

## Consultation Approach

### Introduction

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Far North District Council (FNDC) operates a wastewater treatment plant that serves the Whatuwhiwhi and Tokerau Beach communities. The current resource consent was issued in 2011 and expires in November 2025.

FNDC has chosen to publicly notify the application. Information about the application will be made available on the FNDC website prior to notification.

Consultation with Tangata Whenua, the public, and stakeholders enables Council to identify potentially affected persons, their concerns, and respond to those concerns.

### Consultation Principles

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FNDC approaches consultation in accordance with Environment Court principles. The Environment Court's statement of principles for consultation are:

- The nature and object of consultation must be related to the circumstances.
- Adequate information of the proposals is to be given in a timely manner so that those consulted know what is proposed.
- Those consulted must be given a reasonable opportunity to state their views.
- While those consulted cannot be forced to state their views, they cannot complain, if having had both time and opportunity, they for any reason fail to avail themselves of the opportunity.
- Consultation is never to be treated perfunctorily or as a mere formality.
- The parties are to approach consultation with an open mind.
- Consultation is an intermediate situation involving meaningful discussions and does not necessarily involve resolution by agreement.
- Neither party is entitled to make demands.
- There is no universal requirement as to form or duration.
- The whole process is to be underlain by fairness.

### Engagement Objectives

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FNDCs' engagement objectives were:

- Capture community feedback in a way that supports decision-making
- Provide informative material to support understanding among affected parties
- Work with stakeholders to make sure methods of engagement are helpful.
- Ensure process of engagement is legally compliant.

## Communication and Engagement Process

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### *Tangata Whenua*

Proposed Regional Plan for Northland policy *F.1.9 Tāngata whenua role in decision-making* requires that Tāngata whenua's kaitiaki role is recognised and provided for in decision making over natural and physical resources.

In July 2024 FNDC invited hapu to engage about the current resource consent replacement and improvement options.

FNDC engaged directly with representatives from Ngati Kahu Station 438 Ahuwhenua Trust, Haititaimarangai Marae 339 Trust, and Haititaimarangai Ahuwhenua Trust.

In person hui, online meetings and email were used to share information about treatment plant performance, potential effects of the treatment plant discharges and upgrade options.

A cultural impact assessment (CIA) has been commissioned. At the time of lodging the CIA had not been completed. FNDC request suspension of the application until the CIA is received.

### *Community*

FNDC did not engage directly with the wider community prior to lodging this resource consent application because:

- The treatment plant is generally compliant
- Has not been the subject of customer complaints and
- Expert technical evidence determined that effects on the wider environment were no more than minor.

FNDC has chosen to **publicly notify** the application. This will give the wider community an opportunity to raise relevant matters.

Information about the potential effects of the treatment plant discharges and upgrade options was published on the FNDC website prior to lodging with Northland Regional Council.

## Engagement History

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Between 2005 and 2011 consultation was carried out by Opus Consultants on behalf of FNDC on three upgrade options prior to deciding on the preferred option. No clear option was preferred at the time of lodgement. However, stakeholder feedback was that any option would be supported provided environmental outcomes are improved and that local community not be burdened with an excessive upgrade cost.

## Future Engagement

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FNDC anticipates future engagement, via the CIA, submissions, or other means to inform the recommendation on the Best Practicable Option for treatment and discharge improvements.