

## Policy 49: Recognising and providing for matters of significance to tangata whenua – consideration

Table 10: Resource management with tangata whenua Objectives 25, 26, 27 and 28 Methods 4, 13, 38, 39 & 49 Consider alongside policies 1 to 60

When preparing a change, variation or review of a district or regional plan, the following matters shall be recognised and provided for:

- (a) the exercise of kaitiakitanga;
- (b) mauri, particularly in relation to fresh and coastal waters;
- (c) mahinga kai and areas of natural resources used for customary purposes; and
- (d) places, sites and areas with significant spiritual or cultural historic heritage value to tangata whenua.

### Explanation

This policy recognises the importance of the listed matters of significance to tangata whenua. Accordingly, the policy requires that as part of a plan change, variation or review, local authorities must recognise and provide for these matters. In practice, this means that local authorities' first priority should be on avoiding adverse effects on the listed matter, while recognising that this does not necessarily preclude regional and district plans from allowing these effects to occur in appropriate cases.

There are several ways of gathering information on matters of significance to the region's *tangata whenua*, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Referring to the relevant iwi authorities and/or iwi management plan(s)
- Requesting a cultural assessment<sup>10</sup>
- Seeking technical assistance
- Working with iwi authorities, hapū, whānau or tangata whenua associated with specific marae to identify potential effects on cultural values and *kaitiakitanga*

Kaitiakitanga refers to the expression of Māori authority, mana ethics and guardianship and may be exercised in respect of a particular locality, place or resource. Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) involves the protection of *mauri* and a duty to care for the environment so that it remains in as good as, or better, state for future generations.

Kaitiakitanga is linked inextricably to rangatiratanga (self-determination) as it may only be practised by those iwi, hapū or whānau that possess customary authority in their area. Kaitiaki (those who exercise kaitiakitanga) are knowledgeable about the local environment and resources. The ways in which iwi, hapū, or whānau define kaitiakitanga relating to ancestral land, water and other taonga, and how they wish to have their kaitiaki role recognised, is a matter for them to decide and communicate to local authorities. There are various methods of kaitiakitanga natural resources customary regulations, including rāhui, or placing a temporary restriction or ban.

Mauri is the life force that exists in all things in the natural world, including people. Mauri comprises both physical and spiritual qualities. Mauri can be harmed by insensitive resource use. For example, the health and vitality of the sea, streams and rivers and the plants and animals they support can be threatened by activities such as discharges of pollutants, stormwater, sewage and runoff of contaminants from land; excessive water use; changing the course of water bodies or diverting water between catchments or rivers. Māori consider that rivers are the life blood of the land and that the wellbeing of a river is reflected in the wellbeing of people. Similarly, the mauri of the land and air and the plants and animals they support can be harmed by practices such as clearance of vegetation, soil disturbance and disposal of wastes. The mauri of coastal waters is harmed by pollutants and sewage, and by

<sup>10</sup> A cultural assessment may include, but is not limited to, Māori history, Treaty claims and settlements, presence of significant sites, social effects and recommendations for avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects

insensitive use and development which diminishes the natural character, life-supporting capacity and ecosystem health of the coastal environment.

Mauri can be restored, maintained or enhanced through sensitive management which supports the restoration of the natural character of the place, and the health and vitality of the ecosystem it supports.

Mahinga kai is the customary gathering of food and natural materials and the places where those resources are gathered.<sup>11</sup> Resources used for cultural purposes include, but are not limited to, flora and fauna for rongoa Māori (medicine); flora and fauna for weaving (for example, pingao, kiekie, bird feathers); and wood, such as tōtara, for carving purposes. Access to these resources is important for continuing cultural traditions.

Threats to mahinga kai and natural resources include degradation of water quality in fresh water and marine environments through poor stormwater, sewage and run-off management; loss of water resources and associated ecosystems through water abstraction, drainage and flood management works; exclusion from access to mahinga kai through the construction of physical barriers such as roads or through changes in ownership, management and control. Major threats to natural resources used for customary purposes are similar to the threats to mahinga kai, including development, changing land use, loss of ecosystems, poor management and disposal of wastes, unsustainable resource use, and exclusion from access to sites where valued cultural resources are found.

Many places, sites and areas in the region that are associated with Māori histories, traditions and tikanga are sites of heritage value. Such sites are valued because of the historical and traditional practices and events associated with them. Places, sites and areas with Māori historic heritage value are important because of their social, cultural and spiritual significance not only to Māori, but to all people of the Wellington region. They are an integral part of the region's heritage and provide links between the past, present and future generations.

Some heritage sites are wāhi tapu, sacred places of immense importance. Places can be considered sacred because of past events or activities (such as a battle or ceremony), or where the whenua (placenta) is returned to the earth, or where a valued resource is found.

Places, sites and areas with significant spiritual or cultural historic values to tangata whenua include wāhi tapu and other sites, features of historical, spiritual or cultural significance to tangata whenua, and the cultural and spiritual values associated with them. These include, but are not limited to:

- Tauranga waka (canoe landing places)
- Mahinga mātaitai (places for gathering seafood, fishing grounds and reefs)
- Taonga raranga (plants used for weaving, such as kiekie and pingao)
- Wāhi tīpuna (ancestral sites)
- Landscape features referred to in whakataukī (proverbs and stories)
- Landscape features that define iwi boundaries, e.g. mountains, streams, rivers, estuaries
- Coastal access points
- Residential sites such as pa, marae, papākainga
- Urupā (burial sites)
- Historic battlegrounds

The identification of these heritage values rests with iwi, hapū, whānau and marae in accordance with their kaitiaki responsibilities.

<sup>11</sup> Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, Section 167.