



## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **AGREEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE TO FUTURE OF WAIKATO RIVER**

Today Waikato-Tainui and the Waikato District Council (WDC) signed a Joint Management Agreement (JMA) that will pave the way for a new era of co-management of the Waikato River.

Waikato-Tainui co-negotiator Tukoroirangi Morgan said the JMA signing today is tinged with sadness at the passing of Lady Raiha Mahuta, co-negotiator of the Waikato River settlement. This is a lasting tribute to her huge and stoic contribution to the settlement. The completion of this JMA was one of her final wishes. Without her strength, support and conviction this would have been a much more difficult path to travel.

The agreement is the first joint management agreement to come from the Waikato River settlement and will establish a "positive, co-operative and enduring relationship between the two parties."

Mr Morgan says this is a milestone for both council and iwi and he is pleased with the outcome of recent discussions between the parties and it is a significant step towards developing a relationship with Council that is central to the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River.

"This is about what needs to be done for future generations," said Mr Morgan. "The river has special significance not only for Maaori, but also for many others in the region. The restoration of our awa tupuna to its former glory has always been a key aspiration for Lady Raiha and I."

WDC Mayor Peter Harris echoed Mr Morgan's sentiments saying he was proud of the visionary stance taken by his council and was excited about the future of both the river and the relationship with Waikato-Tainui.

"The process in getting to this point has required a huge leap of faith and goodwill on both sides. We are treading new ground and walking a path that is yet to be shaped.

“This agreement provides the foundation on which the future relationship will be built. I feel privileged to be part of this important moment in history and know that together the health of the river is in good hands.

“I am saddened by the loss of Lady Raiha Mahuta. On behalf of Waikato District Council we offer our sincere condolences for the loss of a wonderful leader for Waikato-Tainui. I appreciate the way in which she and Tuku have shown leadership in these discussions and the way they have guided us all to this conclusion,” he said.

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