consents relating to Te Urewera, to promote informed decision-making through culturally-appropriate access to and use of privileged and sensitive information held by tanata whenua.

This approach that allows us as a local authority to contribute to help safeguard the mauri of water, land, and other natural resources of significance to tanata whenua, by managing the effects of any use or potential development opportunities.

Our authority and future activities within Te Urewera will be carried out in a manner that shows respect for and upholds the mana of Te Kawa, Te Urewera Board, Tūhoe, and most importantly Te Urewera herself as a life force. In order to preserve the mauri of the land, some activities will need to be reconsidered, lessons learnt from the past and new things learnt so that everything we do in the future enhances the land, and thereby enriches the people.

Chapter 5: *Tanata Whenua – Tūhoe*

Whakatāne District Council supported Tūhoe during its Treaty Settlement negotiations with the Crown and acknowledges the Crown apology in relation to past grievances. As an organisation, we have stated that it is our goal to build a positive relationship with Tūhoe, for the betterment of Tūhoe both within and outside of the Whakatāne District, and as a consequence, for the betterment of the Whakatāne community as a whole.

New relationships for the benefit of all can now be formed within the guiding principles of Te Kawa and opportunities for Tūhoe and others can result. The Council values its relationship with Tūhoe, understands, accepts and supports the principles of Te Kawa, and wishes to work with Tūhoe to explore and unleash opportunities throughout the rohe (area) which will enhance the land and enrich the people. This is evidenced in the work we continue to do in exploring the upgrading of the road from Murupara to Wairoa as a key access point to Te Urewera, and how the principles of Te Kawa align with the road's future.

Chapter 6: *Te Ao – Experience*

As a local authority, Whakatāne District Council is committed to upholding the mana of Te Urewera as a taona in our District and within New Zealand. Te Urewera is part of our identity and heritage, is environmentally unique, and plays an important role for reconnecting with nature for both Tūhoe and manuhiri (visitors). The Council would welcome the opportunity to work with the Te Urewera Board to assist in the evolution of the Te Urewera Experience.

In particular, we see the opportunities for Tūhoe and manuhiri to establish a deeper relationship with Te Urewera through education, building networks and dialogue, participating in restorative programmes and contributing to caretaking as positive steps toward the creation of new potential and opportunities.

The introduction of “Friendship Agreements” also aligns well with Council’s strategic objective of enabling opportunities relating to natural landscapes, biodiversity and cultural and heritage assets, provided that any potential adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. Te Kawa’s Friendship Agreements will be a good starting point to strengthen ties between Tūhoe, Te Urewera Board and external parties wanting to establish relationships with Te Urewera.

Chapter 7: Realising the Relationship

From Whakatāne District Council's perspective, putting Te Kawa's principles and responsibilities into action requires open discussions, transparency and trust. These factors have seen the establishment in recent times of a strong platform for a long and enduring relationship between Tūhoe and Council.

The intent to protect and enhance the tikana (customary practices) of Te Urewera under the principles of Te Kawa can be a robust and secure approach to ensure our communities and visitors to the District have an enjoyable relationship with Te Urewera, and as a Council we strongly support this kaupapa (principle).

Summary

Whakatāne District Council views Te Kawa as a tremendously significant document for Tūhoe, which establishes the philosophy and guiding principles for future interactions with Te Urewera. It provides definition to the future framework through which the mana, integrity and natural values of Te Urewera will be protected.

We acknowledge Te Urewera's place as a natural spirit, and a culture-inspiring entity with its own identity and mauri. We also acknowledge that Council's relationship with Tūhoe and the Te Urewera Board is significant to, and highly valued by our organisation, and we provide this submission accordingly. We look forward to the progression of Te Kawa and to continuing our strong and positive relationship with Tūhoe and Te Urewera.



Tony Bonne
MAYOR – WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT