

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER The Rivers and Drainage Activity of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council
(BOPRC) submission on Proposed Change 5 (Kaituna River) to the
Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HEMI BARSDELL ON BEHALF OF
THE RIVERS AND DRAINAGE ACTIVITY OF THE
BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

(Further submission no. FS02)

Introduction and qualifications

- 1 My name is Hemi Barsdell, Asset Management Specialist. This statement of evidence is made on behalf of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Rivers and Drainage Activity.
- 2 The Rivers and Drainage Activity is responsible for the management of the Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme, which includes the management of 75 kilometres of drains in the lower Kaituna area.
- 3 Management of the Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme primarily contributes to Bay of Plenty Regional Council's community outcomes; *Kia haumarū, kia pakari te hapori – Safe and resilient communities*, and; *Toitu te rohe – A vibrant region*.
- 4 I hold the following tertiary qualifications:
 - (a) Bachelor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management.
 - (b) Diploma in Business Management.
 - (c) Diploma in Te Ara Reo Māori.
- 5 I have considerable knowledge and experience in statutory processes under the Resource Management Act 1991, Local Government Act 2002, and legislation relevant to the Department of Conservation.
- 6 While working for the Department of Conservation (2002-2019) I held the roles of Programme Manager Iwi Support, Operations Manager Te Urewera and Statutory Manager Central North Island. These roles included implementing various Treaty Settlement Acts, administering National Parks, and Conservation Management Strategy reviews.
- 7 Since joining the Rivers and Drainage Department in 2019, I have; project managed a publicly notified resource consent application to enable waterway management initiatives across the region; led the Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 review and adoption process for Rivers and Drainage; contributed to various District Plan changes; and been the key point of contact for the Rivers and Drainage Activity for statutory process matters.
- 8 While this evidence is for a hearing conducted by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, I consider it appropriate that the Environment Court Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses is observed. I have read this Code and can confirm that I have complied with it in the preparation of this statement of evidence. I have not omitted consideration of any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.
- 9 My evidence supports the Reporting Officers recommendations made in relation to the Rivers and Drainage further submission FS02, in the report dated 30 August 2022, named "Proposed Change 5 (Kaituna River) to the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement – Overview report on submissions".

10 My evidence also briefly explains further rationale supporting our further submission FS02.

Support of the Reporting Officers recommendations

11 **Rivers and Drainage support the Reporting Officers recommendations 6.72 to 6.74 in relation to Issue 2.12.4(4) Waterbody modification impacts.**

12 Rivers and Drainage further submission FS02 opposes a submission by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society seeking Issue 4 be amended to reference the impacts caused by drainage schemes.

13 As explained by the Reporting Officer at recommendation 6.73, referring to 'drainage scheme' impacts unnecessarily narrows the scope of the issue.

14 Retaining the wording 'waterbody modification impacts' more appropriately reflects how land use is a primary issue to manage in terms of water quality management. To quantify the extent of waterbody modifications, the following table is presented.

Catchment	% Modified	% Unmodified
Lower Kaituna (not including Rotorua Lakes)	87%	13%
Papamoa	93%	7%
Lower Kaituna (Ford Road area)	94%	6%
Rangiuru South	99%	1%
Parawhenuamea	87%	13%
Waiari	63%	37%
Te Puke East	91%	9%
Ohineangaanga	86%	14%
Raparapahoe	48%	52%
Kopuaroa	83%	17%

15 The data in the table above is sourced from Bay of Plenty Regional Council's publicly available GIS mapping tool.

16 In the table above, 'unmodified' is generally considered to be native vegetation, reserves, wetlands, and lakes. 'Modified' is all other land use.

17 The catchment areas can be viewed on the map at Appendix 1.

18 The quality of water in drainage scheme drains is directly related to surrounding land use.

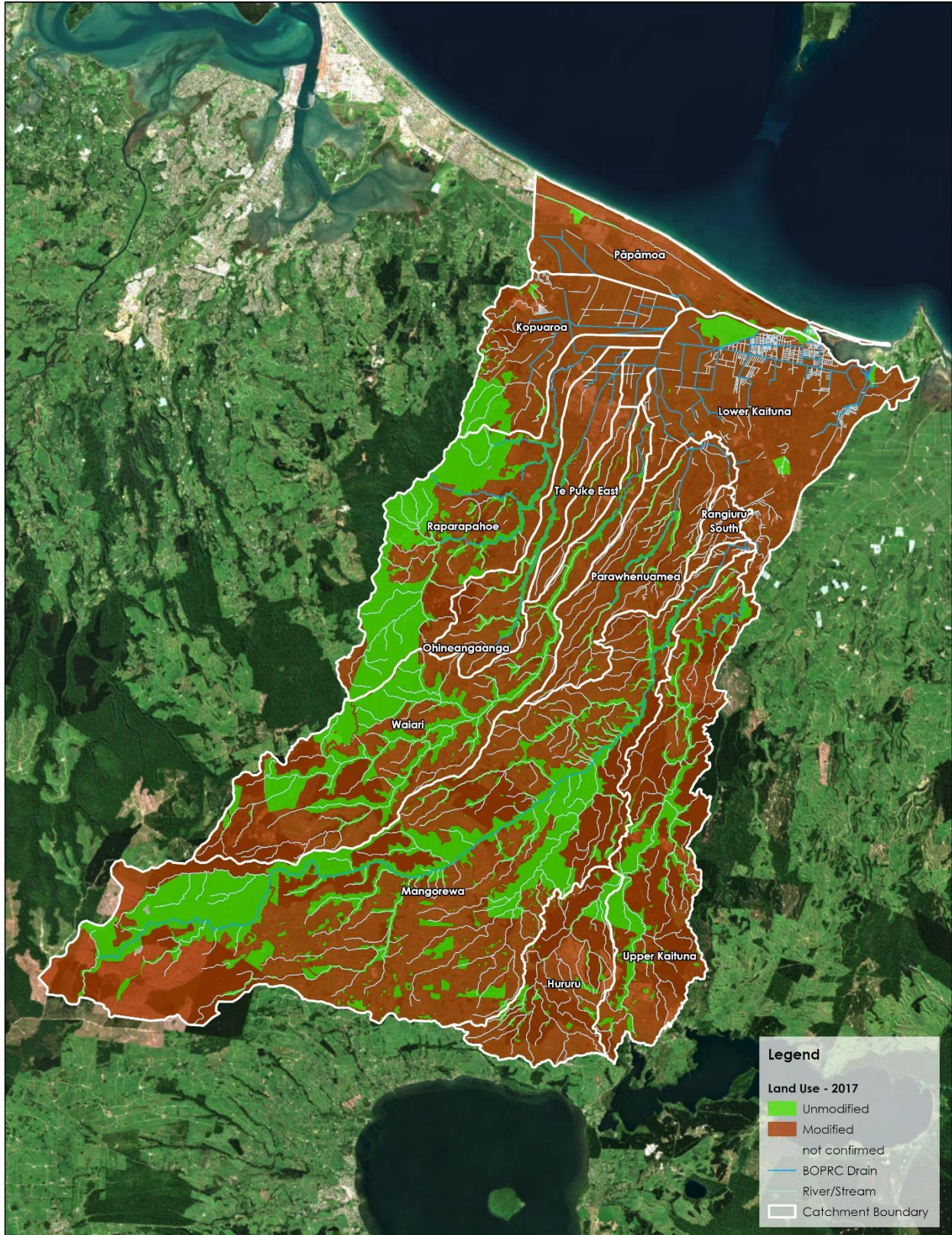
19 As the managers of the Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme – which involves management of drainage scheme drains in the lower Kaituna sub-catchments, Rivers and Drainage are committed to working towards enhancement of drain water quality in a sustainable manner.

- 20 However, our ability to manage land use in the drainage scheme catchments is extremely limited, given that the majority of drains we manage are on private land. Landowner agreement is necessary to undertake drain enhancement work, and this can be a difficult decision for landowners given the likely loss of productive land involved.
- 21 The Land Management Activity lead Bay of Plenty Regional Council's engagement with landowners around drain enhancement work, including drains on private land in drainage scheme areas. For example, in the Ford Road and Waitepuia Focus Catchment (map at Appendix 2), Bay of Plenty Regional Council has invested \$461,870 since 2019 on waterway enhancement. In the 2022-2023 financial year, BOPRC's planned expenditure is \$820,000.
- 22 Rivers and Drainage staff support these initiatives, with a recent example being our support in the construction of the treatment wetland at Maketū (photos at Appendix 3).
- 23 Scheme drain enhancement is ongoing where landowners have agreed. This work is often undertaken with assistance from Rivers and Drainage through the provision of engineering knowledge, staff and machinery time. A recent example is viewable at Appendix 4 where 550 metres of the Singleton's scheme drain has been enhanced with bank battering, planting and fencing.
- 24 **Rivers and Drainage support the Reporting Officers recommendation 6.362 to retain unchanged the currently proposed Appendix A definition of Riparian Areas or Margins**
- 25 The Reporting Officer's recommendation 6.368 explains that staff do not consider that the PC5 definition explicitly excludes artificial waterways. Rivers and Drainage's is supportive of this assessment.
- 26 Explicitly including artificial watercourses in this definition (as per the Forest and Bird submission) would signal a significant policy shift, the implications of which may not be fully understood.
- 27 For example, in the lower Kaituna sub-catchments, there are over 200 private property owners with artificial watercourses on their properties. It is conceivable to think if Forest and Bird's recommendation was adopted, that in time these property owners would be required to retire currently productive land adjacent to drains as riparian areas.
- 28 While this may be favourable from an artificial watercourse water quality perspective, the key point is these landowners would not have had the opportunity to be consulted appropriately on such potential change through this PC5 process.
- 29 Maintaining the currently proposed definition as per the Reporting Officers recommendation 6.362 is appropriate.

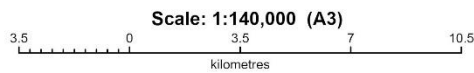
Hemi Barsdell

9 September 2022

Appendix 1 Lower Kaituna Catchment Land Use (Modified vs Unmodified)

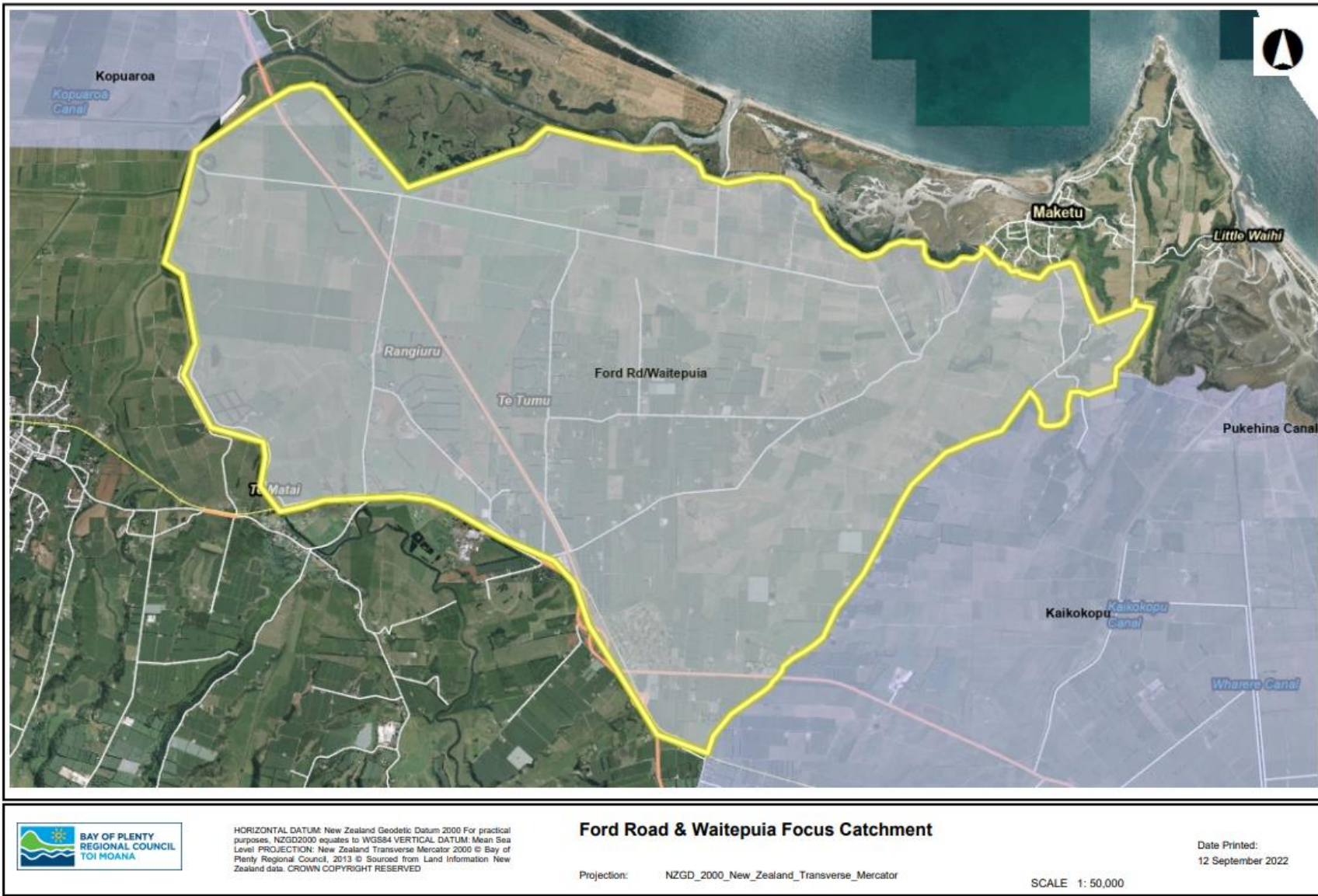


Lower Kaituna - Modified/Unmodified Land Use - 2017



GSP-670640-1
 Sheet 1 of 4
 Printed 2/09/2022

Appendix 2 - Ford Road and Waitepuia Focus Catchment



Appendix 3 - Treatment Wetland - Maketu



Before shot - 2020



Completed – 2022

Appendix 4 – Drain riparian enhancement work – Singelton’s drain (photo taken July 2022)

