TE ARAWA LAKES TRUST SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

Mai Maketū ki Tongariro
Ko Te Arawa te waka
Ko Te Arawa māngai-nui ūpoko tū-takitaki

From Maketū to Tongariro
Te Arawa the canoe
Te Arawa the determined people

Introduction

This is the submission of Te Arawa Lakes Trust to the Draft National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (the Trust) is established by the Te Arawa Lakes Trust Deed 2009. The Trust is the governance entity mandated by all registered members of Te Arawa to receive and manage the assets and funds established by the Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act 2006. This includes ownership of the lakebeds of Te Arawa Lakes. The objectives of the Trust include: the promotion of the cultural well-being of Te Arawa; the maintenance of places of spiritual and cultural significance to Te Arawa; and any other objective the Trustees consider beneficial to Te Arawa. While the Trust is the
governance entity for its members, its decisions are informed by hapū and iwi whose contributions to decision-making are delivered to the Trust through their respective Trustees.

Te Arawa hapū and iwi are tangata whenua, hunga tiaki, and significant landowners over our rohe mai Maketū ki Tongariro. Te Arawa have occupied the area for many, many generations. Te Arawa continues to occupy, own, use and manage lands, areas of significance and resources across our rohe. Te Arawa remains connected to our ancestral lands, waters, wāhi tapu sites and other taonga, even if these may now be in the hands of others and maintain our rights and interests in them. The relationships of Te Arawa with our ancestral lakes has been recognised by the Crown through the Te Arawa Lakes Deed of Settlement 2004, Te Arawa Lakes Settlement Act 2006 and in statutory acknowledgments in the Resource Management Act 1991.

Te Tūāpapa o ngā Wai o te Arawa

Te Tūāpapa o ngā Wai o te Arawa has been adopted by Te Arawa Lakes Trust as the key guiding framework for management of the Te Arawa Rotorua Lakes for the Trust and others to follow. The three strategic goals of Te Tūāpapa o ngā Wai o Te Arawa are:

1. Ka rongo te ao i te Mana o Te Arawa.
   The authority of Te Arawa is readily recognised by all.

2. Te mā o te wai e rite ana kia kite i ngā tapuwae ā te kōura.
   The quality of the water is such that you can see the footsteps of the kōura.

3. Whakapakari ake i te waka kia pae ki uta.
   TALT is well equipped for the journey ahead.

Te Tūāpapa o ngā Wai o te Arawa sets out who we are, our guiding values and how to connect those values to tangible actions. Te Tūāpapa o ngā Wai o te Arawa also provides the context framework and values for our engagement.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust Position

The Trust appreciates the Minister progressing this long delayed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS). Progressing the NPS is consistent with the recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal report “Ko Aotearoa Tēnei”, into the Wai 262 treaty claims, for MfE to make greater use of National Policy Statements. However, that use, as envisaged by the Tribunal, was to develop arrangements for kaitiaki control, partnership and influence on environmental decision-making. Unfortunately, the Draft NPS falls short on these aims.

Overall, the Trust considers that the NPS should be strengthened, simplified and better aligned with other national policy statements. This will better reflect the holistic world view and environmental
management practices of Te Arawa. Our Environmental Plan, He Mahere Taiao mō ngā wai o Te Arawa, which seeks to restore and enhance the health and diversity of ecosystems and habitats in and around Te Arawa Lakes requires regional and district councils to value and manage Te Arawa Lakes and their catchments as a network of interconnected ecosystems. This is not assisted by multiple overlapping national policy statements with a range of effect management hierarchies for freshwater, terrestrial, coastal and geothermal ecosystems.

The Trust makes the comments below to help progress this NPS and improve the management of the ecosystems in and around Te Arawa Lakes. The Trust makes specific comment on those aspects of the NPS that cover or affect freshwater ecosystems. The Trust also draws the attention of MfE to the geothermal statutory acknowledgments set out in the Te Arawa Iwi and Hapū Claims Settlement Act 2008 and raises concerns regarding monitoring and resourcing. The Trust looks forward to dialogue with the Minister and staff to resolve the issues raised.

**Hutia Te Rito**

The Trust supports the NPS having a strong Māori concept at its core. However, the Trust is disappointed that Hutia Te Rito as a core concept is weakly carried through into the objectives, policies and methods of the NPS. This means that while freshwater ecosystems are subject to a strong management hierarchy reflecting a core māori concept, terrestrial biodiversity is subject to differing hierarchy reflecting other values. This is contrary to the holistic world view of Te Arawa and needs to be changed.

The Trust seeks that the concept of Hutia Te Rito be given a strong implementation by the adoption of a management hierarchy similar to that for Te Mana o Te Wai in the Essential Freshwater reforms. That is, consider the needs and health of the ecosystem first (Te hauora o te koio, te hauora o te taonga me te hauora o te Taiao), then the needs and health of the people (including through cultural harvest), then the needs of other uses to provide for social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

**Geographic Application**

Five clauses are required to state where the Draft NPS applies with exclusions and exceptions for indigenous biodiversity in coastal marine, freshwater, wetland and potentially geothermal ecosystems. As stated above this fragmentation of the management of indigenous biodiversity is contrary to the holistic world view of Te Arawa. It hinders the maintenance and enhancement of our Te Arawa Lakes ecosystems which cover terrestrial, freshwater and geothermal environments. It is disappointing to see this fragmentation in a document that proports to improve integrated management (objective four). The overlapping and inconsistent management frameworks applied by each NPS also place additional consultation burdens on Te Arawa iwi and hapū.

One policy statement which sets common objectives, policies and methods for indigenous biodiversity across all the environments of Aotearoa should be considered. Given the current
overlapping complexity of national policy statements and other RMA instruments with varying
degrees of indigenous biodiversity management this may need to be a goal for the next generation
of environmental legislation.

**Objective One - Maintenance of Indigenous Biodiversity**

The first objective of the NPS is simply “to maintain indigenous biodiversity”. However, as the
discussion document notes, indigenous ecosystems have been degraded, lost and fragmented.
Development pressures, predators, weeds, pests and diseases continue to threaten our indigenous
biodiversity and ecosystems in and around Te Arawa Lakes. At the same time there is increasing
pressures from the effects of climate change. The NPS recognises the need to enhance some
ecosystems, such as freshwater wetlands, but lacks an objective which states this.

In the context of what has been lost, and the pressures ahead, an objective of merely maintaining
indigenous biodiversity will inevitably lead to decline in the freshwater ecosystems of Te Arawa
Lakes. The objective must be to maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity. The Biodiversity
Collaborative Group (BCG) proposed that the first objective of the NPS refer to enhancing
ecosystems. The Trust seeks that the objective be: “To enhance and maintain indigenous
biodiversity.”

**Geothermal Ecosystems**

The Trust is concerned by the treatment of geothermal systems in the NPS. The Trust is disappointed
that MfE states in the discussion document that it is in ongoing consultation with local authorities
and industry representatives on these options and does not mention Te Arawa iwi and hapū. Te
Arawa Lakes Trust reminds MfE that the Crown has recognised the association of Te Arawa iwi and
hapū with geothermal systems across the Taupō Volcanic Zone through the Affiliate Te Arawa Iwi
and Hapū Claims Settlement Act 2008. This sets out a geothermal statutory acknowledgment for Te
Arawa iwi and hapū over the Rotorua Region Geothermal System, which includes the following:

- Rotorua Geothermal Field
- Taheke Tikitere Geothermal Field
- Horohoro Geothermal Field
- Waikite-Waiotapu Geothermal Field
- Reporoa Geothermal Field
- Atiamuri Geothermal Field
- Te Kopia Geothermal Field
- Orakei-Korako Geothermal Field
- Ohaaki/Broadlands Geothermal Field
- Ngatamariki Geothermal Field
- Rotokawa Geothermal Field.
The Trust is disappointed that the options are evaluated in the discussion document without any reference to the significant cultural values that attached to geothermal systems or the effects of their use on freshwater ecosystems. The Trust seeks that MfE undertake consultation on this matter with Te Arawa iwi and hapū as a priority.

Policy 4 - Integrated Management
Integrated management should be applied across both administrative boundaries and environmental domains. Unfortunately, as noted above, overlapping and conflicting national policy can detract from this aim. The Trust seeks that the policy be amended as follows: “Apply integrated management of indigenous biodiversity within and between freshwater, terrestrial and coastal environments and administrative boundaries”.

Method 3.16 - Restoration and enhancement
The intent of this method, which applies to freshwater wetlands, is supported by the Trust. Particular support is given to the provision for incentives for restoration and enhancement on Māori land, in recognition of the opportunity cost of maintaining indigenous biodiversity on that land. Such incentives should be provided by both the Crown and local authorities and may be both monetary and non-monetary. Currently the provisions of incentives in the NPS is optional and for regional councils only. The Trust seeks that clause 5 of the policy be amended so that local authorities and the Crown must provide incentives for the restoration and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.

Method 3.18 - Regional Biodiversity Strategies
The intent of this method, which applies in terrestrial, coastal and freshwater environments is supported. The preparation of the strategies in collaboration with Tangata Whenua is supported. It is considered that holistic management could be advanced by aligning and integrating these strategies with Regional Pest Management Plans. The Trust seeks that this method be retained and that options be considered for the alignment and integration of these strategies with Regional Pest Management Plans.

Method 3.20 - Monitoring
Te Arawa iwi and hapū have been monitoring the state of the ecosystems in and around our lakes for generations. The Hutia Te Rito report commissioned by BCG from Te Kahu o te Taiao, the Mātauranga Māori rōpu of the Iwi Chairs Forum, envisaged mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring methods as the basis of biodiversity management. This requires the consistent implementation of Hutia Te Rito as a concept. However, by the time we arrive at method 20 of the Draft NPS Hutia Te Rito has been largely forgotten. Mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori are to be used only “to the extent possible”.

The Trust considers that sustainable management of Te Arawa Lakes requires MfE and councils to recognise, enable and provide for mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori monitoring in the terrestrial
environment as a core component of that management. The Trust seeks that the NPS be amended to reflect this.

**Resourcing**

The Trust notes and supports the funding allocation for Māori engagement in the implementation of the Essential Freshwater package of reforms. Similarly, the implementation of the indigenous biodiversity NPS will require engagement and collaboration from Te Arawa iwi and hapū to achieve the outcomes envisaged. This will require further resourcing.

**Relief Sought**

The Trust seeks amendments to the NPS to address the general points above. The Trust looks forward to discussing these points further with the Minister and MfE staff.

Ngā mihi, nā

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