

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of a Notice of Requirement to alter a designation for the
HCC Central City Reservoir – Ruakiwi Road

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF NORMAN HILL ON BEHALF OF HAMILTON CITY
COUNCIL AS REQUIRING AUTHORITY**

(Cultural)

Dated 19 December 2025

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Norman Hill.
2. I am a cultural and environmental consultant. Since 2019 I have been working as an independent cultural and environmental consultant for Te Hira Consultants Ltd. Prior to this for 3.5 years I was a Senior Professional Consultant (cultural heritage/environmental management) at the Hamilton office of Boffa Miskell Ltd, a company specialising in landscape, urban design and resource management.
3. I hold the qualification of a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree from the University of Waikato.
4. I have over 25 years' experience in a wide range of projects including environmental management, strategy and best practice corporate - cultural relationship engagement. I have extensive knowledge and experience working with whaanau, hapuu and iwi throughout Waikato-Tainui to ensure compliance with regulatory and cultural frameworks, both in the context of plan changes and resource consent applications. I also assisted in the facilitation and development of Tai Tumu, Tai Pari, Tai Ao, the Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan, across marae and hapuu of Waikato-Tainui.
5. I am affiliated to Waikato-Tainui Iwi, and Ngāti Hauaa, Ngāti Whaawhaakia, Ngāti Naaho and Ngāti Mahanga hapuu.
6. I provide this evidence on behalf of Hamilton City Council (**HCC**) as the Requiring Authority (**RA**) which has issued the Notice of Requirement (**NOR**) for the Central City Reservoir – Ruakiwi Road (**Ruakiwi Reservoir Project**).

CODE OF CONDUCT

7. I am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court Practice Note 2023) and although I note this is a Council hearing, I agree to comply with this code. The evidence I will present is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information provided by another party. I have not knowingly omitted facts or information that might alter or detract from opinions I express.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

8. In my evidence:
 - a) I provide an executive summary of my key conclusions.
 - b) I provide an overview of the engagement and consultation undertaken by the RA with mana whenua in relation to the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project.
 - c) I summarise the relevant aspects of the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project with respect to cultural values, cultural effects and the recommendations in the Cultural Impact Assessment (**CIA**).
9. I note that there are no submissions or further submissions that relate to cultural matters and I therefore do not address the submissions received.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

10. The Ruakiwi Reservoir Project is situated within the Waikato River catchment on land of significant cultural, historical, and spiritual value to mana whenua, including Te Hā o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa and Ngāti Wairere. Mana whenua status and responsibilities are recognised and respected by

HCC, with key mana whenua including Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Korokī Kahukura, Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Māhanga, and Ngāti Tama Inu Pō under the overarching tribal authority of Te Whakakitenga o Waikato.

11. The Ruakiwi Reservoir Project is guided by Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato and relevant environmental management plans, ensuring development considers the health of the Waikato River, connected waterways, and cultural values.
12. Early and ongoing engagement with mana whenua began in January 2024. This included:
 - a) Two site visits and detailed assessments of the proposed reservoir area.
 - b) Five hui and additional discussions to gather input and address concerns.
 - c) Preparation of a CIA endorsed by Ngāti Māhanga, Ngāti Hauā, and Ngāti Tama Inu Pō in August 2024.
13. The CIA assessed heritage, stormwater, biodiversity, and the visual/cultural landscape, recommending riparian and ecological restoration, enhancement of mahinga kai and rongoa areas, cultural expression through markers, and ongoing cultural monitoring.
14. On 17 August 2024, THAWK and Ngāti Wairere endorsed the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project.

ANALYSIS

Mana Whenua

15. Mana whenua reflects the ancestral authority and responsibilities iwi and hapū have over their land, based on whakapapa and long-term occupation (ahi kā). This includes protecting and managing taonga such as mahinga kai, water, flora, fauna, and spiritual values for present and future generations.

16. In Kirikiriroa, Te Hā o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa (**THAWK**) and Ngāti Wairere hold mana whenua status, recognised and respected by HCC through ongoing partnership. Key mana whenua in the area include:
 - a) Ngāti Hauā.

 - b) Ngāti Korokī Kahukura.

 - c) Ngāti Wairere.

 - d) Ngāti Māhanga.

 - e) Ngāti Tama Inu Pō.

17. The overarching tribal authority is Te Whakakitenga o Waikato.

Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato (Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River)

18. Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato is the primary guiding document for the Waikato River and its catchment, extending from Huka Falls (Te Taaheke Hukahuka) to the river mouth (Te Puuaha o Waikato), including the Waipaa River.

19. Under s 9(2) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010, the Vision and Strategy apply to all activities within the Waikato River catchment that may affect the river.
20. The Ruakiwi Reservoir site is located within the Waikato River catchment, meaning Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato provides the framework for guiding development and managing effects on the river and connected waterways, including Lake Rotoroa.

Consultation with Mana Whenua

21. Waikato-Tainui, and mana whenua encourage councils to engage early and collaboratively to ensure cultural and environmental values are recognised and addressed. This includes seeking feedback from Waikato-Tainui on appropriate mitigation measures and ensuring that statutory and legal consultation requirements are met.
22. For the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project, engagement with mana whenua began early in January 2024 with a CIA being completed in August 2024. Mana whenua conducted 2 site visits and detailed assessments of the Ruakiwi Reservoir proposal focusing on cultural, historical, and environmental significance.
23. Five hui and additional discussions with mana whenua representatives to gather input and address concerns were held from January – August 2024.
24. I prepared a CIA with mandate from mana whenua outlining potential effects on cultural heritage and values. On 17 August 2024, after careful consideration, THAWK and Ngāti Wairere endorsed and confirmed their support for the construction of the new reservoir on Ruakiwi Road.

Cultural Values

25. The Ruakiwi Road ridgeline is acknowledged as historically significant, Lake Rotoroa is the largest of Hamilton City's three lakes. Historically part of a peat swamp, it was drained for agriculture and urban development.
26. The lake and surrounding land were significant food and resource areas for local iwi, providing kaakahi, kooura, tuna, and raupo for weaving. A traditional walking track connected the lake to Te Rapa Pā.
27. The Ruakiwi Reservoir area, also traditionally called Ruakōiwi, holds deep cultural and historical significance. The Ruakōiwi name reflects ancestral caves (rua) and bones (kōiwi) uncovered during early earthworks, reaffirming the site was used for settlement or burial. Nearby ridgelines show evidence of pre-European Māori occupation, including stone tools.
28. While no formal archaeological sites exist within the project footprint, mana whenua narratives and historical records highlight a clear cultural footprint. The archaeological assessment concludes the risk of encountering pre-European material is low but not zero.¹
29. This reinforces the need for a culturally responsive approach that respects ancestral connections and protects the whenua.

Cultural Impact Assessment

30. I prepared a CIA which was endorsed by Ngāti Māhanga, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Tamainupo in August 2024.
31. The key considerations in the CIA include:

¹ Refer to Appendix Q to the NOR and the Statement of Evidence of Sian Keith on behalf of the RA.

- a) Heritage relating to the land;
 - b) Stormwater;
 - c) Biodiversity; and
 - d) Visual and cultural landscape.
32. The key recommendations in the CIA include:
- a) Riparian and ecological restoration guided by mātauranga Māori and Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato;
 - b) Enhancement of mahinga kai and rongoa areas;
 - c) Cultural expression within the Ruakiwi Reservoir development reflecting ancestral and heritage connections;
 - d) Installation of cultural markers (carved pou, artworks, landscape features); and
 - e) Cultural monitoring.
33. The CIA concludes that mana whenua support the Ruakiwi Reservoir and Pump Station. The Ruakiwi Reservoir Project aligns with Te Ture Whaimana and environmental plans, supports Hamilton's growth, protects cultural values and heritage, and provides opportunities for cultural preservation, landscape improvement, and whānau skills and employment.
34. Mana whenua continue to work with the RA to ensure the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project respects the land, water, and community. These outcomes are reflected in the proposed conditions of the designation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Consultation and engagement with mana whenua began early and were carried out appropriately, leading to their support for the Ruakiwi Reservoir Project.
36. Mana whenua continue to work on the project as partners with HCC as the RA. That ongoing collaboration is reflected in the proposed designation conditions.

Norman Hill

19 December 2025