

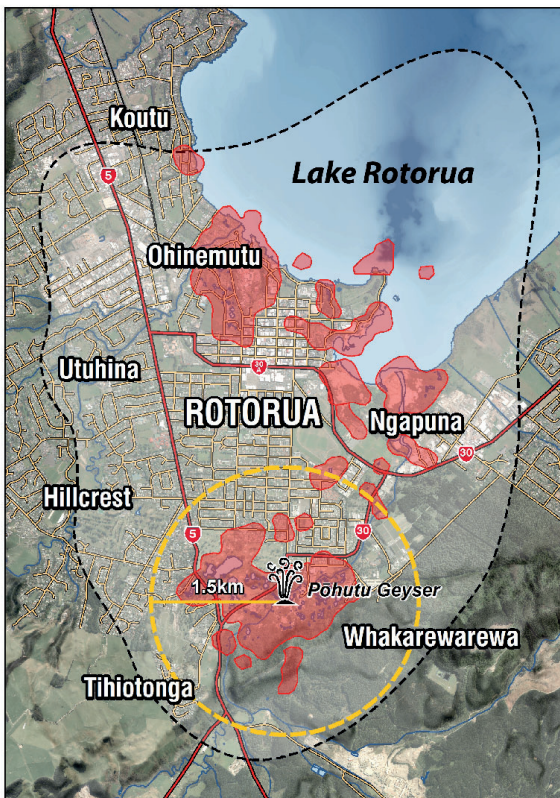
Te Arotake i ngā Whakahaere o Te Waiariki ki Rotorua

Reviewing Management of the Rotorua Geothermal System



Where we started, what we've done and what's next

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana is currently working on the development of a System Management Plan for the Rotorua geothermal system and a review of all geothermal provisions in the [Regional Natural Resources Plan](#) and [Rotorua Geothermal Regional Plan](#).



- Geothermal System Indicative Area
- Geothermal Surface Features Indicative Area
- Rotorua Geothermal Exclusion Zone

A system management plan ensures that where a system is being heavily used (either by a small number of large users or by multiple small users) it is managed on a whole system basis in an integrated and sustainable way.

The content for a system management plan is set out in the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement but there is no set template and it may take on varied forms and include additional information as suits the system to be managed.

Although it is not a statutory document, for Rotorua, the content included in the system management plan will form the basis for changes to the geothermal provisions of the Regional Natural Resources Plan and the Rotorua Geothermal Regional Plan.

You can find out more about System Management Plans on our [website](#).

We have started on the Rotorua system first, but we will also be looking at the management of all of the other geothermal systems in the region over time. The process has so far involved reviewing the effectiveness of current planning provisions, reviewing our understanding of the resource and filling knowledge gaps (e.g. research, monitoring and modelling) and identifying the community's values through community engagement.

We began our engagement with Māori early in the process and will continue engagement throughout as the plan change has important implications for Māori.

An outcome of initial hui in 2018 was that Council agreed to continue to engage directly with iwi and any iwi owned entities, but that a way for tangata whenua to be part of the process was needed. In response, in January 2019 the Ahi Kaa Roa roopu was set up, a mana whenua working group with self-selected representatives from the villages of Ngāpuna, Whakarewarewa, Ōhinemutu, and Tarewa/Kuirau.

Te Ahi Kaa Roa have been meeting regularly since their formation, sharing their thoughts on values and issues and providing a hau kainga perspective into an [Issues and Options Discussion Document](#), which included some background information on the Rotorua Geothermal System, how we look after it now and possible future management options, that was used to start discussions with people. The Roopu also spent time hearing about Council's geothermal work, such as monitoring, modelling and consents. More recently, following feedback through engagement that a Mātauranga Māori perspective on the health or Mauri of the geothermal taonga was needed, the roopu has worked with Elva Conroy to prepare the report Ngā wai ariki o Rotorua: He Kohikohinga, which focusses on Hau Kāinga perspectives on the health and wellbeing of geothermal taonga within Rotorua.

Ngā wai ariki o Rotorua: He Kohikohinga identifies some next steps that the roopu intends to continue working towards with Council and also outlines principles to guide the way the system is managed. These are to ensure that geothermal planning and decision making:

- is intergenerational – for our children and mokopuna.
- reflects our place in the world – we are part of the taiao; our geothermal taonga are a living entity (not just a resource) and our tuākana.
- strives for balance and reciprocity – this means working within the natural limits of the environment and giving back (i.e. restore what is taken; take action to offset effects).

These principles alongside other key messages heard through hui, workshops and open days (Mātauranga Māori, certainty of the science, efficiency and innovation, addressing process barriers, partnership) will inform our process heading into the next phase of development of the Rotorua System Management plan and also the plan change process.

Outside of engagement, reviewing our understanding of the geothermal system and filling knowledge gaps has also been a major focus for Council. We have supported the development of the Ngā wai ariki o Rotorua: He Kohikohinga report, reviewed our reservoir model (a tool that uses mathematical equations to describe and interpret what is happening in the real world), reviewed our geothermal data sets and built our understanding of connections with other data sets such as climate, freshwater and consent information. We've also been looking at ways to improve efficiency, allocation approaches, and new ways to monitor changes as well as internal consent processes and how we can make things simpler and more streamlined for people.

Next steps in our process are to continue to draft the Rotorua System Management Plan and then develop policies for geothermal to be included in our regional plan. We intend to continue to work with the Ahi Kaa Roa roopu and also will be working more intensively with iwi and more widely with key stakeholders as part of this process.

We will be providing opportunities for people to be involved in the process and will keep people informed throughout. A good place to keep up to date with progress and future opportunities to be involved is our website.

We hope to have a draft System Management Plan for Rotorua for discussion by the end of 2021.

May 2018
Three Hui in Ōkurei

Sept 2018
Hui at Ōhinemutu,
Whakarewarewa and
Ngāpuna

May 2019
Initial conversations
with iwi entities

August 2019
Hui at Tarewa,
Whakarewarewa and
Ngāpuna

Sept 2019
Stakeholder
workshops and
public open days

2020
Ongoing discussions
with Ahi Kaa Roa

2021
Ongoing
engagement