

Annual Plan Submission by the Lake Tarawera Ratepayers' Association

The Issue:

1. The LTRA has been asking for a reticulated wastewater scheme for Lake Tarawera since 2012.
2. In the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Tarawera Lakes Restoration Plan, December 2015, the number one action was to reticulate houses in the Lake Tarawera urban community and upgrade conventional septic tanks outside the future reticulation zone.
3. The Lake Tarawera Sewerage Steering Committee (LTSSC) was established in 2015. It identified five viable options and considered and consulted on those in depth. In 2018, it was recommended unanimously by LTSSC (made up of Tarawera ratepayers, iwi, and Maori landowners) and again at a Ratepayers' meeting, by over 100 ratepayers, who unanimously agreed that the Tarawera wastewater system should consist of:
 - 3.1 An on-site low-pressure grinder pump system for each property, and
 - 3.2 A connection from the system trunk main via Tarawera Road to the Rotorua Wastewater Treatment plant (WWTP) at Te Arikirua.

Submission:

The LTRA were very pleased when Councillors agreed in August 2022 that Stage One of the scheme was to go ahead. On 05 April, Councillors agreed that Stage Two would go out for public open tender; however, the community will be waiting until June/July before they know the cost of the scheme.

Lake Tarawera is not one of the Deed Lakes in the Rotorua District and therefore the Tarawera scheme is ineligible for the 50% subsidies that Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti and Okareka received. For that reason, a decision was made by the Lake Tarawera Sewerage Steering Group to apply for funding from the Fresh Water Fund in 2016. In addition to the \$6.5M that was granted by the Ministry for the Environment; Rotorua Lakes Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council have allocated \$825,000 and \$750,000 respectively making a total of \$8.075M.

Since that time, the cost of the Tarawera scheme has risen significantly. At the most recent cost estimate of \$32M for the scheme (not the final cost) the Tarawera ratepayers would be the largest stakeholders and would be paying 71% of the cost.

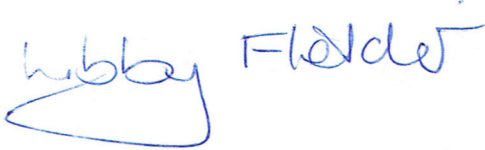
The first sewerage scheme at Morea/Okawa Bay was completed in June 2008 and Rotorua Lakes Council provided a subsidy of \$1,500 to each property. Since that date, every sewerage scheme has received the same subsidy, with no allowance for increased costs or inflation.

The continual delays in developing the Tarawera scheme have resulted in a dramatic increase in costs since government and council funding was set. The cost to the Tarawera ratepayers is totally out of reach for many people, particularly those on fixed incomes. Therefore, we are asking you to increase the level of subsidy to each property in line with inflation and the equivalent percentage that the other lakeside communities have received.

The LTRA continues to actively explore other funding avenues from trusts, foundations, and charities.

4. Accordingly, the LTRA seek an Annual Plan commitment from Rotorua Lakes Council that the subsidy for Lake Tarawera is increased to 50% (minimum) of the cost of the scheme.

The LTRA requests the opportunity to present its submission in person to the Rotorua Lakes Council.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Libby Fletcher". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Libby" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Fletcher" in a more formal, blocky script.

Libby Fletcher
Chair

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Monday 09 May, 2023