

# Heritage Policy

Policy Owner	Strategy and Support General Manager
Policy Sponsor	Planning and Strategy Manager
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## Introduction

Waikato District's historic heritage buildings, sites and trees are a precious and finite resource and they are important in shaping the character of the district. The district's heritage involves aspects of both natural and cultural environment that have been inherited from the past, define the present and will be handed on to future generations. Through history and heritage we come to understand and marvel at how our ancestors faced and overcame great challenges.

Protection and use of the district's historic heritage resources are fundamental to the sustainable management of the Waikato's natural and physical resources. It is important for Council to identify areas and places within the district that are representative of the foundations of the district.

Conserving heritage is an integral component of a district which is at the heart of the Kingitanga movement.

This policy will assist Council in protecting the district's heritage, implementing the Heritage Strategy and in developing our Long Term Plan for 2015. The policy also enables collaboration with other agencies such as Waikato Regional Council or territorial authorities.

## Objective

To protect, promote and manage the heritage of Waikato so that the people of the district can better acknowledge and appreciate their history today and share it with others in the future.

## Application

This policy applies to all employees at Waikato District Council.

## Relevant Documents/Legislation

### The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA):

As a Matter of National Importance, Section 6 of The Resource Management Act directs council to recognise and provide for:

- *the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, Waahi tapu and other taonga, and*
- *the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

The RMA underpins our need to protect and preserve our past. The Heritage Policy and the Heritage Strategy enforces this important legislative requirement. The Heritage Policy is the background statement and the overall direction of Council's intent of fulfilling this legislative requirement. The Heritage Strategy contains the challenges and actions required to achieve the policy.

### **The Proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS)**

The Proposed Regional Policy Statement (Appeals Version 1 February 2013) promotes the establishment of a Regional Heritage Forum which will develop and oversee a heritage inventory. Council will collaborate and participate with Waikato Regional Council, territorial authorities and other agencies to support this initiative and this is recognized in the Heritage Strategy.

### **WDC Heritage Strategy**

A Heritage Strategy has been developed alongside the policy.

### **Definitions**

Council defines and interprets heritage as per s2(1) of the RMA.

For the purpose of this policy cultural heritage includes: sites, places, place names, areas, Waahi tapu, Waahi tapu areas, taonga, buildings, objects, artefacts, natural features of cultural and historical significance, historical associations, people and institutions.

Under the policy the following characteristics are considered relevant to the protection and management of heritage:

- The distinct character and culture of individual communities including people, buildings, sites, street patterns and trees
- Historic use, settlement and activities associated with mining, agriculture, rural land, rivers and waterbodies
- The relationship of places and buildings that identify the people of the iwi / hapuu of the Waikato with their history

### **Policy Statements**

#### **Issues:**

Protecting the district's heritage is not about locking it up. Constantly acknowledging the past provides communities with an improved sense of place, sense of belonging and sense of pride in heritage both in towns and rural areas. As such the continued use of heritage buildings is essential; however, this should not be at the loss of important heritage fabric and features. The challenge is to protect the most valued heritage places in a continually changing environment while meeting the needs of communities.

#### **Rationale:**

The Heritage Policy is prepared to reinforce the commitment by Council to the protection of historic heritage for the current landowners (including Council), iwi / hapu, community, visitors and future generations. The policy will provide direction for the day to day management of heritage by staff and councillors. It will be implemented through the development and review of the District Plan, the Annual Plan and Heritage Strategy.

The relationship that Council develops with the owners and the wider community will be pivotal to meeting this commitment.

**Purpose:**

This policy is based on the principles of retention, protection and recognition of our heritage and culture, both private and council owned.

**Principle 1:**

***The Council has a responsibility to promote the protection of privately owned heritage items that both respects private property rights and recognises public values of these items.***

Council wishes to retain and promote heritage values in the Waikato District and is committed to ensuring that heritage is appropriately identified and that there is a responsible approach to development. A partnership approach with building and landowners will be adopted to ensure the best outcome is achieved.

Heritage values develop over a considerable timeframe and it is important that this investment is recognised into the future.

**Principle 2:**

***The Council has a responsibility to lead by example, by protecting Council-owned and managed heritage and to collate and make available to the public, heritage items and information.***

The Waikato is a source of rich history in terms of the growth of New Zealand as a nation. Council is committed to protecting the heritage items it owns and manages and promote a greater public understanding of the District's history.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years.