



Kia Tū Pakari ai Tātou

He Pitopito Kōrero

Combined Tangata Whenua Forum ePānui
SmartGrowth update – May 2026

Tangihia o ōu tatou mate huhua
o te wā rātou ngā taonga o te
mate kua riro atu ki te pō ka tangi
apakura tonu nei, haere atu rā.

E te tī e te tā koutou ngā
rangatira o tēnā o tēnā o ngā
hapū me ngā iwi o tō tatou rohe
whānui Mai Ngā Kurī a Whārei ki
Ōtamarākau tēnā koutou katoa.

Wow! We are almost halfway through 2026,
and you know we've been busy when
time flies. We reflected on the lives and
contributions of Maru Tapsell and Joseph
James Borell, who both left a lasting legacy
for future generations.

We also welcome our new members to the
CTWF; Heta Gardiner (Pirirākau), Waireka
Walker (Ngāti Pūkenga), and Amiria Hunt
(Ngāti Tūheke).

Governance representation

Congratulations to the following CTWF members who have been appointed to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group as tāngata whenua representatives.

- Matire Duncan – Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana (TCC)
- Whitiora McLeod – Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana (TCC)
- Hakopa Tapiata – Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa (WBOPDC)
- Heta Gardiner – Te Kāhui Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana (WBOPDC)
- Riki Nelson – Alternate (CTWF)

They will serve a 3-year term in line with the local authorities' triennium election cycle.

City and Regional Deal Signed!

A Regional Deal for the Western Bay of Plenty was announced on 14 May 2026, with the sub-region signing an agreement with central government outlining a series of commitments to be delivered over a 10-year period.

The Deal supports a coordinated programme of future growth infrastructure investment across transport, housing, health and education in the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region. It hopes to:

- Enable the delivery of up to 40,000 homes
- Support the creation of 35,000 jobs
- Unlock new industrial land
- Deliver real GDP growth of 4.6% per year.

[▶ More info can be found here](#)



Minden Gully Interchange. NZTA March 2026.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has launched a 'Head Start' pathway as part of its local government reform programme. Groups of councils have a three-month window – closing 5 August 2026 – to develop reorganisation proposals before central government steps in. Final decisions are expected in 2027, with changes in place ahead of the 2028 local elections.

The reform push is focused on creating unitary authorities, reducing duplication, and improving regional coordination. It is closely linked to the new resource management system and Regional Spatial Plan framework – recognising that reforming resource management without reforming local government risks locking in the same fragmented governance and misaligned planning and infrastructure delivery that has long been a challenge.

[▶ More info can be found here](#)

Resource Management System Reform

The Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bills are now before Parliament's Environment Committee.

The Select Committee is set to report back on 26 June, with legislation expected to be passed into law in September.



Increasing tāngata whenua representation across SmartGrowth

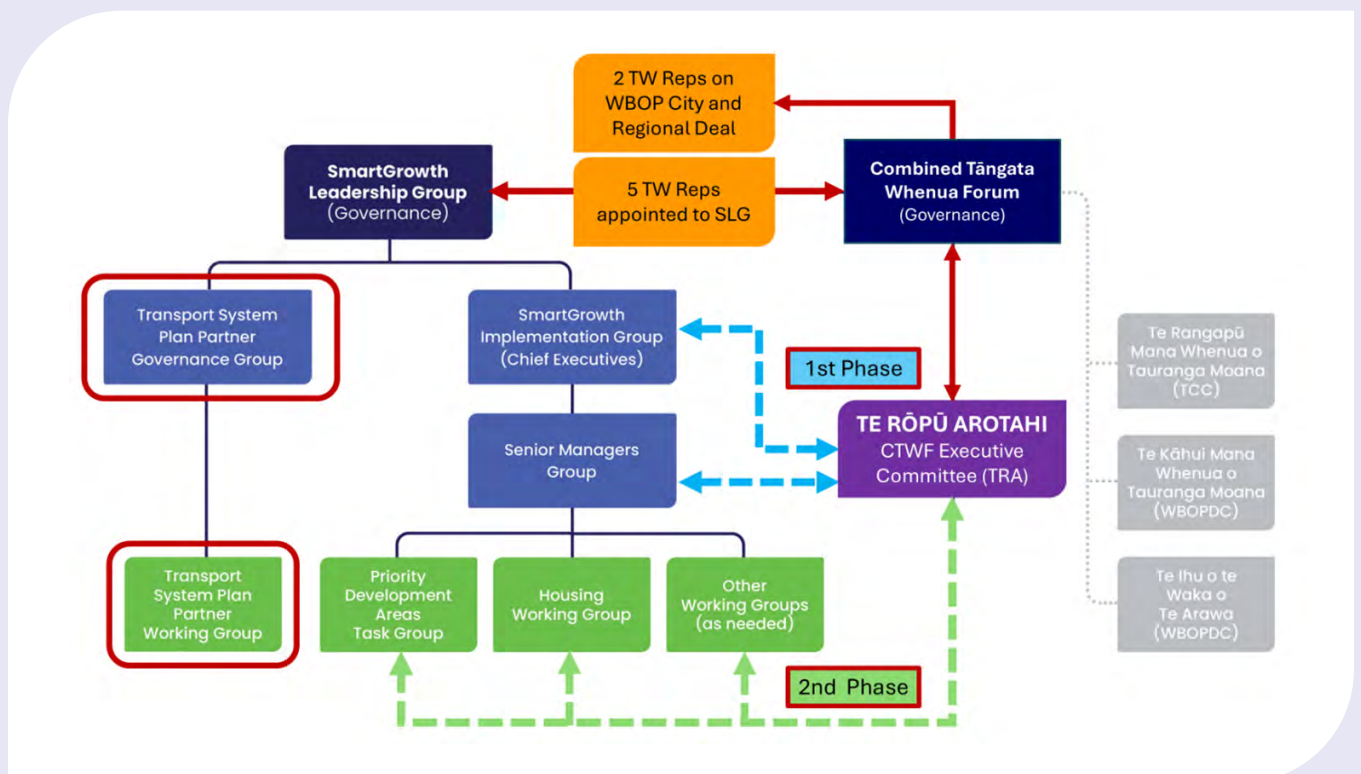
On Friday 17 April, the CTWF held a workshop to discuss possible solutions for improving both the CTWF and Te Rōpū Arotahi Terms of Reference. This enables the CTWF to adapt to the shifting operating environment.

A key outcome of this workshop and the subsequent CTWF formal hui on Tuesday 12 May was support for increased tāngata whenua representation throughout the SmartGrowth partnership, carried out across 2 stages.

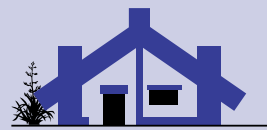
Stage One involves setting up tāngata whenua representation in both the SmartGrowth Implementation Group (SGIG) and Senior Managers Group (SMG). Te Rōpū Arotahi still needs to develop the appointment process for Stage 1 to be completed.

Stage Two involves establishing technical tāngata whenua representatives to sit on the Transport System Plan working group, Priority Development Areas Task Group, and Housing System Working Group (HSWG). This will be carried out once Stage 1 is complete and an appointment process has been designed for this stage.

Below is the proposed structure that was presented to the CTWF that illustrates the intended tāngata whenua representation increase through the SmartGrowth partnership.



Marae as Centres Implementation Framework

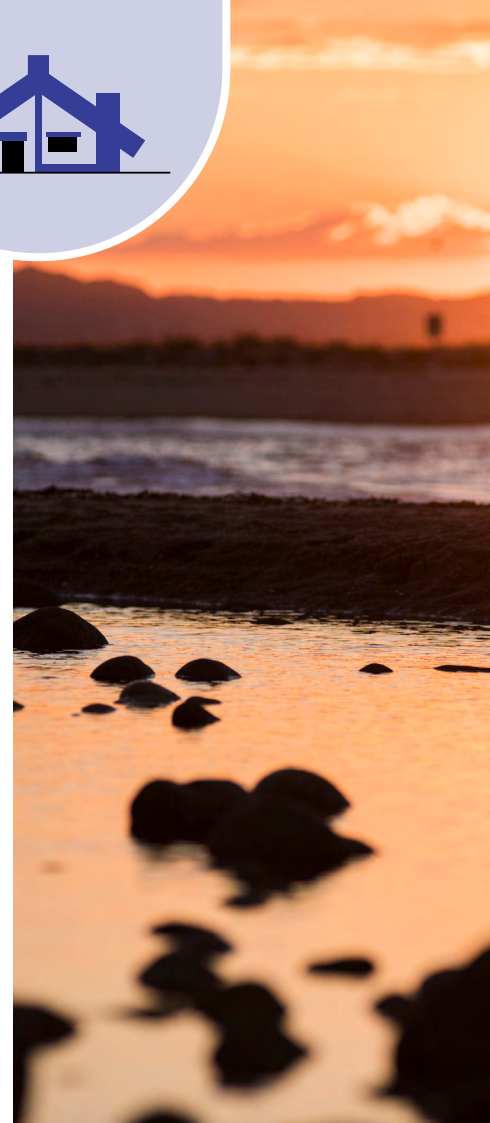


In preparation for Regional Spatial Planning, the CTWF at both the 17 April workshop and 12 May formal meeting supported the development of a Marae as Centres Implementation Framework that will inform the Regional Spatial Plan of the CTWF's growth, development, and protection outcomes.

The implementation framework will focus on transitioning the transformational shift from a strategic tāngata whenua spatial approach into an implementation and delivery pathway that will guide local authorities in delivering outcomes for tāngata whenua.

This enables the CTWF to be proactive planners rather than reactive submitters. It is an opportunity for the CTWF to strengthen the embedding of their collective outcomes into sub-regional and regional planning processes.

We are working towards producing a first version draft by the end of the year.



New National Direction under the RMA

Government has approved amendments to the following national direction as part of a wider programme of changes:

- **Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Activities) Amendment Regulations 2026** will enable the installation of vehicle charging infrastructure in certain locations as permitted activities.
- **Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Amendment Regulations 2026** will remove the need to exclude non-intensively grazed beef cattle and deer from wetlands that support threatened species.

These regulations came into force on 7 May 2026.

The freshwater changes that were consulted on in mid-2025 are now expected to be progressed under the new planning system, once the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill have been enacted.

On 4 May 2026, the report on recommendations and decisions relating to National Environmental Standards (NES) for Papakāinga was released.

This NES is expected to come into force soon.

What's coming up

The next **CTWF hui** is on Thursday **23 July** where you'll hear presentations on the:

- Sub-regional Commercial Centres Strategy,
- Sub-regional Housing System Working Plan, and
- Transpower/PowerCo's WBOP Development Programme.

The next **SLG meeting** is on Wednesday **17 July**.

If you'd like to know more about what's happening in the wider SmartGrowth Urban Growth Partnership you can read their latest newsletter found [here](#).



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This e-pānui is a way of keeping tāngata whenua connected to the Combined Tāngata Whenua Forum (CTWF) and the many projects associated with SmartGrowth.

Feel free to share this e-pānui with your whānau, hapū, marae committees, Iwi and wider networks.



SmartGrowth
Building our futures together

smartgrowthbop.org.nz

An urban growth partnership involving Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, tāngata whenua and central government. The purpose of SmartGrowth is to take a collaborative and coordinated approach to managing and shaping growth within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.