

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

# DEVELOPMENT OF MĀORI CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING

Date of adoption: 8 July 2021

Resolution number: 21/RDC/207

Date by which review  
must be completed: Not applicable

Relevant legislation: Local Government Act 2002  
s76AA

Statutory/Policy: Statutory

Included in the LTP: Yes

# Introduction

Council is committed to working with Māori and tangata whenua to build internal capacity and capability, not least to support the requirements given effect to by the Treaty Settlements. While required to have this policy under the Local Government Act, Council is committed to having working relationships with Māori that go above and beyond what is required under the legislative framework.

Clause 8 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires that the Council outline any steps it might take to foster the development of Māori capacity building to contribute to its decision-making processes, over the period covered by this plan.

The key provision in the Local Government Act 2002 regarding the Council's relationship with Māori is section 81, which requires all councils to fulfil three primary tasks:

- a) Establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and
- b) Consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and
- c) Provide relevant documentation to Māori for the purposes of the above two paragraphs.

## MANA WHAKAHONO A ROHE

Section 58M of the Resource Management Act was included in 2017. This Section provides the provisions to enhance the participation of Māori in Council decision-making in regards to Mana Whakahono a Rohe.

The purpose of a Mana Whakahono a Rohe is (section 58M):

- a) to provide a mechanism for iwi authorities and local authorities to discuss, agree, and record ways in which tangata whenua may, through their iwi authorities, participate in resource management and decision-making processes under this Act; and
- b) to assist local authorities to comply with their statutory duties under this Act, including through the implementation of sections 6(e), 7(a), and 8.

## THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: TŪTOHINGA

The Memorandum of Understanding, initially signed in 1998, recognises the fundamental role of Iwi in the District and the essential partnership between Iwi and the Rangitikei District Council. The key mechanism for delivering on the partnership intent of the Memorandum is Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa, a standing advisory committee of the Council.

Tangata whenua of the District are represented on the Komiti, as is the Rātana Community. Komiti members are regularly briefed on Council matters and specifically offered a lead role in reviews of policies/statements of particular relevance to Māori.

Members of the Komiti are also provided with a training budget in order to build capacity and capability among the group.

To give effect to the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding: TūtoHINGA, the Council and Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa are committed to looking for more effective ways to ensure that Māori are well informed, have an ability to have input into processes and, when they do so, understand the reasons for the Council's response.

A Māori community development programme was undertaken during 2011-2014, and provided for facilitated hui of iwi/hapū from the northern rohe to pre-caucus before Komiti meetings. A budget is allocated for the Māori Community Development Programme and is to be distributed by the Komiti in accordance with its own processes. This programme is designed to increase the capacity of Māori to contribute to local decision-making, and strengthen relationships between iwi organisations/marae and Council (including through the development of individual MOU). As a result, Council developed a policy for unlocking Māori landlocked land and a policy to recognise iwi/hapū interests in Council-owned land that is declared surplus.

The Memorandum of Understanding: TūtoHINGA is subject to review at the same time as each Representation Review. The last review was in 2019 with the final document approved on 17 December 2019.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa has adopted a strategic plan, which is subject to regular review. This plan identifies actions to achieve three goals – building stronger relationships between Council and Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa, building stronger relationships between Council and iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori communities, and building cultural awareness.

Every three years, Council adopts the Long Term Plan, supplemented annually with an Annual Plan. Council will ensure that there is an annual opportunity for iwi to engage with Council's strategic planning process, including the schedule of capital and renewal works, major programmes, policy review development and so on.

Council will also ensure that other tributary strategies – for example, arts, heritage, and economic development – receive particular input from iwi/hapū and from Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa

Council will welcome the opportunity to receive the strategic and other management plans from iwi/hapū in order to ensure alignment of its own strategies and plans where possible and appropriate, and with particular reference to the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991.

## IWI LIAISON OFFICER

Council has appointed an Iwi Liaison Officer who facilitates effective communication with tangata whenua and manages relationships in order to assist with the development and analysis of Council policy.

## REPRESENTATION

One of the early components of the Representation Review is consideration whether one or more Māori wards should be established in the District. Assuming the current statutory provisions remain in force, Council will continue to refer this matter to the Komiti for its consideration at each Representation Review. At the most recent review in 2017, the Komiti did not make a recommendation on this proposal. Instead it resolved that the future of Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa as an advisor group be considered against the value of direct relationships between iwi and Council.

This is not an 'either-or' question but one of establishing complementary relationships, understanding both the potential advantages and disadvantages of both. The Komiti advocates that Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa achieves a sense of tribal accountability, which is important for a district with multiple iwi. The Komiti is therefore in agreement that Māori Wards would not negate the need for Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa. Council expects this discussion to be ongoing and to develop as the relationship between Council and iwi organisations in the District matures.

In 2017, Council invited Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa to nominate one of its members to be a member of the Assets/Infrastructure Committee with full voting rights. In 2018, this was extended to include representation on the Policy/Planning and Finance/Performance Committees. This is viewed by the Komiti as being a form of meaningful participation in Council business.

In early 2021, Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa (TRAK) were asked to consider whether they supported Māori Wards being implemented for the 2022 elections. They advised they supported the introduction of Māori Wards, but wanted TRAK to be retained as a Standing Committee of Council. Council subsequently resolved to consider introducing Māori Wards, therefore in the second half of 2021, Council will undertake a Representation Review to look at how Māori Wards can be incorporated into its Ward structure to be in place for the 2022 local body elections.

## THE POST TREATY SETTLEMENT ENVIRONMENT

Finalisation of Treaty claims is a significant development in Rangitikei. The Council is aware that in a post-settlement phase, iwi with Mana Whēnua have obligations to all people in the rohe.

Ngāti Apa's claim has been settled, which was of particular significance to the District. It has resulted in addressing longstanding grievances that some iwi and hapū in our District have had with the Crown. The settlement has also resulted in commercial and cultural redress that has helped change the business, and cultural landscape within the region.

Council has established a Memorandum of Understanding with Ngāti Apa that supports the realisation of these benefits with Ngāti Apa now having a closer working relationship with Council.

Ngāti Rangi settled their claim on 10 March 2018 and the Taihape claims are currently in progress with closing submissions. Once these settlements are complete, they are likely to promote stronger working relationships with Council, particularly in the economic and industry space. The impacts of the Settlements/Acts on Council's business, resourcing levels and processes are not fully known at this stage.

The Iwi Advisory Komiti is an opportunity for iwi/hapū without the capacity to engage independently to engage in a relationship with Council. However, the iwi Advisory Komiti does not pre-empt the opportunity for individual iwi/hapū to have a direct relationship with Council.