

WRC Workshop – Waikare- Whangamarino Action Plan

2 June 2026

Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan

- The Purpose of the Plan is to:
- *“Identify actions that will drive significant environmental improvements in Waikare and Whangamarino”*
- Most actions identified in the Plan have been raised in previous catchment planning initiatives or in published reports.
- At this stage, WRC has made no commitment to progress any of the Actions.

Feedback on Final Draft Waikare- Whangamarino Action Plan

DairyNZ, HortNZ and Te Kauwhata
Community Event (25/5/2026)

Feedback from Working Group

- Strong support from Waikato River Authority, Waikato-Tainui, Mana Whenua (Ngaa Muka, Ngaati Hine, Waahi Whaanui), DOC, Fish & Game, Te Kauwhata Community rep, Waikato District Council rep,
- Three landowner representatives do not support the Plan

HortNZ Feedback

- Accepts direction of travel, but challenges deliverability
- Key concerns focus on:
 - Lack of implementation clarity and readiness
 - Unclear funding and impacts on private landowners
 - Gaps in engagement with growers (key delivery partners)
 - Uncertainty around regulatory vs non-regulatory expectations
 - Impacts of PC1 and Te Ture Whaimana review
 - Alignment with LWWWCMP 2018

DairyNZ Feedback

- Supports overall direction of the Plan & shares the commitment to improving environmental outcomes.
- Dairy farmers will do their share alongside others.
- Limited clarity about costs and distribution of costs in the Plan.
- DairyNZ recognises that actions will require considerable, multi-generational investment and commitments from all landholders and numerous agencies.
- The Action Plan risks:
 - downplaying the considerable efforts already underway
 - putting undue emphasis on landholders ahead of any action from other users and legacy contributors (e.g. invasive species, hydrological regime changes).
 - underplaying the effort/cost in adoption of “good management practices”.
- DairyNZ is seeking greater industry partnership in implementation planning (feasibility, efficacy, timeliness of response and accountability).

Community Feedback

- Community evening Te Kauwhata on May 2025.
- The turnout greatly exceeded expectations, with >100 highly engaged community members.
- Farming landowners stated there has been a lack of consultation and limited representation on Working Group.
- Major concerns were voiced around:
 - Unknown total cost and distribution of costs for actions within the Plan
 - The added burden/expectations placed on farmers
 - Responsibility of others to do their bit
- Conflicting views in the room about koi control, ranging from “must do it before any other actions” to “complete waste of time and money”.
- Timeframes for input and final delivery of Action Plan were questioned.

Co-Pilot Summary of meeting feedback

- Concern about the impacts on farming
- Koi carp as a priority issue
- Scepticism about proposed solutions
- Science is uncertain/incomplete
- Need practical costed solutions
- Frustration with engagement
- Needs to be equity and fairness
- Forestry impacts need accounting for
- Mixed community sentiment

Reflections on the process of Action Plan Development

- Everyone wants 'Action' to improve the Lake and Wetland – WRC should 'fix the lake', DOC should 'fix' the Wetland.
- Need an open and honest admission of collective impact over many years, recognition of a collective responsibility for action
- Collective contribution to deterioration over time, collective contribution to remediation and restoration
- Collective responsibility with all operating in the catchment having accountability.

AI Insight: Strong Strategy, Weaker Delivery (“Why & What vs How”)

- The Draft Action Plan is strong on “Why” (case for change) and “What” (vision, outcomes, actions)
- But less developed on “How” (delivery, funding, roles, practical implementation)
- *Anticipated - action implementation was explicitly out of scope of the original project, and would be considered as the next phase.*

Implications for Council

- Strategic alignment is good
- Need for further engagement with the wider catchment community.
- We have heard from multiple groups that the ‘How’ (i.e. implementation) is lacking.
- We have also heard from multiple parties of their interest in being part of implementation planning.
- Suggested Next Steps:
 - Stronger engagement with key delivery sectors (e.g. industry bodies)
 - Community engagement period to enable feedback across the continuum
 - Clear implementation pathways (who, how, when)
 - Greater clarity on potential costs (especially for private land)
 - Alignment with existing programmes to avoid duplication

IMPLEMENTATION AND POTENTIAL GOVERNANCE APPROACH

Implementing the Action Plan

- The Action Plan recommends an initial Implementation Programme covering a five-year period (2026-2031).
- Governance is a critical element of implementation

Governance Principles

- Partners are collectively responsible for implementation, but accountability ultimately rests with their respective governors.
- Existing governance and management structures should be utilised wherever practicable to reduce oversight complexity and overhead costs.
- Oversight (either standalone or as part of existing structure) should have Terms of Reference and representation that are closely aligned with the purpose, scope and collaborative approach of the Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan.
- Oversight of Action Plan implementation should include representation from iwi/mana whenua, rural and urban landowners, and potentially youth, as well as those organisations with statutory responsibility (e.g. DOC, WRC, WRA etc.)

Options for Governance

- Option 1. Co-Chaired Catchment Steering Group (operational) that exists within WRC's existing governance framework (enhanced status quo).
- Option 2. Catchment sub-committee provides governance oversight of implementation.
- Option 3. Co-governance delivered by an independent Whangamarino Catchment Trust. Partner organisations are represented on a Catchment Trust Board with an independent chair.
- Option 4. Co-chaired leadership forum built on a multi-party agreement and shared commitments (Waikare-Whangamarino Accord). Governance is anchored by a co-governance entity (e.g. WRC-Waikato Tainui).