

Submission on Proposed Regional Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan

Clause 6 of First Schedule, Resource Management Act 1991

Healthy Rivers Wai Ora Submission - Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan

To: The Chief Executive
Waikato Regional Council
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Submitter Details

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Submission

This is a submission on Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan (Plan Change 1), by Hamilton & Waikato Tourism on behalf of the Waikato Tourism and Recreation Sector. This submission is prepared in general accordance with Form 5 in Schedule 1 of the Resource Management (Forms, Fees and Procedures) Regulations 2003.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism **supports** the fundamental direction of Proposed Plan Change 1.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism wish to be heard in support of the submission.



Jason Dawson
Chief Executive for Hamilton & Waikato Tourism



1 Introduction

This document contains the submission by Hamilton & Waikato Tourism on behalf of the Waikato Tourism and Recreation Sector (“the Sector”) on Plan Change 1.

The submission is structured as follows:

- Overview of the Tourism and Recreation Sector
- The Tourism and Recreational Sector’s submission on Plan Change 1.

The Sector was one of 24 representatives on the Healthy Rivers Wai Ora Collaborative Stakeholder Group (CSG). The Sector’s involvement in the CSG was deserved recognition of its importance to the Waikato community and its contribution to the GDP of the Waikato region. The natural environment contains attributes that contribute to Tourism and Recreation in the Waikato. Local and international tourists are attracted by our unique experiences, many founded on the natural environment. As the natural environment is an attribute of tourism and recreation, doing nothing to address the decline in freshwater quality will risk a negative reputation - potentially detracting from the Waikato region’s image as a desirable visitor destination. The Sector acknowledges the significant efforts of particularly the primary sectors, who have recognised that “doing nothing’ is not acceptable through this plan change development process, and have worked to develop policy in the CSG process, and with their sectors, to deliver improvements to the natural environment in a practical, timely and economically feasible manner.

2 Tourism and Recreation Sector

Tourism growth is driven by people's perceptions and researchable facts on the areas they plan to visit and recreate in. Tourism growth is a long term and ongoing goal where success comes from influencing people about where they want to visit, live, work, play and invest.

Recreating in waterways is ingrained into the New Zealand way of life. It is critical the water resources that people boat, swim, play, fish and collect food from is in an acceptable state that does not present undue risks to those undertaking these activities. Continued health of these waterways is not only important for ensuring people remain healthy and safe while undertaking the activities they enjoy; it is also a reputational issue for the Region so it is able to continue to attract visitors.

Hamilton & Waikato Tourism, Destination Great Lake Taupo and Destination Coromandel are the lead entities promoting tourism and recreational activities throughout the Waikato Region. The role of these organisations is to continue to grow visitor numbers, work with our communities to enhance visitor experiences, and extend length of stay and expenditure in the region. These agencies also encourage local, national and international visitors to experience what our region has to offer through effective marketing and promotional activities. Increasing visitor numbers in turn benefits the Waikato Region and its communities economically, socially and culturally.

Our research shows that visitors to the Waikato Region (Hamilton & Waikato Tourism, Destination Great Lake Taupo and Destination Coromandel) totalled some 13.7m guest nights in 2016. In addition there were 3.3 million commercial guest nights in the region. These visitors spent \$2.4 billion in 2016, making the visitor economy the second largest annual contributor to regional GDP. This is the 5th highest visitor expenditure in a region in New Zealand. These visitor numbers are expected to keep rising; evidenced by a record number of national and international arrivals last year, and with it the expectation for healthy natural environments.



The Waikato Region's environment is a foundation to the reputation of the Waikato River as a desirable visitor destination. Achieving the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato and Waipa Rivers will benefit not only the environment and the communities that thrive in the region, but enhance visitor experience such that visitors are more likely to share with others that the Waikato Region is a 'must do' destination.

3 Submission

The Sector supports the fundamental direction of Plan Change 1 and is supportive of giving effect to the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River, in particular Objective K, *"The restoration of water quality within the Waikato River so that it is safe for people to swim in and take food from over its entire length"*.

The Sector specifically supports the following aspects of Plan Change 1:

- A. **Improving water quality such that the river is swimmable, fishable and has healthy aquatic ecosystems over its length.** The usability of the river is critical for ensuring that local and international tourists continue to visit and recreate in the region. The Sector recognises that the Vision and Strategy sets an appropriate standard in its objectives, which Plan Change 1 is charged with setting limits and targets.

The values and uses outlined in Section 3.11.1 of Plan Change 1 are supported by the Sector. The Sector recognises these values closely align with its own principles and appropriately reflect reasons people choose to recreate and interact with waterways in the Region.

The Sector support the following Objectives, Policies and Implementation Methods which provide a policy framework to improve water quality for the benefit of everyone who lives, visits, and recreates in the Region.

Objectives
Objective 1: Long-term restoration and protection of water quality for each sub-catchment and Freshwater Management Unit Objective 2: Social, economic and cultural wellbeing is maintained in the long term Objective 4: People and community resilience Objective 5: Mana Tangata - Protecting and restoring Tangata whenua values
Policies
Policy 8: Prioritised implementation Policy 14: Lakes Freshwater Management Units Policy 17: Considering the wider context of the Vision and Strategy
Implementation Methods
3.11.4.4 Lakes and Whangamarino Wetland



3.11.4.5 Sub-catchment scale planning

B. Effective and accountable monitoring.

Plan Change 1 sets out the current state and has specified that accounting and monitoring occur in the sub catchments and Freshwater Management Units of the Waikato Region. By referencing to the current state, the Sector supports ensuring that effective monitoring occurs to 'keep check' on meeting the goals of the Plan Change. Effective monitoring will ensure that mitigation efforts are tracked, water quality change is assessed against expectations and help ensure that mitigations actions are directed to the areas or subcatchments that are having detrimental effects on overall water quality.

The Sector supports the following Objectives, Policies and Implementation Methods that provide a framework for effective and accountable monitoring to be achieved.

Objectives
Objective 3: Short-term improvements in water quality in the first stage of restoration and protection of water quality for each sub-catchment and Freshwater Management Unit Objective 4: People and community resilience.
Policies
Policy 5: Staged approach Policy 14: Lakes Freshwater Management Units
Implementation Methods
3.11.4.10 Accounting system and monitoring 3.11.4.11 Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Chapter 3.11

