

# Whenua Māori - Freehold Land Rating Relief - Draft

## Engagement Plan May 2024

### Context

This engagement plan is to address the application of rating relief for Māori Freehold Landowners in accordance with the Local Government (Rating of Whenua Māori) Amendment Act 2021 and FNDC Rating Relief policies, while ensuring collaboration among stakeholders and maintaining cultural competency.

The context for this engagement plan is rooted in the need to address historical and systemic challenges faced by Māori Freehold Landowners within the Far North District Council (FNDC) jurisdiction. Māori Freehold Land holds significant cultural and economic value for Māori communities, yet owners can encounter barriers related to rating processes, debt accumulation, and land use regulations. The enactment of the Local Government (Rating of Whenua Māori) Amendment Act 2021 provides opportunity for FNDC to support to Māori Freehold Landowners. Additionally, FNDC has rating relief policies aimed at addressing these challenges. Effective implementation, however, requires ongoing collaborative efforts among stakeholders to ensure equitable and culturally appropriate outcomes.

### Scoping statement

The Rating Relief Whenua Working Group aims to identify tangible actions and complete a programme of work to reduce debt levels, to set up a sustainable and repeatable process that will be applied in the future, provide clarity on rating processes, reduce barriers for land use and development, stimulate development, and increase understanding of Whenua Māori.

### Negotiables/non-negotiables Boundaries (or scope) of engagement

#### Non-negotiables. What cannot be influenced by external parties or partners?

- The need for compliance with Section 82 consultation requirements (Local Government Act 2002) - ensuring full compliance with legislative requirements and regulations.
- Demonstrating cultural competency and sensitivity in all engagement activities.
- Maintaining transparency in decision-making processes and accountability for project outcomes
- Providing clear and accessible information about project objectives, progress, and decisions to stakeholders, ensuring transparency and fostering trust

#### Negotiables. What can external parties or partners contribute to or influence?

- Adjusting the timeline for stakeholder consultation sessions based on availability and preferences.
- Refining the scope of a proposed initiative based on stakeholder feedback and emerging priorities.
- Adjusting resource allocation based on changing project needs or stakeholder requests.
- Selecting communication channels and methods of engagement based on stakeholder preferences.

## Understanding the people

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External partners and stakeholders	Internal stakeholders
<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori Freehold Landowners</li> <li>• Treaty Partners</li> <li>• Elected Members</li> <li>• Te Puni Kokiri</li> <li>• Māori Land Court</li> <li>• Northland Regional Council</li> <li>• Department Of Conservation</li> </ul>	<p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Te Hono</li> <li>• Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)</li> <li>• Project team</li> <li>• Staff with expertise to contribute</li> </ul>

## Purpose of engagement

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The purpose of engagement is to collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement initiatives that provide greater certainty for Māori Freehold Landowners, stimulate development, and increased understanding of the Whenua Māori constituency.

## Goals

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- Reduce debt levels for Māori Freehold Landowners.
- Provide clarity on rating processes.
- Reduce barriers for land use and development.
- Stimulate development.

## Increase understanding of Whenua Māori. Shape influence

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In shaping our engagement approach, we recognise that the level of influence we grant to our partners, stakeholders, and the community will significantly impact the duration and resource requirements of our engagement plan. Considering the combination of context, scope, people, and purpose of our project, we have chosen a collaborative approach, emphasising partnership and co-creation with stakeholders.

Drawing from the International Association for Spectrum of Public Participation, we aim to involve stakeholders at a high level, providing them with meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes and project outcomes. This level of engagement reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and shared ownership of the project.

Additionally, we are guided by the Community Engagement Model, which visualises engagement as a dynamic and interconnected process. Our core team serves as the central hub, facilitating communication and collaboration among stakeholders. Through various engagement channels, such as workshops, meetings, and online platforms, we foster dialogue and exchange of ideas.

By empowering stakeholders to actively participate in the decision-making process, we believe we can harness diverse perspectives, build trust, and achieve more sustainable and equitable outcomes. While this approach may require additional time, resources, and capacity-building efforts, we are confident that it will lead to greater stakeholder buy-in and long-term success for our project.

## Leadership commitment

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The Senior Leadership Team is committed to supporting the working group and providing necessary resources for successful implementation.

## Engagement Sequence

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- Stakeholder identification and analysis.
- Programme of work development.
- Stakeholder engagement sessions.
- Programme implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Feedback and reporting (consultation).



## Methods of engagement

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### How will your stakeholders be activated to participate?

By thinking outside the box and employing culturally sensitive methods of engagement, we can effectively reach and engage with Māori Freehold Landowners while respecting the sensitivity of the subject matter. These methods prioritise relationship-building, cultural understanding, and community empowerment, laying the foundation for meaningful and inclusive engagement processes.

- **Koha-based Workshops:** Host workshops or information sessions where koha is given as a gesture of appreciation for participants' time and input. Koha-based engagements demonstrate respect for Māori cultural customs and values reciprocity.
  - Fact finding workshops to determine what real-life hurdles are preventing development of MFL to implement real solutions.
  - Participatory participants selected randomly from Rates Information Database.
  - Koha + catering.
  - Capped at 20 people per session.
- **Marae Visits:** Engage with Māori Freehold Landowners through visits to Marae. This will offer opportunities to connect with landowners, learn about their values and aspirations, and seek their input on project initiatives.
  - One Marae per Ward.
  - Koha per visit.
  - Kaiwhakahaere (Local facilitator) Fee.
  - Catering
  - Capped at 60 people.

- **Online Platforms with Cultural Content:** Develop online engagement platforms that include culturally relevant content, such as videos, articles, and interactive maps showcasing Māori heritage, land use practices, and stories. Online platforms provide accessible channels for engagement and education.
  - Dedicated webpage within our website
  - Video showcasing successful implementation of MFL
  - News story, shared to social media
  - Email to subscriber list
  - Survey
- **Radio/Newspaper/Print**
  - Use local radio stations such as Te Hiku o te Ika FM, Radio Tautoko and Ngati Hine FM
  - Local newspapers, Northern Advocate, Northern News, Northland Age.
  - Māori Media, Te kukupa.
- **Cultural Festivals and Events/Print:** Participate in or sponsor cultural festivals and events that celebrate Māori culture and heritage. Engaging with Māori Freehold Landowners in celebratory settings provides opportunities for informal interactions and relationship-building.
  - Fliers and promotional material added to future engagement consultations.
  - Posters.
  - Updated application form.
  - Cultural events, future consultation drop-in sessions, Waitangi Day.

Stakeholders will be activated through targeted invitations, clear communication of objectives, provision of relevant information, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

## Risk

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**Risk:** Disrespecting cultural protocols and values.

**Mitigation:** Te Hono to support and provide cultural competency training with internal project team.

**Risk:** Misunderstandings due to language differences or ineffective channels.

**Mitigation:** Use clear, accessible language and diverse communication channels, offering materials in both English and Te Reo Māori.

**Risk:** Skepticism from historical grievances.

**Mitigation:** Build trust through consistent, respectful, and transparent engagement, acknowledging past issues.

**Risk:** Limited resources affecting engagement quality.

**Mitigation:** Plan resource allocation efficiently and seek additional funding or partnerships.

## Resources

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We need a commitment from SLT to provide necessary funding to carry out Engagement Methods mentioned above.

There is an opportunity to build trust within these communities due to historic grievances.

This will help our endeavours to achieve our goals.

- Reduce debt levels for Māori Freehold Landowners.
- Provide clarity on rating processes.
- Reduce barriers for land use and development.
- Stimulate development.
- Increase understanding of Whenua Māori.