



ADVISORY COMMITTEE for the Waikato REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

**Minutes of the
Advisory Committee for Regional Environment (ACRE)
held via MS Teams and at WRC 160 Ward Street, Hamilton on Wednesday June 26th, 2024, at 3:00-
5:00pm**

Attendees:

Anna Casey-Cox (chair)
Megan Thomas WRC minutes
Shepherd Isaac
Rachel Thompson via teams
Kristel via teams
Malcom Green
Neville Williams

Apologies:

John Badham
Wiea Montemezzani
Craig Solomon
Elisapesi Havea
Keri Thompson

Karakia Tīmatanga – Shepherd Isaac

- **Conflicts of interest**
- **Current workplan**

Developing relationships with Councillors

Councillor Mikale was invited to Rachels event. Good connections were made, positive feedback, environment festival of environmental education. Matariki planting event in Taupō on Wednesday the 3rd in the morning, with a second planting event on the Saturday lead by a collective group from five hapū trust.

ACRE presentation to Strategy and Policy Committee. This went well. Kristel has connected with Pamela Story recently and has received positive feedback about the deputation. The following aspects were reiterated to Councillors: ACRE has a wealth of connections and knowledge. A lot of different groups are represented in ACRE.

Anna has invited Councillor Robbie to the ACRE hui but had no reply.



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Action: A letter will be sent to Councillors regarding the LTP decision. Moved/Seconded Anna/Kristel.

Discussion regarding Mugeridge (Kelvin's concern)

- The last action was to determine if carbon emissions are part of the RMA reform consenting process. They are not currently part of the process.
- Current drainage will remain in area of Mugeridge.
- The pump station is on pause currently due to cost/lack of funding

Acknowledgement of Kelvins resignation

The committee acknowledged Kelvin for his contribution over many years, and his concern to ensure that ACRE's advocacy reflects local issues.

It is important to keep members from the Waikato region broadly, including from the Coromandel. Kristel suggested a member from the MEG Group.

Action: Kristel to make contact with MEG to gauge interest in ACRE membership

The committee discussed creating a teams chat where conversations can be shared more frequently and documents stored.

The committee is parking the 1080 conversation at this stage – No statement for the time being

Connecting with Rangatahi voices – still pending

Connecting with Biodiversity Forum – still pending, Rachel has attended the last two events

Action: Anna to get in touch with Sam from Biodiversity Forum, touch base on forum, keep lines of communication going

Action: Megan to create the team group and committee to give this a try

Field trip – pending for the Summer and Anna to connect with Craig

ACRE members perspective on our purpose – discussion with Neville

Neville discussed his report to Council on the following:

- Reason for establishing ACRE, their purpose and how they are supported by Council
- As part of the report would like to canvass ACRE's point of view in terms of their purpose, is it still current
- Would like council to have an opportunity to revisit the purpose and have a stronger connect/relationship with ACRE, ie even understanding when they meet. Noting that meetings use to be in councillors calendar but they haven't been for the past few years
- If that is brought back to Strategy and Policy Committee then the Committee can have a discussion about which Committee ACRE should best report into



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- Committee members also wanted to see any submissions that ACRE had prepared, such as on the Fast Track Approvals Bill
- Thoughts on this
 - Members agreed with the scope of ACRE's purpose. Advocate, support and promote.
 - The point of difference is ACRE's direct relationship with WRC.
 - Update the purpose as below.
 - Let councillors know when meetings take place and the topic of conversation, relay this invitation. Start building on this relationship
 - Highlight community reference group function.
 - Strong support for the current statement, noting that ACRE is independent and qualified in terms of advocacy.

The Advisory Committee for the Regional Environment | Te Pae Tiaki Taiao ā Rohe (or ACRE) was originally formed in 1989. Its members represent or have associations with many environmental and conservation groups regionally and nationally.

ACRE'S Purpose and Principles

Purpose

To **provide independent, qualified** environmental **advocacy**, by supporting effective climate mitigation and adaptation and by promoting the protection, preservation, conservation, and enhancement of:

- the life supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems – especially indigenous vegetation and fauna and their habitats and biological diversity.
- the natural character, features, and landscapes.
- those qualities and characteristics that contribute to people's appreciation of the pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, cultural and recreational attributes of New Zealand and in particular the Waikato region.
- Network, advocate, and promote conservation and good environmental practices in the region.

Act as a forum for ideas and concerns on environmental matters **and as a stakeholder and community reference group for Regional Council**

Monitor progress on any environmental matters and recommend on any matters that need extra investigation and research.

Advise the Regional Council on environmental policy.

Alert the Regional Council to environmental matters in need of attention.

Advocate to Central government on matters of environmental concern to the region

Collaborate with groups sharing similar aims and identifying potential partnership initiatives

Principles

Promote Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi, including the responsibilities, promises and obligations outlined in the articles.

The activities and business of ACRE shall be conducted in an open and transparent manner in pursuit of the Purpose.



Action: Neville will share his report with ACRE.

- **Coastal research work**

Mike Townsend presented the planned WRC Coastal research.

Business case is yet to be fully signed off. This research is on top of the coastal science plan. The research will identify the gaps and assess where WRC we add value

NIWA pulled mooring from Firth of Thames due to funding

There has been no tidal river estuary monitoring

Mal questioned the lack of thresholds identified for water quality and how Mike felt about this. Mal suggested that a lot of work had been done but no thresholds defined.

Kristel questioned how the science translates into policy. Mike agreed that this is sometimes not clear and that they are working on making this link stronger.

Action: Megan will share Mike's presentation in the minutes

Karakia Whakamutunga – Shepherd Isaac.

Next meeting: Wednesday the 31st of July – 3-5pm



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