Governance Statement

25 August 2025



Jewel anemone colony. © Shaun Lee.

Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tīkapa Moana
Te Moananui-ā-Toi

Whakatauki

"He waka kōtuia kāhore e tukutukua ngā mimira."

A canoe that is interlaced will not become separated at the bow. In unity there is strength.

In the highly developed craft of building ocean going waka the bow section was laced to the centre hull. The waka provides a metaphor for tangata whenua, in that a people interlaced will not be separated and through that unity we find strength. This whakataukī further symbolises the unity and strength required to protect and restore the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi through collective effort, mutual respect, and enduring partnership.

This Governance Statement replaces all prior versions. It covers how the Forum works, and key roles and responsibilities. The Forum's purposes, membership, functions and powers are set out in detail in Part 2 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (HGMPA).

Purpose and Legislative Foundation

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body established under Part 2 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (HGMPA). Its core purpose is to promote the integrated and sustainable management of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments.

The Forum exists to:

- Promote the integrated and sustainable management of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments (Section 15);
- Support collaborative governance by bringing together representatives of tangata whenua, local and central government, and conservation interests (Section 15);
- Recognise the historic, traditional, cultural, and spiritual relationship of tangata whenua with the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and, where appropriate, its catchments (Section 7(c));
- Give effect to its statutory functions as set out in Section 17, including identifying strategic issues, sharing knowledge, and publishing the State of the Gulf report.

The Forum acknowledges the significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi, and is committed to acting in accordance with its principles, as provided for under Section 6 of the HGMPA.

Guiding Principles

Te whakahonore i o maatau hononga Tiriti hei painga mo Te Moananui-ō-Toi; Tīkapa Moana; Hauraki Gulf.

The Forum will operate in partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi in accordance with the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act, including the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi under Section 6.

The Forum's conduct, will adhere to the intent of the following principles:

- Aroha: being considerate – having respect for relationships and being of service.
- Openness and impartiality: having an open mind when making decisions and listening to other points of view.

- Tautoko: supporting others by respecting and upholding others mana, dignity, identity and unique perspective.
- Manaaki: caring for others by responsibly valuing others and ensuring they feel valued.
- Stewardship: using powers and resources prudently.
- Awhi: helping others by entering into effective engagements in the spirit of co-operation and good faith.
- Leadership: inspiring action toward achieving common goals.
- Tika: being responsible – doing the right thing with integrity and accountability.
- Pono: being effective – building credibility.

Membership and Representation

The Forum is made up of members as prescribed in *Section 16* of the HGMPA, including:

- Representatives of relevant local authorities and central government agencies, including the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries, and Māori Affairs;
- Six tangata whenua representatives, appointed by the Minister after consultation with tangata whenua and the Minister of Māori Affairs (*Section 7(e)*);

Together, Members hold a shared responsibility to act in the best interests of the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi and to uphold the purpose of the Forum.

Governance Role and Focus

The Forum's role is to provide strategic leadership and oversight, consistent with the functions in *Section 17(1)* of the HGMPA:

- Identify and prioritise strategic issues affecting the Gulf;
- Promote integrated and sustainable management of the Gulf's natural, historic, and physical resources;
- Facilitate the sharing of information, and contribute to improved understanding and action;
- Publish a State of the Gulf report every three years, to assess environmental trends, governance progress, and management outcomes.

In carrying out these functions, the Forum must have particular regard to the historic, traditional, cultural, and spiritual relationship of tangata whenua with the Gulf, its islands, and catchments (Section 17(2)).

The Forum is not an operational or enforcement agency. Operational functions rest with constituent parties and other agencies acting under their own statutory responsibilities.

Ways of Working

The Forum is co-chaired to reflect shared leadership.

- One Co-Chair is from and elected by the membership at large.
- One Co-Chair is from and decided by the Tangata Whenua members.

The Forum's Administering Authority is Auckland Council, as appointed under Section 28 of the HGMPA. The relationship between the Forum and Auckland Council is governed by a Service Level Agreement, which defines the services, accountabilities, and operational support arrangements provided.

The Forum aims to meet quarterly, with meetings held across both the Auckland and Waikato regions. It will hold additional workshops and meetings as required.

Role of the Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs lead the Forum and work in partnership to:

- Represent the Forum as public spokespeople;
- Uphold and exemplify the principles outlined in this Governance Statement;
- Chair meetings and support strategic direction agreed by Forum members;
- Maintain a collaborative relationship with each other and with all members;
- Approve submissions on behalf of the Forum, taking member interests into account;
- Represent the Forum in external engagements.

Further detail on the governance leadership role of the Co-Chairs, and their collaboration with the Executive Officer, is outlined in the Forum's Service Level Agreement with the Administering Authority.

Role of Forum Members

All Forum members share responsibility for advancing the purpose of the Forum. Members:

- Support and work with the Co-Chairs and each other to take effective decisions and progress the Forum's agenda;
- Bring their expertise and mana to ensure quality decision-making in the interests of the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi;
- Represent their Constituent Party, as defined in the HGMPA;
- May nominate alternates to attend meetings on their behalf, provided this is communicated in advance and consistent with Forum practice.

Partnership Statement

The Forum recognises tangata whenua as kaitiaki and Treaty partners and is committed to supporting sustainable governance by:

- Embedding authentic partnership with tangata whenua in all its governance approaches;
- Elevating mātauranga Māori, iwi/hapū aspirations, and cultural indicators in strategic planning and reporting;
- Creating space for tangata whenua leadership, knowledge, and priorities in the stewardship of the Gulf.

This commitment is not limited to compliance with legislation, but in whakapapa, respect, and shared purpose.

Strategic Intent

The Forum's governance is guided by the protection and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the life-supporting capacity, natural, historic, and physical resources, including kaimoana, of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands, as described in Section 8 of the HGMPA.

The Forum is committed to:

- Addressing cumulative pressures and complex challenges through integrated action;
- Enabling collaboration across jurisdictions and communities;
- Reflecting the voices and aspirations of both tangata whenua and the wider public.

The Forum will regularly reflect on its effectiveness, including through its triennial State of the Gulf reports and other evaluations of progress.

Statutory Functions of the Forum (Section 17, HGMPA)

In fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, the Forum:

1. Identifies and prioritises strategic issues related to the sustainable management, enhancement, and protection of the Gulf, and reviews these issues regularly.
2. Promotes integrated management and the long-term sustainability of the Gulf's natural, historic, and physical resources.
3. Receives and disseminates information, including from tangata whenua, about matters relevant to the Gulf — including iwi management and development plans.
4. Prepares and publishes the **State of the Gulf** report every three years, assessing environmental trends and progress toward integrated management.

When carrying out these functions, the Forum must have particular regard to the historic, traditional, cultural, and spiritual relationship of tangata whenua with the Gulf, its islands, and catchments.

Review

This Governance Statement will be reviewed every 3 years.

ENDS