

Mana Whenua – Kaitiaki Forum discussion

Q: Who should control the waterways / How do we protect the Mauri of water?

A Tame:

- When discussing sources there are two main points of interest, aquifer sources and sources where water accumulates from natural processes – like lakes etc.
- Rights and interests in water have been explored through the treaty. At the end of the day, water should be about providing equal and fair access to everyone. This is to uphold a basic standard of living, and the human right to have access to clean fresh water.
- The corporate ownership of water separates access to water from ordinary citizens.
- All these issues need to go through a rigorous process of discussion and conversations so that ownership is viewed primarily through the lens of access.

A Richie:

- The other big challenge for Māori – Looking at the essence of water and rights and interests. Is that we are a partner to the Crown, which should provide us with the right to be at the decision-making table.
- In the past, there has been a poor representation with just a karakia or a song.
- Our right is not saying “this is mine, not yours”, rather our right is to have access, work as a people, be in the decision-making process and not shut down others.

Q: What are your thoughts on drinking direct purified water? Around the Taonga and mauri of water.

A Richie:

- There are many of our people who have the view that we shouldn't mix human waste into our drinking water. But some of our people recognise we must find something else for our future water. Another faction grew up with traditions that made reusing the human body more acceptable.
- We are competing with three factions: the Ew factor, the need to do something else, and we have used our body waste before in the past.
- We will get there because we need to get there, especially as we cannot take from the Waikato anymore.

A Tame:

- Part of the partnership with Watercare is searching for innovative solutions. This partnership has allowed us to investigate the processes and advanced technology of wastewater treatment.
- It is important that there are many steps between waste and drinking water rather than straight from waste to drinking.
- The use of water for construction is one. As well as irrigation.
- There are increasing technologies to monitor and test our waste and drinking water. We should not ignore getting more use out of the resource. Whether that is in agriculture or other uses, or through drinking.

- The challenge in Tikanga – is the applying of Tapu. Tapu is about restriction.

Q: Auckland takes 300 million litres a day (or has access to that). What happens to the rest of this water – doesn't it go into port Waikato? Can we not take the water before it gets into the harbour?

A Kristiann:

- It is an important question, as the discussion of a first principle, it is not our water to take. The Waikato has its own governance, Iwi and a promise not to take the water.

A Anne:

- The water going to sea is not being wasted, that is the natural flow of water and the environment that it exists within.

A Richie:

- From a Waikato perspective – you must think about the health and wellbeing of my ancestor and consider the vision and strategy that makes sure my ancestor is cared for and looked after.
- Many different people all along the Waikato take lots of water and have other uses of this river. Agriculture and other output as well. Watercare is at the bottom end of the flow, you must consider the whole of the river, when discussing outtake.