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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **West Coast Regional Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu break new ground**

The West Coast Regional Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu are embarking on a significant milestone with New Zealand's first signing of a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe - Iwi Participation Agreement.

The agreement, with an overarching Paetae Kotahitanga ki Te Tai Poutini - Partnership Protocol, is a collaboration between representatives from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and West Coast Regional Council, was signed by the partners today at Arahura Marae and formally acknowledges the partnership and relationship between Council and Ngāi Tahu on the West Coast.

Iwi Participation Agreements are tools under the Resource Management Act, designed to assist tangata whenua and local authorities to discuss, agree and record how they will work together, including how tangata whenua will be involved in resource management decisions.

West Coast Regional Council Chairman Allan Birchfield said that the signing will build on the existing strong relationships the Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu already share as well as strengthening future outcomes.

“We are very pleased to be the first Council in the country to reach this place and be here at the Arahura Marae to sign the Protocol and Agreement. Not only is this a reflection of the work we have done together over many years now, but it is also a chance to celebrate where we have got to together.”

“Formalising this partnership will ensure that together, Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu will continue to make practical decisions for our communities that will ensure the right course of action for the future.”

In a joint statement, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae Chair Francois Tumahai and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio Paul Madgwick said Te Tai o Poutini was leading the way with the agreement.

“Mana Whakahono ā Rohe is a blueprint for how Treaty partners can relate to each other in a meaningful way that respects both te ao Māori and the legislative framework of the Council. This is how it should be, and we believe this is the only way for all of us on the West Coast to thrive.”

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