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Kai Tahu Perspective



4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Regional Plan: Coast for Otago has been contributed by Kai Tahu.

The term “Kai Tahu”, as used in this document refers to the kupenga (net) of whakapapa that embraces the three constituent indigenous iwi of Otago, being Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Waitaha. The use of the term Kai Tahu hereafter in the Plan is inclusive of those three iwi.

The whanau and runanga of Otago who developed this chapter of the Plan and who were consulted over the development of the entire Plan were:

- Te Runanga Moeraki
Based at: Moeraki
Area of influence: Waitaki River to Waihemo (Shag River)
- Kati Huirapa Runanga Ki Puketeraki
Based at: Puketeraki, Karitane
Area of influence: Waihemo River to Heyward Point
- Te Runanga Otakou
Based at: Otakou
Area of influence: Purehurehu (Heyward Point) to Mata-Au (Clutha River)
(a shared interest with affiliated groups)
- Otokia Whanau
Based at: Brighton
Area of influence: Makeratu (Black Head) to Bruces Rocks
- Moturata/Taieri Whanau
Based at: Taieri Mouth
Area of influence: Bruce Rocks to Tokomairiro
- Hukanui
Based at: Kaka Point (South Otago) and McNab (Hokonui),
Area of influence: Tokomairiro to Turi-Mokomoko (The Brothers Point)

This Regional Plan: Coast for Otago has taken account of the concerns that Kai Tahu hold over cultural and environmental issues associated with Otago’s coastal marine area.

4.2 Te Taitoka o Araiteuru - The Tide of the Southern Seas

Whakatauki (proverb)

“Takaroa puukunohi Nui”

“The god of the sea Takaroa can observe all we are doing”

For Kai Tahu the characteristics of the sea and land interface express many values that transcend all aspects of cultural belief, concept and practice.

It is the place of Takaroa the deity who holds domain over all sea life, who is acknowledged by all who enter this domain. It is the medium by which the ancestors arrived in Te Waipounamu and is one of the means by which travel throughout the island was able to occur.

4.3 Place-names

The traditional place names are an oral record of history, traditions and customs. Place-names provide an indicator for a wide range of values that personify the coast, and are a source of the accumulated knowledge of generations that have gone before. They are indicators for today’s generation of the resources that were once, or which still are, available, in every bay and area of the coastal environment. The names of kaitiaki atua (guardian deities) responsible for the maintenance of the resources are interspersed along the coastal area.

Ingoa tawhito (traditional ancestral names) also speak of the spiritual values iwi associate with the coast and reaffirm the creation traditions that underlie the very fabric of Kai Tahu culture.

4.4 Resources

For the present and future generations of Kai Tahu, the coastal environment holds many values that range from the spiritual realm to the practical use of coastal resources. It is a taoka (resource) that has sustained the generations through good times and bad.

For past generations, coastal resources were a pataka (food storage) that was of prime importance to the survival of the coastal dwelling communities, of such importance that protocols of access, take and management are deeply embedded in the culture and attitude of Kai Tahu.

4.5 Creation tradition

Respect for the resource is borne of the fact that in Kai Tahu custom, the creation traditions are linked to the whakapapa of Kai Tahu, a tradition that relates to the beginning of time, the separation of the Earth Mother and the Sky Father, and the arrival of the Waka o Aoraki (South Island). This was the celestial canoe that

descended from the domain of the Sky Father, a canoe captained by Aoraki, son of the Sky Father.

The creation of bays, harbours and the estuaries important to human habitation is the work of Tuterakiwhanoa a benevolent god who was given the task of making Te Waipounamu habitable. In his work Tuterakiwhanoa was able to call on the assistance of Marokura who was given the task of stocking the sea with fish and sea life.

4.6 Present day

Kai Tahu recognise that recreational, commercial and domestic use of the coastal environment should be available for the good of the society to which all belong.

However, any use and management must respect the traditions and rights of Kai Tahu and leave an environment suitable for generations to come. Kai Tahu have areas of cultural value along the coast, the significance of which has either been ignored or legislated against.

Kai Tahu hope that the consultation process that this Plan puts in place will provide respect for and consideration that areas of significant cultural value deserve, that insensitive treatment of such areas as has occurred in the recent past will be avoided.

The Otago coastal environment is still a major source of food, livelihood and recreation for many Kai Tahu. Without the proper care and management the coastal environment could reach a point where the wastes and toxins from modern society cause irreparable ecological damage.

Kai Tahu have looked to the past to find the real value and relevance of traditional areas for today. They look to the future to ensure that the decisions made will protect their values and leave a pristine environment for the generations of New Zealanders to come, Maori and Tauīwi (Pakeha) alike.

4.7 Environment

Kai Tahu share a strong interest in the maintenance and protection of the wider environmental values that the Otago coastal area contains. Many of the issues raised by runanga fall into this category and have been integrated within the Regional Plan: Coast for Otago.

4.8 Kaitiakitanga

Kai Tahu are kaitiaki of the coastal area of Otago. Cultural values permeate all parts of the coast; values that are subject to the authority of kaitiakitanga. This is a responsibility that can only be exercised by Kai Tahu runanga and individuals who at present are custodians of the cultural connection to the coast for past and future generations.

4.9 Holistic view

Kai Tahu hold a holistic view of people and their relationship with the environment; all things are interrelated. Kai Tahu input into resource policy and plans exhibits an all-embracing concern for the total environment, one result of this being that iwi find it difficult to neatly fit into the parameters that traditionally govern resource management practice. However, it is recognised that for iwi to have their concerns raised, they will need to enter into the processes under the Act in order that their values and concerns are taken account of.

4.10 Consultation

Kai Tahu runanga have clearly indicated that in the future management of the coastal area of Otago, recognition and protection of cultural values through the consultation process is essential. Through the process of consultation, Kai Tahu will retain an active relationship with resource users and management agencies and be in a position to advocate from a cultural viewpoint.

Kai Tahu view consultation as a fundamental tool in achieving mutual understanding and agreement on matters of a cross cultural nature. In Maori tradition, talk was considered to be the food of chiefs. Similarly today in a much changed world, the practical implementation of kaitiakitanga is dependent upon open and informed discussion from which sound judgements can be made. Consultation has been identified by Kai Tahu as the prime tool available to resource agencies in achieving recognition of cultural values.

