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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Mana Whakahono ā Rohe takes out key NZPI award**

The New Zealand Planning Institute has recognised the ground-breaking planning work undertaken by Poutini Ngāi Tahu and the West Coast Regional Council in the development and implementation of a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe – Iwi Participation Agreement, awarding it the *Best Practice Award in Consultation and Participation Strategies and/or processes*.

The first of its kind in Aotearoa, the Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, with an overarching Paetae Kotahitanga ki Te Tai Poutini - Partnership Protocol, was signed in October 2020 at Arahura Marae and reflects many years of collaborative mahi between Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu (Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio).

Since its signing, the Agreement has been used as a framework to guide plan development. The combined district plan for the West Coast, *Te Tai o Poutini Plan*, is a primary example of the Agreement shaping the future of the region through the enablement of rangatiratanga and provision of mahinga kai in development and use of the whenua.

West Coast Regional Council, Chair Peter Haddock, said the recognition of the Mana Whakahono ā Rohe was significant for all involved.

“We are rapt to have had this work formally recognised through the NZPI Awards. Not only is this a fabulous outcome for Council and Poutini Ngāi Tahu, but also for our community. Having the Agreement in place enables us to work better together on behalf of our people for the future.”

Poutini Ngāi Tahu Co-Chairs, Francois Tumahai (Ngāti Waewae) and Paul Madgwick (Kāti Māhaki ki Makaawhio), are pleased their partnership with the regional council has been formally recognised.

“This award is a big deal for Poutini Ngāi Tahu. Our partnership is significant for the region, for future generations of our hapū, and our reputation as rangatira of Tai o Poutini.

“All decision making within the RMA space now involves mana whenua. This is resulting in a smoother, less contentious process, which is bringing positive benefits for the region.”

Poutini Ngāi Tahu says applicants are now proactively working with mana whenua from the outset before applying to council, with mana whenua supporting and guiding applicants through the process.

“This has mutual benefits resulting in stronger applications that are consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It’s also pleasing to see more projects recognising the value of a mana whenua perspective, with the creation of training and employment opportunities within the environmental space for our people.

“To meet the growing demand for our services, we have employed four kaimahi to process applications and provide cultural support. With government reforms underway, this demand is projected to increase, and we are seeking additional kaimahi.”

Mana Whakahono ā Rohe is a blueprint for how Tiriti 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 Tai o Poutini to thrive.

As the Regional Council progresses with its freshwater management work, the Agreement will continue to provide guidance and real collaborative input to regional planning processes.

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### More information

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.

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