

**Kia hora te marino, Kia whakapapa
pounamu te moana, kia tere te
Kārohirohi i mua i tōu huarahi**

May the calm be widespread, may the ocean glisten as greenstone, may the shimmer of light ever dance across your pathway.

This whakataukī was gifted to the district plan by Ngāti Maniapoto. Rangawhenua spoke these words to King Tawhiao prior to his departure to England in 1884 to deliver a petition to Queen Victoria seeking recognition of tribal sovereignty. In this context, the whakataukī represents the shared journey of the people of Waitomo District in contributing to and developing this plan.

Forward

It is hard to capture in words, the breath-taking natural beauty and diverse landscapes that we enjoy in Waitomo District. The forest-cloaked hillsides of Herangi dominate the western coastline and the emerald green of Pureora nestles against our border with Lake Taupō. Our district is traversed by expansive tributaries feeding the Waikato and Whanganui River systems. The Waitomo Caves area contains many internationally significant limestone labyrinths which are home to constellations of glowworms and a myriad of unique subterranean flora and fauna.

The district's coastline stretches some 140km from Mokau to Kinohaku. The high energy, highly dynamic west coast is made up of sandy beaches, rocky reefs and coastal cliff faces. Numerous watercourses spill into the sea along this wild and remote coast and sand spits are a notable feature of the entrances to the Marokopa, Awakino and Mokau Rivers. Kawhia Harbour is a distinctive and precious ecosystem, containing large areas of intertidal flats, coastal wetlands and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Over 600 years ago the Tainui waka, from which Waikato and Ngāti Maniapoto peoples trace their descent, landed in Kawhia Harbour. Consequently, the district has a long and rich history. The rolling landscape, with its numerous caves, tors, bluffs, rivers, springs, waterfalls and beaches, anchors mana whenua through narratives and a sacred spiritual connection with home.

This love of the natural environment has been shared by subsequent generations of residents. Waitomo District has approximately 74,000 hectares of conservation estate and the greatest density of QEII National Trust open-space covenants in the country. One of the stand-out features of the district is its remarkable, untamed natural beauty and it is one of the key reasons visitors travel to our district. However we must not be complacent.

Our iconic landscapes and waterways need to remain healthy and safe to sustain essential ecological processes and to meet our economic, cultural and recreational needs.

Traditionally, the major economic driver of our district is sheep and beef hill country farming. Over the past few decades diversification into dairy, lime, aggregate extraction, tourism, renewable energy generation and forestry has increasingly dominated growth and development. It is important that this plan ensures we use these natural resources in a way that doesn't compromise natural processes or the ability of future generations to use and enjoy them.

Council believes that a key component of this plan is shaping our townships into thriving, well-designed communities. After all, this is where most of us live, work and shop. Because our population is small, it means that our townships are crucial to the success of our district. So it is very important that we set aside space for the best infrastructure, facilities and reserves that we can afford. It's also very important that there are opportunities for industries to operate and expand, for tourism to be encouraged, for commercial areas to be vibrant and busy and for all areas – but particularly our residential areas - to be attractive and safe. Together we can achieve these aims and leave a positive legacy for the future residents who will call our district home.

John Robertson

Mayor of Waitomo District