



T Ū W H A R E T O A
M Ā O R I T R U S T B O A R D

Media Statement

30 August 2019

Tūwharetoa lifts rāhui on parts of Lake Taupō and upper Waikato Awa following wastewater spill

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board (the Trust Board) has lifted a rāhui it imposed six weeks ago on parts of Lake Taupō and the upper Waikato Awa (river) following the collapse of a wastewater pipe that resulted in an estimated 800,000 litres of wastewater spilling into the lake.

The rāhui was imposed on 5 July, following the wastewater spill on 2 July, to ensure the community was kept safe and the areas affected by the spill (Tapuaeharuru Bay and the Waikato Awa to Aratiatia) had an opportunity to rest and recover.

Trust Board Chief Executive Topia Rameka says when the spill occurred, one of the first priorities was to put in place an environmental and cultural monitoring plan, driven by Tūwharetoa mātauranga (knowledge), that would inform kaitiaki (guardians) about the state of the moana (lake) and awa.

“Over these past six or so weeks, we have worked alongside our marae representatives to oversee the infrastructure remediation work,” says Mr Rameka.

“We have also been busy implementing our monitoring plan which pulls together cultural data, water sampling, sediment sampling from the shore and lakebed, and mahinga kai sampling”.

Mr Rameka says that following a thorough analysis of all the data, the Trust Board is pleased to report that Tapuaeharuru Bay has returned to normal – kua ea.

“As a result, a karakia was undertaken yesterday and the rāhui over the bay has been lifted – kua whakawatea.

“The restriction over the immediate construction site remains in place until the final remediation work has been completed.

“At the outset, we were clear that our moana and awa are very resilient and in time would heal themselves.

“We are so pleased with this outcome and wish to acknowledge our marae and kaumātua (elders) for their leadership during this time.”

Mr Rameka says lifting of the rāhui does not signal the end of the Trust Board’s work on the matter, rather efforts will now be focused on understanding why the incident occurred.

“This was a significant event for our community and it’s important that we take the time to understand what took place in the lead up and take every measure to ensure it does not happen again.”

ENDS

Media contact:

Topia Rameka
Chief Executive
Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board
021588152

About Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board ('TMTB/the Trust Board') was established in 1926, on behalf of and for the benefit of present and future generations of Ngāti Tūwharetoa.

In September 2007, the Crown signed a Deed with the Trust Board regarding Taupō Waters (including Lake Taupō). This Deed agrees and clarifies the position and interests of the Crown, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and the public. TMTB continues, as they have since 1926, to provide access to Taupō Waters for the public of New Zealand.

TMTB is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and wellbeing of Taupō Waters, and supporting Ngāti Tūwharetoa to achieve its social, cultural, environmental and economic goals.

www.tuwharetoa.co.nz