

Values and uses for the Waikato and Waipa rivers

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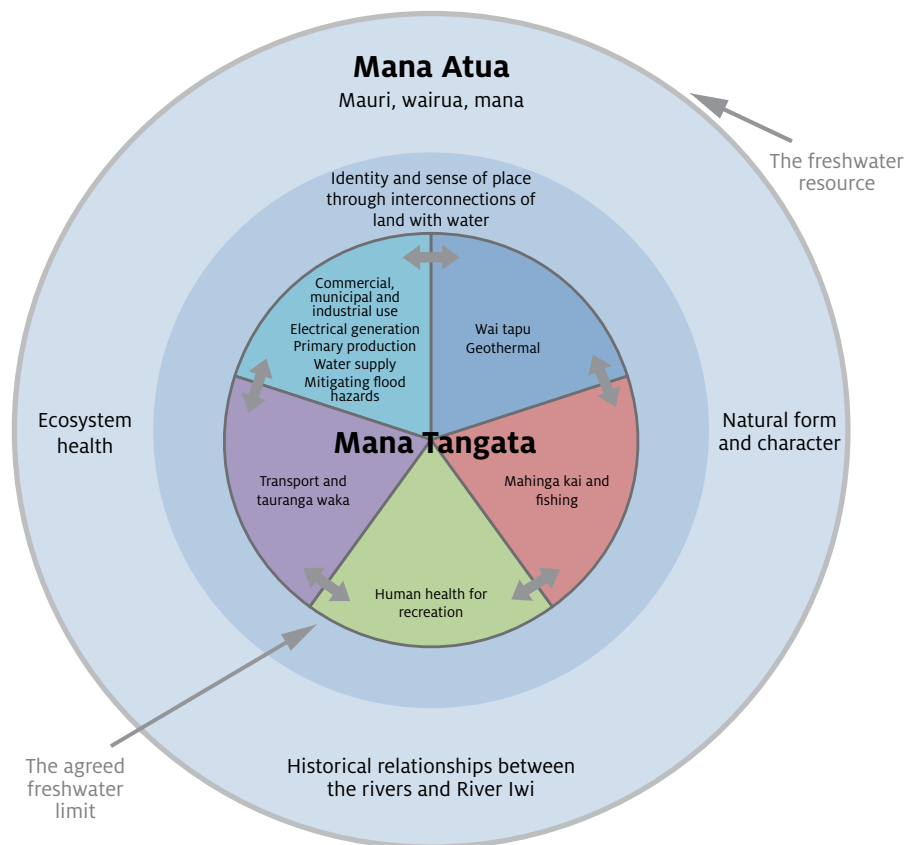
Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River

“Our vision is for a future where a healthy Waikato River sustains abundant life and prosperous communities who, in turn, are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, and all it embraces, for generations to come.”¹

Te Mana o te Wai: Mana Atua, Mana Tangata

Values can be thought of in terms of Mana Atua and Mana Tangata, which represent Te Mana o te Wai.² Mana Atua represents the intrinsic values of water including the mauri (the principle of life force), wairua (the principle of spiritual dimension) and inherent mana (the principle of prestige, authority) of the water and its ecosystems in their natural state. Mana Tangata refers to values of water arising from its use by people for economic, social, spiritual and cultural purposes. Mana Atua and Mana Tangata values encompass past, present and future.

A strong sense of identity and connection with land and water (hononga ki te wai, hononga ki te whenua) is apparent through the Vision and Strategy and the many values associated with the rivers. This is represented in the figure below as a unifying value that provides an interface between the Mana Atua and Mana Tangata values.



¹ The Vision and Strategy is intended by Parliament to be the primary direction setting document for the Waikato River and activities within its catchment affecting the Waikato River. Values and uses are intrinsic to, and embedded in the Vision and Strategy.

² The *National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014* states that the aggregation of a range of community and tangata whenua values, and the ability of fresh water to provide for them over time, recognises the national significance of fresh water and Te Mana o te Wai.

Hononga ki te wai, hononga ki te whenua - Identity and sense of place through the interconnections of land with water

- The rivers contribute to a sense of community and sustaining community wellbeing.
- The rivers are an important part of whānau/family life, holding nostalgic feelings and memories and having deep cultural and historical significance.
- For River Iwi, respect for the rivers lies at the heart of the spiritual and physical wellbeing of iwi and their tribal identity and culture. The river is not separate from the people but part of the people, “Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au” (I am the river and the river is me).
- The rivers are a shared responsibility, needing collective stewardship: kaitiakitanga – working together to restore the rivers. There is also an important intergenerational equity concept within kaitiakitanga.
- Mahitahi (collaborative work) encourages us all to work together to achieve common goals.

Mana Atua – Intrinsic values

Ko te whakapapa o ngā iwi ki ōna awa tūpuna / Historical relationships between the rivers and River Iwi

Ko ngā kōrero o neherā / History

Each River Iwi has their own unique and intergenerational relationship with the rivers.

- The rivers have always been seen as taonga (treasures) to all River Iwi.
- The rivers have always given River Iwi a strong sense of identity and connection with the land and water.
- Rivers were used holistically; River Iwi understood the functional relationships with and between all parts of the rivers, spiritually and physically.
- Iwi strive to maintain and restore these relationships despite the modification and destruction that has occurred through different types of development along the rivers.

Ko te hauora me te mauri o te wai / The health and mauri of water

Ecosystem health

The Waikato and Waipa catchments support resilient freshwater ecosystems and healthy freshwater populations of indigenous plants and animals.

- Clean fresh water restores and protects aquatic native vegetation to provide habitat and food for native aquatic species and for human activities or needs, including swimming and drinking.
- Clean fresh water restores and protects macroinvertebrate communities for their intrinsic value and as a food source for native fish, native birds and introduced game species.
- Clean fresh water supports native freshwater fish species.
- Wetlands and floodplains provide water purification, refuge, feeding and breeding habitat for aquatic species, habitat for water fowl and other ecosystem services such as flood attenuation.
- Fresh water contributes to unique habitats including peat lakes, shallow riverine lakes and karst formations which all support unique biodiversity.
- Rivers and adjacent riparian margins have value as ecological corridors.

Ko te hauora me te mauri o te taiao / The health and mauri of the environment

Natural form and character

Retain the integrity of the rivers within the landscape and its aesthetic features and natural qualities for people to enjoy.

- The rivers have amenity and naturalness values, including native vegetation, undeveloped stretches, and significant sites.
- People are able to enjoy the natural environment; it contributes to their health and wellbeing.
- The rivers are an ecological and cultural corridor.
- The rivers as a whole living entity.

Mana Tangata – Use values

Ko ngā wai tapu / Sacred waters

Wai tapu

Area of water body set aside for spiritual activities that support spiritual, cultural and physical wellbeing.

- The rivers are a place for sacred rituals, wairua, healing, spiritual nurturing and cleansing.
- The rivers provide for cultural and heritage practices and cultural wellbeing, particularly at significant sites.

Ngāwhā / geothermal

Geothermal

A valued resource that is naturally gifted to sustain certain activities (meeting spiritual and physical needs).

- Geothermal areas and their various resources were prized by tūpuna (ancestors) for their many uses and are still valued and used today.
- Geothermal areas of the river have natural form and character, and unique flora found only in the geothermal environment.
- Geothermal areas are a special microclimate.

Ko ngā wāhi mahinga kai / Food gathering, places of food

Mahinga kai and fishing

The ability to access the Waikato and Waipa and their tributaries to gather sufficient quantities of kai (food) that is safe to eat and meets the social and spiritual needs of their stakeholders.

- The rivers provide for freshwater native species, native vegetation, and habitat for native animals.
- The rivers provide for freshwater game and introduced kai species.
- The rivers provide for cultural wellbeing, knowledge transfer, intergenerational harvest, obligations of manaakitanga (to give hospitality to, respect, generosity and care for others) and cultural opportunities, particularly at significant sites.
- The rivers should be safe to take food from, both fisheries and kai.
- The rivers support aquatic life, healthy biodiversity, ecosystem services, flora and fauna and biodiversity benefits for all.
- The rivers are a corridor.
- The rivers provide resources available for use which could be managed in a sustainable way.
- The rivers provide for recreation needs and for social wellbeing.

Ko te hauora me te mauri o ngā tāngata / The health and mauri of the people

Human health for recreation

The rivers are a place to swim and undertake recreation activities in an environment that poses minimal risk to health.

- The rivers provide for recreational use and social needs, are widely used by the community, and are a place to relax, play, exercise and have an active lifestyle.
- An important value for the rivers is cleanliness; the rivers should be safe for people to swim in.
- The rivers provide resources available for use which could be managed in a sustainable way.
- The rivers provide for recreation needs and for social wellbeing.

He urungi / Navigation

Transport and tauranga waka

All communities can use the rivers to pilot their vehicles and waka and navigate to their destinations.

- The rivers provide for recreational use (navigation), and sporting opportunities.
- The rivers are a corridor, mode of transport and mode of communication.
- The rivers provide for culture and heritage, cultural wellbeing, and social wellbeing, particularly at significant sites.

Ko ngā mahi māra me ngā mahi ahu matua / Cultivation and primary production

Primary production

The rivers support regionally and nationally significant primary production in the catchment (agricultural, horticultural, forestry). These industries contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of people and communities, and are the major component of wealth creation within the region. These industries and associated primary production also support other industries and communities within rural and urban settings.

- The rivers support a wide variety of primary production in the catchment, including dairy, meat, wool, horticulture and forestry.
- Due to the economies of scale of these industries, other service sectors, such as agritech, aviation and manufacturing, are able to operate.
- These industries combined contribute significantly to regional and national GDP, exports, food production and employment.
- The rivers and the surrounding land offer unique opportunities for many communities and industries to operate, contributing to the lifestyle and sense of community, pride and culture in rural Waikato.

Ko ngā hāpori wai Māori / Municipal and domestic water supply

Water supply

The rivers provide for community water supply, municipal supply, drinkable broader water supply and health.

- The catchments' surface and subsurface water is of a quality that can be effectively treated to meet appropriate health standards for both potable and non-potable uses.

Ko ngā āu putea / Economic or commercial development

Commercial, municipal and industrial use

The rivers provide economic opportunities to people, businesses and industries.

- Fresh water is used for industrial and municipal processes, which rely on the assimilative capacity for discharges to surface water bodies. In addition:
- Provide for economic wellbeing, financial and economic contribution, individual businesses and the community and the vibrancy of small towns. They are working rivers; they create wealth.
 - Those industries are important to the monetary economy of Waikato region, enabling a positive brand to promote to overseas markets.
 - The rivers provide for domestic and international tourism. Promotion of a clean, green image attracts international and domestic visitors.
 - The rivers provide assimilative capacity for wastewater disposal, flood and stormwater, and ecosystem services through community schemes or on site disposal.

Electricity generation

The river provides for reliable, renewable hydro and geothermal energy sources and thermal generation, securing national self-reliance and resilience. New Zealand's social and economic wellbeing are dependent on a secure, cost-effective electricity supply system. Renewable energy contributes to our international competitive advantage. Electricity also contributes to the health and safety of people and communities.

- Waikato hydro scheme extends over 186km, comprising Lake Taupō storage, dams, lakes, and power stations. Tongariro Power scheme adds 20 per cent to natural inflows to Lake Taupō.
- Huntly Power Station's role in the New Zealand electricity system is pivotal, particularly when weather dependent renewable generation is not available. Fresh water is used for cooling and process water.
- Geothermal power stations located on multiple geothermal systems use fresh water for cooling, process water and drilling.

Mitigating flood hazards

Flood management systems protect land used and inhabited by people.

- River engineering, including stopbanks and diversions, protect land and infrastructure from damage by flooding.