



Waitomo District Council  
15 Queen Street,  
Te Kuiti

18 May 2021

### **To the Mayor and Councillors**

#### Long Term Plan 2021-2031 – Submission

Firstly, we want to commend the efforts of Councillors and the wider organisational team who have developed the Waitomo Long-Term Plan (LTP). Your time, energy and thoughtfulness will leave a legacy for the district and community.

Te Waka – Waikato Regional Economic Development Agency, recognises the role that Waitomo plays in regional growth, prosperity, and connection across the region and its sub-regional relationships.

While Te Waka exists to lift economic performance across the region; support and enable industry growth; and attract business and investment, this can only be done in partnership with our local government partners such as Waitomo District Council (WDC), and for that, we thank you for the ongoing contribution to our organisation.

Our work, from gathering intelligence, sharing insights and advocating for the region can only be driven through strong connections and collaborations, so we also wish to acknowledge Council's willingness to work collectively to advance the district's wellbeing.

There are key functions that Councils hold that enable economic development and it is evident that the WDC LTP 2021-2031 has clearly taken account of your Council's role and considered potential drivers for growth –

- Infrastructure and assets
- Land use planning
- Supporting businesses
- Collaboration/networking
- Lobbying and promotion
- Strategies and plans
- Business case development, evidence and information

We support the quality investment being set aside by WDC to ensure ongoing maintenance of infrastructure to enable Economic Development while meeting community needs. In addition to that, the development of a Marketing Strategy for the district will also be a good tool to support investment attraction and destination promotion.

As identified in your LTP, District Plan development is hugely influential for place making and is fundamentally important in encouraging sustainable economic development, with that in mind we acknowledge this as a key to advancing future opportunities and commend you for the investment committed.

We aim to be a strong consistent partner for WDC in seeking economic development opportunities while enhancing support for Waitomo businesses and contributing to the economic wellbeing of the wider community.

In regard to Council funding for Te Waka, after discussions with local government leaders last year, we recognised that although the need for additional funding was substantial to make material improvements to regional Economic Development outcomes, the ability of many Councils to increase financial support was limited.

One critical consideration for the Te Waka Board, at that time, was the desire to ensure an equitable funding base going forward and as a result, it was accepted that the priority was to maintain the baseline level of funding from local councils, as agreed in 2018. It is, however, important to note that several partners have recognised the complexity in aligning Te Waka's income with the strategic intent for the organisation and in turn, they have presented a willingness to increase funding support.

In these scenarios, we are encouraging Councils to put additional funding into Economic Development internally through staff and projects to help advance Te Waka's goals and activities on the ground. We know that a well-resourced Council can leverage the activities of Te Waka to have meaningful Economic Development outcomes for its community.

Te Waka is, however, very open and eager to engage in further funding discussions outside of the LTP process, with local leadership in acknowledgement that this will form part of a necessary ongoing dialogue between Te Waka and all of its funders and key stakeholders.

In summary, collaboration is critical and while WDC continues to lead the district, Te Waka is very happy to partner with initiatives, projects and ongoing business engagement to enhance economic growth and wellbeing priorities.

We thank you for the support and ongoing financial contribution committed to Te Waka.

Yours sincerely

**Hamish Bell**  
Chair  
Te Waka