

Summary and Key Themes from feedback and pre-drafting engagement

Pre-drafting engagement summary

Council received 45 online responses from individuals who predominantly lived close to the Reserve;

47% Te Awamutu

16% Kihikihi

11% Pirongia

9% Bank Road and Sing Road

7% Ōhaupō

10% Others

Written responses were also received from Waikato Thames Coromandel Youth Sailing Development Trust, Te Awamutu Rowing Club, Waikato Sailability and Ngāroto Sailing Club.

The Project Team sought and received ideas and input from Peat Lake Accord partners, lessees/lake users and adjoining landowners through meetings and follow up correspondence.

Key Themes of feedback and pre-drafting engagement

Significance to mana whenua	Mana whenua confirmed the lake and surrounding areas are very important to them as a taonga tuku iho (treasure handed down), a place of historic occupation, a significant pre-European battle site and an area they can now sustain their physical and spiritual relationship with wai (water) and whenua (land), fulfil their kaitiaki (guardian) responsibilities and pursue traditional and contemporary activities. Mana whenua advocated for a range of priorities, including restoring and protecting the mana and the mauri (life force) of the lake, restoring the traditional name, preserving Pā, enabling kaitiaikitanga (guardianship) and increasing awareness of the lake's significance.
Lake health is a priority	Significant concerns were raised regarding the lake's condition and the effects of the lake's very poor health on the Waipā and Waikato Rivers, indigenous biodiversity, and mana whenua and recreational values. There was a strong focus on collaborative and urgent actions to improve water quality and ecological conditions. A wide range of in-lake, reserve and catchment-wide actions were suggested – many require further investigation, significant funding and/or lie outside of the Council's control and can only be addressed through 'advocacy' policies. One of the most significant actions already underway is the Waikato Regional Plan Change 1: Waikato and Waipā River Catchment. WRC provided information about the current status of the plan change and other initiatives they are intending to progress to restore and protect Lake Ngā Roto
Biodiversity and Open Space	Many respondents and organisations highlighted the Reserve is an important stepping stone in Taieo te Taiao (Maungatautari to Pirongia Ecological Corridor) that needs to be extended, restored and protected to create a thriving habitat for native flora and fauna.
Public amenity and recreation	Respondents outlined they highly value the Reserve for a range of recreation opportunities:

	▪ 38% of individual respondents sought no changes to off-leash dog rules, emphasising the track as a unique long off-road walk ▪ 36% of individual respondents requested improved infrastructure – more seating, track accessibility, shade trees, fitness equipment, BBQs, security cameras, and a playground ▪ 18% of individual respondents highlighted the need for more rubbish and dog waste bins ▪ There was a range of other suggestions to enhance the visitor experience, such as; ○ enabling commercial activities ○ enabling waka ama if supported by kaumatua ○ reconstruction of a Māori pā site ○ funding ongoing infrastructure maintenance ○ prohibiting smoking ○ restricting the location of freedom camping and enforcing freedom camping rules ○ creating interesting view shafts and screen planting ○ stopping game bird shooting unless ducks and other game birds are classed as pests.
Lessee/Lake users	The lessees and lake users provided feedback relating to their operations; ▪ Declining lake health has severely affected their operations, particularly during peak usage times in summer ▪ The value of unique recreational opportunities at Lake Ngā Roto and wish to remain based there, contributing to restoration efforts ▪ Support for bold, innovative in-lake interventions to improve water quality alongside long-term catchment measures ▪ Intention to continue to grow membership, improve off-water facilities, and expand their fleets ▪ Acknowledged game bird hunting is an important activity for a small group of people for a short period of the year and can't easily be

	replicated elsewhere. Fish and Game Auckland/Waikato is very keen to work with Council on actions to enable this activity to continue.
Cycling Connectivity	There was support for cycling on the track to continue and calls to develop cycleways linking Te Awamutu, Ōhaupō, and Pirongia to the lake.
Effects of lake management on adjoining private land	Adjoining landowners want to explore restoration actions that reduce the extent, duration and effects of flooding on their land.
Fiscal responsibility	One respondent noted the need to stage and limit developments to avoid Council creating large amounts of debt.