



Waikato River Authority

THREE YEAR FUNDING STRATEGY 2024 - 2026

MAY 2026



Rarangi Take

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Introduction

"The river of life, each curve more beautiful than the last."

The Waikato River Authority (WRA) is pleased to publish its 16th Funding Strategy, a pivotal instrument in advancing the kaupapa of rejuvenating and safeguarding the Waikato and Waipā River Catchment and its tributaries.

To fully understand the Funding Strategy, one must acknowledge Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (Vision & Strategy), a guiding document that shapes the WRA's actions and aspirations. While Te Ture Whaimana is currently undergoing a review process, it remains the prevailing direction-setting document that steers the course for WRA's funding decisions. The Funding Strategy also aligns with the Restoration Strategy for the Waikato and Waipā Rivers, initially unveiled in 2018. Although time has passed since its inception, the direction and priorities articulated within this blueprint for restoration remain relevant, with anticipated applicability spanning another five to ten years.

Beyond our dedication to long-term initiatives, the WRA is deeply committed to supporting projects that exemplify best practices and extend beyond mere regulatory compliance. We seek transformative projects that contribute to restoring and protecting waterways within the Waikato River catchment, as well as projects that help to achieve the wider objectives of Te Ture Whaimana. Collaborative projects at a community or sub-catchment scale are also encouraged as we are likely to achieve better environmental outcomes when we work together.

The WRA extends an invitation to iwi, marae, whaanau and the wider community situated along both the Waikato and Waipā Rivers, encouraging them to submit funding applications. Within the scope of this year's Funding Strategy, particular emphasis is placed on fostering collaborations with iwi to nurture the health and wellbeing of all waterways in the Waikato and Waipā River catchments. These partnerships are not just welcomed but deemed essential to realising the goals set forth in Te Ture Whaimana.

Recognising that Clean-up Trust Funds were derived from a Crown-Iwi Treaty settlement process, the cash co-funding criteria has been refined for projects led by hapū organisations, Iwi Authorities, or their Marae (or Marae representative). This is explained further on page 10.

The Trust requires applicants to engage with the appropriate Waikato and Waipā River Iwi who hold mana whenua relevant to the project area. Engagement should occur early in a project's planning and not at the end. This is explained further on page 9.

In conclusion, the WRA's Three-year Funding Strategy is a testament to our commitment to put the awa at the heart of our decision making and funding processes. We look forward to the contributions and collaboration of all funding applicants in our mission to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our precious awa.

Ngaa manaakitanga,
Waikato River Authority

Whakatakinga

“Tooku awa koiora me oona pikonga he kura tangihia o te maataamuri”

Kei ngaa maunga whakahii, kei ngaa wai tuku kiri, kei ngaa tai mihi tangata, teenaa koutou katoa.

E tuurangahakoa ana a Waikato River Authority (WRA) ki te whakaputa i taana Mahere Tuku Puutea tuangahuru maa ono, he waahanga nui ki te whakawhanake i te kaupapa moo te whakarauora me te tiaki i ngaa huinga wai o ngaa awa o Waikato, o Waipā anoo hoki me oo raaua kooawaawa.

E maaramatia ai te Rautaki Tuku Puutea, tuatahi ake me whakamaanawa ake Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (Whakakitenga & Rautaki), he tuhinga arataki e whakatauiria ana i ngaa mahinga me ngaa wawata a WRA. Ahakoa e arotakengia ana te Ture Whaimana i teenei waa, koia tonu te tuhinga matua e noho ana hei aratakinga moo ngaa whakataunga tuku puutea a WRA. E haangai hoki ana te Rautaki Tuku Puutea ki te Rautaki Whakarauora moo ngaa awa o Waikato, o Waipā anoo hoki, i huraina i te tau 2018. Ahakoa te waa kua pahure, mai i tana putanga, e haangai tonu ana te ahunga me ngaa whaainga matua kua raarangihia ki teenei whakatauiratanga whakarauora, me te whakapae hoki, ka haangai tonu i roto i ngaa tau e rima, tekau anoo hoki.

Kei tua hoki o taa maatou oati ki ngaa kookiritanga pae tawhiti, e whakapuumau ana a WRA i te oati ki te taunaki i ngaa kaupapa e whakatauiria ana i te mahi tika kaua noa iho moo te te taha ki ngaa tuutohunga aa ture. Ko taa maatou he rapu kaupapa panonitanga nui whakaharahara e whai hua ana ki te taha ki te whakarauora, me te tiaki i ngaa huinga wai moo roto o te rohenga wai o te awa o Waikato, waihoki ki ngaa kaupapa e haapai ana i ngaa whaainga whaanui o Te Ture Whaimana. E akiakihia ana hoki ngaa kaupapa kei te taumata o ngaa hapori, ngaa wehenga huinga wai raanei, e huanui ake ai ngaa whaainga taiao i runga i te mahi tahi.

He karanga teenei naa WRA ki ngaa iwi, marae, whaanau me te hapori whaanui kei ngaa tahatika o ngaa awa o Waikato me Waipā, ki te tuku tono puutea. Kei roto kei te tirohanga o teenei Rautaki Tuku Puutea he whakauu i te hiranga nui o te poipoi i ngaa honohononga ki ngaa iwi ki te tiaki i te toiora o ngaa ara wai katoa o roto o ngaa huinga wai o ngaa awa o Waikato, o Waipā anoo hoki. Ehara i te mea he pai noa iho te whai hononga, engari kee he mea nui e tutuki ai ngaa whaainga o roto o Te Ture Whaimana.

I runga i te moohio i ahu mai ngaa puutea Clean-up Trust Funds i ngaa tukatuka whakataunga Tiriti i waenga i te Karauna me ngaa Iwi, kua whakahaangaihia te paearu moni tuku-takirua moo ngaa kaupapa e kookirihia ana e ngaa roopuu whakahaere aa-Hapuu raanei, aa-Iwi raanei, aa-Marae (maangai Marae raanei) raanei. Kei te whaarangi 9 ngaa whakamahukitanga.

E ai ki te Tarati, me whakapaa atu ngaa kaitono ki ngaa iwi o te awa o Waikato, o Waipā ranei, e pupuri nei te mana whenua e tuu ana te kaupapa. Ka mutu me whakawhiti koorero i te tiimatanga o te kaupapa kaua ko te mutunga. Kei te whaarangi 9 ngaa taipitopito.

Hei whakakoopani ake, ko te Rautaki Tuku Puutea aa toru tau a WRA he oati e paihere nei i te aronga kia noho ko te awa te maataamua o roto o ngaa whakataunga me ngaa tukatuka tuku puutea. E rikarika ana maatou ki ngaa tukunga me ngaa mahinga ngaatahitanga a ngaa kaitono puutea i roto tonu i taa maatou koromakinga ki te whakahaumaru i te ora me te mauri o too taatou taonga kaamehameha, te awa.

Ngaa manaakitanga,
Waikato River Authority

The journey to Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato

Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River

Since the mid 1300s, the Waikato and Waipā rivers and their lands have been home to many iwi (tribes). Marae and communities were established near the safety and provisions of the rivers, which, like a mother, nurture, provide food, heal and comfort while continuing to create life everywhere their waters reach. The relationship was described by the late Sir Robert Te Kotahi Mahuta as:

“Nō tātou te awa. Nō te awa tātou. E kore e taea te wehe te iwi o Waikato me te awa. He taonga tuku iho nā ngā tūpuna. E whakaponono ana mātou ko tā mātou, he tiaki i taua tāonga mō ngā uri whakatupu.”

We belong to the river, and the river belongs to us. Waikato people and the river cannot be separated. It is a treasure that has been passed down by the ancestors. We believe that it is our responsibility to look after [the river] for future generations.

With the arrival of European settlers, the political and social dynamics of the region rapidly changed. To manage and minimise the impact of the colonialists on Aotearoa, the idea of a Kiingitanga movement was deliberated amongst all tribes nationally. The Kiingitanga movement was established in 1858 in response to the continued loss of lands to new settlers, to prevent wars and to unite the Māori people. The tribes of the Tainui waka, in particular Waikato iwi, were asked to lead the movement with the appointment of Pootatau Te Wherowhero (the first Māori King). The reign of Te Wherowhero was short and, as his sun set, a new sun arose through the anointing of his son, Taawhiao, who was the head of the movement during the most turbulent times in Aotearoa. The Crown, feeling threatened by the Kiingitanga, gathered all of their resources to invade the central North Island and subsequently confiscated Waikato lands, forcing the tribe to exile to the King Country. During the forced retreat, the Government assumed the rights to all natural resources and allowed the transfer of lands to private ownership. Subsequent land use activities led to drainage of wetlands, diversion of waters, destruction of forests and desecration of marae, pā and papakāinga.

The act of raupatu (confiscation) and its subsequent effects greatly accelerated the degradation of the Waikato and Waipā rivers, lakes and tributaries. The basis of the 1987 Waikato Treaty claim was to restore these injustices, receive an apology from the Crown for the unjust confiscation of lands, and rebuild the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the iwi. This was partially achieved

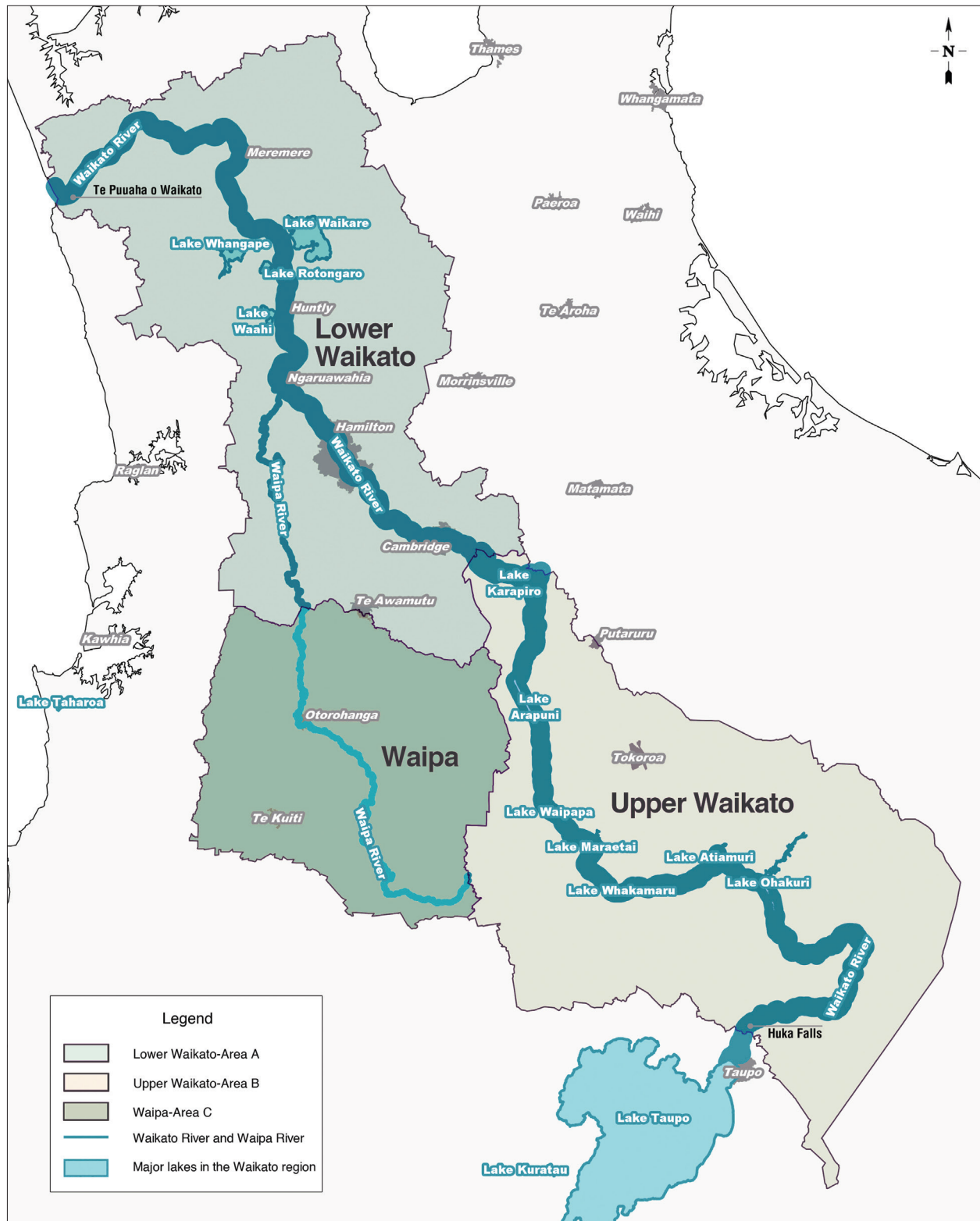
in the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act 1995. One of the outstanding matters from the original claim was settlement of the Waikato River. The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 focused on the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, to rectify the degradation and mistreatment of the Waikato waters and reinstate the mana or power and prestige of the Waikato River and its people.

Through the Treaty settlement process between Waikato-Tainui and the Crown, the Guardians Establishment Committee was formed with the support of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, Te Arawa River iwi and Maniapoto. In 2009 this committee finalised Te Ture Whaimana o te awa o Waikato, otherwise known as the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River. The Waikato River Authority and Waikato River Clean-up Trust were established under the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 with the purpose of acting as an independent entity on behalf of the river. To reflect the aspiration of co-management, the Board of the Authority consists of a representative of each of the five river iwi authorities (Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Te Whakakitenga o Waikato-Tainui, Raukawa Settlement Trust, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust and Maniapoto Māori Trust Board) and five Crown representatives.

The Ngā Wai o Maniapoto (Waipā River) legislation was enacted in 2012 to include the upper catchment of the Waipā River through to its junction with the Pūniu River. The Vision & Strategy now applies to the whole of the Waikato and Waipā River catchments and represents the primary policy setting document for both rivers and their catchments. It has the status of a National Policy Statement and prevails over any inconsistent provision in Resource Management Act planning documents.

The Waikato-Waipā Vision & Strategy envisages a future where a healthy Waikato River sustains abundant life and prosperous communities who, in turn, are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, and all it embraces, for generations to come.

Map of the Waikato River Authority area



1. Background and context

1.1 The Authority and its role

The overarching purpose of the legislation that created the Waikato River Authority ('the Authority') and the Waikato River Clean-up Trust (the 'Trust') is to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and its catchment for future generations.

The purpose of the Authority is to:

- Set the primary direction through the Vision & Strategy to achieve the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations
- Promote an integrated, holistic, and coordinated approach to the implementation of the Vision & Strategy and the management of the Waikato River
- Fund rehabilitation initiatives for the Waikato River in its role as trustee for the Waikato River Clean-up Trust.

The Authority is the sole trustee of the Waikato River Clean-up Trust. The Trust administers and distributes a contestable fund to work towards the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for present and future generations (this forms the Trust's objective). In doing so it must pay adequate regard to the Vision & Strategy and the Waikato River Independent Scoping Study (WRISS). As the sole trustee the Authority determines which projects receive funding in accordance with criteria set annually.

The area that this Strategy applies to is the Waikato River and its catchment from Huka Falls to Te Puahā o Waikato and the upper catchment of the Waipā River through to its junction with the Waikato River (as shown in the map on page 5). The "River" is defined in the Settlement Legislation as including the main stem, the tributaries, and all associated lakes and wetlands within the catchment.

1.2 The purpose of this document

The Trust reviews funding priorities annually to ensure funding continues to be aligned with the objectives of the Trust and the Authority.

This document forms the Funding Strategy for 2025 for the Trust, while also providing a three year outlook. It presents the criteria that the Authority believes will best position the Trust to award funds in a fair and consistent manner to projects that will not only meet the requirements set out in its legislation but will also lead to the most effective response for the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and its catchment.

Priorities are presented both in terms of the geographical areas the Authority believes should draw particular focus from applicants, and also the nature of the projects the Authority believes are a high priority in and across those geographical areas.

1.3 The Waikato River Clean-up Fund

This year the Trust has decided that up to \$6 million will be available in the funding round.

Annual funding decisions are based on:

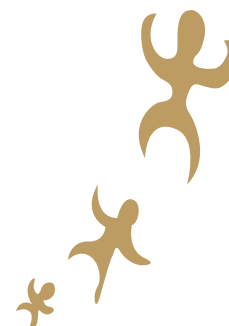
- Applicants meeting the funding criteria
- Applications for projects identified as priority areas by the Trust
- The quality of the applications received. The Clean-up Fund is contestable. The Trust may or may not award all or any of the identified funds in a funding round as this will depend on the quality of applications received and the quantity of funding sought by applicants. The Trust may also award a lesser amount than that applied for.

The timing for this round of funding is:

- Funding round opens for applications Tuesday 2 June 2026
- Funding applications close at 4pm Monday 27 July 2026
- Decisions announced to successful applicants in October 2026
- Deeds of Funding completed by 30 January 2027 (the Trust reserves the right to withdraw funding from applicants not able to complete the Deed of Funding as required). Applications should be for works that are intended to start on or after 1 February 2027.

The Trust is open to funding a range of projects at different scales and over varying timeframes. This could include one-off short-term projects as well as projects taking up to five years, all to be funded from the current funding round.

All applications for funding must be completed using the application portal available on the Authority's website www.waikatoriver.org.nz





A bucket of Elver Eels captured below Karapiro Dam are ready to be released upstream.

2. Criteria for applicants and applications

2.1 Criteria for applicants and applications

The five key guiding concepts for the Trust are: Protect – Restore – Enhance – Health – Wellbeing. In relation to the Waikato River and its catchment these concepts define much of the criteria for what sort of projects should be funded. The Trust has developed a range of criteria that guide applicants in considering whether (and how) to prepare an application for funding. Some of these criteria are mandatory (i.e. all applicants must meet them), and others are intended to guide applicants in terms of the Trust's priorities.

2.2 Threshold criteria

The Trust expects that all applications should meet the following broad 'threshold tests' before being considered eligible for funding:

- Any organisation or group applying for funds of more than \$60,000 must be GST registered (this includes organisations who make multiple successful applications in a single funding round that total over \$60,000)
- Projects must be focused on one or more of the five key guiding concepts of protecting, restoring, enhancing, health and wellbeing in relation to the Waikato River and its catchment
- Projects must be technically achievable, and applications must clearly demonstrate this
- Preference will be given to projects that are able to demonstrate to a high level, certainty of success
- The project should provide an outcome that will be maintained into the future without the need for ongoing funding from the Trust.

2.3 Objectives outlined in legislation

In addition to the Threshold Criteria above, all applications for projects are required to meet the objectives of the Trust outlined in the legislation and summarised below. These include:

- a. The Trust should not fund a project or a part of a project that another agency should or would fund (or be likely to fund) in the normal course of its operations if the Trust did not exist, e.g. fencing of waterways on dairy farms, or activities that a territorial authority should undertake as part of their role would not be funded
- b. The Trust seeks efficiency in the allocation and use of funding, including having particular regard to the desirability of applicants using matching or supplemental funding from other sources, i.e. higher co-funding (either in-kind or cash) is beneficial
- c. Preference will be given to projects that achieve practical results over projects that are purely for research purposes
- d. The Trust requires that adequate regard be given to the Vision & Strategy in applications, including clear demonstration of how proposed projects will give effect to the Vision & Strategy
- e. The Trust requires that adequate regard be given to the report of the Waikato River Independent Scoping Study
- f. The Trust requires that adequate regard be given to any other relevant research (either within or outside the Waikato Catchment)
- g. The Trust requires that adequate regard be given to the extent to which projects would further iwi environmental plans, in the case of applications from iwi or applications based on Maatauranga Maaori or on the mauri of the Waikato River.



Fairfield Project volunteers explore life in Kukutaaruhe Stream, Hamilton.

2.4 Iwi consultation

The Trust requires applicants to engage with the appropriate Waikato River Iwi who hold mana whenua relevant to the project area.

Funding for the Waikato River Authority is derived through two Treaty of Waitangi settlements. Specifically, these are:

1. Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010

This settlement addressed the Waikato-Tainui claim to the Waikato River. It recognised their mana whakahaere (authority and responsibility) over the river and provided significant funding to restore and protect the river.

2. Ngā Wai o Maniapoto (Waipā River) Act 2012

This settlement recognises Ngāti Maniapoto's relationship with the Waipā River and contributes funding for the restoration and protection of the Waipā River under the broader Waikato River Authority structure.

Due to this, the Waikato River Authority expects applicants to engage with one of the five River Iwi about their proposed project in the early stages of project planning. Projects that are not supported by iwi are unlikely to receive funding.

If you are unsure who to contact, start by reaching out to the environmental teams within the relevant iwi covering the Waikato and Waipā River catchments. Their contacts are listed below.

Engagement guidance

They will provide guidance on further engagement requirements, which may include discussions with hapū, iwi, and marae. It is important to be thoroughly prepared before meeting with iwi, hapū, and/or marae.

1. Clearly identify the intended project area and scope of activities/works.

2. Read and consider the relevant sections of the iwi environmental plan to familiarise yourself with iwi matters.

For example, projects in the north Waikato River must consider the Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan. These plans, and more, can be found on the Waikato Regional Council website: <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Community/Your-community/iwi/Tangata-Whenua-Management-Plans/>

Relevant sections may include:

- engagement with iwi, hapū, and marae
- sites of significance
- customary activities
- accidental discovery protocols

3. Contact the relevant iwi authority, hapū, or marae to initiate discussions on the following:

- the most appropriate manner of engagement
- the project concept, location, objectives, and time frames
- identifying cultural expectations for the project, including tikanga (protocols) required prior to the commencement of the project, during the project, and at its completion. This may also include incorporating iwi aspirations into the project.
- protocols for archaeological discovery, kōiwi (bones) discovery, sites of significance, and communication
- providing for cultural induction of agreed protocols with all staff. This may include marae members providing historical and cultural context to the project area.

Allow sufficient time for engagement

Remember to allow plenty of time for engagement to take place. Just because your project is a priority for you, it may not be a priority for local iwi. In many cases, iwi committees might only meet every couple of months each year.

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board

Tūrangi
07 386 8832
info@tuwharetoa.co.nz

Te Arawa River Iwi Trust

Rotorua
07 374 9015
admin@tarit.co.nz

Raukawa Charitable Trust

Tokoroa
07 885 0260
reception@rauakawa.org.nz

Waikato-Tainui

Hamilton
07 858 0400
taiao@tainui.co.nz

Te Nehenehenui Trust (Maniapoto)

Te Kuiti
0800 668 285
patai@tnn.co.nz

2.5 Requirements for all applicants

In addition to each application meeting the criteria outlined in sections 2.1 to 2.3, all applicants must meet the following general criteria:

GST

- All funding applications must refer to GST inclusive figures at all times. Because the Waikato River Clean-up Trust receives its funding from the Crown in GST inclusive amounts, all funding business will be conducted in this way
- For projects over \$60,000 (or multiple successful applications from a single entity amounting to more than \$60,000 in a single funding round) must be GST registered
- Applicants must not be currently registered as bankrupt or insolvent.

Health and safety

All applicants must confirm that they understand their health and safety obligations in relation to the work for which funding is sought, and have considered these in connection with the methods, materials, personnel and time-frames proposed. They must also confirm that they have procedures in place to meet these obligations. If funding is awarded, project related health and safety documentation will be required prior to signing the Deed of Funding.

Trust indemnified

If the Trust suffers any loss or damage as a result of any act or omission of a funding Recipient, its employees, agents or contractors, the Recipient shall fully indemnify the Trust.

Deeds of Funding

All successful applicants will be subject to the terms and conditions of the Trust's Deed of Funding, which represents the funding contract between the Authority and the Recipient. The Deed of Funding must include a detailed project plan. This plan, at a minimum, will contain:

- Deliverables (the identifiable outcome(s) that will be delivered by the project as a whole)
- Key tasks (the key activities that will be undertaken to deliver the project successfully and for which reporting and invoicing will occur)
- A project budget including requested contributions from WRA, cash co-funders and in-kind contributors
- Financial and Reporting Systems.

The Authority requires all funding recipients to maintain sufficient financial and reporting processes to provide evidence that any funds awarded are used in the most appropriate manner to achieve the objectives of the project.

Co-funding

All applications (except Iwi led projects as outlined below) should have an element of co-funding (in-kind and/or cash) included as part of their project. The greater the level of co-funding, the greater the weight the Clean-up Trust will give to the application. Co-funding amounts of 50% and above are typically preferred. It is also preferred that co-funding includes a cash component.

Co-funding can only include new funding, and not funding or expenses incurred prior to the project commencing. Quantified in-kind activity will be considered as co-funding.

Co-funding for River Iwi-led projects

It is recognised that the Clean-up Trust Funds were derived from a Crown-Iwi Treaty settlement process. Accordingly, the same cash co-funding criteria is not applied to River Iwi led projects.

Projects led by hapū organisations, Iwi Authorities* or Marae (or nominated Marae representative) that are requesting less than \$50k of WRA funding are exempt from co-funding recommendations with the exceptions below.

For projects requesting more than \$50k from WRA, a lower level of around 20% co-funding will be accepted (with the exceptions below).

Exceptions

At least 50% co-funding is still recommended for the following types of projects:

- Environmental restoration works for the benefit of a business e.g. riparian fencing and planting on a farm.
- Projects whereby Iwi apply for funding, but almost all the work is undertaken by a non-iwi partner organisation e.g. environmental consultancy or Crown Research Institute.

***Iwi Authority means a governance entity as defined in the settlement and co-management Legislation:**

- Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010;
- Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010; and
- Nga Wai o Maniapoto (Waipā River) Act 2010.

Example Iwi Authorities include: Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Raukawa Settlement Trust, Maniapoto Māori Trust Board, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust (including the 3 affiliated Iwi) and the trustee of the Waikato Raupatu River Trust (Te Whakakitenga o Waikato).

Iwi Authority does not include a commercial investment company of an Iwi Authority (i.e. a company driven by profit).

Funding for fencing

WRA will not fund fencing of streams/rivers/ wetlands where stock exclusion is required through regulations except:

Part funding for fencing may be considered in priority catchments/sites identified in the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy where:

- fencing setbacks go well beyond regulation;
- fences are constructed to the required WRA specifications.

This could include contributing to the additional cost of going to a 5-wire fence to protect native plantings (where a single wire is enough to meet regulations).

Fencing standards

All projects receiving funding which include a component of planting are required to have permanent stock proof fencing erected to protect the planting. The following fencing standards have been developed to provide guidance as to the minimum standard required.

Fences should be located at least five metres back from the edge of waterways. For waterways with steep banks, the fence should be located at least five metres from the top of the bank.

Native plant establishment

For projects that involve native planting, ensure that your project duration and funding cover the full establishment of native plantings. This will normally involve two or three years of weeding and releasing following planting.

It is preferable that native planting plans include at least 20% long lived native plant species. For more information refer to WRAs fact sheet titled 'Trees for the future'. This is available on the funding applications section of the WRA website. This may be a condition of funding.

Plantings must be behind a fence that meets WRA fencing standards.

Minimum fencing standards

Stock type	Electric Fence	Standard Fence	Fencing in a floodplain (with regular flooding)
Sheep		7 wire, post and batten or sheep mesh	As agreed with WRA
Cattle only	5 wire (2 electric), permanent posts	5 wire (2 electric), permanent posts	3 wire electric

Iwi environmental plans

Applications should consider and document the extent to which the project will further the achievement of the relevant iwi Environmental Plans. Discussion of such project with the relevant iwi environmental team is required.

Related projects

The Trust considers it advantageous if newly funded projects are related to adjacent or nearby restoration and/or protection projects, and/or build on existing initiatives. Previously funded projects may be found at www.waikatoriver.org.nz

Funding for actual costs only

It is important to note that the Trust provides funds to cover the costs incurred in completing an agreed project, up to the maximum value approved. Projects will be reimbursed for actual costs incurred only. Unspent funds will be used by the Authority for future restoration activities.

Protection of sites

Where funding of greater than \$120,000 is provided by the Trust, it is likely that a condition of funding will be that a protection mechanism (e.g. covenant or encumbrance) be put in place to protect the work undertaken. This will be treated on a case-by-case basis, however applicants should state whether works will be legally protected as part of the application.

Funding for updates of iwi environmental plans and fisheries plans

The five River Iwi Authorities (Waikato-Tainui, Maniapoto, Raukawa, TARIT and Tūwharetoa) are invited to apply for funding to update their environmental plans and fisheries plans if WRA has not already provided funding towards these documents within the previous 5 years.

Projects involving public walkways

Projects involving the creation of public walkways should discuss their walkway location with Walking Access New Zealand first to ensure they understand the land ownership arrangements and the process/es required to gain access permissions.

Applications for sponsorship

The Waikato River Authority will not accept applications for sponsorships as part of its annual funding round. This includes sponsorships of sports teams, events, festivals and conferences. If you would like to pursue a request for sponsorship, this should be made directly with the Waikato River Authority rather than through the annual funding round.

2.6 Background documents to support applications

The online funding application form requires you to explain:

- How your project contributes to achieving objectives outlined in the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River
- Whether your project was identified as a priority project within the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy
- How your project furthers the relevant iwi environmental plan/s

To answer these questions you will need to read the relevant documents. These are listed below:

- Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan. Tai Tumu Tai Pari Tai Ao
- Maniapoto Environmental Management Plan. Ko tā Maniapoto Mahere Taiao
- Te Arawa River Iwi Trust Iwi Environmental Management Plan. Whakamarohitia ngā wai o Waikato
 - Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuara Iwi Environmental Management Plan
 - Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa Iwi Environmental Plan
 - Tūhourangi Tribal Authority Enhanced Iwi Environmental Resource Management Plan
- Raukawa Environmental Management Plan (Te Rautaki Taiao o Raukawa)
- Ngāti Tūwharetoa Environmental Iwi Management Plan
- The Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River
- The Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy (www.restorationstrategy.nz)

This is not an exhaustive list of hapuu and Iwi Environmental Management Plans. Please take guidance from River Iwi during your engagement with them to determine what Iwi Environmental Plans are applicable.

Some of these documents are available online at www.waikatoriver.org.nz along with a map of previously funded projects. Applicants should also consider the priorities identified within the various River Iwi (Tūwharetoa, Te Arawa, Raukawa, Waikato-Tainui, and Maniapoto), fisheries plans and associated environmental prioritisation documents (e.g. Maniapoto Priorities for the Restoration of the Waipā River Catchment), as well as any other catchment focused restoration strategies.

2.7 What the Trust does not fund

The Trust will not fund:

- Works that are required arising from the statutory planning framework within the Waikato region, National regulation, or by industry regulation. In particular, waterway fencing projects that entail only the minimum requirements will not be eligible to receive funding. Applications will be considered where works go beyond minimum requirements (e.g. larger fencing setbacks with a higher grade of fence). WRA funding could be applied to cover the additional cost associated with a higher grade fence.
- A project to address discharges or contamination that are the responsibility of the entity that created them. The 'polluter pays' principle will generally apply, however in exceptional circumstances the Trust may consider funding projects with a high degree of public good on a co-funding basis with polluters.
- Capital purchases or items that can be used beyond the life of the project as part of a business e.g. laptops, iPads, vehicles, boats and machinery.
- Nursery set up and running costs (although the Trust will fund the purchase of plants).
- Sponsorships. This includes sponsorships of sports teams, events, festivals, conferences etc.
- The following project management/admin costs:
 - Time spent undertaking GST returns and general accounting
 - Annual returns to the companies office
 - Accountants costs
 - Costs associated with operating a Trust or Incorporated Society
 - Insurance costs
 - Costs associated with covenanting land (e.g. survey and legal costs). However, this can count towards project co-funding.
- Research projects without an on the ground restoration component
- Retrospective costs
- Establishment of exotic forest
- Large water infrastructure projects (e.g. water storage).

3. Priorities for funding

3.1 Background

The Trust consulted widely and through its networks has drawn on a wide range of sources to develop its priority areas.

In setting the following priorities the Trust has also given adequate regard to the Waikato River Independent Scoping Study (WRISS). The key purpose of the WRISS was to provide the Crown and Waikato River Iwi with a sound and objective basis on which to make decisions about the priority actions required to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations.

3.2 Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy

In April 2018 the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy was launched by the Minister for the Environment, Hon David Parker. This is a 5-to-15 year action plan for the Waikato and Waipā rivers and their catchments with the purpose of guiding funding and restoration activities throughout the catchment. Projects have been prioritised so that they are likely to make the greatest difference in improving the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā rivers, and reflect the values and goals of the iwi and communities within the catchment.

The Strategy can be viewed at www.restorationstrategy.nz

The Trust would therefore like to give the highest priority to all those projects identified in the Strategy.

Note: *Not all components of Restoration Strategy projects meet WRA funding criteria. (For example some projects involve the purchase of items such as vehicles or capital items). Applicants should check the criteria outlined in sections 2 and 4 of this document or contact the WRA Funding Manager to check before submitting an application.*

Applications must also provide a more detailed plan and costings than that provided in the Restoration Strategy.

3.3 Iwi priorities

A key component of the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy are Iwi Priority projects. These projects were identified by Iwi as being important towards achieving the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River.

Projects are varied and include actions such as restoration of mahinga kai sites, enhancement of habitat for taonga species, restoring sites of significance, sharing cultural history in relation to Waikato River catchment waterways, lake restoration and much more.

Many of these have started to be implemented but there are still many more that have not.

WRA encourages more Iwi groups to undertake projects and invites anyone who is interested to have a look at the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy (www.restorationstrategy.nz) for Iwi Priority projects and talk to Iwi from that area.

The WRA particularly welcomes funding applications from iwi, marae and whānau located in the lower Waikato River in the area of the Watercare water take.

In addition to the priorities identified in the Waikato and Waipā Restoration Strategy iwi are also encouraged to apply to implement projects that contribute towards the implementation of their Iwi Environmental Management Plans.

3.4 Other priorities

In addition to the specific projects identified in the Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy, the priorities listed below more broadly describe the priorities of the Trust. The first three of these are geographically based.

1. Karapiro Dam to Te Puuaha o Waikato (the mouth of the Waikato River) referred to in the map on page 5 as Area A

- Projects that address or demonstrate tangible outcomes in improving lake, river and stream water quality.
- Projects that improve habitat quality and connectivity for taonga species including tuna.
- Projects that improve the passage of native fish species including improved downstream passage of migratory species (particularly tuna). Projects that improve the downstream passage of large migratory species must be undertaken in partnership with iwi.
- Investigating native species establishment as dominant predators in the Waikato and its lakes including through the impacts of koi carp removal.
- Supporting Māori land blocks to achieve sustainability outcomes, where such outcomes give effect to the Vision & Strategy.
- Projects that increase the resilience of catchments against erosion and sedimentation and the impacts of climate change.





Volunteers are inducted to the Waikato RiverCare 'Barbour Farm' wetland community planting day.

2. The Waipā River catchment referred to in map Area C and part of map Area 1 (page 5)

Those applications that are based on the mauri of the Upper Waipā River should consider and document the extent to which the project will further the achievement of the Maniapoto Environmental Management Plan and Maniapoto Priorities for Restoration of the Waipā River Catchment. Discussion of such projects with the Te Nehenehenui Trust is required.

Priorities for Trust funding in this area include:

- Projects that address or demonstrate tangible outcomes for water quality, in particular through reduction of sediment and E.coli load to the Waipā River
- Restoration of river network connectivity to enable biota to access upstream habitats
- Wetland protection and restoration including of puna
- Protection of habitat of significant fish species including tuna and pihirau
- The preservation of sites of significance along the Waipā River
- Stream/awa health monitoring programmes that contribute to a wider monitoring framework (e.g. Iwi Cultural Health Indicator monitoring)
- Supporting Māori land blocks to achieve sustainability outcomes, where such outcomes give effect to the Vision & Strategy
- Projects that increase the resilience of catchments against erosion and sedimentation and the impacts of climate change.

3. Above the Karapiro Dam to the Huka Falls referred to in map Area B and part of map Area A (page 5)

Priorities for Trust funding in this area include:

- Projects that address or demonstrate tangible outcomes in improving water quality including through nutrient reductions.
- Wetland restoration, protection and recreation, including headwater seeps and springs.
- Restoration and enhancement of waterways and puna of cultural significance to iwi.
- Protecting the diversity of natural landscapes such as unique geothermal landscapes.
- Protection and restoration of native fish and their habitats, including improved migration corridors for native species, especially tuna.
- Improving the cultural, environmental and recreational values of the Waikato River hydro lakes.
- Supporting Māori land blocks to achieve sustainability outcomes, where such outcomes give effect to the Vision & Strategy.
- Improving access to the Waikato River, in particular for cultural purposes such as accessing sites of significance to hapu and marae.
- Projects that enhance the Waikato River ecological corridor and are guided by Iwi tikanga and mātauranga Māori.
- Projects that increase the resilience of catchments against erosion and sedimentation and the impacts of climate change.
- Stream/awa health monitoring programmes that contribute to a wider monitoring framework (e.g. Iwi Cultural Health Indicator monitoring).

4. Mātauranga Māori

We support projects specifically identified as Mātauranga Māori. Mātauranga Māori may be supported in any of the funding areas outlined and, where appropriate, this should be acknowledged.

Mātauranga Māori is usually used to mean 'Māori knowledge' – distinctive knowledge created by Māori in history and arising from their living circumstances, their worldview and their experiences.

The Trust encourages applications that recognise the important contribution of Mātauranga Māori to the clean-up of the Waikato River and its catchment. Projects that work to reinvigorate the relationship of the Waikato River Iwi and the Waikato River will be especially supported.

The Trust expects that projects involving Mātauranga Māori will be undertaken in partnership with iwi and that iwi have approved the inclusion of how their Mātauranga Māori will be used in the project and funding application.

Nine key areas have been identified:

- i. The improvement of the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River through the practice and implementation of kaitiakitanga by its iwi, including through their tikanga (including Noho wānanga)
- ii. The preservation and dissemination of traditional knowledge relating to the Waikato River, including knowledge of the historical connection of iwi to the Awa
- iii. The development of kaitiaki tools to support hāpu and marae, including water quality monitoring kits
- iv. Restoration and enhancement of the mauri of the waterways in the Waikato River catchment
- v. The preservation of sites of significance to iwi, including the preservation of knowledge of sites that no longer remain
- vi. Projects that support the creation, restoration and/or enhancement of kai producing areas
- vii. Projects that incorporate māramataka to inform environmental work on the ground (e.g. using practices of the past within an Iwi māramataka framework)
- viii. Projects that contribute to the collection of iwi data – using Mātauranga Māori Monitoring Frameworks on the Waikato and Waipā River and their tributaries
- ix. Projects that support customary restoration and traditional water management practices.



5. Projects that have a community outcome associated with the Waikato River and its catchment

These may include (but are not limited to) projects that:

- Involve community catchment care groups
- Improve public access and experience of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers, including through the use of signage and electronic media
- Support liaison between groups engaged in Clean-up Trust funded projects
- Undertake educational and communication activities that promote awareness of the values important to Waikato and Waipā River Iwi and that improve catchment understanding of the Vision & Strategy, including enhancing delivery, reach and educational outcomes
- Include a training/educational component that provides increased capacity within the skilled labour force required for river protection and restoration works
- Promote the work of the Waikato River Authority and its funded projects within the community, with the aim of helping to increase engagement and participation in restoration activities.

6. Projects that contribute to iwi capacity building

- Applications that assist River Iwi Trusts in providing professional capacity building and training opportunities to their marae and hapū. This may include (but is not limited to) support with project management and reporting, Health and Safety training and field operations
- Applications that support collaboration and partnerships with tangata whenua.

7. Projects that help to demonstrate the effectiveness of projects funded by both the Waikato River Clean-up Trust and others

These may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Further development of the Waikato River Report Card
- Projects that help to demonstrate the effectiveness of the fund in stopping degradation and loss of freshwater ecosystem health and reversing past damage.

8. Projects that improve water quality and ecosystem health in streams, wetlands, lakes and drains that flow into the Waikato River and its catchment

- Projects that make use of innovative technologies and approaches to improve water quality in lakes, streams and rivers
- Projects that are likely to result in material improvements within five years
- Projects that explore the potential of regenerative agriculture for achieving the Vision & Strategy
- Projects that seek tangible outcomes across the range of ecosystem health components including:
 - Aquatic life – the abundance and diversity of indigenous biota including microbes, invertebrates, plants, fish and birds
 - Habitat – the physical form, structure and extent of the waterbody, its beds, banks and margins, riparian vegetation and connections to the floodplain
 - Water quality – the physical and chemical measures of the water
 - Ecological processes – their interactions among biota and their physical and chemical environment
 - Water quantity – the extent and variability in the level or flow of water.
- Priority projects (identified in the WWRRS) that have been previously funded by the WRA to protect or enhance native fish habitats, and that have sustained damage or been impacted by extreme weather events (e.g. Pirongia streams following the February 2026 flood).

9. Pest Clam (*Corbicula Fluminea*)

The Waikato River Authority recognise the recent impact of the pest clam to the wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers including the relationship of iwi and communities to their waters. The Authority does not fund pest management or biosecurity incursions. However, the WRA is open to working with the responsible agency to support and facilitate the coordination & development of strategic community and mana whenua approaches to the long term management and eradication of the pest clam for 2024-2025.

4. How to make an application

4.1 How to make an application

All applications for funding must be completed using the application portal available on the Waikato River Authority's website www.waikatoriver.org.nz. We recommend you view the form ahead of time so you have a good understanding of the information required.

Under the 'funding applications' section of the website there is a series of videos to help you through the application process. These include:

1. *An introduction to WRA funding*
2. *How to make a funding application*
3. *Tips for your project plan*

We recommend you put together a project plan before attempting to start the application as this will make completing the application form easier.

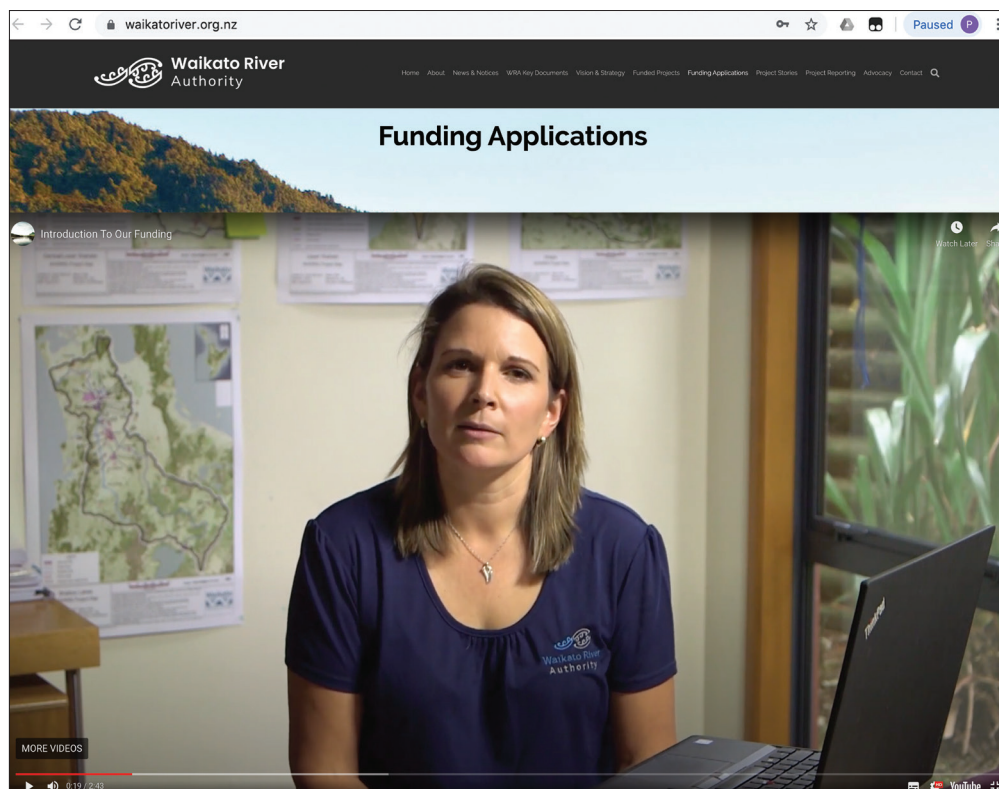
All applications requesting \$100,000 or more from WRA are required to attach a project plan.

This is because more detail is required other than that provided in the application form.

For projects less than \$100,000 it is highly recommended that a basic project plan is submitted containing additional information to that provided in the application form.

- A project plan should include (but not be limited to):
 - An overview of the reasons for the project
 - A detailed description of intended results/deliverables
 - A detailed breakdown of all work required
 - Detailed costings (showing cost assumptions – hourly rates, quotes, etc.)
 - Map showing the location of the proposed work (if applicable)
 - Photos of the works site/s (if applicable).

See the video on the 'Funding Applications' section of the Waikato River Authority website for tips on preparing your project plan. Ask us about our project plan templates.



4.2 Information requirements

The application form requires you to answer questions related to the following:

Purpose of the proposed project

- A summary of why you are undertaking the work.

Project goals and methods

- Detailed outputs and outcomes of your project once it is fully completed e.g. what project partners can expect to see for their funding. Goals must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). An example goal could be – two kilometres of stream is fenced (at least 5 metres back from the stream edge) to exclude stock.
- Also provide detail on how your project will be undertaken, including methods for physical works and who will carry them out (e.g. volunteers, contractors).

Project tasks/costs

- A breakdown of the estimated costs (in GST inclusive amounts) of the proposed project, clearly linking costs to the tasks. Identify any matching or supplemental funds that are to be provided by others.

Project management

- Applications can include costs associated with Project Management. However, if project management costs for the project are greater than 10% of the overall project budget, a breakdown of the estimated hours and cost per hour associated with project management is required. Project components such as consultation and community engagement are not considered project management, but rather part of project delivery, and should therefore be itemised separately from Project Management.
- WRA would normally expect not to cover the entire cost associated with Project Management so this is an item of expenditure that co-funding should be sought for.
- Project Management costs can include:
 - General office overheads
 - Printing and stationery
 - Preparing reports and invoices to WRA
 - Procurement of resources for the project
 - Time spent paying project related invoices
 - Contractor management
 - Project planning and oversight
 - General vehicle mileage for PM related work
 - Health and Safety planning.

- WRA will not pay for:
 - Time spent undertaking GST returns and general accounting
 - Annual returns to the companies office
 - Accountants' costs
 - Costs associated with operating a Trust or Incorporated Society
 - Insurance costs.

Vision & Strategy

- Outline how the proposed project will contribute to the Objectives and Strategies in the Vision & Strategy.

Fit with funding strategy and other priorities

- Identify how the criteria and priorities for the Trust are met, as outlined in this Funding Strategy. Outline how the project fits with the Waikato River Independent Scoping Study (WRISS) and/or Waikato and Waipā Rivers Restoration Strategy.

Iwi Environmental Plans

- Identify how the project furthers the relevant iwi environmental plan.

Consultation and letters of support

- A summary of people who you have consulted with (including iwi, regional council, landowners) and any letters of support for the project.

Personnel, skills, previous experience

- Identify the proposed team and their respective roles, including any subcontractors (where known). Provide a synopsis of the organisation's relevant experience for the proposed project. CVs are not required.

5. Application evaluation

5.1 Independent Evaluation Panel

All applications are assessed by an Independent Evaluation Panel. This Panel is appointed by the WRA Trust Fund Manager in consultation with the Chief Executive. Panel membership is rotated periodically to ensure there is a balance between continuity and a spread of expertise across the range of applications we expect to receive.

No external parties influence appointment on the Evaluation Panel, although the Trust does seek to have an appropriate Waikato Regional Council staff member participate so we can directly access the body of technical knowledge within council, and avoid funding duplication.

Conflicts of interest between Evaluation Panel members and applications are managed as they arise. There are two further stages after the recommendations are received from the Evaluation Panel before a project is accepted for funding:

1. *The full board of the Trust considers the recommendations from the Independent Evaluation Panel and makes a final funding decision*
2. *The Trust Fund Manager works with successful applicants to ensure a Deed of Funding is completed to our satisfaction. If it is not, a recommendation will go back to the full board for consideration.*

A restored wetland area along Tunaeke Stream, Whatawhata.

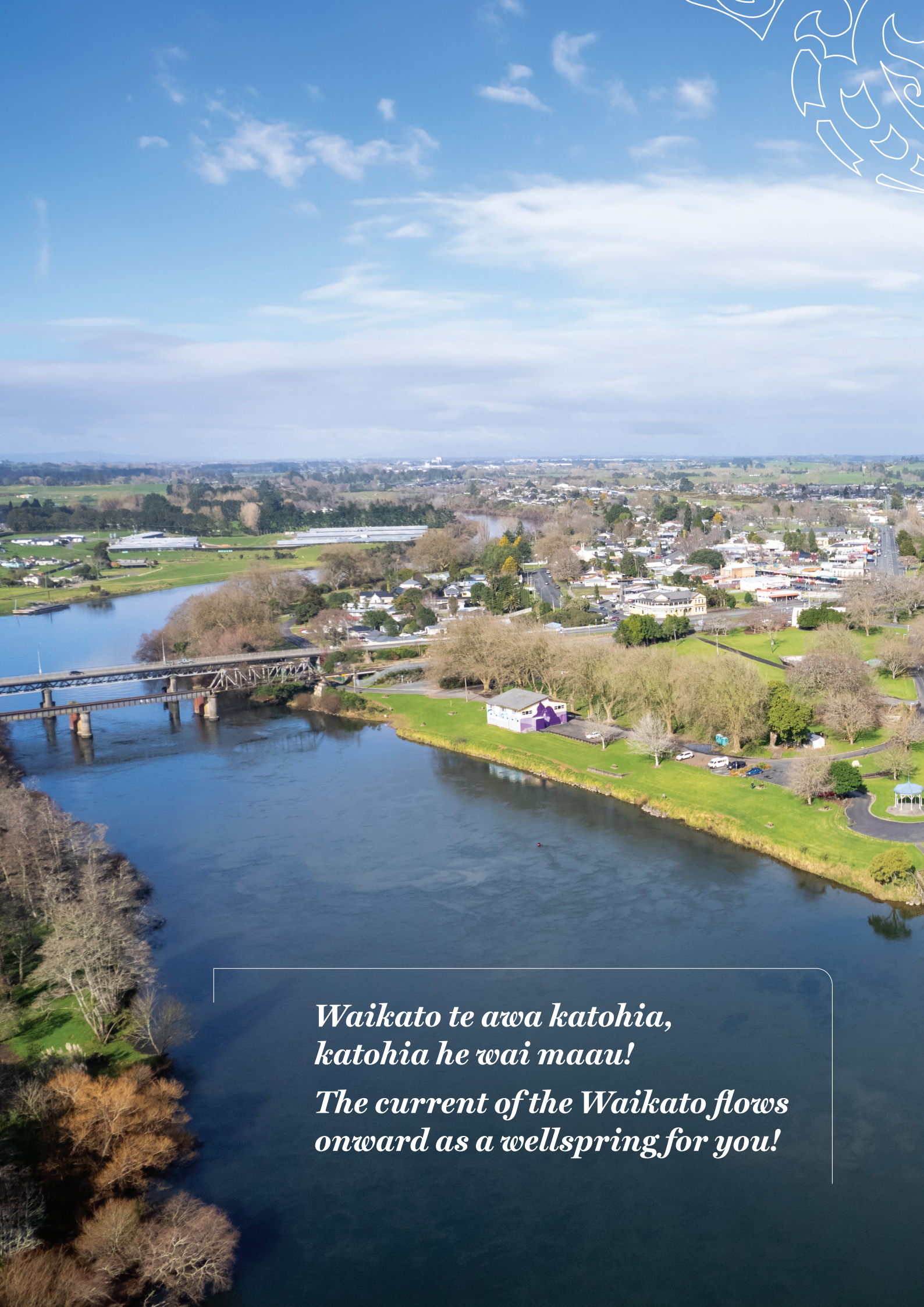


5.2 Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria. The criteria marked with a dot (●) are a requirement in the WRCUT's enabling legislation. Those shaded will be given a double weighting to reflect their importance.

Waikato River Iwi Authorities will be directly involved in the evaluation of criteria 12. and 15. River Iwi will also provide information around whether projects implement Iwi priorities outlined in this Funding Strategy.

	Criteria	WRCUT	Explanation
1.	Purpose and Goals		Applications should have a clear purpose and goals. Goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely).
2.	Benefits		Project benefits should be clearly identified and demonstrably greater than the costs.
3.	Methodology & Technical Feasibility	●	The proposal should demonstrate that the proposed approach is technically feasible and there is a high certainty of success. The methodology should align with relevant research or best practice. The methodology should be clear and link to the goals and outcomes identified.
4.	Costs		Costs should be clearly identified for all project stages and be reasonable (not above market rates) and accurate.
5.	Matching / Supplemental Funding	●	The application should ideally meet the co-funding recommendations set out in the Funding Strategy.
6.	Monitoring		The application should state how the project will be monitored, reported on and evaluated.
7.	Research vs Practical Outcomes	●	Preference is given to projects that achieve practical results over projects purely for research purposes.
8.	Longevity of solution		Projects should provide outcomes that will be maintained into the future without the need for ongoing funding from the Trust.
9.	Links to Vision & Strategy	●	The project will be assessed on how strongly it gives effect to the Vision and Strategy objectives.
10.	Prioritisation		The project will be assessed on how strongly it aligns with the priorities identified in the WRCUT Annual Funding Strategy (including the Waikato and Waipā Restoration Strategy).
11.	Links to WRISS	●	Regard is given to how the project aligns with the Waikato River Independent Scoping Study.
12.	Links to Iwi Management Plans		The project is assessed on how well it links to iwi management plans, or contribute to future plans.
13.	Overlap with other Agencies		It should be clear that the proposal is not something that the Waikato River Authority would expect another organisation to fund during its normal course of operations.
14.	Related Projects		It is an advantage if the project is adjacent to or builds on (but not duplicate) existing projects.
15.	Engagement and/or Partnership with River Iwi		The proposal should provide evidence of engagement with Iwi. Projects that have support from mana whenua and iwi will be considered more favourably. Projects that partner with local iwi and/or provide meaningful opportunities to local Iwi will be given more priority over those that don't.
16.	Evidence of Consultation and/or Partnership with other Relevant Stakeholders		It is an advantage if the proposal provides evidence of consultation and/or partnership with other relevant stakeholders.
17.	Project and financial management		The application should outline adequate project management and governance appropriate to the size and nature of the project. Past track record of project delivery will also be taken into consideration.



*Waikato te arua katohia,
katohia he wai maau!*

*The current of the Waikato flows
onward as a wellspring for you!*



Waikato River
Authority

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