



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **TALT opposes proposed wastewater discharge**

The Trust responsible for the ownership of the Lake Rotorua lakebed, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, will oppose an application by Rotorua Lakes Council to discharge treated wastewater into the lake.

Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) is seeking resource consent to upgrade its existing Rotorua Wastewater Treatment Plant, and a new discharge of treated wastewater to the Te Arikioa Channel and Lake Rotorua at Puarenga Bay (Sulphur Bay).

A total of 15 resource consents are required to support the wastewater plant upgrade – ten lodged by Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and five from RLC. It is the RLC resource consent applications which propose the discharge of treated wastewater into Te Arikioa Channel and Lake Rotorua at Puarenga Bay (Sulphur Bay).

All of the resource consent applications have been directly referred to the Environment Court.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT) made the decision at its Trust meeting today.

Trust chairman Tā (Sir) Toby Curtis says the Trust determined that the wastewater discharge proposal would be a direct conflict with the position of the ahi kā / mana whenua for the lake, and in relation to its values with the Te Tūāpapa o Ngā Wai o te Arawa (Te Arawa Cultural Values framework).

“As a Trust, we are responsible for the sustainable and responsible oversight and management of Te Arawa’s settlement assets – including the region’s 14 lakes.

“The Trust supports the upgrade of the wastewater plant and the method of treating the wastewater, however, we cannot support the discharge of this water into Te Arikioa Channel and Lake Rotorua.

“We have outlined our original position in a number different ways and forums in recent years, but have today officially confirmed this decision as a Trust.

“We acknowledge that RLC has gone to a great deal of effort in an attempt to consider cultural values for this project, which has included the development of a ‘contact bed’ to restore the mauri of the water before it reaches the lake.

“However, we also acknowledge and support the genuine concern of local hapū that the contact bed does not sufficiently address their concerns,” says Tā Toby.

Local hapū concerns include a loss of mana and the belittling of Rangatiratanga through an unacceptable activity; a loss of mana to an ancestral icon; that the association of the lake with wastewater is perceived as an offence; and that the discharge would have a significant negative impact on the ability to harvest, cook and clean in and around the area.



**TE ARAWA LAKES TRUST**

“We support these concerns. In addition, we are also concerned about the potential negative impact of 20 million litres of treated wastewater entering the lake every day.

“Our focus is much wider than our environmental work, with social, economic and cultural objectives forming a key part of our work and decision making. This is a good example of where these wider objectives need to be considered through our decision making.”

Tā Toby says TALT will continue to work with RLC as it works through its wastewater upgrade development process.

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