

TANGATA WHENUA/TCC STANDING COMMITTEE

Chairman's report to meeting 26 April 2023 – Maungatapu Marae

Tēnā koutou e ngā karangatanga maha

tēnā anō hoki tātou i runga i ngā tini āhuatanga o te ao hurihuri.

This is my third meeting as Chair of this Standing Committee, having missed the last meeting at Waimapu Marae through illness. Over the short time I've had the honour of holding this Chair I've attempted to get a feel for the extent of the work the tangata whenua representatives, Te Rangapu, are having to deal with, what opportunities there are to make the best impacts, and to begin to understand how the relationship between the Council and tangata whenua, through Te Rangapu, can be leveraged for the betterment and wellbeing of all.

This is still a work in progress for me and I have no doubt will become a lot more coherent over time and with greater exposure at this level to the range of issues we're grappling with. There are however some initial observations that I make and that over time I may adjust, refine, actively progress, or even discard.

Not surprisingly the first observation is the breadth and depth of issues Te Rangapu representatives are having to deal with, and consequently their hapū and marae representatives and whānau. These comprise responding to unrelenting consenting processes, central and local government planning and consultation requirements, resource and environmental management reforms. Stretched and inadequately resourced hapū representatives and marae whānau are continually finding themselves in situations where they simply do not have the capacity to respond to everything that is being asked of them and are therefore forced to make choices – often at their peril - about what to leave and what to action/progress.

In one of the country's highest growth areas and the consequential impacts on the environment and natural resources these demands will only increase.

Central government reforms, most notably in recent times Three Waters, Resource Management and Environmental Management, can only be described as eye-watering.

The extreme weather events of the last few months and their associated consequences on the natural and built environments and the wellbeing of people and communities, has pushed climate change even more into the public debate as an increasing area of concern for our population. Indeed an article I was reading last weekend noted that climate change was one of the top two priorities/concerns for the general public (the other being the cost of living!).

The need for national and local level responses by iwi, hapū and marae communities on climate change matters are increasingly becoming an area that Māori see as needing more prevalence. The list goes on.....

In situations outline above Māori usually always get left behind.

Heoi anō, this isn't intended to be a narrative of despair and hopelessness. There is a great opportunity that's been created by the relationship between the Tauranga City Council and tangata whenua through Te Rangapu. It is one that needs to be maximised and focused optimally to both support tangata whenua in achieving their aspirations and their obligations in the face of the unrelenting demands I've outlined above. Equally it needs to be maximised and focused optimally to

support the Tauranga City Council to meet its obligations, Treaty based and otherwise, to tangata whenua and also Council's obligations to the wider community.

The question I have is "Is it? (maximised and focused optimally to meet the needs and aspirations of both parties)."

I don't have a view either way about this, but I would be interested to understand over the next little while what we were collectively wanting to achieve over the last 12 months and whether we achieved it; similarly what we're wanting to achieve over the next 12 months and how we're going against that. Are we sweating the big stuff or the small stuff? Are we satisfied with what we're working on and what we've achieved?

Equally importantly have we created a solid enough platform for this relationship model and way of working together with the Tauranga City Council to endure and be of value beyond the tenure of the current Commissioners?

All or some of the issues and questions I've outlined in this report may well have been raised and discussed in the past and if so I'll bring myself up to speed over time. If they haven't then I'm keen to progress discussions going forward.

Ahakoā he iti tenei, hei aha aku whakaaro ēnei

Anthony Fisher
Chairperson