

Hon Christopher Finlayson

**Minister for Treaty of Waitangi
Negotiations**

21 July 2010



Media Statement

Crown supports Regional Council Planning Committee for Hawke's Bay

The Crown will support the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and local iwi in streamlining and improving the way iwi contribute to the management of natural resources, Treaty Negotiations Minister Christopher Finlayson announced today.

The Crown will work with the Council to discuss with local iwi the establishment of a Regional Council Planning Committee, a mechanism provided for in the Local Government Act 2002, as part of Treaty settlement negotiations in the area.

This will allow iwi to effectively contribute towards planning for the use of natural resources and environmental outcomes through regional plans and regional policy statements.

The previous government considered statutory boards for co-management of the local rivers.

"The statutory board model for river management that has been used elsewhere, is not suitable for Hawke's Bay," Mr Finlayson said. "It would expose the region to greater complexity and cost, particularly if the model was replicated throughout the region for each iwi and each river."

"A single Planning Committee would allow iwi the participation they've been seeking, while fitting into existing Regional Council and resource management processes," Mr Finlayson said. "This makes it an effective solution for the region and for iwi, and one that the Government will endorse in negotiations."

Council Chairman Alan Dick agreed.

"The alternative of up to seven river boards would be unworkable in Hawke's Bay. We would lose consistency in natural resource management across the region and sever the integration of land and water management," Mr Dick said.

Providing for claimant groups to have a greater say in the management of natural resources with which they have a historical link has been a common feature of Treaty settlements since the 1990s.

“The Crown’s proposal importantly recognises the care and governance of natural resources as a key issue for both claimant groups negotiating Treaty settlements and the wider region,” said Mr Dick. “The Council looks forward to working with the Treaty claimant groups so that we can arrive at the best possible outcome for our regional community”.

The Crown and the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council will discuss with iwi how the proposed Committee could work. It is expected that it will have equal representation of Regional Councillors and iwi representatives, and will develop and oversee policies and plans that the Council approves.

Following discussions on the Committee proposal between the Crown, the Treaty claimant groups and the Regional Council, the Council will make a recommendation about the Joint Planning Committee for consideration by the incoming Council following the local government elections in October.

The Committee’s work would be carried out in accord with the Resource Management and Local Government Acts and maintain the rights of all parties to participate in the resource management process.

Media contacts

For the Minister: Ben Thomas, Press Secretary 0274 943-579

For the Council: Alan Dick, Chairman (06) 835 9201

Andrew Newman, Chief Executive (06) 835 9201

Liz Lambert, Group Manager External Relations (06) 835 9214

Questions and Answers

How would the Joint Planning Committee work?

The aim of the proposal is to provide a meaningful role for iwi to participate in managing natural resources in the region, consistent with the Resource Management Act. The joint Regional Planning Committee would be charged with reviewing and making changes to the Regional Resource Management Plan. The Plan deals with regional issues such as water quality and quantity, air quality, coastal resources, indigenous vegetation and wetlands, gravel management and natural hazards.

The joint Regional Planning Committee would receive priorities for plan changes and any required technical information from the Council. The Committee would then work through the process of developing and consulting on a draft plan change, before refining it and referring the plan change back to the Regional Council for approval and public notification. All work of the Committee would be carried out in accordance with the Resource

Management and Local Government Acts and maintain the rights of all parties to participate in the resource management process.

The joint Committee would not hear resource consent applications which would continue to be heard by specially appointed hearings panels.

Will this proposal cost ratepayers more?

No. Council has always used a Committee to prepare its plans and policy statements and engaged with iwi on these. Ratepayers will continue to meet the costs of planning and Councillors undertaking that function.

Is this the same as the solution for the Waikato-Tainui River Settlement?

No, it is considerably less complex and more efficient than the Waikato River model. It involves one joint committee applying to the whole region and all resources.

Is there an opportunity for a different system to be negotiated?

Government has agreed the outlines of the committee and the Crown and the Regional Council will be discussing with claimant groups how to put it into operation.

What happens from here?

Discussions on the proposal will take place from late July to late August, with the principal discussions occurring between the Crown, the Treaty claimant groups and HBRC.

Which claimant groups could be involved in the Committee and at what stage are their Treaty settlement negotiations?

The claimant groups are: Ngāti Pahauwera, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Ruapani ki Waikaremoana, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Maungaharuru Tangitu, Mana Ahuriri, Ngāti Hineuru, Heretaunga / Tamatea and Ngāti Tuwharetoa.

Ngāti Pahauwera are finalising their deed of settlement and Ngai Tuhoe are also in negotiations, Maungaharuru Tangitu, Mana Ahuriri, Ngāti Hineuru all have mandated negotiators and are beginning their negotiations. The remaining groups are still working to develop deeds of mandate.