



AGENDA

Emergency Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, 18 June 2026

Time: 2:00pm

Location: Council Chambers
Waikato Regional Council
Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members: Cr Robert Cookson – Chair
Cr Noel Smith – Deputy Chair
Cr Kataraina Hodge
Cr Keith Holmes
Cr Chris Hughes
Cr Tipa Mahuta
Cr Warren Maher
Cr Gary McGuire
Cr Jennifer Nickel
Cr Garry Reymer
Cr Liz Stolwyk

Integrated Catchment Management Committee

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere | Terms of Reference

1. *Mana ā-Ture* | Status

This Committee was established by Council under [clause 30\(1\)\(a\) of Schedule 7](#) of the *Local Government Act 2002*. It is a discretionary committee that can be created or disestablished by Council resolution.

2. *Kawenga* | Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible for:

- a. Providing governance oversight of Council's science, biodiversity, biosecurity, catchment planning and management, flood protection, river management and land drainage activities.
- b. Guiding the development and implementation of regional, sub-regional, catchment and community plans and fostering community-led and iwi-led partnerships for integrated catchment outcomes.
- c. Receiving infrastructure performance, state of environment and ecosystem monitoring reports to inform adaptive management and policy review.
- d. Considering emerging infrastructure and environmental issues and recommending actions to strengthen infrastructure sustainability, ecosystem resilience and biosecurity protection.
- e. Recommending to Council actions and partnerships that support integrated freshwater, biodiversity, and biosecurity outcomes.

3. *Ngā Apatono* | Powers

The Committee has the following powers required to carry out its responsibilities:

- a. Receiving monitoring and performance reports on biodiversity, biosecurity, catchment planning and management, flood protection, river management and land drainage activities.
- b. Approving regional, sub-regional, catchment and community plans, and recommending funding priorities to Council.
- c. Considering and distributing funds from the Natural Heritage Fund.

4. *Ngā Tūranga* | Membership

4.1 *Ngā Mema* | Members

The Committee has eleven members:

- a. Ten councillors appointed by Council
- b. Chair of Council

4.2 *Ngā Kairīwhi* | Alternates

The Deputy-Chair of Council is the alternate for the Chair of Council on this Committee, unless otherwise appointed.

4.3 *Ūpoko me te Ūpoko Tuarua* | Chair and Deputy-Chair

The Chair and Deputy-Chair are appointed by Council in accordance with clause 25 of Schedule 7 of the *Local Government Act 2002*.

5. *Herenga Tokoiti* | Quorum

Two members. One of whom must be an elected member of Council. *Refer clause 23(3)(b) of Schedule 7, [Local Government Act 2002](#)*.

6. *Ngā Tikanga Pōti* | Voting

- a. Decisions are made by majority vote of members present.
- b. If votes are equal, the Chair has a deliberative and casting vote.

Refer clause 24 of Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002.

7. *Ngā Hui i te Tau* | Frequency of meetings

Quarterly or as required.

Order Of Business

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1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Whakataka te hau ki te uru | Cease o winds from the west |
| Whakataka te hau ki te tonga | Cease o winds from the south |
| Kia mākinakina ki uta | Bring calm breezes over the land |
| Kia mātaratara ki tai | Bring calm breezes over the sea |
| E hī ake ana te atakura | And let the red-tipped dawn come |
| He tio | With a touch of frost |
| He Huka | A sharpened air |
| He hau hū | And promise of a glorious day |
| Tīhei mauri ora! | Behold we live |

2 APOLOGIES

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of the need to be aware of maintaining a clear separation between personal interests and duties and their role as an elected member.

If any member has an interest that creates an actual, or could be perceived to create, a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda, it is recommended that this be disclosed.

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

5.1 MINUTES OF THE INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2026

Rā | Date: 17 June 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Daggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 27 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 27 May 2026



MINUTES

Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 27 May 2026

Order Of Business

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Waikato Regional Council
Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 27 May 2026, 1.00pm
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Robert Cookson – Chair
 Cr Noel Smith – Deputy-Chair (Chair for the duration of the meeting)
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Chris Hughes
 Cr Warren Maher
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams, from 2.14pm).
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer (virtually via Teams)

In Attendance: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Patrick Whaley – Manager, Biosecurity and Biodiversity
 Jordan Metz – Democracy Advisor

The contents of these minutes meet all legal requirements and include a full set of decisions.

An audio-visual recording of the open session of the meeting is available on Waikato Regional Council's public website.

| Recording | Document ID # | YouTube Link |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
| Open Meeting Recording #1 | 36130664 | https://youtu.be/w9a3ZKAYHTk |
| Public Excluded Recording | 36043713 | - |
| Open Meeting Recording #2 | 36133837 | https://youtu.be/5vFDr3f8M |
| Open Meeting Recording #3 | 36127817 | https://youtu.be/86vUdQ2OCmg |

The Deputy-Chair (Cr Noel Smith) assumed the chair for the duration of the meeting.

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Director, Integrated Catchment Management (Greg Ryan) opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 37 seconds.

APOLOGY

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/14

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That the apologies of Cr Tipa Mahuta for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 11 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/15

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

- 1. That the agenda of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting of 27 May 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting, subject to:**
- 2. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1 at 2 minutes.

No interests were disclosed pertaining to items on the agenda or interests not already recorded on a relevant register.

5 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Nil

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 5 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/16

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

- That in accordance with section 48(1) of the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (Act)* and the interests protected by section 6 or 7 of that Act, the public is excluded from the following parts of this meeting. The general subject of the matters to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public are set out below:

| Meeting item no. and subject | Grounds for excluding the public | Reason for excluding the public |
|---|--|--|
| 7.1 - Receipt of Legal Advice for Self-Administration | s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege | section 48(1)(a)(i) of the Act - the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7 |

- That Mark Hammond and Megan Crocket (Thompkins Wake) remain in this meeting after the public has been excluded because of their knowledge of the items to be discussed. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to those matters because of its specialised nature and the benefit to be gained from expert advice.

CARRIED

1.03pm – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

7.1 RECEIPT OF LEGAL ADVICE FOR SELF ADMINISTRATION

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at start.

Presented by the Senior Litigator, Tompkins Wake (Mark Hammond) and Senior Consultant, Tompkins Wake (Megan Crocket).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/17

Moved: Cr Robert Cookson

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

1. That the report *Receipt of Legal Advice for Self-Administration (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 27 May 2026)* be received.
2. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee does not recommend any amendment to the Self Administration Policy and Agreement in response to the request from landowner Trevor Simpson.
3. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee recommends that a review of the Self Administration Policy and Agreement is completed to address recommendations included in this legal advice.
4. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.
5. That the legal advice be considered for release in due course (at the discretion of the Chief Executive (Chris McLay)).

CARRIED

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at 27 minutes 8 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/18

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That the meeting return to the open session.

CARRIED

1.31pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 NATURAL HERITAGE FUND APPLICATIONS**

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Manager, Biosecurity and Biodiversity (Patrick Whaley), Team Leader Biodiversity (Natasha Grainger) and the Senior Biodiversity Officer (Andrew Thomas). Refer Document # 36095000 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

Action: That the Natural Heritage Fund Policy (NHF) be reviewed at the next appropriate Strategy and Policy Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/19

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

1. That the report *Natural Heritage Fund Applications* (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 27 May 2026) be received.
2. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee approve a total distribution of \$1,899,116 to four applications, as follows:
 - (a) That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$340,000 be granted to Thames Coast Kiwi Care Incorporated for the Mountains to sea: Thames Coast predator control and habitat protection project
 - (b) That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$72,816 be granted to Mokaihaha Kōkako Trust for the Mokaihaha Predator Control and Kōkako Survey project
 - (c) That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$346,000 be granted to New Zealand Landcare Trust for the Taiea te Taiao Maungatautari to Pirongia Ecological Corridor project.
3. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee decline the following Natural Heritage Fund applications:
 - (a) Ngāti Tumutumu Iwi Trust (\$477,185 for the Tumutumu Kaitiaki Taiao project)
 - (b) Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Iwi Trust (\$305,567 for the Wairere Mahi project).
4. That \$122,006 of unallocated funding be transferred into the Natural Heritage Fund reserve for distribution in the 2027/28 funding round.

CARRIED

MOTION

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$1,140,300 be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community well-being project.

AMENDMENT

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/20

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer

That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$383,240 per annum for two years (inflation adjusted) be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community well-being project.

CARRIED

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer

That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$383,240 per annum for two years (inflation adjusted) be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community well-being project.

The substantive motion was not put. At the request of the chair, it was left to lay on the table, for Council to consider at its meeting on 25 June 2026.

6.2 TRIAL OF THE SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK IN THE MOTUKARAKA CATCHMENT

Item commenced in open recording 3, at 3 minutes 41 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Integrated Catchment Management (Greg Ryan).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/21

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

- 1. That the report *Trial of the Sustainable Infrastructure Decision-making Framework in the Motukaraka catchment* (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 27 May 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the Committee acknowledge and thank catchment stakeholders for their commitment, time and effort to participate in the trial of the SIDF on the Motukaraka Catchment.**
- 3. The Integrated Catchment Management Committee recommends to the Strategy and Policy Committee that the SIDF decision making framework Policy is reviewed urgently.**

CARRIED

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at 22 minutes 5 seconds.

The Director, Integrated Catchment Management (Greg Ryan) closed the meeting with a Karakia.

2.47pm – The meeting closed.

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 NATURAL HERITAGE FUND APPLICATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Rā Date: | 2 June 2026 |
| Kaituhi Author: | Andrew Thomas, Senior Biodiversity Officer |
| Kaituku Authoriser: | Greg Ryan, Director, Integrated Catchment Management |
| Mana whakatau Delegation Status: | Committee has delegated authority to make the recommended decision |

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To consider the recommendations for the Natural Heritage Fund (NHF) application made by Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust in the 2026/27 funding round.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Integrated Catchment Management Committee (ICMC) met on 25 May 2026 to consider six funding recommendations for the NHF 2026/27 funding round.
 - (a) The agenda was published prior to the meeting and can be accessed by clicking the following link: [Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 27 May 2026](#).
 - (b) The minutes are attached to this Committee agenda for confirmation.
3. The ICMC approved three applications and declined two applications.
4. The sixth application, from Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (MEIT), requested a significant increase in funding compared to the current levels of funding through the NHF. The ICMC requested additional information to be provided to inform the decision-making process and referred the decision to Council. It has since been decided that an emergency meeting of the ICMC will be held to complete this decision-making process.
 - (a) ICMC approved a total distribution of \$1,899,116 (based on four applicants) and transferred \$122,006 of unallocated funding into the Natural Heritage Fund reserve for distribution in the 2027/28 funding round. Three applications have had funding approved to a total of \$758,816 leaving \$1,140,300 available for distribution. (ICMC26/19).
 - (b) Staff recommended that \$1,140,300 be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust. An amendment was carried, adjusting the amount to \$383,240 per annum (inflation adjusted) for two years (ICMC26/20).
 - (c) The substantive motion that *“The Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$383,240 per annum for two years (inflation adjusted) be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community well-being project.”* was not put and was subsequently referred to Council for consideration.
5. If MEIT is funded at the reduced amount, as per the substantive motion, there is enough money to allocate MEIT funding for three years which provides more certainty for the Trust

and increases efficiency for both organisations (i.e., another application does not need to be prepared and assessed for three years and the funding deed would cover three instead of two years).

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Natural Heritage Fund Application* (Council, 18 June 2026) be received.
2. That the Committee approve a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$1,140,300 be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community wellbeing project, distributed over a two year funding term (\$561,724 in 2026/27 and \$578,576 in 2027/28).

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

6. The NHF was established in 2005 to assist organisations with environmental projects in the Waikato region and is funded through the natural heritage targeted rate.
7. The NHF is intended to support community led, collaborative projects that have long term, landscape scale, intergenerational ecological benefits, including assisting in securing public assets and public access.
8. Funding is allocated in accordance with the *Natural Heritage Partnership Programme (NHPP) Funding Policy* ([Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 27 May 2026 at page 18](#)), that was adopted by the Council on 24 April 2024.
9. The NHF 2026/27 funding round opened on 27 January 2026 and closed on 24 February 2026. The total budget available for allocation in the 2026/27 round of the NHF was \$2,021,122. A total of six applications were received, requesting \$3,277,797 in funding from the Council.
10. On the 27 May 2026, the ICMC approved three grants totalling \$758,816 and declined two applications, as detailed below:
 - (a) Thames Coast Kiwi Care Incorporated were granted \$340,000 for the Mountains to sea: Thames Coast predator control and habitat protection project;
 - (b) Mokaihaha Kōkako Trust were granted \$72,816 for the Mokaihaha Predator Control and Kōkako Survey project;
 - (c) New Zealand Landcare Trust were granted \$346,000 for the Taiea te Taiao Maungatautari to Pirongia Ecological Corridor project;
 - (d) Ngāti Tumutumu Iwi Trust were declined funding for the Tumutumu Kaitiaki Taiao project; and
 - (e) Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Iwi Trust were also declined funding for the Wairere Mahi project.
11. MEIT, trading as Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, requested a significant increase in funding in their 2026/27 application, compared to current levels of funding provided by the Council through the NHF. ICMC requested additional information to be obtained by staff from MEIT to help inform their decision-making process (see **Attachment 1** for supplementary information).

TE TAKE | ISSUE

12. ICMC requested additional information to decide whether to fund MEIT in the NHF 2026/27 funding round and if so, to what extent that funding contribution should be.

PŪTEA | FINANCES

13. The revenue for the NHF is sourced from the natural heritage targeted rate of \$15 per property per annum and was designed to allow any unspent funds to be put into a reserve. Staff time spent administering the NHF is drawn from the total natural heritage rate revenue, reducing the amount available for grants accordingly.

NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA | OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

14. Staff recommend MEIT receive funding by one of the following two options (outlined in Table 1). It is noted that both options will only partially fund the amount requested by MEIT for the three year period:
- (a) **Option 1 – Preferred option** - That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$1,140,300 be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community wellbeing project, distributed over a two year funding term (\$561,724 in 2026/27 and \$578,576 in 2027/28), or;
 - (a) **Option 2** – That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$1,222,486 be granted to Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust for the Maungatautari – the seed source of biodiversity and community wellbeing project as follows:
 - (i) that \$395,120 be granted in in 2026/27 and \$407,369 be granted in 2027/28.
 - (ii) That a further \$419,997 be granted in 2028/29.
 - (iii) The Council draws \$82,186 from the NHF reserve to distribute in grants in the 2028/29 financial year.
15. That any remaining unallocated funding be transferred into the Natural Heritage Fund reserve for distribution in future funding rounds.
16. If funding is approved, MEIT will be required to sign a funding agreement and meet project accountability and reporting requirements detailing how funding has been used and outcomes achieved through their project.
17. Table 1 summarises the funding requested in the MEIT application, as well as the two funding recommendation options for the Committee’s consideration.

Table 1: Funding requested and funding recommendation options for consideration.

| Request/Recommendation | Year 1 (2026/27) | Year 2 (2027/28) | Year 3 (2028/29) | Total Funding |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Requested | \$561,724 | \$578,576 | \$595,929 | \$1,736,229 |
| Option 1 – Recommendation as presented to ICMC | \$561,724 | \$578,576 | \$0 | \$1,140,300 |
| Option 2 – Proposed motion drafted at ICMC (modified) | \$395,120 | \$407,369 | \$419,997 | \$1,222,486 |

18. Table 2 summarises the rationale and impact assessment for each option.

Table 2: Recommendation options outlined with details and analysis.

| Option 1 – Recommendation as presented to ICMC on 27 May 2026 | |
|---|---|
| Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa Description of option | |
| <p>Recommendation made to ICMC on 27 May 2026 – fund MEIT for two of the three years requested in their application, totalling \$1,140,300. The rationale for this option was based on the available funding in the NHF and a preference from MEIT for full funding of years as requested, where possible. MEIT were the highest ranking applicant in the latest round and staff have reviewed the budget and think it represents the costs of delivering the trust’s core activities.</p> | |
| Tearo matawai i ngā pānga Impact assessment | |
| Tūraru Risk | <p>The key risk of not funding MEIT for the third year is that the funding term would end during a period of significant uncertainty about the Council’s structure in 2028, following the Simplifying Local Government reforms announced on 5 May 2026. This creates a risk to the trust’s financial viability from the 2028/29 financial year onwards.</p> |
| Option 2 – Proposed motion drafted at ICMC (modified) | |
| Whakamāramatanga o te whiringa Description of option | |
| <p>Recommendation to Council from ICMC (modified) – fund MEIT at a similar rate to current funding (adjusted for inflation) over the three year funding term to a total of \$1,222,486. The rationale for this recommendation is based on the direction provided by ICMC at the 27 May meeting that their preference was for funding MEIT in alignment with previously funded levels provided by the Council through the NHF. The funding is inflation adjusted on an annual basis using an inflation rate of 3.1%.¹</p> <p>There is enough budget to fund MEIT for three years (rather than two) which is more efficient for both organisations as less time is spent applying and assessing an application in two years’ time. Funding the trust for a three year term will provide greater certainty for the project during the 2028/29 financial year, when significant changes to regional councils are likely to occur as part of the Simplifying Local Government reforms (the impact and timing of which have become clearer since the MEIT application was initially assessed).</p> | |
| Tearo matawai i ngā pānga Impact assessment | |
| Tūraru Risk | <p>The key risk of funding MEIT at a reduced level from the amount requested in their application is that they will be unable to obtain funding from other agencies or sources to cover the funding shortfall during the three year funding term. This will likely result in MEIT having to reduce their overall level of service. Examples may include; slower response times to fence breach alerts, reduced threatened species monitoring, less capacity to pursue innovative revenue opportunities.</p> |

¹ Statistics New Zealand (2026) www.stats.govt.nz/news/annual-inflation-at-3-1-percent-in-march-2026

TE ARA AROMATAWAI | ASSESSMENT PROCESS

19. All applications were scored against the assessment criteria from the *NHPP Funding Policy* (Section 7.4 for more information) by an assessment panel consisting of two staff members and an independent assessor.
20. Following assessment, a meeting was held with a panel of moderators to review the combined assessment scores and to agree on recommendations for the ICMC.
21. The moderation panel kept the following principles in mind when reaching their recommendations:
 - (a) Preference was given to projects with higher combined assessor scores.
 - (b) Continuing to support high scoring, well established groups who are successfully delivering outcomes for biodiversity.
 - (c) Funding to the full extent of the requested amount where appropriate and practical. Partially funding projects may affect project outcomes and overall project viability.
22. Following the ICMC meeting on 27 May 2026, two options have been drafted for the Council to consider.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

23. This decision will increase the ability of the Council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now and into the future.
24. Each applicant was required to state how their project will increase resilience to climate change and/or contribute to positive carbon sequestration in their funding application.
25. The decision to approve staff recommendations for funding is not sensitive to higher emission scenarios or more rapid climate changes.

TE WHAKAMAURU – TE WHAKAHEKE I NGĀ PĀNGA KI TE ĀHUARANGI | MITIGATION – REDUCING IMPACTS ON THE CLIMATE

26. The decision requested is likely to result in a small reduction in greenhouse gasses through the awarding of a grant to a project undertaking a range of biodiversity enhancing activities.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

27. The decisions to approve the grants recommended are opportunities for the Council to demonstrate leadership by supporting community initiatives that encourage mitigation through actions that also restore biodiversity.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

28. Having regard to the decision-making provisions in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) and the council's Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance. Staff are of the opinion that the content and recommendations in this report are consistent with the

decision-making requirements contained in Part Six of the LGA and that the decision-making requirements of the LGA have been met.

TE HOROPAKI Ā-TURE | LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

29. The decision is not subject to any decision-making requirements other than the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

30. The preferred option is for the Committee to approve the funding as recommended in Option 1, for reasons outlined above.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

31. To the best of the writer's knowledge, this decision is not significantly inconsistent with, nor is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with any policy adopted by Council or any plan required by the LGA or any other enactment.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

32. The Council is obligated under the LGA to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes.
33. Applications to the NHF are assessed against six criteria, one of which specifically relates to the value of the project to mana whenua and how the project involves iwi Māori including their cultural values, interests and associations, the effect on Māori historic heritage and the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga including fauna and flora. Additionally, one of the other criteria assesses the extent of mana whenua support of the project.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

34. The Natural Heritage Fund 2026/27 round opened on 27 January 2026 and closed on 24 February 2026 with six applications received.
35. At its meeting on 27 May 2026, ICMC approved three projects to be funded, totalling \$758,816 and declined funding for two projects.
36. A decision on funding the sixth applicant, Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust was deferred to Council, pending additional information being provided. This decision has now been returned to the Committee.
37. Two options for partially funding MEIT are presented for the Committee's consideration.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

38. [Report to ICMC – Natural Heritage Fund Applications \(Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 27 May 2026 at page 5\)](#)
39. [NHPP Funding Policy \(Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 27 May 2026 at page 18\)](#)

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **MEIT Application - Supporting information as requested by ICMC (Doc #36260154)** [↓](#)

Supporting Information - MEIT's Application for Funding

Overview

At its meeting on 27 May 2026, the Integrated Catchment Management Committee (ICMC) requested that staff supply further information to support their decision-making process in relation to the application for funding received by Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (MEIT) in the 2026/27 NHF funding round. This document is intended to provide that further information requested by Councillors.

Reasons for an increase in baseline funding sought from the Council

Staff have reviewed the budgets provided in the application and sought additional information from MEIT, and concluded that the level of funding requested is considered appropriate for the Trust to continue to maintain the 47 km fenceline and the sanctuaries' pest-free status. The level of funding requested will ensure core activities are maintained.

The fenceline is monitored 24 hours a day with staff rostered to respond if a fence breach (usually a tree falling onto the fence) is detected to reduce the chance of pests entering the sanctuary. If a pest enters the reserve there is a protocol to follow to remove the pest, depending on the species.

Due to successive years of funding shortfall, MEIT have deferred maintenance of access tracks and the fence and reduced vegetation trimming (preventative measure for fence damage) around the fenceline.

The cost to deliver core work has increased significantly, such as increases in fuel costs, materials, increased fence breaches due to higher frequency of adverse weather events.

The fence infrastructure is being impacted by the increased frequency of severe weather events, dieback from an unknown cause in mature mangleo trees, aging fence infrastructure (now over 20 years old in many parts), all of which increase the overall cost of maintaining the pest-free sanctuary status.

What is being done differently?

The work programme the Trust has submitted as part of its application is similar to the current work programme and the Trust is not seeking to expand the work it currently undertakes. The application requests funding for contributions to:

- Staff labour – for operational delivery of the threatened species management programme, maintaining the pest-free sanctuary and the environmental educational programme.
- Materials – for threatened species management programme and materials required to respond to fence breaches and repairs.

The slight difference is that the current application does not seek funding for core competency training. The current NHF funding deed for the Trust allocated \$6,194 for this type of training. Table 1 summarises and compares the budget for the current funding deed and the budget submitted as part of the Trust's application.

MEIT are seeking the three primary partners (Waikato Regional Council, Waipā District Council and Department of Conservation) to contribute a higher percentage (25%) of the trust's annual operational costs in funding, compared to approximately 14% currently.

Funding certainty

A three-year funding term provides certainty for MEIT that they will be receiving Council funding through until the end of 2028/29 financial year. The Trust typically has between four to twelve weeks cash in the bank.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and Waikato Regional Council (WRC) have transitioned to contestable funding which has added less certainty for MEIT to continue to run the basic operations of Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari. Waipā District Council has a service level agreement for the trust to maintain the scenic reserve which is approved through their Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Financial management

MEIT have reduced their annual operating expenses from \$2,908,325 in 2022/23, to \$2,471,107 in 2024/25. The trust has reduced FTEs following the cessation of Jobs for Nature funding.

MEIT have diversified how they raise money and have confirmed new revenue streams, including:

- Biodiversity credits
- On-site accommodation
- Commercial native plant nursery
- Tourism offerings
- Overnight educational visits
- Changes to the membership programme
- Endowment fund

MEIT have been transparent with funding constraints. A qualified audit opinion was not necessary as all the financial information was provided. There was an operating loss 2023/24 with a deficit of \$547, 976 that was reduced to \$33,702 in 2024/25 by one-off donations from the philanthropic sector (~\$250,000) and staff reductions which is reflected in the Trust's financial statements.

Overview of current funding from primary partners

Councillors sought clarification of other funders contributions which are presented in Table 2. Waikato Regional Council and Waipā District Council fund fence maintenance and pest control while DOC funding is generally tagged to threatened species management, with the exception of the Jobs for Nature Funding, which funded the employment and training of additional rangers for fence maintenance and monitoring work.

Table 1. MEIT budget summary. All figures are GST exclusive.

| 2022/23 to 2025/2026 | Funding approved | 2026/27 to 2028/29 | Funding requested |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Year 1 | | Year 1 | |
| Staff salaries (rangers, volunteer coordinator, operations, administration community outreach, educators) | \$218,083 | Staff salaries (rangers, volunteer coordinator, operations, administration community outreach, educators) | \$396,914 |
| Materials (including pest management, fence maintenance, threatened species management, tools and equipment) | \$126,441 | Materials (including pest management, fence maintenance, threatened species management, tools and equipment) | \$164,810 |
| Training for staff and volunteers in core competencies | \$6,194 | | |
| | <u>\$350,718</u> | | <u>\$561,724</u> |
| Year 2 | | Year 2 | |
| Same activities as Year 1 with a 3% inflation adjustment | | Staff salaries (rangers, volunteer coordinator, operations, administration community outreach, educators) | \$408,822 |
| | | Materials (including pest management, fence maintenance, threatened species management, tools and equipment) | \$169,754 |
| | <u>\$361,240</u> | | <u>\$578,576</u> |
| Year 3 | | Year 3 | |
| Same activities as Year 2 with a 3% inflation adjustment | | Staff salaries (rangers, volunteer coordinator, operations, administration community outreach, educators) | \$421,084 |
| | | Materials (including pest management, fence maintenance, threatened species management, tools and equipment) | \$174,845 |
| | <u>\$377,077</u> | | <u>\$595,929</u> |
| Year 4 | | | |
| Same activities as Year 3 with a 3% inflation adjustment | | Materials (including pest management, fence maintenance, threatened species management, tools and equipment) | |
| | <u>\$383,240</u> | | <u>\$0</u> |

Table 2: Summary of funders of Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust. All figures are GST exclusive.

| Funder | Funding received | | | | Funding confirmed | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 |
| Local government funding | | | | | | | |
| WRC | \$351,718 | \$361,240 | \$372,077 | \$383,240 | | | |
| Waipā DC | \$305,000 | \$305,000 | \$305,000 | \$313,235 | \$321,691 ¹ | | |
| Waipā DC – track maintenance | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | \$26,471 ¹ | | |
| Central government funding | | | | | | | |
| DOC | \$0 | \$141,205 | \$73,500 | \$0 | | | |
| DOC - Jobs for Nature | \$197,972 | \$193,472 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| International Visitor Levy ² | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$450,000 | \$180,000 | \$120,000 | \$0 |

¹ These figures are subject to approvals through Waipā District Council's Annual Plan.

² Tagged to the management of five threatened species; kākāpō, hihi, takahē, Hochstetter's frog and Māhoenui giant wētā, and community engagement.

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Unuhia, unuhia

Unuhia mai te uru tapu nui

kia wātea, kia māmā,

te ngākau, te tinana, te hinengaro,

i te ara takatū

Koia rā e Rongo

e whakairia ake ki runga

kia tina! TINA!

Haumi ē, hui ē, TĀIKI ē!

Draw on, draw on,

Draw on to the supreme sacredness

To clear, to free

our heart, body and soul

Our pathway prepared

Lo, there is peace

suspended high above

manifest!

draw together!

Affirm!