



TŪWHARETOA
MĀORI TRUST BOARD

6 November 2024
Media Statement
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board Appeals to the Public to Refrain from Scattering Ashes in Lake Taupō

The Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board is urging all recreational users of Lake Taupō to help preserve the lake's cultural and ecological health by not scattering human and animal ashes in its waters. This appeal follows recent reports from the Ngā Kaihautū o Te Awa o Waikato Committee regarding ashes being scattered at Acacia Bay. The Trust Board emphasises that this practice is strictly prohibited.

In September 2007, following an agreement with the Crown, the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board was confirmed as the owner of Taupō Waters, which includes the lakebed of Lake Taupō and the Waikato River up to Te Toka a Tia (the rock of Tia), along with Huka Falls and the beds of various rivers and streams flowing into Lake Taupō.

Since its establishment in 2015, the Ngā Kaihautū o Te Awa o Waikato Committee has been dedicated to protecting the upper Waikato River. This committee made up of Trust Board members and representatives from Te Hikuwai Tūwharetoa marae, works together with various authorities to uphold kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over these vital waters, ensuring their health for future generations.

"Lake Taupō and the Waikato River are precious taonga (treasures) for all New Zealanders," stated Rakeipoho Taiaroa, Chief Executive of the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board. "We understand that many people feel a personal connection to this lake and wish to honour loved ones here, but our shared commitment to preserving Lake Taupō for future generations must come first."

Introducing ashes into the lake can disrupt the habitats of aquatic species, including fish and plants, which rely on stable environmental conditions for survival. Additionally, scattering ashes violates the Taupō Waters trust deed, which expressly discourages the spreading of human ashes.

Taupō Waters and the Waikato River are essential resources, supplying water to major centres such as Auckland and Hamilton and supporting local fisheries that provide food for residents and visitors alike. The Trust Board, in partnership with government agencies, enforces cultural and



environmental protocols to protect these waters. All requests to scatter ashes are respectfully declined in accordance with Ngāti Tūwharetoa tikanga and kawa (customs and protocols). The Trust Board reaffirmed its stance on this issue in 2016 and remains committed to protecting Lake Taupō. "We appreciate the community's cooperation in upholding our cultural and environmental values," Taiaroa added. "By working together, we can ensure Lake Taupō is protected and remains a place for everyone to enjoy."

For more information on the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board's initiatives to protect Lake Taupō or how you can assist in our preservation efforts, please visit www.tuwharetoa.co.nz.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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