

BEFORE THE WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARING COMMISSIONERS

PROPOSED WAIKATO DISTRICT PLAN

UNDER

Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, Heritage
and Cultural Landscapes.

Submitter

WAIKATO – TAINUI

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RUKUMOANA SCHAAFHAUSEN
ON BEHALF OF WAIKATO-TAINUI**

LANDSCAPES CHAPTER HEARING

21 AUGUST 2020



**Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated
PO Box 648
HAMILTON**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Teena koutou katoa, my name is Rukumoana Schaafhausen and I am named after my marae, Rukumoana, based in the heart of our tribal boundary of Ngaati Hauaa in Morrinsville. I serve as the Kaahui Ariki Representative, and Chair of Te Arataura, the executive board of Waikato-Tainui.
- 1.2 Today is my second opportunity to present to the Panel in this District Plan Review process. I previously attended the Overview Hearing and presented, from a governance perspective, about our expectations and aspirations for the District. The remarks I made through my evidence in the Overview Hearing are as relevant in this Landscapes Hearing. We have considered the Waikato River the central issue to this District Plan Review from the beginning.

2 RELATIONSHIP OF WAIKATO RIVER AND RIVER IWI

- 2.1 I start today by setting the scene and providing some context about the importance of the relationship with the River and Waikato-Tainui. The evidence of Donna Flavell touches on the expression of this relationship through the Waikato River Settlement.
- 2.2 There are two particular points that I want to make about our relationship with our awa tupuna; a relationship that is central to our everyday identity as Waikato.
- 2.3 First, I draw on the point that the Waikato River is a living ancestor to our people and is fundamental to our beliefs.
- 2.4 One of our rangatira and kaumaatua, Pumi Taituha summed up our relationship with our awa, noting:
- “The Waikato River is a living ancestor. It is part of us. Our River, symbolises a tuupuna, it is the name from which our tribe derives its identity and the issues that affect our River ultimately affects the tribe and its people.”
- 2.5 One of our kuia, Rangihinemutu (Nanny Iti) Rawiri of Te Awamaarahi Marae reconfirmed this view when she said that:

“The Waikato River is a tupuna and looks after us throughout our lives. The River feeds us, nurtures us, and takes care of us, healing our hurts and protecting us from harm. The River’s spiritual powers are as important today as they were in the past. The power of the River does not change or dwindle with the passing of the year...If people were going on journey, they would go to the River first before leaving the area. This is still practised today. When people were sick, we would send them to the River to anoint themselves and be healed. This is still practised today. To us, the most important thing about the River is the water’s healing power.”

- 2.6 Second, I want to make it clear that our tupuna awa is a single, indivisible being. Te Ture Whaimana is our modern-day attempt to reflect our awa’s indivisibility and find a

place for it in a contemporary legislative context. In the words of our late kaumaatua, Kamira (Binga) Henry Haggie:

“The (Waikato) River is a being, a mother, complete and whole body comprising the water, the bed and the banks from its source to the sea. The life of the River and thus of the tribe is in its intactness – no limb struck from its body or the head separate from the heart.”

2.7 Today, this view remains. We still go to the awa in challenging times, we hold karakia and our practices to whakarite (bless) ourselves. Our tribal headquarters at Hopuhopu and Hamilton overlook our awa so we can draw on its power and strength.

2.8 Ultimately, the Waikato River is a representation of the tribe’s spiritual authority and power, and it harbours the mauri ora (life-force) of Waikato-Tainui.

3 TE TURE WHAIMANA – VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE WAIKATO RIVER

3.1 The Vision and Strategy was redress to Waikato-Tainui (and to other river iwi), intended to be a game changer for our awa tupuna. Its application within the Waikato Region is an ongoing education process for the community, but one that we are committed to. The evidence of Donna Flavell speaks to this in detail.

3.2 Part of our responsibility is ensuring that Te Awa o Waikato is recognised in the manner intended through the Settlement legislation in local planning contexts. In this context, this can be achieved by acknowledging the Waikato River as an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 Through the Waikato District Plan Review, Waikato-Tainui seeks to give expression to the tribal view of, and relationship with, the Awa o Waikato; a view and relationship that is legislatively recognised.

4.2 The recognition of Te Awa o Waikato as an outstanding natural feature or landscape is a significant, and long overdue, contributor to achievement of this outcome.

Dated this 21st day of August 2020



Rukumoana Schaafhausen
CHAIR, TE ARATAURA