



AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, 30 April 2026

Time: 9.30am

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

Members: Cr Warren Maher – Chair
Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy-Chair
Cr Robert Cookson
Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
Cr Kataraina Hodge
Cr Keith Holmes
Cr Chris Hughes
Cr Tipa Mahuta
Cr Gary McGuire
Cr Jennifer Nickel
Cr Garry Reymer
Cr Noel Smith
Cr Liz Stolwyk
Cr Angela Strange

Kaunihera | Council

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere | Terms of Reference

1. **Mana ā-Ture | Status**
Council is the governing body of Waikato Regional Council, a statutory corporation created by *section 41 of the [Local Government Act 2002](#)*.
2. **Ngā Kawenga | Responsibilities**
Council is responsible for meeting its legal obligations set out in statute and the common law.
3. **Ngā Apatono | Powers**
Council holds all powers provided by law necessary to perform its responsibilities, whether delegated or not, except for the following powers which cannot be delegated under the Local Government Act 2002:
 - a. To make a rate
 - b. To make a bylaw
 - c. To borrow money, or purchase or dispose of assets, other than in accordance with the long-term plan
 - d. To adopt a long-term plan, annual plan, or annual report
 - e. To appoint a Chief Executive
 - f. To adopt policies required to be adopted and consulted on under this Act in association with the long-term plan or developed for the purpose of the local governance statement
 - g. to adopt a remuneration and employment policy
4. **Ngā Tūranga | Membership**
All councillors are members of Council.
5. **Tokamatua | Quorum**
Half the members including vacancies (*seven*). Refer to clause 23 of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002](#).
6. **Ngā Tikanga Pōti | Voting**
 - a. Decisions are made by majority vote of members present and voting.
 - b. In the case of a tie, the Chair has a deliberative and casting vote.

Refer **clause 24** of [Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act](#) and [Standing Orders](#).
7. **Hautūtanga Āhuarangi | Climate Leadership**
Climate leadership is a priority. All discretionary committees of Council are tasked with the following responsibilities:
 - a. Set mitigation and adaptation objectives to decarbonise committee activities and ensure business resilience.
 - b. Ensure climate change evidence and guidance informs committee work programmes, and that decisions include explicit consideration of climate change impacts.
 - c. Use environmental, social, cultural, and economic research and capabilities to assess and mitigate climate risks, including transition risks.
 - d. Monitor and report annually on progress toward emissions mitigation and climate adaptation objectives.
 - e. Promote consistent and effective leadership, advocacy, communication, and engagement on climate change issues.
8. **Ngā Hui i te Tau | Frequency of Meetings**
Monthly or as required.

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Preliminary Items	5
2.1	Deputations - Local Government New Zealand Membership.....	5
3	Apologies	7
4	Confirmation of Agenda	7
5	Disclosures of Interest	7
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	8
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 26 March 2026	8
6.1	Minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026	20
6.2	Minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 9 March 2026.....	28
6.3	Minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026	36
6.4	Minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2026.....	43
6.5	Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 March 2026	57
6.6	Minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 30 March 2026.....	67
6.7	Minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2026	83
7	General Items	95
7.1	Hauraki Gulf Forum - Minutes for Receipt	95
7.2	Health and Safety Report - March 2026.....	104
7.3	Waikato Regional Energy Strategy	113
7.4	Waikato Regional Council Submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 to the Waipā District Plan.....	168
7.5	Notice of Motion - Local Government New Zealand Membership.....	189
8	Public Excluded Items	191
9	Karakia Whakamutunga	192

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 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

2.1 DEPUTATIONS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND MEMBERSHIP

Rā | Date: 17 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Daggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. Council has received requests from Mr Brett Murphy and Mr Scott Necklan (Chief Executive, Local Government New Zealand) to address the Council. These requests have been approved by way of a deputation (pursuant to Standing Order #16).
2. Both speakers have indicated that they wish to speak regarding the Council's membership of Local Government New Zealand and is related to item 7.5 *Notice of Motion – Local Government New Zealand Membership* tabled later in the meeting.
3. An overview of the deputation process and relevant standing orders pertaining to deputations is set out below.

KŌRERO WHAKATAHI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4. The purpose of a deputation is to enable a person, group, or organisation to make a presentation to a meeting on a matter or matters covered by that meeting's terms of reference. Deputations must be approved by the chair, or an official with delegated authority, ten clear working days before the meeting; however, this requirement may be waived by the chair. Deputations may be heard at the commencement of the meeting or at the time that the relevant agenda item is being considered.

Time limits

5. Speakers can speak for up to five minutes, or longer at the discretion of the chair. No more than two speakers can speak on behalf of an organisation's deputation.

Restrictions

6. The chair has the discretion to decline to hear or terminate a deputation at any time where:
 - (a) A speaker is repeating views presented by an earlier speaker at the meeting;
 - (b) The speaker is criticising elected members and/or staff;
 - (c) The speaker is being repetitious, disrespectful or offensive;
 - (d) The speaker has previously spoken on the same issue;
 - (e) The matter is subject to legal proceedings; and
 - (f) The matter is subject to a hearing, including the hearing of submissions where the local authority or committee sits in a quasi-judicial capacity.

Questions of a deputation

7. At the conclusion of the deputation members may, with the permission of the chair, ask questions of any speakers. Questions are to be confined to obtaining information or clarification on matters raised by the deputation.

Resolutions

8. Any debate on a matter raised in a deputation must occur at the time at which the matter is scheduled to be discussed on the meeting agenda and once a motion has been moved and seconded.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

9. The rules pertaining to deputations are contained in the *Standing Orders* (Doc # 25989465). The Executive Summary above contains an excerpt of those rules, and the *Standing Orders* are available on the Council website, or by clicking [here](#).

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

3 APOLOGIES

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

5 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.

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

Ordinary Council Meeting – 26 March 2026



MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting

Thursday, 26 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	5
2	Preliminary Items	5
	Nil	
3	Apologies	5
4	Confirmation of Agenda	5
5	Disclosures of Interest	5
6	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	6
	Ordinary Council Meeting – 25 February 2026	6
6.1	Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 10 February 2026.....	6
6.2	Minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026	6
6.3	Minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026	6
6.4	Minutes of the Finance and Performance Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026	7
6.5	Minutes of the Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting held on 20 February 2026	7
6.6	Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026	7
6.4	Minutes of the Finance and Performance Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026 (RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE).....	7
7	General Items	8
7.2	Statements of Intent and Half Yearly Reports for Council Controlled Organisations.....	8
7.1	Health and Safety Report - February 2026.....	8
7.3	Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028.....	9
7.4	Submission to Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2026/2027	9
8	Public Excluded Items	10
8.3	Public Excluded Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026	10
8.4	Bus Contract Renewal	10
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	11
	APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN	12
8.3	PUBLIC EXCLUDED MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026	12
8.4	BUS CONTRACT RENEWAL.....	12

**Waikato Regional Council
Ordinary Council Meeting**

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026, 9.31am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Warren Maher – Chair
 Cr Mich'eal Downard – Deputy Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes (from 9.37am)
 Cr Chris Hughes
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (from 9.33am)
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer
 Cr Noel Smith
 Cr Liz Stolwyk
 Cr Angela Strange

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
 Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services
 Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections
 Tracey May – Director, Science, Policy and Information
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use
 Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono
 Stuart Brown – Executive Manager, People and Capability
 Brooke Roebeck – Democracy Advisor
 Dave Doggart – Team Lead, Democracy

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 Recording 1	Doc # 35330063	https://youtu.be/sZq7CXfpTWA
Public Excluded Recording 1	Doc # 35329843	–
Public Excluded Recording 2	Doc # 35338552	–
Open Recording 2	Doc # 35329427	https://youtu.be/y4fub0suewA

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 16 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Nil

3 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 53 seconds

RESOLUTION WRC26/16

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

That the apologies received from Cr Keith Holmes and Cr Tipa Mahuta for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

4 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 12 seconds.

9.33am – Cr Tipa Mahuta entered the meeting.

9.37am – Cr Keith Holmes entered the meeting.

RESOLUTION WRC26/17

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge

- 1. That the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 26 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.**

CARRIED

5 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

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

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

6 MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION OR RECEIPT

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 21 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/18

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Liz Stolwyk

That the open and public excluded minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 25 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.1 MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2026

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 47 seconds.

RESOLUTION WRC26/19

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 10 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.2 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/20

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the minutes of the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.3 MINUTES OF THE WRC TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/21

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the minutes of the WRC Transport Committee meeting held on 17 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.4 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/22

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the open and public excluded minutes of the Finance and Performance Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.5 MINUTES OF THE FUTURE PROOF IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/23

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the minutes of the Future Proof Implementation Committee meeting held on 20 February 2026 be received.

CARRIED

6.6 MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLUTION WRC26/24

Moved: Cr Mich'eal Downard

Seconded: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

That the open minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6.4 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026 (RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE)

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 4 minutes 14 seconds.

Presented by the Chair, Finance and Performance Committee (Cr Chris Hughes).

RESOLUTION WRC26/25**Moved: Cr Chris Hughes****Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer**

That on the recommendation of the Finance and Performance Committee, Council approves the forecast budget adjustments, resulting in:

- (a) A net decrease in operating revenue of \$663,000.**
- (b) A net decrease in operating costs of \$4.311 million.**
- (c) A decrease in reserve balances of \$1.173 million.**
- (d) A reduction in forecast borrowing of \$3.825 million.**

CARRIED**7 GENERAL ITEMS****7.2 STATEMENTS OF INTENT AND HALF YEARLY REPORTS FOR COUNCIL CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 7 minutes.

Presented by the Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker) who requested the report be taken as read. An error was noted on page 154 of the open Council agenda, within the attachment titled Regional Software Holdings Ltd — 2026–2027 Draft Statement of Intent. The graph at the bottom of the page should correctly refer to “Waikato Regional Council”.

Actions:

- a. That Co-Lab consider a 10-year vision aligned with Long Term Plans, and confirm how resilience is being incorporated.
- b. That updates on the HPAI biosecurity work be provided to members when available.

RESOLUTION WRC26/26**Moved: Cr Noel Smith****Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard**

That the *Statements of Intent and Half Yearly Reports for Council Controlled Organisations* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED**7.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2026**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 20 minutes 55 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown) who requested the report be taken as read.

RESOLUTION WRC26/27**Moved:** Cr Warren Maher**Seconded:** Cr Robert Cookson**That the *Health and Safety Report - February 2026* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.****CARRIED****7.3 WAIKATO TRIENNIAL AGREEMENT 2025-2028**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 37 minutes 42 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Executive (Chris McLay).

RESOLUTION WRC26/28**Moved:** Cr Noel Smith**Seconded:** Cr Tipa Mahuta

1. That the report *Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.
2. That Council adopts the *Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028* as set out in Attachment 1 (Council Agenda, 26 March 2026 at page 219).
3. That Council authorises the Chair (Cr Warren Maher) to finalise and sign the Waikato Triennial Agreement 2025-2028 on behalf of the Council, incorporating any minor editorial amendments if required.

CARRIED**7.4 SUBMISSION TO AUCKLAND COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PLAN 2026/2027**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 42 minutes 20 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Corporate Planning (Jane Apperley).

During discussion, the members requested that the submission be sent to Auckland Council Governors, staff advised this should occur at a governance level. Members also requested the submission include a request for in principle support for Te Huia funding (a 50/50 split of the 50% local share) and whether a reduced funding request could support relationship building.

Actions:

- a. For future submissions, members requested engagement and alignment with territorial authorities on aligned submissions, including Regional Land Transport Plan updates.
- b. Members requested Te Huia information to be tabled at the next WRC Transport Committee meeting including service viability, costs and fuel impacts.

RESOLUTION WRC26/29**Moved:** Cr Jennifer Nickel**Seconded:** Cr Kataraina Hodge

1. That the report *Submission to Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2026/2027* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.
 2. That Council delegates the Chair (Cr Warren Maher) and the Chief Executive (Chris McLay) approval for lodgement of the *Submission to Auckland Council's Annual Plan 2026/2027* (Council Agenda, 26 March 2026 at page 232), subject to amendments identified in discussions had at the Council meeting.
- CARRIED**

8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 58 minutes 12 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

RESOLUTION WRC26/30

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

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
8.3 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	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
8.4 - Bus Contract Renewal	s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	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

CARRIED

10.29am – The meeting moved into public excluded session and was adjourned.

11.57am – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 5 seconds.

The Chief Executive (Chris McLay) closed the meeting with a karakia.

11.59am – The meeting closed.

APPENDIX ONE: DECISIONS MADE IN PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION REPORTED INTO OPEN**8.3 PUBLIC EXCLUDED MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026**

RESOLUTION WRC26/31

Moved: Cr Tipa Mahuta

Seconded: Cr Mich'eal Downard

1. That the public excluded minutes of the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.
2. That as discussed by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee, KPI #8. Biodiversity Strategy be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee (6 May 2026) with engagement commencing by the end of May 2026.
3. That as recommended by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee, KPI #1. Infor Enterprise Solution be amended noting that there was no meeting of the Risk and Assurance Committee in December 2025, and will be tabled at the next meeting of that committee being March 2026.
4. That as recommended by the CE Employment and Remuneration Committee that a new KPI be adopted as follows:

Provide information to Council that will give councillor's confidence to make Long-Term Plan decisions by 30 June 2027, that deliver Waikato Regional Council outcomes for the community in an effective and efficient manner, and targets a reduction in current expenditure of at least \$4M, by:

- Providing an overview of activities, costs and value gained to all council standing committees within their Terms of Reference.
 - Presenting an opportunity for deep dives into Corporate, Integrated Catchment Management and Regional Transport Committee expenditure to the Finance and Performance Committee in 2026.
 - Having in place an enterprise working model that allows Council to understand all council expenditure.
5. That the decisions made by the Chief Executive Employment and Remuneration Committee under delegated authority (at their meeting held on 24 February 2026) be noted.
 6. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

8.4 BUS CONTRACT RENEWAL

RESOLUTION WRC26/32

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Tipa Mahuta

1. That the report *Bus Contract Renewal* (Council, 26 March 2026) be received.
2. [Redacted s7(2)(i)]
3. That only the receipt of the report be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

6.1 MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 15 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jess Hood, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026 be received.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Aside from the standard procedural items (apologies, confirmation of agenda etc) and receipt of reports, there were no recommendations for council to consider.

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 9 March 2026



MINUTES

Regional Transport Committee Meeting

Monday, 9 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
	Regional Transport Committee Meeting - 8 December 2025	5
6	General Items	5
6.1	Director's Report	5
6.2	Introduction to Regional Land Transport Plan	5
6.3	Road Safety Update.....	6
6.4	Topics raised at induction meeting	6
6.5	Regional New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Update	6
6.6	Special Topic - Freight	7
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	7

Waikato Regional Council
Regional Transport Committee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Monday 9 March 2026, 9.30am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Liz Stolwyk – Committee Chair – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Angela Strange – Committee Deputy-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Ray Broad – Hauraki District Council
 Cr Duncan Campbell – Taupō District Council
 Mayor Rodney Dow – Ōtorohanga District Council
 Cr Mike Keir – Waikato District Council
 Cr Sue Moroney – Hamilton City Council
 Cr Janette Osborne – Waitomo District Council
 Mayor Peter Revell – Thames-Coromandel District Council
 Cr Clare St Pierre – Waipā District Council
 Mayor Ash Tanner – Matamata-Piako District Council
 Cr Elvisa van der Leden – South Waikato District Council (from 9.35am)
 Anthony Curl – Access and Mobility Advisor (non-voting)
 Lisa De Coek – KiwiRail (non-voting) (from 9.49am)

In Attendance: Cr Stephen Crooymans – Hauraki District Council
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith – Waikato Regional Council (from 11.01am)
 Cr Keith Holmes – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Chris Hughes – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Mesh Macdonald – Hamilton City Council (from 10.01am)
 Cr Jennifer Nickel – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Garry Reymer – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Sarah Thomson – Hamilton City Council (from 9.41am)

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive (from 11.26am)
 Phil King – Director, Regional Transport Connections
 Jess Hood – 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 Recording #1	34871728	https://youtu.be/5iK6DUguLSI
Open Recording #2	34874704	https://youtu.be/xqtkoXUjP4

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 30 seconds.

The Democracy Advisor (Jess Hood) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 49 seconds.

APOLOGY**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/01**

Moved: Mayor Rodney Dow

Seconded: Cr Janette Osborne

That the apologies received from Lisa De Coek for lateness and Mayor Mike Pettit for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute, 12 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/02

Moved: Cr Clare St Pierre

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

- 1. That the agenda of the Regional Transport Committee Meeting of 9 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 2. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 3. 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 1 minute, 27 seconds.

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

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 43 seconds.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING - 8 DECEMBER 2025**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/03****Moved: Cr Janette Osborne****Seconded: Mayor Rodney Dow****That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee Meeting held on 8 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.****CARRIED****6 GENERAL ITEMS****6.1 DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 8 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King) and Manager, Transport Policy and Programmes (Lorraine Cheyne).

9.35am – Cr Elvise van der Leden entered the meeting.

9.49am – Lisa De Coek entered the meeting.

10.01am – Cr Mesh Macdonald entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/04**Moved: Cr Clare St Pierre****Seconded: Mayor Rodney Dow****That the *Director's Report* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.****CARRIED****6.2 INTRODUCTION TO REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 36 minutes 13 seconds.

Presented by Manager, Transport Policy and Programmes (Lorraine Cheyne).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/05**Moved: Cr Mike Keir****Seconded: Mayor Ash Tanner****That the report *Introduction to Regional Land Transport Plan* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.****CARRIED****6.3 ROAD SAFETY UPDATE**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 47 minutes 32 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Policy and Programmes (Lorraine Cheyne) and Road Safety Lead (Alexandra Moyer).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/06

Moved: Mayor Ash Tanner

Seconded: Cr Elvsa van der Leden

That the report *Road Safety Update* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.4 TOPICS RAISED AT INDUCTION MEETING

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour, 1 minute and 22 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King) and Manager, Transport Policy and Programmes (Lorraine Cheyne).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/07

Moved: Cr Clare St Pierre

Seconded: Cr Ray Broad

That the report *Topics raised at induction meeting* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.5 REGIONAL NEW ZEALAND TRANSPORT AGENCY WAKA KOTAHI UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour, 22 minutes and 2 seconds.

Presented by the Acting Regional Manager, System Design – Waikato/Bay of Plenty (Ngairé Atmore). Refer Document #34771013 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

11.01am – Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith entered the meeting.

11.07am – Cr Sarah Thomson left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/08

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Clare St Pierre

That the report *Regional New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi Update* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

11.16am – The meeting adjourned.

11.27am – The meeting reconvened.

6.6 SPECIAL TOPIC - FREIGHT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

Presented by the OTL Group representative (Mayor Rodney Dow), Les Harrison Transport Group representative (Craig Foster), Tainui Group Holdings representative (Dave Christie), KiwiRail representatives (Lisa De Coek and Alan Piper), GM Operations, Hamilton Airport Group (Ben Langley). Refer Documents # 34845864, 34849766, 34844405 and 34857059 for the PowerPoint presentations or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTC26/09

Moved: Cr Peter Revell

Seconded: Mayor Ash Tanner

That the report *Special Topic - Freight* (Regional Transport Committee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 32 minutes and 1 second.

The Democracy Advisor (Jess Hood) closed the meeting with a karakia.

1.00pm – The meeting closed.

6.2 MINUTES OF THE RTC PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 17 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 9 March 2026 be received.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Aside from procedural items, there were no recommendations or decisions made under delegated authority.

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee meeting held on 9 March 2026



MINUTES

RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, 9 March 2026

Order Of Business

1 Karakia Timatanga.....4

2 Apologies4

3 Confirmation of Agenda4

4 Disclosures of Interest4

5 Preliminary Items4

5.1 Public Forum.....4

6 General Items.....5

6.1 Brief Subcommittee Induction5

6.2 Director's Report5

6.3 Proposed changes to the Connect-2-Taupo trial service5

6.4 Central Government and NZTA work plan6

6.5 Te Huia Update.....6

6.6 Public Transport Operations Report6

6.7 Public Transport Issues and Opportunities7

6.8 Public Transport Branding Refresh.....7

7 Karakia Whakamutunga7

Waikato Regional Council
RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Monday 9 March 2026, 1.00pm
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Liz Stolwyk – Committee Chair – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Angela Strange – Committee Deputy-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Ray Broad – Hauraki District Council
 Cr Jo Butcher – Ōtorohanga District Council
 Cr Duncan Campbell – Taupō District Council
 Cr Mike Keir – Waikato District Council (until 4.23pm)
 Cr Mesh Macdonald – Hamilton City Council
 Cr Sue Moroney – Hamilton City Council
 Cr Janette Osborne – Waitomo District Council (until 4.23pm)
 Cr Mike Pettit – Waipā District Council
 Cr Martin Rodley – Thames-Coromandel District Council
 Mayor Ash Tanner – Matamata-Piako District Council (until 2.57pm)
 Cr Elvisa van der Leden – South Waikato District Council (until 4.23pm)

In Attendance: Cr Stephen Croymans – Hauraki District Council
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Keith Holmes – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Warren Maher – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Garry Reymer – Waikato Regional Council
 Cr Sarah Thomson – Hamilton City Council

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
 Phil King – Director Regional Transport Connections
 Trudi Knight – Manager, Public Transport Operations
 Lorraine Cheyne – Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery
 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
Meeting Recording #1	34865630	https://youtu.be/hUy2St4bWyl
Meeting Recording #2	34865631	https://youtu.be/Lyl-6dEUTUM

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at start.

The Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 42 seconds.

Nil

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 50 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/01

Moved: Cr Angela Strange

Seconded: Cr Janette Osborne

4. That the agenda of the RTC Public Transport Subcommittee Meeting of 9 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.
5. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.
6. 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 recording 1, at 1 minute 7 seconds.

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

5 PRELIMINARY ITEMS

5.1 PUBLIC FORUM

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 14 seconds.

Pamela Chiles outlined the Land Transport Management Act and the Regional Transport Plan (2022-2032), highlighting accessibility and service design. She noted that while some Hamilton bus routes operate at high frequency, low-frequency services were often neglected.

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 BRIEF SUBCOMMITTEE INDUCTION

Item commenced in recording 1, at 12 minute 14 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/02

Moved: Cr Elvise van der Leden

Seconded: Cr Janette Osborne

That the report *Brief Subcommittee Induction* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Item commenced in recording 1 at 13 minutes 2 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/03

Moved: Cr Elvise van der Leden

Seconded: Cr Martin Rodley

That the *Director's Report* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.3 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONNECT-2-TAUPO TRIAL SERVICE

Item commenced in recording 1, at 47 minutes.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy & Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne).

This item was discussed. There was no motion put.

2.57pm – Mayor Ash Tanner left the meeting.

6.4 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND NZTA WORK PLAN

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 hour 21 Minutes and 4 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne).

3.30pm – The meeting adjourned.

3.49pm – The meeting reconvened.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/04

Moved: Cr Roger Gordon
Seconded: Cr Martin Rodley

That the report *Central Government and NZTA work plan* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.5 TE HUIA UPDATE

Item commenced in recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King).

4.00pm - Cr Duncan Campbell left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/05

Moved: Cr Janette Osborne
Seconded: Cr Sue Moroney

That the report *Te Huia Update* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATIONS REPORT

Item commenced in recording 2, at 13 minutes 7 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Contracts and Insights (Vincent Kuo) and Network Monitoring Analyst (Melissa Smith).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/06

Moved: Cr Angela Strange
Seconded: Cr Mesh Macdonald

That the *Public Transport Operations Report* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.7 PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Item commenced in recording 2, at 18 minutes 7 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Transport Strategy and Delivery (Lorraine Cheyne).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/07

Moved: Cr Mesh Macdonald
Seconded: Cr Ray Broad

That the report *Public Transport Issues and Opportunities* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT BRANDING REFRESH

Item commenced in recording 2, at 31 minutes 34 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Public Transport Operations (Trudi Knight).

4.23pm – Cr Elvisa van der Leden left the meeting.

4.23pm – Cr Mike Keir left the meeting.

4.23pm – Cr Janette Osbourne left the meeting

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RTCPTS26/08

Moved: Cr Martin Rodley

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

That the report *Public Transport Branding Refresh* (RTC Public Transport Subcommittee, 9 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 2, at 52 minutes.

The Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King) closed the meeting with a Karakia.

4.42pm – The meeting closed.

6.3 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 17 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Aside from procedural items, there were no recommendations or decisions made under delegated authority.

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Minutes of the Environmental Performance Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026**



MINUTES

Environmental Performance Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 11 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
6	General Items	4
6.1	Regional Consents Update	4
6.2	Farm Plan Implementation.....	5
6.3	Environmental Science – State of Environment & Emerging Issues	5
6.4	Freshwater monitoring techniques and options.....	6
7	Karakia Whakamutunga	6

Waikato Regional Council
Environmental Performance Committee Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 11 March 2026, 9.30am
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Kataraina Hodge – Committee Chair
 Cr Gary McGuire – Committee Deputy-Chair
 Cr Robert Cookson
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith (from 9.39am)
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Warren Maher (until 11.43am)
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Liz Stolwyk (until 11.43am)

In Attendance: Cr Garry Reymer

Staff Present: Chris McLay, Chief Executive
 Brent Sinclair, Director, Resource Use
 AnaMaria d’Aubert, Manager, Regional Consents
 Mike Scarsbrook, Manager, Environmental Science
 Tracey Nelson, Manager, Primary Sector Engagement
 Ed Brown, Manager, Environmental Monitoring
 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
Meeting Recording #1	34895419	https://youtu.be/MeDJaRhJ7hl
Meeting Recording #2	34893698	https://youtu.be/2yrxKWHWZMw

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording 1, at start.

The Director, Resource Use (Brent Sinclair) opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute.

Nil

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 3 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION EPC26/01

Moved: Cr Robert Cookson

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

- 7. That the agenda of the Environmental Performance Committee Meeting of 11 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 8. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**
- 9. 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 recording 1, at 2 minutes 14 seconds.

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

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 REGIONAL CONSENTS UPDATE**

Item commenced in recording 1, at 2 minutes 17 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Regional Consents (AnaMaria d'Aubert). Refer Document # 34878176 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION EPC26/02

Moved: Cr Robert Cookson

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the report *Regional Consents Update* (Environmental Performance Committee, 11 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.2 FARM PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 hour 28 minutes 20 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Primary Sector Engagement (Tracey Nelson). Refer Document # 34875878 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION EPC26/03

Moved: Cr Liz Stolwyk

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the report *Farm Plan Implementation* (Environmental Performance Committee, 11 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

11.43am – The meeting adjourned. During the adjournment, Crs Warren Maher and Liz Stolwyk left the meeting.

11.50am – The meeting reconvened.

6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE – STATE OF ENVIRONMENT & EMERGING ISSUES

Item commenced in recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Manager, Environmental Science (Mike Scarsbrook). Refer Document # 35292215 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION EPC26/04

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the report *Environmental Science – State of Environment & Emerging Issues* (Environmental Performance Committee, 11 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.4 FRESHWATER MONITORING TECHNIQUES AND OPTIONS

Item commenced in recording 2, at 42 minutes 45 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Environmental Manager (Ed Brown). Refer Document # 34878174 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION EPC26/05

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

That the report *Freshwater monitoring techniques and options* (Environmental Performance Committee, 11 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording 2, at 1 hour 19 minutes 14 seconds.

The Director, Resource Use (Brent Sinclair) closed the meeting with a karakia.

1.09pm – The meeting closed.

6.4 MINUTES OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 15 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jess Hood, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2026 be received.
2. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee the Council Chair (Cr Warren Maher) signs the Audit Engagement Letter and Audit Proposal for the annual report audit of Waikato Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2026.
3. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee, Council adopts the updated *Procedural Delegations Manual* (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 211).
4. That on the recommendation of the Risk and Assurance Committee, Council adopts the updated *Protected Disclosures (Whistle-blower) Policy* (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 303).

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.

- (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
6.5 Audit New Zealand's Governance Report for the audit of the 2024/25 Annual Report			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/07	✓		
2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes that management is progressing actions to address matters raised in the audit.			
6.6 Audit New Zealand Engagement Documents for the 2025/26 Annual Report Audit			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/08		✓	
2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee recommends to Council that the Council Chair (Cr Warren Maher) signs the Audit Engagement Letter and Audit Proposal for the annual report audit of Waikato Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2026.			
6.11 Policy Review Schedule			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/13	✓		
2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee note the updated <i>Health and Safety Policy</i> (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 210).			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/13		✓	
3. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes the updated <i>Procedural Delegations Manual</i> (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 211) and recommends to Council that it be adopted.			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/13	✓		
4. That the Risk and Assurance Committee endorses the updated <i>Risk Management Framework</i> (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 278).			
COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/13		✓	
5. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes the updated <i>Protected Disclosures (Whistle-blower) Policy</i> (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 303) and recommends to Council that it be adopted.			

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 March 2026**



MINUTES

Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

Monday, 16 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
	Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting - 17 September 2025.....	4
6	General Items	5
6.1	Risk and Assurance Committee Work Plan 2026	5
6.2	Risk Management Activity Update.....	5
6.3	Internal Audit Activity Update.....	5
6.4	Legal Compliance Survey Results July - December 2025	6
6.5	Audit New Zealand's Governance Report for the audit of the 2024/25 Annual Report.....	6
6.6	Audit New Zealand Engagement Documents for the 2025/26 Annual Report Audit	6
6.7	Key Projects Update	7
6.8	Infor Benefits Report	7
6.9	Insurance Programme Update	8
6.10	Annual Leave Management Wellbeing and Health and Safety Indicators	8
6.11	Policy Review Schedule	8
6.12	Elected Member Interests Register Update to 28 February 2026	9
7	Public Excluded Items	9
7.1	Key Projects Activity Update - Vessel.....	10
7.2	Cyber Security Update March 2026	11
7.3	Fraud Risk Management Activity Update.....	11
7.4	Potential Liability Report	11
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	12

Waikato Regional Council
Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Monday 16 March 2026, 9.03am

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

Members Present: Paul Connell - Independent Chair
 Cr Chris Hughes – Committee Deputy-Chair
 Cr Graham Naylor – Independent Member
 Cr Robert Cookson (from 9.04am)
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Warren Maher
 Cr Tipa Mahuta (virtually via Teams, from 10.09am until 10.21am, back from 11.22am until 12.30pm)
 Cr Noel Smith

In Attendance: Cr Garry Reymer (virtually via Teams, from 9.30am)

Staff Present: Janine Becker – Director, Customer and Corporate Services
 Jess Hood – 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 Recording #1	#34934960	https://youtu.be/ldbyR0_3jisk
Open Recording #2	#34936438	https://youtu.be/gCATVJqvXaM
Public Excluded Recording	#34937854	-
Open Recording #3	#34936190	https://youtu.be/GCVXAQlg398

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 28 seconds.

No apologies were received.

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 41 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/01

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

10. That the agenda of the Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting of 16 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.
11. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.
12. 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 54 seconds.

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

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 10 seconds.

RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING - 17 SEPTEMBER 2025**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/02**

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting held on 17 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 32 seconds.

Presented by the Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/03

Moved: Cr Keith Holmes

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That the report *Risk and Assurance Committee Work Plan 2026* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.2 RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 9 minute 49 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Business Advisory Services (Fiona Hunter) and Strategic Risk Advisor (James Brennan).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/04

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Risk Management Activity Update* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.3 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 56 minutes 36 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Business Advisory Services (Fiona Hunter), PwC Director (Aaron Steele) and PwC Partner (Jade Collins).

10.09am – Cr Tipa Mahuta entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/05

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Internal Audit Activity Update (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.4 LEGAL COMPLIANCE SURVEY RESULTS JULY - DECEMBER 2025

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour, 11 minutes and 37 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Business Advisory Services (Fiona Hunter).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/06

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Graham Naylor

That the report *Legal Compliance Survey Results July - December 2025 (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

10.21am – The meeting adjourned.

During the adjournment, Cr Tipa Mahuta left the meeting.

10.31am – The meeting reconvened.

6.5 AUDIT NEW ZEALAND'S GOVERNANCE REPORT FOR THE AUDIT OF THE 2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

Presented by the Chief Financial Officer (Raj Suppiah) and Audit New Zealand Manager (Jaimala Singh).

10.33am – Crs Chris Hughes and Robert Cookson entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/07

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

- 1. That the *Audit New Zealand's Governance Report for the audit of the 2024/25 Annual Report (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.**
- 2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes that management is progressing actions to address matters raised in the audit.**

CARRIED

6.6 AUDIT NEW ZEALAND ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTS FOR THE 2025/26 ANNUAL REPORT AUDIT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 20 minutes 39 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Financial Officer (Raj Suppiah) and Audit New Zealand Manager (Jaimala Singh).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/08

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

- 1. That the report *Audit New Zealand Engagement Documents for the 2025/26 Annual Report Audit* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee recommends to Council that the Council Chair (Cr Warren Maher) signs the Audit Engagement Letter and Audit Proposal for the annual report audit of Waikato Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2026.**

CARRIED

6.7 KEY PROJECTS UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 25 minutes.

Presented by the Business and Education Services Manager (Dean King) and Director, Regional Transport Connections (Phil King).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/09

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Key Projects Update* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.8 INFOR BENEFITS REPORT

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 39 seconds 28 seconds.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown).

11.22am – Cr Tipa Mahuta entered the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/10

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the *Infor Benefits Report* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.9 INSURANCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 4 minutes and 17 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Business Advisory Services (Fiona Hunter).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/11

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the report *Insurance Programme Update (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.10 ANNUAL LEAVE MANAGEMENT WELLBEING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY INDICATORS

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 8 minutes and 1 second.

Presented by the Executive Manager, People and Capability (Stuart Brown).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/12

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

That the report *Annual Leave Management Wellbeing and Health and Safety Indicators (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.11 POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 13 minutes and 50 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Business Advisory Services (Fiona Hunter).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/13

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

1. That the report *Policy Review Schedule (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.
2. That the Risk and Assurance Committee note the updated *Health and Safety Policy (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 210)*.
3. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes the updated *Procedural Delegations Manual (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 211)* and recommends to Council that it be adopted.

4. That the Risk and Assurance Committee endorses the updated *Risk Management Framework (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 278)*.
5. That the Risk and Assurance Committee notes the updated *Protected Disclosures (Whistle-blower) Policy (Risk and Assurance Committee Agenda, 16 March 2026 at page 303)* and recommends to Council that it be adopted.

CARRIED

6.12 ELECTED MEMBER INTERESTS REGISTER UPDATE TO 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 24 minutes and 30 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Democracy Services (Dave Doggart) who requested the report be taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/14

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Elected Member Interests Register Update to 28 February 2026 (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 1 hour, 25 minutes and 29 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/15

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Graham Naylor

1. 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 - Key Projects Activity Update - Vessel	s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information	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

	s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities	withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7
7.2 - Cyber Security Update March 2026	s7(2)(j) of the Act - To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	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
7.3 - Fraud Risk Management Activity Update	s7(2)(j) of the Act - To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage	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
7.4 - Potential Liability Report	s7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act - To avoid unreasonable prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information s7(2)(g) of the Act - To maintain legal professional privilege s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities	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
CARRIED		

11.56am – The meeting moved into public excluded session and was adjourned.

7.1 KEY PROJECTS ACTIVITY UPDATE - VESSEL

Item commenced in public excluded recording 1, at start.

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

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/16

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

1. That the report *Key Projects Activity Update - Vessel* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.
2. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

7.2 CYBER SECURITY UPDATE MARCH 2026

Item commenced in public excluded recording 1, at 8 minutes 18 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Information Officer (John Crane) .

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/17

Moved: Graham Naylor

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That the report *Cyber Security Update March 2026* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.

CARRIED

7.3 FRAUD RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Item commenced in public excluded recording 1, at 20 minutes 46 seconds.

Presented by the Chief Financial Officer (Raj Suppiah).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/18

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Keith Holmes

1. That the report *Fraud Risk Management Activity Update* (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026) be received.
2. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

7.4 POTENTIAL LIABILITY REPORT

Item commenced in public excluded recording 1, at 39 minutes 32 seconds.

Presented by the Senior Solicitor (Jonathan Ridling).

12.30pm – Cr Tipa Mahuta left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/19

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

1. That the *Potential Liability Report (Risk and Assurance Committee, 16 March 2026)* be received.
2. That the decision be released into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

Item commenced in public excluded recording 1, at 47 minutes 57 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION RAC26/20

Moved: Paul Connell

Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

That the meeting return to the open session.

CARRIED

12.50pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at start.

The Director, Customer and Corporate Services (Janine Becker) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.50pm – The meeting closed.

6.5 MINUTES OF THE INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 17 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Jordan Metz, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Greg Ryan, Director, Integrated Catchment Management

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 March 2026 be received.
2. That on the recommendation of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee, Council as standard practice, where a legal opinion is tabled as part of an agenda item, requests that the instructing letter and the engagement letter be included with the agenda papers.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The minutes contains a recommendation for Council to consider regarding the tabling of legal opinions within reports to council and/or committees. This recommends that Council adopt a standard practice to improve transparency and contextual understanding when legal advice is provided as part of Council decision-making. Specifically, where a legal opinion is tabled within an agenda item, it is recommended that both the instructing letter and the legal engagement letter be included with the agenda papers.
2. The summary below sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
3. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
4. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.

- (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
Confirmation of Agenda			
Committee Resolution ICM26/01 That item 7.1. <i>Self-Administration Policy</i> be moved into the open session of the meeting.	✓		
Committee Resolution ICM26/02 The Integrated Catchment Management Committee recommends to Council that as standard practice, where a legal opinion is tabled as part of an agenda item, the instructing letter and the engagement letter be included with the agenda papers.		✓	
6.4 Five-Year Grazing Licence Fee Review – Lower Waikato			
Committee Resolution ICM26/03 That from 1 June 2026, all Lower Waikato Zone licence fees be adopted as per the recommendations by QV Ltd in the Lower Waikato and Mangawara Grazing Licence Fee Review 2026 report (Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 18 March 2026 at page 183), less a 5% discount acknowledging the benefit to Council.	✓		
7.1 Self Administration Policy			
Committee Resolution ICM26/04 That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee defers the <i>Self Administration Policy</i> and request input from suitably qualified Health and Safety and Legal experts to inform further consideration.	✓		

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting held on 18 March 2026



MINUTES

Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	5
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	5
5.1	Minutes of the Waikato Scheme Subcommittee meeting held on 11 February 2026.....	5
5.2	Minutes of the Hauraki Scheme Subcommittee meeting held on 2 March 2026	5
6	General Items	6
6.1	Mid Year Reports - Biosecurity and Biodiversity.....	6
6.2	Minimising the risk of Corbicula spread through council activities	6
6.3	Half year update - Infrastructure Section	6
6.4	Five-Year Grazing Licence Fee Review – Lower Waikato	6
6.5	Half year update Planning and Support	7
6.6	Half year update Catchments.....	7
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	8

Waikato Regional Council**Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting****OPEN MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2026, 1.02pm
Location: Council Chambers
 Waikato Regional Council
 Level 1, 160 Ward Street, Hamilton

Members Present: Cr Robert Cookson – Chair
 Cr Noel Smith – Deputy-Chair
 Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith
 Cr Kataraina Hodge
 Cr Keith Holmes
 Cr Chris Hughes
 Cr Warren Maher
 Cr Gary McGuire
 Cr Jennifer Nickel
 Cr Garry Reymer

In Attendance: Cr Ben Dunbar-Smith

Staff Present: Chris McLay – Chief Executive
 Greg Ryan – Director, Integrated Catchment Management
 Brent Sinclair – Director, Resource Use
 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
Meeting Recording	34958838	https://youtu.be/vmwpY0wK534

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in recording, at start.

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

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in recording, at 1 minute 41 seconds.

APOLOGY**COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/01**

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the apologies of Cr Jennifer Nickel for lateness be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in recording, at 1 minute 56 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/02

Moved: Cr Keith Holmes

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

3. That the agenda of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee Meeting of 18 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.
4. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.
5. That the meeting may sit longer than two hours continuously and continue longer than six hours including adjournments.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/03

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Warren Maher

That item 7.1. *Self-Administration Policy* be moved into the open session of the meeting.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/04

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

The Integrated Catchment Management Committee recommends to Council that as standard practice, where a legal opinion is tabled as part of an agenda item, the instructing letter and the engagement letter be included with the agenda papers.

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in recording, at 2 minutes 15 seconds.

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

5.1 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO SCHEME SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Item commenced in recording, at 10 minutes.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/05

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the minutes of the Waikato Scheme Subcommittee meeting held on 11 February 2026 be received.

.CARRIED

5.2 MINUTES OF THE HAURAKI SCHEME SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2026

Item commenced in recording, at 10 minutes 26 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/06

Moved: Cr Keith Holmes

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

- 1. That the minutes of the Hauraki Scheme Subcommittee meeting held on 2 March 2026 be received.**
- 2. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee notes the Hauraki Scheme Subcommittee support for a one-year loan repayment period for the purchase a portion of Part Lot 6 at 2067 State Highway 27.**

CARRIED

6 GENERAL ITEMS**6.1 MID YEAR REPORTS - BIOSECURITY AND BIODIVERSITY**

Item commenced in recording, at 10 minutes 29 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Biosecurity and Biodiversity (Patrick Whaley).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/07

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Garry Reymer

That the report *Mid Year Reports - Biosecurity and Biodiversity (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.2 MINIMISING THE RISK OF CORBICULA SPREAD THROUGH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Item commenced in recording, at 44 minutes 20 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Biosecurity and Biodiversity (Patrick Whaley).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/08

Moved: Cr Warren Maher

Seconded: Cr Chris Hughes

That the report *Minimising the risk of Corbicula spread through council activities (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.3 HALF YEAR UPDATE - INFRASTRUCTURE SECTION

Item commenced in recording, at 1 hour 12 seconds.

Presented by the Land Drainage Manager (Reuben Mills). Refer Document # 34949775 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/09

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

That the report *Half year update - Infrastructure Section (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.4 FIVE-YEAR GRAZING LICENCE FEE REVIEW – LOWER WAIKATO

Item commenced in recording, at 1 hour 31 minutes 45 seconds.

Presented by the Council Lands Officer (Harman Sandhu). Refer Document # 34949775 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/10

Moved: Cr Chris Hughes

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

1. That the report *Five-Year Grazing Licence Fee Review – Lower Waikato (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.
2. That from 1 June 2026, all Lower Waikato Zone licence fees be adopted as per the recommendations by QV Ltd in the Lower Waikato and Mangawara Grazing Licence Fee Review 2026 report (Integrated Catchment Management Committee Agenda, 18 March 2026 at page 183), less a 5% discount acknowledging the benefit to Council.

CARRIED

6.5 HALF YEAR UPDATE PLANNING AND SUPPORT

Item commenced in recording, at 1 hour 44 minutes 22 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Planning and Support (Dave Wade). Refer Document # 34949775 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/11

Moved: Cr Robert Cookson

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Half year update Planning and Support (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.6 HALF YEAR UPDATE CATCHMENTS

Item commenced in recording, at 2 hours 13 minutes 22 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Regional Resilience (Emily O`Donnell) and Team Leader, Waikato, Waipā and West Coast Catchments (Tane Desmond).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/12

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Half year update Catchments (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS**7.1 SELF ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

Item commenced in recording, at 2 hours 57 minutes 30 seconds.

As per resolution ICM26/03 (above), this item was tabled in the open session of the meeting.

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

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ICM26/13

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Robert Cookson

- 1. That the report *Self Administration Policy (Integrated Catchment Management Committee, 18 March 2026)* be received.**
- 2. That the Integrated Catchment Management Committee defers the *Self Administration Policy* and request input from suitably qualified Health and Safety and Legal experts to inform further consideration.**

CARRIED

7 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in recording, at 3 hours 30 minutes.

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

4.33pm – The meeting closed.

6.6 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 14 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 30 March 2026 be received.
2. That the recommendation from the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee for Council to include regionally consistent Key Performance Indicators for Civil Defence Emergency Management in the Long Term Plan be included in the planning process for consideration.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
Item 6.1 – Government Reforms			
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/04</p> <p>2. That the Joint Committee agrees that the Joint Committee Chair (Cr Emma Pike), write to the Minister of Emergency Management and Recovery requesting they;</p> <p>(a) Raise the implications of the proposed Rates Target Model, for sustainable Civil Defence Emergency Management funding, with the relevant Minister; and</p> <p>(b) Explore options for exempting Civil Defence Emergency Management funding from the proposed Rates Target Model.</p>	✓		
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/04</p> <p>3. That the Joint Committee receives the following submissions (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Open Agenda, 30 March 2026 at pages 46-97):</p> <p>(a) Rates Target Model for New Zealand</p> <p>(b) Emergency Management Bill (No. 2)</p> <p>(c) Planning Bill</p> <p>(d) Natural Environment Bill</p> <p>(e) Simplifying Local Government</p>	✓		
Item 6.2 – Regionally Consistent Long Term Plan Measures			
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/05</p> <p>2. That the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee approves a regionally consistent Long-Term Plan Key Performance Indicators for Civil Defence Emergency Management across Waikato councils; and</p>	✓		
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/05</p> <p>3. Requests that all Waikato councils include these measures in their draft Long-Term Plans for 2027-2037.</p>		✓	
Item 6.5 – Group Finances 1 July to 31 December 2025			
<p><u>Action:</u> The Members requested a workshop to discuss the current funding model for Civil Defence operations and to consider Long Term Plan (LTP) business cases, including options for contingency funding.</p>			✓
Item 6.7 – After-Action Review – Jan-Feb 2026 Severe Weather Events			

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
<u>Action:</u> The Group Manager/Controller to send members the drafted After-Action Terms of Reference for Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (WCDEM), as set by the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG).			✓
Item 7.1 – Appointment of Local Recovery Managers			
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/14</p> <p>2. That, in accordance with the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Recovery Manager Policy and the Tiered Recovery Manager Policy, the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee approve the appointment of the following as a Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nick Carroll, Taupō District Council; and ii. Nathan Sutherland, Matamata-Piako District Council; and iii. Michelle Clark, Waitomo District Council. 	✓		

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 30 March 2026**



MINUTES

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting

Monday, 30 March 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	4
2	Apologies	4
3	Confirmation of Agenda	4
4	Disclosures of Interest	4
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	4
	Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting – 15 December 2025	4
6	General Items	5
6.1	Government Reforms	5
6.2	Regionally Consistent Long Term Plan Measures	5
6.3	Coordinating Executive Group - 13 March 2026 Meeting Summary	6
6.4	Group Plan Actions – Report for the Period 1 October 2025 to 31 January 2026.....	6
6.5	Group Finances 1 July to 31 December 2025.....	7
6.6	Group Policy and Governance Document Register.....	7
6.7	After-Action Review – Jan–Feb 2026 Severe Weather Events	7
6.8	National Emergency Management Agency Quarterly Update	8
7	Public Excluded Items	8
7.1	Appointment of Local Recovery Managers	8
7.1	APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RECOVERY MANAGERS.....	9
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	10
	APPENDIX ONE: REPORT – Appointment of Local Recovery Managers	11

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Monday 30 March 2026, 10.03am

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

Members Present: Cr Emma Pike – Committee Chair – Hamilton City Council
Deputy-Mayor John Grant – Committee Deputy-Chair – Thames-Coromandel District Council
Cr Marcus Gower – Waipā District Council
Deputy-Mayor Eady Manawaiti – Waitomo District Council
Cr Steve Manunui – Taupō District Council
Cr Gary McGuire – Waikato Regional Council
Deputy-Mayor Eugene Patterson – Waikato District Council
Cr Anne Marie Spicer – Hauraki District Council
Mayor Ash Tanner – Matamata-Piako District Council
Cr Michael Thomas – South Waikato District Council

In Attendance: Cr Andrew McGiven – Matamata-Piako District Council
Cr Jennifer Nickel – Waikato Regional Council (virtually via Teams)

Staff Present: Susan Law – Chair, Co-Ordinating Executive Group
Julian Snowball – Group Manager/Controller, Civil Defence Emergency Management
Matthew Bramhall – Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor, National Emergency Management Agency
Andrew McMillan – Team Leader, National Emergency Management Agency
Brooke Roebeck – 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 Recording 1	Doc # 35390784	https://youtu.be/0XVS1CT8dlo
Public Excluded Recording	Doc # 35390783	–
Open Recording 2	Doc # 35391082	https://youtu.be/dEHa5ezxyNg

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at start.

The Committee Chair (Cr Emma Pike) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 50 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/01

Moved: Cr Emma Pike

Seconded: Deputy-Mayor John Grant

That the apologies of Mayor Aksel Bech and Cr Thomas Lee for absence be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 5 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/02

Moved: Cr Emma Pike

Seconded: Cr Gary McGuire

6. That the agenda of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting of 30 March 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.

7. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 minute 25 seconds.

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

WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING – 15 DECEMBER 2025

Item commenced in recording 1, at 1 minute 38 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/03

Moved: Cr Emma Pike

Seconded: Cr Anne Marie Spicer

That the minutes of the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 minutes 46 seconds.

Presented by the Strategic Planning Advisor (Vicky Cowley).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/04

Moved: Cr Marcus Gower

Seconded: Deputy-Mayor John Grant

- 1. That the report *Government Reforms* (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026) be received.**
- 2. That the Joint Committee agrees that the Joint Committee Chair (Cr Emma Pike), write to the Minister of Emergency Management and Recovery requesting they;**
 - (a) Raise the implications of the proposed Rates Target Model, for sustainable Civil Defence Emergency Management funding, with the relevant Minister; and**
 - (b) Explore options for exempting Civil Defence Emergency Management funding from the proposed Rates Target Model.**
- 3. That the Joint Committee receives the following submissions (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Open Agenda, 30 March 2026 at pages 46-97):**
 - (a) Rates Target Model for New Zealand**
 - (b) Emergency Management Bill (No. 2)**
 - (c) Planning Bill**
 - (d) Natural Environment Bill**
 - (e) Simplifying Local Government**

CARRIED

6.2 REGIONALLY CONSISTENT LONG TERM PLAN MEASURES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 7 minutes 38 seconds.

Presented by the Team Leader, Operational Readiness (Aaron Tregoweth) who requested the report be taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/05

Moved: Cr Gary McGuire

Seconded: Cr Marcus Gower

- 1. That the report *Regionally Consistent Long Term Plan Measures (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.**
- 2. That the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee approves a regionally consistent Long-Term Plan Key Performance Indicators for Civil Defence Emergency Management across Waikato councils; and**
- 3. Requests that all Waikato councils include these measures in their draft Long-Term Plans for 2027-2037.**

CARRIED

6.3 COORDINATING EXECUTIVE GROUP - 13 MARCH 2026 MEETING SUMMARY

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 17 minutes 30 seconds.

Presented by the Chair, Co-Ordinating Executive Group (Susan Law).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/06

Moved: Mayor Ash Tanner

Seconded: Cr Michael Thomas

That the report *Coordinating Executive Group - 13 March 2026 Meeting Summary (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.4 GROUP PLAN ACTIONS – REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2025 TO 31 JANUARY 2026

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 55 minutes.

Presented by the Strategic Planning Advisor (Vicky Cowley), the Team Leader, Resilience and Recovery (Irving Young) and the Team Leader, Operational Readiness (Aaron Tregoweth).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/07

Moved: Cr Emma Pike

Seconded: Mayor Ash Tanner

That the *Group Plan Actions – Report for the Period 1 October 2025 to 31 January 2026 (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.5 GROUP FINANCES 1 JULY TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 10 minutes and 17 seconds.

Presented by the Group Manager/Controller (Julian Snowball).

Action: The Members requested a workshop to discuss the current funding model for Civil Defence operations and to consider Long Term Plan (LTP) business cases, including options for contingency funding.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/08

Moved: Mayor Ash Tanner

Seconded: Cr Marcus Gower

That the report *Group Finances 1 July to 31 December 2025 (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.6 GROUP POLICY AND GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REGISTER

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour, 41 minutes and 25 seconds.

The Controllers Policy (page 120 of the agenda), the “last reviewed” date should read May 2026, not November 2025.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/09

Moved: Cr Anne Marie Spicer

Seconded: Deputy-Mayor Eugene Patterson

That the report *Group Policy and Governance Document Register (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.7 AFTER-ACTION REVIEW – JAN–FEB 2026 SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 43 minutes and 42 seconds.

The Chair acknowledged the loss of life in the Ōtorohanga District, those impacted by the events, the multiple incidents occurring in quick succession, and the significant efforts and care of Civil Defence Emergency Management staff, volunteers, iwi, councils, and partner agencies.

Presented by the Group Manager/Controller (Julian Snowball).

Action: The Group Manager/Controller to send members the drafted After-Action Terms of Reference for Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (WCDEM), as set by the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/10

Moved: Cr Emma Pike
Seconded: Cr Marcus Gower

That the report *After-Action Review – Jan–Feb 2026 Severe Weather Events (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

6.8 NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY QUARTERLY UPDATE

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 1 hour 58 minutes.

Presented by the Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor and Team Leader, National Emergency Management Agency (Matthew Bramhall and Andrew McMillan respectively) who requested the report be taken as read.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/11

Moved: Mayor Ash Tanner
Seconded: Deputy-Mayor Eady Manawaiti

That the report *National Emergency Management Agency Quarterly Update (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)* be received.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 2 hours 6 minutes and 6 seconds.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/12

Moved: Cr Emma Pike
Seconded: Deputy-Mayor John Grant

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 - Appointment of Local Recovery Managers	s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons	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
CARRIED		

12.10pm – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

7.1 APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RECOVERY MANAGERS

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at start.

Presented by the Team Leader, Resilience and Recovery (Irving Young).

<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/14</p> <p>Moved: Mayor Ash Tanner Seconded: Deputy-Mayor John Grant</p> <p>1. That the report <i>Appointment of Local Recovery Managers (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026)</i> be received.</p> <p>2. That, in accordance with the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Recovery Manager Policy and the Tiered Recovery Manager Policy, the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee approve the appointment of the following as a Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Nick Carroll, Taupō District Council; andii. Nathan Sutherland, Matamata-Piako District Council; andiii. Michelle Clark, Waitomo District Council. <p>3. That the report (refer appendix one) and decision are made public, while the attachments remain public excluded.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p>
--

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at 1 minute 20 seconds.

<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WCDEM26/15</p> <p>Moved: Cr Emma Pike Seconded: Deputy-Mayor Eugene Patterson</p> <p>That the meeting return to the open session.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p>
--

12.12pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 2, at start.

The Committee Chair (Cr Emma Pike) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.13pm – The meeting closed.

APPENDIX ONE: REPORT – APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RECOVERY MANAGERS

Public Excluded Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint
Committee Meeting Agenda

30 March 2026

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

7.1 APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RECOVERY MANAGERS

Rā Date:	13 March 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Irving Young, Team Leader, Resilience And Recovery
Kaituku Authoriser:	Aaron Tregoweth, Team Leader, Operational Readiness
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TĀMATAITI | PUBLIC EXCLUDED

The following good reasons to withhold this report from the public exist under section 6 or 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, in accordance with section 48(1)(a)(i):

- s7(2)(a) To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group Joint Committee an opportunity to consider and decide on appointments as per Waikato CDEM Recovery Manager Policy dated 11 November 2022 and Waikato CDEM Group Tiered Recovery Manager Policy dated 7 March 2024.
2. The purpose of this report is to request the Waikato Joint Committee (JC) to appoint Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. Nominations were received from Taupō District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council and Waitomo District Council for the appointment of Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers as per Waikato CDEM Recovery Manager Policy and Waikato CDEM Group Tiered Recovery Manager Policy.
4. As per the Waikato Recovery Manager policies, the Coordinating Executive Group Subcommittee, Statutory Roles Advisory and Appointment Committee (STRAAC), undertook assessment of the nominees.
5. STRAAC recommends the appointment of Nick Carroll, Taupō District Council, Nathan Sutherland, Matamata-Piako District Council and Michelle Clark, Waitomo District Council as a Tier 3 Local Recovery Manager.
6. Recovery can continue for an extended period, it is critical that the Waikato CDEM Group appoints and develops an appropriate number of recovery managers to maintain the region's capability and capacity.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Appointment of Local Recovery Managers* (Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, 30 March 2026) be received.
2. That, in accordance with the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Recovery Manager Policy and the Tiered Recovery Manager Policy, the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee approve the appointment of the following as a Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers:
 - i. Nick Carroll, Taupō District Council; and
 - ii. Nathan Sutherland, Matamata-Piako District Council; and
 - iii. Michelle Clark, Waitomo District Council.
3. That the report and decision are made public, while the attachments remain public excluded.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

7. Nominations for appointment to Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers were received from Taupō District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council and Waitomo District Council
8. Following individual assessment, in line with the Waikato CDEM Group Recovery Manager Policy; the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) Subcommittee, Statutory Roles Advisory and Appointment Committee (STRAAC), recommend the appointment of Nick Carroll, Nathan Sutherland and Michelle Clark as Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

9. The Waikato CDEM Group has resolved to develop, appoint, and retain an appropriate cadre of CDEM Local Recovery Managers, to provide CDEM Recovery Managers coverage across a large geographic area. The Waikato CDEM Group Recovery and Tiered Approach Policies provide for different tiers of recovery managers; the tiers relate to the geographic scope of appointment.
10. The Territorial Authority Chief Executives have nominated and support their Local Recovery Managers to be appointed as Tier 3 Recovery Manager

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

11. Having regard to the decision-making provisions in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, Local Government Act 2002 and Waikato Regional Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is not considered to have a high degree of significance.

TE HOROPAKI Ā-TURE | LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

12. The CDEM Act 2002 requires the appointment of a Group Recovery Manager and permits the appointment of Local Recovery Managers at the discretion of CDEM Joint Committees. The Waikato CDEM Group has adopted further classifications of recovery managers for the purpose of:
- (a) Enhancing professional competency by focusing resources on a limited number of recovery managers, authorised to work across administrative boundaries of the Group.
 - (b) Establishing levels of competency for operating at the local, intra-region, Group or Inter Group levels.

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

13. The preferred option is for the Waikato CDEM Group Joint Committee to approve the appointment, as recommended by the CEG Subcommittee, STRAAC.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

14. Recommendations are consistent with the Joint Committee adopted Waikato CDEM Group Recovery and Tiered Approach Policies.
15. 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 other policy adopted by the Joint Committee, or any plan required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, LGA or any other enactment.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

16. Interview of the nominee/candidate included a panel member (identified by the relevant local authority) who is qualified to consider the needs of local Māori. Enhanced response capability enables improved Parenga/protection for Māori.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

17. All Waikato CDEM Group Recovery Manager and Tiered Approach Policies prerequisites of the named nominee are met. STRAAC have endorsed the nomination received from Taupo District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council and Waitomo District Council for appointment of Tier 3 Local Recovery Managers.

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Confidential : Nick Carroll Bio [↓](#)
2. Confidential: Nathan Sutherland Bio [↓](#)
3. Confidential: Michelle Clark Bio [↓](#)

6.7 MINUTES OF THE WAIKATO RAUPATU RIVER TRUST AND WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL CO-GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2026

Rā | Date: 14 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Brooke Roebeck, Democracy Advisor

Kaituku | Authoriser: Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2026 be received.
2. That the decisions made under delegated authority be noted.
3. That the actions requested be noted.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This summary sets out decisions made at the meeting in table format, except for the following procedural items:
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Confirmation of agenda
 - (c) Confirmation (or receipt of) minutes
 - (d) Receipt of reports
 - (e) Resolutions to enter and/or leave public excluded sessions
 - (f) Procedural motions pertaining to meeting process.
2. This extract is a solely a reference tool for those readers who find it helpful. It does not replace the minutes which are the official record of the meeting.
3. Key:
 - (a) **Delegated Authority:** The decision made falls within the delegated authority of the committee.
 - (b) **Recommendation:** The decision is a recommendation for council (or other body) to consider. These recommendations may be included with the minutes for consideration, or by a separate report.
 - (c) **Recorded Action:** These are not resolved decisions, but rather administrative requests made informally during the meeting.

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
Item 6.1 – Record of Meeting Actions			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the record of meeting actions be updated to include the meeting date and assigned due dates to improve traceability and accountability. 2. That staff explore alternative mechanisms to strengthen Mana Whenua participation in Council decision-making processes. 3. That regular updates on the progress and key developments of the Mana Whakahono ā Rohe with Ngāti Mahuta be provided. 			✓
Item 6.3 – Regional Partnership Response to System Reform in the Waikato			
That a Council workshop be scheduled as soon as practicable to provide an overview of the Waikato-Tainui proposal and enable discussion on a coordinated regional partnership response to system reform in the Waikato.			✓
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/06</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That the co-governance committee supports the direction of the report and the recommended actions noted in the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Agenda, 8 April 2026 at pages 50-52. 	✓		
Item 6.4 – Update on the Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan			
That the Whangamarino Action Plan be tabled at the next Co-Governance Committee meeting.			✓
Item 6.6 – Strategic Work Programme Reset and Co-Development Approach			
That a workshop be scheduled for a facilitated session on the Strategic Work Programme and the co-development approach, prior to the next co-governance committee meeting.			✓
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/09</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That the Strategic Work Programme for the 2022–2025 triennium be formally closed. 	✓		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. That all remaining and carried-forward actions be transferred into the Co-Governance Committee’s actions register and continue to be reported and monitored through that mechanism. 	✓		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. That a facilitated session will inform development of the Strategic Work Programme for the 2025–2028 triennium. 	✓		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. That a draft Strategic Work Programme be prepared following this session and brought back to the Committee for formal consideration at the next co-governance meeting. 			✓
Item 7.1 – Te Matatini 2027 – Waikato Regional Council Support			

Title / Description	Delegated Authority	Recommendation	Recorded Action
That the relevant Waikato Regional Council team be advised of the anticipated lodging of a Waikato-Tainui resource consent application (earthworks) for the Te Matatini 2027 site at Hopuhopu, to enable early awareness and effective process management.			✓
<p>COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/11</p> <p>2. That Waikato Regional Council continue to work in partnership with Waikato-Tainui on planning for Te Matatini 2027, specifically to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) lead and contribute to regional transport planning and coordination for the event (b) identify and progress areas of Waikato Regional Council support in collaboration with Waikato-Tainui and relevant partner agencies (c) provide progress updates to the Co-Governance Committee at each meeting 	✓		

ĀPITI HANGA | ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee meeting held on 8 April 2026**



MINUTES

Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 8 April 2026

Order Of Business

1	Karakia Timatanga	5
2	Apologies	5
3	Confirmation of Agenda	5
4	Disclosures of Interest	5
5	Minutes for Confirmation or Receipt	5
	Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Meeting – 24 September 2025	5
6	General Items	6
6.1	Record of Meeting Actions	6
6.2	Presentation – Overview of Waikato-Tainui	6
6.3	Regional Partnership Response to System Reform in the Waikato	7
6.4	Update on the Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan	7
6.5	Summary of River and Catchment Management Activities - 2024/25	8
6.6	Strategic Work Programme Reset and Co-Development Approach.....	8
7	Public Excluded Items	9
7.1	Te Matatini 2028 – Waikato Regional Council Support	9
8	Karakia Whakamutunga	11

Waikato Regional Council
**Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-
Governance Committee Meeting**

OPEN MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 8 April 2026, 10.02am

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

Members Present: Trustee Jackie Colliar – Co-Chair – Waikato-Tainui
Cr Noel Smith – Co-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
Cr Jennifer Nickel – Deputy Co-Chair – Waikato Regional Council
Trustee Jeff Green – Waikato-Tainui (virtually via Teams from 10.14am)
Cr Kataraina Hodge – Waikato Regional Council (until 12.35pm)
Trustee Hinerangi Raumati-Tu'ua – Waikato-Tainui
Cr Angela Strange – Waikato Regional Council
Trustee Donald Turner – Waikato-Tainui (virtually via Teams)

In Attendance: Cr Keith Holmes – Waikato Regional Council
Cr Tipa Mahuta – Waikato Regional Council (virtually via Teams until 10.52am)

Staff Present: Donna Flavell – Chief Executive Officer, Waikato-Tainui
Mali Ahipene – Pou Tuhono, Waikato Regional Council
Marae Tukere – General Manager, Oranga, Waikato-Tainui
Jason Ake – General Manager, Communications and Engagement, Waikato-Tainui
Mike Scarsbrook – Manager, Environmental Science, Waikato Regional Council
Sandra Sesto-Dekic – Team Leader, Customer Focus, Waikato Regional Council
Karuna Deobhakta – Policy Advisor, Waikato-Tainui
Brooke Roebeck – 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 Recording 1	Doc # 35495979	https://youtu.be/9ylDumi1zzY
Open Recording 2	Doc # 35497038	https://youtu.be/pPLjdGU-53l
Public Excluded Recording	Doc # 35498403	–
Open Recording 3	Doc # 35497284	https://youtu.be/eGNhAK64c9k

1 KARAKIA TIMATANGA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 30 seconds.

The Waikato Regional Council Kaitohutohu (Joshua Wetere) opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 3 minutes 50 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/01

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Trustee Jackie Colliar

That the apologies of Trustee Jeff Green for lateness and Cr Kataraina Hodge for early departure be accepted.

CARRIED

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 4 minutes 45 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/02

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge

- 8. That the agenda of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Meeting of 8 April 2026, as circulated, be confirmed as the business of the meeting.**
- 9. That the order of items follows the order set out in the minutes.**

CARRIED

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 5 minutes 15 seconds.

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

**WAIKATO RAUPATU RIVER TRUST AND WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL CO-GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE MEETING – 24 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 5 minutes 25 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/03

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Trustee Donald Turner

That the minutes of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Meeting held on 24 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED

6 GENERAL ITEMS

6.1 RECORD OF MEETING ACTIONS

Item commenced in recording 1, at 7 minutes 5 seconds

Presented by the Kaiwhakarite (Ashley Eden).

10.14am – Trustee Jeff Green entered the meeting.

Actions:

10. That the record of meeting actions be updated to include the meeting date and assigned due dates to improve traceability and accountability.
11. That staff explore alternative mechanisms to strengthen Mana Whenua participation in Council decision-making processes.
12. That regular updates on the progress and key developments of the Mana Whakahono ā Rohe with Ngāti Mahuta be provided.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/04

Moved: Cr Jennifer Nickel

Seconded: Trustee Hinerangi Raumati-Tu'ua

That the report *Record of Meeting Actions* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.2 PRESENTATION – OVERVIEW OF WAIKATO-TAINUI

Item commenced in recording 1, at 42 minutes 45 seconds.

Presented by the General Manager, Oranga (Marae Tukere). Refer Document # 35427688 for the PowerPoint presentation or at page 28-47 of the open agenda.

10.52am – Cr Tipa Mahuta left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/05

Moved: Cr Kataraina Hodge

Seconded: Trustee Hinerangi Raumati-Tu'ua

That the report *Presentation – Overview of Waikato-Tainui* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.3 REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO SYSTEM REFORM IN THE WAIKATO

Item commenced in open recording 1, at 55 minutes 30 seconds.

Presented by the Pou Tuhono (Mali Ahipene) and General Manager (Marae Tukere).

11.52am – The meeting adjourned.

12.03pm – The meeting reconvened.

Item continued in open recording 2, at start.

Action:

That a Council workshop be scheduled as soon as practicable to provide an overview of the Waikato-Tainui proposal and enable discussion on a coordinated regional partnership response to system reform in the Waikato.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/06

Moved: Trustee Hinerangi Raumati-Tu'ua

Seconded: Cr Kataraina Hodge

- 4. That the report *Regional Partnership Response to System Reform in the Waikato* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.**
- 5. That the co-governance committee supports the direction of the report and the recommended actions noted in the Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee Agenda, 8 April 2026 at pages 50-52.**

CARRIED

6.4 UPDATE ON THE WAIKARE-WHANGAMARINO ACTION PLAN

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 46 seconds.

Presented by the Manager, Environmental Science (Mike Scarsbrook) who requested the report be taken as read. Refer Document # 35557826 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

Co-Chair Jackie Colliar acknowledged the significant work, investment of time and funding in the Whangamarino and Waikare areas. She thanked those involved for their collaborative approach and highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum, considering future funding opportunities, and agreeing next steps.

Action:

That the Whangamarino Action Plan be tabled at the next Co-Governance Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/07

Moved: Trustee Jackie Colliar

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Update on the Waikare-Whangamarino Action Plan* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.5 SUMMARY OF RIVER AND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES - 2024/25

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 20 minutes 51 seconds.

Presented by the Programme Lead, Integrated Catchment Management (Paula Reeves) who requested the report be taken as read. Refer Document # 35520517 for the PowerPoint presentation or on the public website.

12.35pm – Cr Kataraina Hodge left the meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/08

Moved: Trustee Jackie Colliar

Seconded: Cr Noel Smith

That the report *Summary of River and Catchment Management Activities - 2024/25* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.

CARRIED

6.6 STRATEGIC WORK PROGRAMME RESET AND CO-DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 34 minutes.

Presented by the Pou Tuhono (Mali Ahipene).

Action:

That a workshop be scheduled for a facilitated session on the Strategic Work Programme and the co-development approach, prior to the next co-governance committee meeting.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/09

Moved: Trustee Jackie Colliar

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

- 1. That the report *Strategic Work Programme Reset and Co-Development Approach* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.**

2. That the Strategic Work Programme for the 2022–2025 triennium be formally closed.
3. That all remaining and carried-forward actions be transferred into the Co-Governance Committee’s actions register and continue to be reported and monitored through that mechanism.
4. That a facilitated session will inform development of the Strategic Work Programme for the 2025–2028 triennium.
5. That a draft Strategic Work Programme be prepared following this session and brought back to the Committee for formal consideration at the next co-governance meeting.

CARRIED

7 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

Item commenced in open recording 2, at 37 minutes 54 seconds

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/10

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Trustee Jackie Colliar

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 - Te Matatini 2028 – Waikato Regional Council Support	s7(2)(h) of the Act - To enable Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities	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

CARRIED

12.41pm – The meeting moved into public excluded session.

7.1 TE MATATINI 2027 – WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORT

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at start.

Presented by the General Manager Engagement and Communication (Jason Ake) and the Team Leader, Customer Focus (Sandra Sesto-Dekic).

Action:

That the relevant Waikato Regional Council team be advised of the anticipated lodging of a Waikato-Tainui resource consent application (earthworks) for the Te Matatini 2027 site at Hopuhopu, to enable early awareness and effective process management.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/11

Moved: Trustee Donald Turner

Seconded: Cr Angela Strange

- 1. That the report *Te Matatini 2027 – Waikato Regional Council Support* (Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Co-Governance Committee, 8 April 2026) be received.**
- 2. That Waikato Regional Council continue to work in partnership with Waikato-Tainui on planning for Te Matatini 2027, specifically to:**
 - (a) lead and contribute to regional transport planning and coordination for the event**
 - (b) identify and progress areas of Waikato Regional Council support in collaboration with Waikato-Tainui and relevant partner agencies**
 - (c) provide progress updates to the Co-Governance Committee at each meeting**
- 3. That the report and the decision be released into the open session, noting that the attachments remain public excluded due to their confidential nature.**

CARRIED

Item commenced in public excluded recording, at 14 minutes 51 seconds.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION WTCG26/12

Moved: Cr Noel Smith

Seconded: Cr Jennifer Nickel

That the meeting return to the open session.

CARRIED

12.56pm – The meeting moved back to open session.

8 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Item commenced in open recording 3, at 48 seconds.

The Co-Chair (Jackie Colliar) closed the meeting with a karakia.

12.58pm – The meeting closed.

7 GENERAL ITEMS

7.1 HAURAKI GULF FORUM - MINUTES FOR RECEIPT

Rā | Date: 15 April 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

Kaituku | Authoriser: Dave Doggart, Team Lead, Democracy

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To present the minutes of the Hauraki Gulf Forum (23 March 2026) for receipt.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The most recent meeting of the Hauraki Gulf Forum was held on Monday, 23 March 2026, at the Reid Homestead. Those minutes are attached for receipt.
3. Agendas and minutes for the forum can be viewed on the Auckland Council website at the following address: <https://aucklandcouncil.resolve.red/portal/>

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the minutes of the Hauraki Gulf Forum meeting held on 23 March 2026 be received.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

4. [Auckland Council, Hauraki Gulf Forum webpage](#)

ĀPITIHINGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Hauraki Gulf Forum Minutes - 23 March 2026 [↓](#)



Date: Monday, 23 March 2026
Time: 1:00pm
Meeting Room: Reid Homestead
Venue: Home Bay, Motutapu

Hauraki Gulf Forum OPEN MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 1:29pm.

PRESENT | TE HUNGA KUA TAE MAI

Co-Chair	Ms Nicola Rata-MacDonald, MNZM	Tangata Whenua
Co-Chair	Councillor Warren Maher	Waikato Regional Council Co-presiding from 2:15pm, Item 5.1
Members	Ms Charmaine Bailie	Tangata Whenua
	Councillor Stephen Croymans	Hauraki District Council
	Mr Joe Davis	Tangata Whenua
	Councillor Christine Fletcher, QSO	Auckland Council
	Councillor Richard Hills	Auckland Council
	Mr Jacob Hore	Ministry for Primary Industries
	Councillor Dayne Horne	Matamata-Piako District Council
	Mr Tom Irvine	Tangata Whenua
	Mr Martin Mariassouce	Te Puni Kōkiri
	Mr Chris Ollivier	Auckland Council-Aotea/Great Barrier Local Board
	Councillor Sarah Paterson-Hamlin	Auckland Council Via electronic link, from 1:31pm, until 2:39pm, Item 4.1
	Ms Bianca Ranson	Auckland Council-Waiheke Local Board
	Mr Alex Rogers	Department of Conservation
	Councillor Victoria Short	Auckland Council Via electronic link
	Councillor Robyn Sinclair	Thames-Coromandel District Council
	Councillor Peter Thomson	Waikato District Council

Hauraki Gulf Forum
23 March 2026



ABSENT | TE HUNGA KĀORE I TAE MAI

Members

Mr Terrence Hohneck
 Councillor Mike Lee
 Mr Dean Ogilvie

Tangata Whenua
 Auckland Council
 Tangata Whenua

ALSO PRESENT | TE HUNGA ĀPITI KUA TAE MAI

Councillor Robert Cookson (Alt)
 Mr Rereahu Collier (Alt)
 Mr Eric Rangī Hillman (Alt)

 Councillor Alison Smith (Alt)

Waikato Regional Council
 Hauraki District Council
 Auckland Council-Waiheke Local Board
 Thames-Coromandel District Council

Minutes

Co-Chair Nicola Rata-MacDonald welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1 Ngā Tamōtanga | Apologies
Apologies

Resolution number HGF/2026/10

MOVED by Member Irvine, seconded by Member Ollivier:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

a. accept apologies from:

Absence

**Member Hohneck
Councillor Lee
Member Ogilvie**

Early Departure

Councillor Paterson-Hamlin

CARRIED / KUA MANA

2 Te Whakapuaki i te Whai Pānga | Declaration of Interest
Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A round of introductions took place.

Note: The Co-Chair gave priority to Item 5.1 Election of Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

Note: From this point forward, agenda items were taken in the following order:

Item

- 5.1 Election of Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum
- 4.1 Public Forum - Presentation from Ngāti Manuhiri rangatahi
- 4.2 Public Forum - Presentation from Waiheke Marine Project
- 3 Items not on the agenda
- 5.2 Co-Chair's report
- 5.3 Constituent Party reports
- 5.4 Executive Officer's report
- 5.5 State of our Gulf report
- 5.6 Hauraki Gulf Forum Budget 2026/27

Minutes

5.1 Election of Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum

Co-Chair Rata-MacDonald spoke to the Forum's co-chairing arrangement and the role of the Co-Chair.

Resolution number HGF/2026/16

MOVED by Member Irvine, seconded by Councillor Fletcher:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the report
- b. adopt the following voting system for appointment of the co-chair of the Hauraki Gulf forum, as described in the report and in the Local Government Act 2002: Statutory voting System A.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Co-Chair Rata-MacDonald handed over the chair to the Governance Advisor who acted as the Returning Officer for the election.

The Forum considered nominations for Co-Chair at this time.

NOMINATED by Councillor Croymans, seconded by Member Ollivier:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. elect Councillor Warren Maher, Waikato Regional Council, as Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum for the 2025-2028 local government electoral term, with immediate effect.

Councillor Maher accepted the nomination.

NOMINATED by Member Bailie, seconded by Member Irvine:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. elect Member Bianca Ranson, Auckland Council - Waiheke Local Board as Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum for the 2025-2028 local government electoral term, with immediate effect.

Member Ranson accepted the nomination.

There were no further nominations.

The nominees addressed the Forum.

The Returning Officer conducted the election of the Co-Chair by closed ballot.

The Returning Officer declared by majority vote, Councillor Warren Maher, Waikato Regional Council, as Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum for the 2025-2028 local government electoral term, with immediate effect.

Councillor Maher assumed the co-chair.

Hauraki Gulf Forum
23 March 2026



4 **Te Matapaki Tūmatanui | Public Forum** **Public Forum**

4.1 **Public Forum - Presentation from Ngāti Manuhiri rangatahi**

Jessie Thompson and Ataria MacDonald spoke in support of the item.

Resolution number HGF/2026/11

MOVED by Councillor Sinclair, seconded by Councillor Thomson:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **thank rangatahi from Ngāti Manuhiri for their presentation on the successful Section 186A application for the two-year closure of rockpool harvesting in their Whangaparāoa rohe.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

4.2 **Public Forum - Presentation from Waiheke Marine Project**

A presentation was given by Ngahua Takirau, Alice McSherry and Brianna Marvin in support of the item. A copy has been placed on the official minutes and is available with the meeting material.

Resolution number HGF/2026/12

MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Member Ranson:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **thank Waiheke Marine Project for the update on the Kōura Dive Survey**
- b. **thank Brianna Marvin for the presentation on her research.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

3 **Ngā mea kāore i runga i te rārangi take | Items not on the Agenda** **Items not on the Agenda**

There were no items in this section.

Minutes

5 He Pūrongo | Reports
5.2 Co-Chair's report

Note: Co-Chair Rata-MacDonald thanked Katina Conomos, Interim Executive Officer and Mike Giddey, Governance Advisor for their service to the Forum, and welcomed new Executive Officer Beth Rose and Governance Advisor Rosemary Geard.

Resolution number HGF/2026/13

MOVED by Member Ranson, seconded by Member Bailie:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **receive the Co-Chair's report.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

5.3 Constituent Party reports

Constituent party representatives spoke to the written reports.

Member Ollivier requested that the Hauraki Gulf Forum writes a letter of support to Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board and Ngāti Rehua-Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust Board for the proposed local rules for the Aotea / Great Barrier koura (rock lobster) fishery.

A presentation was given in support of the item. A copy has been placed on the official minutes and is available with the meeting material.

A decision was deferred.

Resolution number HGF/2026/14

MOVED by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Sinclair:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. **thank Department of Conservation and Fisheries New Zealand for the written report**
- b. **thank Auckland Council for the written report**
- c. **thank Hauraki District Council for the written report**
- d. **thank Matamata-Piako District Council for the written report**
- e. **thank Thames-Coromandel District Council for the written report**
- f. **thank Waikato Regional Council for the written report.**

CARRIED / KUA MANA

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
23 March 2026



5.4 Executive Officer's report

Note: A change to the original motion was made, removing original clauses b) and i), with the agreement of the meeting, to be deferred to a future meeting.

Resolution number HGF/2026/18

MOVED by Member Rogers, seconded by Councillor Horne:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the Executive Officer's report
- b. acknowledge the DOC and FNZ clarification on Marine Reporting
- c. acknowledge the Forum's submission on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills, noting its positions of concern
- d. acknowledge the Forum's letter of support for public consultation on the Upper North Island's Clean Vessel Plan
- e. acknowledge the direction of the State of Our Gulf report so far as associated Forum member engagement and delivery timings and objectives
- f. acknowledge the direction of the website restructure and refresh work outlined, including the publication of press releases and submissions on the website
- g. acknowledge the incorporation of video content as a communications tool for the Forum's work and publication on digital channels (website and social media).

CARRIED / KUA MANA

5.5 State of our Gulf report

Resolution number HGF/2026/15

MOVED by Member Rogers, seconded by Councillor Horne:

That the Hauraki Gulf Forum:

- a. receive the report.

CARRIED / KUA MANA

5.6 Hauraki Gulf Forum Budget 2026/27

With the agreement of the meeting, the item was deferred to a future meeting of the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

Minutes

Hauraki Gulf Forum
23 March 2026



Kua Kati te Hui | Meeting Closed

Member Irvine closed the meeting with a karakia.

04:11pm

The Co-Chairs thanked members for their attendance and attention to business and declared the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT
RECORD AT A MEETING OF THE HAURAKI GULF
FORUM MEETING HELD ON

DATE:.....

CO-CHAIR:.....

CO-CHAIR:.....

Minutes

7.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - MARCH 2026

Rā | Date: 25 March 2026

Kaituhi | Author: Marie Fullerton, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Kaituku | Authoriser: Chris McLay, Chief Executive

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide councillors with an overview of Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) health, safety, and wellbeing performance, and to enable councillors to exercise their due diligence regarding health and safety governance.

KŌRERO WHAKATAHI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance Plan has been updated to strengthen governance assurance and clearly set out how officers meet due-diligence responsibilities in line with Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) and Institute of Directors (New Zealand) good-practice guidance. The refreshed plan confirms officer expectations across the five core elements of effective health and safety governance. It is intended to provide the Chief Executive and Councillors with clear line of sight and confidence that health, safety, and wellbeing risks are being managed in a proportionate and fit-for-purpose way. The plan is under the review of the Chief Executive, who will advise on the next step.
3. There were 33 staff event reports for the period March 2026, 15 were events, 7 injuries, and 11 near misses. The total reports for the last 12 months (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) are 257. Incident data indicates seasonal increases in reporting during peak activity periods, with strong reporting of events and near misses providing early warning and learning opportunities. There was no report to WorkSafe or any other enforcer during this time.
4. There were 20 scheduled Executive Leadership Governance Walkarounds from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This initiative strengthens our safety culture by giving ELT members clear visibility of what's working well and where challenges exist, enabling timely decisions that improve workplace safety. An ELT walkaround has been selected for inclusion in this report to demonstrate the value of leadership walkarounds and how this visit has demonstrated notable risk management, visibility, and assurance at the operational level.
5. Senior Leadership (SL) walkarounds were introduced in February 2026 to further strengthen Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance. This is achieved by increasing visibility of senior leaders as they focus on critical risk management. This activity strengthens assurance, reinforces safety culture, and ensures that critical risks are genuinely understood, and well controlled where the work happens.
6. Council's sick leave data for March 2026 (4.6) are higher than the staff sick leave numbers reported for February (4.0). The twelve-month rolling average for March 2026 was 5.7 which is above the national benchmark of 5.
7. In the past year 80 staff have accessed EAP Services, with an average of 2.21 sessions per person. Our utilisation rate is 12.6% which is within the recommended range of 7% to 15%. At Council, 76% of all referrals were for personal reasons, compared to 24% for work related issues. These percentages are consistent with other industries.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the *Health and Safety Report - March 2026* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

8. Council's health and safety performance is reported to Council each month. The information is presented under four sections: 1) *Risk Profile* 2) *Performance Data* 3) *Governance* 4) *Assurance and General Information*.

SECTION ONE: Risk Profile**WorkSafe – March 2026**

9. WorkSafe prosecuted **Peter Gray Engineering** following a December 2023 fatality where a worker was crushed while moving a 1.8 tonne machine during poorly planned, non-routine work. WorkSafe found that the task lacked a risk assessment, used unsuitable equipment, and exposed workers to uncontrolled crush risks, relying on improvisation rather than structured planning.
10. The company was charged under sections 36(1)(a) and 48(1) and (2)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, sentenced in February 2026. The company was ordered to pay \$140,000 in reparation and fined \$9,000, with WorkSafe emphasising that experience does not replace planning and that ad-hoc, high-risk tasks must be treated as high risk and properly controlled.
11. These cases are presented as learning opportunities to help illustrate why the organisation manages routine work through standard operating procedures (SOPs), and higher-risk, infrequent or non-routine work through site specific safety plans (SSSP), and job-specific risk assessments (JSAs).
12. Court decisions provide practical insight into the consequences of relying on informal practice or experience and reinforce the need for deliberate planning and controls for higher-risk activities. This supports continuous improvement and strengthens our approach to risk management.

Councils Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance Plan update

13. The 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance Plan' has been updated to strengthen governance assurance and clearly articulate how officers meet their due-diligence responsibilities in line with the HSWA and Institute of Directors (New Zealand) good-practice guidance.
14. The refreshed plan sets clear expectations for officers within the following key areas:
- **Learn and develop** – and maintain current health and safety knowledge
 - **Anticipating and Understand** - the critical risks arising from how work is performed
 - **Plan and Resource** - ensuring appropriate planning and resourcing for health and safety
 - **Trust and Verify** - seeking assurance that systems and controls are effective, and active

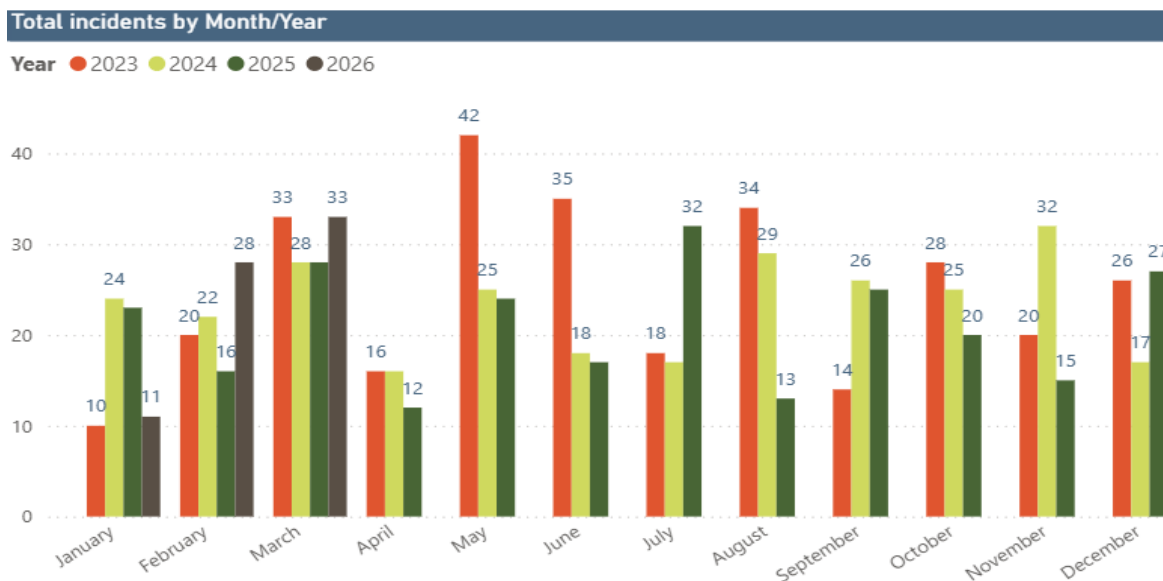
- **Monitor and Respond** - to ensure outcomes from audits are implemented and supports continuous improvement.

15. The Chief Executive will review the updated plan in April 2026 and advise on the next steps.

SECTION TWO: Performance Data (reporting, and other outputs of the safety management system)

Incident Reporting Trends

16. The total number of incidents reported for last 12 months (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) is 257, including the events reported for the period March 2026 (n=33).



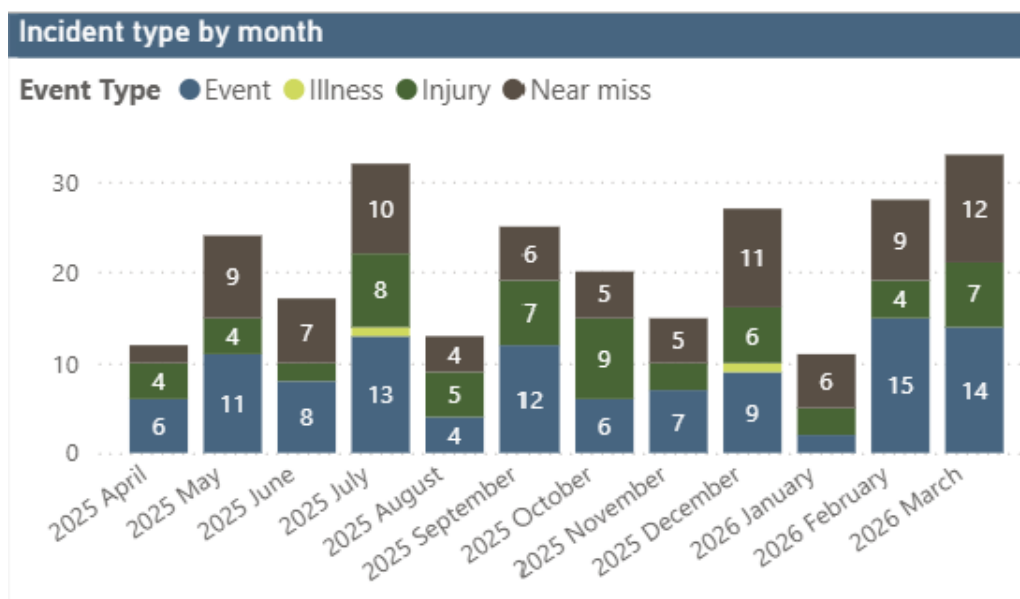
Graph 1. 12 month-Incident Report Trending data – March 2026

Event Type by Month

17. The graph below provides a comparison of all reports by events, injury, illness and near misses. There was a total of 33 reports for the period of March 2026, 15 were events, 7 injuries and 11 near misses.

Event Type and Key Observations

18. The data shows seasonal peaks in incident reporting, particularly in July and from February to March 2026, suggesting heightened risk exposure due to increased work activity. Events and near misses account for most reports, indicating staff have a good understanding and visibility of unsafe conditions, and event reporting requirements. These reports provide an opportunity for early intervention. Injury numbers remain relatively stable but increase slightly during peak activity months.



Graph 2. Incident type by month – March 2026

Events Report by Category

19. The table below shows the total reporting numbers by category for the period March 2026. There was a total of 33 reports, 15 were events, 7 injuries and 11 near misses.
20. March 2026 saw higher-than-usual vehicle event reporting, mainly linked to low-speed manoeuvring and challenging rural or off-road conditions following wet weather and other external hazards. These events have been fully investigated and showed that there was good situational awareness, and good decision making. While there were no injuries and minimal or no vehicle damage, staff are encouraged to report events to focus on learning and prevention.

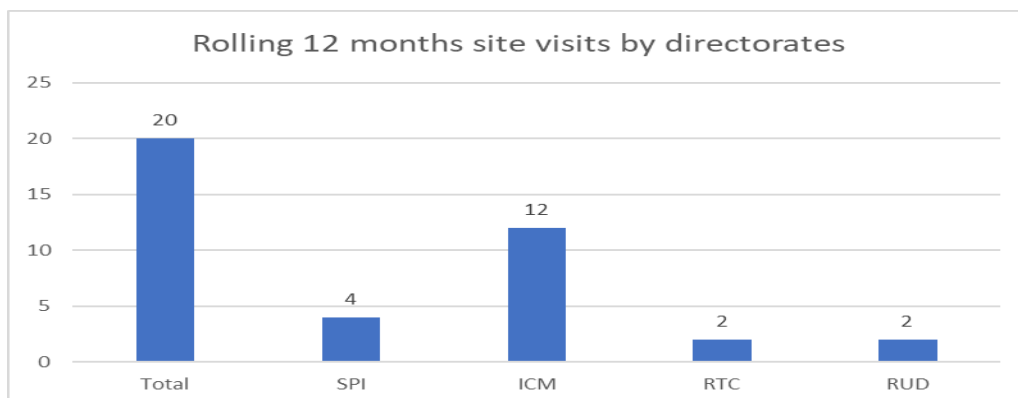
Event risk category (realised risk)	Nº
Vehicle	9
People/behavioural	3
Environment	2
Other (Vertigo)	1
Total	15
Injury/loss risk category (realised risk)	
Bite/Sting	1
Sprain/strain	4
Bruising	1
Other	1
Total	7
Potential risk category (near-miss)	
Activity/task	3
Access/egress	1

Event risk category (realised risk)	Nº
Member of public/third party	2
Procedural	1
Faculty/building	1
Vehicle	3
Total	11

SECTION THREE: Governance and Assurance

Exercising Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance – Leadership Walkarounds

- 21. **Lead indicator:** Tier 1 and Tier 2 Governance Leadership Walkarounds are a key health and safety governance initiative that is actively supported by the Chief Executive and conducted by members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). These walkarounds enhance executive team visibility, strengthen staff engagement, and provide real-time feedback that supports continuous improvement.
- 22. From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, there have been 20 walkarounds conducted across various work sites, resulting in 7 corrective actions, with all having been resolved.



Graph 3. Vault checks – March 2026

Leadership Site Visit – Key Observations

- 23. **Lead Indicator:** One leadership walkaround has been chosen to illustrate the practical value of on-site leadership presence, in a governance function. Observations of the visit included staff reinforcing risk awareness, roles were clear, and effective controls were in place to manage this high-risk construction activity. In summary, the contractor and council staff demonstrated strong capability, and working well together due to clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (overlapping duties observed). Additional controls were implemented to manage water hazards, including a second coffer dam, with water levels being observed and safety mechanisms were functioning effectively. Resourcing was appropriate with sufficient staff, good on-site induction, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and clothing, and site controls in place to manage the steep terrain safely.
- 24. **Lead indicator:** Senior Leadership Team (SLT) walkarounds are now embedded as a scheduled activity to strengthen visibility and oversight of critical risks. These visits provide direct operational insight, reinforce visible leadership, and support engagement with

frontline teams. Reporting on the number of walkarounds and critical risk reviews undertaken will commence from 1 July 2026.

Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) Assurance

25. **Lead indicator:** As part of Council's Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45001) requirements, the annual assurance programme is updated at the beginning of the new financial year, and delivered by the Health and Safety Team, in collaboration with managers and their teams.
26. The Health and Safety Assurance Programme is constantly evolving and includes Tier 1, 2 and 3 level walkarounds, focusing on various aspects of compliance, identifying risks, and ensuring systems are effective and improved. It drives Councils Governance functions, and supports decisions, strengthens safety culture, and shared learning.
27. Between 1 February and 31 March, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team have undertaken **44 reviews**, focused on the quality of event investigations. The team provides constructive feedback to investigators, and over the year have seen a steady improvement in manager capability and confidently to undertake event investigations.
28. **Lead indicator:** The Health and Safety Team uses a documentation register to track all document checks, inspections, audits, and reviews against the HSMS. Performance remains **on target**, with 83% of critical risk reviews completed (target 80%), 83% of common risks reviewed (target 80%) and 85% of HSMS documents reviewed (target 85%). The system covers 122 key items, including policies, procedures, workflows, e-learning modules, and risk registers.

Health and Safety Leadership Capability Development

29. **Lead Indicator:** The HSW team continue to deliver targeted briefing sessions for people managers as part of the staged rollout of the ISO 45001 Health and Safety Management System implemented last year. This month's session was focused on assurance activities, strengthening understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
30. The April 2026 session will focus on event investigations, supported by mandatory 3-hour externally led training for people leaders, and refresher training required every three years. These sessions are designed to progressively uplift leadership capability and confidence, and to embed consistent health and safety practices across the organisation.

SECTION FOUR: Management of risk

31. Councils Risk Management Framework sets out responsibilities and processes for managing risk, including strategic risks that may affect directorate operational risks, health and safety, and project and programme delivery.
32. Critical risk reviews are led by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager with support from the Health and Safety Team, subject matter experts, and consultation through the Health and Safety Committee and elected Representatives. Outcomes are reviewed by the Executive Manager People and Capability and submitted to the ELT for endorsement.

Summary of critical risks review

33. The table below shows a summary of the six critical health and safety risks, risk statement, bowtie status, and the risk register review status.
34. The critical risk reviews are on track, with the Threat, Aggression and Violence Risks review slightly delayed.

Critical risk review status

WRC Critical Risk	Risk statement	Bowtie status	Risk review status
Vehicle Use	The risk of <i>losing control over the vehicle</i> leading to a crash and resulting in serious harm or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register update Completed Review due November 2026
Overlapping Duties (Contractor Management)	The risk that <i>works processes are not controlled</i> , leading to serious injury or death, loss of plant, equipment or impacts on the environment.	Not undertaken	Risk Register updated Completed Next review October 2026
Working in and Around Water:	The risk of the <i>accidental exposure to water bodies</i> , leading infection, serious injury, or drowning.	Bow-tie	Risk register update Completed Next review April 2026
Working in Geothermal Areas	The risk of <i>exposure to gases and thermal heat</i> leading to asphyxiation, life threatening burns, or death.	Bow-tie	Risk Register updated Completed Next review due July 2026
Struck by Moving Vehicles, Plant or Equipment	The risk of <i>being struck by moving vehicle, plant or equipment</i> resulting in personal injury or fatality.	Not undertaken	Risk Register update Completed Review due September 2026
Threat, Aggression and Violence	Risks of <i>confrontational interactions with members of the public</i> , leading to physical and psychological harm.	Bow-tie	Risk Register updated Underway Review due February 2026

Waikato Regional Council Wellbeing Initiatives

- 35. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free, independent, and confidential support service provided to staff. It not only provides psychological support, but a wide range of other support services.
- 36. From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, 80 staff accessed EAP Services. Council’s utilisation rate is 12.6%, which is within the average uptake of 7% to 15%. The Rongoā Māori implementation in August 2024 and is utilised by staff.
- 37. Across all industries EAP Services access is primarily for personal issues. At WRC 76% of referrals were for personal reasons, compared to 24% for work related issues. These percentages are consistent with other industries.
- 38. The key personal issues identified are personal relationships (n=15), stress and anxiety (n=15), and grief and loss (n=6), with work issues being relationship with manager (n=4), career (n=3), and Workload (n=4). EAP Services can be contacted 24/7, by phoning 0800 327 669.

My Everyday Wellbeing update

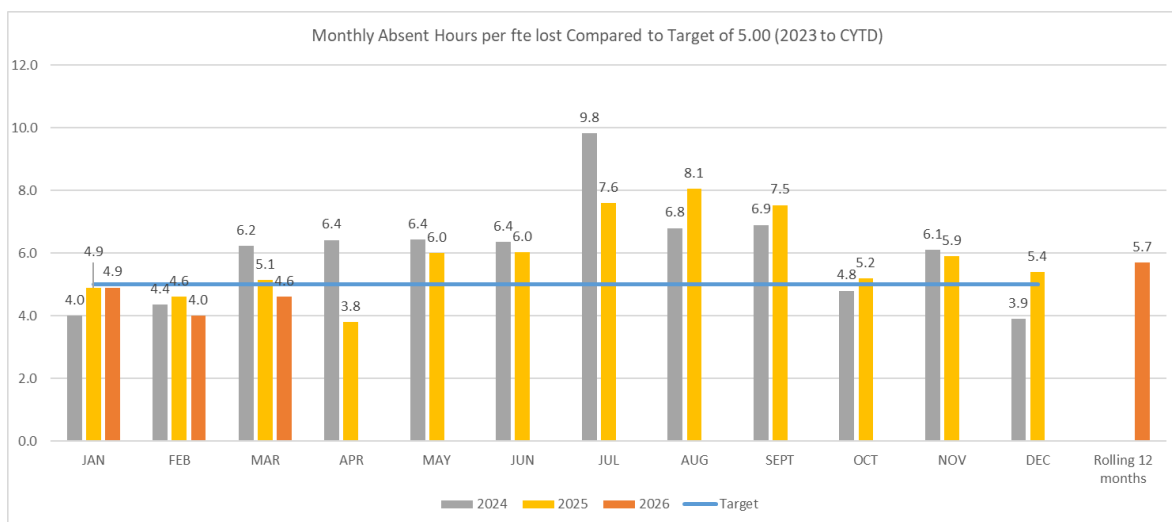
- 39. My Everyday Wellbeing is a weekly workplace wellbeing platform offering expert advice, practical tools, and engaging resources. It provides tailored wellbeing plans, monthly challenges, and content aligned with the Council’s Te Pae Mahutonga Framework—Mauri Ora, Toi Ora, Wai Ora, and Te Oranga.

- 40. My Everyday Wellbeing newsletters for March covered: 3-minute breathing space and a mindfulness practice podcast, recipes for health and wellbeing, building and maintaining a good sleep routine, and how to connect with colleagues at work.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

Sick Leave Statistics

- 41. Graph 5 below shows sick leave numbers reported for March (4.6) is higher than the sick leave reported over February (4.0) March is below the national benchmark of 5.0.



Graph 5. Hours of Sick Leave by Month

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

- 42. Event reporting remains strong, with 257 staff reports submitted in the last 12 months, including 33 for the period March 2026. Encouragingly, the quality of investigations continues to improve, driven by active support from the Health and Safety Team through monthly event reviews and coaching. These efforts are fostering greater trust in the reporting process, growing manager expertise and strengthening our overall safety culture.
- 43. Supported by the Chief Executive, Tier 1, 2 and 3 walkarounds are a key health and safety initiative, with 20 completed between April 2025 and March 2026. This programme has now been extended to Senior Leadership Teams, who will focus on critical risks reviews during their visits. These walkarounds demonstrate visible leadership commitment, strengthen engagement with frontline teams, and provide valuable insights into risk management, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with organisational safety priorities.
- 44. Council’s HSMS assurance programme supports a safe, compliant, and continuously improving organisation by systematically reviewing HSMS components, ensuring risks and documentation are current, and supports informed decision-making.
- 45. Council’s EAP is a free, confidential support service available 24/7, with a 12.6% staff utilisation rate which is within the industry average. Most referrals (76%) are for personal issues, such as relationships, stress, and life transitions, consistent with national trends. The introduction of Rongoā Māori has added culturally responsive support, further enhancing the programme’s value.

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.3 WAIKATO REGIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

Rā Date:	9 April 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Michelle White, Senior Policy Planner
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To provide Councillors with the final draft of the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy (2026) for adoption.

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Waikato Regional Energy Strategy, first developed in 2009, has been updated to align with today's energy landscape and Council's strategic direction.
3. The strategy provides a roadmap for transitioning the region to a low-emissions, affordable, resilient and sustainable energy system. The strategy is underpinned by a strong evidence base, iwi perspectives and extensive stakeholder engagement.
4. The strategy recognises that Waikato Regional Council alone does not hold all the levers required to deliver the strategy. The central action is to establish a regional energy forum to implement the strategy collaboratively.
5. Recommendations are made across seven pillars (pou) to be considered and implemented by the regional energy forum. Council is being asked to adopt the draft Waikato Regional Energy Strategy, with any necessary amendments.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Waikato Regional Energy Strategy* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.
2. That the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy be adopted, subject to any amendments identified during discussion at the Council meeting.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

6. Waikato was the first region in New Zealand to develop a regional energy strategy, released in 2009. Since this time, the energy landscape has changed significantly, prompting an update to the strategy.
7. An updated strategy has now been developed – underpinned by Council's strategic direction, the [Waikato Regional Energy Inventory, modelling](#) and economic analysis, a technical support document, and incorporates stakeholder and iwi perspectives.
8. The strategy provides a roadmap for transitioning the region to a low-emissions, affordable resilient and sustainable energy system. New Zealanders need energy that is affordable,

secure and environmentally sustainable – this is essential not only for community wellbeing but also for sustained economic growth.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

9. The way energy is provided and consumed has significant consequences, for the environment and the economy. The combustion of fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Consequences of climate variability to more extreme weather, water shortages and infrastructure strain. It also increases the country's vulnerability to global supply change disruptions.
10. New Zealand faces high and volatile energy prices, declining domestic gas supply, increasing electricity demand, energy hardship and rising climate pressures.

THE STRATEGY

11. The strategy recognises that the current energy system is no longer fit for purpose and that in lieu of a national response, there is a need for coordinated regional action.
12. The strategy is split into three parts:
 - (a) Part A: Setting the scene – provides the current energy situation, our operating environment and the purpose of the strategy.
 - (b) Part B: Evidence base – provides evidence to support the recommendations in Part C. This part is information rich to provide sufficient explanation and evidence and is supported by separate technical reports.
 - (c) Part C: Strategy framework – describes the vision, outcomes, opportunities and recommendations.
13. The strategy is included as **Attachment 1** to this report.
14. As a key part of the evidence base, three long-term energy scenarios were modelled to understand the implications of different pathways. The findings show that a proactive and coordinated transition reduces energy supply chain risks and delivers lower long-term costs, deeper emissions reductions, and stronger economic outcomes despite higher upfront investment.
15. A central action of the strategy is the establishment of a regional energy forum. The regional energy forum will bring together iwi, industry, government, infrastructure providers and major energy users to refine and drive delivery of the strategy.
16. Recommendations are set out across seven pillars (pou) for consideration and implementation by the forum:
 - Pou 1 Strategic partnerships
 - Pou 2 Advocacy and leadership
 - Pou 3 Supportive policy settings
 - Pou 4 Workforce capability and capacity
 - Pou 5 Information and monitoring
 - Pou 6 Funding and finance

Pou 7 Renewable and energy efficient technology

17. The transition to renewable energy presents major opportunities for the Waikato, creating high-quality jobs, strengthening the regional economy, and improving long-term resilience. Renewable energy supports long-term economic stability, reducing national spending on imported fossil fuels. Decarbonising transport offers one of the highest returns on renewable energy investment. Significant opportunities exist to decarbonise industry. Ninety-one fossil-fuel-dependent process-heat sites have been identified in the region, representing substantial potential for emissions reductions and a transition to renewable energy.
18. Wairakei/Taupō, Tokoroa, and Huntly are identified as priority renewable energy-driven hubs due to strong resource, labour and infrastructure advantages.
19. The strategy was presented and discussed at a workshop with Councillors on 9 April 2026. A number of amendments have been made in response to feedback given at the workshop. The key changes are:
 - Identifying the priority action for WRC to implement separate from the recommendations which are to be implemented by the regional energy forum.
 - Additional wording included in the introduction to address why new fossil energy sources and nuclear fission are excluded from the strategy.
 - Additional wording included in the background to reinforce the fundamental role of energy in the economy.
 - Edit to Section 1.1 (what is energy) to include 'master resource'.
 - Additional wording included in Section 8.2 to clarify that minimal or no fuel costs offset the high upfront capital costs of renewable energy.
 - Recommendations added to the Technical Support Document to advocate for EV charging stations in remote areas and ensure energy equity across government funding.
 - Added a key to Appendix A to assist in the interpretation of the Sankey diagrams.
 - Graphs added to Section 8.1 to illustrate the rate of transition from fossil fuels.
20. The vision and purpose have also been sharpened, and a recommendation has been added to Pou 1 to support partnership models.

ĒTAHI ATU TAKE | OTHER MATTERS

21. Implementation of this strategy will be led by the regional energy forum. The forum will bring together key participants responsible for the supply, distribution and use of energy across the Waikato, including iwi, infrastructure providers, major energy users, education, local and central government and commercial representatives. This will ensure a coordinated, partnership-based approach to regional energy planning and delivery.
22. An implementation plan, and monitoring and reporting programme, will be developed and coordinated by the regional energy forum.
23. The forum will report to WRC's Regional Development and Resilience Committee through WRC staff. WRC will maintain oversight of the strategy and implementation plan, providing technical and administrative support for the forum.

24. The strategy will be formally reviewed every five years, with earlier reviews triggered for example if a national energy strategy is released or if significant policy or system changes occur.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

25. This decision will increase the ability of the Council and region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future.
26. It will achieve this by ensuring future energy developments are tightly integrated in the spatial plan chapter of the proposed regional scale plan to address climate adaptation risks.

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

27. The implementation of the strategy will result in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Under a dynamic (coordinated, proactive) scenario, greenhouse gas emissions are projected to decrease by 77% by 2050.
28. The strategy sets out a pathway to greater emission reductions through a range of recommendations such as encouraging the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies, supporting iwi renewable energy initiatives, and supporting research and development opportunities.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

29. There are opportunities for Council to demonstrate leadership arising from this decision. Council can provide leadership through the adoption of this strategy – recognising the need for a strategy and a future-focused approach. Council can also provide leadership through the support and creation of a regional energy forum, to implement the strategy. While Council has few direct levers to influence change regarding energy, it has a role to play with regulation, advocacy, information, procurement and partnerships.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

30. Although the subject matter is critical to the ongoing development of the prosperity of the Waikato region, having regard to the decision-making provisions in the LGA and 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

31. The key statutory document is the Climate Change Response Act 2002 which establishes a legal framework to enable New Zealand to meet its international obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. It is supported by the Emissions Reduction Plan that sets out the policies and

strategies for meeting the relevant emissions budget. The strategy is also consistent with the purpose of the LGA – which is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

32. At a regional level, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement recognises renewable energy as a significant regional issue. This has translated into streamlined consenting, long-duration approvals and spatial planning that supports renewable generation while protecting sensitive landscapes.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHĒRE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

33. The draft strategy is underpinned by:
- (a) The Council's 2023-2033 strategic direction: *Transitioning to a low-emissions economy.*
 - (b) The Council's 2026-2036 strategic direction: *Enable and promote a productive region that delivers shared prosperity, profitability and security.*
34. 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

35. This decision will not impact the Council's obligations under the Treaty. Iwi perspectives have been fundamental to the strategy, shaping its direction through a focus on protecting taonga and a protection-first approach. The strategy recommends supporting iwi partnership, participation and engagement in the energy sector.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

36. Council is asked to adopt the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy. The strategy addresses the region's energy challenges with the aim of providing energy that is affordable, secure and environmentally sustainable which is essential for community wellbeing and for sustained economic growth.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

1. Reference 1: [Waikato Regional Energy Inventory](#)
2. Reference 2: Waikato Regional Energy Technical Support Document (WRC Internal Series – available upon request)
3. Reference 3: Iwi Māori and the Future of Waikato Energy (WRC Internal Series – available upon request)
4. Reference 4: [Modelling of energy scenarios](#), undertaken Concept Consulting
5. Reference 5: Waikato Regional Energy Scenarios, report by Concept Consulting (available upon request)

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Draft Regional Energy Strategy #34846040** [↓](#)

Waikato Regional Council Policy Series Year/Number



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Waikato Regional Energy Strategy
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Chairperson's foreword

This is the second regional energy strategy prepared for the Waikato region. The first was prepared in 2009 – the first in New Zealand – prompting the second-generation Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS) to recognise renewable energy as a significant regional issue, enabling smooth consenting processes to access natural resources containing renewable energy. The fundamental drivers that prompted the 2009 Regional Energy Strategy have not changed. In some ways they have only become more acute and in others, technology advances offer more choices and options.

The Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on behalf of the region, is now updating the strategy to align with today's energy landscape. In the absence of a national energy strategy, the Council is stepping up providing regional direction, identifying how the energy sector can support its strategic direction that sets WRC up for future change under the theme of enabling and promoting a productive region that delivers prosperity, profitability and security¹.

The Waikato region is already central to New Zealand's energy system and exports two thirds of the electricity generated in the region to households, industrial and commercial sectors in other parts of the country. This position means that changes in regional generation capacity, demand growth, and infrastructure investment have outsized economic effects. Investment in renewable electricity in Waikato not only supports local decarbonisation but also supports the rest of the country to electrify and grow. In this way meeting the needs of international markets while at the same time reducing supply chain risks from a dependence on imported liquid fossil fuels.

This strategy has benefited from engagement with key partners and stakeholders over the last two years under the previous council's direction for a transition to a low emissions economy. Scenario modelling shows that this is the very action that will achieve our renewed goal of regional productivity and prosperity. The regional transition to a low emissions economy is a move to reduce trade risk and increase economic resilience for positive economic development.

We appreciate the time, and efforts of partners and stakeholders and their experts engaging with our officials to ensure that this strategy is fit for purpose to take us forward in today's dynamic operating environment. We know where we need to head and we know that we will need to work together to co-ordinate actions over time as no one party has all the functions, roles and responsibilities to achieve agreed goals. It is only by collective action and advocacy can we ensure that this is not the end but the beginning and that we all have a contribution to make. We each hold different pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, and this strategy provides the picture on the box that helps bring them all together.

We anticipate the strategy will be actioned through the establishment of a region-wide energy forum. We invite partners and stakeholders to progress actions or make appropriate recommendations for change that will increase regional productivity and prosperity whilst at the same time imparting resilience to the supply and use of energy through ambitious electrification of all economic sectors.

[We will use the policy levers available to WRC and work through genuine partnerships, recognising that partners may support different recommendations while remaining aligned on shared goals.](#)

~~[We will do this using the active policy levers available to WRC and via genuine partnerships and through sustained and concerted advocacy for change from different coalitions for different issues based on common values and interests.](#)~~

I commend this strategy to all in the region engaged with the supply, distribution and use of energy for the benefit of individuals, communities and the productive economy to adopt and promote this energy strategy that champions a resilient, affordable and sustainable energy system for the Waikato region.

Warren Maher

Chairman: Waikato Regional Council

¹ [PS26-03-Strategic-Direction-2026-2036.pdf](#)

Strategy on a page

<p>The Waikato Regional Energy Strategy is a roadmap for transitioning to a low-emissions, affordable and resilient energy system that reduces reliance on fossil fuels and strengthens the regional economy.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Vision</p> <p><i>Waikato’s energy system – resilient, affordable and sustainable. Powering Waikato’s growth and New Zealand’s clean energy transition. A resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy system that supports Waikato’s economic growth, safeguards the environment and the wellbeing of future generations, and strengthens New Zealand’s transition through the region’s vital contribution to national energy supply.</i></p>	
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Improve energy equity: communities have fair access to affordable and reliable energy, reducing energy hardship.</p> <p>Strengthen energy security: our energy system is secure and resilient, able to withstand disruptions and reliably meet the region’s needs now and into the future.</p> <p>Achieve environmental sustainability: greenhouse gas emissions are reduced, and renewable resources are used in ways that protect the environment and taonga.</p> <p>Strengthen economic growth: economic growth is strengthened through greater use of renewable, affordable and reliable energy.</p>	
<p>Action – WRC to implement</p> <p>Establish a regional energy forum to consider the recommendations and lead implementation of the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy.</p>	
<p>Recommendations – regional energy forum to consider and implement</p>	
<p>Pou 1 Strategic partnerships Strategic partnerships across government, iwi, industry, research and communities accelerate progress by reducing duplication, sharing resources, and combining expertise to unlock innovation and ensure communities shape and benefit from the transition.</p>	<p>1. Establish a regional energy forum. 2.1. Support partnership models that enable co-investment, shared governance and equitable participation. 3.2. Support iwi partnership, participation and engagement in the energy sector.</p>
<p>Pou 2 Advocacy and leadership Strong advocacy and leadership drive the region’s low-emissions transition by shaping supportive policy, aligning stakeholders and signalling long-term commitment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for and enable renewable energy developments. Lead by example through procurement and organisation decision-making, and case studies. Advocate for a New Zealand energy strategy.
<p>Pou 3 Supportive policy settings Clear, coordinated policy and spatial planning provides long-term direction, enables consistent renewable energy development, and builds investor confidence to accelerate delivery.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and strengthen regional policy settings. Use spatial planning to identify renewable energy opportunities.
<p>Pou 4 Workforce capability and capacity A skilled and well-supported workforce is vital to the energy transition, backed by sustained investment, strong training pathways, and collaboration across government, iwi, industry and communities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build workforce capability and capacity through education, training and investment.
<p>Pou 5 Information and monitoring Transparent, timely and reliable information, supported by robust monitoring, enables evidence-based decisions, reduces uncertainty, and strengthens collaboration.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build understanding of renewable energy resources and regional use. Maintain up-to-date information. Provide guidance to help high-use fossil-fuel industries transition.
<p>Pou 6 Funding and finance Financial schemes and incentives are important to help communities transition, making low-emissions technologies more accessible, reducing upfront costs, and enabling households, businesses, iwi and community organisations to participate meaningfully in the energy shift.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore financing schemes to improve access to energy efficient and renewable technologies. Advocate for government incentives to help make low-emissions technologies more accessible. Promote total cost of ownership analysis.
<p>Pou 7 Renewable and energy efficient technology Widespread adoption of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies is essential to lowering emissions, reducing energy costs and strengthening regional resilience.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies. Support iwi renewable energy initiatives. Support research and development opportunities Encourage energy hubs Encourage mode shift toward lower-emissions transport. Advocate for rail electrification and support more frequent rail services. Encourage the use of low emission vehicles and enable public EV charging infrastructure. Utilize smart charging technology. Support grid expansion and distributed generation.

Table of Contents

Chairperson’s foreword	i
Strategy on a page	ii
Executive summary	ii
PART A – SETTING THE SCENE	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Current situation	4
3 Operating environment	7
PART B – EVIDENCE BASE	10
4 Renewable energy sources	10
5 How energy is stored	14
6 How we use energy	15
7 How energy is managed and distributed	19
8 Exploring future energy pathways	21
PART C – STRATEGY FRAMEWORK	27
9 Our vision and way of working	27
10 Outcomes	27
11 How do we achieve a dynamic future?	28
12 Implementation pathway	32
Appendices	37
Appendix A: How to read and interpret a Sankey energy flow diagram	38
Appendix B: Current (2025) Waikato energy flows and emissions	39
Appendix C: Comparison of future energy scenarios	40
Appendix D: Future (2050) Waikato energy flows and emissions	41
Appendix E: WRC case study	44

Executive summary

The Waikato Regional Energy Strategy provides a forward-looking roadmap for transitioning the region to a **low-emissions, affordable and resilient energy system**. Waikato is central to New Zealand's energy future, producing 36 percent of the nation's electricity, and in the absence of a national energy strategy, regional leadership has become essential. This strategy sets out how the Waikato can drive a coordinated, partnership-based transition that strengthens the economy, protects taonga, and improves wellbeing for communities across the rohe.

The strategy recognises that the current energy system is no longer fit for purpose. New Zealand faces high and volatile energy prices, declining domestic gas supply, increasing electricity demand, and rising climate and energy hardship pressures. Successive governments have made fragmented, short-term adjustments that have not resolved structural issues in affordability, market performance, or energy security. Political support remains uneven, investment is lagging, and much of the broader social and economic benefits of renewable energy remain unrealised. The region now requires a clear, durable direction to support investment, guide land-use and infrastructure planning, and align regional partners.

A just transition is fundamental. The strategy is grounded in iwi partnership, protection of taonga, wāhi tapu, wai, whenua and mauri, guided by Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato and Treaty settlements. Iwi leadership should be enabled across all energy roles, supported by efforts to reduce energy hardship for whānau and marae and unlock Māori land and assets for renewable energy. Building iwi capability, upholding data sovereignty, and embedding early, relationship-first co-design are essential to achieving an equitable and culturally grounded energy future.

Modelling of three long-term scenarios shows that a proactive, and coordinated transition delivers the strongest outcomes – lowest long-term costs, deepest emissions reductions, strongest economic outcomes and greatest resilience.

Coordinated regional action is required. ~~The strategy sets out recommendations across seven pou (pillars). Central to implementation is the establishment of a regional energy forum to bring together iwi, industry, government, infrastructure providers and major energy users to drive delivery and monitor progress. The strategy's central action is to establish a regional energy forum to bring together iwi, industry, government, infrastructure providers and major energy users to drive delivery of the strategy. Seven pou (pillars) set out the recommendations for the forum's consideration and implementation.~~

Significant opportunities exist to decarbonise industry while leveraging the region's strengths in hydro, geothermal, wind, solar, biomass and emerging technologies such as hydrogen, energy storage and sustainable fuels. These advantages position the Waikato to anchor new low-emissions industries and accelerate the shift away from fossil fuels. Within this context, Wairakei/Taupō, Tokoroa and Huntly stand out as priority renewable-energy hubs, each offering strong resource potential, skilled labour, and well-developed infrastructure that can support large-scale, regionally aligned development.

Overall, the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy positions the region to harness its natural strengths, drive economic transformation, and lead the country toward a fair, secure, and sustainable energy future. It provides the direction and practical steps needed to coordinate regional partners, attract investment, and create long-term, intergenerational benefits for the Waikato and Aotearoa New Zealand.

PART A – SETTING THE SCENE

1 Introduction

Energy underpins every aspect of life in the Waikato, providing the power that supports homes, transport and industry, while also holding deep cultural significance as a taonga to iwi Māori. The way energy is produced and consumed has significant consequences, especially for the environment. The combustion of fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases that drive climate change leading to more extreme weather, water shortages and infrastructure strain. These impacts, combined with rising electricity demand and costs, and growing clean-energy expectations are influencing community wellbeing, industry performance and investment decisions – prompting global shift in the way we plan for, and invest in, energy production and supply.

Waikato is well placed to lead an energy transition. The region’s hydro and geothermal assets provide a strong renewable foundation, while substantial untapped potential in wind, solar, and emerging green fuels offers new opportunities for innovation, skilled jobs, and sustainable economic growth. At the same time, protecting taonga, whenua, and the wellbeing of future generations remains paramount.

Waikato also has a history of energy leadership. It was the first region in New Zealand to develop a regional energy strategy, in 2009, prompting the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (RPS) to recognise renewable energy as a significant regional issue. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on behalf of the region, is now updating the strategy to align with today’s energy landscape. In the absence of a national energy strategy, the Council is stepping forward to provide regional direction.

The updated strategy is underpinned by Council’s strategic direction², the Waikato Regional Energy Inventory³, modelling and economic analysis, a technical support document, and iwi perspectives. Iwi perspectives have been fundamental to this strategy, shaping its direction through a focus on protecting taonga and upholding genuine partnerships.

While WRC does not hold all the levers needed to deliver the energy transition, it plays an important enabling role through its statutory responsibilities, regional scale, planning functions, and role as an advocate for sustainable economic development. This strategy recognises that maintaining the status quo is not an option. It calls for a proactive, future-focused approach.

1.1 What is energy?

Energy is [a master resource⁴ that underpins modern life](#)~~the foundation of modern life.~~ ~~and it is~~ part of a living system that connects atua (ancestor), whenua (land), wai (water), te taiao (environment) and tangata (people), sustaining life and binding all forms of existence⁵. It powers homes, fuels transport, drives industry and supports the digital technologies that enable everyday activity, making it essential for economic development, public health and overall wellbeing. As communities grow and evolve, so too does their need for reliable, affordable and sustainable energy.

[Energy is fundamental to how an economy operates – it is a continuous, essential flow that makes all economic activity possible.](#)

² [Te Pae Tawhiti | Strategic Direction 2026-2036 | Waikato Regional Council](#)

³ [Waikato Regional Energy Inventory | Waikato Regional Council](#)

⁴ [Energy as the Master Resource](#)

⁵ The Woven Universe: Selected Writings of Rev. Maori Marsden 2023

Energy takes many forms, including electricity, heat, fuel and mechanical power, and is contained in fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas and is available from renewable resources. Renewable energy comes from solar, biomass, wind, hydroelectricity, geothermal and marine sources.

People experience energy in different ways, shaped by housing, income, location and connection to place. For many households, energy is understood through everyday realities such as power bills, winter warmth and supply reliability, while for iwi Māori it is also tied to responsibilities as kaitiaki of the landscapes, waterways and ecosystems that sustain their communities. From a Māori worldview, energy is not simply a commodity, but a taonga that must be respected, protected and carefully managed⁶.

1.2 Why we need an energy strategy

The Waikato needs an energy strategy now because energy is getting more expensive, supply is less certain, and climate change is affecting people's lives and businesses. The strategy will set a clear direction to make energy more affordable, secure, and cleaner for the region – this is essential not only for community wellbeing but also for sustained economic growth. It will do this by working with partners, guiding investment, and supporting practical actions that help the region transition to a prosperous, profitable, and secure region.

Energy affordability (or equity), security and sustainability are collectively known as the energy trilemma (Figure 1).

The Waikato is entering a period of significant change as environmental, economic and social pressures reshape how energy is produced, distributed and used across the region. Rising electricity demand, high energy costs, climate impacts, and increasing expectations for cleaner, less carbon intensive products and more resilient energy systems are placing pressure on communities, industry and infrastructure.

The purpose of this strategy is to address the region's energy challenges by identifying and advancing the most effective pathway for balancing the energy trilemma – improving energy equity, strengthening energy security, and achieving environmental sustainability. New Zealanders need energy that is affordable, secure and environmentally sustainable – this is essential not only for community wellbeing but also for sustained economic growth.

Energy equity

Energy equity and accessibility, focuses on making energy available and affordable for all people, including businesses and vulnerable and low-income communities. It's about ensuring fair access and avoiding energy poverty. Energy hardship remains persistent across New Zealand, driven by rising energy costs, uneven income growth and structural inequalities. Māori, Pacific peoples, renters and crowded households are most affected. High electricity prices, combined with low incomes, poor housing quality and reduced heating efficiency, place increasing pressure on household budgets and amplify vulnerability to energy stress.

Energy security

Energy security refers to the need for a reliable and uninterrupted supply of energy to meet current and future demands. New Zealand faces growing challenges to its energy security and resilience due to supply disruptions, geopolitical risk and climate change. Declining domestic gas reserves and ageing infrastructure are reducing the system's ability to respond to shocks. Climate change is compounding these risks, with rising sea levels, more extreme weather, warmer summers, droughts, and shifting rainfall patterns. Rainfall records over the past 60 years show that the most recent decade has been the driest. This trend is projected to continue, reducing water reliability for farming, communities, hydro generation, industry and potential new industries, including those reliant on water for cooling or processing.

⁶ [Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy for New Zealand | Royal Society](#)

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability means reducing the ecological impacts of energy production, particularly by lowering carbon emissions. It also requires using renewable energy resources in ways that protect the environment and taonga. While renewables deliver significant environmental benefits, their development can still create local pressures. Hydroelectricity can alter river flows, habitats and culturally significant sites; geothermal development may disturb landforms and sensitive taonga-protected systems; and wind generation can affect landscapes, birdlife and culturally important skylines.

Economic growth

Economic activity depends on energy. Achieving national and regional growth relies on a sufficient, reliable, and affordable energy supply. High energy costs remain a major headwind for New Zealand’s economic recovery and contribute to persistently weak productivity⁷. Rising electricity prices and high transport costs continue to erode the competitiveness of New Zealand exports. Global experience shows that the *more electrified an economy is, the less vulnerable the economy is*⁸. Growth pathways that prioritise local jobs, affordable energy, and community resilience, deliver stronger economic and social outcomes.

Integrating the trilemma

The elements of the energy trilemma are often viewed as being in tension, with the traditional view suggesting that security, equity, and sustainability cannot be advanced simultaneously. However, technological progress is increasingly easing these trade-offs. Rapid improvements in renewable energy technologies, such as solar, wind, geothermal and bioenergy, are making clean energy more accessible and cost-effective. Advances in energy storage, smart grids, and distributed generation are also strengthening system flexibility and reliability. Together, these developments are enabling a shift away from fossil fuels while still supporting energy security and affordability.

Rather than progressing each of the three elements in isolation from each other, this strategy aims to progress all three simultaneously in an integrated way (Figure 1).

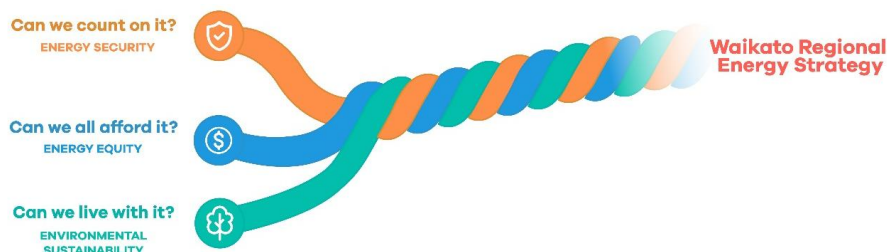


Figure 1: Integration of the three elements of the energy trilemma

1.3 Scope

New fossil energy sources are excluded due to their long-lived emissions and market pressures. This includes waste-to-energy proposals that release fossil carbon, previously sequestered in manufactured products, into the atmosphere as CO₂, increasing the region’s emissions footprint, contrary to Council’s commitment to a low-emissions future.

Nuclear fission is acknowledged as a low greenhouse gas-emitting energy source. However, it is excluded from this strategy due to the lack of social licence and regulatory framework, high costs, slow to build, unresolved waste management challenges, and the need for large volumes of cooling water, typically requiring coastal siting.

⁷ OECD Economic Outlook, Vol 2025, Issue 2

[These factors, combined with climate change-driven sea level rise and New Zealand’s tectonic risks \(as highlighted by the 2011 Fukushima incident, make nuclear development unsuitable at this time.](#)

2 Current situation

2.1 National picture

New Zealand continues to benefit from one of the world’s highest shares of renewable electricity, primarily from hydro and geothermal. However, its overall energy supply still relies significantly on fossil fuels to meet its energy needs – mainly comprising coal, oil and natural gas (Figure 2).

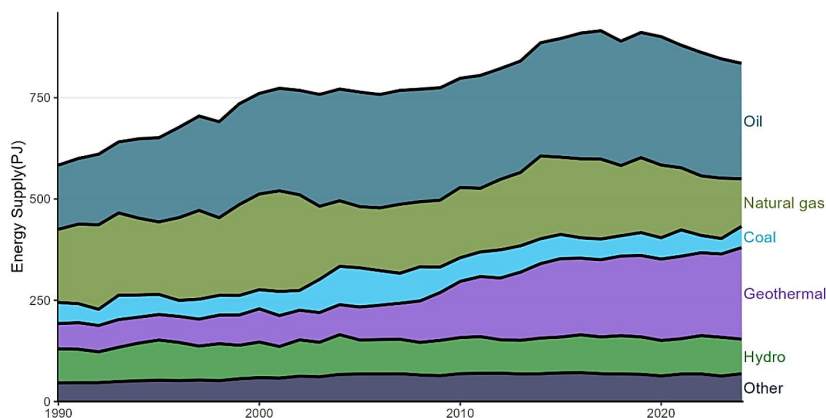


Figure 2: New Zealand’s total energy supply⁹

New Zealand retains significant coal reserves, over 15 billion tonnes, mostly lignite in the South Island. Oil production remains centred in Taranaki, but unlike many countries, New Zealand exports nearly all its crude oil. Since the closure of the Marsden Point refinery, the country now imports all refined petroleum products, including petrol, diesel and jet fuel, to meet domestic needs.

Natural gas has long supported New Zealand’s electricity system and industry, but declining fields (Figure 3) and unsuccessful exploration have tightened supply and increased costs for users. Gas remains most heavily used in industrial processes. Government policy has shifted – from banning offshore exploration in 2018 to reinstating it in 2025 alongside a \$200 million Gas Security Fund, slowing the transition away from gas and delaying industrial decarbonisation. Despite uncertainty, existing gas infrastructure presents opportunities for renewable gases such as biomethane, and depleted reservoirs could support future gas storage or carbon capture.

⁹ [Energy in New Zealand 2025 | MBIE](#)

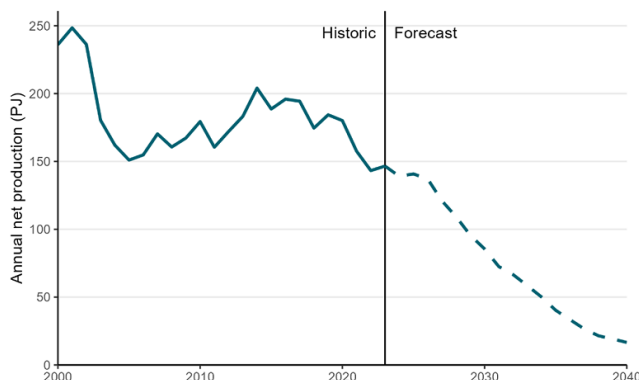


Figure 3: Historic and projected gas production

The energy sector in New Zealand is now facing a convergence of pressures that expose growing vulnerabilities: shrinking gas supply, increasing electricity demand, higher price volatility, and dry-year risks that strain system resilience.

2.2 Regional picture

Waikato’s role in Aotearoa’s energy system is deeply connected to wai, whenua and its geothermal systems. Waikato is a key contributor to the country’s energy system, home to 75 percent of New Zealand’s high-temperature geothermal resources, major hydro schemes, strong solar and wind potential, and the country’s largest thermal station at Huntly.

The Waikato region continues to lead New Zealand in electricity supply (Figure 4) and generation.

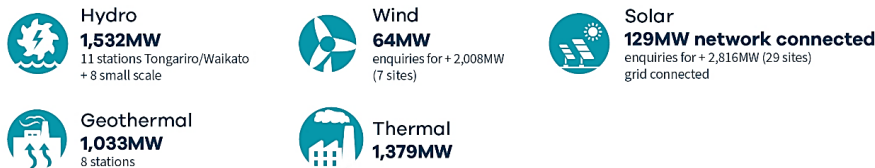


Figure 4: Waikato’s electricity supply (2024)

In 2024, Waikato generated 36 percent (15,701 GWh) of the nation’s electricity. Just over half of this (51 percent) came from local renewable sources, 15 percent came from Taranaki region as gas, and 33 percent was imported internationally as liquid fossil fuels, with some coal (Figure 5). Most fossil fuels were used by industry, manufacturing, transport and for electricity generation. In contrast, nearly all renewable energy produced within the Waikato was converted into electricity.

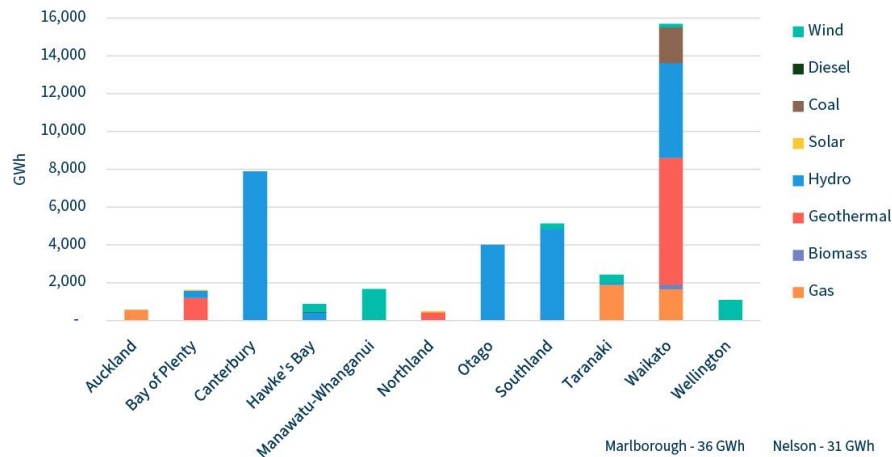


Figure 5: Grid connected electricity generation by region (2024)

Industrial decarbonisation is a major regional priority: the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) has identified 91 high-use fossil-fuel sites, mainly dairy and meat processors, with significant potential for emissions reductions through fuel switching, efficiency improvements and heat-pump technologies.

Strategic transmission upgrades, particularly between Whakamaru and Auckland, have made the Waikato the strongest part of the national grid. This is a significant regional advantage, allowing for rapid expansion of grid-connected wind and solar generation.

The co-location of geothermal fields and extensive central North Island forests offers strong potential for biomass and bioenergy industries, supported by electrified rail links for efficient transport. Strategic industrial hubs such as Tokoroa, Huntly and Wairakei/Taupō are well-placed to offer further potential in renewable energy, leveraging available land, infrastructure, labour, transport networks and freshwater. These hubs also create opportunities for iwi-led and partnered development, provided engagement and resourcing occur early and meaningfully.

The current (2025) energy flows for the Waikato region are shown in Appendix B¹⁰.

2.3 Greenhouse gas emissions

The Waikato region’s economic sectors have the highest greenhouse gas emissions of any region, contributing 18.7 percent of the national total in 2024. This equates to 14.5 million tonnes of CO₂e emissions annually. Electricity, gas, water and waste services contribute 22.9 percent of the emissions, including fossil fuels used for electricity generation (for example coal at Huntly power station) and industrial process heat. Transport and industrial processes are significant contributors through fossil fuel use for freight, passenger vehicles and manufacturing¹¹.

How are greenhouse gas emissions managed?

Greenhouse gas emissions are primarily managed through the ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme). The ETS requires emitters to surrender one ‘emissions unit’ (known as New Zealand Units; NZU) to the government for each one tonne of emissions they emit¹². This creates a financial incentive to reduce emissions. Emissions are also being shaped by international market pressures. The European Union (EU) has introduced a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which imposes a carbon levy on certain emissions-intensive goods imported into the EU – in sectors which are considered at risk of carbon leakage (i.e. the

¹⁰ See Appendix A for guidance on how to read and interpret a Sankey diagram

¹¹ How are my region’s emissions tracking? | Stats NZ

¹² At the time of writing the price of carbon was \$41.06

offshoring of production to countries with laxer emission constraints)¹³. At the time of writing, a tonne of CO₂ emissions is priced at NZ\$178 (4.5 times the local price) with expectations of between NZ\$200 and NZ\$300 (current exchange rate) by 2030.

3 Operating environment

3.1 Markets and geopolitics

External global and market factors are increasingly shaping the operating environment for Waikato's export-driven economy. These factors include:

- **Market requirements:** the Waikato has a strong primary export sector and is dependent on meeting market expectations to gain access to markets and to achieve a premium price.
- **Trade agreements:** trade agreements increasingly include environmental and climate provisions that require countries to reduce emissions, improve sustainability, and meet low-carbon standards to maintain market access. More than 80 percent (value) of New Zealand's exports go to countries with either mandatory or proposed climate-related disclosures.
- **Supply chains:** oil price shocks affect not only export sectors but also regional industries that rely heavily on road-based logistics, particularly for agricultural inputs such as fertiliser, diesel and chemicals.

3.2 Political context

New Zealand's energy system operates within a complex and shifting political landscape, where government decisions have implications for regions, industry, communities, and iwi Māori. Successive governments have largely avoided making bold, structural changes to address long-standing issues. Instead, they have made incremental adjustments, without committing to the consequential reforms required to reshape the energy system.

Government responses to obligations under the Paris Agreement vary widely, and national energy policy often prioritises different elements of the energy trilemma depending on political priorities, economic conditions, and public pressure. These choices have long-term impacts on the pace and direction of the energy transition and on New Zealand's ability to meet its climate commitments.

The focus of the current Government is on energy security and affordability. This approach includes a major pivot toward importing liquefied natural gas (LNG), renewed support for oil and gas exploration, and fast-tracking renewable energy infrastructure.

3.3 Regulatory framework

National context

The energy sector is influenced by a range of statutory instruments at the national level. These are set out below:

¹³ [Implementation of the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism | NZ Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

- **Climate Change Response Act 2002:** this Act establishes a legal framework to enable New Zealand to meet its international obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The Act established the New Zealand ETS.
- **Emissions Reduction Plan:** the Climate Change Response Act 2002 requires that an emissions reduction plan is prepared that sets out the policies and strategies for meeting the relevant emissions budget.
- **Resource Management Act 1991:** the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) establishes the roles of councils in managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources. This includes the allocation of resources for the generation of electricity and the managing of the effects of electricity generation. There are three pieces of national direction under the RMA that relate specifically to electricity generation and transmission:
 - National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011
 - National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission 2008
 - National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities Regulations 2009.
- **Fast-track Approvals Act 2024:** the purpose of this Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.
- **Resource management replacement legislation:** the government is in the process of replacing the RMA with two new acts; a Natural Environment Act and a Planning Act. The Planning Act includes mandatory regional spatial planning which will set the strategic direction for development and public investment priorities in a region.

National Energy Strategy

New Zealand’s first Emissions Reduction Plan included a commitment to develop a national energy strategy by the end of 2024 to address the strategic challenges facing the energy sector and outline pathways away from fossil fuels¹⁴.

However, the national strategy work programme has not progressed, rather there have been incremental reforms, such as minor electricity changes, subsidies to restart oil and gas exploration, and stronger national direction for electricity and infrastructure consenting. These changes have not provided an integrated, long-term direction required for a coherent national-regional energy system.

Regional and local context

The use of energy is also influenced by regional and local policy and plans, particularly in relation to urban form and transport. Key policies and plans prepared at the regional and local levels under the RMA are identified below.

- **Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato:** this is the primary direction setting document for the Waikato River and its catchment, including the Waipā River. Te Ture Whaimana prevails over any inconsistent RMA planning instrument, including any national policy statement.
- **Waikato RPS:** the RPS provides an overview of the resource management issues for the region and aims to achieve integrated management of natural and physical resources. Regional and district plans are required to give effect to the RPS¹⁵. The Waikato RPS recognises renewable energy as a significant regional issue. This has translated into streamlined consenting, long-duration approvals and spatial planning that supports renewable generation while protecting sensitive landscapes.
- **Waikato Regional Plan:** the Operative Waikato Regional Plan provides for the regulation of functions of the council under section 30 of the RMA, being water, river and lake beds, land and soil, air, and geothermal resources.

¹⁴ [New Zealand's First Emissions Reduction Plan | Ministry for the Environment](#)
¹⁵ RMA, Sections 67(3)(c) and 75(3)(c)

- **Waikato Coastal Plan:** the Operative Waikato Coastal Plan provides for the regulation of activities in the coastal marine area.
- **Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan – Decisions version:** this is intended to replace the Operative Coastal plan and contains an Energy and infrastructure chapter, which recognises the benefits of renewable electricity generation and transmissions and enables these activities in appropriate circumstances within the coastal marine area.
- **District plans:** the district plans of the eleven territorial authorities within the Waikato region have a significant impact on both the supply and demand sides of energy through their management of land use and development.
- **Spatial plans:** the proposed legislation to replace the RMA will require a single regional scale plan that includes a spatial plan chapter. This will provide the opportunity to identify current and future locations of energy related infrastructure.

3.4 Relevant energy parties

The New Zealand energy system involves many parties, each driven by their own mandates, commercial incentives, statutory roles, or community obligations, and these motivations do not always align to deliver balanced outcomes across the energy trilemma. The mix of parties includes:

- Central government
- Iwi Māori
- Electricity providers and Transmission/distribution infrastructure providers
- Gas transmission and distribution networks
- Te Waihanga, Infrastructure Commission
- Te Mana Hiko, Electricity Authority
- Te Tari Tiaki Pūngao, Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority (EECA)
- New Zealand ETS
- Crown research institutes
- Commerce Commission
- Private fuel companies
- Transport fuel regulators
- Economic development agencies
- Industry peak groups
- Community advocacy groups

Waikato Regional Council's role

There are three mutually reinforcing roles driving regional council interest. They are supporting regional economic development requiring energy, sustainable use of natural and physical resources containing energy and the strategic integration of energy supply and distribution and use infrastructure with land use across the entire region.

PART B – EVIDENCE BASE

4 Renewable energy sources

Renewable energy resources are natural sources of energy, connected to wai, whenua and te taiao, that can be replenished naturally overtime. They provide sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels. Most renewables are closely linked to the sun, meaning their availability can fluctuate throughout the day and across seasons. Renewable energy resources in the Waikato include solar, biomass, wind, hydroelectricity, geothermal and marine. An overview of current resources and opportunities is presented in Figure 6.

4.1 Solar

Solar energy uses sunlight to generate electricity most commonly through photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert solar irradiance into usable power. Solar can be installed almost anywhere – from rooftop to floating systems.	
Advantages	Sunlight is abundant and accessible, systems are quick to consent, easy to install, and versatile – can be installed on homes, marae, public buildings, farms, industrial sites or on water. It provides opportunities for iwi and has no operational emissions.
Disadvantages	Solar has intermittent generation and output is lowest in winter (when demand is highest). The upfront costs of solar panels is a significant barrier and suitable land parcels are required for large-scale development. Poor site development can affect landscapes, biodiversity or culturally significant places. In some areas network capacity is limited and connection charges are high. The ‘energy return on energy invested’ (EROI) is lower than all other forms of renewable energy ¹⁶ .
Opportunities	Residential rooftop solar is the most widespread form of distributed generation in the Waikato and offers significant potential, particularly if upfront cost barriers can be overcome. Nationally, only one in 27 homes (3.7 percent) has rooftop solar ¹⁷ . A typical 3–5 kW system costs around \$8,500–\$11,500, with an additional \$5,000–\$15,000 for a battery ¹⁸ . There are no utility-scale solar farms operating in the region, however 12 are consented or proposed. Given grid, land-use and economic constraints, only a portion of this pipeline is likely to proceed.

4.2 Biomass

Biomass refers to organic material, such as wood, forestry residues, agricultural by-products, crops, food waste, or animal manure, that can be converted into useful energy in the form of heat, electricity, biofuels, or biogas. New Zealand has a substantial biomass resource. Within the Waikato, most exotic forests are concentrated near Tokoroa and Taupō.	
Advantages	Biomass can provide continuous, controllable energy – complementing intermittent renewables. It is highly versatile, affordable and is a low emissions energy source when sourced sustainably. Forest waste can be used.
Disadvantages	The sustainability of the resource depends on the feedstock, and its use requires large feedstock volumes, with extensive storage and handling space.

¹⁶ [Solar Energy in New Zealand | EECA](#)

¹⁷ Electricity Authority

¹⁸ [Breaking Down Home Solar Costs and Savings | EECA](#)

Opportunities	Biomass is becoming an increasingly important part of the national energy mix. Māori land blocks with forestry plantations, farm operations, or access to organic waste streams may be well positioned to supply or own biomass projects. The co-location of North Island production forests with geothermal developments creates synergies by using geothermal heat to dry timber. Several biomass initiatives are underway, including new pellet and pine-chemical production at Kawerau (Foresta), food-waste-to-bioenergy and biomethane production in Reporoa (Ecogas ¹⁹), biomass trials at Huntly, a waste-to-energy system being piloted in Reporoa (Cetogenix ²⁰), and ongoing landfill-gas power generation at Hampton Downs ²¹ .
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4.3 Wind

Wind is a valuable energy resource in New Zealand because average wind speeds are high. Although wind conditions vary by location and weather, the country’s diverse climate means there is usually strong wind somewhere.	
Advantages	Wind energy is abundant, reasonably stable over longer periods, produces zero emissions, and has a high EROI.
Disadvantages	Generation can vary significantly over hours and days. Wind turbines can have a visual impact on the environment, create noise and affect bird populations. They can also impact culturally significant skylines and ancestral relationships to maunga and ridgelines. Construction of wind turbines needs energy and material input – embodied emissions.
Opportunities	Wind provides higher output than solar during stressed winter periods supporting seasonal reliability. The Waikato currently has one operational wind farm (Te Uku), with seven more proposed, including two offshore projects. Offshore wind will depend on major upgrades to Port Taranaki and coordinated supply-chain development, including potential trans-Tasman partnerships. Grid capacity and transmission investment also remain key constraints.

4.4 Hydroelectricity

Hydroelectricity relies on gravity-driven water to generate electricity and operate within awa that are taonga, carrying their own mauri and whakapapa. It is increasingly challenged by more frequent dry winters and highly variable inflows, with storage levels now the main driver of electricity price volatility in New Zealand. The Waikato region has two major grid-connected hydro schemes – Tongariro Power scheme (operated by Genesis Energy) and Waikato hydro scheme (operated by Mercury). Water from the Whanganui, Whangaehu, Moawhango and Tongariro catchments is diverted into Lake Taupō, contributing around 19 percent of its annual inflow. Consents authorising the diversion of waters will expire in 2039. These will require re consenting, with key considerations including the river’s relationship with tangata whenua and the impacts of diversions on catchment resilience and life-supporting capacity in the face of increasing climate change pressures.	
Advantages	Hydroelectricity is one of the only fully controllable and dispatchable renewable electricity sources. Hydro is reliable and consistent, when enough water can be stored, and has the highest EROI out of all energy sources.
Disadvantages	While hydro has delivered national benefit, its development has also created enduring cultural, environmental, and social impacts ²² , including

¹⁹ [Reporoa Organics Processing Facility | Ecogas](#)
²⁰ [Tackling Climate Change at a Global Scale | Cetogenix](#)
²¹ [Hampton Downs Landfill](#)
²² [Appendix 23 - Hydro Dams](#)

	altered river flows, habitats, and wāhi tapu, which continue to influence kaitiakitanga and cultural integrity.
Opportunities	With limited scope for new large-scale development, future hydro opportunities are expected to focus on optimisation, refurbishment, and small-scale or network-connected schemes. There is a proposal to raise Moawhango Dam to improve storage and dry-year resilience.

4.5 Geothermal

<p>The Waikato region has over 70 percent of the country’s known geothermal resources, supporting both electricity generation and direct heat use across major industries such as pulp and paper, wood processing, dairy manufacturing, hydrogen production and greenhouse heating. Iwi Māori consider geothermal fluid as a living entity and a taonga, and have used geothermal systems for cooking, bathing and heating for centuries²³. There are 15 large geothermal systems in the region – seven have been identified as development systems for use, two for limited development, one for research, and five are protected due to their taonga relationship to iwi Māori and vulnerability of surface features. Any new undiscovered system is by default managed as if it were a research system.</p>	
Advantages	Geothermal energy is abundant in the Waikato. It’s consistent and reliable – ideal for baseload uses. The emissions intensity of geothermal electricity is low. The resource is already hot and therefore is very efficient for direct heating and industrial process uses
Disadvantages	Developing a geothermal power station is an expensive and risky proposition, requiring significant preliminary investigations and infrastructure, and specialised maintenance. Geothermal development can have damaging environmental effects including land subsidence and loss of high-value and culturally significant surface features ¹⁹ .
Opportunities	It is estimated that New Zealand has capacity to roughly double the current electricity generation from geothermal energy. There are two large development systems (Horahora and Mangakino) and two limited development systems (Atiamuri and Tokaanu-Hipaua) that have not been developed for heat energy potential. Additionally, there are at least 31 known sites of low flow, low temperature geothermal scattered around the region that, upon investigation, may have potential for direct heat uses. Hot groundwater is periodically being discovered as wells are drilled for access to ground water. Low and moderate temperature groundwater has the potential to offset electricity for small and community scale heating wherever it occurs. Central government has allocated funding for research into accessing super-hot geothermal energy at depth ²⁴ . The Rotokawa geothermal reservoir has been selected as the first site for exploration.

4.6 Marine – wave

<p>Wave energy is a form of marine power, driven by wind. It remains largely experimental. Waves are classified as ‘sea’ (at generation point) or ‘swell’ (energy transmitted away), with swells on Waikato’s west coast mostly originating from the southwest.</p>	
Advantages	Wave energy is consistent and reliable.
Disadvantages	Wave energy devices can have adverse effects on marine ecosystems. High installation and maintenance costs are a significant barrier. Wave energy resources are concentrated in specific areas, limiting widespread implementation.

²³ [From the Ground Up | MBIE](#)

²⁴ [Government Exploring New Energy Source | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

Opportunities Twelve potential sites have been identified on New Zealand’s south and west coasts, including Waikato, but no deployments exist yet²⁵. Research into wave energy is increasing, with the University of Waikato exploring offshore deployment and device testing²⁶. Kawhia is a promising site due to its strong marine conditions and local technical expertise. Despite the lack of a southern hemisphere testing centre, the region holds significant development potential with global relevance.

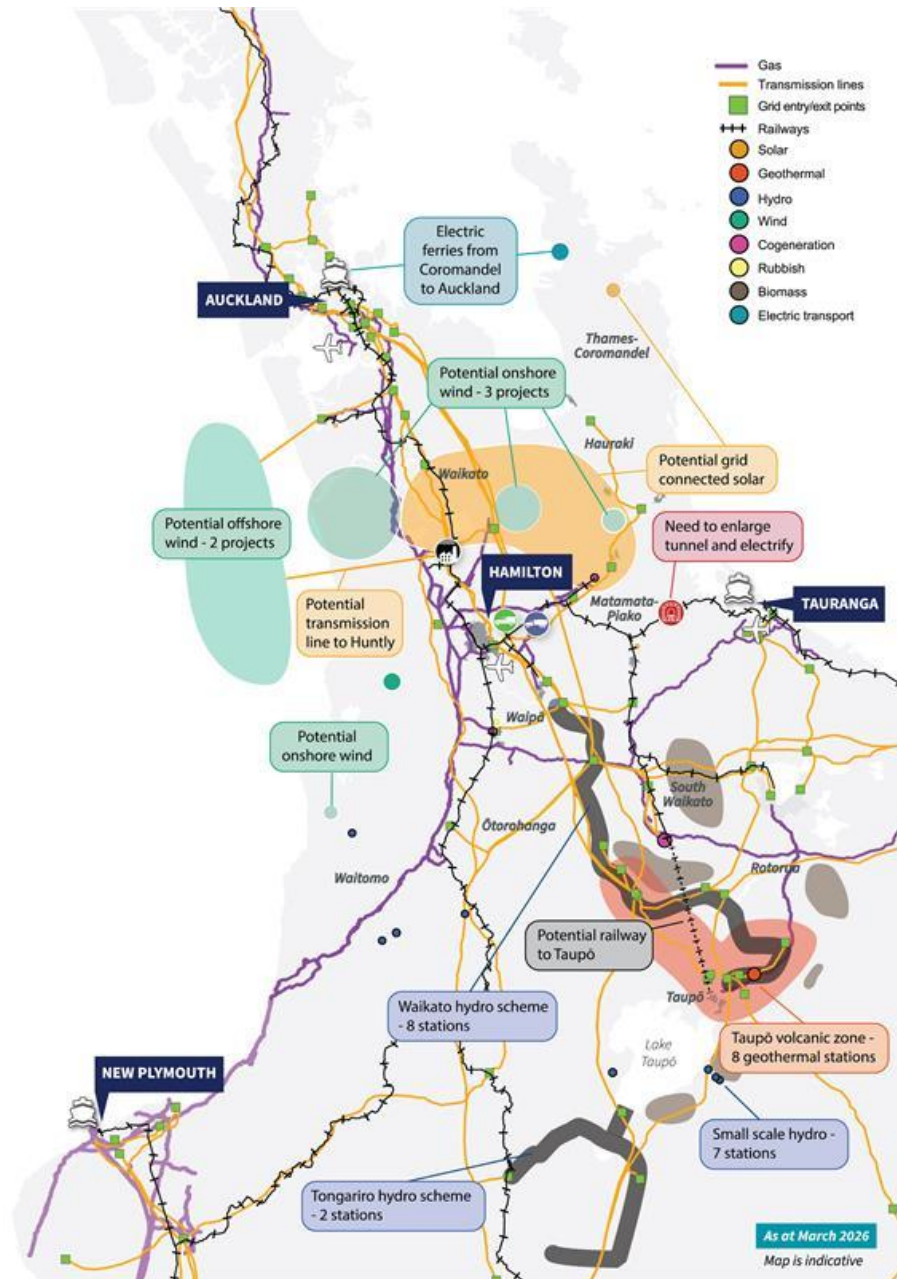


Figure 6: Overview of current renewable resources and opportunities in the Waikato region

²⁵ [Integrated Site and Device Selection Methodology for Ocean Wave Energy Sector | UoW](#)

²⁶ [A Systematic Approach for Selecting Suitable Wave Energy Converters for Potential Wave Energy Farm Sites | Science Direct](#)

5 How energy is stored

New Zealand's recent energy crises and rising use of intermittent wind and solar energy highlight the need for flexible storage to manage weather-dependent supply and support both local and national energy security. Storage is also critical to addressing the persistent dry-year problem, historically met by fossil fuels. Energy storage can take many forms – large scale options currently include batteries, pumped hydro, hydrogen and biomass.

5.1 Battery

Battery storage plays an increasingly important role in supporting a reliable, flexible, low-emissions energy system. Small-scale batteries (like those in electric vehicles (EVs)) and large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) can respond instantly to changes in supply and demand, helping stabilise the grid and improving resilience for marae, papakāinga and rural communities with less reliable electricity.

Lithium-ion batteries remain the most common and cost-effective option, well suited to daily storage cycles. Newer technologies, such as sodium-ion (safer and more sustainable) and iron-air batteries (multi-day storage), are emerging and may complement future energy needs.

EV batteries are also becoming part of the wider system through vehicle-to-load (V2L) and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) capabilities. When coordinated at scale, EVs could supply power back to homes or the grid, reducing peak demand and unlocking significant economic benefits. Realising these benefits requires smart-charging, user-friendly systems, and nationwide “type-of-use” pricing that rewards flexible charging behaviour.

In the Waikato, there are currently three operational or committed BESS projects and five additional proposals.

5.2 Pumped hydroelectric energy storage

Pumped hydroelectric storage works by pumping water uphill when electricity is cheap or plentiful, then generating electricity by releasing it during high-demand periods. It is becoming increasingly important for managing dry years, integrating more wind and solar, and improving grid stability.

National investigations through the New Zealand Battery Project²⁷ identified potential large-scale storage options, including Lake Onslow (although this option was halted – and since revived privately) and around Lake Taupō²⁸, including above Lake Moawhango – which consists of three dam locations and could add in excess of 1,000 GW hours storage. The Tongariro power development assets could be repurposed alongside this proposal.

Preliminary work by the University of Waikato has identified at least two viable pumped hydro reservoir sites around the Upper Waikato River—one near Lake Whakamaru and another south of the Kinleith mill at Tokoroa. Together, these could provide around 28 GWh of storage or deliver up to 600 MW of renewable peaking capacity for two days²⁹.

Smaller, distributed pumped hydro schemes remain a live option, but there are many challenges to overcome before such technology can be consented, such as land use changes, inundation of rivers and streams, and altered hydrology which can affect wetlands and biodiversity.

²⁷ [New Zealand Battery Project | MBIE](#)

²⁸ [Identifying Potential Sites for Large-Scale Pumped Hydroelectric Energy Storage in NZ | NIWA](#)

²⁹ Unpublished research proposal | UoW

5.3 Hydrogen and derivatives

Power-to-X are technologies that turn renewable electricity into alternative energy carriers or products. The process generally involves electrolysis, synthesis, storage and use. The simplest power-to-X pathway is power-to-hydrogen (green hydrogen).

In more complex pathways, green hydrogen contributes to other outputs such as green ammonia and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF):

- **Green hydrogen** is already emerging as part of Waikato's low-emissions transition, with early regional projects underway by Hiringa Energy³⁰ and partners.
- **Green ammonia** can replace fossil-fuel-based urea, provide energy storage for electricity generation, and also serve as a fuel for maritime transport. Maritime use of green ammonia is still emerging but trials show it can cut emissions by up to 90 percent. However, ammonia is toxic and corrosive, creating significant safety and environmental risks, especially near ports.
- **Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)** is the umbrella term for non-fossil, drop-in fuels that can directly replace Jet A-1³¹. SAF includes bio-SAF made from crops (which raises sustainability concerns) and e-SAF produced from green hydrogen and captured carbon, which is more scalable long term but currently expensive and still at pilot scale. Both fuels cost far more than Jet A-1, so SAF makes up only 0.3 percent of global use. Plans for a 300 MW e-SAF plant at Marsden Point could supply Auckland Airport, but additional infrastructure would be required for Hamilton Airport.

5.4 Biomass

Pelleted biomass provides a consistent, efficient, low-moisture fuel suitable for residential, commercial and industrial heat, with advanced forms like torrefied pellets able to directly replace coal and withstand outdoor storage. Foresta is producing torrefied pellets³², powered by geothermal steam, at its Kawerau site, with potential expansion into the Waikato. Torrefied pellets offer high energy content, lower conversion costs, and up to 95 percent emissions reduction, proven through successful trials at Huntly Power Station, where Genesis Energy plans to source 300,000 tonnes annually by 2028. Fonterra's Te Awamutu site has already demonstrated the benefits of biomass conversion, with wood-pellet fuel delivering major emissions cuts, improved efficiency, and reduced environmental impacts, though pellets require covered storage to avoid moisture absorption.

6 How we use energy

Energy demand reflects the essential services society depends on – heat, light, transport from both domestic and industrial/commercial activity. Understanding how and where these services drive energy use is central to planning an affordable, resilient, and low-emissions system.

6.1 Transport

Reducing transport emissions will be key in transitioning to a low emissions economy. This will consist of a combination of reducing transport demand, switching to renewable fuel sources, and changing the way we travel, including from cars to public transport and active travel, and for freight, from trucks to rail and coastal shipping.

³⁰ [About Hydrogen | Hiringa Energy](#)

³¹ Also known as Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) or 'avtur'.

³² [Torrefied Wood Pellets | Foresta Group](#)

Rail

Rail lines between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga, link the import and export ports of the 'golden triangle'³³ with high freight volumes and passenger flows. The first 52.3 km to Pukekohe is electrified as is a short section near Frankton Junction, however, beyond Hamilton, it remains unelectrified. Extension of electrification options to the entire North Island rail network would support inter-regional supply chains, strengthen connectivity for emerging energy-intensive industries, and enable export industries to benefit from the reduction of transport emissions.

The Waikato region generates 25 percent of New Zealand’s rail freight. In 2025, 260,000 truck trips were avoided through the use of rail freight. Rail uses approximately one-quarter of the energy of heavy trucking to move the same weight and has on average 60 percent fewer emissions³⁴.

There are a broad range of options for electrification of rail with the most promising option being a combination of battery electric and selective extension of overhead line electrification³⁵. Currently, charging economically is the largest uncertainty surrounding the choice of battery-electric locomotives. In addition to charging constraints, there are physical track related constraints including two single track sections on the otherwise double tracked Hamilton to Auckland line, across the Ngāruawāhia bridge and the Whangamarino wetland.

A hybrid network could look like Figure 7 and may be an interim step to full electrification. This would require a new dual track tunnel, through the Kaimai ranges, estimated at \$1 billion, which could be met by reprioritising national roading infrastructure priorities.³⁶

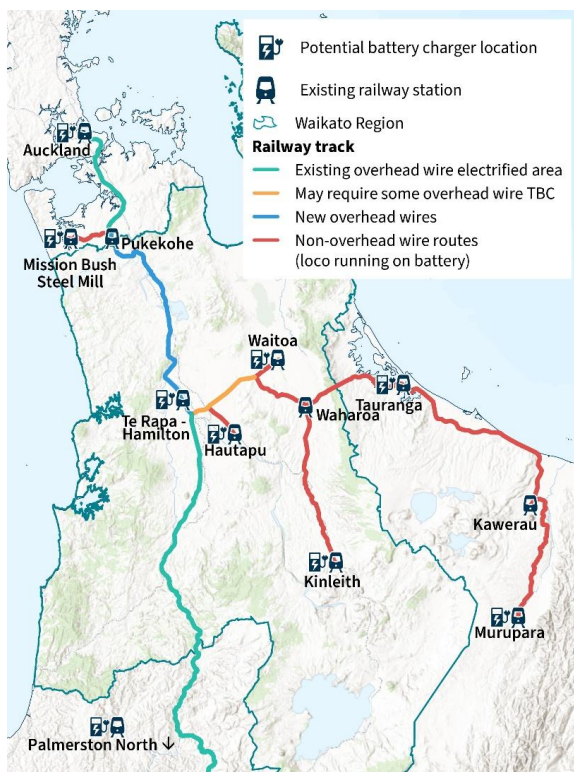


Figure 7: Potential electrification of the golden triangle using battery electric hybrid locomotives³⁷

³³ [Waikato Regional Transport Committee Presentation | KiwiRail](#)

³⁴ [Environment | KiwiRail](#)

³⁵ Biofuel, Hydrogen, Electricity, Battery-Electric locomotives, Conventional Overhead Line Electrification, Fuel efficient diesel

³⁶ [Dumping One Road of National Significance Would Pay for Fast Inter-City Rail | Asia Pacific Infrastructure](#)

³⁷ [Golden Triangle Electrification Project | The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport](#)

Road

Transport accounts for 21 percent of New Zealand’s carbon footprint, with most emissions coming from the light vehicle fleet – cars, vans and utes. While low- and zero-emission technologies for road transport are proven and available, the main barrier to the transition is cost. Even freight operators committed to reducing emissions face challenges – government support is needed to overcome regulatory and cost barriers.³⁸

A three-pronged approach offers the greatest impact: shifting more freight and passengers to rail; leveraging the region’s strong renewable electricity generation for light vehicles and last-mile logistics; and using green hydrogen for heavy and long-haul transport. Rail produces far fewer emissions than road freight (36 gCO₂e/tonne-km compared to 508 gCO₂e/tonne-km)³⁹, and each freight train can replace around 40 trucks⁴⁰. Mode shift also delivers wider benefits, including reduced road damage, lower congestion, and improved safety.

Neither hydrogen nor battery-electric systems can meet all road transport needs. Each has strengths for different tasks – hydrogen for heavier freight and long distances, and battery-electric for light vehicles and urban deliveries. Hydrogen trucks offer resilience to global supply shocks and lower freight emissions, though current fuel costs remain high and depend on grid-supplied electricity and water; these costs are expected to decrease with scale.

Battery-electric cars, vans and delivery trucks are already efficient, low-cost and widely available. Government investment is supporting this shift, including funding for 10,000 additional EV chargers. Public transport is also transitioning, with the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) committing to zero-emission bus purchases from 2025, aligning with the national goal of a fully decarbonised bus fleet by 2035⁴¹.

Maritime

Apart from the offshore ironsand terminal at Taharoa, the region has no major coastal ports. Maritime activity is instead centred on around 160,000 recreational boaties, along with charter vessels and ferries, which typically use petrol or diesel. Commercial marine diesel use is not well quantified but is likely a notable contributor to regional transport emissions, particularly from mussel farming and coastal freight⁴².

There is long-term potential to transition commercial marine operations to low- and zero-carbon fuels, and possibly to manufacture substitutes for heavy fuel oil used in coastal shipping. While ammonia is already transported internationally, its toxicity and corrosiveness require specialised bunkering and careful handling, creating safety and logistics challenges.

More immediate opportunities lie in electrifying small to medium commuter ferries and aquaculture service vessels. A local business (Vessev) is trailing a passenger catamaran on the Hauraki Gulf⁴³.

Air

Hamilton International Airport has experienced rising passenger numbers since 2025, driven largely by the return of trans-Tasman flights. Growth is expected to continue with the Titanium Park expansion and potential increases in international services, particularly for high-value exports.

Aviation is recognised as a ‘hard-to-abate’ sector, and the Government’s Aviation Action Plan⁴⁴ aims to reduce fossil-fuel use and support a transition to clean energy in line with New Zealand’s 2050 net-zero target. Currently, only one low-carbon option, “drop-in” SAF, is compatible with existing aircraft. All other emerging technologies require changes to aircraft design.

³⁸ [Heavy-Vehicle Operator Understanding | Ministry of Transport](#)

³⁹ [Comparing Freight Transport Emissions by Mode | Transportation Conference 2021](#)

⁴⁰ [Rail Freight Saved 230,000 Tonnes of Emissions | KiwiRail](#)

⁴¹ [Public Transport Decarbonisation | Ministry of Transport](#)

⁴² [Economic Impacts of Aquaculture in the Waikato Region | Waikato Regional Council](#)

⁴³ [The NZ Startup Building Flying Electric Ferries | NBR Podcast](#)

⁴⁴ [Aviation Action Plan | Interim Aviation Council](#)

SAF was identified as a significant opportunity by Air New Zealand⁴⁵ and could potentially be refined within the region, but high costs and the need for new refuelling infrastructure limit near-term adoption. Progress at Hamilton International Airport will require coordinated investment across infrastructure, policy and industry⁴⁶.

Electric aircraft may offer a viable option for some regional routes. Air New Zealand is already investigating the use of electric propulsion for freight and is currently conducting a technical demonstration programme with an electric aircraft.

Over time, aviation in the region will likely rely on a mix of battery charging, hydrogen fuelling and SAF. Hydrogen poses additional challenges, as all destinations must have compatible refuelling capacity, making a coordinated national strategy essential.

Ground effect marine

Ground-effect marine craft fly a few metres above the water, combining the speed of an aircraft with the low operating costs of a boat. Their aerodynamic “ground effect” delivers major efficiency gains – around 30–50 percent more efficient than conventional flight and 8–15 times more efficient than high-speed displacement boats.

A New Zealand company (Ocean Flyer⁴⁷), plans to launch high-speed seaglidors in the Hauraki Gulf from mid-2026 to provide fast, cost-effective passenger and freight services between coastal centres such as Whangārei, Auckland and Coromandel.

6.2 Industrial/commercial process and space heating

The Waikato has the highest concentration of fossil-fuel-dependent process-heat sites in the country. Waikato’s Regional Energy Transition Accelerator (RETA) report⁴⁸ highlighted 91 sites in the region, highlighting significant opportunities for regional transition. These sites all operate large (>500 kW) fossil-fuelled process-heat equipment and span sectors such as dairy, meat, timber, food and beverage, and commercial sectors such as schools, hospitals and accommodation providers. In 2022, these sites, collectively consumed 12,204 TJ of process heat energy, predominantly in the form of fossil gas, and produced approximately 730 kt per year of CO₂e emissions. The region’s export economy is dominated by the dairy sector, making dairy processing sites the single largest opportunity for transitioning to renewable energy.

6.3 New industries – data centres

Digital services are now essential to modern life. Data centres are locations for storing and processing data and are becoming core infrastructure for the digital economy. Their growth is driven by rising demand for computing power, particularly from artificial intelligence and real-time applications such as autonomous vehicles and electricity grid management.

Data centres rely on three main types of infrastructure:

- **Information and communication technology:** computers, servers, routers international data cables and fibre optic cabling. New Zealand is connected to the rest of the world by five international submarine data cables – all connect to the United States west coast⁴⁹. More are under construction and consideration.
- **Cooling systems:** needed to manage the significant heat produced by modern chips, often requiring large volumes of water. Water requirements and cool temperatures make the Southland an ideal location for hyperscale data centres.
- **Power supply:** reliable electricity supported by grid connections, backup generation and battery storage.

⁴⁵ [Climate Change & Business Conference 2025 | Sustainable Business Council](#)

⁴⁶ [Sustainability | NZ Airports Association](#)

⁴⁷ [Seaglidors - The Future of Travel | Ocean Flyer](#)

⁴⁸ [Waikato Regional Energy Transition Accelerator | EECA](#)

⁴⁹ [Submarine Cable Map | TeleGeography](#)

New Zealand's data centre electrical capacity is currently 104 MW and is expected to triple by 2030. New Zealand already hosts 56 data centres (nearly half in Auckland) with four in Hamilton and a further 20 planned nationally⁵⁰. Spark and the University of Waikato have an agreement to manage the University campus data centre as part of their strategy to build data centre capacity and enhance connectivity and resilience in the region.

The location of data centres matters. While hyperscale facilities offer strong economies of scale, they also concentrate risk. Locating data centres close to where data is used reduces latency, strengthens resilience to natural and geopolitical disruptions, and supports indigenous data sovereignty⁵¹. New Zealand's political stability, distance from conflict zones, and abundant renewable energy provide distinct advantages⁵², though the country is still exposed to natural hazards such as earthquakes and floods. The Waikato offers low seismic risk and low latency, but it remains uncertain whether these regional benefits will outweigh the natural cooling advantages of southern regions.

7 How energy is managed and distributed

Managing electricity demand is becoming increasingly important as New Zealand transitions to a low-emissions economy. Electrification of transport, industry, buildings and heat is placing new pressure on a system already shaped by seasonal hydro variability and rising peak loads. Current modelling indicates that total electricity demand is expected to grow by 35 to 82 percent by 2050⁵³. Ensuring that electricity remains affordable, reliable and sustainable will depend not only on building new renewable generation, but also on how effectively demand is managed, through smarter pricing, flexible technologies, energy efficiency, and distributed generation.

7.1 Electricity

Transmission and distribution

New Zealand's electricity sector operates through four distinct functions: **generation**, where most electricity is produced by four major companies (Contact, Genesis, Meridian and Mercury); **transmission**, where Transpower owns and operates the national grid and balances supply and demand; **distribution**, where local lines companies deliver electricity from substations to homes and businesses; and **retail**, where retailers purchase electricity on the wholesale market and sell it to consumers through installation control points (ICPs).

The system was designed to keep generation, transmission, distribution, and retail separate to promote competition and ensure prices reflected true production and infrastructure costs. Over time, however, most generators have also become retailers, creating vertically integrated "gentailers" that can offset losses in one part of the business with profits from another. Critics argue this vertical integration weakens competition and is a structural flaw in the current market model.

Electricity is a 'just-in-time' energy carrier, meaning it must be consumed as it is generated or generated when required. This creates challenges for grid and network operators, particularly as reliance on renewable energy grows. Renewable supply, such as wind and solar, is inherently variable, while electricity demand fluctuates daily, weekly, and seasonally. The transmission system must balance these variations and maintain sufficient capacity to meet peak demand. One solution is to store surplus renewable electricity for later use through battery systems, improving flexibility and resilience.

⁵⁰ [Our National Data Centre Infrastructure | NZTech](#)

⁵¹ [Unlocking the Potential: New Zealand's Data Centre Industry](#)

⁵² [Data Centres as Strategic Infrastructure: Unlocking Value for NZ Inc | BCG](#)

⁵³ [Electricity Demand and Generation Scenarios: Results Summary | MBIE](#)

Future transmission requirements

A successful low-emissions transition depends on a reliable, affordable electricity transmission system – there is *no transition without transmission*⁵⁴. This requires proactive grid investment ahead of renewable generation, locating vulnerable assets away from climate-exposed areas, maintaining and upgrading ageing infrastructure, and ensuring policy settings support regional and national energy connectivity.

New Zealand’s electricity system is shifting from a centralised model to a more decentralised one, with growing volumes of variable generation such as wind and solar, rising electrification of transport and process heat, and more active consumers feeding power back into networks.

Large-scale offshore wind will require significant grid upgrades, with Transpower’s scenarios identifying South Taranaki and the West Coast of Waikato as the most viable locations. Waikato is the more cost-effective option for grid integration, while Taranaki developments would either need to be consumed locally or require major transmission investment. A shared development pathway across both regions would strengthen grid resilience.

Nationally, Transpower has reported a surge in grid-connection enquiries with 323 proposals totalling 46,548 MW as at December 2025 – signalling a structural shift toward electrification and the need for coordinated planning and investment. Waikato remains a major area of interest, contributing 19 percent of national enquiries and 15 percent of proposed capacity.

Interest in large-scale battery energy storage has also increased sharply, doubling from three to six projects and expanding proposed capacity by 385 percent, from 350 MW to 1,350 MW – highlighting the rapidly growing role of storage in a future renewable-dominant grid.

Prices

New Zealand’s electricity pricing system is complex. New Zealand consumers have experienced a significant increase in the price of electricity in the past 25 years, contributing to cost-of-living pressures, even as commercial and industrial users have seen reductions. International comparisons hide this because New Zealand started from a low base compared to other countries. Market reforms reversed earlier policies that kept residential prices low, leaving households with less bargaining power than large users⁵⁵. Gentailers often attribute higher household prices to morning and evening peaks, but most consumers are on fixed-price plans that insulate them from price variability – but this also means that consumers can’t take advantage of the variability by shifting their demand when prices are high.

New Zealand’s electricity market has no price cap or capacity market, relying instead on high scarcity prices to fund long-run investment⁵⁶. Unlike many countries where governments finance major renewable and storage projects, New Zealand passes these costs directly to consumers (through electricity bills)⁵⁷. This model has contributed to underinvestment in new supply because sector settings prioritise shareholder returns over reinvestment.

Time-of-use pricing and smart metering could better reflect real costs, encourage shifting demand away from peak times, and reduce system costs, but most households remain on flat-rate plans. To address this, the Electricity Authority is updating the industry code to strengthen incentives for retailers to offer time-of-use plans and reward consumers who supply or shift power during peak periods.

Managing electricity demand

Demand management reduces overall energy system costs by lowering or shifting electricity use. It helps match demand with variable renewable supply, particularly solar and wind, by moving consumption to off-peak periods when electricity is cheaper and more plentiful.

⁵⁴ [No Energy Transition without Transmission | PwC](#)

⁵⁵ [Malcontents and Monopoly Rents: An analysis of the nature and quality of discourse around, and the drivers of policy change in NZ electricity. Wilson 2015.](#)

⁵⁶ [The New Zealand Electricity Market: Challenges of a Renewable Energy System](#)

⁵⁷ [Energy to Grow. Securing New Zealand’s Future | BCG](#)

Balancing energy supply and demand is challenging, and around 20 percent firming capacity is needed to meet peak demand. New Zealand relies on coal, oil and gas to back up hydro during cold winter peaks – demand management can provide an alternative approach, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. It also includes local generation, such as rooftop and onsite solar, which lowers grid demand.

Although New Zealand has used tools like ripple control since the 1950s, demand management declined after energy-market deregulation, as energy conservation was seen as conflicting with profitability.

Recent dry years have highlighted system vulnerability: low hydro inflows drive up prices, contributing to industrial closures and worsening cost-of-living pressures. Recent closures include Tasman Mill, Penrose paper recycling mill, Karioi Pulp Mill and Kinleith Mill⁵⁸.

As climate change increases the frequency of dry years, effective demand management will be essential to reduce prolonged high prices and support system stability.

Distributed renewables

Distributed generation produces electricity close to where it is used, using technologies such as rooftop solar, small-scale hydro, wind turbines, and BESS. Because these systems connect to local distribution networks rather than the national grid, they can reduce demand on centralised generation and help balance supply and demand. Distributed renewables can lower electricity costs for households, communities, and businesses, while improving resilience during extreme weather by maintaining local supply. Their short construction times and small scale make them flexible and cost-effective, with minimal energy costs once installed. Generating power locally also reduces network losses and can ease wholesale electricity prices, providing particular benefits for low-income households who spend a larger share of their income on energy.

7.2 Gas

New Zealand's gas transmission network, owned and operated by First Gas Limited, is a key strategic asset linking Taranaki's onshore and offshore gas fields to major industrial users and urban centres across the North Island. The Waikato region sits in a pivotal position within this network as the corridor connecting Taranaki to the wider upper North Island.

The pipeline system also provides future opportunities to transport increasing volumes of renewable gases such as biomethane. This is already underway at the Ecogas facility in Reporoa, which plans to upgrade biogas to biomethane for direct injection into the national pipeline network.

Depleted oil and gas reservoirs offer proven long-term gas storage potential, creating future strategic value if linked to emerging carbon-capture technologies. Experimental work⁵⁹ is currently exploring the capture of CO₂ from geothermal electricity generation and reinjecting it into geothermal reservoirs, highlighting the potential for integrated carbon management solutions.

8 Exploring future energy pathways

The Waikato energy transition will not follow a single fixed path; instead, it will depend on choices made today, global forces, policy settings, and technological change. In short, there is no 'silver bullet' and a range of approaches will be needed in any transition. To understand possible futures, three scenarios were developed and modelled – not as predictions, but as plausible pathways reflecting different policy and market conditions.

⁵⁸ [Energy to Grow, Securing New Zealand's Future | BCG](#)

⁵⁹ Carbon Dioxide Removal with Geothermal and Bioenergy Sources | University of Canterbury Research Programme

These range from an incremental, market-led change, a security-focused static pathway, to a coordinated and proactive dynamic transition. Together they show the spectrum of likely futures. The scenarios are summarised in Figure 8 and Appendix C.

Business as usual (BAU): market-led transition	Static: energy security over sustainability	Dynamic: coordinated, proactive transition
The BAU scenario represents a continuation of current policy settings and government projections. It provides a baseline against which the static and dynamic scenarios are compared.	In this scenario, energy security and short-term affordability are prioritised (via legacy technology) over environmental sustainability. The shift away from fossil fuels is deprioritised and the transition is slow.	In this scenario, decarbonisation is seen as a long-term economic opportunity, with a balanced and coordinated approach to the energy trilemma. The transition is the fastest under this scenario.

Figure 8: Future energy scenarios developed and modelled for the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy

The three scenarios were modelled 50 years into the future to 2075. Sankey diagrams⁶⁰, showing energy flows for each scenario, are provided for 2050 to align with the national target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions⁶¹. These are provided in Appendix D.

The resulting regional energy pathways were used as inputs to an economy-wide computable general equilibrium (CGE) model, which assesses the implications of the scenarios for the wider economy, including impacts on gross domestic product (GDP), sectoral output, investment, prices, and trade⁶².

8.1 Findings from the modelling

The modelling shows that the strongest economic growth occurs when all three elements of the energy trilemma are advanced together – i.e. the dynamic scenario. This is achieved through widespread electrification of regional productive sectors, supported by expanded geothermal generation, increased distributed and grid-scale solar, and growth in both offshore and onshore wind. Intermittency is managed through mature hydro systems providing firming capacity, complemented by deployment of battery energy storage.

The transition to an electrified regional economy requires the largest short term (first ten years) investment – an additional \$22.5 billion nationally over the BAU scenario, including approximately \$4.5 billion within the Waikato. Moving to an electrified economy also accelerates the shift to low emissions, strengthening the resilience of regional and national export sectors by reducing exposure to fossil-fuel price shocks and meeting growing international demand for low-carbon products.

The static scenario produces the weakest long-term outcomes – lowest GDP growth and leaves the economy increasingly exposed to geopolitical and market risks. Although it requires the least investment, around \$15.7 billion less nationally than the BAU scenario over 25 years – this is achieved by retaining twentieth-century technologies, resulting in an increasingly uncompetitive national economy over time.

A summary of the key findings is shown in Table 1.

⁶⁰ See Appendix A for guidance on how to read and interpret a Sankey diagram

⁶¹ [Waikato Region Energy Sankey 2024-2050](#)

⁶² Waikato Regional Energy Scenarios December 2025 | Concept Consulting Group Limited

Table 1: Summary of the key findings for the Waikato region at the year 2050

	BAU	Static	Dynamic
Greenhouse gas emissions	Down 53%	Down 44%	Down 77%
Electricity generation	Up 20%	Up 11%	Up 54%
Total energy use	114 PJ	110 PJ	158 PJ
Renewables use	94 PJ	32 PJ	154 PJ
Fossil fuel use	25 PJ	83 PJ	13 PJ
EV uptake – light vehicles	50% by 2041	50% by 2043	50% by 2038
Resilience to oil shock	-	Highly exposed, 44% GDP gains in BAU lost	Less exposed, 9% GDP gains in BAU lost
GDP (medium-term)	-	0.2% above BAU	1.5% above BAU
Employment and wages (medium-term)	-	2.5% below BAU	2.5% above BAU
Investment required (national)	-	\$15.7 billion below BAU	\$22.5 billion above BAU
Investment required (regional)	-	\$3.14 billion below BAU	\$4.5 billion above BAU

Business as usual

Under the BAU scenario, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions decline substantially over time, falling by 53 percent by 2050. This reduction is driven by a gradual shift in both energy supply and demand. Energy supply is increasingly sourced from within the region, with strong growth in geothermal and biomass and more moderate increases in wind and solar. This lifts electricity generation by around 20 percent and enables higher exports, while hydro generation remains largely unchanged. Coal use increases briefly to support winter electricity needs but declines sharply after 2037 as coal-fired boilers are phased out. Biomass progressively replaces fossil fuels for industrial heat, and liquid fuel use declines as transport electrifies (Figure 9).

Electrification improves overall energy efficiency, particularly in road transport, helping to reduce total final energy demand. Energy prices in this scenario are shaped by new electricity investment, a shrinking base of gas customers, and ETS carbon pricing that peaks in the early 2030s. Transport electrification progresses gradually, with limited observable impacts on GDP.

The BAU scenario assumes GDP growth consistent with the New Zealand national emissions projections, sizing the Waikato economy at \$24.9 billion in the start year and growing in real terms to \$39.1 billion by 2050 – an increase of \$14.2 billion, or average annual growth of \$0.54 billion.

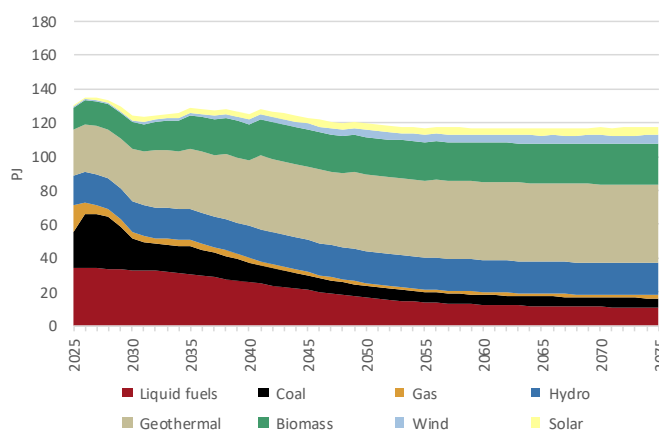


Figure 9: BAU energy demand by fuel for 2025 to 2075

Static

The static scenario prioritises short-term energy security and affordability over sustainability, slowing the pace of decarbonisation but still reducing energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 44 percent by 2050. In this scenario, more energy is supplied from within the region (up 30 percent), reliance on imported fossil fuels decreases, and electricity generation increases by around 11 percent, with similar exports to other parts of the country. However, overall energy demand remains more dependent on fossil fuels than in the other scenarios, with only a gradual decline in locally sourced coal, liquid fuels and gas under weak decarbonisation incentives. Geothermal demand continues to grow due to its cost competitiveness (Figure 10).

Because decarbonisation incentives remain weak, fossil fuels retain a prominent role and gas-peaking power prices stay higher for longer. Transport electrification progresses more slowly, only about 50 percent of light-vehicle travel is electric by 2043, and emissions fall to around 2.53 Mt CO₂e by 2075 (about 55 percent below current levels).

Economic growth under this scenario is modest. Regional GDP is only slightly above the BAU scenario in the short term (up 0.7 percent after ten years), easing to a small 0.2 percent increase by 2050, with national GDP rising just 0.1 percent. This indicates limited economic benefit from policies that align with this pathway.

In the Waikato, electricity prices rise above BAU levels toward 2050, with similar trends nationally. These higher prices flow through to production costs, household consumption, and factor incomes. The small GDP gains reflect continued reliance on domestic and imported fossil fuels, which increases exposure to international carbon-border measures such as the CBAM.

Household consumption of electricity is slightly higher than in both the BAU and dynamic scenarios due to lower NZU. However, regional employment and wages fall by around 2.5 percent below BAU by 2050, driven by weaker electricity generation growth, slower transport electrification, and ongoing exposure to carbon-priced fossil electricity. The scenario’s dependence on imported fossil fuels also makes it highly vulnerable to oil price shocks, with GDP gains falling by 44 percent compared to a no-shock scenario⁶³.

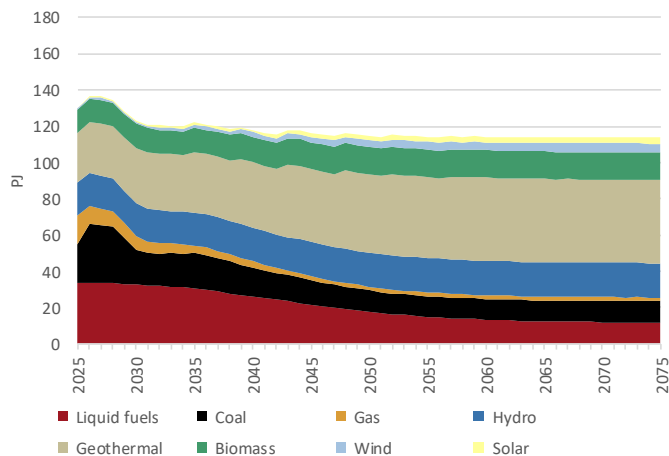


Figure 10: Static scenario energy demand by fuel for 2025 to 2075

⁶³ An oil shock was simulated by adding a 20 percent increase in the price of imported oil products in 2043 to both the static and dynamic scenarios.

Dynamic

This scenario treats decarbonisation as a long-term economic opportunity and delivers the largest emissions reduction, cutting energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 77 percent. This is achieved by rapidly shifting the region away from imported fossil fuels toward locally supplied renewables such as wind, solar and geothermal, enabling greater electrification and increased electricity exports to other parts of the country.

Coal is phased out more quickly under stronger carbon pricing. Gas is used only briefly for security and firming before being largely phased out, while geothermal energy expands for both electricity generation and direct heat applications (Figure 11).

Energy demand increases from 52 PJ in the BAU scenario to 56 PJ by 2050, driven by rising data-centre electricity use and greater direct use of geothermal heat. Electricity prices face some upward pressure due to higher demand but this is partially offset by faster consenting processes and increased demand flexibility. Retail gas prices rise sharply for the remaining small consumers as network costs are spread across fewer users.

Carbon prices follow the Climate Change Commission’s 2023 demonstration path, with NZU prices rising three percent per year. Transport electrifies more rapidly, with half of light-vehicle travel electric by 2038, alongside accelerated rail electrification (from 2035) and earlier uptake of low-emissions aviation. These changes help reduce energy-related greenhouse gas emissions to around 0.99 Mt CO₂e by 2075.

Faster electrification with efficiency gains⁶⁴ and fuel switching lift regional GDP by 0.9 percent after ten years and 1.5 percent by 2050 (compared with 0.7 percent and 1.3 percent nationally). This growth is supported by additional wind and solar generation, higher uptake of electric transport, and the presence of data centres that put downward pressure on electricity prices.

Lower electricity prices flow through to reduced costs and higher household consumption, while expanding renewable generation increases regional employment and wages by around 2.5 percent in the medium term compared with BAU.

With far less reliance on imported fossil fuels, the region becomes more resilient to external shocks. An oil-price shock erodes only about nine percent of anticipated GDP gains – demonstrating greater resilience under a renewable-dominant and locally sourced energy system.

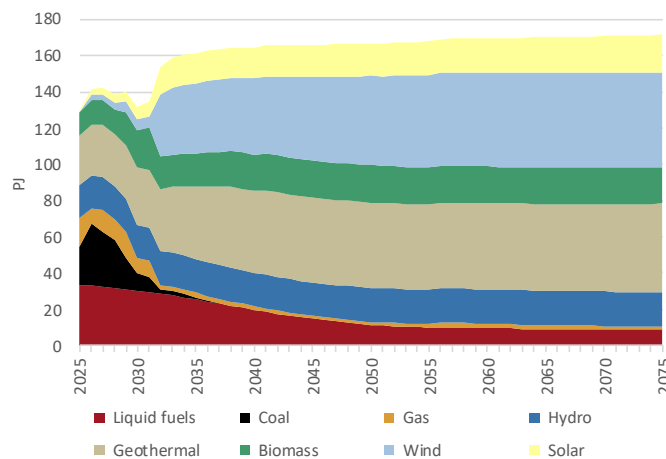


Figure 11: Dynamic scenario energy demand by fuel for 2025 to 2075

⁶⁴ Electrification reduces the total amount of energy required to deliver a given service, as electric motors, electric boilers, and heat pumps are substantially more efficient than fossil fuel technologies. This is most pronounced in the transport sector.

8.2 Key messages

The scenario modelling reveals several key messages for the region.

Waikato has influence

The Waikato region is already central to New Zealand's energy system and is a net exporter of energy, particularly electricity. This position means that changes in regional generation capacity, demand growth, and infrastructure investment have outsized economic effects. Investment in renewable electricity in Waikato not only supports local decarbonisation but also supports the rest of the country to electrify and grow.

Transition is sensitive to policy changes

The pace and direction of the energy transition are highly sensitive to policy settings, investment signals, and institutional coordination. Market-led change under existing settings delivers gradual progress, but materially different outcomes arise where barriers to renewable investment are reduced, demand flexibility is enabled, and complementary policies reinforce price signals. In these cases, electricity demand growth within the region, driven by electrification of transport and industry, interacts positively with large-scale renewable build, supporting higher use of generation assets and more efficient network investment.

Decarbonisation assists affordability and resilience

A key insight from the scenario comparison is the relationship between decarbonisation, affordability, and resilience. In the dynamic scenario, there is accelerated electrification, improved energy efficiency, and reduced reliance on imported fossil fuels and offers lower long-run energy costs relative to the other pathways. While this scenario involves higher upfront investment and adjustment costs in the short term, over time it delivers greater exposure to low and stable-cost domestic energy sources. This improves affordability for households and businesses and materially reduces the impact of declining gas reserves and oil price shocks.

Importance of a long-term perspective

The modelling also highlights an important distinction between short- and long-term economic impacts. In the near term (first ten years), faster investment in renewable generation, networks, and enabling infrastructure requires capital expenditure and has transitional costs for some sectors. However, in the longer term, these investments support lower average energy prices, reduced import expenditure on liquid fuels, and higher economy-wide productivity. The CGE results indicate that these effects translate into stronger regional GDP over time, with positive spillovers beyond Waikato as lower energy costs, increased electricity supply, and improved energy security support national economic activity, trade competitiveness, and household incomes. [While renewable energy involves high upfront capital costs, these are offset over the long term by minimal or no fuel costs.](#)

In contrast, scenarios that retain higher dependence on imported fossil fuels for longer may appear less costly in the short term but expose the region and the wider economy to sustained affordability pressures, greater vulnerability to global fuel price volatility, and weaker long-run economic performance. In these pathways, higher energy costs act as a drag on both regional and national GDP, particularly for energy-intensive industries and export-oriented sectors.

PART C – STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

9 Our vision and way of working

Our vision

~~A resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy system that supports Waikato’s economic growth, safeguards the environment and the wellbeing of future generations, and strengthens New Zealand’s transition through the region’s vital contribution to national energy supply.~~

Waikato’s energy system – resilient, affordable and sustainable. Powering Waikato’s growth and New Zealand’s clean energy transition.

Addressing regional energy challenges and advancing renewable energy solutions requires an approach that upholds cultural values, protects taonga, and enables genuine partnership. The following principles, guided by iwi, set the foundation for this approach.

Regional leadership and collaboration

A strong regional voice, genuine iwi partnership, and coordinated cross-sector collaboration are essential to securing the policy, funding and investment needed for the transition. This means moving faster together – aligning roles and expectations, reducing duplication, and working with a shared direction and collective purpose.

Inclusiveness and participation

Ensure all energy partners and stakeholders can meaningfully participate in shaping the region’s energy transition. This requires collective responsibility to provide equitable access to information, resourcing, technical support and capacity-building, along with clear pathways for involvement across governance, planning, investment and delivery. Early, relationship-based engagement ensures iwi and hapū aspirations are embedded from the start, strengthens decision-making, reduces conflict, and ensures the transition delivers fair and enduring benefits for all communities.

Protection-first approach

Apply a protection-first approach, ensuring taonga, wāhi tapu and environmental systems are safeguarded before development proceeds. This reflects the Treaty relationship and the role of iwi as kaitiaki. Decision-makers must give effect to Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato and treat protection as the starting point for any energy-related activity.

10 Outcomes

The strategy sets four outcomes to 2050, aligned with the strategy’s purpose and energy trilemma. Success will be measured by our progress toward these outcomes.

- Outcome 1** Communities have fair access to affordable and reliable energy, reducing energy hardship.
- Outcome 2** Our energy system is secure and resilient, able to withstand disruptions and reliably meets the region’s needs now and into the future.
- Outcome 3** Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced, and renewable energy resources are used in ways that protect the environment and taonga.
- Outcome 4** Economic growth is strengthened through greater use of renewable, affordable and reliable energy.

11 How do we achieve a dynamic future?

The transition to renewable energy presents major opportunities for the Waikato, creating high-quality jobs, strengthening the regional economy, and improving long-term resilience. Achieving this transition will require coordinated action across the region, as WRC's direct levers are limited and largely centred on regulation, convening, advocacy, information, procurement and partnership. This section outlines the key opportunities for the Waikato and the recommendations that a regional energy forum can progress to drive an aligned and effective transition.

11.1 Opportunities for the Waikato

Employment opportunities

New renewable infrastructure presents major opportunities for regional employment. Solar, wind, geothermal and bioenergy projects can create stable jobs. International evidence shows renewables generate more jobs per unit of energy than fossil fuels, spanning construction, engineering, installation, maintenance, project management and supply-chain services, with further economic benefits through local spending.

Stronger regional action can help ensure the employment benefits supplying and using renewables are realised. Building local value chains, expanding vocational training and apprenticeships, and supporting school-leaver pathways can anchor new opportunities in the Waikato. Procurement expectations for developers can also direct benefits to local communities and iwi Māori.

Many large-scale renewable projects are located in rural areas with limited employment options. With early engagement and training partnerships, these projects can bring high-quality jobs to local communities and build long-term regional capability.

Integrated approaches, such as biorefineries that convert waste into valuable products, demonstrate how renewable energy can support job creation, environmental improvement and regional economic development⁶⁵. Renewables also improve the viability of established industries previously constrained by energy costs.

Economic opportunities

Renewable energy supports long-term economic stability, reducing national spending on imported fossil fuels, and potentially saving billions each year (such as the \$10.8 billion spent in 2024). This allows more value to be reinvested into regional economic growth. Because renewable resources are indigenous, more of this value circulates locally through construction, maintenance, and high-skill jobs. By contrast, fossil fuels carry higher and more volatile costs, with most expenditure flowing offshore.

Decarbonising transport offers one of the highest returns on renewable energy investment. Reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels enables expenditure to be redirected into local jobs, skills development, and resilient regional infrastructure, particularly through the growth of energy-dense industries. In 2024, New Zealand spent \$10.8 billion on fossil transport fuels (roughly equal to the combined export revenue of the meat and seafood sectors⁶⁶), largely just to move people and goods around the country.

Electricity, whether renewable or fossil-fuel-based, underpins economic activity, supporting digital infrastructure, industrial processes, and emerging growth sectors such as data centres, hydrogen production and sustainable fuels. Increasing renewable electricity supply lowers long-term prices.

⁶⁵ [Closing the Nutrient Loop Between Urban and Rural Areas | Analysing the Technical Potential of Recycling Fertilizers from Urban Biorefineries](#)

⁶⁶ Based on data from Infometrics Ltd.

Emerging energy carriers such as green hydrogen, ammonia and advanced biofuels offer new avenues for economic diversification. These technologies rely on affordable renewable electricity and can support high-value industries, export opportunities, and specialised workforce development.

Regions that produce goods with local renewable energy are better positioned to support sustainable economic growth and reduce embodied emissions in exported goods.

Renewable energy hubs

Transitioning existing industries and locating new ones close to where renewable energy is found helps capture more of the economic benefits and reduces transmission losses. An example is the cluster at Mokai, where Tuaropaki Trust uses geothermal heat from the Mokai system to support dairy processing, horticultural cropping, hydrogen production and electricity generation in one integrated energy precinct. If energy is in the form of heat, there is no more efficient use than using it as heat⁶⁷.

Commercial and industrial businesses also need access to skilled labour, affordable land, strong logistical links (such as freight roads, rail, gas pipelines and data cables), reliable grid connections, and a consistent biomass supply. Most, if not all, these key factors conveniently converge in three places:

- **Wairakei/Taupō hub:** the Taupō–Wairakei area is a major geothermal hub, making it ideal for industries that require direct process heat such as greenhouse horticulture, timber drying, dairy processing, aquaculture, food processing, district heating and industrial steam.
- **Tokoroa hub:** Tokoroa and its surrounding area, including Kinleith, Whakamaru and Lichfield, is close to major forestry and biomass resources, the Waikato River hydro lakes, an undeveloped geothermal system, and critical transport links such as the Kinleith rail line, SH1, the First Gas pipeline and Transpower’s high-voltage grid.
- **Huntly hub:** Huntly is strategically located within the upper North Island golden triangle, with strong transport links, and existing energy infrastructure. The area is increasingly suitable for agri-solar, floating solar, and both onshore and offshore wind development. Huntly’s established fossil-fuel energy precinct could be converted to biomass.

These areas present the best opportunities to create or expand renewable energy hubs. They also present opportunities for iwi-led and partnered development, including skilled employment for rangatahi, local supply chains, and projects aligned with rohe-specific aspirations.

11.2 Action

While WRC does not hold all the levers required to deliver the Regional Energy Strategy, it plays a key leadership role and is well placed to convene and support a regional energy forum to implement the strategy collaboratively. Establishing the forum is the central action to the strategy.

Establish a regional energy forum

As soon as practicable, establish a regional energy forum to consider the recommendations and lead implementation of the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy. The right representation at the right level will be key.

⁶⁷ If geothermal already gives you heat, don’t waste energy converting it into electricity first — just use the heat directly
[Direct Use Geothermal vs Power Generation: Which is More Efficient?](#)

11.211.3 Recommendations

[Seven pou provide the framework for key recommendations required to achieve the strategy’s vision. These recommendations are intended for consideration and implementation by the regional energy forum.](#)

~~Central to the transition are seven pou that provide the framework for the key recommendations required to achieve the strategy’s vision.~~

Pou 1 Strategic partnerships

Strategic partnerships across government, iwi, industry, research and communities accelerate progress by reducing duplication, sharing resources, and combining expertise to unlock innovation and ensure communities shape and benefit from the transition.

Partnership models

[Support partnership models, including joint ventures, that enable co-investment, shared governance and equitable participation in renewable energy projects.](#)

Support iwi partnership, participation and engagement

Support early, funded engagement with iwi and hapū at the design stage of energy projects, and create the conditions for meaningful iwi participation and partnership throughout planning and delivery.

Pou 2 Advocacy and leadership

Strong advocacy and leadership drive the region’s low-emissions transition by shaping supportive policy and regulation, aligning stakeholders, and signalling long-term commitment.

Advocate for and enable renewable energy developments

When engaging with government, industry, iwi and communities, advocate for renewable energy by leveraging the evidence and insights contained in the strategy. Promote clear and consistent messaging that encourages investment in renewable energy developments.

Lead by example

Lead by example by prioritising low-emissions solutions in procurement and organisational decision-making, and by sharing practical case studies of organisations transitioning away from fossil fuels to inspire and guide others. See the WRC example in Appendix E.

Engage with central government

Actively engage with central government on the National Geothermal Strategy.

Advocate for a New Zealand energy strategy

Advocate for the preparation of a clear and coordinated New Zealand energy strategy.

Pou 3 Supportive policy settings

Clear, coordinated policy and spatial planning provides long-term direction, enables consistent renewable energy development, and builds investor confidence to accelerate delivery.

Maintain and strengthen regional policy settings

Maintain and strengthen regional policy settings that support renewable energy and regional decarbonisation.

Use spatial planning to identify renewable energy opportunities

Use spatial planning to identify suitable locations for renewable energy (e.g. solar and wind), energy hubs, battery storage, charging stations, electrified transport corridors, data

centres, and transmission and distribution infrastructure – integrating iwi priorities and avoiding negative impacts on culturally sensitive sites.

Pou 4 Workforce capability and capacity

A skilled and well-supported workforce is vital to the energy transition, backed by sustained investment, strong training pathways, and collaboration across government, iwi, industry and communities to align skills with emerging technologies and build long-term regional resilience.

Build workforce capability and capacity

Support the development of coordinated education, training and apprenticeship pathways aligned with future energy needs. This includes the supply and use of renewable energy and training initiatives aligned with iwi priorities, including school-to-work pathways that connect rangatahi with energy sector employers and training providers.

Pou 5 Information and monitoring

Transparent, timely and reliable information, supported by robust monitoring, enables evidenced-based decisions, reduces uncertainty, and strengthens collaboration.

Build understanding of renewable energy resources and regional use

Support the delivery of clear, accessible transition [information and](#) advice for businesses, [iwi partnerships](#) and communities, [that complement](#) existing EECA services, ~~including tailored information for Māori businesses and enterprises.~~

Maintain up-to-date information

Maintain an up-to-date understanding of regional energy requirements to ensure the region can plan effectively and respond to changing conditions. Maintain high quality databases of renewable energy resources, particularly geothermal systems.

Provide guidance to high-use fossil-fuel industries

Provide guidance on future decarbonisation pathways for high-use fossil-fuel industries and advocate for financial support to enable a smooth transition away from fossil fuels.

Pou 6 Funding and finance

Financial schemes and incentives are important to help communities transition, making low-emissions technologies more accessible, reducing upfront costs, and enabling households, businesses, iwi and community organisations to participate meaningfully in the energy shift.

Explore financing schemes

Explore options such as bulk-buy programmes and ratepayer schemes to improve access to energy efficient and renewable technologies such as rooftop solar. Prioritize high-impact measures such as solar and transport.

Advocate for government incentives

Advocate for government incentives to help make low emissions technology more accessible.

Promote total cost of ownership analysis

Encourage businesses and households to consider lifetime costs, including fuel, maintenance, and emissions, when making investment decisions.

<p>Pou 7 Renewable and energy efficient technology <i>Widespread adoption of renewable and energy-efficient technologies is essential to lowering emissions, reducing energy costs, and strengthening regional resilience.</i></p>
<p>Encourage the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies Encourage renewable and energy efficient technology across homes, marae, papakāinga, community facilities, commercial and industrial buildings.</p>
<p>Support iwi renewable energy initiatives Support iwi-led and iwi-partnered renewable energy initiatives.</p>
<p>Support research and development opportunities Support research and development across emerging and existing renewable energy options, including untapped geothermal and wave resources, as well as opportunities for pumped hydro, small-scale hydro, aviation SAF, green hydrogen and green ammonia.</p>
<p>Encourage energy hubs Support the development of renewable energy hubs, particularly around Wairakei/Taupō, Tokoroa and Huntly.</p>
<p>Encourage mode shift Advocate for and enable a shift toward lower-emissions transport by supporting greater use of public transport, rail and active travel, and accelerate the transition of WRC’s bus fleet to zero-emissions, focusing on high-usage routes in Hamilton.</p>
<p>Advocate for rail electrification and support more frequent rail services Advocate for hybrid battery-electric locomotives as an interim step and full golden triangle electrification, and improve rail capacity by double-tracking key sections, expanding Te Huia services, and adding passing loops for more frequent, reliable travel.</p>
<p>Encourage the use of low emissions vehicles and enable public EV charging infrastructure Promote and normalise low-emissions vehicle uptake through existing communication channels, and create a supportive environment for charge point operators investing in the region.</p>
<p>Utilize smart charging technology: utilize smart charging technology to ensure EV charging coincides with high solar/wind generation and low network demand, partnering with local lines companies.</p>
<p>Support grid expansion and distributed generation Support, advocate for and facilitate long-term grid expansions and upgrades, and actively enable the development of embedded and distributed generation across the region, including EV participation.</p>

12 Implementation pathway

12.1 Implementation plan

Implementation of this strategy will be led by a regional energy forum. Establishment of the forum is [the priority recommendation made in this central to the](#) strategy. The forum will bring together key participants responsible for the supply, distribution and use of energy across the Waikato, including iwi, infrastructure providers, major energy users, education, local [and central](#) government and commercial representatives. This will ensure a coordinated, partnership-based approach to regional energy planning and delivery.

[The forum will develop an implementation plan outlining timeframes, resourcing, responsibilities and actions. The forum will consider the recommendations in this strategy progress agreed actions through the implementation plan.](#)

The forum will report to WRC’s Regional Growth and Resilience Committee through WRC staff. WRC will maintain oversight of the strategy and implementation plan, providing technical and administrative support for the forum.

~~The detailed recommendations in the Waikato Regional Energy Strategy Technical Support Document will be considered by the forum, and progressed through nominated lead agencies.~~

12.2 Monitoring, reporting and review

~~Monitoring the success of the strategy is important to demonstrate progress towards the vision, and to provide clear evidence of what is working and what is not.~~

~~As part of the implementation plan, a monitoring and reporting programme will be developed and led by the regional energy forum. To track progress, performance indicators could be established, including economic indicators for example clean-energy job growth, industry fuel-switching, and uptake of low-emissions technologies, and transport indicators for example EV uptake, mode shift, rail electrification, and adoption of hydrogen or SAF.~~

~~Regular reports, such as annual progress updates, will be reported to the Regional Growth and Resilience Committee.~~

~~Monitoring the success of the strategy is important to demonstrate progress towards the vision, and to provide clear evidence of what is working and what is not. The strategy will be monitored through a structured, transparent framework that tracks progress against the outcomes and performance indicators. Economic indicators could include clean energy job growth, industry fuel switching, and uptake of low-emissions technologies. Transport indicators could include EV uptake, mode shift, rail electrification, and adoption of hydrogen or sustainable aviation fuels.~~

~~A monitoring and reporting programme will be developed and coordinated by the regional energy forum. Regular reporting, such as annual progress updates and a more comprehensive review, will evaluate changes in energy demand, emissions, renewable electricity generation, infrastructure development, and equity outcomes.~~

~~Monitoring also includes iwi partnership and participation, measured through iwi-led projects, governance roles, alignment with iwi management plans, and the use of cultural indicators that reflect protection of taonga.~~

The strategy will be formally reviewed every five years, with earlier reviews triggered for example if a national energy strategy is released or if significant policy or system changes occur.

Acronyms and units

Acronym/unit	Meaning
BAU	Business as usual
BESS	Battery energy storage system
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CGE	Computable general equilibrium
CO₂e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
EECA	Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority
EROI	Energy return on energy invested
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
EV	Electric vehicle
GDP	Gross domestic product
GWh	Gigawatt-hour
ICP	Installation control point
KW	Kilowatt
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
MW	Megawatt
NZU	New Zealand units
PHEV	Plug-in hybrid electric vehicle
PJ	Petajoule
PV	Photovoltaic
RMA	Resource Management Act
RETA	Regional Energy Transition Accelerator
RPS	Regional Policy Statement
RPTP	Regional Public Transport Plan
SAF	Sustainable aviation fuel
V2G	Vehicle-to-grid
V2L	Vehicle-to-load
WRC	Waikato Regional Council

Glossary

Term	Definition
Atua	Ancestor.
Awa	River, stream, creek.
Climate change	Changes in global or regional climate patterns that are evident over an extended period (typically decades or longer). May be due to natural factors or human activities.
Electrification	Converting a device, system or sector from non-electric sources of energy to electricity.
Emissions intensity	A measure of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced per unit of activity. Measured as megajoules per dollar of GDP.
Energy hardship	When individuals, households and whanau are not able to obtain adequate energy services to support their wellbeing in their home or kainga.
Energy intensity	A measure of energy used per unit of economic output or activity. It indicates how much energy is required to produce a product or service.
Firming	Backup power or storage that keeps electricity supply steady when renewables fluctuate.
Gentailer	Company that operates both as a generator and retailer of electricity.
Greenhouse gas	Gas in the Earth's atmosphere that traps heat from the sun and prevents it from escaping into space e.g. carbon dioxide and methane.
Gross domestic product	A measure of a country's economic activity.
Hapū	Kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe.
Indigenous	Sourced locally from within New Zealand.
Industrial process heat	The heat used in factories and industrial sites to make products, such as heating materials, drying them or making chemical changes.
Iwi	Refers to tribe or grouping of Māori people descended from a common ancestor(s).
Kainga	Home.
Kaitiaki	A person who is active in the guardianship of the mauri of ecosystems.
Kaitiakitanga	Active protection and enhancement of the mauri of ecosystems.
Mahinga kai	Means "to work the food"; a food gathering place.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori customary knowledge, traditional knowledge, or intergenerational knowledge and is held by tangata whenua at place
Maunga	Mountain, peak.
Mauri	Life force, life essence.
Moana	Sea, ocean.
Papakāinga	Original home, village, communal Māori land.
Pou	Māori term for a carved wooden post, pillar, or upright support used in traditional architecture, often representing ancestors or marking boundaries (pou rāhui). It signifies strength, connection, and history, serving as a pillar for community identity, storytelling, or a metaphorical support/mentor.
Resilience	In the context of this strategy, the ability of energy systems to adapt and recover from disruptions e.g. a flood.
Ripple control	A tool for managing electricity demand. For example, where providers temporarily turn off hot water to reduce pressure on the grid.
Rohe	Territory.

Sankey diagram	In the context of this strategy, a diagram representing the flow of energy.
Taiao	The natural world.
Taonga	All things of value treasured by tangata whenua.
Tikanga	Procedure, custom, lore.
Wahi tapu	Sacred place or site.
Wai	Water.
Whanau	Family group, extended family.
Whenua	Land.

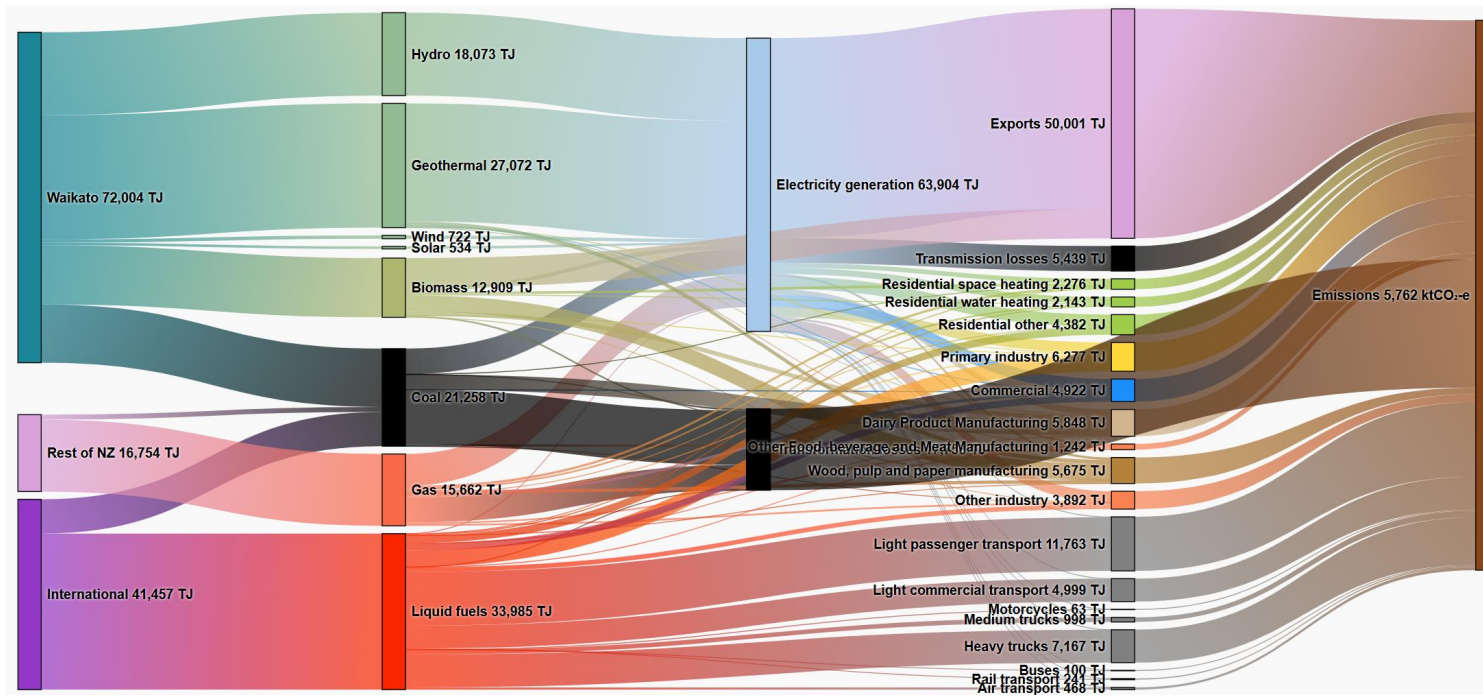
| **Appendices**

Appendix A: How to read and interpret a Sankey energy flow diagram

A Sankey diagram is a visual way of showing how energy flows through a system. The key rules when reading the diagram are outlined below with examples.

1. Width equals quantity: the width of each band, flowing left to right, represents the amount of energy. Wider flows = more energy, narrower flows = less energy.
2. Read the diagram from left to right – looking at the five columns:
 - a. The first column shows where energy is geographically sourced e.g. Waikato, rest of New Zealand or internationally.
 - b. The second column shows the energy sources e.g. geothermal, coal.
 - c. The third column shows how energy sources are converted into useable forms e.g. electricity.
 - d. The fourth column shows the final energy use e.g. transport, industry, including electricity exported to other regions.
 - e. The fifth column shows estimated greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Energy splits and merges to tell a story: where a flow splits, energy is being distributed to multiple uses. Where flows merge, different sources are contributing to the same use.
4. Pay attention to losses: energy losses are shown as ‘transmission’ losses. Fossil fuels often lose large amounts during conversion to useful energy.
5. Use Sankey diagrams to compare scenarios: diagrams were prepared for the BAU, static and dynamic scenarios to enable comparison. Look for:
 - a. Shrinking fossil fuel flows.
 - b. Growing electricity and renewable flows.
 - c. Reduced energy losses.
 - d. Greater electrification of transport and industry.
 - a.e. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Appendix B: Current (2025) Waikato energy flows and emissions⁶⁸



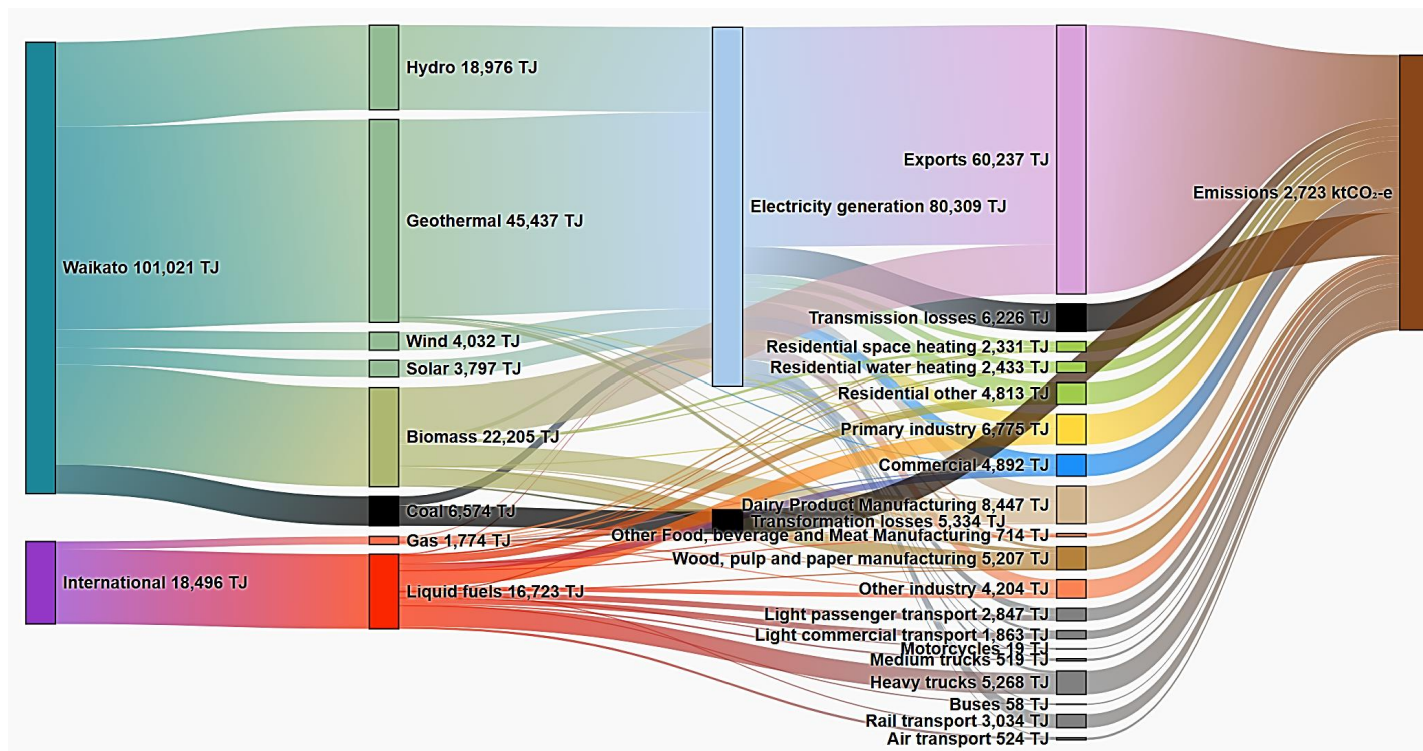
⁶⁸ Prepared by Concept Consulting. An interactive version of the diagram is available at <https://econenergy.earth/ConceptApps/WaikatoSankeyDynamic.html>
 The left side of the diagram shows where energy is sourced — either within the region, from other parts of New Zealand, or through international imports. The next column categorises these sources, with renewable energy shown at the top and fossil fuel below. This is followed by a column showing how these energy sources are converted into useable forms such as electricity or heat. The fourth column shows how this energy is used across economic sectors, such as industry and transport, as well as the amount of electricity exported to other regions. The final column provides estimated greenhouse gas emissions, attributable to each sector, based on the types of energy they use.

Appendix C: Comparison of future energy scenarios

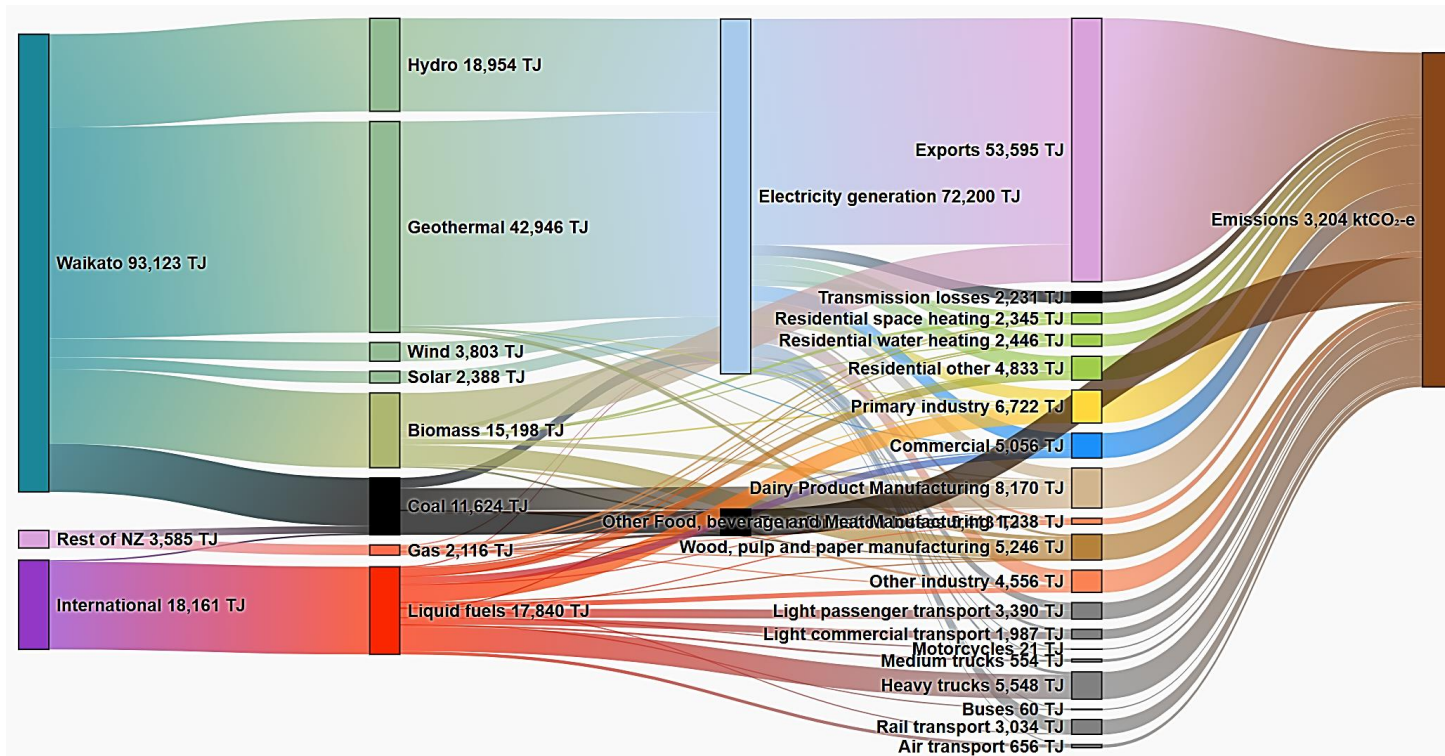
Dimension	Business As Usual	Static	Dynamic
Overall framing	Continuation of current policy settings and central government projections;	Energy security and affordability prioritised over sustainability; transition slows	Decarbonisation treated as a long-term economic opportunity with coordinated action
Climate policy stance	ETS is the primary decarbonisation lever; no new policies	Weak commitment to emissions targets; decarbonisation sidelined	Proactive, bipartisan climate policy supported by complementary measures
ETS price trajectory	Rises until 2030, then gradually declines	Remains low	Rising ETS price provides a strong, reliable signal
Renewable electricity investment	Market-led build responding to demand; moderate consenting delays slow deployment	Renewable investment deprioritised; consenting uncertainty deters new projects	Large, anticipatory renewable build supported by streamlined consenting and revenue stability
Electricity system outcomes	Renewables grow steadily; gas remains a firming fuel	Continued reliance on gas for security; higher long-run electricity prices	Affordable high renewable penetration with storage, transmission and demand flexibility
Gas supply and use	Domestic supply declines; gas prices rise; demand falls gradually through switching and exit	Expanded gas development and LNG imports; gas use sustained longer	Gas pro-actively displaced by electricity and biomass
Coal use	Coal phased out of boilers by 2037 under Industrial Heat NES	Coal boilers remain; coal mining expands; Huntly continues operating	Coal phased out of boilers and Huntly switches to biomass
Industrial heat and efficiency	Gradual fuel switching driven by relative costs; limited efficiency improvements	Minimal efficiency gains; continued reliance on gas and coal	Biomass and electrification dominate; energy efficiency prioritised
Transport demand and behaviour	Transport demand follows MoT projections; limited mode shift	Higher private vehicle demand	Greater mode shift to rail, active and public transport
EV uptake and vehicle efficiency	EV uptake in line with projections; gradual efficiency improvements	Low EV uptake; weak emissions standards; slow efficiency gains	Strong EV uptake; declining vehicle fleet size; improved efficiency
Energy efficiency in buildings	Incremental improvements in new builds	Little improvement	Energy efficiency treated as the “first fuel”, including retrofits
Distributed energy and resilience	Moderate uptake of rooftop and agri-solar	Low uptake; weaker community resilience	Strong growth in rooftop, agri-solar and community energy
Industrial development	Some gas-intensive industries exit over time	Gas-intensive industries exit a few years later; limited diversification	Increased attractiveness for data centres and electrified industries
Hydrogen	None at scale	None at scale	Some use for heavy transport and aviation; production outside Waikato

Appendix D: Future (2050) Waikato energy flows and emissions

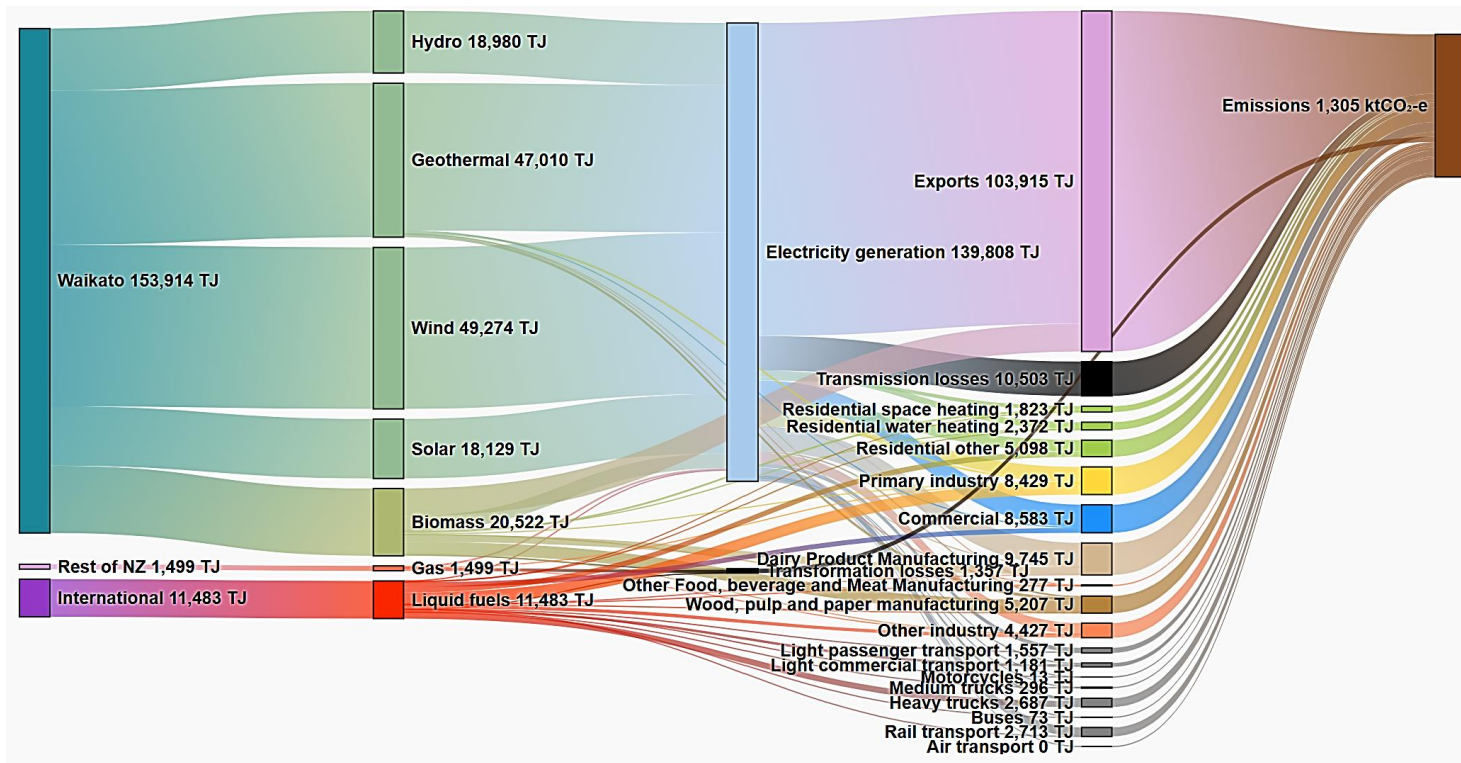
Business as usual scenario



Static scenario



Dynamic scenario



Appendix E: WRC case study

This case study demonstrates how WRC is applying the strategy’s principles by reducing its own corporate emissions and leading by example.

In 2017, WRC committed to accurately measuring and reducing its carbon footprint, with progress to date independently assessed and verified through the Toitū carbon reduce programme. As part of this commitment, WRC prepares an annual Emissions Inventory Report to quantify organisational greenhouse gas emissions and updates its Emissions Management and Reduction Plan. The organisation has set a target to reduce corporate emissions by 65 percent by 2030.

To support this goal, WRC has implemented a range of initiatives, including:

- **Solar:** three solar systems have been installed at WRC’s Ward Street, Northgate, and Paeroa offices. The solar arrays have installed solar power capacity to cover 25 percent, 48 percent and 34 percent of the total site power, respectively. Electricity generated from the solar arrays in 2024/25 reduced grid electricity by 139,479 kWh and saved approximately \$32,000 over the last 12 months.



Solar panels on WRC’s main office in Hamilton

- **Electric vehicles:** the most significant ongoing corporate emissions sources are diesel and petrol. A transition pathway is in place to reduce overall fleet fuel consumption. Strong progress has been made with a deliberate shift away from diesel vehicles towards electric options. As part of this transition, petrol hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles have been introduced as interim solutions – balancing capital constraints with operational needs, especially in areas where fully electric vehicles are not yet viable for fit-for-purpose use. WRC’s current fleet now includes 13 EVs, 23 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and seven petrol hybrid vehicles. EV charging stations have been installed at all offices excluding Whitianga which is being aligned with the new build due for completion this year.
- **Building management systems:** The Ward Street office is equipped with a building management system (BMS) that monitors and controls key building services. Working in collaboration with the landlord, WRC has implemented a programme to improve the efficiency of cooling, lighting, and heating systems. This has delivered a measurable reduction in electricity consumption and strengthened overall operational performance.
- **Pump stations:** electricity use is predominately from the operation of flood pumps across the region. Depending on rainfall, electricity use can vary considerably from year to year. Emissions reduction options are now built into plans for pump station replacements. Some options include increased automation and pumping at night.

Overall, these actions demonstrate that WRC is delivering a meaningful shift its carbon footprint, with a 38 percent reduction in emissions recorded for the 2024/25 period.

7.4 WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO PROPOSED PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 37 TO THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT PLAN

Rā Date:	8 April 2026
Kaituhi Author:	Katrina Andrews, Senior Policy Advisor
Kaituku Authoriser:	Chris McLay, Chief Executive
Mana whakatau Delegation Status:	Council has delegated authority to make the recommended decision

TE ARONGA | PURPOSE

1. To seek approval on the content, and subsequent lodgement, of the Waikato Regional Council's (the council's) submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan (PPC37).

KŌRERO WHAKATAKI | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. PPC37 proposes to rezone a 98.6ha area in Leamington, Cambridge to Medium Density Residential Zone. Approximately 45.71ha of this area is currently zoned Deferred Residential and is part of the C5 Growth Cell in the Waipā District Plan, while the remaining approximately 52.89ha of the site is zoned Rural and is not currently identified for future urban development in any strategic planning documents.
3. Submissions on the notified plan change are due on 28 April 2026; however, staff have obtained an extension until 1 May 2026.
4. The proposed Waikato Regional Council submission focuses on alignment of PPC37 with the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS) and other higher-order policy documents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). It recommends further assessment is undertaken to demonstrate consistency with these documents, and suggests amendments to proposed provisions. Key areas of interest relate to impacts of urban rezoning on highly productive land and ecological effects.

TAUNAKITANGA KAIMAHI | STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report *Waikato Regional Council Submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 to the Waipā District Plan* (Council, 30 April 2026) be received.
2. That the Council:
 - (a) Approves for lodgement the proposed Waikato Regional Council submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan; or
 - (b) Delegates to Cr Maher (Chair) and the Director Science, Policy and Information the approval for lodgement of the proposed Waikato Regional Council submission to

Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan, subject to amendments identified in discussion had at the council meeting.

HOROPAKI | BACKGROUND

5. Milan Park Stud Limited has requested a change to the Waipā District Plan to rezone 98.6ha of land in Leamington, Cambridge to Medium Density Residential Zone. The plan change area comprises:
 - (a) An approximately 45.71ha area that is currently zoned Deferred Residential in the Waipā District Plan. This area is part of the C5 Growth Cell, which is identified for urban development post-2035 in the WRPS and Waipā District Plan. PPC37 proposes to bring forward the planned timing of development of this area.
 - (b) An approximately 52.89ha area that is currently zoned Rural. This area is not currently identified for future urban development in the WRPS, Future Proof Strategy 2024 or Waipā District Plan.

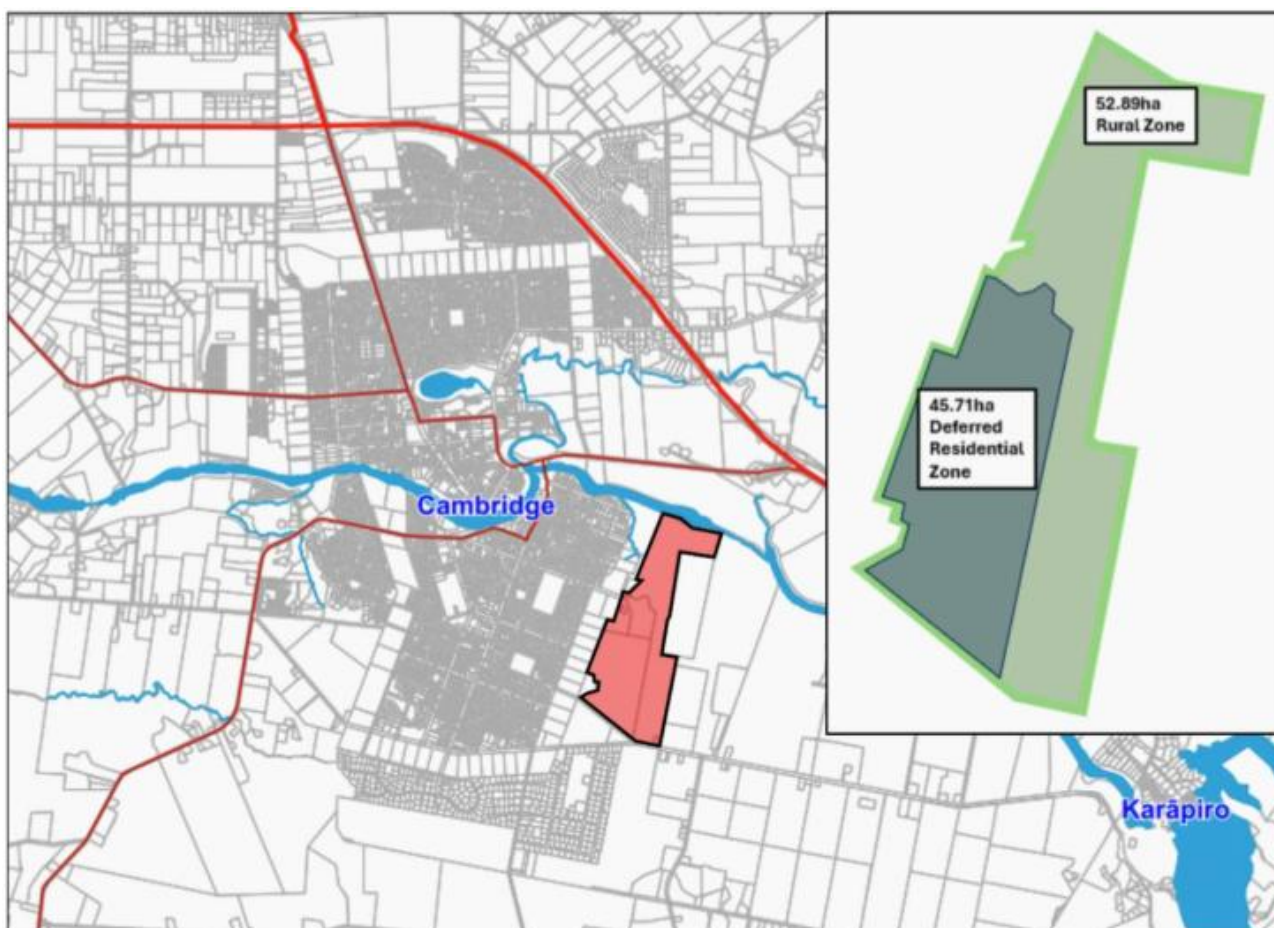


Figure 1 – Location of the plan change site

6. PPC37 proposes to change and add provisions within Sections 2A (Medium Density Residential Zone), 15 (Infrastructure, hazards, development and subdivision) and 21 (Assessment criteria) of the Waipā District Plan and insert a new Structure Plan for the area, to be known as the Rider Park Structure Plan.

7. The plan change also proposes to create two Neighbourhood Centres to support the proposed residential development of the site, and local purpose reserves incorporating a gully through the centre of the site and along the bank of the Waikato River.
8. PCC37 was publicly notified on 26 March, with submissions closing on 28 April 2026. Staff have obtained an extension until 1 May 2026 to enable the proposed submission to be considered at this council meeting.

TE TAKE | ISSUE

9. The council has the opportunity to provide comment on PPC37. The proposed submission (**Attachment 1**) is focused on ensuring a strategic and integrated approach is taken to the zoning of land for urban development and that proposed rezoning is supported by sufficient information in accordance with the WRPS.
10. The submission identifies that PPC37 does not currently provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed rezoning of the Rural Zone portion of the site meets the tests for urban rezoning of highly productive land under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL); particularly that the rezoning is required to provide sufficient development capacity to meet demand for housing land, or that the 'live-zoning' of the C5 Growth Cell needs to be brought forward. It highlights further assessment and evidence that would be required to demonstrate that the plan change meets the requirements of the NPS-HPL and the criteria for Out-of-sequence and unanticipated developments in Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.
11. The proposed submission also recommends further technical assessment and amendments to provisions to ensure ecological effects are adequately addressed, particularly in relation to long-tailed bats and their habitat.

TE URUTAI KI TE HURIHANGA ĀHUARANGI | ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

12. The decision will have no impact on the ability to of the council or region to proactively respond to the impacts of climate change now or in the future. The decision 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

13. The decision is likely to result in no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

TE HAUTŪ ĀHUARANGI | CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

14. The proposed submission supports design principles within the proposed Structure Plan that support creating a more compact development and ensuring development has good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of enabling public or active transport.

TE AROMATAWAI I TE HIRANGA | ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

15. Having regard to the decision making provisions in the LGA and the council's Significance and Engagement Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendation 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

16. The council is responsible for the development and implementation of a regional policy statement. In accordance with section 75(3)(c) of the RMA, district plans are required to give effect to any regional policy statement.
17. Under section 74(2)(a)(i) of the RMA, territorial authorities must also have regard to any proposed regional policy statement, which includes Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.
18. The WRPS reflects council direction on significant resource management issues for the Waikato region. The council is therefore responsible for advocating that the WRPS is given due consideration through any plan change processes.

KŌWHIRINGA I MANAKOHIA | PREFERRED OPTION

19. The preferred option is that the council approves the submission staff have prepared. Staff consider the points included in the proposed submission are important for ensuring alignment with relevant statutory and policy documents, including the WRPS and Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.

NGĀ WHAIWHAKAARO KAUPAPAHERE | POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

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

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI | THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

21. The decision sought by this report will not affect the council's obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi
22. The plan change request includes a Cultural Impact Assessment prepared by Te Hira Consultants Ltd on behalf of Ngāti Hauā and Ngāti Korokii Kahukura. The applicant has undertaken engagement with Ngāti Koroki Kahukura Trust and Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, as mana whenua, culminating in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all relevant representatives.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

23. PPC37 seeks to rezone 98.6ha of land in Leamington, Cambridge to Medium Density Residential Zone to enable this area to be developed for residential purposes.
24. The council has an opportunity to provide comment on the plan change to ensure that key matters of interest, including alignment with the WRPS, are adequately addressed.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

25. Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan - [Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park Structure Plan | Let's Talk Waipā](#)

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. **Waikato Regional Council submission on Proposed Private Plan Change 37 - Rider Park Structure Plan (Doc # 35489937) [↓](#)**

File No: 25 07 00
Document No: 35489937
Enquiries to: Katrina Andrews



30 April 2026

Waipā District Council
Private Bag 2402
Te Awamutu 3840
Attn: Proposed Private Plan Change 37 Submission

Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240, NZ

waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401

Email: districtplan@waipadc.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Waikato Regional Council Submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan. Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's submission regarding this document. This submission was formally endorsed by the Council on 30 April 2026. Waikato Regional Council looks forward to being involved in further discussion on this subject.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Katrina Andrews, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic and Spatial Planning directly on (07) 8590 929 or by email Katrina.Andrews@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

Tracey May
Director Science, Policy and Information

HE TAIAO MAUIRORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Waikato Regional Council submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan**30 April 2026****Introduction**

1. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan (PPC37). WRC's primary interest is in relation to the Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS). District plans, including plan changes such as this one, are required to give effect to the WRPS under s75(3)(c) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Territorial authorities must also have regard to Proposed WRPS Change 1 (National Policy Statement on Urban Development and Future Proof Strategy Update) (WRPS Change 1) – Decisions version under s74(2)(a)(i) of the RMA.
2. The key areas of interest for PPC37 relate to the WRPS and Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version, the Future Proof land use pattern, highly productive land/high class soils and ecological effects, particularly in relation to long-tailed bats and their habitat.
3. Given the proximity of the site to the Waikato River, we also highlight that it is important the plan change gives effect to Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River. This includes ensuring that stormwater is appropriately managed within the plan change area in accordance with the Waikato Stormwater Management Guideline and Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications.
4. WRC acknowledges that approximately 45.71ha of the plan change site is currently zoned Deferred Residential and located within the C5 Growth Cell, which is identified for future urban development post-2035 in the Waipā District Plan. The plan change proposes to bring forward the planned timing of development of this area. Whereas the remaining approximately 52.89ha of the site, which is currently zoned Rural, is not identified for future urban development in the WRPS, Future Proof Strategy 2024 nor Waipā District Plan.
5. We consider the proposed plan change does not currently provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed rezoning of the Rural Zone portion of the site meets the requirements for urban rezoning of highly productive land under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL); particularly that the rezoning is required to provide sufficient development capacity to meet demand for housing land, or that the 'live-zoning' of the C5 Growth Cell needs to be brought forward. Further assessment and evidence would be required to demonstrate whether the plan change meets the requirements of the NPS-HPL and the criteria for Out-of-sequence and unanticipated developments in Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.
6. Our submission is focused on ensuring a strategic and integrated approach is taken to the zoning of land for urban development and that proposed rezoning is supported by sufficient information in accordance with the WRPS, as is required by the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA).
7. The table below identifies specific areas where further assessment is recommended in relation to the relevant higher-order policy documents under the RMA. It also provides recommended amendments to proposed provisions.

Table of specific submission points: WRC submission to Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
Highly productive land and proposed urban rezoning				
8.	Plan change request (Section 9.2), Soils Assessment and Economic Assessment	Oppose	<p>As identified in section 9.2 of the plan change request, the NPS-HPL applies to the Rural Zone portion of the site. Clause 3.6 of the NPS-HPL applies to the proposed urban rezoning of this portion of the site.</p> <p>We consider that the assessments provided in the plan change request do not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Clause 3.6 is met; particularly Clauses 3.6(1)(a), 3.6(1)(b) and 3.6(5). The following submission points highlight particular areas of concerns with the Soils and Economic Assessments, which are reflected in the NPS-HPL assessment within the plan change request.</p> <p>Additionally, the WRPS seeks to avoid a decline in the availability of high class soils for primary production due to inappropriate subdivision, use or development (LF-O5, LF-P11). Method LF-M41 directs that district plans shall give priority to productive uses of high class soils including, among other actions, through restricting urban development on these soils.</p>	Provide a more robust assessment to demonstrate whether the proposed plan change gives effect to Clause 3.6 of the NPS-HPL.
9.	Plan change request (Section 9.2), Soils Assessment and Economic Assessment	Oppose	<p>Section 5 of the Soils Assessment discusses the transitional definition of ‘highly productive land’ prior to the mapping of highly productive land being undertaken by regional councils under the NPS-HPL. This states that <i>“LUC 1, 2, or 3 land is defined by reference to the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory or by any more detailed mapping that uses the Land Use Capability classification”</i>.</p> <p>This statement is not correct for the purpose of the NPS-HPL assessment, as the transitional definition of highly productive land in Clause 3.5(7) of the NPS-HPL refers to land that is zoned general rural or rural production at the commencement date and is LUC 1, 2 or 3 but does not meet any of the exemptions in Clause 3.5(7)(b). The NPS-HPL does not provide the ability to provide a site-specific assessment for the purpose of</p>	Clarify that the entirety of the Rural Zone portion of the plan change site meets the transitional definition of highly productive land under the NPS-HPL and ensure the relevant assessments reflect this.

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<p>demonstrating whether land meets the transitional definition under Clause 3.5(7).</p> <p>As identified in Section 6 of the Soils Assessment, based on the NZLRI map information at the commencement date of the NPS-HPL, the site comprises LUC2 and LUC3 soils. Therefore, under Clause 3.5(7) the entirety of the Rural Zone portion of the site meets the transitional definition of highly productive land.</p>	
10.	Plan change request (Section 9.2), Soils Assessment and Economic Assessment	Oppose in part	<p>In addition to the above, we query the classification and interpretation of the ‘non-productive/modified soil’ areas identified for the site in the Soils Assessment. The legends of some of the maps provided in the report (e.g. Figure 6) indicate that these areas contain “<i>disturbed soil and fill, excavated drains and spill, track, buildings, large windbreaks, and buildings and curtilage</i>”. The later text in the comments section of the report appears to indicate that the inclusion of linear ‘modified’ features such as farm tracks or large windbreaks are being used to help argue that otherwise contiguous areas of highly productive land (e.g. LUC 2s1) are fragmented, not easily used for <i>intensive</i> primary production, and (as a result) have reduced productive potential.</p> <p>We question this interpretation for the following reasons. While it is true that the soils directly under a formed farm track have likely been irreversibly modified and could be considered no longer ‘productive’ themselves, farm tracks could also be considered essential farm infrastructure required to enable the productive use of the adjacent paddocks. It may also be true that the presence of farm tracks and large windbreaks in relative proximity might hamper future arable use (although noting that large windbreaks could be removed but would likely involve some localised soil disturbance). However, such farm infrastructure could support intensive pastoral or horticultural uses (as opposed to hamper or limit such uses). We consider that using features such as farm tracks and windbreaks to help imply fragmentation of highly productive land and thus</p>	Amend the NPS-HPL assessment to reflect that the linear modified features such as farm tracks and large windbreaks on the site do not create a blanket reduction in productive potential.


Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<p>a <i>blanket</i> reduction in productive potential is an overstretch in interpretation.</p> <p>This is particularly relevant as this argument is used in the Economic Assessment and plan change request in assessing the NPS-HPL; for example, in section 9.2 of the plan change request and the executive summary of the Economic Assessment (pages 7 and 8).</p>	
11.	Economic Assessment	Oppose	<p>We consider the Economic Assessment does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed urban rezoning of the Rural Zone portion of the site is required to provide sufficient development capacity to meet demand for housing or business land to give effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, or that the ‘live-zoning’ of the C5 Growth Cell needs to be brought forward from the planned post-2035 timing.</p> <p>This assessment is required to demonstrate that the proposed plan change gives effect to Clause 3.6(1)(a) of the NPS-HPL and Method UFD-M49 and APP13 Criteria A of Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.</p> <p>We have a number of concerns with the robustness of the Economic Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consider the assessment does not provide sufficient reasoning to justify the use of the ‘current (2022) prices scenario’ rather than the ‘market growth scenario’ preferred in the Future Proof Housing Development Capacity Assessment 2023 (HDCA). The use of the ‘current prices scenario’ has a significant impact on the residential development capacity identified for Cambridge in the Economic Assessment, with insufficient analysis to justify this. • The assessment focuses on the ‘reasonably expected to be realised’ capacity identified in the HDCA, with limited consideration of the plan-enabled capacity. 	<p>That a more detailed and robust economic assessment of PPC37 be undertaken, in order to demonstrate whether or not the proposed plan change gives effect to Clause 3.6 of the NPS-HPL and the relevant provisions of the WRPS and Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.</p>

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the assessment focuses on ‘reasonably expected to be realised’ capacity when assessing sufficiency of existing development capacity in Cambridge, it does not provide any detailed assessment of the feasibility of providing the necessary infrastructure to service the plan change area. It acknowledges significant infrastructure costs but does not quantify that cost or test its effect on feasibility, lot prices, or housing affordability. The assessment conflates additional capacity with affordable supply without modelling likely dwelling prices or product mix. <p>We also note that the HDCA was prepared using the best available evidence at the time to set the base assumptions, including population projections based on 2018 census data. Since the 2023 HDCA was prepared, there are new population projections based on the 2023 census data and the market conditions have evolved. Any further detailed assessment must demonstrate how it has considered this more current evidence.</p>	
12.	Plan change request (Section 9.11.1.1)	Further assessment required	<p>Section 9.11.1.1 of the plan change request provides an assessment against Policies UFD-P1 and UFD-P11 and Appendix APP13 of the WRPS/Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version. A number of other objectives, policies and methods of the Urban form and development chapter of the WRPS/Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version are also relevant to PPC37, including Objective UFD-O1 , Policies UFD-P2, UFD-P12 and UFD-P13 (in relation to the proposed Neighbourhood Centres), Methods UFD-M1, UFD-M2, UFD-M8, UFD-M11 and UFD-M49, and Appendix APP11.</p> <p>These provisions provide policy direction on important matters relevant to the proposed urban rezoning, such as integration of land use and infrastructure and achieving compact urban environments that support multi-modal transport options.</p>	Ensure the proposed plan change is assessed against all relevant objectives, policies and methods of the WRPS and Proposed WRPS Change 1 – Decisions version.
Urban form and transport				
13.	Structure Plan	Support	We support design principles within the proposed Structure Plan that support creating a more compact and carbon positive development,	Retain principles within the Structure Plan relating to

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			encouraging mode shift and ensuring development has good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of enabling public or active transport.	compact urban form, encouraging mode shift and ensuring good accessibility, including by way of public and active transport.
Ecological effects				
14.	Plan change request (Sections 9.11.1.3 and 9.12)	Further assessment required	<p>Section 9.11.1.3 of the plan change request comments on Policy ECO-P2 of the WRPS. However, we note that given the ecological values of the plan change site identified in the Ecological Assessment, particularly in relation to long-tailed bats, a number of other provisions of the Ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity (ECO) chapter are also relevant to the plan change. This includes Objective ECO-O1, Policy ECO-P1 and Methods ECO-M1, ECO-M2, ECO-M3, ECO-M13 and ECO-M14.</p> <p>We also note that the northern portion of the plan change site is within a Biodiversity Corridor ('750m River/Stream Corridor') under the Waipā District Plan. We recommend that an assessment be provided in relation to the relevant objectives and policies within Section 24 of the district plan relating to maintenance and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity within biodiversity corridors.</p>	Provide assessments against all relevant provisions of the ECO chapter of the WRPS and the relevant objectives and policies of Section 24 of the Waipā District Plan.
15.	Ecological Assessment	Further assessment required	<p>We seek the following clarifications/areas of further assessment in relation to the Ecological Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.8.3 states that <i>“Through a combination of planting trees, installing artificial roost boxes, and treating weedy trees, the magnitude of effect from removing 120 potential roost trees is assessed as Negligible and the level of effect on long-tailed bats is assessed as Low.”</i> <p>We note that planting cavity-bearing trees is a long-term mitigation option and may not result in desired outcomes. Installing artificial roost boxes and treating weedy trees are not guaranteed to be successful at providing appropriate roosting conditions (thermal,</p>	Provide updates to the Ecological Assessment to address all matters identified in this submission point.

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<p>humidity, etc). We query how the outcomes of these mitigation options are to be assessed in the short-medium-long term. If these are not successful, have alternatives or increasing these measures been considered? When is the trigger point for this (e.g. in the short-term; after 5 years of no occupancy)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recommend Table 3 should identify the actual/potential effect, ecological value, magnitude, mitigation measures and overall level of effect prior to and following mitigation. • We recommend further detail be provided in relation to the bird surveys undertaken (Section 4.2), including how many hours and days in the year the opportunistic observations were undertaken, and what buffer/search distance from the site was used for the reviewed databases. • In relation to the lizard assessment (Section 5), we query whether there was no rank grass or suitable habitat around fencelines or on the western edge of the site where trees have been removed due to damage from Cyclone Gabrielle. Suitable surveys are required if habitat is available on site to determine copper skink presence. • Section 6 does not describe the wetlands on-site as 'natural inland wetlands' under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) criteria. We recommend the report specifies if all wetlands are considered 'natural inland wetlands'. • We note there appears to be a potential wetland in the north-eastern corner of the site. It would be useful to know if this area was considered in any assessment. • Regarding Table 13, with the lack of understanding of bat roost availability in the surrounding landscape (as per Section 3.8.2 of the report), it is unclear how the magnitude of effect would be considered low. The overall level of effect is dependent on the short-term success of mitigation measures which are not guaranteed to be successful. 	

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding the statement in Section 9.1 that <i>“The removal of potential roosting habitat for long-tailed bats is assessed as a Moderate level of effect and recommendations are made to remedy this effect through the creation of new suitable roosting habitat within the Site to reduce the level of effect to Low”</i>, we query how the suitability of created roosting habitat is going to be assessed. We recommend that more detail be provided on this. We recommend more detail be provided on how the proposed compensation was calculated. This includes how the figure of \$200,000 to be contributed to Waipā District Council or a local community trust for predator control and monitoring was calculated, and more detail on how many years this is likely to cover. 	
16.	Ecological Assessment and Structure Plan	Support in part	<p>We support the proposed protection and enhancement of the gully and riverbank areas on the site via the creation of reserves. It is important that the plan change maintains and enhances the functionality of the reserve areas as habitat for long-tailed bats and other indigenous species.</p> <p>We note that Figure 6 of the Ecological Assessment, which shows ‘proposed mitigation areas’, identifies the escarpment area in the north-west of the site as ‘Wildlife Habitat Area’, surrounded by a proposed ‘Light Management Area’. The proposed Structure Plan shows a Light Management Area in this location; however, the escarpment area itself is shown as Medium Density Residential Zone.</p> <p>It is unclear whether the Ecological Assessment recommendations are based on this area being protected as a reserve. This should be clarified, and the Structure Plan updated to ensure it reflects the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment.</p>	Clarify whether the Ecological Assessment recommends that the escarpment area in the north-west of the site be protected as reserve and update the Structure Plan accordingly.

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			 <p data-bbox="891 970 1599 1023"><i>Figure 1 - Excerpts from Ecological Assessment Figure 6 and proposed Structure Plan</i></p>	
17.	Ecological Assessment and Structure Plan	Further assessment required	<p>The north-eastern boundary of the site adjoins a vegetated gully area to the east. The area of the plan change site adjacent to this boundary is proposed to be rezoned to Medium Density Residential Zone. While there is a Light Management Area proposed along this boundary, the proposed development of this area has potential to reduce connectivity between the gully to the east of the site and the Waikato River. We recommend further consideration be provided to whether additional measures (e.g. a planted buffer area) are needed to address this.</p>	<p>Provide further consideration as to whether additional measures are needed to address potential loss of habitat connectivity in the north-eastern corner of the plan change area.</p>

Submission point	Provision	Support/oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			Creating buffers, linkages and corridors to support indigenous biodiversity values aligns with Policy ECO-P1 and Method ECO-M1 of the WRPS.	
18.	Structure Plan	Support with amendments	<p>We support the descriptions of the landscape response and open space network within the proposed Rider Park Structure Plan. However, we consider the Structure Plan text should clearly reflect the key recommendations of the Ecological Assessment affecting the layout and development of the plan change area. This would ensure future development remains in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment and aid in the assessment of future resource consent applications.</p> <p>We recommend the Structure Plan includes descriptions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ecological significance and purpose of the reserve areas, including protection of habitat for long-tailed bats, birds and lizards. • The purpose of the 20m Light Management Area (shown on the Structure Plan map), in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment. • Recommendations within the Ecological Assessment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise the presence of roads immediately adjacent to proposed reserves and the Rider Park boundary to minimise degradation of bat habitat due to increased lighting. - Retain/establish a tall hedge, fence, shelterbelt or other buffer on the boundary of the site and reserves. 	Amend the text of proposed Rider Park Structure Plan to better reflect key recommendations of the Ecological Assessment.
19.	New issues, objectives, policies, rules and assessment criteria/information requirements	New provisions recommended	Long-tailed bats are a Threatened - Nationally Critical species present in the Waipā area. The Ecological Assessment identifies that the PPC37 site provides commuting and foraging habitat for long-tailed bats and that the site contains potential bat roost trees. Given the identified ecological effects of the proposal, particularly on long-tailed bats and their habitat, we recommend the provisions of the plan change be strengthened to meet the direction of the WRPS, particularly Policies ECO-P1 and ECO-P2 and	Add issues, objectives, policies, rules and assessment criteria/information requirements in relation to the maintenance and enhancement of ecological values, particularly long-

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<p>Methods ECO-M1 and ECO-M13, and reflect the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment.</p> <p>The plan change should include a cascade of issues, objectives, policies, rules and assessment criteria/information requirements relating to ecological values within the plan change area, particularly long-tailed bats and their habitat, and measures to protect, maintain and enhance those values. These provisions should reflect the recommendations of Ecological Assessment (including any updates required to address the matters discussed in this submission).</p> <p>The rules should include a requirement to prepare an Ecological Management Plan for the plan change area as part of the first subdivision or land use consent for the area. This should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bat Management Plan (in accordance with Section 9.1 of the Ecological Assessment) prepared by a suitably experienced bat ecologist, which provides further detail on measures to avoid, minimise, remedy and compensate for effects on long-tailed bats and their habitat, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of foraging, commuting, and roosting habitats via the creation of reserves - Measures for reducing the risk of mortality, injury and disturbance to long-tailed bats during tree removal and earthworks, in accordance with the latest version of the Department of Conservation 'Protocols for Minimising the Risk of Felling Bat Roosts' - Lighting design to minimise adverse lighting effects - Planting/maintenance specifications for planting within the reserves and for retaining/establishing a tall hedge, fence, shelterbelt or other buffer on the boundary of the site and reserves 	<p>tailed bats and their habitat, within the plan change area. These provisions should reflect the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment.</p>

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details of how planting and light spill will be managed where transport corridors are located adjacent to proposed reserves and the Rider Park boundary - Installation, maintenance and monitoring of bat roosting boxes - Treatment of weedy trees to encourage the development of potential roosting habitat in existing forested gully and river embankment habitats on-site - Compensation measures to address residual adverse effects and achieve a net biodiversity gain, including restoration/planting plans, details of predator control and monitoring and details of the financial contributions. • A pest/weed management plan (including ongoing monitoring/maintenance specifications, consideration of control/ban on cats). • Guidance on avoidance of native bird nesting/nests during tree felling and land disturbance. • Guidance on avoidance if lizard habitat is available. Attention should be focussed during land disturbance activities around amenity garden habitat, rank grass (commonly along fencelines) and areas providing leaf litter, fallen debris, etc – if native lizards are detected a lizard management plan should be required. • Appropriate design and construction of stormwater infrastructure to demonstrate negligible impact on wetlands. <p>The rules should also require future resource consent applications in the Rider Park Structure Plan area to be consistent with the approved management plans.</p>	
20.	Rule 2A.4.2.70	Support	We support proposed Rule 2A.4.2.70 to mitigate lighting effects on long-tailed bats, in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment.	Retain proposed Rule 2A.4.2.70.

Submission point	Provision	Support/oppose	Submission	Relief sought
21.	Potential new rule	Further assessment required	Other recent plan changes in the Waipā and Hamilton areas affecting long-tailed bat habitat have included minimum building setback requirements from the edge of reserves/bat habitat areas. ¹ We note the plan change proposes geotechnical setbacks from the majority of the indicative reserve areas, however the Ecological Assessment does not discuss whether any setback rules are recommended to minimise adverse effects on bats/bat habitat within the Rider Park Structure Plan area.	Consider whether any additional building setback rule is needed to minimise adverse effects on bats/bat habitat.
Natural hazards				
22.	Stormwater Management Plan and Geotechnical Assessment	Neutral	WRC has not completed a technical review of the Stormwater Management Plan or Geotechnical Assessment appended to the plan change request, however we highlight the importance of ensuring that all natural hazards are appropriately identified and managed as part of the proposed plan change, including liquefaction, slope instability and flooding.	Ensure all natural hazards are appropriately identified and managed as part of the proposed plan change.
Acid Sulphate Soils				
23.	Soils Assessment	Neutral	WRC's preliminary regional Acid Sulphate Soils Probability spatial layer ² indicates a high probability of Acid Sulphate Soil occurrence across substantial areas of the southern part of the site, with remaining areas largely having a low probability of Acid Sulphate Soils. However, the regional Acid Sulphate Soil map is mapped at the regional scale and, in this location, the occurrence of high Acid Sulphate Soils probability areas is largely driven by the distribution of poorly drained Gley soils mapped at the regional scale ³ . The property scale soil assessment undertaken as part of the plan change application suggests that, although poorly or very poorly drained soils are present, their location and distribution is likely different and more complex at the property scale compared with the regional scale mapping.	If Acid Sulphate Soils are identified on the plan change site, ensure appropriate guidance for their management is followed.

¹ For example, Plan Change 14 - Mangaone Precinct & C10 Industrial Growth Cell – Hautapu to the Waipā District Plan.

² See [Waikato region acid sulfate soils preliminary risk assessment | Waikato Regional Council](#) for the Technical Report.

³ See [S-Map Online | Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research](#)

Submission point	Provision	Support/ oppose	Submission	Relief sought
			<p>We note that when disturbed (e.g. excavated) and exposed to oxygen, Acid Sulphate Soil materials can produce sulfuric acid which can become mobilised following rainfall. Damage to infrastructure (e.g. concrete) and impacts on the environment (e.g. aquatic ecosystems) can result. The potential for the occurrence of Acid Sulphate Soils at the site should be considered in relation to the proposed development and appropriate guidance for their management⁴ followed if identified on site.</p>	

⁴ [Managing acid sulfate soils | Waikato Regional Council](#)

Further information and hearings

WRC **wishes to be heard** at the hearings for Proposed Private Plan Change 37 – Rider Park Structure Plan to the Waipā District Plan in support of this submission and is prepared to consider a joint submission with others making a similar submission.

WRC **could not** gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

Submitter details

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I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission
I am not directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that:
(a) does not adversely affect the environment; and
(b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

7.5 NOTICE OF MOTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND MEMBERSHIP

Rā | Date: 13 March 2026

1. I, Councillor Noel Smith, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 30 April 2026, I intend to move the following motion. The motion has been seconded by Councillor Chris Hughes:

MOTINI | MOTION:

That Council revokes the resolution WRC25/114 (Council, 23 July 2025) and withdraw from Local Government New Zealand ending Council membership.

WHAKAMAHI | RATIONALE

2. There was a notice of motion tabled at the meeting of Council held on 27 March 2025, that Council withdraw from Local Government New Zealand. This item was left to lay on the table, pending a workshop on the matter.
3. At the Council meeting on 24 June 2025, a resolution to stay in Local Government New Zealand was defeated (five supported, six opposed – WRC25/99).
4. Council considered a notice of motion at the meeting held on 23 July 2025, revoking the previous decision (WRC25/99) and remaining a member of Local Government New Zealand (seven supported, seven opposed, carried using the chair's casting vote – WRC25/114).
5. Since August 2025, continued membership in Local Government New Zealand has yielded minimal benefit. The Regional sector presents a more suitable avenue for collaboration, and I am aware that progress is currently being made in this area.

NGĀ TOHUTORO | REFERENCES

6. [Council Agenda, 27 March 2025 \(Doc # 31676538\)](#)
7. [Council Minutes, 27 March 2025 \(Doc # 31750504\)](#)
8. [Council Workshop Agenda, 28 May 2025 \(Doc # 32324080\)](#)
9. [Council Workshop Minutes, 28 May 2025 \(Doc # 32220894\)](#)
10. [Council Agenda, 24 June 2025 \(Doc # 32421334\)](#)
11. [Council Minutes, 24 June 2025 \(Doc # 32465627\)](#)
12. [Council Agenda, 23 July 2025 \(Doc # 32681706\)](#)
13. [Council Minutes, 23 July 2025 \(Doc # 32742794\)](#)

ĀPITIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

Nil

8 PUBLIC EXCLUDED ITEMS

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

HE TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION:

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
<p>8.1 - Public Excluded Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 26 March 2026</p>	<p>s7(2)(a) of the Act - To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>s7(2)(i) of the Act - To enable Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)</p>	<p>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</p>

9 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!