

DEVELOPMENT OF MAORI CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

In Rotorua District's Bright Future Project, one of the community outcomes identified was "A Community that Values its living Maori Culture". Rotorua District Council has a number of mechanisms by which it encourages Maori participation in the decision making processes of local government and helps to build capacity within the Maori community.

These mechanisms recognise Te Arawa as having mana whenua within the district and over the next 10 years Council will be working to improve and strengthen relationships as well as ensuring all Maori are able to participate in decision-making processes.

A positive relationship with Tangata Whenua/Maori is significant to the strategic focus of Council. Part of this focus is designing, implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of positions, committees, advisory groups, policies, procedures and communications that will involve or affect Tangata Whenua and Maori in the varied decision-making processes of Council.

The Local Government Act 2002 has a number of references to Maori and the Treaty of Waitangi (Section 4 Part 1). Parts 2, 6 and Schedule 10 clause 5 of the LGA 2002 provide principles and requirements for local authorities and Maori communities.

This section of The Ten Year Plan overviews how Council currently works with Tangata Whenua Maori and will outline future strategies of engaging and encouraging participatory democracy with our diverse Maori community.

Rotorua's Maori community

There are more than 21,000 Maori currently living in the Rotorua District and this number is steadily growing¹. Rotorua's Maori population is very young; 56.2 percent of the under-15 age group in Rotorua are of Maori descent. The Median age of Maori people in the Rotorua District is 22.1 years compared with 33.0 years for the District population as a whole².

At least 25 percent of Rotorua's Maori population have identified as being of Te Arawa descent. Rotorua's young Maori profile, Tangata Whenua and Maori from other tribal areas, pose a number of challenges for

Rotorua's District Council in ensuring that Maori as a whole either have opportunities to participate, or are contributing to Council's decision making processes.

Council is proposing for the following three years, to create opportunities to engage and positively influence participation from Maori that live in Rotorua, but are from other rural and urban areas.

Maori Communications Strategy

The strategy is intended to identify feasible, cost effective and targeted methods of engaging and encouraging participation from Rotorua's Maori community. Research will be undertaken to identify the type of Council information that will increase awareness and build capacity to participate in Council decision-making processes (eg. electoral processes, funding options, rating policies, customer services, resource consents, committees, legislation etc) to assess how this information can and is presented; taking into consideration the media used, how accessible and user-friendly that media is (eg, reports, internet, brochures, public notifications, customer services, policies and procedures, committee meetings). Implementation of research findings and action plans will be based upon available resources and how well the plans progress Council's Community Outcomes.

Intent of the strategy is to initiate and maintain an open and effective relationship with Maori, iwi organisations and individuals, to encourage feedback and information sharing, about;

- appropriate and effective consultation processes,
- current and future land and resource development strategies
- potential models of collaboration and co-operation
- environmental, business, social, cultural and recreational initiatives.
- defining tribal geographical boundaries and associated contacts.

Council is currently seeking commitment and cooperation from community organisations and Maori to develop monitoring indicators which will measure and evaluate how Council's Community outcomes are being met, in terms of enhancing and fostering a "Living Maori Culture".

¹ Rotorua District Cultural Profile 2003 pg6

² Rotorua's Changing Communities 2002 pg 11

Tangata whenua have an active representative role in some decision-making processes of Council, through the following forums. These forums encourage tangata whenua to become familiar and interact with Council staff, Councillors, policies and procedures. Forum members are able to utilise, and communicate with, their networks about Council processes as they relate to specific departments or functions.

Te Arawa Standing Committee

This committee was established in 1993 to review all matters that may impinge upon the collective resources of Te Arawa iwi, hapu and whanau and to provide a Te Arawa perspective on all matters that affect Maori. Elections for the committee are held every three years in the same year as local body elections

Iwi Consultative Group

Council established a consultative committee in 2000, to meet its obligations under Sections 6(e) and 8 of the Resource Management Act. The role of the committee is to determine when further consultation is required and who to contact in such circumstances. Three Te Arawa Kaumatua are members of the consultative committee.

Kaumatua Committee O Te Whare Taonga o Rotorua

The Committee was set up to facilitate communications between Council and Te Arawa, whanau, hapu and iwi on matters regarding Te Arawa taonga, conservation methods, ethnology and social history, exhibits, placement, storage and movement of taonga within the museum and to other local or national locations.

Ngati Whakaue Gifted Lands Protocol

This is an agreement between the Rotorua District Council and Pukeroa Oruawhata Trust on behalf of the original owners of the Pukeroa Oruawhata Block (known as the City of Rotorua), and their descendants. The agreement is that Council will not effect any changes of status with respect to any reserves, or take steps to dispose of or alienate any of them, without prior negotiation, consultation and consent in writing from the Pukeroa Oruawhata Trust.

Kauae Cemetery Trust Board

The Kauae Cemetery is part of the Rotohokahoka E Block. In June 1884 by order of Judge Clarke of the Native Land Court, the title was issued in the names of fifteen owners or grantees. On 23 August 1923 Judge Harold Carr of the Native Land Court made an order vesting the "Ngongotaha Cemetery in the first board of Trustee. The Mayor holds the position of chairperson. Three Councillors, and three Ngati Whakaue members whom are descendants of the original owners, comprise the board. The board meets once a year to work through operations, policies and procedures.

Iwi Management Plans

A policy to create environmental, strategic and operational alliances with tangata whenua will be implemented in 2004. The policy encourages Te Arawa iwi/hapu based organisations, resident in Rotorua, to apply for funding to enhance and develop their resources. The policy is intended to facilitate models of co-operation (Tangata Whenua & Council), encourage information and expertise sharing and stimulate economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes.

Rotorua Joint Lakes Committee

The Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee is currently a joint committee of Rotorua District Council and Environment BOP, with Te Arawa as a co-opted member. The committee's role is one of strategic monitoring and facilitation with respect to co-management issues for the Lakes of the Rotorua District.

With a pending settlement offer from the Crown to Te Arawa in relation to ownership of the lakebeds of the Rotorua District, the composition and legal status of any joint committee will be reviewed accordingly.

The forums and strategies outlined in this document are pivotal to meeting community expectations, reflected in "Community Outcomes".

They will assist Council to initiate and create positive models of mutual co-operation between Maori and Council. These strategies and forums are legal requirements and meet the intent of the Local Government Act 2002 as it affects Maori and their participation and contribution to Council's decision-making processes.