

**NGAI
TOHIANGA**
IMPACT
ASSESSMENT
REPORT 2021

OTURU MARAE ENVIRONMENTAL UNIT



**RENEWAL OF CONSENTS FOR THE
KAITAIA
WASTEWATER
TREATMENT PLANT**

PRODUCED BY
OTURU KAITIKI

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Introduction & Proposal

- [1] Oturu Kaitiaki Ltd (Oturu Kaitiaki) represent Ngai Tohianga and Te Paatu ki Oturu hapū at Oturu Marae to address proposed resource consents within their respective mana whenua rohe.
- [2] Ngai Tohianga and Te Paatu ki Oturu are descendants of Kahutianui and Te Parata, recognised tupuna of Ngati Kahu iwi.
- [3] The Hapū of Oturu marae have an ahikaroa status like no other hapū or iwi in Kaitaia, that is whānau and hapū of Oturu Marae continue to reside and retain ancestral land in their mana whenua rohe.
- [4] Oturu Kaitiaki use the terms ‘mana whenua’ to mean whānau, hapū and iwi that continue to exercise their authority and practises in their ancestral lands. Tangata whenua is a term used here to express iwi Māori.
- [5] Oturu Kaitiaki acknowledge that the Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour are taonga (sites of significance) to mana whenua of Oturu Marae.
- [6] Far North District Council (The applicant) is seeking to renew discharge consents for the Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant for 15 years, to replace the existing consent conditions which will expire 30 November 2021.
- [7] The applicant operates the Kaitaia wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) which services the urban areas of Kaitaia and Awanui. The treated wastewater is discharged into the Awanui River on the opposite side of Bonnets Road. The Awanui River drains into the Rangaunu Harbour.
- [8] Oturu Kaitiaki recognise that the Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is within the mana whenua rohe of Oturu Marae (Figure 1.)
- [9] The applicant requires three (3) discharge consents, one for the discharge of odour to air, one for seepage from the base of the WWTP and sludge facilities and one for discharge of treated wastewater into the Awanui River.
- [10] Kaitaia WWTP is located along Bonnets Road, 8km West of Oturu Marae, the discharge point in question is indicated in Figure 2.





Figure 1: Te Mana Whenua Rohe o Ngai Tohianga, source: Charlie Larkins

- [11] The applicant states that the conditions on the consent for discharge to air and seepage from the base of the WWTP and sludge facilities will be similar to those on the current consent. For the discharge to water, the conditions stipulating the quality of the wastewater discharge will be much stricter than the current conditions as per the new provisions of the Proposed Northland Regional Plan.



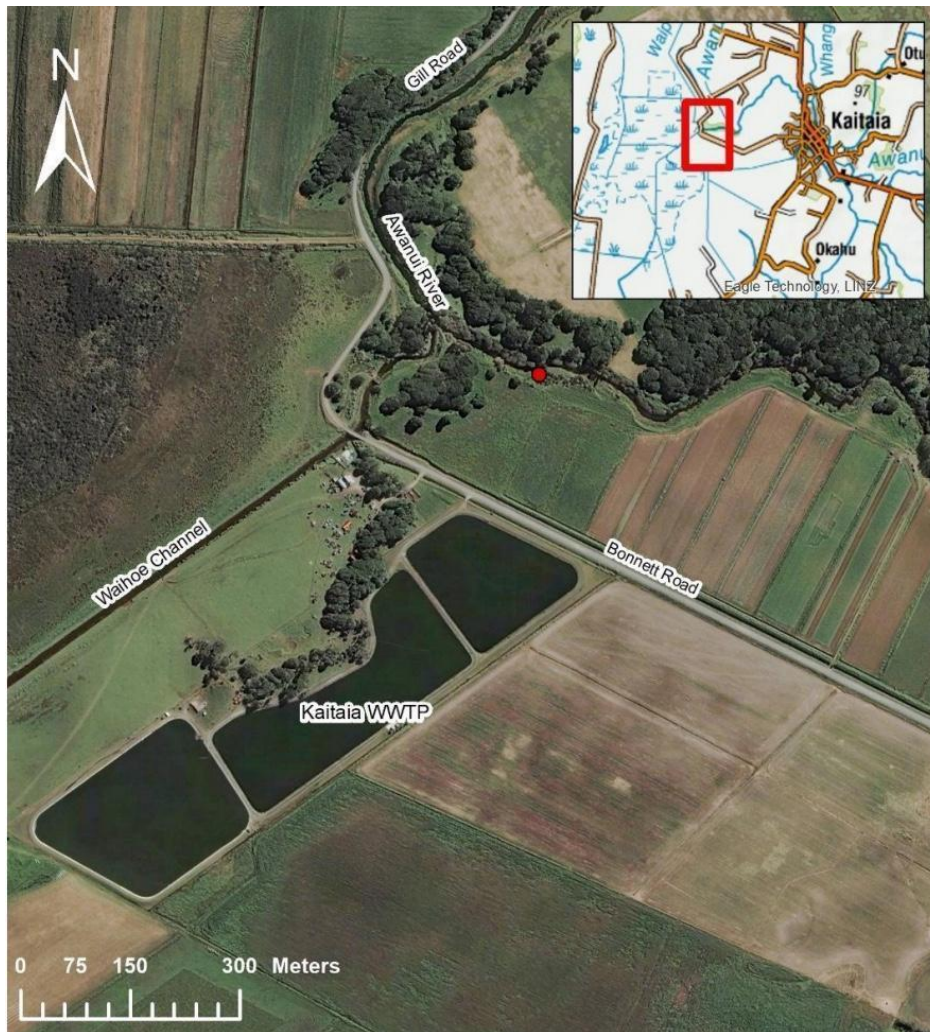


Figure 2: Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant and marked discharge point

- [12] The applicant has provided evidence and rationale to its preferred upgrade model (Refer to option 1 of FNDC Kaitaia and Kaikohe WWTP Assessment) which requires the removal of wetland + upgrade to septage system + in pond upgrades (Aerators + Baffle Curtain + Chemical dosing + tertiary treatment) (Clarifier + UV).

Far North District Council (FNDC) have engaged Oturu Kaitiaki to carry out a Ngai Tohianga Impact Assessment Report:

- [13] To Identify how hapū at Oturu Marae are adversely affected by the discharges from the Kaitaia WWTP,
- [14] Provide mitigation of any adverse cultural effects as part of FNDC's 2021 renewal of resource consent application for the Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant, and for hapū affected by adverse effects of the WWTP to provide consent conditions agreed between FNDC and Oturu Marae.



This CIA is structured as follows:

- [15] Mitigation measures and consent conditions are provided in each relevant resource consent section, and
- [16] Mitigation measures and consent conditions are also given particular attention in response to Trade Waste Discharge and Tangata Whenua and Cultural Values.

Proposed Regional Plan (PRP)

- [17] The applicant is guided by the PRP to undertake an assessment of effects of treated wastewater. The PRP states that guidance is required for NRC to include target attribute states in its regional planning instruments for a range of physical, chemical and biological attributes of water at (or above) national bottom lines. It is expected that NRC will notify a plan change to the PRP within the next three years to implement the national planning requirements.

General Comments

- [18] Oturu Kaitiaki recognises that the discharge of treated wastewater from the WWTP to the Awanui river that drains into Rangaunu Harbour has an adverse effect on the mauri (health) of our taonga.
- [19] Oturu Kaitiaki considers that a high priority for mana whenua in improving the mauri of Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour is to avoid treated wastewater being discharged to water bodies.

Community Engagement

- [20] Oturu Kaitiaki considers the FNDC 'drop-in day' tour are valuable forums for the community to meet FNDC staff in person that are leading infrastructure projects in our community. People of the Community have an opportunity to respond to FNDC proposals verbally without having to submit plans and proposals in writing. Writing submissions is a luxury most people do not have time (and sometimes ability) to do, so meeting in person and providing oral submissions, is another method to engage meaningfully with community members.

Recommendation

- [21] Oturu Kaitiaki recommends that FNDC drop in days continue to occur on an annual basis to engage with Community members.



Existing Environment

- [22] The Awanui River Catchment embodies a multitude of significant Māori cultural institutions such as: whakapapa, maunga, ngahere, awa, whenua, moana and mana whenua. The Maungataniwha range meanders North to create Te Puhi Stream, Victoria and Takahue River, and combined with the Awanui River, this Catchment scales up to 220km² above Kaitaia.
- [23] Narrow flood channels push Awanui River towards Kaitaia where the awa then spreads onto expansive floodplains; West towards Ahipara, and North draining at Rangaunu Harbour (Figure 3).
- [24] Oturu Kaitiaki recognises that the WWTP is an existing site within the Awanui River Catchment.
- [25] The receiving environment of the discharge point is registered by Oturu Marae as a high priority area to restore and revitalise the mauri of both the Awanui river and its surrounding area.

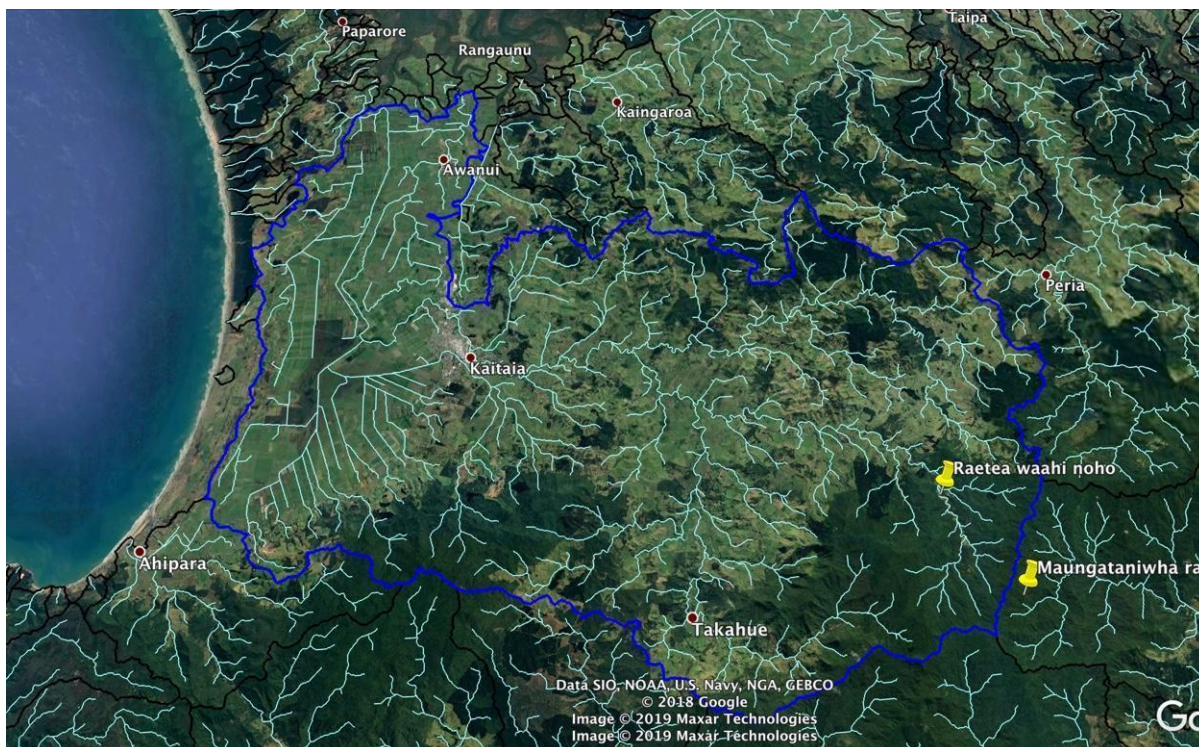


Figure 3: Awanui River Catchment and its tributaries draining North to Rangaunu Harbour



Discharge of treated wastewater to the Awanui River

- [26] The applicant proposes a shortening of the current zone of reasonable mixing from 150m to 120m and continued monitoring of water quality standards as per the PRP for Northland.
- [27] The Baseline Ecological Report of Awanui River at Kaitāia Wastewater Treatment highlights the intensive agriculture land-use practices within the Awanui Catchment as significant contributors to the degraded water quality and stream health of the Awanui River, both upstream and downstream of the point of discharge.
- [28] E Coli is a key water quality indicator that reflects the ongoing agricultural land use surrounding the Awanui River. It is imperative to include this parameter in the water monitoring programme

Trade waste discharge from Juken New Zealand Limited (JNL)

The following comments are related to the Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant Trade Waste Effects Assessment Report:

- [29] The assessment carried out by PDP Ltd highlights two issues:
- 1) At times, JNL operations used to treat their trade waste malfunction and concentrated amounts of contaminants such as Ammoniacal-N and Nitrogen exceed their expected concentration levels.
 - 2) It is apparent that FNDC is not formally notified of JNL trade waste discharge levels when they exceed their general contaminant concentration levels in these instances.

Findings and conditions proposed

- [30] Oturu Kaitiaki considers it is essential for a mitigation measure to be included in the resource consent to address trade waste discharge 'events' that exceed standard levels. Such a mitigation measure would require that the applicant seek a trade agreement with JNL to establish formal protocols of managing trade waste discharges into the Kaitaia Wastewater Treatment Plant, that include breaches of exceeding standard level of concentrated contaminants.



Tangata Whenua and Cultural Values

Adverse Effects on indigenous biodiversity of water and coastal bodies, Māori non-commercial fisheries

- [31] Oturu Kaitiaki acknowledges that the existing WWTP site is fundamental to servicing Kaitaia's current and future residential development to treat human waste. The WWTP site contributes considerably to protecting public health and prevents the outbreak of disease to people in the community of the Kaitaia and wider areas.
- [32] Long term agricultural land use, removal of ancient native forests and wetlands, sedimentation from urban development and earthworks, treated wastewater and stormwater discharge all contribute to the adverse effect of mauri of the Awanui River Catchment.
- [33] Nonetheless, Oturu Kaitiaki espouses that protection of mauri of Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour is paramount to mana whenua and Tangata whenua values.
- [34] To protect the mauri of Awanui River from adverse effects as mentioned above is to progress towards protecting the health and wellbeing of water itself and to all people within its catchment. Oturu Kaitiaki recognises the essential human needs of drinking water is paramount. Therefore in the case of treating wastewater, in practice this means moving towards a land-based wastewater treatment operation and immediately working towards revitalising the mauri of Awanui River via restoration work.
- [35] Oturu Kaitiaki record some of the vertebrates and invertebrates, native tree and shellfish species within the Awanui River that are significant to mana whenua. However, what is important to note is that none of these species live in isolation and that a healthy biodiverse ecosystem is required for enhancing the mauri of all living and non-living beings within the Awanui River Catchment.
- [36] Species recorded by Oturu Kaitiaki include; eels, freshwater crayfish, mullet, patiki, white bait, raupo, harakeke, karaka trees, native forest stands, native bird species like kukupa, shellfish species such as pipi and tuatua, kokota, huawai that were once all present in and along the Awanui River.
- [37] Maturanga o te whānau, o te Hapū are crucial institutions of knowledge that enabled whānau and hapū to harvest successfully and safely within their rohe. The



transmission of this matauranga allowed the continuation of traditional practises such as kaitiaki to occur. It is important to note that one exists due to the other. So protecting matauranga of traditional practices to harvest kai is just as important as mahinga kai.

Mahinga Kai

- [38] Awanui River historically harboured rich sanctuaries for tuna migration and whitebait spawning sites. Whitebait spawning sites have been historically recorded near the original Waihou Channel and tuna migrations continue to occur from and within the Awanui River and its many tributaries today. These mahinga kai sites existed throughout the Awanui River.
- [39] Today, there is little to no traditional practises of harvesting kai with the tributaries and streams of the Awanui River Catchment. Many mahinga kai sites have been decimated as a result of past activities mentioned earlier in this section.
- [40] Taiapure and Mataitai are recorded in a number of mana whenua historical documents within the Rangaunu Harbour. The Waitangi Tribunal Muriwhenua report documents how Waha Popata (a renowned kaitiaki of the Rangaunu Harbour) had the duty and responsibility of regulating kaimoana. Waha would announce shark fishing for kapeta (carpet shark) for two days every year, and a signal (cannon) was fired to commence the season.
- [41] Pioke, a renowned shark species for mana whenua, found sanctuary within the Rangaunu Harbour. While the abundance of Pioke has significantly reduced, these species continue to live within the degenerated taiapure areas of Rangaunu.

Sites Ngai Tohianga have a special relationship with

- [42] The Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour are both significant tupuna waterbody sites to mana whenua. These were historically tauranga waka sites to enable mana whenua to: hunt and gather kai for whānau; perform traditional customary practises; transport whānau; and bathe and enjoy the mauri of the wai. These traditional practises gave rise to and maintained the mauri ora for the awa, harbour and therefore, for mana whenua.
- [43] Access to the Awanui River to carry out traditional customs and practises is paramount to maintain the health and wellbeing of mana whenua. Access to our rivers ensures continued occupation and relationship to Taiao to enable tangata whenua to continue to carry out their customary practises with their local waterways.



- [44] The Awanui river receiving treated discharge from the Kaitaia WWTP (point source) creates a significant site for mana whenua to restore and revitalise the mauri of the wai.

Findings and conditions proposed

The existing environment of the WWTP and its discharge point to the Awanui River is a living and breathing tupuna that holds its own mauri. While the mauri of the river has degraded overtime mana whenua continue to hold hope and opportunity to restore and enhance its mauri through māori approaches to environmental and mana whenua health.

Oturu Kaitiaki provides the following mitigation measures to encourage the restoration of mauri of Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour:

- [45] The installation and/or financial of appropriate natural infrastructure such as riparian planting of native species, restoration projects, providing riparian planting plans for erosion-prone riverbank areas, providing mana whenua access to Awanui River, providing educational restoration resources to encourage ecosystems that support tuna migratory and whitebait spawning sites of significance identified by mana whenua.
- [46] Recognised Taiapure and Mahinga kai sites within the Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour are restored through tangata whenua rejuvenation programmes for fish, shellfish, seagrass, tuna, whitebait, plant and tree species.
- [47] Māori approaches to the restoration including riparian planting and safe access to the Awanui river at the discharge point of the WWTP is undertaken.
- [48] The applicant shall capture cultural indicators of stream health identified by mana whenua in the water quality monitoring programme (as per schedule 1 Monitoring schedule).
- [49] The applicant shall resource mana whenua capacity to measure and monitor cultural indicators of stream health within the current zone of reasonable mixing and appropriate areas agreed to by mana whenua representatives and the applicant.

Discharge of treated wastewater to land (Seepage)

- [50] The applicant records that the effect of treated wastewater discharge to land, groundwater and surface water is less than minor and the closest known bore (LOC



210525) is unlikely to be affected by any seepage discharge from the WWTP or sludge storage beds.

Findings and conditions proposed

- [51] The applicant shall avoid potential sludge storage beds or WWTP surface or groundwater seepage in the event that flooding events occur.
- [52] The applicant shall notify mana whenua via email in the event that seepage occurs to either land, groundwater or surface water.

Discharge of contaminants to Air (Odour)

- [53] Oturu Kaitiaki records that odour related to wastewater treatment plants is a potential adverse effect. We recommend riparian planting at the discharge point as a mitigation measure to address this issue.

Findings and conditions proposed

- [54] Riparian planting along the Awanui River should be undertaken at appropriate areas identified by the applicant as a mitigation measure to address potential odour.
- [55] Riparian planting should include locally sourced native trees and plants such as; Harakeke species, Rautahi, Pukio, Sedges, Mānuka, Tītoki, Ribbonwood, Mahoe, Karamu, Kānuka, Koromiko, Matapou, Nikau, Pūriri, Rimu, Rewarewa, Kōwhai, Karaka, Kahikatea, Tōtara.



Final Decision

- [56] Oturu Kaitiaki supports in principle the applicant's role in treating wastewater of the Kaitaia township area and recognises that the treatment of Kaitaia Wastewater is of high priority to protect human health.
- [57] Oturu Kaitiaki supports the protection of the mauri of Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour and that this is of high priority to Mana Whenua and tangata whenua in order to protect human health.
- [58] Oturu Kaitiaki supports in principle a land-based Wastewater Treatment Plant as the long term solution for Kaitaia, this addresses mana whenua values of restoring and protecting mauri of the Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour.
- [59] The applicant shall use an appropriate mechanism to bring together multiple mana whenua perspectives, aspirations and priorities to shape feasibility studies prior to December 2023. This will enable the Long-Term Plan engagement process which needs to be resourced accordingly to invite mana whenua participation.
- [60] The applicant shall meet annually with mana whenua to review the consent conditions alongside the Far North District Council, Far North Waters and NRC.
- [61] The applicant shall incorporate mana whenua cultural health indicators of wai mauri within the water monitoring programme.

