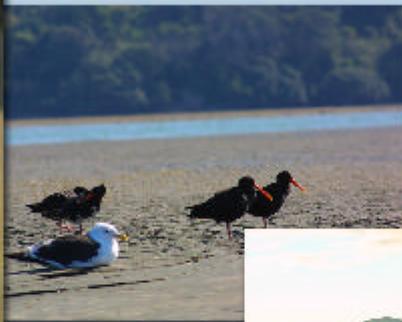


# Draft Ohiwa Harbour and Catchment Scoping Report



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## Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Document Housekeeping.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Catchment Description .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 General.....	1
<b>Chapter 2: Background and Purpose of the Scoping Report .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Kaitiakitanga and History of the Ohiwa Harbour .....	6
2.2 Legislative Requirements on Local Government Organisations.....	8
2.2.1 <i>Environment B-O-P</i> .....	8
2.2.2 <i>Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils</i> .....	8
2.3 The Department of Conservation .....	9
<b>Chapter 3: Stakeholders Response to Consultation .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Pressures on the Harbour .....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Relevant Issues.....	13
<b>Chapter 5: The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands .....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Listed sites.....	15
5.2 Wise Use .....	15
5.3 Reserves and Training .....	16
5.4 International Co-operation.....	16
<b>Chapter 6: Integrated Management.....</b>	<b>17</b>
6.1 What is Meant by ‘Strategy’.....	18

**Chapter 7: Methodology for Strategy Development**..... 21

7.1 What would an Integrated Management Strategy include?..... 22

7.2 Benefits ..... 22

**References** ..... 25

**Appendix 1 – Map of Ohiwa Catchment**..... 27

## Executive Summary

This is the Draft Ohiwa Harbour and Catchment Scoping Report prepared for the Strategic Policy Committee of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Environment B·O·P).

The Scoping Report is designed to help Environment B·O·P decide whether to proceed to fund the development of an integrated management strategy for the Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment.

This Scoping Report is based on research of reports prepared for Environment B·O·P and other stakeholder organisations.

An intensive consultative process involving statutory and iwi and hapu stakeholder group's was undertaken prior to the preparation of this report. In all cases staff and elected representatives of each organisation indicated their willingness to participate in the Scoping Report process and any subsequent strategy that might arise out of it. For this reason it is recommended that further consultation should follow this report, regardless of the outcome.

Planning terms such as 'integrated management' and 'strategy' are explained in the report and identify the focus of the Scoping Report.

The report recognises that integrated management is a goal and that arriving at integrated management requires communication which is, in itself, a strategic device that has potential to benefit all stakeholder participants.

Developing a strategy that focuses on integrated management offers management agencies the potential to:

- Reduce duplication of services and spending,
- Provide greater clarity and certainty about roles and responsibilities,
- Design processes to help resource consent applicants plan application timelines,
- Enhance relationships between stakeholder groups, including the community,
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder groups to participate in activities aimed at achieving a common vision,

while sustainably managing resources that are being appropriately used and developed.

This report asserts that such objectives are best met when stakeholder groups come together to strategise how they might integrate their resource management with other stakeholders.



## Document Housekeeping

This version of the draft scoping report has been prepared by staff of the Resource Policy Section of the Strategic Policy & Evaluation Group for the consideration of Environment B·O·P's Strategic Policy Committee at its meeting of 8 May 2002.

### (i) Objective

The objective of this report is to assist the Strategic Policy Committee of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Environment B·O·P) to decide whether to proceed with the development of an Integrated Management Strategy for the Ohiwa harbour and catchment.

This Scoping Report has been prepared while Councillors and staff have been consulting on it and the prospect of a strategy itself. It can be expected that the Scoping Report will be the starting point for development of the strategy and will be subject to further discussion by the participating partners and other interested groups.

This Scoping report has been prepared to meet a commitment in the 2001/2002 Annual Plan to investigate and report on the need to commence the preparation of an integrated resource management strategy for the Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment.

The Scoping report has been prepared to inform deliberations on the draft Annual Plan for the period 2002/2003.

Initial consultation during the preparation of the Scoping report has been undertaken with the Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils, the Department of Conservation, and several kaitiaki stakeholder organisations including Upokorehe hapu, Whakatohea, Tuhoe and Ngati Awa. There is clear recognition that to be truly representative of the catchment, in the event that an integrated management strategy for the harbour is developed, wider consultation with members of Ohiwa Harbour and catchment communities will be initiated.



## Chapter 1: Catchment Description

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### 1.1 General

Ohiwa Harbour is situated in the eastern Bay of Plenty in the North Island of New Zealand. The harbour itself is separated from the Pacific Ocean by a major sand spit (Ohope Spit) on the western side of the harbour entrance, and a much smaller spit, (Ohiwa Spit) to the east.

The urban settlement of Port Ohope is on the Ohope Spit, west of the harbour mouth, and is a popular holiday destination for people who enjoy the attractions of an open coast and harbour, within easy walking distance of each other. Ohiwa Spit is on the eastern shore of the harbour mouth, and although it is much smaller than the Ohope Spit, the Ohiwa Spit and locality is also a popular holiday destination and residential area.

The harbour bed covers an area of approximately 26.4 km<sup>2</sup>, and is relatively shallow, exposing 70% of its bed at low tide. The main channels provide adequate depth for a small fleet of commercial and recreational fishing craft based at Port Ohope and Ohiwa. There are a number of small islands within the harbour, one of which has permanent residents.

There are twelve small streams and one small river feeding into the harbour from a catchment that drains approximately 171km<sup>2</sup>, from inland hills at Matahi in the Waimana and Nukuhou valleys.

The land catchment draining into Ohiwa Harbour covers an area of 171 square kilometres. See Appendix 1

The harbour is enclosed by the Ohope and Ohiwa barrier spits, on the western and eastern sides respectively of the harbour entrance. Ohope Spit is approximately 6 kilometres long and varies between 300 and 1000 metres wide. The western end of the spit has been predominantly subdivided and developed into urban land, with the settlement known as Port Ohope. Much of the eastern end is reserve land. Some of the reserve land has been developed into the Ohope Golf Course, and some into parking and recreational areas on the harbour side of the spit. The balance has been left in indigenous vegetation. The Ohiwa Spit is much smaller, being approximately 500 metres long and 200 metres wide. There are several houses remaining on the Ohiwa Spit, as the erosion phase of the 1960s and 1970s has passed.

There are ten small islands in the harbour. Four of the islands cover less than 1 hectare each and are un-named. Tern Island is a Wildlife Management Reserve, Pataua Island a Scientific Reserve, Uretara Island a Scenic Reserve, Motuotu Island a Nature Reserve, and Hokianga Island is a Maori Reserve. Ohakana Island is subdivided into several small lifestyle farm blocks and has permanent residents.

The salt marsh area at the mouth of the Nukuhou River is the Nukuhou Conservation Area and provides spawning habitat for whitebait.

A commercial oyster farm is situated to the southwest of Ohakana Island adjacent to Wainui Road.

The Ohiwa Harbour catchment drains a number of small valleys, with the largest being the Nukuhou River valley, arising approximately 12 kilometres inland. The catchment generally faces to the north, and has a diversity of land uses, ranging from protection and production forestry, through dry stock and dairy farming, to orcharding and lifestyle blocks.

The harbour has been identified as a wetland of international importance, especially for wading birds (Owen 1991, 1994), and is described as “an important estuarine ecosystem with significant conservation values” (Beadel 1993). There are four general categories of vegetation identified by Beadel, differing according to the substrate on which they grew:

- Estuarine wetlands: These are dominated by two species: searush and mangrove. The mangrove (which rarely occurs naturally further south of Ohiwa) has increased markedly in numbers over the last 5 decades. The searush is often found in association with other estuarine species such as oioi.
- Freshwater wetlands: The freshwater wetlands have been largely lost through development for farmland since the arrival of Europeans. The few remaining examples consist of a narrow band of manuka scrub and shrublands (harakeke, ti kouka, grey willow and *coprosma spp.*) inland of saltmarsh areas. Environment B·O·P has assisted a number of landowners in fencing and planting these margin areas, and the extent of these areas is slowly increasing. Grazing by stock provides the greatest threat to these areas, which are seen as being able to provide an important buffer between the land and the harbour water.
- Sand dunes: Spinifex sandfield occurs along the margins of the two sand spits. Apart from spinifex, *Muehlenbeckia*, sea couch, and bracken are common.
- Hillslopes: Hillslopes have been extensively modified from the original forest cover. All that remain are examples of pohutukawa forest on some of the headlands, and small remnants on the Hiwarau Block, a substantial area of Maori-owned land near Kutarere.

The natural character and landscape of the Ohiwa Harbour is under pressure from a wide range of activities. These include:

- The loss of indigenous vegetation over time, particularly around the harbour margins,

- the demand for urban development on Ohope Spit,
- more intensive subdivision around the harbour,
- poor road maintenance around the harbour margin,
- dumping of rubbish on the harbour edge.

While natural character can be expected to change over time, the loss of natural character is a concern.



## Chapter 2: Background and Purpose of the Scoping Report

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When local government was reorganised in 1989, an Ohiwa Harbour Advisory Committee was established with some statutory powers. That committee comprised three representatives each from the Whakatane and Opotiki District Councils and representatives of the three iwi with interests in the harbour. The Resource Management Act 1991 effectively transferred that committee's powers to the regional council. An informal Ohiwa Working Group of staff from Environment B·O·P, the Department of Conservation and the two district councils endeavoured to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to management of the harbour and its catchment but this group is no longer functioning.

In 1991, the regional council's interim regional strategy noted that *it is widely appreciated that a [Ohiwa Harbour] management plan is urgently required* and identified the need for an Ohiwa Harbour Scoping Study. In association with the preparation of the next strategic plan, a scoping report was prepared and presented to the Resource Planning Committee on 26 May 1994. That scoping report, while acknowledging that some harbour-related issues could be addressed through other measures, noted that other issues required further investigation. The report recommended (and this was adopted by the Council) that the decision whether or not to proceed with an Ohiwa Catchment Regional Plan should await the outcome of the Integrated Planning Strategy project.

The Integrated Planning Strategy<sup>1</sup> proposed that the number of regional plans be reduced (from a possible 15 or so suggested in strategic plans up until then) to four core plans (coast, air, land and water) together with those special purpose plans that were well advanced through the formal process, and to address other sub-regional or topic-based issues initially by way of non-statutory strategies. This 'strategy' approach was adopted through subsequent annual and strategic plans, with priority being given to a strategy for the lakes of the Rotorua district, Tauranga Harbour (now incorporated in Smartgrowth), heritage, waste, and natural hazards.

The 1995 Strategic Plan forecast that work on the Ohiwa Catchment Regional Plan would commence at the beginning of 2000 with a note that it was subject to the integrated planning strategy but would require a similar scale of resources. In considering the integrated planning strategy, the Corporate Management Team (now the Strategic Management Group) included Ohiwa Harbour among a short list to be given further consideration: heritage, natural hazards, Tauranga Harbour catchment, and Ohiwa Harbour catchment. (Ohiwa is the only one of those not yet commenced.)

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<sup>1</sup> The Integrated Planning Strategy was developed by staff and was not formally reported to the Council. However, its main provisions have been adopted in subsequent annual and strategic plans.

The Council's 1998 Strategic Plan proposed that the Ohiwa Harbour Strategy would commence in 2001/2002 and run for three years at \$100,000 per year. In the 2001 Strategic plan and Long Term Financial Strategy (reflected in the current annual plan), \$15,000 was allocated for 2001–2002 for the preparation of a scoping report with the \$100,000 per year for three years postponed for a year, subject to that scoping report.

Up to now, in regard to investigations and planning, priority has been given to addressing comparable issues in respect of the lakes of the Rotorua district and more recently Tauranga Harbour and its catchment. However, operational activities and particularly soil conservation property plans have accorded Ohiwa Harbour and its margins a high priority, addressing predominantly soil conservation and water quality issues.

There is a call for more recognition of the need for the protection and enhancement of natural character and landscape and for facilitating the participation of district councils, iwi and other interest groups in managing the harbour and its catchment.

At its meeting on 12 February 2002, the Strategic Policy Committee directed the Group Manager Strategic Policy to present a draft outline report of the possible scope of the strategy for the integrated management of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment, having regard to the ramification of seeking Ramsar registration/identification, to the Strategic Policy Committee meeting on 26 March 2002. The draft outline received by the Committee on 26 March 2002 was used as the basis for consulting selected stakeholders in the preparation of this Scoping Report. This scoping report is directed to be presented to the Strategic Policy Committee at its meeting on 8 May 2002.

The Scoping report identifies that the preparation of a strategy will provide an opportunity for stakeholder agencies to take a proactive approach to developing an integrated management strategy for the harbour.

## 2.1 Kaitiakitanga and History of the Ohiwa Harbour

Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment is ancestral land with which several Mataatua iwi have a traditional relationship. Hapu from Whakatohea, Ngati Awa and Tuhoe iwi have maintained long and important cultural and traditional relationships with Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment and these relationships endure today.

The ethic of kaitiakitanga applies in the Ohiwa harbour for the tangata whenua, and there is increasing concern that the harbour should be looked after to ensure that its rich resources are still there for future generations.

Shellfish have been harvested from the harbour for centuries, and continue to be harvested today. One of the names that the harbour is known as is "Te Kete Kai a Tairongo" (the food basket of Tairongo). The harbour is seen as a "taonga", a priceless treasure that must be looked after to ensure that it continues to provide for present and future generations.

The land surrounding Ohiwa Harbour has been populated for centuries. There are hundreds of archaeological and historic sites within the catchment, with many in close proximity to the harbour itself.

Following the Crown confiscations of the 1860s, Mataatua iwi were dispossessed of much of their land.

At around the same time, Ohiwa Harbour was used as a secondary trading centre servicing Whakatane and Opotiki, because the river entrances to Whakatane and Opotiki were often too rough or too shallow to safely navigate a passage.

Ohiwa township was built on a sand spit on the western entrance of the harbour. Prior to 1900, there was a good deep water entrance to the harbour, and a wharf was built at Ohiwa. In addition, a ferry service transported people across the harbour entrance. After 1900, erosion of the Ohiwa sand-spit east by the harbour entrance finally forced the closure of the wharf and a new wharf was built at Kutarere. The land where the Ohiwa Township once stood has disappeared into the harbour waters. At the same time as the erosion threatened the Ohiwa Wharf, the inland road from Whakatane to Opotiki was completed, and the Ohiwa Route across the harbour entrance became less popular. Port Ohope Wharf was also built, and continues to be used to the present day, for a small fishing fleet. The Kutarere Wharf continued to be used until the regular ferry services stopped, as land transport became more economical.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Lands and Survey Department subdivided land on the Ohiwa spit at the eastern end of the harbour entrance. Many people bought sections and built weekend or retirement homes. However, by 1965, it was evident that the sand spit was eroding at a rate of 6 metres per year. Attempts to control the erosion were unsuccessful. By the 1970s some homes had been lost, and some were shifted, with Government assistance, to Matata (20 kilometres west of Whakatane). By 1980, erosion had slowed, and the Ohiwa Spit began to build up again.

Within the Ohiwa Harbour catchment, clearing of the forests and draining of the swamps and wetlands resulted in major changes to the landscape. The development of the land accelerated with the arrival of the Europeans, so that the Ohiwa Harbour catchment today is a thriving area producing a wide range of primary produce. At the same time, the effects of these changes to the landscape has resulted in impacts on the waters of Ohiwa Harbour, particularly in terms of sedimentation and nutrient enrichment.

Development of an integrated management strategy which recognises and provides for the relationship of Maori people and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, waahi tapu, sites and other taonga will benefit all stakeholder agencies and the Ohiwa harbour and catchment communities by assisting iwi and hapu to identify areas and values of significance to them.

Some provision is already made by statutory organisations for the active participation of iwi and hapu kaitiaki. For example, Environment B·O·P can contribute funding towards the development of Iwi Management Plans, and regional and district councils refer applicants for resource consent to consult with tangata whenua of the harbour.

An integrated management strategy may identify further opportunities to provide for the relationship of tangata whenua with the harbour catchment. Statutory organisations may consider supporting applications that tangata whenua might make to national organisations such as the Ministry for the Environment that administers the sustainable management fund and the Ministry of Maori Development that provides funding for capacity building for Maori people and organisations.

It is also important to note that the iwi of the Ohiwa harbour and catchment have lodged claims with the Waitangi Tribunal, the outcome of which will assist those iwi with their negotiations with the Office of Treaty Settlements.

Full participation in the development of an integrated management strategy alongside statutory organisations could therefore provide iwi with opportunities to consider the nature and level of further investments they might contribute to advance their kaitiaki responsibilities within the Ohiwa harbour and catchment.

## **2.2 Legislative Requirements on Local Government Organisations**

For resource management purposes, control of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment is divided among three units of local government: Opotiki District Council, Whakatane District Council and Environment B·O·P.

### **2.2.1 Environment B·O·P**

Environment B·O·P carries out a number of activities and functions under a range of legislation including the Resource Management Act 1991, the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Local Government Act 1974.

Environment B·O·P has a Regional Policy Statement and a number of regional plans that cover specific activities in the area. These include the following:

- Bay of Plenty Regional Land Management Plan
- Proposed Bay of Plenty Coastal Environment Plan
- Bay of Plenty On-Site Effluent Treatment Regional Plan
- Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan

The net effect of these plans mean that there are a number of activities within the Ohiwa Harbour catchment which require consent from Environment B·O·P before the activity can be carried out.

### **2.2.2 Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils**

Similarly Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils carry out a number of functions and duties under a range of legislation including the Resource management Act 1991, the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Local Government Act 1974.

Opotiki and Whakatane District Council's have their respective district plans which meet at the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment.

Again, the net effect of these plans is that there are a number of activities within the Ohiwa Harbour catchment which require consent from the relevant district council before the activity can be carried out.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991, both District and Regional Councils, among other things, are required to, “have particular regard to kaitiakitanga”, and to “take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. This means that there is a requirement by the Councils to work closely with tangata whenua, when carrying out their responsibilities under the Act.

## 2.3 The Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is a Government Department with statutory responsibilities relating to the protection of natural and historic resources. DOC has four major roles within the Ohiwa Harbour catchment. These are set out below:

- DOC is responsible for managing conservation land vested in the Crown, (Scenic Reserves, Conservation Areas, etc).
- DOC has responsibilities for the protection of indigenous flora and fauna, and takes a particular interest in the protection of freshwater fisheries.
- DOC has a special role in the management of the coastal environment, under the Resource Management Act 1991.
- DOC has an advocacy role in a wide range of conservation issues, including the protection of the habitat of indigenous flora and fauna, the coastal environment, natural and historic resources, wetlands, etc.

In carrying out its functions, DOC works closely with District and Regional Councils, tangata whenua, as well as with other organisations such as Fish and Game Councils and the general public. DOC may provide input to Regional and District Plans, as well as commenting on resource consent applications. DOC’s role on private land is generally limited to advocacy, although there are instances where they have assisted with advice, facilitation, and provision of protection material/planting material.



## **Chapter 3: Stakeholders Response to Consultation**

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An intensive consultative process involving statutory and iwi and hapu stakeholder group's was undertaken prior to the preparation of this report.

The purpose of consultation was to find out from each group whether it:

- Is willing to be involved in the development of the Scoping Report and any subsequent strategy that might arise from it
- Considered that integrated management of the Ohiwa harbour and its catchment should be the subject of any strategy developed
- Considered that the purpose of developing an integrated management strategy is to:
  - (i) Reduce duplication of services and spending,
  - (ii) Provide greater clarity and certainty about roles and responsibilities,
  - (iii) Design processes to help resource consent applicants plan application timelines,
  - (iv) Enhance relationships between stakeholder groups, including the community,
  - (v) Provide opportunities for stakeholder groups to participate in activities aimed at achieving a common vision.

In all cases staff and elected representatives of each organisation indicated their willingness to participate in the Scoping Report process and any subsequent strategy that might arise out of it.

Several stakeholder organisations including Opotiki District Council, Whakatane District Council, Upokorehe Hapu and the Department of Conservation wrote to Environment B·O·P to advise their support for the development of an integrated management strategy.

As well as this all stakeholder organisations identified issues that cause them particular concern but which also require input from other stakeholder organisations that have resource management interests in the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment.

In these instances stakeholder groups comment and make formal submissions on planning instruments being developed by other groups. At times when mutually agreed decisions cannot be negotiated, submitters can feel compelled to appeal to the Environment Court. Although necessary, this process can be expensive, time-consuming and requires the Environment Court to monitor and manage negotiations for resolution of issues.

All stakeholder organisations considered that important opportunities to discuss such matters would be available at meetings to develop an integrated management strategy for Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment. They considered this would offer opportunities to develop planning instruments that provide greater consistency, clarity and certainty for appropriate and sustainable resource use, development and protection.

## Chapter 4: Pressures on the Harbour

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The Ohiwa Harbour is under increasing pressure from a wide range of harbour users. Not only is the Ohiwa Harbour an area where people want to visit, but it is also becoming increasingly popular as a place to live. There are many reasons for this popularity, including the close proximity of a safe open beach at Ohope. However, much of the interest relates to the special character of Ohiwa Harbour itself, which is seen as largely unspoilt. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that Ohiwa Harbour is not particularly large in size, and therefore, there is often conflict between different activities. The conflicts range from recreational and commercial surface water activities to land use activities within the surrounding catchment.

The pressure for urban development on the Ohope Spit has resulted in objections and appeals to several subdivision applications in recent years. These subdivision applications have been further compounded by questions over sea level rise, and the potential effects of storm surge. The harbour margins and farmland in close proximity to the harbour have also been under pressure for lifestyle subdivision. The ecological values and natural character of the harbour have been studied and recognised as being important. The pressures for further subdivision threatens these values.

The water quality of the Ohiwa Harbour is largely dependent on the water quality of the contributing streams, the condition of wetland margins/riparian areas, and the land management within the harbour catchment. Pressures to develop the catchment of Ohiwa Harbour will potentially affect the harbour water and its immediate surrounds. This is even more important when the pressures for development are often in close proximity to the harbour margins.

### 4.1 Relevant Issues

Issues relevant to the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment that can be included in an Integrated Management Strategy include:

The physical state of Ohiwa Harbour especially sedimentation; the degree to which sedimentation is caused in the harbour catchment by human activity, such as forestry, farming and subdivision-related earthworks.

Harbour water quality; the effects of inappropriately located septic tanks; nutrient runoff from forestry, farms, small holdings and urban areas, draining land and wetlands and damage to riparian margins.

Landscape and the natural character of the coastal harbour environment: including damage to established vegetation, establishment of inappropriate structures, dumping of rubbish, and subdivision-related activities which identify the need for both district

councils to subscribe to a mutual understanding of the value of the harbour environment and to establish consistent planning regimes across the arbitrary administrative boundary between them through the harbour.

The expectation of parties with an interest in Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment that Environment B·O·P will facilitate a formal forum through which they can participate and contribute to establishing a common vision and management regime with broad agency and community support.

The need to provide for the protection of the outstanding natural values of the Ohiwa Harbour environment and consideration of providing for that protection, e.g. through instruments such as Ramsar in respect of wetlands.

The need to provide for the protection of significant heritage values of the Ohiwa harbour environment and consideration of providing for that protection.

The need to provide for the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, waters, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga as a matter of national importance. Tangata whenua of the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment have been asserting for years their concerns for the harbour and its catchment. In all cases tangata whenua have declared their commitment to continuing to undertake their roles as kaitiaki of the harbour and its catchment.

It should also be noted that the Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment is subject to cross-claims to the Waitangi Tribunal. It is possible that as a result of recommendations from the Waitangi Tribunal, the Office of Treaty Settlements may require cross claimants to identify the management relationships they propose to develop with statutory and other agencies relevant to the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment.

Development of a strategy would therefore mean that statutory and kaitiaki stakeholder organisations may continue to make progress toward integrated management of the harbour without being required to engage in claim issues.

## Chapter 5: The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

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In resolving to outline the possible scope of a strategy for the integrated management of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment, the Council sought inclusion of consideration of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.

Ramsar is the first of the modern global intergovernmental treaties on conservation and wise use of natural resources, but, compared with more recent ones, its provisions are relatively straight forward and general. Over the years the conference of the Contracting Parties<sup>2</sup>, including New Zealand, has further developed and interpreted the basic tenets of the treaty text and succeeded in keeping the work of the convention abreast of changing world perceptions, priorities, and trends in environmental thinking.

When countries join the convention they are enlisting in an international effort to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The treaty includes four main commitments that the Contracting Parties have agreed to by joining:

### 5.1 Listed sites

The first obligation under the convention is to designate at least one wetland for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance and to promote its conservation, including, where appropriate, its wise use. New Zealand has registered five sites including Farewell Spit, Firth of Thames, Kopuatai Peat Dome, Waituna Lagoon and Whangamarino.

### 5.2 Wise Use

Under the convention there is a general obligation for the Contracting Parties to include wetland conservation considerations in their national land use planning. They have undertaken to formulate and implement this planning so as to promote, as far as possible, 'the wise use of wetlands in their territory' (article 3.1 of the Treaty).

The conference of the Contracting Parties has approved guidelines and additional guidance on how to achieve 'wise use', which has been interpreted as being synonymous with 'sustainable use'.

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<sup>2</sup> Contracting Parties are the individual countries that have joined the Ramsar Convention.

### 5.3 Reserves and Training

Contracting Parties have also undertaken to establish nature reserves in wetlands, whether or not they are included in the Ramsar list, and they are also expected to promote training in the fields of wetland research, management and warden duties..

### 5.4 International Co-operation

Contracting Parties have also agreed to consult with other Contracting Parties about implementation of the Convention, especially in regard to trans-frontier wetlands, shared water systems, and shared species.

Over the years, the Conference of the Contracting Parties has interpreted and elaborated upon these four major obligations included within the text of the treaty, and it has developed guidelines for assisting parties in their implementation.

Contracting Parties report on progress in implementing their commitments under the Convention by submission of triennial National Reports to the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The National Reports become part of the public record.

Criteria are used to determine whether a site is eligible for registration as a Ramsar site. It appears that Ohiwa Harbour may be eligible for registration. However whether registration should be sought is a matter for consideration during the preparation of a strategy for Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment.

## Chapter 6: Integrated Management

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Integrated means ‘to make whole by bringing all parts together; unify’. Integration means ‘the act or process of integrating’, ‘the bringing of people together of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association, as in society or an organisation; desegregation’.

Each statutory agency and at least one of the three iwi with responsibilities in the harbour, administers their respective management plans, which describe each separate agency’s resource management functions and duties in the Ohiwa Harbour. There are currently several regional plans, two district plans, a conservation management strategy, Ministry of Fisheries planning and one iwi management plan available for operation within the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment. As a result a variety of issues common to all agencies are managed on a case-by-case basis in different ways by different agencies using different planning instruments.

Under section 30(1)(a) of the Resource Management Act 1991, Environment B·O·P has the function of establishing, implementing and reviewing objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region. Such integrated management is especially relevant in circumstances such as exist in regard to Ohiwa Harbour with many agencies having an involvement in its management. The integrated management function of regional councils, unlike that of territorial authorities is not confined to effects nor is it restricted to activities in relation to land. The purpose of the function is to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region without limitation beyond that inherent in the definition of the term ‘natural and physical resources’ in section 2(1) of the RMA 1991.

For such a regime to work effectively, the exercise of the regional council function must be able to compel, to some degree, management decisions made in the exercise of the territorial authority function. That is the very nature of the regional council function to achieve integrated management of all the natural and physical resources (including land) of the region.

Integration will help stakeholder organisations to achieve greater certainty and consistency in environmental regulation of the harbour catchment. It would provide opportunities to consider ways to avoid duplication of services, further enhance existing programmes and projects and ensure that activities are appropriate by having no more than minor adverse environmental effect on the harbour and its catchment.

Developing an integrated management strategy means that stakeholders work together to investigate the best ways of establishing, implementing and reviewing objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment.

## 6.1 What is Meant by ‘Strategy’

A strategy is a plan of action to get us from where we are now to where we want or need to be in the future. It sets out a vision for the future, identifies the issues or problems we currently face, examines the options for addressing those problems, analyses the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and makes recommendations concerning what options should be chosen. A strategy should ensure that we have a shared understanding of where we are going, that we correctly recognise current issues or problems, that we look at all the possible approaches for addressing those problems and that we choose the best way forward. A strategy may draw extensively on previous work in the subject area, or it may take a “first principles” approach to the subject.

A strategy is about defining a means acceptable to the whole community for managing and enhancing our environment for the future, while providing each generation, including our own, with an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of that environment.

A strategy approach enables Environment B·O·P to develop a non-statutory document that provides for integrated management of natural and physical resources within the region or a part of the region. A strategy can integrate the activities of Environment B·O·P, the district councils, the Crown, iwi and members of the community to improve environmental outcomes. Such outcomes can therefore be achieved through, for example, regional plans, district plans, annual plans and management plans. Such a strategy can also provide opportunities for communities to have an involvement with the management of a problem that the community identifies. While Ohiwa Harbour provides a general focus, the harbour and catchment is made up of a number of different communities. Care programmes such as Harbourcare, Rivercare, Landcare and Coastcare work well when there is a ground swell of interest and a clearly identified issue that the group can work on. Such a ground-swell of interest has been asserted and demonstrated by landowners and iwi and hapu within the Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment.

The newly formed “Ohiwa Catchment Care Group” comprises several farmers and landowners from the Ohiwa Harbour catchment area, mostly from Stanley, McCoy and Wainui Roads. This group has met several times and is developing objectives and methods of implementation that largely focus on the wise management of their own lands so as to avoid, mitigate or remedy the effects of their activities on Ohiwa Harbour.

Similarly, local iwi and hapu have continually asserted their interest in undertaking their kaitiakitanga role by working to identify sites of significance to them for the purpose of protecting those sites and the traditional and cultural values associated with them for the benefit of present and future generations.

Not being confined to RMA matters, the strategy approach can be used to provide integration over a wider range of issues and go further in developing agreements on approaches that are not limited to RMA methods. Examples include SmartGrowth, the strategy addressing growth and development in the western Bay of Plenty, and the Lakes Strategy addressing the lakes of the Rotorua district and their catchments.

A strategy can be implemented through many different mechanisms. This freedom would not be available if it was decided instead to prepare a regional plan. A strategy could identify the need for changes to, say, two of the existing regional plans and a provision in the regional policy statement, together with, for instance, preparation of some guidelines and an education package. It could also indicate the desirability of a district council altering its district plan. A strategy could examine more fully some of the methods suggested in section 32 of the RMA—the provision of information, services, or incentives, and the levying of charges—and other options. Voluntary initiatives can be guided towards common goals. The preparation of a strategy by a multi-agency group would also assist in the allocation of various functions at an early stage. In summary, the strategy could indicate the desirability of:

- altering one or more of the regional plans;
- altering the district plan of one or more district council;
- transferring functions and powers;
- other initiatives for various agencies and interest groups.

Thus, the strategy concept allows considerable flexibility in structuring the involvement of central and local government agencies, iwi and hapu and other interested parties.



## Chapter 7: Methodology for Strategy Development

A six-phase methodology is proposed for the development of any strategy for the Ohiwa harbour and catchment. It will be necessary to divide the project into distinct stages with specific milestones (tasks) and measurable outputs that must be 'signed off' by stakeholder groups prior to undertaking the next phase of the project.

This method will ensure that:

- all stakeholders are involved
- that the project is moving towards achieving its goal
- that resources are being properly utilised in the development of the strategy and
- that decisions are based on current and accurate information.

Phase	Tasks (examples only)
Project Inception	Initiating the project, conducting technical for a workshops/hui, confirming project objectives/scope of the strategy, establish phases and timing, identify and establish communications between organisations and other stakeholders including the Ohope Community Board, Historic Places Trust, Ministry of Fisheries, the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board, Mataatua Fisheries Working Party, Federated Farmers, Royal NZ Forest & Bird Society Incorporated, landowners and others, to identify relationships and opportunities to discuss the potential that integrated management might provide. Risks can also be assessed in the inceptions phase of the project.
Research Input	Identifying what research will be necessary and how it will be used eg: maps may be required, and education programmes identifying management roles and best management practices as well as education for future generations could be developed.
Option Development	Identifying options for effective and equitable integrated management of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment.
Option Costing & Evaluation	Estimating the costs of the various management options
Detailed Implementation Framework	Implementing an integrated management framework
Final Strategy Report Produced	Production of a Strategy document together with implementation guidelines

## 7.1 What would an Integrated Management Strategy include?

An integrated management strategy could identify:

- A common vision for the Ohiwa Harbour and catchment
- Key issues to be addressed by the strategy
- Key management goals and associated tasks
- Key community values and associated tasks
- Priorities for integrated management, research and spending
- Consistent planning instruments that provide greater certainty to plan users, including the community

Associated tasks identified in an integrated management strategy might include the development of processes that provide for:

- Tangata whenua to practise kaitiakitanga
- Ongoing management of voluntarily covenanted protection areas
- Consideration of compatible harbour and catchment resource uses
- Education regarding the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder groups and best management practices for resource users
- Communications strategy including memoranda of understanding

## 7.2 Benefits

An integrated management strategy could benefit all agencies and the Ohiwa harbour and catchment by:

- Establishing, implementing and reviewing objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment
- Addressing overlapping issues and responsibilities relating to the various functions and duties of agencies, tangata whenua and the community
- Clarifying the responsibilities of each agency and the community
- Recognising and providing for the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga

- Identifying opportunities to collectively focus on specific issues and how they might best be funded and managed in a co-ordinated way
- Promoting appropriate and effective protection for significant natural, physical and cultural heritage values and places
- Enabling people and their communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being while sustaining the potential of the harbour to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.



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## Appendix 1 – Map of Ohiwa Catchment

