

Waimatā Catchment Project

Community Meeting – 20 May 2021

Post-it notes from community members

Community Concerns about the Waimatā river	
‘Let the River Speak’	<p>Whose voices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consultation: Will we hear only the loudest voices? • Will we hear the voices of mana whenua? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kei hea te waahi mo ngā mana whenua o te awa? Ko Ngāti Oneone te mana whenua mō Rarohau; ko te Whanau a Iwi te mana whenua mo Whataupoko – kei hea rātou? • Will we listen to the Awa? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The more we ignore the river, the more disconnected we become from the river; ○ We’re not listening to the voice of the river, only physical indicators; ○ The needs of the people are being put ahead of the needs of the river.
Current state of the Waimatā:	<p>Water Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment: Chocolate brown water, sediment laden, clear felling forestry in catchment Te Paru – kahore i te pai • Faeces in water bad! The mud stinks at times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Human poo, ○ high bacteria counts, ○ infection • Dead animals in the river • Nutrient overload, acidification • Algae blooms, effects on people, dogs, stream ecology, including cyanobacteria • Pollution, plastic, garden waste, neglect <p>A lack of life in the river</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of native vegetation in the catchment • Lack of life in the river and its tributaries – koura (freshwater crayfish), freshwater mussels, inanga (whitebait), native fish species • Ecological life in the catchment is shocking, extinction rates for endemic species high • A severe lack of bird and lizard species that are difficult to reintroduce

Upper River

- **Erosion:**
 - Need to control mass erosion in vulnerable geology
 - Collapsing gullies, river banks
 - Sediment periodically chokes the river
 - Concern about build up of sediment; heavy silt layer from higher up the catchment, farming & forestry
 - There's too much silt at the river mouth – effects on coastal areas, marine life

- **State of river banks**
 - Trees continually slipping into the river following storms – poplars, willows, pines
 - Rubbish being thrown into the river
 - Horrific weed and pest infestations in the catchment – Riverside Road, Donner's Bush, river banks
 - Need better understandings of river bank mobility – where to plant natives, where to leave eroding banks alone

- **Forestry**
 - Forestry slash is going into the river; rubbish and slash floating down the river
 - As in other countries, forestry companies should be held responsible for clearing slash, harvest timing should be controlled, don't allow clear felling
 - Too much forestry, not enough native planting
 - Glyphosate infiltration from farming and forestry operations
 - Forestry roading causes huge damage to the Waimatā River

- **Farming**
 - Contamination from farming chemicals; fertilisers, pesticides finding their way down stream and ending up in the river
 - Little accountability for use of chemicals in the catchment – spraying scrub, paddocks etc
 - Grazing steep erodible slopes leads to erosion, and sediment in the river
 - Lack of access to the river upstream for swimming, picnics etc
 - Dumping animal carcasses that float down river – affect swimmers and paddlers
 - Stock in streams and in the river
 - Fence off river banks, remove stock to reduce Ecoli
 - Fencing should be mandatory

Lower River landowners and river users

- Lack of protection of river banks by landowners
- Compost, lawn clippings left on river banks, waiting to be sent downstream
- Lack of control of fast boats, jet boats, eroding river banks, risks to paddlers, rowers and swimmers
- Fishing lines, hooks left tangled in river bank vegetation – risks to water fowl, swimmers etc.
- Plastic, fast food packaging, rubbish dropped in the river

Gisborne District Council

- Gisborne District Council shows a lack of urgency, concern for taking care of our waterways. Reflects poor management of the local environment
 - GDC needs to rethink its approach to waterways – stop using them as rubbish dumps, toilets; treat them as a taonga
 - GDC is way behind many other Councils in NZ in rivers restoration.
 - Need to innovate, respond urgently to community concerns and priorities. Don't just listen to some lobby groups, loud voices.
 - Better spatial planning and management of land use in the catchment is urgently needed – forestry, spraying of shrublands, fencing of river banks and riparian plantings etc.
 - Lack of pest and weed control on GDC land (river reserves, roadside verges) in the catchment
 - Council needs to better manage compliance with consents for forestry harvest requirements, construction related erosion, maintain fish passage during temporary works on waterways etc,
 - Need cycleways, walkways, picnic spots beside the awa
- Council has responsibility to monitor, measure and publish readings of water quality over longer periods
 - Data is not readily available; need accurate tables published on GDC website
 - The opening of overflow valves during adverse events is well known for time of start, length of opening. Need samples taken before and after valves are opened to assess impacts on water quality, human health
- Raw sewage is allowed to float into the river – we live in 2021, not the 1960s!
 - After rainfall, concern re floating logs and sewage
 - Where's the GDC ?
 - GDC needs to fix the pipes! The pump station on the corner of Riverside Road and Russell Street needs fixing
 - Need more stringent rules, manage wet weather peaks
 - Expedite infrastructure upgrades
 - Many similar comments indicate **very strong community feeling against sewage in the river eg. "Keep the river clean for future generations. No sewage pumped into the river."**

Impacts	
	<p>Impacts on Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals and bacteria in the water are physically harming people who swim or paddle in the river • The health of our community should come first; money over health • Lack of accountability for those who are polluting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No fun in the river when it is polluted; ○ Surfers unable to use town beaches after sewage overflows • Need rāhui signs to warn river and beach users • Test the mud – it'll tell us the whole story • How clean will the river be for future generations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I want our family to be able to swim in the river without fearing getting sick ○ I don't feel confident to swim or paddle in any part of the river, or let my dog in the water ○ I want the ability to keep up my training to a high level <p>Impacts on wider ecosystem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awa links to te moana, the sea – linked to food sources, food web • Diminishing fish stocks especially juvenile whitebait species, flounder • The return of edible kai to the awa! • Concerned about what is washing out to sea and onto the beaches • A lack of understanding in our community about biodiversity -if we don't know what we do or don't have, how can we protect it? • Take care of Te Mana o te Wai

Community Aspirations	
	<p>Listen to the Voice of the River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the river, place its needs first • Recognition of the awa as a being in its own right <p>Healthy river, healthy people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our source of a fresh, moving body to sit by and remind us of the constant changing of things' • A gift, spirit, life, home • Keeping the river alive. • Me hoki mai ano te mauri o te wai • The mauri of the river and the energetic health of the river, and the part this plays in healing the river • The river is a conscious, living being. Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au. • Nature for itself, and us • People are place and places are people. By healing the awa, we heal ourselves • Seeing and feeling the mauri of the river and the health of the ecosystem • Mountains, river, sea are all connected • My well being depends on the wellbeing of the awa <p>Beauty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Waimatā is a huge visual amenity for the city • Rivers shape the urban form, and beautify the city • The river brings the natural world into the heart of town • Peaceful meditating on the flow of the river • It's a peaceful and enriching place to live beside • Beautiful vista across the seasons, a pleasure to live on its banks • Beauty, fun and family <p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access for recreation and restoration • Easy access for those without cars, and the young for water activities • A sporting resource in the centre of the city

River sports

- The river should be clean and safe for us rangatahi to swim and paddle
- Love that waka, kayakers, rowers, surf life saving, SUPs, swimmers use and share the river
- The river should be safe for swimming with my grandchildren
- A playground for sports and pleasure
- Great for all water sports – boating, skiing, waka ama, fishing, swimming in clean water
- Recreation for everyone – waka, kayak, swimming, all water sports
- The river is a source of fun. There is always someone jumping off the bridge
- Able to enjoy the Waimatā for fishing, while learning about its needs, and how to protect it for the future.

Walking

- Beautiful places to walk
- Lovely picnic areas
- Peaceful to cycle by and walk by
- Walking at Longbush

Stories, legacies

- An enduring legacy is passed on to our tamariki mokopuna, ngā kai tiaki mō apōpō
- Many memories connected to the Waimatā, generations are connected to it
- Stories of generations and centuries of settlement
- Love of rivers, histories of rivers

Working alongside Mana whenua

- Listen first to the voice of the river, then mana whenua, then all influencers and users and visitors to the river
- Use the Mauri compass to measure the effectiveness of the restoration project

Whakapapa and identity

- Mauri whenua, mauri tangata, mauri awa, mauri ora
- Whakapapa ki te whenua, ki te wai māori
- It flows into the moana, and we evolved from this

Link between town and country

- A connection between the hinterland and city dwellers
- Restoring the awa brings town and country together

Water quality

- Clear, deep, fast flowing
- I want to see the water sparkle again
- Clean drinking water with nourishing minerals
- I want to be able to see the bottom of the river

Mahinga Kai

- Resources are plentiful and healthy, contribute to contemporary kai and farming practices
- Having the possibility to gather food from the awa that is healthy

Fish

- Clean water where fish can flourish
- Edible shellfish
- Eeling with my kids
- More fish life than ever – kahawai, snapper, mullet, kingfish in good numbers
- The fish and lovely kakahi in the wai

Native bush

- Native trees, birds in the catchment – bring back the bird song!
- Nectar and pollen sources for bees, native and introduced
- Take care of biodiversity in the catchment

Birds

- Banks are part of the river, beautiful resting places for humans, birds
- Birdlife near the river has much improved over the past 10-20 years
- Bird-watching

	<p>Healthy water, healthy people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We farm beside the river and its tributaries. We want the river to become healthier as a result of our group actions • Knowing the Waimatā is healthy and looked after by all
<p>Community Ideas for Action</p>	
	<p>Celebrate the Awa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River festival – food, music, performances • Story boards in ANZAC Park and all areas of public access with stories of the river = historical to the present day • Build living links with the awa – a walking track up the whole catchment; river competitions and activities for kids and adults • Local pride in the river <p>Taking care of the River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger to our tamariki and whanau swimming and paddling in polluted water, so lets clean it up NOW – not in 20 years or so • Harness all the goodwill and energy of the people to create change • The future of our connection with the rest of our living world • Community members come together to work on solutions • Give people personal, intimate connections with the Waimatā River • More groups like the ones who planted up Waikanae creek <p>Kai-tiaki activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get rid of spartina • Right tree in the right place – urban as well as rural riparian planting. Planting guides for different parts of the river <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fence tributaries, and plant with natives ○ Plant buffer strips of natives – manuka roots are known to mitigate the harmful bacteria in the soil. ○ Buffer strips beside river 500 metres; also buffer strips beside streams to shade and stabilise them; with access points for recreation ○ Restore native forest on high country in the catchment, marginal for farming • Restore native flora and fauna to river banks – beauty, stability, biodiversity • We need a full range of native birds, native fish, lizards etc in the catchment – run restoration projects • Sustainable harvest of traditional species

	<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My son goes around schools speaking to tamariki about keeping waterways clean – do the same here • We need someone to go around schools educating our tamariki about the state of our Awa • School planting groups, adopt a stream / tributary • Children catch vision really fast! • Each group should take responsibility for educating its own – eg. forestry, farming, town dwellers etc. <p>Planning – a trajectory of improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective ownership of the wellbeing of the river • Sponsor a stretch of the river, and hold sponsors to account – local businesses • Citizen science – help to collect data on the river • Community buy-in! for this project • Balanced, realistic plan that ensures progress is made into the future <p>Forestry & GDC – responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that forestry in the catchment is responsible for not allowing sediment and slash to enter into the river. Fine offenders heavily, make them accountable • Consider detrimental effects of multiple replantings on soil, topography and disease • GDC to ensure a balance of different land uses in the catchment, so that forestry does not take over <p>GDC and Sewage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop resource consent for sewage dumping by the Council • Council needs to be accountable to the community for the harm its doing to the awa • No untreated wastewater in the river; upgrade our sewage systems • Stop dumping the bloody sewage in the awa! <p>Polluters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and shame polluters; penalties for polluters • \$ support for cleaning up the river; \$ penalty for those who dump crap in the river • Council does its job – regulatory enforcement, lots of bad behaviour on the river
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