

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, 27 June 2017 commencing at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

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: S Lewis (Director Operations, Ministry for the Environment); N Douglas (Te Arawa Lakes Trust); D Atkinson (Chairman, Lake Water Quality Society); G Dohnt and J Willmoth (Lake Rotoehu Water); S Goodwin (Lake Okareka Community Association); C Sutton (Project Rerewhakaaitu Inc.); Rotorua Lakes Council: G Williams (Chief Executive), S Michael (Director Transport and Waste Solutions), A McGregor (Project Management Office Manager), I Tiriana (Public Relations Manager); Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Councillor N Bruning, A Bruere (Lakes Operations Manager), C Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), L Goldsmith (Rotorua Catchments Manager), R Burton (Senior Planner (Water Policy)), S Omundsen (Tauranga Catchments Manager), S Lamb (Natural Resources Policy Manager), T White (Incentives Programme Director), R Garrett (Committee Advisor).

Apologies: Sir Toby Curtis

1 Welcome

Mayor Chadwick welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, and proffered the meeting's congratulations to the New Zealand Americas Cup team on their win. Mrs Chadwick also acknowledged the support and sympathy she had received from the wider Rotorua community on the recent passing of her husband John. Mayor Chadwick then invited W Emery to open the meeting with a karakia.

2 Apologies

Resolved

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

- 1 Accepts the apology tendered by Sir Toby Curtis.

Winters/Hunt
CARRIED

3 **Declaration of conflicts of interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4 **Previous Minutes**

4.1 **Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group minutes - 10 March 2017**

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 on 10 March 2017.**

**Winters/Hunt
CARRIED**

4.2 **Public Excluded Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group minutes - 10 March 2017**

Resolved

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

- 1 **Confirms the minutes of the Public Excluded Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group meeting held on 10 March 2017.**

**Winters/Hunt
CARRIED**

5 **Reports**

5.1 **Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Status Report**

Rotorua Catchments Manager Linda Goldsmith updated members on progress made in the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme and associated projects since the last Strategy Group meeting. Ms Goldsmith advised members that the hearings for Proposed Plan Change 10 had concluded and that the findings of the independent Hearings Panel would be released to the Regional Council for consideration and ratification. Ms Goldsmith noted an increase in engagement with the Lake Rotorua Advice and Support Service, with 25 out of 26 dairy farmers in the catchment now registered in the system; and also noted increased engagement with the gorse scheme after a slow start.

The report also sought approval of Change Request 057: Brunswick Park Sewerage Reticulation, which proposed the transfer of the 2016/2017 Brunswick Sewerage Connections budget to the 2017/2018 financial year. Rotorua Lakes Council Director Transport and Waste Solutions Stavros Michael explained the costs associated with installing a reticulated system for the 55 properties affected and outlined consultation undertaken with affected parties to date. In response to a member's question, staff clarified that it was certainly the intention that the connection work would be completed in the next financial year.

Resolved

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

- 1 Receives the report, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Status Report;**
- 2 Approves Change Request CR057 – Brunswick Sewerage Connections.**

**Hunt/Leeder
CARRIED**

5.2 Te Arawa Lakes Trust Update June 2017

Te Arawa Lakes Trust Environment Manager Nicki Douglas updated members on recent Trust activities. Ms Douglas outlined recent changes to staff and their roles within the Trust, and summarised progress made on various Trust work programmes.

Ms Douglas clarified that the proposed floating wetland relocation was due to anchoring damage from recent storms and that the wetland would remain within the Sulphur Point vicinity. Ms Douglas also confirmed that the Trust would be involved in any initiative to develop an ecological management plan for the Sanatorium Reserve.

Resolved

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

- 1 Receives the report, Te Arawa Lakes Trust Update June 2017**

**Winters/Hunt
CARRIED**

5.3 Rotorua Lakes Council Update

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) Director Transport and Waste Solutions Stavros Michael updated members on RLC activities that impacted the Lakes Programme, including current wastewater treatment projects. Mr Michael noted that a Memorandum of Understanding regarding nutrient accounting for aspects of the Rotorua Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade had been developed between RLC and Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Mr Michael also summarised progress made on the Rotomā/Rotoiti sewerage scheme, noted that the resource consent application had been lodged with the hearing scheduled for 15 July, and advised that RLC was investigating whether Rotoehu could also be included in the scheme.

Members queried the timing of the development of the Rotomā/Rotoiti scheme; staff clarified that the work for Rotomā was scheduled for 2017/18 and Rotoiti for 2018/19 and that the Ministry of Health funding contribution for Rotomā was available until June 2018. Staff expected that the Rotomā scheme would be substantially completed by June next year.

Resolved

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

- 1 Receives the report, Rotorua Lakes Council Update;**

**Emery/Hunt
CARRIED**

5.4 Update on Lake Rotorua Incentives Scheme

Incentives Programme Director Te Taru White updated the Strategy Group on progress made by the Lake Rotorua Incentives Committee towards achieving its nitrogen reduction targets. Mr White advised that 8.4 tonnes of in-lake nitrogen had been secured so far this calendar year, with several more purchases under negotiation that will move the Scheme close to its calendar year target of 20 tonnes. He also noted that an Expressions of Interest process for small amounts of nitrogen (less than 1 tonne) had been established although uptake was relatively slow at this stage; and observed that the dNITRO analysis tool was increasingly being used by landowners to help assess land use change.

Members expressed concern about the possible impact of the myrtle rust incursion on landowners' consideration of mānuka as an alternative land use; Mr White acknowledged that this was likely to make mānuka a less attractive option and could be off-putting for some landowners considering conversion. Ministry for the Environment Operations Director S Lewis noted that, while the myrtle rust incursion had longer term implications for land use change and soil erosion, the immediate response was being managed by the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Primary Industries.

Resolved

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

- 1 Receives the report, Update on Lake Rotorua Incentives Scheme.**

Hunt/Emery
CARRIED

5.5 Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Annual Work Programme 2017-2018

Rotorua Catchments Manager Linda Goldsmith sought approval from the Strategy Group to provide the 2017-2018 Annual Work Programme for the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme to the Ministry for the Environment, as required by the Deed of Funding Agreement. Ms Goldsmith summarised the key points of the work programme, and noted that the focus remained on the continued implementation of the Integrated Framework.

Members asked for and received clarification regarding funding included in the Programme for Ohau Wall mitigation work and the Rotomā/Rotoiti sewerage reticulation scheme.

Members queried whether the Work Programme included actions necessary to meet national swimmability targets. Staff explained that Council work around swimmability targets was separate from Lakes Programme work at this stage, but would be brought in under the Programme's umbrella as appropriate interventions were identified and action plans developed, and considered this would be reflected in the next annual work programme.

Members noted that recruitment for Professor Hamilton's replacement as Lakes Chair at the University of Waikato was underway.

Members discussed the very high lake levels being experienced at Lake Ōkāreka and noted that emergency measures had been invoked to manage the high flows.

Resolved

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

- 1 **Receives the report, Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme - Annual Work Programme 2017-2018;**

**Winters/Hunt
CARRIED**

- 2 **Approves the provision of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme – Annual Work Programme 2017-2018 to the Ministry for the Environment as required by the Deed of Funding Agreement.**

**Winters/Leeder
CARRIED**

5.6 **Tarawera Farm Environment Plans**

Lakes Operations Manager Andy Bruere and Chris Sutton, Chairman of Project Rerewhakaaitu Incorporated Society, updated the Strategy Group on progress with the Tarawera Farm Environment Plan project. This project is being implemented as part of the Lake Tarawera Restoration Plan in conjunction with Project Rerewhakaaitu Incorporated and supported by Fonterra.

Members expressed concern that the Farm Environment Plans developed using Fonterra's template and their associated nutrient budgets would be confidential and not subject to audit, which may raise questions regarding the integrity of the data generated from Overseer and used in the Plans. Staff explained that 10 Plans would be selected for review by Council staff to identify any aberrations with the data used, audit the Overseer budgets and resolve any issues raised. Members emphasised the need for sharing of information and collaboration to minimise the risks of duplication and ensure integrity of process.

Resolved

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

- 1 **Receives the report, Tarawera Farm Environment Plans;**

**Hunt/Emery
CARRIED**

5.7 **Lake Rotorua Nitrogen Accounting Mechanism**

Natural Resources Policy Manager Stephen Lamb and Project Manager Office Manager Aimee McGregor sought Strategy Group approval of a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding a nitrogen accounting mechanism for the Rotorua Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) discharge.

Mr Lamb explained that the mechanism had been developed to acknowledge the urban growth pressures facing Rotorua and to account for the additional nitrogen load created by reticulation of sewage from previously rural land to the WWTP, with no net increase to the total load of nitrogen to the Lake. Mr Lamb outlined the key points of the MoU and noted that the development of the mechanism was an operational accounting process and did not pre-empt the resource consent process for the WWTP.

In response to a member's question, staff clarified that the mechanism could not be used to track phosphorus.

Resolved

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

- 1 **Receives the report, *Lake Rotorua Nitrogen Accounting Mechanism*;**

Hunt/Emery
CARRIED

- 2 **Approves the Memorandum of Understanding: Nitrogen Accounting Approach for the Rotorua Waste Water Treatment Plant Discharge.**

- 3 **Recommends that Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Rotorua Lakes Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council sign the Memorandum of Understanding.**

Chadwick/Hunt
CARRIED

6 **Closing karakia**

Provided by W Emery.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm.