

4 May 2009

Attention: Garry Maloney

Freepost Environment Bay of Plenty  
Regional Land Transport Programme Submission  
Environment Bay of Plenty  
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Tēna koe

## **REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME 2009 - 2012**

Thank you for providing additional time for our submission to the Regional Land Transport Programme 2009 – 2019.

This is the submission of Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa.

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa is established as the governance entity for Ngāti Awa by Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa Act 2005, operative from 26 October 2005

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa holds statutory acknowledgements for various areas, rivers and resources in the Bay of Plenty region, including a gazetted rohe moana along the coast from Wahieroa in the west to Maraetotara in the east.

The Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 provides information about Ngāti Awa statutory areas identified through the settlement process.

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa is also the owner of a number of significant land holdings in the eastern Bay of Plenty as well as being an active advocate and catalyst for Ngāti Awa's economic development alongside highly productive Māori Land Trusts affiliated to Ngāti Awa iwi.

As such Ngāti Awa is a key stakeholder in the production of goods to be transported throughout New Zealand and for import.

Forestry, agriculture and fisheries are the main activities undertaken by Ngāti Awa.

Transportation of our products to market is critical to the economic well-being of Ngāti Awa people.

The use of rail is preferred as it removes heavy vehicles and heavy cargo from public highways while reducing fuel costs, harmful emissions and, most important of all, improving road safety.

## **Submissions**

### *General Support (In Principle)*

The principles of the draft Regional Land Transport Programme are generally supported.

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa agrees that the Regional Land Transport Committee and staff at Environment Bay of Plenty have identified key issues in the draft programme.

The Ngāti Awa submission comments on priorities and activities associated with these issues.

### *Bay of Plenty Transport Priorities*

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa makes the following submissions in respect to priorities identified in the draft programme.

*Priority Three: Optimise use of the existing network by improving provision for public transport, walking and cycling.*

Public transport, walking and cycling are different transport modes. Provision for them all in the Regional Land Transport Programme is supported, however it is suggested that the Regional Land Transport Committee deal with them as separate modes of transport as there are different opportunities for each of the three modes.

For example, existing stop-banks and levies can provide access opportunities for cycling and walking modes of transport. In many cases there will be opportunities to provide for walking and cycling access-ways using flood protection infrastructure around the region. Likewise these important structures are in both rural and urban areas.

Relief Sought: Study and where appropriate establish safe and secure walking and cycling access-ways along stop-banks.

Reasons:

- Can contribute to separating vulnerable walking and cycling modes of transport from roads used by vehicles
- Utilises existing corridors owned, managed and maintained by regional council.

Public transport like buses and taxis will continue to use roadways. Provision of bus and taxi lanes in urban areas will minimise travel time for public transport users. Separation of transport modes will assist in the minimisation of travel time and improve road safety.

Relief sought: Provide bus and taxi lanes in urban areas

Reasons: Improves safety, reduces travel time, and supports increased use of public transport.

*Priority Five: Reduce the social and environmental effects of heavy vehicles*

Priority Five is supported.

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa agrees that the volume of heavy vehicles traversing the regions road network is continuing to increase.

Forestry, farming, horticulture and fishing activities are the mainstay of economic well-being in the eastern Bay of Plenty.

Quick, efficient and cheap transportation of local produce is critical to the economic advancement of the eastern Bay of Plenty.

*Existing Kawerau Railhead*

The current location of the railhead at Kawerau is strongly supported. It provides a local hub for transportation of heavy produce to the Port of Tauranga and beyond.

Ngāti Awa submits that transport route and head should be maintained at that location into the future.

*Further Enhancement of Remaining Rail Link*

Further enhancement of the rail line by re-establishing links at Awakeri will provide opportunities to carry heavy material such as rock to other places in the western Bay of Plenty.

It may also provide the means to carry waste and recyclables to any new waste management location that might be established in the Awakeri area.

*Domestic Sea Freight Development Opotiki Harbour Development*

A study of a Domestic Sea Freight Development Opotiki Harbour Development is supported in principle provided the proposed study identifies issues and options relating to other locations before decisions are made for further significant investment in an eastern sea-freight utility at Opotiki.

Eastern, western and southern land transport routes to such a facility should also be investigated as part of the study.

Navigation safety and flood management will also need to form a comprehensive part of the study as there are two rivers converging at the Opotiki Harbour, each of which contributes to flooding of Opotiki Township from time to time.

Relief sought:                    Ensure the proposed Domestic Sea Freight Development Opotiki Harbour Development study considers and identifies issues and options relating to other locations as well as eastern, western and southern land transport routes to such a facility.

Reasons:

Consideration of other locations like Whakatane River mouth and Ohiwa Harbour will either identify a more appropriate location for a sea-freight utility in the eastern Bay of Plenty (which we anticipate is unlikely given the environmental values associated with Ohiwa Harbour and Whakatane River mouth) or will eliminate these locations from consideration in future.

Consideration of them at this time will provide for greater certainty in future.

Balancing environmental issues like biodiversity, flood protection and navigation safety with transport needs is essential to any consideration of establishment of a sea-freight utility in the eastern Bay of Plenty.

Regional council is the most appropriate local authority to be responsible for establishment, management and ongoing maintenance of any structures established to provide for sea-freight utilities in the eastern Bay of Plenty.

Land transport, navigation safety and flood risk management are functions of regional councils.

#### *Opportunity to Retrofit Taneatua Rail Corridor as Heavy Vehicle Bypass*

Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa requests that the Regional Land Transport Committee considers investing in a feasibility study to establish a heavy traffic bypass at Taneatua by retrofitting the now disused rail corridor.

This would have the effect of diverting heavy vehicles and cargo from McKenzie and Tuhoe Streets in Taneatua to the rail corridor 'above' the township.

Relief sought: Investigate the feasibility of diverting heavy vehicles to the rail corridor at Taneatua.

Reasons:

Benefits would include:

- Resolving issues relating to heavy vehicle impacts on storm water and roading infrastructure at Taneatua
- Improving safety for children and others crossing McKenzie Street to enter or leave Taneatua School
- Providing opportunities for establishment of businesses to service drivers of heavy vehicles at the old railway station or on nearby land
- Providing sufficient room for planting of trees to mitigate road noise in the town
- Cost effectiveness of using an existing rail corridor for heavy traffic bypass
- Provides for the establishment of a well placed relief stop for long haul drivers at Taneatua
- Provides further opportunities for forestry type activities in Taneatua town.

#### *Bay of Plenty Land Transport Activities*

There are a number of activities in the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme that will affect Ngāti Awa statutory areas or places of significance to Ngāti Awa.

It is strongly recommended that regional and district council staff work with Environment Ngāti Awa to identify and assess each of those activities so that consents procedures can be streamlined and simplified when applications are ready for lodgement.

It is also strongly recommended that Council allocates sufficient time and resources to seek Ngāti Awa assessments in respect to each of those activities.

We note that consultation on this draft land transport programme was initiated by Environment Ngāti Awa.

We note that the Draft Programme was developed without Council having the benefit of contributions from members of the Māori regional community.

Given the significance of the programme, statutory requirements for consultation with Ngāti Awa contained in section 49 of the Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 and the many various policies promoting partnership and consultation with members of the Māori regional community, it is important that Council ensures its decision-making is informed by contributions from the Māori community.

Council must also ensure it contributes to the capacity of Māori to make those contributions to its decision-making.

### **Concluding Comments**

It is noted that the majority of more major works identified in the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme for 2009/10 and 2011/12 are relevant to the western Bay of Plenty.

We understand this is because of rapid growth in the western Bay of Plenty.

It is important that regional council equalises the investments it makes in land transport infrastructure across the region in order to recognise and provide for the significant proportion of export produce that comes from the eastern Bay of Plenty to the Port of Tauranga.

Getting this produce to ports and markets presents a significant cost to producers in the eastern Bay.

This will assist people from the eastern Bay of Plenty to provide for their economic well-being and to plan for growth in the future.

Kia ora

Jeremy Gardiner  
**Chief Executive**