

Embargoed to 12.30pm, Friday 14 March 2008

Guardians Establishment Committee to focus on what is best for the River

The inaugural meeting of the Guardians Establishment Committee (GEC) was held today, and Waikato-Tainui co-chair and co-convenor of the Committee Tukoroirangi Morgan believes that the work of the GEC must focus on what is best for the river.

“Our settlement will be unique because we have considered all the interests of the river iwi, the general public and the Crown, who will come together for the purpose of designing a Vision and Strategy for the future health and wellbeing of the river,” Mr Morgan said.

“The work of the GEC must focus on what is best for the river and will not be hamstrung by any particular vested interests.”

Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Dr Michael Cullen says that the establishment of the GEC is an important milestone demonstrating kotahitanga or unity in developing a Vision and Strategy to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations.

“The Committee is required to develop both a consultation draft and a final version of the Vision and Strategy, and recommend this to Waikato-Tainui and the Crown,” Minister Cullen said.

“The Vision and Strategy must be consistent with the overarching purpose of the settlement between Waikato-Tainui and the Crown in respect of historical claims relating to the river. The Crown has a commitment with Waikato-Tainui to enter a new era of co-management, and the establishment of the GEC highlights that commitment.”

Last week membership of the Guardian Establishment Committee was announced. Minister Cullen and Tukoroirangi Morgan are co-convenors and the permanent co-chairs are Gordon Blake and Tukoroirangi Morgan.

Waikato Tainui appointees are:

- Tukoroirangi Morgan, Co-negotiator Waikato River Claim and Chair of Executive Board, Waikato Raupatu Trustee Company Ltd.
- Taipu Paki, Claims Consultant and Legal Analyst
- Linda Te Aho, Associate Dean of Maaori, School of Law, Waikato University
- Rangitiaho Mahuta, Kaitiaki a Rohe/Specialist Projects Officer, Huakina Development Trust

Other river iwi have appointed the following representatives to the GEC:

- Weo Maag, Board member, Maniapoto Maaori Trust Board

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Waikato Raupatu Trustee Company Ltd



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- Stephanie O'Sullivan, Environmental Manager, Raukawa Trust Board
 - Rawiri Te Whare, Chair, Te Pumautanga o Te Arawa Trust
 - Dean Stebbing, Board member and advisor, Tuuwharetoa Maaori Trust Board

The Crown appointees are:

- Gordon Blake, Former Mayor of South Waikato District Council, Dairy Farmer
- Jenni Vernon, Former Environment Waikato Chair, Dairy Farmer
- Bob Simcock, Mayor of Hamilton City Council
- Clint Baddeley, Deputy Mayor of Waikato District Council
- Traci Houpapa, Principal of THS & Associates
- Don Scarlet, Regional Affairs Manager for Mighty River Power.
- Alan Livingston, Mayor of Waipaa District Council
- Andra Neeley, Councillor, Environment Waikato (nominated by Environment Waikato)

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