

Give your coast a helping hand

Me atawhai te takutai

Summary of the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan review He whakarāpopototanga

The Waikato region has about 1150 kilometres of diverse coastline, ranging from the white sands of the eastern Coromandel to the rugged west coast from Port Waikato to Mōkau. Our coastal marine area is highly valued for its ecosystems and biodiversity, and for a range of uses including recreation, food gathering and aesthetic, cultural, conservation and commercial opportunities.

Waikato Regional Council's role is to look after the region's natural environment, including air, water, land, coasts, plants

and animals, through regional plans. These plans define the way activities are managed, thereby striking a balance between protecting the environment and using its resources.

To make sure we get this balance right for our coasts, we're reviewing the *Waikato Regional Coastal Plan* – the 'rulebook' for certain activities in the coastal marine area. The review is an opportunity for us to find out from you what you think would make the Waikato even better.

What is the coastal plan?

Mō te mahere takutai moana

The *Waikato Regional Coastal Plan* sets out the objectives, policies, rules and methods the council will use to manage and regulate activities in the coastal marine area.

In this area, the coastal plan recognises water quality, indigenous biodiversity and natural hazards while managing activities like the use of resources, the occupation of space, extraction of sand and other materials, aquaculture, the protection of natural features and landscapes (seascapes) as well as the discharge of contaminants.

But the coastal plan is only a part of the council's response to the sustainable management of our coasts. It must also give effect to

- Resource Management Act 1991
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010
- Waikato Regional Policy Statement 2016
- Relevant Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation
- Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011
- Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000

Why are we reviewing the coastal plan?

Mō te arotake i te mahere takutai moana

The Resource Management Act (RMA) requires the council to review the coastal plan every 10 years to update provisions, as necessary, and take into account current issues and community aspirations as well as legislative changes and national and regional policy direction.

The current coastal plan became operative in 2005 and is now out of step with statutory requirements and the growing needs of our communities:

- national and regional rules and direction have changed
- treaty of Waitangi settlement obligations are not incorporated
- more people are living, playing or working on and around our region's coasts
- some rules do not sustain values of the coastal marine area or enable regional development
- some objectives and policies are difficult to meet, monitor and enforce
- there's a lack of clarity in some areas to guide regulatory processes.

So we're taking a fresh look to ensure the coastal plan can continue to enable the sustainable management of the coastal marine area.

Where does the coastal plan apply?

Mō te pānga a te mahere takutai moana

The coastal plan is the rulebook for activities in the coastal marine area – that's the 'wet' part of the sea below the high tide mark and extending out 12 nautical miles (approximately 20 kilometres).

Management of the coastal marine area applies to the foreshore, seabed, coastal water and the air space above the water. Land based areas within the coastal environment are managed by regional and district plans.

What has been done so far?

Mō ngā whakatutukitanga

Feedback on the issues and gaps of the current coastal plan has been sought from a range of stakeholders, including iwi, agencies, industry and coastal users and residents. At the same time, council staff have carried out an analysis of iwi management plans to understand the coastal issues and priorities for iwi.

This information, along with statutory requirements, have informed our approach to sustainably manage the coastal marine area. The opportunity for communities to review and make a formal submission on the full draft plan is expected in late 2022.

What have we heard?

Mō ngā kaupapa kua whārikihia

Communities have told us that the coastal plan needs to protect the mauri (essence) of coastal ecosystems and enhance our unique way of life by providing for the restoration of indigenous habitats and ecosystems, prohibiting discharges and establishing water quality standards, and managing disturbances to protect natural coastal processes like surf breaks.

They also want it to address climate change and the impacts of coastal erosion and inundation, while providing for tangata whenua perspectives and values, and support our region's aquaculture industry.

How will council use the feedback it has received?

He mana tō reo

Feedback we've received from communities on the issues they've identified with the current coastal plan will inform how we develop and update the objectives, policies and rules in the coastal plan. A full draft plan is expected to be notified for public submission in late 2022.

What are some of the key changes being proposed?

Mō te whakahāngai i ngā kaupapa

The below outlines some of the key changes we'll be exploring to ensure the coastal plan meets statutory requirements as well as the needs of our communities.

- Identify and map significant surf breaks, historic heritage, natural character, outstanding natural features and landscapes (seascapes) and indigenous biodiversity and protect them through new objectives, policies and rules.
- Consider providing new areas for aquaculture in appropriate locations while maintaining the environmental bottom lines.
- Permit moorings within the Zoned Mooring Areas.
- Include a tangata whenua chapter that will detail processes and context relating to tangata whenua, specifically tangata whenua objectives, policies and rules that increase iwi views and mātauranga Māori, and the ability to exercise and provide for kaitiakitanga.
- Incorporate risk management and adaptation as a matter to consider when assessing resource consents for structures.
- New policies and rules will ensure that noise from any new activities will be managed in a more specific way, including the impact on marine mammals.
- Identify different coastal water types and set water quality standards for each.
- Restrict location of the disposal of human ashes.

What is meant by an objective, policy, method or rule in the coastal plan?

Mō ngā whāinga, kaupapa here, tikanga, ture rānei

An objective is the outcome we are seeking for the coastal marine area.

A policy is how we will achieve an objective.

A method implements a policy and a rule will determine if a permit or resource consent is needed for a proposed activity in the coastal marine area.

Where can I find out more information?

He puna kōrero

Check out [waikatoregion.govt.nz/rcp-review](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/rcp-review) to find:

- a breakdown of key topics in the coastal plan
- a full report of proposed policy direction options
- a report on engagement feedback.

You can also email us at

healthyenvironments@waikatoregion.govt.nz

or call 0800 800 401 to speak to a member of our coastal plan review team.