

Arguments, Argumentation and Agreement:

A symbolic convergence study of the Lake Omapere Project

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Ruth A. Newport

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Glossary

Māori terms

Māori Word

English Definition

Aotearoa	The Māori name for New Zealand which literally means The Land of the long white cloud
Hapu	Sub-tribe
Hui	Meeting
Iwi	Tribe
Kaitiaki	Guardian or steward -
Kaitiakitanga	Stewardship
Kawanata	Covenant
Ki uta ki tai	A concept of the natural world which views all things as connected
Kotahitanga	Unity
Mana	Authority, prestige, power
Manawa ora	Hope
Manawhenua	Customary authority over land. The territorial right or possession of land
Manuhiri	Visitor
Māori	The indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand
Matauranga	Knowledge
Mauri	Life force
Noa	Ordinary, for common use and opposite of tapu

Papatuānuku	Earth mother
Pepeha	Geographic locator of identity
Rohe	Geographical area
Taakauere	Name of the taniwha at Omapere, originally a tohunga who inhabited the forest that used to stand where the lake is now situated
Tangata whenua	The people of the land
Taniwha	A powerful spirit that is usually placed in guardianship over a particular area.
Tapu	Sacred, set apart, a metaphysical concept
Taonga	Treasure, precious possession
te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
te Wheke	Octopus
Tikanga	Customary lore
Tino rangatiratanga	Chiefly authority
Tohunga	Priest
Tuna	Eel
Turawai	Freshwater mussels
Wāhi tapu	Sacred place
Waiora	Life-giving water, pure water
Whakatauki	Proverb, saying
Whenua	Land or afterbirth

Abstract

The focus of this research is the construction of a shared vision for the environment. Specifically, the purpose of this research was to examine the construction of shared vision between different rhetorical communities for the Lake Omapere Restoration Project. In this investigation, I applied Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to the communication processes of the Resource Management Act (1991). The intended outcome of this research was to gain further understanding of the communication processes in place within the Resource Management Act 1991 in order to foster a more holistic, bicultural approach for the development of Aotearoa New Zealand¹. My premise was that shared understanding through storytelling could be a useful tool for producing equitable bicultural environmental decisions.

This research is concerned with how that shared vision is created rhetorically. It is based on the theoretical understanding that language constructs people's social reality (Escobar, 1996; Pearce, 1989). The literature review established that people make sense of the material world through language, deep emotional connection to the land and decision-making processes. This discussion of the different ways people come to view the material world provided the background for the central research question. The primary research question that guided the investigation was *how do different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment?* In order to answer this question data were collected using archival records retrieved from the Northland Regional Council. The analysis of the data involved the application of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to the construction of shared vision for the polluted condition of Lake Omapere in Northland.

¹ Aotearoa New Zealand combines both the Māori and English names and is used in this thesis to acknowledge the bicultural intention of environment resource management.

The fantasy theme analysis of the texts revealed two fantasy themes personifying Lake Omapere: first, the story of the dying lake, followed by second fantasy theme of the salvation of the lake. These two fantasy themes provided the rhetorical ground for the evolution of shared rhetorical vision for the restoration of the wellbeing of Lake Omapere. Following Bormann (1972; 1983), the study showed that symbolic convergence theory accounts for the irrational as well as rational aspects of positive collaborative action for the environment.

This research has contributed to knowledge by showing that Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory is a useful framework for explaining the process by which different rhetorical communities construct shared vision. The fantasy theme analysis approach was specifically designed for this research. Burke's (1966) "hexed" pentad was used in the initial stages of analysis to determine the elements of the fantasy themes. This study showed that construction of shared vision encompasses at least three forms of communication: consciousness creating, raising and sustaining. The study also contributed further questions as to the nature of the resulting shared vision. This study shows that the democratic dialogue that is produced from sharing stories can result in justice.

The emergence of shared vision produced a new reality and an altered worldview where *kaitiakitanga*² has become a crucial focus for the future of Lake Omapere. The restoration of the wellbeing of Lake Omapere through establishing *kaitiakitanga* is now a rhetorical reality and will shape future decisions made regarding the management and restoration of the lake. The implications involved with incorporating the indigenous spiritual relational perspectives in legislation are a crucial concern for environmental decision-making both locally and internationally and further application of symbolic convergence theory research in this area is recommended.

² Stewardship

Chapter 1

Overview of the Research

Introduction

The original research recorded in this thesis is a rhetorical analysis of the narratives people share about nature. The purpose of my research was to examine the communication processes in The Resource Management Act (1991) that different groups use as they attempt to construct a shared vision. The specific application of this research project is to the Lake Omapere Restoration Project, which was undertaken by the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council to restore the health of the dying Lake.

The specific theoretical approach of this research is Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory applied to the Resource Management Act (1991). Since the Act passed into law, it has dominated the rhetorical landscape of environmental management in Aotearoa New Zealand. Accordingly, an examination of the role of rhetoric in applying the Act in order to construct "shared consciousness" (Bormann, 1985, p. 5) for the use, management and development of natural resources in Aotearoa New Zealand forms a key part of this research. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research topic and its theoretical underpinnings. Section one of the chapter introduces the concept of the research and the research question. In the second section I will discuss the rationale for using Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory and fantasy theme analysis methodological approach while the evolution of the research is presented in section three. In section four, I will discuss the underlying assumptions on which the research is based and outline the organisation of this thesis.

1.1 Background to the research concept

In a general sense, this thesis is about bicultural communication in environmental decision-making processes. Specifically I critically explore the construction of shared vision by different groups who talk about the material world differently. Many theorists assert that people construct their reality through language (Bormann, 1972; 1983; Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997; Escobar, 1996; Kuhn, 1970; Pearce, 1989). This research is underpinned by the concept that language both defines the way people interact with the natural world, and also brings the environment into being (Escobar, 1996, p. 64). Different groups use language in isolation from each other, so they necessarily develop different ways of viewing and interacting with the world. In the context of this thesis, I will refer to these different groups as “rhetorical communities” (Bormann, 1983, p. 5). A ‘rhetorical community’ is defined by Bormann (1983, p. 15) as a group of people who share meaning by actively participating in specific stories. These stories, otherwise known as “fantasies” or “dramatised messages” become “fantasy themes” as the group shares them. Usually fantasy themes combine to form a “rhetorical vision” which is a worldview that describes reality, as the group perceives it (p. 15).

Where a number of different rhetorical communities apply their own rhetorical vision to a particular environmental problem, the potential for shared vision arises; however, there is equally the potential for conflicts to result from the clash of different worldviews. Competing interests that are expressed through different rhetorical visions can cause social and cultural tension. Fairclough (1992) calls the communication that produces disfluencies “cruces” - moments, in other words, of rhetorical friction. In some cases, disparate rhetorical visions co-exist without producing conflict or shared understanding. However, my focus is on the resolution of potential friction and conflict so that different rhetorical communities can come to share common rhetorical realities (Bormann, 1983). Essentially, I seek to find an approach that allows dialogue between different worldviews to occur, resulting in shared vision. I am interested in how shared stories could help facilitate shared understanding in the context of New Zealand’s environmental decision-making process.

Research context and problem

The Resource Management Act (1991) is pivotal to environmental decision-making processes in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was instituted to bring cohesion to New Zealand's environmental laws (Ministry for the Environment report [ME], 1995, p. 1). The Act accommodates the probability that different groups would have competing interests for the same environmental space. Accordingly, it provides communication and problem solving processes that are intended to achieve holistic environmental decisions.

The Resource Management Act (1991) signified a historic shift in political communicative processes involved in environmental decision-making (Nelson, 2004; Palmer, 1992; 1995; Phillipson, 1994). Previous environmental law focussed on specific events and actions that could be allowed or disallowed (Palmer, 1990). Instead, the Resource Management Act (1991) was designed to regulate human interaction with the environment by requiring that all the potential effects on the environment are considered and accounted for before allowing any proposed interaction. One of the main ways the Resource Management Act (1991) allows for the effects of human activity on the environment to be considered is through an emphasis on consultation with all affected parties.

Despite such good intentions, the application of the Resource Management Act (1991) is frustrated by the lack of shared meaning amongst different parties with vested interests in environmental issues (Michaels & Laituri, 1999; Nelson, 2004). The problem that this research explores is the disparity between the theory and the practice of The Resource Management Act (1991) (Nelson, 2004; Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995). In the context of environmental decision-making, the problem this gap between theory and practice produces is that people are often talking past each other. I contend that shared understanding is a necessary step in finding effective, functional solutions to common environmental problems.

The Lake Omapere Restoration Project

The focus of the research is to examine how a group of people constructed a shared vision for the environment. The specific application of my research is the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere. Located in the centre of Northland, the lake is owned by the Ngapuhi tribe. The polluted state of the lake has been the source of much contention between the local government and Ngapuhi for many years. In more recent times, the lake's Trustees and the Northland Regional Council have worked together on the Lake Omapere Restoration Project. The vision for this project is to restore the "wellbeing" of the Lake and establish a model for *kaitiakitanga*. The Lake Omapere Restoration Project provides a rich opportunity to examine the communication processes provided for in the Resource Management Act (1991) in a situation where proactive measures are being sought to produce shared meaning and understanding. The research question that has guided my analysis of the Lake Omapere Restoration Project is:

How do different rhetorical communities³ construct a shared vision for the environment?

In order to address the question, I will use Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to identify the rhetorical communities (Bormann, 1983, p. 15) involved in the Lake Omapere Project and to analyse the converging stories that the different parties participate in as they seek to construct a shared vision. The following section outlines my rationale for using Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory.

³ *Rhetorical community* is a theoretical term Bormann (1972; 1983; 1985) used to define a group of people who share the same way of talking about the world.

rather than *why* people arrive at shared vision, Bormann's (1972; 1983) approach seemed most applicable. Indeed, the broad, flexible and robust nature of symbolic convergence theory is an advantage for the analysis of the Lake Omapere case. The wide range of perspectives present in rhetorical communities resulted in complex dynamics of communication between the parties involved. Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory is useful to explain how those dynamics were produced.

Bormann's (1972; 1983) approach allows maximum flexibility to handle the data and the emerging rhetorical vision. There is scope within his methodology to combine other rhetorical methods that help to identify the rhetorical communities and fantasy themes. Other symbolic convergence theory studies have favoured Foss' (1996) fantasy theme analysis method. Foss' (1996, p. 123) model delineates fantasy themes according to three types. First, "setting" fantasy themes locate the drama. Secondly, "action" fantasy themes are focussed on the plot of the story and thirdly, "character" fantasy themes centre on the actors that participate in the drama. However, the rigidity of her system appeared to compartmentalise rhetorical acts in a manner that did not suit the holistic approach of this research.

In contrast, Burke's (1966, p. xv) "hexed pentad" provided a useful complementary structure for analysis that was also fluid and holistic in nature. Burke's (1966) metaphor of communication as a play seemed appropriate for the symbolic convergence theory's focus on dramatised messages. The six components: *scene*, *character*, *attitude*, *act*, *characters* and *purpose* (Burke, 1966, p. xv) were used to identify the rhetorical structures and fantasy themes.

The attraction of testing new combinations of theoretical framework also played a part in my selection process. Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory has previously been applied to organisational communication and to media stories about the environment. However, his theory does not appear to have been applied in the context of organisational communication concerning the environment. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand's environmental decision-making process, Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory could have utility in enabling consultation processes to be more effective by

providing a communication framework that enables dynamic, democratic dialogue between different worldviews. In this way, it could be helpful to fostering shared understanding in the environmental decision-making process.

1.4 Research assumptions and the research question

This research is based on the following assumptions about the Resource Management Act (1991). The first assumption is that the intention behind the Resource Management Act (1991) was well meaning in that it aimed to be inclusive of different stake-holders' views and needs. Unfortunately, in practice, due to limited time, resources and also often the ideological stance of local government staff (Nelson, 2004) the consultation process does not always produce the results that the rhetoric of the Resource Management Act (1991) seems to intend (Michaels & Latituri, 1999).

The second assumption is that the communication processes within the Resource Management Act (1991) effectively bring the environment into being.⁴ In other words, communication talks or “stories” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p.7) the material world into the shape that it assumes. This assumption is based on my theoretical approach that communication is integral to the social process (Pearce, 1989, p 11). The underlying premise of the concept is that people actively create their social world through their use of language. Obviously, “environment” is being used very broadly here to include the social environment.

It is important to note here that many key concepts discussed in this thesis contain multiple meanings. Therefore, there is the potential within my own use of language for miscommunication to occur. While I accept that some ambiguity is inevitable, my selection of terms is intended to minimise confusion. Wherever possible, the use of terms with ‘loaded’ connotations has been

⁴ The concept of language and knowledge of the material world being so interconnected that the environment is brought into being language will be discussed in the Literature review.

avoided. Where necessary, I define my particular perspective of the concept. I have deliberately chosen to use ‘material world’ to refer to the physical world. This term appeared to be most appropriate and specific for the purposes of my research. Alternatively the terms “nature” and “environment” are often used interchangeably to refer to the physical world. However, these two terms carry many connotations that could potentially obstruct understanding. Also, for reasons I will discuss in section two, it is important to make a distinction between the terms ‘nature’ and ‘environment’. Consequently, to avoid confusion, I use material world to refer to the physical or external world.

Furthermore, I wish to differentiate the material world from the immaterial world. The immaterial world is the intangible world involving the metaphysical world and the interpersonal dimensions of the social world. Generally a group’s worldview incorporates understandings of both the material world and the immaterial world. The general understanding of immaterial is “insignificant” or “unimportant”. However, the word is used in this research in opposition to the term “material world”. In this context, it does not mean unimportant.

The third assumption is that the Resource Management Act (1991) provides a channel for bicultural development through the communication structures it established. Under section 6, the Resource Management Act (1991) provides that that:

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to - *Kaitiakitanga* (Resource Management Act, 1991 s 2(7)).

The Act clearly recognises Māori as *tangata whenua*⁵, and states amongst “matters of national importance” to be “recognise[d] and provide[d] for” are: “the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral

⁵ Transliteration is “the people of the land” The name for the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

lands, water, sites, *wāhi tapu*⁶, and other *taonga*⁷” (Resource Management Act 1991, s 2(6)). These key elements are linked to the purpose of the Act which is the “to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources” (s 2(5)). This purpose is the articulation of the sustainable development discourse that forms the foundation of the Act and will be discussed in the next section.

Organisation of the research

The first chapter briefly outlines the concept for this thesis, introduces the research problem and details the manner in which the resulting research question will be addressed. Chapter 2 covers background material on sustainable development and environmental justice. These two important concepts underpin the thrust of the research and are fundamental to a holistic reading of the Resource Management Act (1991). The Literature Review (chapter 3) will provide the theoretical investigation of the issues arising from different meanings of environment and nature and chapter 4 is the methodology chapter where the qualitative paradigm is discussed and Bormann’s (1972, 1983) symbolic convergence theory is explained in more detail. The method is also outlined. Chapter 5 sets the scene of the case study by introducing Lake Omapere and the unfolding story of the Lake Omapere Restoration Project. The question of how different rhetorical communities can achieve a shared vision for the environment is the focus of the data analysis and discussion in Chapter 6. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will discuss the wider implications of the research findings and offer recommendations for further research.

⁶ Sacred place

⁷ Treasure or precious possession

Chapter 2

Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice

Introduction

The purpose of my research is to explore the way that different rhetorical communities can construct a shared rhetorical vision. Specifically, the focus is on the communication processes of the Resource Management Act (1991) that guide environmental decision-making in Aotearoa New Zealand. My contention is that different rhetorical communities can find common understanding by sharing stories. I believe shared understanding is important so that the Resource Management Act (1991) processes achieve in practice what the rhetoric of the Act proclaims. My research concept was inspired by a strong belief that deeper shared understanding is required for the future holistic, bicultural development of Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter provides the background material about sustainable development and environmental justice, which are both foundational concepts to the theoretical underpinning of this research. In the first section, I will discuss background of the Treaty of Waitangi that forms the basis for bicultural development and environmental justice in Aotearoa New Zealand. I will also outline the evolution of my research concept. Section two contains the discourse of sustainability in particular reference to the Resource Management Act (1991). Finally, I will present an overview of the concept of environmental justice in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand and this research.

2.1 The Treaty of Waitangi

This section outlines the background of the Treaty of Waitangi (*te Tiriti o Waitangi*⁸) in relation to bicultural development. The conflicting stories of the Treaty in Aotearoa New Zealand society impact significantly on environmental decisions (Macduff, 1995, p. 30). The Treaty was signed in 1840 by over 500 chiefs on behalf of the Māori peoples and Governor Hobson on behalf of the Queen and the people of Britain (King, 2003; Orange, 1987), and still holds much metaphoric, symbolic and relational meaning. There are also numerous conflicting interpretations of the promises made in 1840 and in particular their application in today's society.

The agreement was ignored as a legal entity for close to a hundred years. Māori activism in the 1960s and 70s led to an increased impetus at government level to honour the Treaty and negotiate the injustices done to the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. The turbulent history of the Treaty has produced complex dynamics of land ownership and responsibility that significantly impact on resource management in Aotearoa New Zealand. In more recent times, the Treaty has come to the forefront of political consciousness in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially in the contested application of the Treaty to environmental issues (Austin, 2006, p. 115).

The general understanding of “biculturalism” is that the term refers to the combination of two cultures. The approach to biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand is, however, more complex and connected with the Treaty of Waitangi. The 1840 agreement between Māori chiefs and British Crown is generally regarded as the founding document of this nation. Arguably, there are elements within the agreement that point to the establishment of a bicultural nation (Epstein, 1999, p. 8). The Treaty has created a distinctive dynamic that situates Māori as one culture of the bicultural combination and Pakeha (nonMāori)

⁸ The Treaty of Waitangi. Originally I used a hyphenated *te Tiriti*-the Treaty to refer to the bilingual aspect of the agreement and to acknowledge that there are multiple understandings of meanings of the texts. Ultimately it was distracting. Due to the fact the English version is referred to in the Resource Management Act (1991) I chose to use “the Treaty.”

1.2 Rationale of research methodology

In the previous section, I introduced the research concept and Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory applied to Resource Management Act (1991). The aim of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the necessary communication practices required within the Resource Management Act (1991) to enable different rhetorical communities to construct a shared vision for the environment. This will be achieved by the application of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to the ongoing joint Lake Omapere Restoration Project between Northland Regional Council and the Lake Omapere Trustees. The rationale for the research methodology is summarised in this section, while the details of methodology will be covered in more depth in the Methodology chapter (chapter 4).

The selection of the methodology

My interest in environmental stories and narrative research approaches led me to symbolic convergence theory and fantasy theme analysis. For the object of my enquiry, I required a methodology that focussed on the process of sharing meaning between different groups. While other narrative methodologies, such as discourse analysis and thematic analysis, may be useful in analysing rhetorical patterns within discourse communities, they are limited when it comes to analysing the convergence of discourses. The utility of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory for my research lies in his holistic approach and focus on symbolic convergence. Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory views communication as a holistic dramatised phenomenon. It focuses on the dynamics of creating shared meaning through story telling. I was intrigued by the concept of people constructing shared vision through participating in stories that explained their experience.

Symbolic convergence theory has been criticised for not explaining *why* people share stories (Gunn, 2003; Jackson, 1999; Olufowote, 2006). There are many theories about why people share stories and more recent symbolic convergence theory research has investigated this (Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997; Olufowote, 2006). Due to the fact that my research question focuses on *how*

which includes all other ethnicities in the two cultures that make up biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Despite Māori now being a minority in the population, the Treaty recognises particular importance of Māori values to Aotearoa New Zealand society. According to Court of Appeal authority (Austin, 2006; Lunt, 1999), the Treaty established Māori as the *tangata whenua* of Aotearoa New Zealand. Many acts of Parliament, of which the Resource Management Act (1991) is one of, incorporate principles of the Treaty. Essentially, the Resource Management Act (1991) established pathways and communication structures that attempt to enable different cultural views to be incorporated into environmental decision-making processes.

The Treaty of the Waitangi can be seen as a covenant, a *kawanata*⁹, and in relation to the Resource Management Act (1991) it can be a guide for resource management and the resolution of environmental problems. Much of the tension surrounding the Treaty arises from the dissonance between Crown and Māori discourses. As Claudia Orange (1987, p. 5) remarks, “The gap between Māori and European expectations of the treaty remains unbridged.” During the intervening twenty years since Orange (1987) wrote that statement, much effort has been made to “bridge the gap,” but it appears that a fundamental lack of shared meaning still exists.

The mismatch of expectations could lie in two different perceptions of the Treaty. It seemed to me that Crown and Māori discourses operate on parallel lines with no meeting point. Any attempts to apply the terms of the Treaty are frustrated by continual talking past each other. Therefore, I set out to explore the process of constructing shared common rhetorical ground between the Crown and Māori discourses of the Treaty. Essentially, I saw that legislative and modern Crown outworking of the Treaty operate from a contractual, business view of the agreement and that early Māori and Christian missionary discourses, on the other hand, perceive the Treaty as a covenant. With the latter

⁹ Covenant

discourses, a covenant is generally understood to be a deeply spiritual, sacred eternal agreement that binds two parties, and establishes an enduring relationship between them. While there may be some small acknowledgement of the Treaty as a covenant at an official level¹⁰, it is the legal contractual perspective that dominates legislative decision-making processes.

In relation to the Resource Management Act (1991), partnership is expressed in value of respecting *wāhi tapu* and honouring treaty through Resource Management Act (1991). The communication processes within the Resource Management Act (1991) were constructed with the intention to enable relational-based solutions to local problems (Palmer, 1995). I believe that this intention to incorporate a relational focussed approach to environmental decision-making potentially allows space for the inclusion of a covenantal understanding of the Treaty. This in itself would be a topic worthy of further consideration, but it is outside the focus of this research. The covenantal discourse of the Treaty, therefore, is an important underpinning concept in my thinking but is not central to the purpose of the research.

2.2 Sustainability and the Resource Management Act (1991)

The Resource Management Act (1991) is built on the philosophy of sustainable development, which pushes problem solving to the local level where local solutions are found to local problems. The Resource Management Act (1991) was the result of ground-breaking law reform led by the then Minister of the Environment, Geoffrey Palmer (Peterson, 1997). The law reform process began in 1989, eventually involving an unprecedented level of consultation with the New Zealand public. This reform was part of an international trend to address the environmental problems associated with industrial development (Barber & Dickson, 1995, p. 124). Essentially, the Resource Management Act (1991) assimilated the separate elements of New Zealand environmental law into one comprehensive statute (Phillipson, 1994).

¹⁰ For example, in the service at Waitangi February, 06, 2007

The underlying philosophy of the Resource Management Act (1991) is sustainable development. The stated aim of the Act is: “the sustainable management of New Zealand’s natural and physical resources” (s(5)). The sustainable development discourse combines the capitalistic ideal of development with caring for the environment and justice; in terms of the recognising the needs of the impoverished and of future generations (Dryzek, 1997; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999). The sustainable development discourse is based on a particular set of assumptions and understandings of the world (Dryzek, 1997, p. 10). It places humans as the most valuable and important priority of the planet (Milton, 1996, p. 183) and presents development as a positive necessity for the improvement of the human condition.

The discourse of sustainable development was first brought into public consciousness by two important international events. The Brundtland Report (1987, cited in Barber & Dickson, 1995, p. 124) identified the link between development and environmental problems and offered sustainable development as a strategy to address the issues of industrial development, poverty and the degradation of the environment. The other significant global event involved in establishing sustainable development as an overarching philosophy for addressing environmental concerns connected with development was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Peterson, 1997). The conference established the Sustainable Development Commission and signified international acknowledgement that global collaborative action through compliance with sustainable development principles was required in order to address environment problems (Barber & Dickson, 1995). These global initiatives embraced sustainability as a rational ideal for continued development, but the definition of “sustainability” was never specified. Since then different governments have worked to implement an essentially indefinable concept. The problems of the broad definition of sustainable development will be discussed further below.

Sustainable development is an underlying assumption that is widely used to help make sense of the consequences of industrial development on the environment (Dryzek, 1997, p. 10). Although the developments of science and technology invented ways to make life easier and more predictable, they introduced new problems for society. This has resulted in “manufactured risk” (Giddens, 1999, p. 3). Manufactured risk is difficult to address and plan for because the outcomes are not yet known (Giddens, 1999, p. 3). In order to combat the modern problems arising out of human interaction with the material world, sustainable development has now become the driving force of legislation in relation to the environment (Escobar, 1996; Peterson, 1997; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999). The focus on sustainability ultimately requires governing bodies to establish systematic planning and management strategies (Escobar, 1996, p. 50). According to the philosophy of sustainable development, sustainability can only occur through human intervention and control, which in context of Resource Management Act (1991) occurs with the creation of district and regional plans. Plans portray values and contain the key concepts that people in an organisation deem important (Cane, 1995; Cohen & March, 1974; Weick, 1979). In this way, they both create and guide the meaning people ascribe to the material world. Essentially, plans create a “social structure” for people to solve problems that they encounter in the material world (Weick, 1979, p. 9). As I mentioned previously, sustainable development aims to find local solutions to local problems.

Aotearoa New Zealand was one of the first countries to embody the discourse of sustainable development in its law. The systematic planning for the management of resources is embodied in the Resource Management Act (1991). As the review in the previous section showed, the discourse of sustainable development is viewed as an approach for solving the environmental problems associated with industrial development. Dore (1992, p. 355) asserts that much development theory has centred on the assumption that economic development will lead to social transformation and alleviation of poverty. In this way, sustainable development contains the implicit promise of justice. Generally, environmental justice promoted in sustainable development discourse is the equitable distribution of resources both now and in the future (Howarth &

Norgaard, 1992; Luper-Foy, 1995). In fact, sustainable development is often viewed as a prerequisite for justice to occur (Simmons, 1995, p. 68). Such a perspective is founded on the argument that unless governments can achieve economic and environmental sustainability, justice is not possible in either social or ecological arenas (Simmons, 1995, p. 68). Barber & Dickson, (1995, p. 122) assert that although the intention of the issue of distributive justice is to be equitable, authorities working for the interests of themselves rather than those who need it can frustrate the process.

2.3 Environmental justice

The purpose of this section is to explore how particular concepts of justice inform the environmental decision-making process and accordingly how the idea of justice affects how the material world is perceived. Decision-making is an important way that people assign meaning to their experience of the material world (Popper, 1962). The practice of decision-making necessarily involves the evaluation and consideration of different concepts of justice.

There are many different meanings contained within the term justice. In general, justice contains the concept of equality and equitable relations between people. However, understandings of justice vary from the concepts of right and wrong, distributive justice, rights, and restorative justice (Almond, 1995; Barber & Dickson, 1995; Sen, 1999). The multiple views on justice often originate from different priorities in the evaluation of information to base decisions on (Goulet, 1993; Sen, 1999). For the purpose of my research, I was concerned with the role of justice in the communication decision-making processes set out in the Resource Management Act (1991). My reading has focussed on issues of justice in the context of sustainable development and environmental decision-making processes in Aotearoa New Zealand. Justice is a central issue when discussing matters concerned with the Treaty and sustainability's core tenet of intergenerational justice in the application of the Resource Management Act (1991).

Intergenerational justice

The concept of intergenerational justice is based on the premise that it is unfair to produce a future generation without leaving them with resources that will sustain their wellbeing (Luper-Foy, 1995, p. 97). The difficulty that intergenerational justice raises is the matter of how to accurately predict the precautions or actions required in the present, to be equitable to future generations (Grundy, 1995; Howarth & Norgaard, 1992; Luper-Foy, 1995)

The value of intergenerational equity is central to the sustainable development discourse. However, sustainable development also embraces capitalistic values that inherently oppose intergenerational justice (Grundy, 1995, p. 44). As the name itself suggests, sustainable development encapsulates two opposing ideas. The value of conserving resources for futurity does not fit with the model of capitalistic development of maximising profits and using assets (p. 44). The existing amount of resources cannot satisfy people's demand for those resources (Luper-Foy, 1995, p. 96). According to Luper-Foy (1995, p. 97) sustainability requires the practices of conserving, recycling and renewing resources. He proposes concept of the *sustainable consumption-reproduction principle* where "each generation may consume natural resources, pollute, and reproduce at given rates only if it could reasonably expect that each successive generation could do likewise" (p. 98). In this way, intergenerational equity is achieved as people keep their present lifestyle in balance with potential for the next generation to reproduce a similar lifestyle.

Environmental justice in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand

The legacy of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand impacts on present day environmental decision-making processes. The Treaty has become the "constant back drop" (Macduff, 1995, p. 30) for Māori assertion of rights and responsibility of a certain *rohe*¹¹. On the basis of the Treaty, Māori claim a unique relationship to the land as the first nation people of Aotearoa and desire for that to be recognised in the socio-political arena of our society (Austin,

¹¹ Geographic area

2006; McHugh, 1991; Sneddon, 2005). There are a number of issues regarding justice that need to be yet to be satisfactorily resolved in terms of honouring the Treaty regarding natural resources. While the call from some quarters is for separate lands, institutions and economies (Durie, 1998, p. 238), such an approach does not also appear to be the original intent of those who signed the Treaty (Green, 2002; McHugh, 1991; Meleisea, 1991).

The fact that the Treaty has been recognised in environmental law indicates that there are different ways of viewing the material world and conceiving of justice in the context of environmental decision-making in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Act includes specific stipulations to observe the Treaty in sections 5, 7 and 8. The fact that Aotearoa New Zealand environmental legislation recognises the claim of *tangata whenua* to play a role in decision-making process has sparked public debate regarding who has the right to be considered *tangata whenua* and to what extent do those rights extend (Barclay, 2005; Byrnes, 2004).

There is currently much debate over what self-determination for indigenous people groups actually means and looks like in practice. It is often argued that “the right to self-determination, however defined, is viewed as fundamental to issues such as regaining cultural identity, for assuming responsibility in managing their own affairs, and for striving to achieve their own destiny” (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 5). In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, *tino rangitiratanga* is often connected with self-determination and the right to govern Māori affairs. Indeed, there are differing views on the meaning of *rangitiratanga* and how the Treaty should be interpreted and applied to policies (Kawharu, 2005; King, 2003; Moon, 2002). Many define the concept as chieftainship and often relate it to issues of self-determination and autonomy (Durie, 1991; Kawharu, 2005; McHugh, 1991; Sneddon, 2005). “Generally it is accepted that *rangitiratanga* underpins a whole way of enabling responsibility to be applied to Māori affairs” (Kawharu, 2005, p. 110). Blackford & Matunga, (1995, p. 190) provide two main conditions required to achieve justice for Māori. They argue that both *manawhenua*¹², the authority over land and also

¹² Customary authority over land, territorial rights or possession of lands

5 Purpose:

- 1) The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- 2) In this Act, **sustainable management** means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while—
 - a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
 - b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
 - c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

6 Matters of national importance:

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

- (a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
- (b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
- (c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna:
- (d) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers:
- (e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.
- [(f) the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.]
- [(g) the protection of recognised customary activities.]

7 Other matters

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to—

- (a) Kaitiakitanga:
- [(aa) The ethic of stewardship:]
- (b) The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources:

Table 1.1: Text of Resource Management Act 1991, part 2: sections 5 – 7(b)

tikanga,¹³ the customary practices associated with *manawhenua* are required. They also relate *tino rangatiratanga*¹⁴ to *manawhenua* in respect that the former is absolute authority for resources within the region that an iwi hold *manawhenua* over.

Kawharu (2005) argues that the increased attention on principles has shifted the focus off the interpretation of *rangatiratanga*. She states that, “[p]rinciples have become important guides, but policy and practice have not always been on the basis of an informed understanding of *rangatiratanga*” (Kawharu, 2005, p. 105). The political shift to adhere to the “principles of the Treaty” has affected all major institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand and requires an awareness of cultural issues concerning other minority ethnic communities (Barclay, 2005; Christie, 1997). The various cultural and ethnic communities that now inhabit Aotearoa New Zealand have resulted in a necessity to be sensitive in acknowledging the multicultural make up of this nation. There is ongoing debate over how to address the dynamic of biculturalism in the multicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand (Barclay, 2005; O’Sullivan, 2007; Sibley & Lui, 2004). However, those who advocate multiculturalism instead of biculturalism effectively push a political agenda that does not acknowledge *tangata whenua* as anything more than another voice among the many (Lunt, 1999, p. 8). Whatever the future outworking of *rangatiratanga*, Māori sovereignty or working towards a ‘treaty based’ approach it is clear that developing shared understandings of the language and concepts we choose to use will be crucial for the future direction of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Resource Management Act 1991 has provided a communication framework with the potential to implement creative, relational based solutions (Grundy, 1995; Phillipson, 1994). The Resource Management Act (1991) was initially criticised for its lack of active definition of the role of Māori as consultative but not active participants in the decision-making process (Grundy, 1995; Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995). The consultation process requires all interested parties to find

¹³ Customary lore or practices

¹⁴ Chiefly authority

value in shared dialogue (Palmer, 1992; 1995). This of course, is complex when different groups have very different conceptions of how to make sense of the material world. For instance, Nuttall and Ritchie (1995, p. 1) note the tension of including the concept of *kaitiakitanga* in the Resource Management Act (1991). *Kaitiaki*¹⁵ is an extension of *tinio rangatiratanga* beyond just authority (Blackford & Matunga, 1995, p. 190). The concept incorporates the idea of overseeing resources accountably, which involves “managing “wisely” (p. 197) the resources the tribe has *kaitiaki* over. Nuttall and Ritchie, (1995, p. 1) argue that the concept of *kaitiakitanga* cannot operate within the limiting bureaucratic nature of legislation. From their perspective, the concept belongs within the cultural boundaries of Māoridom. They point out that the broad sweeping nature of legislation cannot account for the fact the diverse approaches to *kaitiakitanga* (p. 1). In light of this discussion, it is evident that for the Resource Management Act (1991) to achieve its aims in relation to concepts such as *kaitiakitanga*, increased participation and dialogue with Māori and interested parties will be necessary in the context of environmental decision-making in Aotearoa New Zealand (Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995, p. 1).

The Resource Management Act (1991) places a duty on local government bodies to regulate a comprehensive consultation process. Consultation and communication with the local community were considered crucial to enable the means for specific solutions to environmental issues to be addressed at a local level in consideration of the variant views and needs of the local community (Grundy, 1995; Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995; Palmer, 1995; Phillipson, 1994). This accords with the principle that environmental justice requires an approach that does not privilege one way of knowing the material world over another. Goulet (1993, p. 20-21) identified 3 rationalities that form the informational basis for decision-making: technical rationality,” “political rationality,” and “ethical or humane rationality.” Technical rationality focuses on the instrumental use of environment and practical/scientific issues involved in resource management, while political rationality is concerned with social relationships upholding the social power structures that exist within institutions. Ethical and humane

¹⁵ Guardian or steward

rationality relates to peoples' rights and highlights the importance of decision-making process aligning with values. This research is based on the premise that the Resource Management Act (1991) potentially provides space for open discussion to occur that could enable true bicultural development to emerge.

Conclusion

Considerations of justice as they relate to the environment have a pivotal role in the decision-making process. A group's concept of environmental justice will therefore inform their view of the material world in specific and significant ways. In order to construct shared vision for the environment, the differences amongst different rhetorical communities need to be acknowledged. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the honouring of the Treaty of Waitangi is incorporated into the Resource Management Act (1991). The philosophy of sustainable development that underpins that Act implicitly promises justice. This chapter has reviewed some of the complex dynamics involved in the environmental decision-making process in Aotearoa New Zealand. Due to the specific provisions and communication processes set within the Resource Management Act 1991, the Act has the potential to provide the framework for bicultural development in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapter 3

Speaking Space: The Nature of Words

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the communication processes between different rhetorical communities constructing a shared vision for the environment. In chapter one, I outlined the research concept and the primary question that has guided my investigation. The aim of this chapter is to review the body of literature delineating perceptions of nature. My intention is to identify the various components that combine to create peoples' views of the material world. This chapter will provide a broad theoretical context for my research question: *How do different rhetorical communities construct a shared vision for the environment?*

The primary research question is focussed on the way in which different rhetorical communities share their view of the environment. However, my primary question did not give me sufficient scope to investigate all the aspects that could be involved in people attaining different perceptions of nature and the environment. An additional question was required to focus on the investigation of the components that comprise a particular rhetorical community's perspective of the material world. Therefore, the complementary question that has guided my literature review is:

What are the significant elements that can be included in people's cultural perceptions of the material world?

I have presented the material in two sections. Firstly, I will review the theoretical perspective on how people make sense of the material world through language. Secondly, I will discuss how the changing use of language has affected the development of different ways of relating to the material world.

2.1 Understanding the material world through language

The following section is focussed on the role of language in people's comprehension of the material world. Traditionally, scholars theorised that communication was conceived as an external tool to convey people's emotions and explain the events that they encountered living in the material world (Pearce, 1989, p. 11). In contrast to this perspective, many researchers, such as Berger & Luckmann (1966) and Shotter (1993), have now come to view communication as a process that constructs social reality (p. 11). My examination of the role rhetoric plays in constructing shared understanding for the environment is based on that theoretical understanding that the way that people make sense of the world in which they live is produced by the words that they speak (Escobar, 1996, p. 46). This assumption forms the foundation of the literature reviewed in this chapter.

Deetz (1992, p. 14) argues that the people's knowledge of the material world is constructed from their perceptions of reality. These perceptions or understandings of the material world are usually articulated through language. Scollon & Scollon (2001, p. 6) assert that there is much evidence to suggest that language is intrinsically ambiguous. Different people can use the same words with completely different understandings. In the context of environmental decision-making, different understandings can cause critical tension and miscommunication (Dryzek, 1997; Spangle & Knapp, 1996; Suzuki & Knutson, 1993). Because language is ambiguous, considerable variation in the understandings of the material world may arise, even within one language group.

In the context of this discussion, Weick's (1995, p. 4) definition of sense-making has utility. According to Weick (1995, p. 4), sense-making is the process that people use to produce a meaningful framework to rationalise the facts they encounter. In other words, people assign rational patterns to phenomenon that occur in their lived experience. Although Weick's (1995) conception of sense-making specifically focussed on organisational structure, it has application in more generalised terms, because his definition was based on a wider theoretical understanding of the way people comprehend the world. Essentially making

sense of the world is a creative process that incorporates interpretation of the world but actively creates social reality (Weick, 1995, p. 10).

The interaction of humans with the material world relies on people giving meaning to their experience (Chambers, 1994; Dryzek, 1997; Popper, 1962). The meaning people attribute to the material world is often expressed through language. Burke (1966, p. 15) refers to language as “symbolic action”. According to his view, people’s knowledge of the world is actively produced through language. The symbolic use of language to construct the reality of lived experience is evident in the way that different cultures and communities refer to the natural world in which they live (Dryzek, 1997, p. 10). In a similar manner, Chambers (1994, p. 10) postulated that language is the means by which people explain and construct the reality that they experience.

Researchers have identified a crucial dynamic between language and the way people know the world. A founding contributor to this concept, Foucault (1972), argued that it was impossible to separate knowledge from discourse. He referred to this intimate, indivisible dynamic between language and knowledge as “discursive formation” (p. 39). Although his philosophy was developed largely in the realm of discourse analysis, Foucault’s (1972) ideas have wider application to general communication theories. They have significantly influenced subsequent discussion concerning the nature of reality, human interaction and people’s understandings of the material world. Foucault’s (1972) position was summarised by Foss, Foss & Trapp (1991, p. 217) in the following way: “Everything about which we can speak in a discursive formation is knowledge; knowledge is generated by discursive practice.” Essentially, people’s knowledge of the world is produced and defined by the discursive formation they use (Spangle & Knapp, 1996, p. 5). Evidence suggests that the different ways people talk about the environment (and therefore, their knowledge of the environment) lead to different interaction patterns and construction of vision for the environment (Dryzek, 1997, p. 15). Discursive formation produces distinct discourses, therefore, because only one type of knowledge is considered valid within certain discourse formations (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991, p. 217).

A key concept evident from my review of the literature was that language creates the order and framework that enables meaning to be constructed (Booth, 2001; 2004; Burke, 1966; Chambers, 1994; Escobar, 1996; Foucault, 1972; Milton, 1996; Pearce, 1989; Weick, 1979; 1995). Burke's (1966, p. 15) logology theory of language proposed that it was impossible to use language without expressing value. Essentially, Burke (1966) argued, the act of finding the right word to name a thing or person produces a hierarchy of meaning that defines how people viewed the material world. His contention was that the process of language was inevitably a movement toward perfection. According to Burke's (1966) theory of logology, as summarised by Teo-Dixon and Monin (2007, p. 7), the symbolic use of language will head towards a 'god-term' where identification and obedience to a particular symbol (in Burkean terms) can be achieved.

According to Milton (1996, p. 68), discourse frames the way the world is known but it also constructs how it is mediated. In this way disparate rhetorical communities can develop that place different emphasis on different aspects of knowledge. In any community the values, artefacts, and underlying assumptions play an important role in social interactions by providing a "template for action" (Hirschon, 2000, p. 405). People come to understand the material world through their social interactions. The idea of how language creates structures that impact on the way people interact with the material world will be explored further below.

2.2 Affective attachment to the material world

The above discussion highlighted the ways language constructed people's view of the material world and was a vehicle for people to make sense of it. The changing use of language has influenced the different ways that people perceive the material world. My review of previous research found that people make sense of the material world through a deep intangible, emotional attachment to physical places (Akenson, 1992; Donaldson, 2003; Graham, 1997; Green, 2002; Grey, 2003; Hughes, 1986; Kawharu, 2005; McHugh, 1991; Meleisea, 1991; Tuan, 1974; Tucker, 2005). It appears that the shift of people's interaction with

nature from conservational to developmental coincides with the shift in the language used. As I mentioned earlier, I deliberately chose to use ‘material world’ instead of either ‘nature’ or environment’. It is a prior assumption of this research that people’s linguistic change of using the term “nature” to referring to the “environment” could influence their interaction with the material world (Dryzeck, 1999; Escobar, 1996). The following discussion focuses on how language and science impact on the different perceptions people have developed of the material world.

Knowing “Nature” personally

The word “nature” is a loaded term with layers of multiple meanings and connections. In particular, the word tends to carry the idea of living personification of Mother Nature (Escobar, 1996; Grey, 2003). In many ancient pre-industrial traditions, Gaia or Earth Mother was worshipped as the giver of life and therefore, deserved reverence from people and protection from human destruction (Grey, 2003; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999; Suzuki & Knutson, 1993). This attachment was expressed in different ways by different cultures but a universal characteristic of all is the involvement of strong emotional and spiritual components (Hughes, 1986; Tuan, 1974; Tucker, 2005). Tuan (1974, p. 92) coined the term “topophilia” to describe people’s emotional connection with the material world. Tuan (1974, p. 92) comments on the deep connection farmers have with the land through their interaction of tending the land. The farmers’ interaction with nature enables them to comprehend the material world.

Many indigenous people groups, including Māori, tend to have a holistic view of nature (Graham, 1997; Lewis, Willing, & Mullan, 1995; Marsden, 2003; Tucker, 2005). There is much documented evidence to suggest that for many indigenous people (among them the Māori) the construction of identity is deeply connected with the land (Donaldson, 2003; Green, 2002; Kawharu, 2005; McHugh, 1991; Meleisea, 1991; Tucker, 2005). Such a sense of attachment and interconnection has been fostered through an understanding of nature as the mother of human existence. Indigenous explanations of the world

told through tribal stories intertwine the immaterial world and the material world (Lewis, Willing, & Mullan, 1995, p. 16). The personification of nature and the sense of relational connection with the material world inform the sense of belonging and make sense of people's existence (p. 16-17). For instance, Māori define themselves in relation to the land. The place a person comes from is very important in Māori culture because that piece of land is their *turangawaewe*¹⁶ (Marsden, 1992; 2003). The mountain and waterways and geographical location of their tribe are the first references made when introducing themselves.

Sacred spaces of “Mother Earth”

Viewing nature as a living ancestor contains a spiritual as well as emotional perspective. The perception of nature as a living ancestor produces a perception of all of nature as sacred (Hughes, 1986; Lewis, Willing, & Mullan, 1995; Simmons, 1995). Hughes (1986, p. 1) defines the view of space containing spiritual holiness in the following way:

Sacred space is a place where human beings find a manifestation of divine power, where they experience a sense of connectedness to the universe. There, in some special way, spirit is present to them.

In this way, people have made sense of the material world in connection with the spiritual. The view held by Native American Indians, was that the earth is “Mother Earth” and therefore was “sacred in all her parts” (Hughes, 1986, p. 1). According to Māori tradition, *Papatuānuku*¹⁷ is the earth mother who gave birth to all life (Love, 2004; Marsden, 1992). The conception of *Papatuānuku* as their ancestor impacts on the way Māori have related the material world. Everything is interconnected and has its own *mauri*¹⁸ (Love, 2004; Marsden, 1992; Pere, 1997). *Mauri*, which translates best into English as “life force,” allows

¹⁶ *standing place*

¹⁷ Earth mother

¹⁸ Life force

connection between the material and immaterial worlds (Marsden, 1992; 2003) enabling interaction and dialogue between the spiritual and physical dimensions (Love, 2004, p. 40). As Bird-David (1999, p. 67) notes, Taylor (1871) first termed the view of nature as living, common in indigenous people's understanding of nature, as "animism." She reviews Taylor's ideas in the context that his observations were taken from a modernist perspective and Western mindset. Instead, Bird-David (1999, p. 77-78) argues that indigenous people view of the Earth as an ancestor is the "relational epistemology" that advocates a different view of nature and supports a conservationist approach. Hughes (1986, p. 1) proposes that dualistic Western practices of designating boundaries around holy sites was part of segmenting earth and allowed the sanctity of nature to be "desacrilised". While Hughes' (1986) argument offers insight into the differences between Western and indigenous perceptions of nature, it is in itself dualistic. Boundaries are a mechanism for preserving sacred spaces and protecting land so that it is not used for common purposes. Even in traditions where the land is viewed as sacred there are areas which are designated for common use. For instance, in *Māoritanga* there is a distinction between areas of land which are *tapu*¹⁹ and those which are *noa*²⁰ and available for general use (Marsden, 1992; Pere, 1997). The symbol of water, which is considered the lifeblood of *Papatuānuku* (Pere, 1997, p. 24), plays an integral part in distinguishing the boundaries between *noa* and *tapu* (Love 2004).

Technological changes: from "nature" to "environment"

The impact of treaties made by colonising powers with indigenous people groups have had ramifications to the current circumstances, culture and lifestyle of indigenous people groups around the world (Donaldson, 2003; Rixecker, 1998; Ward, 1991). Through the modernisation, people's position in relation to the land was altered by the ability to gain mastery over land to enhance their lifestyle (Beck, 1997; Ross, 1996; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999). Technological advancement and industrialisation have significantly changed the way people

¹⁹ Sacred or set apart

²⁰ Ordinary, for common use and the opposite of *tapu*

made sense of the material world. Figlio (1996, p. 72) points out that in order to achieve the aims of science, nature must be regarded as inanimate. The scientific process of discovering order and establishing predictability imposes a frame of viewing nature as an object (Escobar, 1996; Figlio, 1996).

The changes in how people interacted with the material world coincided with changes in way people talked about the material world (Dryzek, 1997). The use of the word “environment” rather than “nature” led to an objectification of the material world and altered the way people understood the material world (Escobar, 1996; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999). The increased use of “environment” instead of “nature” allowed the construction of land as something that could be instrumentally used (commodified), to better human existence beyond mere survival (Beck, 1997; Escobar, 1996). Through the linguistic shift from “nature” to “environment”, nature came to be viewed not as a living being to be revered and nurtured, but instead as an inanimate object to be subjected to human desire and need (Escobar, 1996, p. 52). Thereby, the loss of the connotation of “Mother Nature” resulted in a conception of the environment as an object, distinct from humans. Such a perspective constructed a fragmented view of the world that distinguished nature and society as separate entities (Irwin, 1995, p. 40).

Marsden (2003, p. 36) argued that a western view of the world that divided it into discontinuous units resulted in solving symptoms rather than problems. He compared this to the different holistic conception of the world in Māori that places emphasis on metaphysical view of the material world. The concept of private property holds little or no meaning for indigenous people like the Māori (Epstein, 1999; McHugh, 1991; Tucker, 2005). Therefore, one of the issues in the process of decolonisation is how to reconcile the different individual and collective conceptions of land and property. The existence of these different ways of making sense of the world presents significant implication for constructing shared vision for the environment.

The environment as an object of enquiry

The developments of science and technology have instigated a tendency towards viewing the environment as an object (Irwin, 1995; Suzuki & Knudtson, 1993). Scientific thought often requires a simplification of the complexity of nature. Usually science breaks up nature in order to study it; therefore it will seldom be possible to fully represent the whole. “[W]hile science yields powerful insights into isolated fragments of the world; their sum total is a disconnected, inadequate description of the whole” (Suzuki & Knudtson, 1993, p. xxviii). From this perspective, science “encompasses and formulates nature in the process of representing it” (Figlio, 1996, p. 72). Figlio (1996, p. 75) refers to the scientific representation of nature as a reductive process that essentially involves the “destruction of emotional dimensionality”. In other words, there is always something missing in the portrayal of the original. For example, a picture of a forest loses the experiential meaning of physically being in a forest. Grey (2003, p. xi) argues that a loss of heart has been produced by the shift away from perceiving nature as a living being with an emotional connection to humans. Thus, the use of “environment” provides scope to enact humanity’s desire on the natural world and is facilitated by a “corporate heartlessness” (Grey, 2003, p. xi).

The evidence suggests that science is only one way of knowing and is itself based on discourse. Ways of knowing outside the realm of science appear to be gaining more acceptance (Beck, 1997; Dryzek, 1997). Some argue that making sense of the world in the area of collective environment decision-making requires discourses that represent different ways of understanding the world to be in dialogue (Beck, 1997; Goulet, 1986). The way people make sense of the material world has undergone changes. Arnold (1996, p. 11) notes a shift in Western perspective from nurturing and nurtured by nature to controlling nature. Regardless of the shifts in perspective, the understanding of the interconnection of humans and the natural world remains consistent. People’s identification with the material world has often been articulated in the connection of the land’s health to people’s wellbeing (Arnold, 1996, p. 11). This sense of emotional connection is another element involved in people’s perceptions of the material world.

Conclusion

There are many facets to the process of comprehending the material world and it is evident that there are many factors involved in constructing a view of the material world. In this chapter, I have reviewed aspects that can be included in people's perceptions of the material world. Firstly, I discussed how people make sense of the world and create social reality through language. People's perceptions of the material world are impacted through the use of language. Particularly, the shift from "nature" to the "environment" appears to have affected the way people perceive, and consequently interact with, the material world. Scientific enquiry has influenced the way people view and interact with nature. These factors that can be included in people's perceptions of the material world require consideration because environmental decision-making evolves out of people's use of language and plans to provide order and structure to the way they comprehend the material world.

Chapter 4

Methodology and Method

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to critically explore the communication processes among different rhetorical communities (Bormann, 1972; 1983; 1985) involved in formulating a shared vision for Lake Omapere. In this chapter I will explain the way I carried out the research.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section defines the interpretive research paradigm and grounds the research within its theoretical perspective. The second section outlines the specific methodology of symbolic convergence (Bormann, 1972; 1983). The third section sets out the practical measures I undertook to study the Lake Omapere project using symbolic convergence theory.

4.1 Situating the research question

The question that shaped this research is: *How do different rhetorical communities construct a shared vision for the environment?* To answer this question, I situated my research in the interpretive paradigm. I was drawn to the interpretive paradigm because I anticipated that the data I collected would be complex, rich and possibly even messy: in fact, that it would be what Geertz (1973, p. 3) calls “thick description”. The interpretive paradigm directs researchers to understand lived experience from the insiders’ standpoint (Gregory, 1983) by observing and interpreting the complexity of their interactions, relationships and cultural values (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

The research question, though simple in itself, is therefore located in a research paradigm that is anything but simple, drawing as it does on multiple theories, disciplines and methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The use of multiple disciplines requires researchers to be, in some sense, *bricoleurs*. This analogy is not a complete stretch: *bricolage* artists observe, make sense of and incorporate items that chance to be available in the environment. Because one aim of the interpretive paradigm is to give a voice to research participants, researchers must make space for all forms of data and data gathering, and must be adaptable to what the data throws up. The process of interpretive research is therefore not dissimilar to *bricolage*. The results of such research can be a surprise when they are related back to the original research question, but they will always offer closely textured representations of the situation under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Geertz, 1973; Nelson, 2004; Schwandt, 1998).

Deep, rich pictures of the research context and close engagement with research participants should always result in a high level of “understanding of lived experience and social action” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 33). Dilthey (1900, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 3) called such understanding *verstehen*, a term widely used in social science research, but equally widely debated. The concept of *verstehen* has been particularly linked to the field of hermeneutics and the theory of social constructionism, which argues that “human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it . . . against a backdrop of shared understanding, practices, [and] languages” (Schwandt, 1998, p. 97).

Achieving *verstehen* requires inductive analysis of meaning embedded in rituals, artefacts and group practices (Geertz, 1973; Janesick, 2003), implying that for researchers truth emerges from the process of analysing the text (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; McAuley, 2004). Truth in any form is always desirable, but truth found by interaction with a text cannot help but change the text. McAuley’s (2004) take on the process of interpretive research is that studying the meanings lodged within social interactions causes the object

studied to take on a new reality. Perhaps T.S Eliot (1941) expresses this best, though for a quite different context:

We had the experience but missed the meaning
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form

(The Dry Salvages, lines 95 – 97, *Four Quartets*)

Such an emphasis on opulent description (Geertz, 1973), lived experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and insider understanding (Gregory, 1983) might be said to allow, if not encourage, researcher bias. Certainly, every researcher approaches research with prior epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions (Littlejohn, 1999), which inevitably influence choice of research subject, theoretical orientations, data-gathering methods and interpretive frameworks. As Fairclough (1989, p. 5) put it, interpretive researchers tend to be “committed and opinionated”, but simply acknowledging such a tendency is not sufficient to overcome the potential for researcher bias and excessive “presence” in the research. Interpretive research is always open to the criticism that it is too imprecise to be regarded as scientific (Hammersley, 1992). In fact, Carey (1989, p. 99 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 7) goes so far as to say that qualitative research is “an attack on reason and truth” because it produces findings far from the generalisable results of “hard science”.

The point of interpretive research, however, is not to produce generalised knowledge across populations, or one “right” answer. Rather, the essence of interpretive research lies in the dynamic between description and explanation (Janesick, 2003). In other words, in interpretive research, validity and reliability are determined by evaluating the suitability and credibility of both the account of the research and also the evaluation of data (Janesick, 2003). It should not need saying, therefore, that to be sound, interpretive research must deliver both honest representation of the participants’ stories and also rational, evidence-based explanations of phenomena in the data. To dispose entirely of this point of researcher bias, however, I will turn again to Fairclough (1989), who remarked that it is important to locate the researcher in the research, so that prior assumptions can be assessed and accounted for.

To clarify my presence in the research, then, I have a deep concern for the environment, but more importantly, I believe that all people should have a voice in decisions that can materially affect their lives. It seems to me that environmental issues can influence people's wellbeing intensely in many ways. There are obvious aspects to the relationship of humans with the environment - the quality of air and water, say -- but aesthetic, cultural and spiritual issues assume enormous importance in some circumstances.

By nature, I am a person who tends to think "big picture" when viewing social problems. My world view was significantly shaped by my childhood upbringing in Tanzania, East Africa. We lived in a small village community and I grew up conscious that different people groups had different ways of relating to the material world. In my opinion, capitalistic development has caused many environmental issues that tend to be addressed in segmented and ad hoc ways. I perceive an increasing necessity to address environmental problems using more holistic approaches than are currently being used. My purpose in undertaking this research was to consider the ways in which all four aspects of humans' relationship with the environment could have voice inside official decisions. My purpose springs from my Christian faith: I can say wholeheartedly:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world,
and all who live in it. (Psalm 24:1).

By using symbolic convergence theory, I have been able to place all parties in the environmental decision that accommodated and led to a shared vision of Lake Omapere.

Narrative theory and the stories people tell

Lake Omapere, the setting of this research, was for several years the focus of intense communicative effort as different groups produced and promoted their own individual (and conflicting) views of a “right” future for the Lake. Although the citizens subsequently came together to reconcile those different visions, communication about the lake was frequent and affective until the goal of *waiora*²¹ was achieved. I have taken the Lake Omapere Project, therefore, to be an example of the way that stories – taken in the broadest sense of the word – bring the material world into being (Nelson, 2004). It seemed that such rich communicative activity deserved equally rich consideration and interpretation, and turned my attention to the vivid stories told about the lake.

Stories are a logical focus of interpretive research because the “storied nature of human conduct” (Sarbin, 1986, p. 1) provides access to the lived experience of research participants. The primary tenet of the narrative approach is that “[s]tories provide coherence and continuity to one’s experience and have a central role in our communication with others” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 7). Disputes and resolutions over a major cultural artefact can generate many stories, which gain their own momentum, circulate, influence and lose ground to newer and more influential stories. The Lake Omapere Project was no exception. For this reason, I selected a narrative methodology to analyse and interpret the stories connected with the lake.

If the theoretical examination of a data is going to be narrative analysis, it is impossible not to consider using Burke’s (1966) rhetorical method of investigating human communication as performance. Burke’s (1966) method uses an elaborate and precise vocabulary in which the message is the *act*, the context is the *scene*, the initiator of the message is the *agent*, the tools for conveying the message are known as *agency*, and all these contribute to *purpose*, which is the aim of the message. These elements are called the “pentad” (Burke, 1966, p. x). Each part of the pentad can be analysed separately

²¹ Pure or life-giving water

or together to ascertain the content and value of what was communicated and the relationships of the elements within the pentad.

Burke's methodology (1966) was appealing for this project, because the very vocabulary defining the pentad suggests that the highly charged language in the stories of Lake Omapere could be handled as dramas. I did not use it as my sole methodology, but I did find it a useful tool for "entering" the stories, and I employed it heavily in my initial interrogation of the texts. Specifically, it allowed me to locate the "players" in the drama and situate "scenes" in an overall drama and setting. Despite its usefulness in the first phase of my analysis, however, the methodology proved too open-ended, in that it did not seem to allow for the "plot" to take a completely new direction. I continued to use it to mark out the stories, but in the higher stages of my analysis, I moved to symbolic convergence theory (Bormann, 1972; 1983).

4.2 From story telling to symbolic convergence theory

Like Burke's (1966) theories of rhetorical analysis, symbolic convergence theory uses rhetorical analysis, but its scope for explaining shared meaning seems greater. For instance, symbolic convergence theory offers insights into how consciousness is created, raised and sustained in a community (Bormann, 1972; 1982; 1983; Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996). Thus, explanations can be found for the way that individuals with widely differing opinions, telling divergent but equally plausible stories, can eventually come to hold similar perspectives and engage in joint action for the common good. The rhetorical analysis in symbolic convergence theory allows the development of "fantasy themes" (Bormann, 1983, p. 104) which are shared symbolic ground created when people participate in one another's story telling.

Critics (Gunn, 2003; Mohrmann, 1982) point out that symbolic convergence theory is long on description of the "how" of sharing fantasy themes and short of the detail of "why" such sharing happens. However, it is an explicitly stated assumption underpinning the theory that humans tend naturally towards being

“social story-tellers” (Bormann, 1983, p. 102). Critics have also argued that the language of symbolic convergence is vague and imprecise. Bormann (2003), however, contests this criticism, contending instead that the terms in symbolic convergence theory are clearly identifiable and well established across wide range of studies. This debate did seem to offer any special insights to my study, but it did serve to highlight the size and specificity of the terminology in symbolic convergence theory. Before I go on to explain the practical application of symbolic convergence theory in this research, I will clarify the terms that will occur frequently in the research.

It is the word “fantasy” that in particular attracts negative critique for being confusing. Some critics have also attacked symbolic convergence theory for borrowing the term “fantasy” from Freud (Gunn, 2003; Mohrmann, 1982). Mohrmann (1982, p. 119-120) particularly, criticised symbolic convergence theory for being based on Freudian theory and the imaginary, and therefore, unable to produce data that was useful in explaining people’s motives to participate in a particular rhetorical vision. Bormann (1972, p. 292) emphatically denied any association with the Freud’s theory of the unconscious and reiterated that his concern and focus was rhetorical. In the context of symbolic convergence theory, “fantasy” does not mean “imaginary” or “unrealistic”. Rather, its application is in the area of sense-making. Bormann (1983, p. 107) explains it as the “way communities of people make sense out of their experience and create their social reality.”

Multiple fantasy themes can emerge for single events, as different groups produce their own versions of the reality they participated in. Identifying fantasy themes can distinguish group associations and explain “us” and “them” mentality (Bormann, 1983, p. 104). The sharing of fantasies enables members of any one group to transcend the “here and now” (Bormann, 1983, p. 103) of a chaotic experience. Communicative action in the form of story telling allows group members to re-structure their experience symbolically and so render it comprehensible and manageable. Once a fantasy theme is established, group members may use the “inside joke syndrome” (Bormann, 1983, p. 109) as a device to trigger a re-enactment of the shared fantasy.

In essence, finding fantasy themes is an exercise in tracking the messages composed and released into a community. A fantasy theme begins with a “dramatised message” (Bormann, 1983, p. 15) that tickles a community’s consciousness and somehow lodges there as a key idea. Community members, stimulated by the dramatised message, interact with it: they add to it, they build arguments on it, they adapt it for other purposes and they incorporate it into other messages until it builds into a “chain” (p. 15). A chain of messages is referred to as “a fantasy theme” (p. 15) that has a specific function in the group that created it: it expresses strands of shared meaning and jointly-held ideas. A fantasy theme that becomes a recurrent script for communicative processes is known as a “fantasy type” (Bormann, 1983, p. 104).

An agglomeration of fantasy themes is called a “rhetorical vision” (Bormann, 1983, p. 114) and is best characterised as a story that satisfactorily explains the group’s idiosyncratic but valid vision of reality. Those individuals who engage in a rhetorical vision form a “rhetorical community” (Bormann, 1983, p. 115). In a rhetorical community, the members share not only common symbolic ground, but also communication directed at problem solving.

Bormann (1972; 1983) studied the existence of rhetorical communities in organisations, and one of his important findings was that the boundaries of the rhetorical communities often crossed formal organisational hierarchies and structures. Furthermore, organisational members might belong to several rhetorical communities, depending on their membership of small groups within the organisation. Bormann (1983, p. 115) went on to suggest that if rhetorical visions are maladapted to the prevailing cultural values of the organisation, loyalties could be split to the point that necessary action could be impeded. These last points of explication of symbolic convergence theory, focusing as they do on organisations, did not seem to offer especially ground-breaking insights for the research on Lake Omapere. In society at large, interest groups attract diverse memberships, and this seems more natural than it does in the more structured environment of organisations. However, they were not necessarily completely irrelevant either. Studies among small groups have found evidence of communities constructing “new symbolic ground” (Kroll, 1981, cited in

Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996, p. 2) sharing fantasy themes in ways that create shared group meaning. The makeup of different rhetorical communities involved with the Lake Omapere project could therefore provide useful data for understanding the emergence of rhetorical vision.

4.3 Rhetorical vision

The heart of symbolic convergence theory is shared rhetorical vision, which needs to be understood in some detail. Bormann, Cragan and Shields (1996, p. 2) examined the life cycle of rhetorical visions and identified “three streams of rhetorical consciousness”. The three streams are consciousness creating, consciousness raising and consciousness sustaining. These three streams do not necessarily succeed one another in a linear fashion. Rather, though all may be present during a particular stage of the rhetorical vision, one stream one may dominate.

Logically enough, consciousness-creating communication is most obvious at the beginning of life cycle of the rhetorical vision, but is not limited to that phase of a rhetorical vision. Because the process of sharing fantasies is a dynamic process, consciousness-creating may occur at any time in the life of a rhetorical vision (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996). Bormann et al. (1996) found that the consciousness-creating communication is associated with stories that can be classified according to three sets of principles. Such stories may offer communities novelty and difference, or may powerfully explain events and phenomena. Finally, the stories may provide the comfort of familiarity, although that familiarity would need to supply a fresh twist to attract new subscribers.

Consciousness-raising communication becomes the primary form of communication in sharing fantasy themes once the rhetorical vision has been established (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996). This type of communication proselytises. It produces new adherents: acolytes who convert to the vision and then act on the “principle of dedication” (Bormann et al., 1996, p. 11-12) by

participating in an event or activity associated with the rhetorical vision. In other words, a newly converted and enthusiastic convert to radical environmentalism might demonstrate dedication to the cause by destroying crops suspected of genetic modification when older converts might seek a more moderate form of expression. A feature of acting on the principle of dedication is that converts will show a high degree of emotional congruence with emotions expressed in the rhetorical vision (Shields & Cragan, 1981, p. 181-199).

The third stream in the life cycle of a rhetorical vision is consciousness-sustaining communication, which is required to maintain the commitment of participants in the rhetorical vision (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996). At this point in the life cycle of the rhetorical vision, some members of the rhetorical community may have become disaffected, so that the fantasy themes require forms of communication that breathe fresh life into the rhetorical vision.

Bormann, Cragan and Shields (1996, p. 13) also propose that rhetorical visions can usefully be located on a continuum of flexible to inflexible. At one extreme of the continuum, a flexible rhetorical vision is easily influenced and modified according to circumstance, motives, values and experiences. At the other extreme, an inflexible rhetorical vision maintains the original internal vision in spite of changing circumstances and experience. The notion of the flexible—inflexible continuum is useful in understanding the survival or death of rhetorical visions that seem equally powerful. For example, Bormann et al. (1996, p. 13) suggest that the rhetorical vision of the Cold War ultimately died because the vision was illogically preserved unchanged after experience and information raised serious questions about its veracity.

Groups often have vested interest in maintaining their rhetorical vision unchanged and so employ a range of strategies to protect it. Such strategies include the restoration of an original rhetorical vision – a “back-to-basics” approach (Bormann, 1982) -- or a syncretic combination of the remnants of the original vision with new elements (Stoltz, 1986). Any strategy aimed at preserving the inflexibility of a rhetorical vision is likely to be combined with blocking opposing messages from informal and formal communication channels. Bormann et al. (1996, p. 13) identify these conditions predispose the

rhetorical vision to move to the final stage of the lifecycle of the rhetorical vision where it declines.

Finally in this outline of the main elements of rhetorical vision, Cragan and Shields (1981, Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997, p. 257) suggest that most rhetorical visions can be classified according to three “master analogies”: the pragmatic, the social and the righteous. Pragmatic rhetorical visions unite action around solving the practical problems within a given situation. For instance, the growth of noxious water plants in Lake Omapere produced a pragmatic rhetorical vision, which resulted in the release of carp to eat the weed. A social rhetorical vision centres on the need to build strong relationships in order to develop a bright common future, and an example of this is the uniting of *tangata whenua* in defence of their *taonga* and their *mana whenua*. The third master analogy is the righteous rhetorical vision, which develops a guiding philosophical position similar, perhaps, to that which underpins the Resource Management Act (1991) and impelled the Northland Regional Council to abandon its original strategy for the lake and adopt a more inclusive approach.

4.4 Symbolic convergence theory at Lake Omapere

Fantasy theme analysis has been used in this research project because of its holistic conception of the communication process and its focus on the group processes involved in formulating shared visions of reality (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996). The inclusion of audience as important component in the communication process is a strength of this methodology, which is important to the case study where diverse audience is involved in the communication processes under investigation. The fact that Bormann’s (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory focuses on the “crucial link between message and audience” (Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997, p. 255) means that using content analysis, rhetorical criticism and discourse analysis to study fantasies groups share can uncover important distinctive features to enable comprehension of the communication process and the rhetorical vision of the group (Bormann, et. al., 1997, p. 255).

The focus of symbolic convergence theory is the “creation and sustaining of a community’s consciousness” (Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997, p. 255), and therefore a useful and appropriate methodology to critically explore the process of creating a shared vision for environmental action amongst Treaty partners. Bormann, et al., (1997, p. 255) use the term “shared consciousness” and I use this term interchangeably with “shared vision”.

4.5 The research process and method

The aim was to broaden understanding and gain insight of the way different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment through the communication processes of the Resource Management Act (1991). The main source of my data was public documents retrieved from the Northland Regional Council archives. Archival documentation is an important source of unobtrusive data collection (Berg, 1998, p. 179). The scope of this research may have been richer if it had not been limited purely to primary data from archival documents; however, it still provides an in depth view of the communication conscious creating and maintaining processes involved in formulating a rhetorical vision. A limitation of the study is that interviews that would have triangulated the evidence were unable to be done. However, it is unlikely that people would be able to identify an exact motive for using any particular words (Mumby, 1988; Nelson, 2004). The premise of Bormann’s (1972; 1983) theory is that people participate in shared stories because doing so makes sense of their lived experience. There are multiple reasons that people could participate in the fantasies. Ultimately my focus is on shared vision, and therefore individual motivation to adhere to the vision is not a primary concern of this study.

After a brief meeting to gain permission to access an appropriate case study, I spent three days at the Northland Regional Council reading through 10 files about the Lake Omapere Restoration project, and photocopying useful documents that told the story of the communication process in the restoration project. I numbered in pencil which file the photocopied documents came from for further reference and then categorised according to primary topic. One of

the disadvantages associated with collecting primary data from archival records is the possibility that key material has not been documented, producing bias in the data (Berg, 1998, p. 181). Informal discussions with people involved with the project provided background information and offered opportunities to clarify potential “missing” information in archives (Berg, 1998, p. 181). The information that I had access to was mainly public, although some information was highly sensitive and restricted to a limited audience (Berg, 1998; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Therefore, issues of confidentiality needed to be addressed when working with certain documents as some records contain private, identifying markers on them, such as names, addresses etc. Privacy needed to be ensured (Berg, 1998; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

The files portray many stories and actions in the complex case of Lake Omapere. Restoring Lake Omapere is obviously not a “quick fix” process. The slow pace has created much criticism among all parties involved. There are multiple parties, perspectives and agendas in the collaboration of Lake Omapere. Archival documentation shows that multiple attempts to address the polluted state have been mixed up in an emotional struggle of communication breakdowns and blaming. During the data gathering process, I made a point of collecting more information than I would eventually use, as well as wide range of sources. The advantage of this approach is that the data offered a wide perspective of the entire story of Lake Omapere. The difficulty that arose from obtaining such a large range of information was selecting the documents most relevant to my investigation. Because my purpose was to investigate the construction of shared meaning, I based my selection on data that suggested movement towards shared vision.

I selected texts for the fantasy theme analysis that were primarily related to crucial moments in the data that initiated the construction of shared vision. The first crucial moment was the public building up of the rock wall in May 2000 that raised public awareness of the condition of the lake. The second crucial event occurred in 2004, when the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council signed the Memorandum of Understanding. This document signified an effort and recognition to work together for the benefit of the lake.

From this agreement, the joint working party, Lake Omapere Project Management Group, was formed and given the mandate to formulate a strategic plan for the restoration of Lake Omapere. The resulting strategic plan provided a useful text for confirming that symbolic convergence had indeed occurred.

Data analysis

The reasons for choosing Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory were outlined in the previous section. Essentially, it provided a useful theoretical framework by which to investigate the rhetorical process through which people come to share a common reality and consciousness about the world (Bormann, 1972; 1983; 1985). The flexible and robust nature of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory provided the necessary freedom required to approach the interconnectedness of rhetoric in the case of Lake Omapere.

I set out to identify the aspects of the fantasy themes using the components of Burke's (1966, p. x) "hexed pentad"; scene, agent, action, agent, attitude, and purpose. The interconnected nature of the fantasy themes and the rhetorical aspects meant separating the aspects into the elements was tricky. There were multiple places where rhetorical features could be discussed. The process was a bit like trying to hug an octopus and decipher where each tentacle ended and the next one began. All of the rhetorical elements tended to merge into each other like tie-die cloth. There were many shades or layers of meaning that were not designed to be separated out.

The fantasy themes were first identified in the media headlines through close reading for recurrent rhetorical patterns and images. Then evidence of sharing of fantasies or "chaining" was sought in the official documents gathered from the archives. The media headlines provided a useful means to discover the dramatic messages that were initially presented to public consciousness. The two main fantasy themes from the fantasy theme analysis were the death of the lake and the fight for life or salvation of Lake Omapere. Evidence found in the

analysis suggested these two themes combined to form the rhetorical vision for the restoration of the lake's wellbeing.

Once fantasy themes and corresponding fantasy types were identified their evolution into a rhetorical vision was systematically analysed using the three aspects of Bormann's (1983, p. 101) symbolic convergence theory:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identifying patterns of communication demonstrating shared consciousness.2. Describing "dynamic tendencies within communication systems" explaining "why the observed practices took place" (p. 101).3. Investigating factors "that explain why people share the fantasies they do when they do." (p. 101). |
|--|

Table 4.1:3 stages of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory

To establish the emergence of symbolic convergence, five key elements must be identified. These elements are: "symbolic cues," "dramatis personae," "plotline," "scene" and "sanctioning agent" (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201-202). The fantasy theme analysis using Burke's (1966) pentad provided a useful foundation for establishing the presence of a rhetorical vision. However, the symbolic convergence component of the analysis extends beyond the scope of Burke's (1966) pentad. Symbolic convergence is primarily concerned with the dynamics involved in the construction of shared vision amongst different rhetorical communities. The central text used to confirm symbolic convergence was the recent Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy. The documents I analysed were scanned into the computer and were included in the data chapter. The following chapter presents the background information to the situation of Lake Omapere.

Evidence shows that shared vision for the restoration of Lake Omapere's wellbeing was created. The data were congruent with the three forms of consciousness creating, raising and sustaining communication in the creation of a rhetorical vision identified by (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 11-12). Discussion of how the different rhetorical communities constructed shared vision included comment on the operating principles evident in the three phases

described by Bormann, Cragan and Shields (1996). The following chapter 5 details the background of the situation at Lake Omapere, while chapter 6 contains the fantasy theme analysis and evidence for symbolic convergence in the rhetorical vision of restoration of wellbeing for Lake Omapere.

Chapter 5

Setting the Scene

Introduction

This chapter describes Lake Omapere and gives details of its importance to the people of the Far North. The aim is to set the scene for the research and provide a historical context for the data. A sense of the cultural significance of the lake, particularly in pre-European times will be developed as well as the lengthy disputes over the ownership of the lake. Material covered in this overview of Lake Omapere will also sketch the history of the lake's decline into ill-health and its return to good health. The chapter also includes the interventions that were attempted or considered and the fighting and reconciling between interested parties concerning the lake.

5.1 Lake Omapere

The focus of my research is the Lake Omapere, located 5 kilometres north of Kaikohe in Northland. Lake Omapere is a prominent feature of the Utakura basin, amid rolling hills of rural farmland. Approximately 5 kilometres wide and 19 kilometres long, Lake Omapere is the largest lake in the region and covers an area of about 1200 hectares (Lake Omapere Submission, 2000, p. 3). The water level fluctuates with the seasons but it is usually only 2-3 metres deep at its deepest point.

The lake is situated right in the centre of Ngapuhi land and is of considerable cultural, spiritual and material importance to the Ngapuhi people, who regard the lake as a *taonga*. Traditionally, the lake was known as the heart of the octopus, *te Wheke*, and was seen as the heart of Ngapuhi. In Māori thought, the



Figure 5.1: Map of Northland

heart is seen as the seat of wisdom and the lake, by extension, was a powerful symbol of wisdom and life (Love, 2004; Pere, 1997), intimately connecting the tribe's wellbeing with the wellbeing of the lake.

In pre-European times, the lake was an important source of both water and food such as *tuna* and *turawai*. As well as using the lake for water and food, Ngapuhi often used the geothermal springs that feed Lake Omapere for medicinal purposes. Of equal importance to these practices of daily life was the fact the lake is the home of the Ngapuhi *taniwha*. According to Ngapuhi oral traditions, the basin of Lake Omapere was once the location of a giant kauri forest that was inhabited by *Taakauere*, a sacred *tohunga*. One day a fire demolished the forest and *Taakauere* disappeared. He became a *taniwha* and chose to make his home in the lake that had formed where the trees used to stand (White, 1998, p. 206).

Recent geological research confirms Māori oral histories about the lake. The area was once kauri forest and probably lake formed when the trees died in a fire (Newnham, et. al., 2004, p. 165). The kauri stumps can still be seen in the bottom of the lake. The area is volcanic and Lake Omapere has been defined by volcanic activity. A lava flow cut off the eastern outlet where the lake used to flow out to the Waitangi. The lake now drains out to the west into Utakura River and the Hokianga (Judd & Kokich, 1986; Newnham et. al., 2004).

Lake Omapere contains symbolic significance in unifying the distinctive *hapu* of the greater Ngapuhi tribe. Historically, the lake has been the setting where tribal wars were fought and negotiations made. The tribes of Taitokerau (Ngati Whatua, Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri and Ngati Kahu tribes) came together at Lake Omapere to form the treaty of peace (Lake Omapere Submission, 2000, p. 11). It is also the site where Ngapuhi war chiefs, Kawiti and Hone Heke, led their tribes in a battle against British forces and won (Lake Omapere Submission, 2000; White, 1998).

For many years, and for many reasons, Lake Omapere has been polluted, and its poor health is considered by the Northland Regional Council to be an urgent environmental problem. The council has formed a working group with the Lake

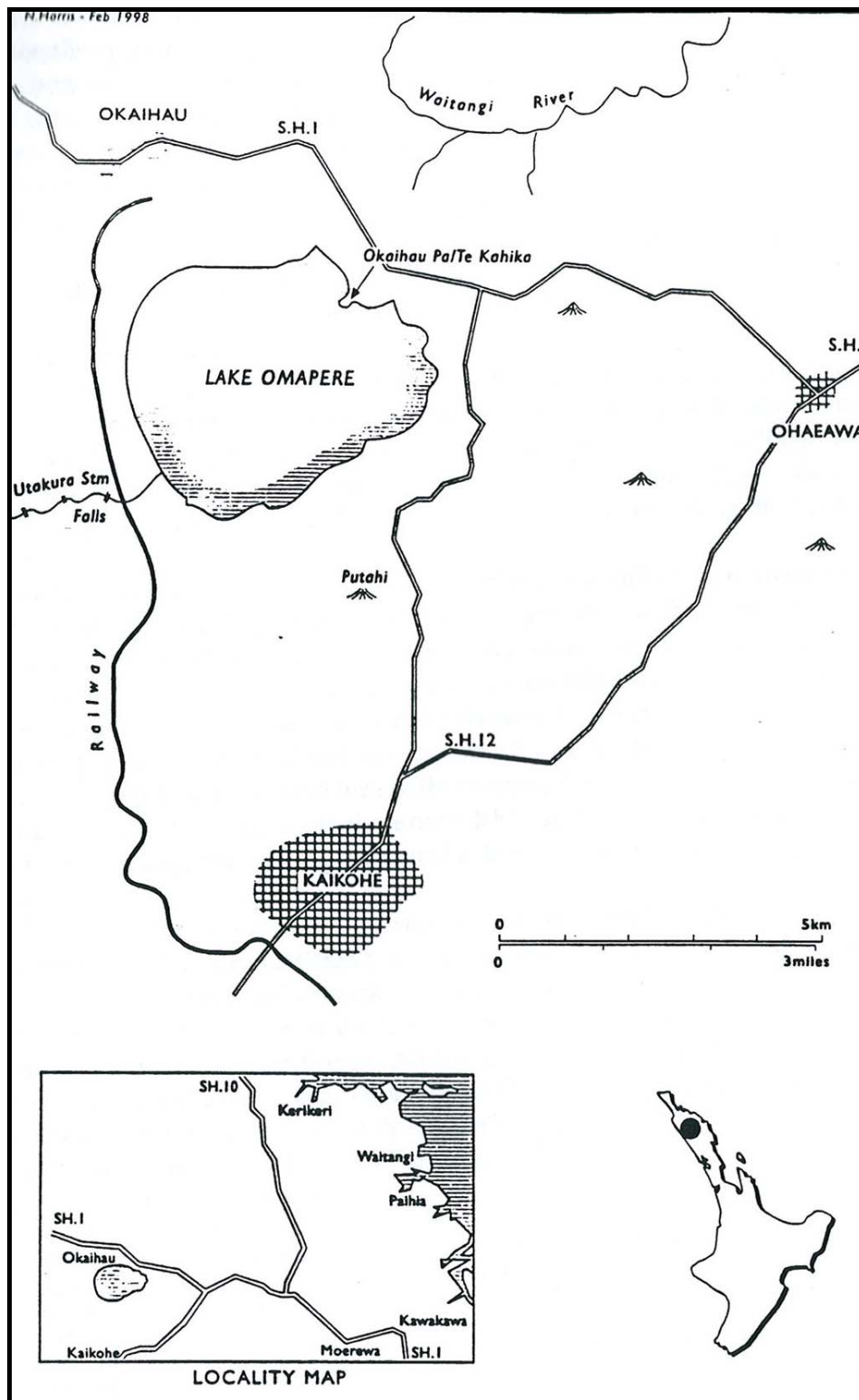


Figure 5..2: Map of Lake Omapere

Omapere Trustees to restore this *taonga* of Northland. The lake is in a state known as “hypertrophic”, which means that an over-abundance of nutrients is present in the green, patchy water, causing weeds and algae to flourish (Lake Omapere Project Management Group, 2006, p. 1). The problem is not easy to address, however, for Lake Omapere is fed by underground springs and streams, making it difficult to locate and assess all the points at which polluted material can enter the lake (Newnham et. al., 2004; Judd & Kokich, 1986).

Local people have been frustrated by years of delay and inaction over improving the lake, but one of the major causes of delay is uncertainty over the cause and source of the polluting nutrients. The catchment land of around 1700 hectares is used for dairy farming, dry stock and lifestyle properties. Runoff from the pesticides and farming effluent is believed to be one cause (Lake Omapere Project Management Group, 2006, p. 1). Agricultural development in the region began with the arrival of European settlers (Bawden, 1987; Ritchie, n.d.). It is certain that agricultural development in the area has largely contributed to the lake’s current condition, but its own shallow conformation is a contributing factor. Another event that may have had an effect on the current state of the lake is that according to White (1998), in the 1900s, the Crown illegally lowered the water level of the lake.

In the summer of 1985-86, toxic blue green algae overran the lake, severely reducing the quality of the water (Judd & Kokich, 1986). The bloom caused a localised ecological disaster that affected many aspects of life in the region. Bad water caused human health issues, such as headaches and stomach aches. Stock refused to drink the water and much of the birdlife around the lake died or vacated the area (Judd & Kokich, 1986, p.5). The disaster spurred efforts to restore the lake.

Although customary title was given to Ngapuhi in 1929, the lake has a long history of contested ownership which has resulted in a number of court cases in the Māori Land Court (White, 1998). Years of fighting over ownership and lack of certainty over what to do for the lake and who it should be done by, have created distrust in the local community towards the Crown and have negatively affected relationships between different interest groups associated with the lake. When



Figure 5.3: Historical picture of Lake Omapere



Figure 5.4: Lake Omapere Outlet

the Northland Regional Council became involved in the lake restoration project, communication with local groups was often tense, and its difficulty was exacerbated by a long history of distrust for Crown and associated authorities. In particular, there was ongoing contention over assigning responsibility for the state of the lake.

A taskforce established in 1986 by the Northland Catchment Commission to investigate possible solutions to the problems affecting the lake suggested the following ideas:

- draining the lake, either permanently or temporarily in order to remove the nutrients from the lake by scraping the bed;
- increasing the level of the lake;
- removing the weed by mechanical harvester or spray;
- introducing fish to eat the weed and algae;
- killing the algae by chemical use;
- controlling the numbers of swan;
- constructing marshland to clean the water before it drains into the river;
- containing dirty water in the lake.

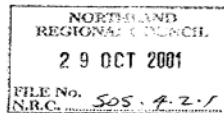
The taskforce determined that none of the options was feasible either due to cost or their potential to be detrimental to long-term restoration of lake.

After much deliberation, silver carp were released into the lake to eat the weed. Unfortunately this plan was not effective and the condition of the lake continued to deteriorate. The role of the Northland Regional Council was for many years simply to monitor the condition of the lake, but about 10 years after the first silver carp were introduced to reduce the algae bloom, Lake Omapere became a separate project for the Northland Regional Council. It was given its own separate file distinct from the other lakes managed by the Northland Regional Council.

One of the solutions suggested by the Council for the management of the lake was to introduce grass carp to destroy the weed. This was not a simple solution: consent was needed to introduce a foreign fish into any lake in New Zealand, and it was necessary to remove the silver carp first. Other issues involved with

NZ Water Management

The Natural Solution Is Clear



FAXED

25th October 2001

Tony Phipps
Environmental Monitoring Manager
Northland Regional Council
Private Bag 9021
Whangarei

	Action	Info
Chair		
G.M.		
COES. M.		
C.S.M.		
B.M.O.		
F.M.		
L.O.M.		
Mar M.		
Mon M.		
M.P.P.		
Sec.		



Dear Tony,

LAKE OMAPERE

Further to our telephone conversation today, I confirm my relief that the Lake Omapere Trustees have changed their position in relation to the use of herbicide sprays.

This is a very positive step by the Trustees that is tantamount to all our efforts to save the lake.

I understand the Trustees now prefer a herbicide and harvester boat option as they believe there already exists sufficient carp in the lake.

If we adopt a conservative approach to harvester boats, taking into consideration a period for tender, then purchase, time to freight, survey and training of personnel it would seem reasonable to assume boats would not be fully operational until mid January.

By mid January, the grasscarp available for immediate release will by themselves be removing more weed than the total capacity of the harvester boats.

This will remove problems of weed disposal and form the basis of a fish farming industry generating more employment than harvester boats.

Should however a political decision be made to purchase harvester boats, as this would leave no funding for any further carp, NZ Water Management Ltd (NZWM) would require payment for carp already released into the lake during December 2000.

I believe a herbicide/harvester approach to the weed problem in Lake Omapere is unlikely to succeed resulting in the death of the lake and existing carp.

NZ Water
Management
Limited
Office
P.O. Box 413, Orewa
Hibiscus Coast
New Zealand
Farm & Hatchery
Perry Rd, Warkworth
Ph: 09 426 5143
Fax: 09 426 5170
Mobile: 021 908 676
E-mail
woodkill@nzwm.co.nz

Should NZWM not receive payment for the existing carp and as they will likely die, NZWM would have to look seriously at removing the carp while they still have some value to help recover losses.

Be assured I will not undertake any action to prejudice our efforts to save Lake Omapere.

I ask to be kept informed of progress and would like a copy of the final proposal to government agencies.

Yours faithfully,

Gray Jamieson
Managing Director

cc: Jim Peters, Chairman Northland Regional Council
cc: Hon. Dover Samuels, Parliament Buildings Wellington
cc: Bob Zuur, Ministry of the Environment Wellington
cc: Paul Champion, NIWA Hamilton

Text 5.1: Letter from NZ Water Management, to Tony Phipps, 25 October 2001

the introduction of the grass carp included the matter of who would own the fish once they were released into the lake and the practical considerations of containment of the fish so they did not escape down the river. Ultimately the existing rock barrier at the mouth of the river was considered sufficient for containment, although minor adjustments and maintenance were required, and eventually, the rock barrier became the responsibility of Lake Omapere Trustees to maintain, while NIWA scientists and Northland Regional Council were assigned responsibility for monitoring the fish and the water quality. In 1997, the Trustees, supported by the Northland Regional Council, applied for funding from the Ministry of Environment to release grass carp into the lake, and this part of the solution was put in place.

The elaborate communication and decision making process connected with the release of grass carp portrays the complex issues of rights and responsibility that is a defining feature of the story of Lake Omapere. The delays in the process of obtaining consent and funding from central government for the grass carp produced frustration. Correspondence contained in the files, portray many “blaming” scenarios for the inaction of different organisations (mainly the Department of Conservation) for the delays in addressing the lake’s problems.

Feelings about the lake ran high in the area and generated all kinds of strong talk and hasty action. In 2000, frustrated by perceived inaction of the Crown to provide the funding required for the grass carp, the Trustees issued an ultimatum that they would themselves act to save the lake. An intervention that had been raised a number of times was to raise the level of the lake, but the scientific view was that deepening the lake would do little to change its state. According to an expert from NIWA, the hypertrophic state was so advanced it would require a lot more than an increase of water level to improve the balance of nutrients and weeds. Despite this advice, however, the Trustees attempted to build the barrier higher in order to stop the water draining out the Utakura River.

During the period between 1996 and 2002, options for action that were dismissed by the taskforce in 1986 were again reviewed as the lake’s condition continued to deteriorate. The weed harvester option discarded by the taskforce

Place: Whangarei, Judges Chambers
Present: J V Williams, Chief Judge
R M Polamalu, Case Manager
Date: 29 September 2005
Panui No: Chambers **Application No:** A20040003677
Subject: Lake Omapere - Enforce Obligations of a Trust
Legislation: 238 of Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993
Previous Evidence: 35 Kaikohe MB 98-102 dated 26 August 2004
36 Kaikohe MB 124 dated 23 February 2005
36 Kaikohe MB 252-257 dated 23 June 2005

Miss RM Polamalu, for Registrar: This matter was referred for directions and the following has been issued:

Court: I have considered this file, the accounts and advice from the trust's auditors and concerns expressed by various parties in relation to the health of the Lake itself. The papers appear to disclose serious problems of mismanagement and poor governance. Lake Omapere's environmental well being appears to be significantly affected thereby.

Trustees should be aware that I will, on this application, be considering whether to remove some or all trustees. I will be considering further, whether external interim trustees should be appointed in the interim to redress the problems in the Trust's administration.

Parties should be prepared to make submission on these matters when the matter comes before the Court on 31 October. The Registrar should ensure that all parties receive a copy of this minute. Representatives from the Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council and Far North District Council are invited to attend the hearing.


J V Williams
CHIEF JUDGE

Text 5.2: Memorandum from Chief Judge HH J V Williams

in 1986 became a popular option for restoration management of the lake. The potential employment options for *iwi* involved in maintaining the weed harvesting were an obvious advantage of this plan, but ultimately it was too costly to be considered viable.

Another option included the use of chemicals to combat the problem of algae and weed growth in the lake. This alternative portrayed the complications in process of negotiating two different worldviews. In 2000, it was considered necessary to spray the weed with diaquat in conjunction with the introduction of the carp. There was also some discussion at this stage of using prentox to kill algae. The consideration of alternatives produced evidence of the tension of accommodating different perceptions of the environment. The use of diaquat to kill the weeds was strongly opposed by *iwi* due to cultural beliefs. Other environmentalists also voiced concerns. Correspondence shows heated emotive responses to use of chemicals in the lake. As one woman stated, *"If you [are] going to kill our lake by putting poison in it [you] might as well let it die a natural death."* In the end, the use of weed killer never occurred because the algae bloom was not as bad over summer as had been expected.

The alternatives were considered, a number tried, and eventually a multi-method strategy was initiated, beginning with the formation of the Lake Omapere Project Management Group in November 2003. The establishment of a combined group containing representatives of the Trustees and Northland Regional Council marked a significant turning point in the working together of the government authorities and *iwi*. Despite difficulties, the Lake Omapere Trustees and Northland Regional Council signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding. This memorandum mandated the Lake Omapere Project Management Group to formulate a long-term strategy for the restoration of Lake Omapere. The *kaitiakitanga* remains a focus of conflict and accusations of culpability for the situation. Some people, for instance, believe that the poor condition of the lake is a result of poor understanding and acceptance of *kaitiakitanga*, and therefore some of the tribe have taken legal steps to remove the Trustees from their position. Such problems as these have created internal

AB

QUANTUM FACSIMILE MESSAGE

ATTN: <u>Jim Peters, Tony Phipps,</u>	FROM: <u>Wallace Wihongi</u>
COMPANY: <u>Northland Regional Council</u>	CONVANY: <u>Lake Omapere Trustees</u>
ADDRESS: <u>Whangarei</u>	ADDRESS: <u>Kaikōre</u>
DATE: <u>14 November 01</u> NO. PAGES:	PHONE NO: <u>09 401 2023</u> FAX NO: <u>09 401 2063</u>

Kia Ora

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have sent to Pita Paraone confirming the Trustees support for the Herbicide/Grass camp option.

Please do what you can to bring about the speediest commencement of that programme. It may not have been our preferred option but we are sensible enough to see that it is the only 'ball game in town'.

Our thanks to you for the considerable effort you have made to help save Lake Omapere. Whatever the result, we and Ngāpuhi will always appreciate your contribution.

Aroha mai

Wallace Wihongi
Trustee Chairperson

ps. Thanks also to Amanda Baldwin

NORTHLAND
REGIONAL COUNCIL
14 NOV 2001
FILE No. SES 14.2.1
NRC

	Action	Info
Chair		
G.M.		
Cous. M.		
C.S.M.		
H.M.O.		
P.M.		
J.O.M.		
Mar M.		
Mon M.		
M.P.P.		
Sec.		
<u>Q. H. 223</u>		✓

Text 5.3: Letter from Wallace Wihongi, to Jim Peters and Tony Phipps (NRC)
14 November 2001

conflicts that significantly affect the functional capabilities of the Lake Omapere Project Management Group.

The Memorandum of Understanding represents a movement towards shared vision for the environment. It embodies an agreement between the Trustees and Northland Regional Council to work together in restoration and management of the lake. The document represents the long-term commitment of both parties to collaborative action in order to effect change for the good of the lake and the community of Northland. The establishment of Lake Omapere Project Management Group and the Memorandum of Understanding between Trustees and Northland Regional Council demonstrates an effort to put the obligations of Resource Management Act (1991) into practice. The Memorandum also documents an increased awareness and acknowledgement of Trustees' role as *kaitiaki* of the lake. This can be seen by reviewing the 1986 taskforce report compared to the most recent sustainable management report. In significant contrast to the recent plan, the 1986 report contains no mention of the Trustees and their role as *kaitiakitanga*. In fact one of the key objectives of Lake Omapere Project Management Group strategy was to help establish a *kaitiakitanga* model (Lake Omapere Project Management Group, 2006, p. 1).

The mandate of Lake Omapere Project Management Group was to create a strategy for the lake (see text 5.6). The official launch of the Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere occurred at the end of 2006. Ongoing efforts are continuing and the strategy is being implemented. The strategic plan articulates a collaborative action plan that clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Trustees and the Northland Regional Council. It points to a shared vision for the lake and the future of the lake. The next chapter will present the data of the study of symbolic convergence for the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere focus on the fantasy themes that arose from the first crucial moment when the rock wall was built up.

Chapter 6

The Drama of Death and Life

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the communication processes that enable rhetorical communities to construct a shared vision for the environment. This was achieved through the application of the Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to the Lake Omapere Restoration Project. The premise of the methodological approach is that shared vision is constructed by sharing stories, otherwise known as fantasy themes (Bormann, 1983, p 104). 'Shared consciousness' (p. 103) was sought by analysing the fantasy themes that portray the polluted state of Lake Omapere and suggest a sharing of vision for the lake's future. There are two main fantasy themes that appear to have fuelled and focussed the construction of shared vision for the lake. The "rhetorical cues" (Foss, 1996, p. 122) of the fantasy themes were repeatedly evident in the texts, and suggested that symbolic convergence was occurring. This chapter contains three sections that in turn cover the three aspects identified in Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory method. First the fantasy themes are identified through the fantasy theme analysis. The second section contains the investigation of the symbolic convergence of the fantasy themes that has resulted in a rhetorical vision. The final section evaluates the process of construction of shared rhetorical vision and investigates the reason why symbolic convergence occurred.



Figure 6.1: Lake Omapere, landscape view

6.1 Fantasy theme analysis

The purpose of this section is to portray the analysis of the fantasy themes that construct the shared vision for Lake Omapere. The first fantasy theme portrayed the death of the lake. The second fantasy theme that emerged in response to the first fantasy theme was the battle to save the lake. The dramatised message presented through these two fantasy themes is the lake as an extremely sick patient who requires immediate medical intervention. My approach for the fantasy themes analysis was adapted specifically for this study. The fantasy themes were identified using the elements of Burke's (1966, p. x) "hexed pentad": scene, agent, action, agent, attitude, and purpose. The fantasy themes revealed a complex, interconnected web of meaning between the story of the dying lake and the efforts to save the lake. These data will be organised in a way that attempts to minimise the loss of meaning. The first three components; scene, attitude and character of Burke's (1966) model will be discussed together first, then the analysis of the Act or message of the fantasy themes. Due to the recurrent overlap of the elements fantasy themes and to avoid repetition, both fantasy themes are presented together in order. The data related to the agents and purpose are presented in the final subsection of the fantasy theme analysis section.

Stage setting

The previous chapter was devoted to setting the scene in which the fantasy themes under analysis developed. Therefore, in this sub-section I will briefly review the main aspects of the scene and the attitude underlying the fantasy themes. For many years, the polluted state of Lake Omapere has caused concern for the Trustees, local government, environmental authorities and local community. The poor condition of the lake has not improved much in the last 20 years. In 2000, the nutrient-rich lake was overgrown with weed. There was much concern that another collapse as in 1985 would occur and it would return to be algae dominated. Over the previous three years, efforts to alleviate the problem had centred on the introduction of grass carp. The action to release

grass carp in order to control the weed growth had been delayed due to the Government's refusal of a sustainable development fund grant.

The process of addressing the situation has involved years of tense relations between all interested parties. As the condition of the lake has worsened, tensions increased: tribal infighting continued and the Trustees were unsatisfied with Northland Regional Council and the Crown's lack of action on the issue. The apparent lack of progress and action, in a case where it was perceived to be possible to prevent a similar collapse to 1985, set the scene for the community to participate in sharing the fantasy themes.

The condition of the lake is dramatised through the fantasy themes of the death of the lake and necessity to save it. The fantasy themes first gained public profile through a series of articles in *The Herald* and *The Northern Advocate*. In the middle of 2000 these stories were headline news. They covered the story of a Trustee and community rallying together to raise the level of Lake Omapere without council resource consent in an effort to change the fate of the lake. The 'rock wall' particularly, became the symbol of action in the story. The building of the rock wall was a physical act the actors could undertake to rescue the lake from dying and *keep it alive*. Scientific experts reported that the raising of the water level would do little to cause significant change in the water quality of the lake; however, the battle to *save the lake* from death operated on the emotive desire to do something.

Ascertaining the attitude

The following discussion contains the aspects expressed in the analysis connected to attitude. I found this component the hardest to separate out because it seemed to be equally connected to the message, the characterisation of the lake, the messenger (agent) and the purpose of the message. Ultimately its utility was in identifying the core values that the fantasy themes encapsulate. There were some antecedent values and attitudes regarding Lake Omapere and its condition that drove the proliferation of the fantasy themes and set the context for people participating in the fantasy themes.

Lake Omapere holds much significance to tribe of Ngapuhi who own the lake. It contains spiritual as well as material connections for the tribe. It has been a *cupboard* for local hapu. It could also potentially be a crucial water source for the area. The lake is viewed as an important *taonga* of Ngapuhi. To the naked eye, this value may at not be evident at first. The outward appearance of the lake is arguably ordinary. It is not the most picturesque lake in Northland. In fact, the lake's current poor condition results in a sickly green colour and occasional bad smell. Regardless of outward beauty, the precious value of the lake in the minds of the owners of the lake is an antecedent condition of the fantasy themes.

The fantasy themes were driven by the value that the lake needs protection and healing from the pollution caused primarily from human intervention in the landscape. The lake holds immense significance for the tribe. The value behind the saving lake fantasy theme is the appeal to the Treaty and the Resource Management Act (1991) obligations of the Crown to enable the *kaitiaki* role of Ngapuhi. The basis of the appeal refers back to Article 2 of the Treaty where Māori were guaranteed *tino rangatiratanga* of their lands. Essentially, the physical and meta-physical wellbeing of the tribe is connected with the condition of the lake. The discursive understanding of the lake being the heart of *te Wheke* amplified the significance and urgency of the situation. The potential loss of the lake and the idea of the lake dying are connected to the Māori concept of losing *mauri* and *mana*²². According to the Trustees, the life essence of the lake or *mauri* was depleted which affected the *mauri* of the tribe. Therefore, the rhetorical vision that emerged placed great emphasis on the restoration of the lake's *mauri*. The lake needs to be restored in order to provide the life sustaining force for the people.

²² Authority, prestige power, a metaphysical concept

Lake Omapere Trustees

62 Hillcrest Road
KAIKOHE
Ph: 09 401 2023
Fax: 09 401 2063

16 July 2001

R. Graeme Gummer
390 Redoubt Road
RD 1
Papatoetoe
Auckland 1703

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter to the Northland Regional Council which has been redirected to me.

The waka you were shown may have been one of three which were used to ferry bodies of Maori who fell in the engagement at Puketutu Pa between Chiefs Kawiti and Hone Heke and colonial forces in the early 1840s. (I was not aware that Pakeha fallen were also carried).

You are also correct in stating that the waka were submerged and appeared after a particularly severe drought which lowered the lake level markedly. We the guardians of Lake Omapere had always been aware of those tapu waka and their resting place. That place had been given the name *Piraunui* "the place of the great decomposition" in that the bodies had been left to decompose in the waka as was custom before being consigned to burial in Mt Putahi. Bones were also alot lighter than complete bodies to portage up to the summit of the mountain.

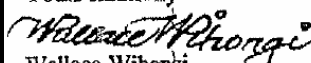
A proposal to remove a waka to the Auckland Museum was rejected by the Trustees and a fence was erected around the waka after they were hauled up some metres to higher ground. It was not thought appropriate to leave them so close to the pipes drawing drinking water for Kaikohe. I have visited the site on several occasions and noted the complete deterioration of the waka until there is now no visible evidence of them left. The site is overgrown in fern but recognised by a Historic Places Trust designation.

As to your allegation that the Lake was deliberately lowered by the Bay of Islands County Council it is no surprise to us. It was merely one of many occasions when Governments local and central took it upon themselves to vandalise and demean our taonga. You are quite correct in the summary of consequences you listed. Lowering the lake has had devastating effects on the resource and on its owners, Ngapuhi.

As to the ability of the problem weed *egeria densa* to grow in a deeper water environment we have been told that it would thrive in water 5 metres deep. We therefore need to look at other options to eradicate it including weed-eating fish, mechanical harvesters and herbicides. As Trustees we approve of the first two but not the third. A long-term management plan would also include returning Lake Omapere to its foremost level and planting trees around its entire foreshore to deter farm effluent entering the lake.

Thankyou again for your interest.

Yours faithfully


Wallace Wihongi
Trustee Chairperson

cc Amanda Baldwin, Regional Council

Text 6.1: Letter from Lake Omapere Trustees, to R. Graeme Gummer, 16 July 2001

The personified character of the lake

This sub-section outlines the characterisation aspect of the fantasy themes. According to Burke (1966, p. x), communication is a drama that consists of characters presented in certain ways. Lake Omapere is the main character of the two fantasy themes. Both fantasy themes personify the lake. The data show the personified condition of Lake Omapere was a rhetorical reality for the Trustees and other members of the community long before 2000. In contrast, for many years prior to the emergence of the fantasy themes the rhetoric dominant in the official Northland Regional Council archived documents focused on water quality and pollution.

Human emotion is assigned to the “*troubled lake*”. These dramatised messages personify the lake and position it as a living, struggling being that is unable to provide the life-giving sustenance to the community it previously could, due to the modern human intervention or development. The fantasy themes characterise the lake as a very sick patient in need of serious medical help. Although Lake Omapere is depicted as a dying patient who required the help of the experts and Trustees to stay alive, the metaphors used in the fantasy themes also gave the impression that the lake itself was struggling and fighting to stay alive.

Lake Omapere as the driving force of action

The lake is an active participant in the fight for its salvation. Essentially, the dying lake provoked the iwi that own the lake to act. The forceful nature of the lake is conveyed in the metaphor: *lake spurs iwi to action*. This metaphor presents the lake as the driving force and subject of the action. The verb ‘to spur’ contains the understanding of inciting or prompting action. In the context of a military fight, soldiers would wear metal spurs on their boots to dig into their horses to make them run faster. Thus, a spur was a painful instrument that triggered a rapid, active response. This image conveys a painful urgency in the battle to save the lake.

Dying lake spurs Maori to take action

*Herald
27/4/00*

By ANGELA GREGORY

OMAPERE — A Maori trust is considering lodging a Waitangi Tribunal claim to raise the level of a Northland lake in danger of self-destructing.

An algal bloom and weed growth are threatening the health of Lake Omapere, north of Kaikohe, and scientists fear it could turn into a large toxic soup by the end of the year.

The chairman of the Lake Omapere Trust Board, Wallace Wihongi, believes the problem was created when the lake was partly drained after the First World War to provide farmland for returned servicemen.

The shallow waters in the remaining 1200ha waterway had prompted weed growth and the water quality deteriorated, he said.

In 1985, the lake became overrun with an introduced oxygen plant.

Scientists believe the weed congestion somehow led to an outbreak of algal bloom that created toxic water, killing fish and birdlife.

The pollution also travelled along the Utaura River to the upper Hokianga Harbour.

Last month, the Northland Regional Council warned that the water quality might collapse again after an outbreak of algae was discovered at the start of this year.

Mr Wihongi said his people had tried all they could to look after the Ngapuhi taonga (treasure), but the Crown had failed to meet its responsibilities.

About five years ago, the trust sought Department of Conservation

approval to release grass carp into the lake to control the weeds.

The project had still not received the go-ahead, and the delays had added to the cost.

A \$1.2 million application to the Environment Ministry's sustainable management fund recently failed.

Mr Wihongi said the trust considered that the Crown had created the problem and should fix it.

The trust would now look seriously at lodging a Waitangi Tribunal claim so it could raise the lake level about 3m back to its original depth.

That could swamp hundreds of hectares of farmland, he said.

"But we never gave up ownership of the original lakebed."

The trust would also consider seeking compensation for lost income.

It had previously sold the lake water to the former Kaikohe County Council, and the lake still provided some food for Maori.

"If the lake goes bad, a lot of eels will die."

Regional council monitoring officer Dwane Kokich said the algal bloom had been knocked back by the cooler weather.

"But my gut feeling is the lake will pack up when the weather warms up again."

Mr Kokich said the algae responsible for the present discoloration was *Microcystis aeruginosa*, the same species that dominated the bloom which devastated the lake in 1985 with similar levels of weed growth.

He said the lake could end up resembling a reeking green soup, and the polluted water might in turn harm river and harbour ecologies.

Text 6.2: New Zealand Herald article, 27 April 2000

Facing page 59

Fantasy theme 1: The death of the lake

The focus of Burke's (1966) pentad is the Act – the message that conveys the drama. In the context of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory, the communication is the fantasy theme, otherwise known as dramatised message. The headlines from the series of articles analysed highlighted the fantasy themes of death and life and the urgent necessity for action. In the following sub-section I will present the rhetorical features that reveal the fantasy themes. In this analysis, the two fantasy themes regarding the lake's death and life are like two sides of the same coin. Consequently, they were so interconnected that there was no way to neatly separate the two. I have presented them in order with reference to the overlapping nature of the rhetorical features.

A call for action

The first fantasy theme of the death of the lake emerged to describe the situation of Omapere. Essentially, the story of the lake's death is a call for action. In the middle of May 2000 the Trustees released a press statement highlighting the inaction of the Crown. The drama that unfolded contained strong emotive language. A resulting article portrayed the message through the headline: *Desperate plea on dying lake. – Act or we will warn Trustees*. The fantasy theme portrays the image of distressed family members demanding that something must be done for a loved one who lies on their deathbed. The finality of death is a certainty of the human condition. Naturally, this can cause anxiety and much emotion. The connotation of doom and inevitable loss present in the rhetoric of *imminent demise* provoked a frustrated sense of urgency and threat. The urgency of the situation was illustrated in the Trustees' reluctance to go through the legal channels of Tribunal to lodge a complaint, as they claimed Lake Omapere *will have died*. The article portrayed the sense of loss and frustration at the local government for not taking a proactive approach to assist the Trustees in their *endeavours* to solve the problem of the lake. The use of the word *endeavours* suggests attempts in climbing or adventure, and encompasses the possibility of risk.

Desperate plea on dying lake

Act or we will, warn trustees

By TONY GEE

KAIKOHE — Frustrated trustees of weed-infested Lake Omapere north of Kaitake say they will start raising the level of the 1200ha lake tomorrow if the region's two councils do not actively support efforts to save the waterway.

The trustees have no resource consents, and acknowledge that surrounding farmland could be flooded.

The chairman of Lake Omapere Trust Board, Wallace Wihongi, said a deadline for the Northland Regional Council and the Far North District Council to be "more pro-active" in seeking a solution expired today.

Trustees want the councils' support in efforts to save Lake Omapere "from imminent demise," and say truckloads of boulders will be used if necessary to raise and strengthen a rock wall barrier at the western outlet to raise the water level.

Mr Wihongi said a large number of "able-bodied supporters" will be on hand tomorrow morning to put the boulders in place.

A meeting of trustees at the outlet earlier in the day will receive "a final direction" from iwi representatives on the course of action to be taken. "It's the only means left open to us."

The trustees are trying to stop the shallow lake from self-destructing under a mass of oxygen weed growth and an algal bloom which scientists fear may turn it into a toxic, smelly soup by the end of this year.

Five years ago the Department of Conser-



Sandra Lee

vation was asked to sanction the introduction of up to 40,000 weed-eating carp to control weed growth, but talks had stalled.

Trust board agent Gray Jamieson said the delays and recent approval for release of only 31,000 fish had led to a worsening problem and an increase in costs as huge numbers of carp would now be

needed.

Mr Jamieson and Mr Wihongi acknowledge that the trustees have no resource consents for blocking the outlet into the Utakura Stream to raise lake levels.

Mr Jamieson said it was possible under the Resource Management Act for a council to waive a consent requirement in cases of immediate or one-off action needed to alleviate an emergency.

The regional council's monitoring officer, Dwane Kokich, said the trustees were responsible for maintaining the outlet barrier and recent work appeared to be in line with past council recommendations to prepare the lake for carp release. He was now writing to the board outlining the need for a resource consent to raise water levels.

Mr Jamieson said the trustees would probably try to raise the level until Conservation Minister Sandra Lee, who has indicated support for carp release, agreed to meet the trustees to discuss a solution.

Text 6.3: New Zealand Herald article, 26 May 2000

The fantasy theme depicts the image of the lake as a patient in intensive care where, [d]esperate measures afoot to keep lake alive. The term “desperate” implies that any action that will achieve the goal of keeping the lake from dying will be attempted. The phrase *resorting to desperate measures* contains the implication that there was a lack of alternatives, and all other options had been attempted. The press release also stated that the Trustees had given the local government a deadline to agree to assist them with a proactive approach to central government. The use of the word *deadline* contains significance in two ways. First a deadline represents a specific point in time where there is no return. It demands action to be complete before that point. The rhetoric carries the sense of the Trustees drawing a line in time for the Crown’s help to prevent the death of the lake. The action appears significant considering the non-linear sense of Māori worldview. Secondly, the *deadline* alludes to the patient image on life support, when the heart stops beating. When the deadline or flat line occurs, there is not much else one can do. The finality of the line symbolically reflected the death of the lake. The understanding of Lake Omapere as the heart of the tribe underpins the urgency and emotion expressed in the fantasy theme. The threat of the lake’s death has significant implications to the state and well being of the tribe.

Desperate descriptions of life in the shadow of death

Evidence was found in the data that indicated existence of the chaining of the fantasy theme of the lake dying. The chaining of a fantasy theme occurs when group members pick up on the dramatised message and actively participate in sharing that message (Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997, p. 255). The extension of the dying lake fantasy theme focuses on the cause of the lake’s death and the state of the lake. The presence of these adaptations, additions and extensions of the fantasy theme were present, indicating that sharing of the fantasy theme occurred (Bormann, 1972; 1983; Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996; Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997; Cragan & Shields, 1992).

Another depiction of the narrative of the lake’s death described the *lake in danger of self-destructing*. Self- destruction contains the connotation of a

Advocate 25 May 2000

Desperate measures afoot to keep lake alive

By Michael Doherty

The trustees of Lake Omapere are resorting to desperate measures in a last bid to keep the 1200ha waterbody alive.

In a statement yesterday trustees chairman Wallace Wihongi announced steps would be taken on Saturday to start raising the level of the lake.

That would involve dumping rocks and dirt across the outlet from the lake, pushing water onto surrounding farmland.

The Northland Regional Council has told the trustees such action requires a resource consent, which has not been obtained.

The trustees' aim is to buy time while they seek government funding to stock the lake with grass carp.

It is hoped the fish will eat the weed now threatening to suffocate the mid-North lake.

An NRC survey this month found the amount of weed in the lake had increased four-fold during the past year.

"The feeling is that the lake is close to the point where we think it may switch back to being dominated by algae," NRC monitoring officer Dwane Kokich said today.

When that happened in the mid-1980s weed in the lake died, releasing nutrients. Oxygen was removed from the water, which was declared toxic, and fish and birds died.

Pollution travelled along the Uakura River to the upper Hokianga Harbour.

Based on the NRC survey, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research now estimates nearly 254,000 25cm long grass carp are needed to control the weed. Just six months ago the estimate was for 40,000 fish, when the cost of saving the lake was being put at around \$1.2 million.

When trustees first sought permission to put grass carp in the lake five years ago, the number thought to be needed was much lower even than that.

Trustees' agent Gray Jamieson is angered that permission to put fish in the lake was not received from the Department of Conservation until this month.

"That permission had only been for 31,760 fish, the amount thought necessary in August last year.

He had believed final issues were sorted out with Doc officials at a meeting in November, when the 40,000 figure had been discussed, he said.

Trustees wanted an urgent discussion with Conservation Minister Sandra Lee about the issue, and they needed her to come up with some funding for the project.

He did not know what the total cost of the project would be now, but his company was prepared to put up around \$300,000 for the fish, around 30,000 carp.

Using bigger fish than those used by NIWA in its estimates would reduce the total number of carp needed, Mr Jamieson said.

The trustees held DOC responsible for the present condition of the lake and would seek judicial remedies, including "millions of dollars in damages", if the minister did not help.

A spokesman for Ms Lee said a funding application had been received at Parliament yesterday, and would be assessed reasonably quickly.



□ Lake Omapere trustees chairman Wallace Wihongi.

— Michael Cunningham photo

FORECAST: ...

Text 6.4: Article from Advocate, 25 May 2000

bomb with a self-detonating device that could explode at any moment. The image of destruction echoes the fighting imagery of the article that indicates total ending and danger are immediate. Further descriptions of the lake illustrate the life-giving potential of the lake being destroyed by the weed. The *overrun* lake is also described as *resembling a reeking green soup*. The presence of algae threatens to turn Lake Omapere into *large toxic soup*. In a similar unpleasant image, the lake is referred to as a *cesspit*. The emotive image signified a situation where the water was disgusting waste that had the capacity to do harm, rather than give life. As water is understood to be the life-giving blood of *Papatuānuku* (Love, 2004; Pere, 1997), the event of the lake becoming *toxic* signified the loss of the heart of the tribe. The image went beyond the scientific, factual evaluation of polluted water to express a visually disgusting sight that assaults the senses of sight and smell. The poisonous state of a toxic substance denotes the potential for the lake to kill rather than sustain life.

The fantasy theme chaining continues in the description of the lake being *in danger of being choked to death by weed*. The weeds are also depicted as *suffocating* the lake and *threatening to destroy* it. The image of the lake being killed in such a violent, destructive, forceful way emphasises the fight and struggle of the lake. These images highlight the element of intervention in the fantasy theme. If someone is getting choked there is usually something or someone causing the action. Therefore, the message of the fantasy theme contains the implication that the death of the lake can be prevented.

Fantasy theme 2: Fighting for life

The underlying theme of the lake's *demise* is that it is essentially wrong to do nothing. It is deemed morally wrong to let the lake die. In this way, the first fantasy theme is integrally connected to the second fantasy theme of the fight to *save the shallow lake*. In the press release, the Trustees stated that they would take action to *save the lake from imminent demise*. Ngapuhi considers the lake to be sacred and this perception is intimately connected to the desire to save Lake Omapere. The connection with the tribe's wellbeing and the loss of *mauri* categorises it as a spiritual issue. The rhetoric of keeping the lake alive implied

NZ Government funds sought to keep lake alive

THE trustees of Lake Omapere in the Bay of Islands are resorting to desperate measures in a last bid to keep the 1200ha lake alive, amid threats to sue the government.

In a statement on Wednesday trustees chairman Wallace Wihongi announced steps would be taken on Saturday to start raising the level of the lake by dumping rocks and dirt across the outlet from the lake, pushing water on to surrounding farmland.

The Northland Regional Council has told the trustees such action requires a resource consent, which has not been obtained.

In March it was reported that a potentially toxic algal bloom was expanding rapidly on the lake, and people were warned against drinking water from the lake.

Now the trustees are seeking government funding to stock the

lake with grass carp to eat the weed threatening to suffocate the mid-North lake.

An NRC survey this month found the amount of weed in the lake had increased four-fold during the past year.

"The feeling is that the lake is close to the point where we think it may switch back to being dominated by algae," NRC monitoring officer Dwane Kokich said yesterday.

When that happened in the mid-1980s weed in the lake died, releasing nutrients. Oxygen was removed from the water, which was declared toxic, and fish and birds died with pollution travelling along the Utakura River to the upper Hokianga Harbour.

Based on the NRC survey, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research now estimated nearly 254,000 25cm-long grass carp were needed to control the weed. Just six months ago

the estimate was for 40,000 fish, when the cost of saving the lake was being put at around \$1.2 million.

Trustees' agent Gray Jamieson said he was angered that permission to put fish in the lake was not received from the Department of Conservation until this month. That permission had only been for 31,760 fish, the amount thought necessary in August last year.

Trustees said they wanted an urgent discussion with Conservation Minister Sandra Lee and urged her to help fund the project.

Mr Jamieson said he did not know what the total cost of the project would be now.

The trustees held DOC responsible for the present condition of the lake and would seek judicial remedies, including "millions of dollars in damages", if the minister did not help.

—NZPA

Text 6.5: New Zealand Herald article, May 2000

that life needed to be preserved and also suggested the possibility that life could be lost. The second fantasy theme of the lake's fight for life is motivated by the first fantasy theme. In this sub-section, the rhetorical features relating more specifically to the second fantasy theme are presented. However, as I noted earlier, it is impossible to separate death and life; therefore there are significant references to the first fantasy theme of the death of the lake.

The desperate battle

The rhetorical devices identified in the second fantasy theme convey an intense battle. The urgency is underscored again in this article with the phrase: *last ditch effort*. It is an English idiom that originates from the military. The term "last ditch" was used to refer to the last line of defence against the enemy (Siefring, 2004, p. 78). This image conveys the desperation of the situation regarding the potential death of the lake. This idiom connotes actively defending something to the end. "[L]ast ditch" is often used as an adjective that means "desperately resisting to the end" (p. 78). These ideas are conveyed in the desperate battle to save the lake.

The powerful rhetoric used in the fighting language emphasises the position of the Trustees that they would go to any length to fight, *endure any consequence*. There was a sense in this dramatised message that they were fully aware of the things they were doing but prepared to do what they feel is necessary to get action and help the lake. Once again, the concept of battle is evident in the article entitled: *Campaign to save lake stepped up*. The intensification of the battle and military imagery is evident with the addition of a political overtone. The use of *stepping up* implies movement that would intensify to another level. The cycle of the fantasy theme has changed in context and the attitude has progressed as action has occurred. Initially the fantasy theme was shared within the community's rhetoric of the lake. However, from 2004 onwards the common appearance of words, such as *rescue*, *recovery* and *restoration* and phrases like *to improve water quality and overall health of Lake Omapere*, were evident in official council documents. Throughout the process of sharing fantasy themes, there has been a significant shift from helpless mode to action



Figure 6.2: Mawhe pa site

and from victim to rescuer. The frustrated attempts have changed into proactive actions.

Storytellers and the message

The fourth aspect of Burke's (1966) pentad is the agents or tellers of the story. The Trustees were the initial agents of the fantasy theme through the press release. Mr Wihongi said his people had done all they could to look after the Ngapuhi *taonga* (treasure), but the *Crown had failed to meet its responsibilities*. The Trustees Press release referred to iwi involvement including Te Uri Taniwha, referred to in the press release as *keepers and guardians of the lake taniwha, Takauera*.

The narrative of the death of the lake placed the responsibility on the Crown. The state of lake was blamed on the Crown's actions and its inaction. References to *the health* of the lake actually meant, literally, its ill health. However, mention was not made of "*rescue*" or "*saving the lake*". Instead, the focus was on the Crown's responsibility to *fix the problem*. The reasons for the death of the lake were assigned to lack of governance and lack of recognition of *kaitiaki*. Ultimately, blame for the condition of the lake was assigned to those responsible for management of lake. The story of the salvation of the lake portrays Lake Omapere Trustees as spiritual directors and drivers of the vision: Northland Regional Council as assisting the trustees to achieve the goals set out by the Lake Omapere Project Management Group, and the community involved in *helping them help Omapere*.

The moral of the tale

The final element of Burke's (1966) "hexed pentad" is the purpose and outcome of the message. The fantasy themes appealed to the political and public consciousness in an emotive way by making an effort to keep the lake alive. The Trustees, who own the lake and are responsible for exercising *kaitiakitanga*, felt powerless to stop the degradation of their *taonga*. Powerful emotive images connected with the death of the lake appeared to be motivated by the purpose to

stimulate action. The deep desperation for a lake that required immediate intervention provoked action. These fantasy themes also served to legitimate drastic action and initiate participation of all parties. Ultimately, both of the fantasy themes produced a drama where people were working together in order to fight against time and the weeds in order to save the lake. It appears that people shared the fantasy themes so as to obtain attention for the lake. The resentment and desperation fuelled by inaction dissipated as momentum for the saving of the lake fantasy theme was shared.

The fantasy theme analysis portrayed in this section demonstrated the sharing of two fantasy themes. These two fantasy themes were the impending death of the lake and the subsequent fight to save the lake. It is obvious from the analysis that the fantasy themes were chained and therefore shared by a wide group of people concerned with the condition of the lake. My research is concerned with the way in which different rhetorical communities construct shared vision. In order to establish that the fantasy themes combined to form an overall rhetorical vision amongst the different rhetorical communities, the analysis must be extended further. The following section continues with the second step of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory, evaluating the features of the rhetorical vision in order to determine that symbolic convergence has taken place.

6.2 Confirmation of symbolic convergence

The question that has guided my investigation of the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere is: *how do different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment?* Bormann's (1983, p. 103) symbolic convergence theory asserts that the creation of shared vision originates in a fantasy theme that captures the lived experience of the group in an imaginative way. In summarising symbolic convergence theory, Cragan & Shields (1992, p. 210) point out that not all fantasy themes that are shared by a group result in an overall rhetorical vision. In order to answer my question, therefore, it first must be established that a rhetorical vision exists. In order to establish that a



Lake Omapere Planting Day

He Panui ~ Nau Mai Haere Mai

*Come and Help Us Help
Lake Omapere*

*The Lake Omapere Trustees, and
The Lake Omapere Project Management Group
are Holding Two Planting Days*

*We Invite You Along to Help
BYO Refreshments and Spade
BBQ Lunch Provided*

Saturday 13 August – 10am
SH1 north of Te Pua Road turnoff

Saturday 20 August – 10am
Will be sign posted from Te Pua Road and SH1

- × *Properties and parking will be signposted*
- × *For cancellations please listen to More FM or Radio Tautoko*
- × *Postponement dates are 27 & 28 August*

*For more details contact:
Department of Conservation, Mita Harris ~ 09 407 8474
Northland Regional Council, Kate Banbury ~ 0800 002 004
Remana Henwood ~ 09 405 7857*



Text 6.6: Public Notice, Lake Omapere Project Management Group

rhetorical vision exists there are five elements that must be present (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201-202); “symbolic cues,” “dramatis personae,” “plotline,” “scene” and “sanctioning agent.” The following section outlines the five features and the principles connected with creation of shared consciousness of the restoration of the lake’s health and wellbeing. The most recent strategic plan for the lake’s restoration was the focus of my critical evaluation for symbolic convergence of the fantasy themes identified in the previous section.

Identifying symbolic cues

Evidence of the same defining symbolic cues for a fantasy theme in recurrent communication acts, suggests that symbolic convergence is occurring (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201). People’s experience of the prolonged problem with the lake’s condition created two main fantasy themes that personified the lake. The recurrent references to the *dying lake*, and to *keep the lake alive* appeared in many documents in the archives. These are often focused around the *health and restoration* of the lake. It is important to note that the personified nature of the lake was consistently evident in the Trustees’ discourse regarding the lake long before 2000. In contrast, prior to 2002, there was little in local government documentation of the *health of the lake*. Instead, the focus was on *water quality* and the *environmental problem*. The archives document a letter with Northland Regional Council staff handwritten notes questioning the assumption of what “restoration” implies: *restore to what state?* Over time, the official documentation has incorporated increased reference to the *restoration of the lake*. The health of the lake was once a fantasy theme that was shared by the Trustees, iwi and other members of the public. Now, however, the fantasy appears to have become an official artefact. Restoration of Lake Omapere is now a common rhetorical feature in Northland Regional Council planning documents.

The recurrent symbolic cues of the fantasy themes are evident throughout the official documents and correspondence in the files. These symbolic cues suggest that symbolic convergence has occurred. Symbolic cues for the fantasy theme of the death of the lake are evident on p. 5 of the strategic plan in the words:

07 MAY 1998 12:35 64-9-4388812 NORTHLAND REG COUNCIL PAGE 02

07 MAY '98 (THU) 13:21 COMMUNICATION No. 12 PAGE 2

07 MAY 1998 12:35 64-9-4388812 NORTHLAND REG COUNCIL PAGE 01

07 MAY '98 (THU) 13:21 COMMUNICATION No. 12 PAGE 1

1 May 1998

Mr. Warren MacLennan
General Manager
Northland Regional Council
Private Bag 921
Whangarei

Dear Warren,

I write to you with regard to Lake Onopere and the proposals currently under consideration for its restoration associated with the introduction of grass carp.

I have recently discussed this matter with Gray Jamieson and Robyn and Andie LaBonte and mention was made of the interest in pursuing a more integrated and long term management / restoration package for the lake involving the introduction of carp for the control of weed growth plus the systematic fencing and planting of the lake edge around as much of periphery as possible. I gather this was discussed at a meeting attended by you, Dwayne Kohliu, Robyn LaBonte and Gray Jamieson.

I also understand that \$5000 has been set aside this financial year for work associated with Lake Onopere and that you may be willing to direct that money towards the production of a full scale restoration plan for the Lake. It is for this reason that Gray Jamieson and the LaBontes suggested I write to you.

I specialise in the restoration of natural and modified sites using indigenous species and have recently been involved in several projects in the Northland Region. These include:

- Technical adviser to the Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society and the completion of a successful application to the Northland Regional Council last year for funding to assist this project.
- Independent Environmental Consultant for the processing of resource consent for the Paradise Shores Resort subdivision at Rukaka
- Independent Environmental Consultant to assist with the removal of the large petroleum tanks from the ECNZ site at Marsden Point.

I enclose a copy of my business profile for your information.

My name has been put forward to produce a restoration plan for Lake Onopere and I would be happy to do it. On the basis of other large scale restoration plans that I have produced I am confident I can produce a plan for Lake Onopere that can be produced for no more than \$5000 but

Page 2

until I can view the site and discuss the requirements with all of those likely to be involved I am not in a position to provide a more precise breakdown of cost. However, if you are happy to accept in principle the suggestion that the allocated funding be spent on such a plan then I would be happy to present you with a more detailed schedule of costs.

Generally, I would include the following elements in a restoration plan:

- analysis of the current ecological state of the site
- explanation of the ecological and social history of the site
- study of social, political and cultural aspects, including land ownership and aspirations
- environmental recommendations to restore the health of the site — *principles of ecological restoration*
- analysis of how to implement the restoration recommendations in a way that best represents the social, political and cultural aspirations of interested parties *what stakeholders?*
- consideration of costs and benefits and recommendations as to how the restoration could be funded and how it should be staged to reflect economic realities
- production of a work or implementation plan outlining in detail the work to be done and materials to be purchased. This would include a work timetable and such detail as plant species recommendations, fencing specifications, site preparation specifications, planting logistics including workers required, and site maintenance requirements.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further. I am probably most easily contacted on my mobile phone: (025) 961 365. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Roger MacGibbon

Roger MacGibbon

Tell to all landowners, moor, Fudge and come up with all above for \$5000! I don't it.

Text 6.7: Letter from Roger MacGibbon, to Warren MacLennan (NRC) 1 May 1998

serious risk and *very poor water quality*. In addition, the depiction of the weed *smothering out* the lake is a symbolic cue to the choking to death of the lake. The strategic plan also describes the lake's *condition* as a *serious threat* which echoes the urgency and danger expressed in the death of the lake fantasy theme. Symbolic cues that indicate the presence of the second fantasy theme of saving the lake are also evident in the strategic plan. For instance, the plan mentions *improving the health of the lake and restoration* of Lake Omapere, while phrases such as the *invasion of ...damaging oxygen weed* conjures up the larger rhetorical reality battle for life.

The personification and characterisation of the lake as a valuable living entity worthy to be saved are articulated in the vision statement of the strategy. The *whakatauki*²³: *ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua*²⁴ is used on the opening page to begin the document. The translation of the proverb goes on to explain *because the wellbeing of this land resides at Omapere, so it is in everyone's interest to protect and take care of it*. A significant feature of the vision is that the intimate connection of the wellbeing of the people to the wellbeing of the lake is explicitly expressed throughout the strategic plan. Right from the start of the document, the *strategic importance* of the lake for Ngapuhi is highlighted.

Ultimately, the rhetorical vision defines the primary cause of the lake's *ill health* as the lack of balance and the decline of *kaitiakitanga*. The plan defines the vision for the restoration project as *waiora* and restoration of the *mauri* of the lake. Within Māoridom, water is considered the foundational element of life and existence and thereby allows life to continue (Love, 2004; Pere, 1997). In light of this perspective, the plan articulates that *waiora* symbolises the making of things right, in balance and sacred once more by returning everything to its proper place. The document goes on to distinguish the key factors that will enable *mauri* to be protected and restored to Lake Omapere and as a consequence restore the wellbeing of the lake and the land. The rhetorical

²³ Proverb or saying

²⁴ From the life force of Omapere the land will thrive



Text 6.8: Whakatauki for the Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

Vision:					
Ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua					
Wairua					
The protection of the Mauri of Takauere.	A healthy lake that sustains the people.	A return of native species of plants and animals to Lake Omapere.	Increased understanding of factors that affect water quality.	The community working together to protect and enhance the Lake.	Sustainable long-term management for the Lake and the catchment.
Ki uta ki tai	Matauranga	Rangatiratanga	Kotahitanga		
Ki uta ki tai actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water Quality Monitoring• Environmental Farm Management Plans• Aquatic Weed Management• Enhancement of Native Plants and Animals• Pest Fish Management Strategy• Addressing Downstream Impacts	Matauranga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge Base• Health and Wellbeing	Rangatiratanga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation into Lake Level• Outlet structures	Kotahitanga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information Sharing• Hapu Involvement Strategy• Public Access to the Lake		
Actions that address all four elements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Funding and Support 2004/2005• Funding and Support 2006 onwards• Review of this Strategy• Regulatory Bodies Understanding of Process					

Text 6.9: Summary of the vision for the Lake Omapere Restoration Project

vision for restoration is intimately connected with the re-establishment of *kaitiakitanga*. The plan outlines that the *healthy state of the lake* depends on the balance of four elements, which are *ki uta ki tai*²⁵, *matauranga*²⁶, *rangatiratanga*, *kotahitanga*²⁷. If these elements are in balance, then the lake will be in a *healthy state and able to sustain the people and the environment* (p. 9). The document presents six goals and four elements that will enable the accomplishment of the goal of restoring the lake to *waiora*.

Knowing and relating to the material world

The concept of *ki uta ki tai* encompasses a sense that the entire natural world is completely interconnected. Such a holistic perspective of the material world facilitates an *integrated management approach* so [as] *to ensure that processes are not fragmented and piecemeal* (p. 9). Although the text refers to the interconnection of all things, the inherent nature of a sustainable development strategic plan results in the compartmentalisation of the goals into actions. The strategic plan portrays a sense of fragmentation and compartmentalisation in the attempt to amalgamate tribal knowledge in a management framework. In general, the action plan section of the report is very official sounding and takes a much more ministerial tone. The structure of actions reflects a much more compartmentalised approach to time than the first section of the report. The *health of the lake* is again mentioned in the introduction to the action but the tone of text in the boxes beneath is very official.

The element of *matauranga* acknowledges the need to also understand Lake Omapere from a historic and spiritual perspective in order to find workable solutions. The prominence of tribal knowledge above the scientific view of the lake appears significant. At the beginning of the document noticeable emphasis is placed on indigenous knowledge. On the first page, a Māori proverb summarises the rhetorical vision and Māori terms are used to define the key

²⁵ A concept of the natural world which views all things as connected

²⁶ Knowledge

²⁷ Unity

Foreword

It is with much satisfaction and pride that the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council present this Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere.

The development of this Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere has a lot of history and is the result of a huge commitment of time and resources by the Trust and the Regional Council.

Together we have accessed resources and funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund and established a Lake Omapere Project Management Group. This project team has drawn together expertise from the Trustees and the Regional Council, as well as assistance from the Far North District Council and the Department of Conservation.

This Restoration and Management Strategy focuses on putting in place structures and processes that enhance the management of Lake Omapere in the long term, including working closely with adjacent landowners. The focus is on Lake Omapere, with the knowledge that as the Lake and its catchment improves, the outlet and harbour will also benefit.

We wish to thank all those who have been involved in this project and look forward to continuing to work together to keep this Restoration and Management Strategy a living and evolving document.

Mike Kelleher
Chairman
Lake Omapere Trust

Mark Farnsworth
Chairman
Northland Regional Council

Text 6.10: Foreword for Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategic Plan

aspects of the vision. The history of the lake begins with the narrative of the *taniwha* and the formation of the lake. There is also evidence to suggest a movement in cultural inclusion in the scientific process of monitoring the lake and procedures in assessing the wellbeing of the lake. The knowledge base (see action 8 of the strategic plan on facing page 80) conveys a combination of scientific and citizen knowledge to build up information for the community.

Responsibilities and collective action

The third element of the *kaitiakitanga* model is *rangatiratanga*, which addresses the issues of ownership and responsibility. In the plan, authority, control and responsibility are connected with indigenous knowledge. The attempt to clearly articulate complementary roles suggests a shared consciousness. The plan contains words such as *assist* and *support* that suggest space for negotiation. It is likely these terms will require ongoing evaluation in the context of relationship building process through communication. The establishment of *kaitiakitanga* in the strategic plan is important for future dealings with the lake. The concept of *kaitiakitanga* incorporates the practical outworking of *rangatiratanga* that is kept within tribes and individual *hapu*. Only the tribe that holds *manawhenua* for a specific *rohe* can exercise *kaitiaki* and it may be outworked differently for different tribes, depending on the situation (Durie, 1998, p. 23). In the *kaitiakitanga* section of the strategic plan (section 5), the concept that *hapu* hold responsibility for the exertion of *kaitiakitanga* over its natural environment, is emphasised. The focus on collaborative action and shared meaning appears somewhat contradicted by the sentence that states:

While the exercising of kaitiakitanga can only be undertaken by Māori, it is recognised that the future of the lake is dependent upon many individuals and agencies working together.

The fourth element of the *kaitiakitanga* model is *kotahitanga*, which emphasises the importance of *collective action*. The foreword clearly acknowledges the historic process that has culminated in the production of the

5. Kaitiakitanga

Ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua

Because the well-being of this land resides at Omapere, so it is in everyone's interest to protect and take care of it

Tiaki, its basic meaning is to guard, depending upon the context in which it is used. It also means to preserve, to keep, conserve, nurture, protect and watch over. The prefix 'kai' denotes the agent of that action of 'tiaki'. Therefore 'kaitiaki' is the preserver, the keeper, conservator, nurturer and protector. The addition of 'tanga' denotes preservation, conservation and protection.

The kaitiaki is the tribal guardian who can be spiritual such as those left behind by deceased ancestors to watch over their descendants and to protect sacred places or wahi tapu. They are also mediums between the spiritual realm and the human world. There are many representations of kaitiaki but the most common ones are animals, birds, insects and fish. In many cases taniwha are the guardians of water ways or specific areas and their role is one of protection.

Tikanga Whakaaro Key Concepts in Maori Culture, Barlow C (1994)

As the Lake is physically connected to the lands and waterways that stretch from its catchment to the sea and beyond, numerous hapu have an interest in the Lake. Each hapu has a responsibility to exercise Kaitiakitanga over its natural environment.

Kaitiakitanga can be viewed as a range of inter-connecting concepts that feed into each other and provide a cultural framework for the management of the natural environment and its resources. The view is based on whakapapa; genealogies of creation, the interwoven network of ancestry, and the ways that the people have ordered their lives through the centuries. It is part of the overall picture of Maori as tangata whenua.

Environmental knowledge was fundamental to the survival of whanau, hapu, and iwi as collectives. Tohunga had vast knowledge about the land and its resources, and the myriad of place names bind the history to the land. This knowledge governed tribal resources, provided control mechanisms, and helped to create social order. It also influenced the way relationships with other iwi were conducted. This was reinforced by the Declaration of Independence and the Te Tiriti/ Treaty of Waitangi signed by Tai Tokerau Rangatira at Waitangi, Waimate North, and Mangunu. Article Two of the Treaty guaranteed undisturbed possession of lands, forests and fisheries. It is difficult to separate the land and its natural resources from the people.

Ways to Achieve Waioira

In terms of developing this Strategy, four elements have been identified as important to achieving Waioira. These elements are:

- Ki uta ki tai;
- Matauranga;
- Rangatiratanga; and
- Kotahitanga.

Text 6.11: Kaitiakitanga, section 5: Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

strategic plan. The marked use of the collective pronoun *we* conveys collaboration. Emphasis is placed on actions that express efforts to work closely together. There are reference made several times to *working together and engag[ing] all stake holders*. The prevalence of these collaborative terms in these documents stands out in stark contrast to previous documents when the Trustees and Northland Regional Council were not as well aligned. The significant rhetorical shift suggests the creation of shared vision and purpose.

Fantasy types, sagas and dramatis personae

Another component that must be present to establish the existence of a rhetorical vision is a “fantasy type” (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201). A fantasy type is a fantasy theme that is repeated so often in the rhetorical vision that it becomes an overarching framework to make sense of any new experience that the rhetorical community encounters (Bormann, 1983; Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997; Cragan & Shields, 1992). In the case of Lake Omapere, the fantasy theme of the salvation of the lake has in fact become a fantasy type. Public notices sport the phrase: *Let’s help save Lake Omapere*. The primary object of the plan is to save the lake. In fact, the salvation fantasy type incorporates all of the other elements that involve the constitution of a rhetorical vision. The *plotline* or story of the rhetorical vision is the honourable battle and quest to rescue the lake. Essentially the story is driven by the cause to restore the life force of the lake. The righteous cause that it is worth fighting for is evident in the depiction of the lake as a *taonga*.

The *dramatis personae* component refers to the way in which the characters within the rhetorical vision are depicted (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201). As the fantasy theme analysis showed, the fantasy themes personified Lake Omapere and placed it at the centre of the drama. The battle for the life of the lake involved heroes and enemies. Every story needs heroes, even if they do some ineffectual things sometimes. The heroes of the story were the ones who were building the rock wall higher to raise the water level. In the story, the saviours were the tribe who own the lake and those who supported the cause. The concept of *saving the lake* implied that there was someone or something to

Ki uta ki tai

Describes the total connectedness of the natural environment. It refers to the continuum between the inland environment right through to the coast and beyond. Kaitiakitanga is driven by the notion that nothing can be considered in isolation from its total environment. From a strategic point of view, Lake Omapere needs to be placed into a broader environmental and cultural context rather than just a focus on the Lake itself.

Ki uta ki tai Focus

Lake Omapere will not be restored through isolated initiatives or a narrow focus on the immediate problems within the catchment. The causes of the deterioration of the Lake are diverse. The Lake's condition and the impacts and problems that this causes are felt by many and not just within the immediate catchment.

Matauranga

Can be broadly viewed as knowledge or teachings that underpin Kaitiakitanga. There is important knowledge that relates to the Lake itself, the catchment both above and beneath the ground, the whole eco-system and microclimate connected to the Lake, and the people and their histories. From this knowledge, a better understanding of Lake Omapere can be gained and sustainable practices can be developed.

Matauranga Focus

There is an urgent need to focus on knowledge about Lake Omapere and its context environmentally, historically, and spiritually. Gathering and sharing of knowledge is required. This will enhance the cultural indicators that are appropriate for the long term monitoring of the health of the Lake and its environment.

Rangatiratanga

Conveys the sense of authority, control and responsibility inherent in the exercising of Kaitiakitanga. There is a need to ensure appropriate structures and practices are in place to support the long-term restoration of the Lake. These need to be supported by relationships that support the Trustee's to fulfil their responsibilities.

Rangatiratanga Focus

It is important to make sure that the Trust has the necessary blend of skills, experience, and knowledge to underpin the exercising of Kaitiakitanga.

Kotahitanga

Refers to a unity of purpose in relation to Lake Omapere. It is essential the collective strength of all those with an interest in the Lake are brought together. Setting out clear roles and identifying the contributions different stakeholders can make will achieve this. If relationships are developed and maintained, a sustained improvement will be made in the long term.

Kotahitanga Focus

The most important ingredient for the successful restoration of the Lake is unity of purpose. A successful Strategy process will do a lot to encourage kotahitanga through bringing people and interested groups into the project.

Text 6.12: Elements of kaitiakitanga vision: Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

blame and save the lake from. Originally, the Crown and the Northland Regional Council were perceived as the “bad guys” and ones to blame for the state of the lake due to allowing the lowering the lake in the 1900s (White, 1998). The roles changed as he shared vision for saving the lake involved closer links between the Trustees and the Northland Regional Council. A redefinition of the good versus bad roles was required in order to account for how they worked together. In the current rhetorical vision the Trustees and the Northland Regional Council both undertake the redemptive role of saving the lake from the weed that *threatens to destroy* the lake.

Legitimising the vision

Another element that makes up a rhetorical vision is the sanctioning agent that legitimises and sanctions the vision (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201). The significance of the lake as *taonga* is an essential sanctioning feature in the construction of the rhetorical vision. Lake Omapere is important to Ngapuhi for a number of material, spiritual and cultural reasons. The fact that the lake is a *taonga* means that under the Treaty and the Resource Management Act (1991), the Crown and the Northland Regional Council, as the delegate of the Crown, are obligated to assist the Trustees in managing the lake and take into account their role as *kaitiaki* in decision-making processes regarding the lake. The relationship established through the Memorandum of Understanding has officially sanctioned the planning strategy that embodies the vision. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2004 and presented the vision for a *healthy and sustainable lake*. The Memorandum of Understanding clearly states that the purpose of *the Project is to develop and implement a voluntary strategy that will lead towards the improvement of the health of Lake Omapere and re-establish the kaitiaki role of the lake trustees*. Overall the document provides insight into convergence of a rhetorical vision concerned with *restoring the wellbeing of the lake*.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL AND LAKE
OMAPERE TRUST**

**LAKE OMAPERE RESTORATION AND
MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set out the responsibilities of the Northland Regional Council (hereinafter shown as NRC) and Lake Omapere Trust (hereinafter shown as LOT) and defines the role and function of the Lake Omapere Project Management Group (also shown as the LOPMG) in relation to the Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Project (hereinafter known as the Project).

2. PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the Project is to develop and implement a voluntary strategy that will lead towards the improvement of the health of Lake Omapere and re-establish the kaitiaki role of the Lake trustees. The Project has a two-year time frame with funding being sought from the Sustainable Management Fund administered by the Ministry for the Environment (hereinafter shown as MfE).

Text 6.13: Memorandum of Understanding between Northland Regional Council and Lake Omapere Trus

Identifying the type of rhetorical vision

Cragan and Shields (1992, p. 202) identified that rhetorical visions usually operate from three master analogues: righteous, social and pragmatic. In the case of Lake Omapere, the type of rhetorical vision that has emerged from the data is difficult to categorise. The rhetorical vision does not as easily fit into one of the three analogues and it is not as delineated as the theory suggests (Cragan & Shields, 1992, p. 201). In this particular study, there are significant elements of all three, although the rhetorical vision is primarily driven by a righteous vision for *kaitiakitanga*. The fantasy theme of the salvation of the lake underpins the righteous nature of the rhetorical vision. The prioritisation of the plan is on the value of the lake as *taonga* and wellbeing connected to the tribe, which culminates in a vision for *kaitiakitanga*. However, the scientific views and conventional management style plan format are still present.

The view of the lake and land as sacred underpins the righteous aspect of the rhetorical vision for restoration of Lake Omapere. The concept of restoration implies to make something like it was before. The state of the lake must have been already altered if intervention to *restore the lake* is required. In fact, the restoration of the lake will never completely occur; it is the rehabilitation of the lake that will take place, if anything. The rhetorical vision for the lake's restoration presupposes that the lake is in a condition that needs restoration, and that it is in fact possible, to return the lake to the pure state of *waiora*. The sense of the holistic connection of all life forms and *mauri* informs the righteous aspect of the rhetorical vision. Equally, the rhetorical vision also contains a link to social master analogue, where social relationships are emphasised. A significant element of the rhetorical vision is that the wellbeing of lake is deeply connected with wellbeing of Trustees and people. In order for the condition of Lake Omapere to improve, therefore, all interrelationships are required to be in balance. Elements of the pragmatic rhetorical vision are also present in the plan which includes the scientific aspects and problem solving action plan.

Rhetorical visions contain attributes that relate to 4 continua. These are pure to mixed, inflexible to flexible, paranoid to healthy and secret to prostelyzing (Cragan & Shields, 1992; Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996). There are both

elements of pure and mixed in this rhetorical vision. The tension to account for the different worldviews is evident in the layout and structure of the plan. The concept of *waiora* is the vision of the strategic plan includes a Māori worldview into the rhetorical vision of the restoration plan. The uneasy tension of including such a holistic worldview with the discourse of sustainable development and management is evident in the phrase *waiora is the end product*. The phrase portrays the image that *waiora*, pure water, clean, life-giving water, is an outcome of production that it can be made by people's intervention.

6.3 From death to life: Resurrecting meaning

The fantasy theme analysis recorded in this chapter uncovered a rhetorical vision that personified the poor condition of Lake Omapere. The previous section portrayed elements that constructed the rhetorical vision and provided evidence that symbolic convergence had occurred. The data showed that the rhetorical vision of the restoration of Lake Omapere's wellbeing emerged from the two fantasy themes of the lake's death and the fight for its life. The final section will evaluate the process of the symbolic convergence of shared rhetorical vision. In particular I will focus on the three "streams of consciousness:" "conscious-creating;" "conscious-raising;" and "consciousness sustaining" that comprise the three phases of the construction of a rhetorical vision (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 3) and their guiding principles. This evaluation of the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere will answer my primary research question: *how do different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment?*

The emergence of the rhetorical vision

The data showed that the construction of shared vision involved consciousness-creating communication. The rhetorical vision for the restoration of the lake's wellbeing evolved from two main fantasy themes. Evidence suggests that the principles of imitation, novelty and explanatory power were operational in the

4. *Waiora*

Waiora is a term that we have agreed to use to describe the life giving element and the successful outcome. When all the contributing factors are in balance, the Lake will be restored to a healthy condition and the people and the wider environment will benefit.

Waiora is the end product or the vision that is to be achieved, and will result in the following:

A healthy Lake that sustains the people

- The ability to use the Lake and downstream water as a source for drinking water.
- The use of the Lake for recreational activities such as swimming, waka ama and boating.
- The ability to harvest shellfish and other food sources from the Lake.
- The Lake doesn't have an adverse effect on the ability to harvest food sources from the rivers which feed into and out of the Lake and the Hokianga Harbour.
- Being able to use the Lake for economic gains by Lake Omapere Trustees.
- Supporting the land use surrounding the Lake so that the effects are reduced.

A return of native species of plants and animals to Lake Omapere

- Return of raupo, kuta, harakeke, torewai and tuna to the Lake and its margins.
- Restoration of wetlands surrounding the Lake.
- Pest plants and animals are controlled so that native species can return.

The protection of the Mauri of Tākauere and Lake Omapere

Increased knowledge and understanding of the Mauri of Lake Omapere and everything within it

- Access and sharing of up-to-date information on the Lake.
- Increased knowledge of the effects of the wider catchment on Lake Omapere.
- Increased knowledge of the effects of Lake Omapere on the wider catchment.

Everybody working together to protect and enhance Lake Omapere.

Sustainable long-term management for Lake Omapere and the wider catchment

- An informed decision on the long-term Lake level.

Text 6.14: Waiora, section 4: Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

creation of shared vision for Lake Omapere. The two fantasy themes of the *imminent* death and consequent need to *save* the lake expressed the emotive reality of the problem. According to Bormann (1983, p. 114), the strength of a fantasy theme is evident in the power it has to explain people's lived experience. Thus, the rhetorical vision for Lake Omapere had to explain the experience of the group operating on the principle of explanatory power (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996; Cragan & Shields, 1992).

Both fantasy themes conceived the lake as a personified living being. The personification of the lake resonates with an indigenous understanding of a relational connection to the land (Bird-David, 1999; Hughes, 1986; Marsden, 1992; 2003). The fantasy theme analysis of the archives shows that the presence of the lake represents the reality of life for Ngapuhi. The death of the lake is, therefore, as intimate as the death of a close loved one. It is impossible to ascertain the full extent of what the concept of the death of the lake meant to people without triangulating with interviews. However, in a rhetorical sense, the loss of the lake signified the loss of the tribe's source of strength and vitality. From this perspective, the condition of the lake logically became a matter of life and death. By implication, if the wellbeing of the lake were in jeopardy, the wellbeing of the land and the tribe would also be threatened. The threat gave impetus to the issue of the lake's wellbeing, and from this point, the use of symbolic language acquired power and urgency. Some of this power was derived from a wide understanding that the wellbeing of the lake was interconnected with the wellbeing of the people.

The rhetorical vision explained the reality of the lake in a way that connected strongly with predominant established understandings the rhetorical communities held about the material world. The effectiveness of the fantasy themes to explain people's experience of the situation of Omapere is based on an understanding of a deep connection with the land, particularly prevalent in Māoridom (Donaldson, 2003; Green, 2002; Kawharu, 2005; McHugh, 1991; Meleisea, 1991). A central aspect to such an understanding of the world is the concept of the material world possessing a life force or *mauri* that ultimately connects each element of the world together (Kawharu, 2005; Love, 2004;

Action 9. Health and Wellbeing

Monitoring of the Lake is only one means of assessing the health of Lake Omapere and its wider catchment, it can also be assessed through investigating the health of the people. and ensuring that these are not dealt with as separate identities or in isolation.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate the Memorandums of Understanding that exist between the Councils and Northland Health on notifiable illnesses and investigate similar agreements with the Lake Omapere Trust.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inform and bring onboard health Trustee's working in the vicinity of Lake Omapere, to ensure that they are aware of the work being undertaken on the lake. Also ensure the Lake Omapere Trustee's are aware of work being undertaken by the health Trustee's.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate, in conjunction with Northland Health, information on illnesses that could be a result of the poor water quality in Lake Omapere.	September 2006

Text 6.15: Health and wellbeing, action 9, Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

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Marsden, 2003). Therefore, the rhetorical vision involved the principle of explanatory power but also utilised the principle of imitation, by referring to elements that people were already familiar with. The concern for the lake portrayed in the fantasy themes arose from the lack of a structured response to the state of Lake Omapere and consequent blame-shifting. The situation was difficult to solve because it is difficult to establish all the factors that may impact on the condition of the lake. In a sense, the focus of the plan to establish *kaitiakitanga* directed people's attention in a particular direction that gave meaning to the situation.

The opening *whakatauki* states that the *mauri* of the land resides at Omapere and demonstrates the principle of imitation functioning in tandem with the principle of explanatory power. The proverb links the vision with the concept of the sanctity of life that is established in the holistic view of the world within Māoridom. For instance, life and death, and the past and the future are integrated and impact on the way the world is viewed (Dansey, 1995 p. 105). The fantasy theme of the death of the lake resonated with this pre-existing understanding of the material world. Many tribal rituals and customs are based on an understanding that the ancestors and the afterlife influence the present (Durie, 1998; King, 2003; Marsden, 1992; Orange, 1987). Therefore, appropriate acknowledgement of the past is the only way to adequately make sense of the present and plan for the future (Kawharu, 2005; Marsden, 1992; Sneddon, 2005).

This research shows that the construction of shared vision amongst different rhetorical communities involves the principles of novelty and imitation. Both these principles enable the shared rhetorical vision to powerfully explain the rhetorical communities' lived experience. The establishment of the Lake Omapere Project Management Group is an illustration of the principle of novelty operating to enable the creation of shared vision. The archival data showed that for a long time, the construction of shared vision and collaborative action for Lake Omapere was impeded by the historic distrust of existing governmental structures. The early archives were dominated by rhetoric disagreement that expressed much discontent with the inaction by those who

were held responsible for the lake's health. Once the second fantasy theme gained momentum, the elements of accusation and helplessness common in first fantasy theme of the death of the lake dissipated. The focus on the rescue of the lake contained the possibility to be more inclusive and hopeful because saving the lake was less alienating than the death of lake fantasy theme. As the fantasy themes combined to form the rhetorical vision, the central focus became the health and wellbeing of the lake, which situated the focus on the future rather than the past. The establishment of Lake Omapere Project Management Group instituted a new structure that combined representatives from all major stakeholders. The new group appears to have been the catalyst for more positive interaction and proactive action by all concerned. Even though the Lake Omapere Management Project Group was mandated to create a plan that had previously been attempted, the creation of a new structure signified action with new intent.

Increased awareness of rhetorical vision

Communication that engenders commitment to the vision is crucial to the second phase of constructing rhetorical vision amongst different rhetorical communities (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996, p. 10). The data show that consciousness-raising communication was used to construct the rhetorical vision for Lake Omapere. Essentially a rhetorical community grows as consciousness is raised, particularly when the number of people who participate in the vision reaches a critical mass (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 10). Usually the consciousness-raising phase occurs at the beginning, once the rhetorical vision has emerged. The two main guiding principles during the consciousness-raising phase are the principle of critical mass and the principle of dedication (p. 10-11). The data showed evidence of consciousness-raising communication at both of the two crucial moments this research has focused on. Thus, the guiding principles of dedication and critical mass were utilised in the second phase of the construction of the rhetorical vision.

The first instance of consciousness-raising in the data was evident during the rock wall incident. The story of the iwi and local community coming together to build up the rock wall played a significant role in ‘raising consciousness’ (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 11-12) for the lake’s condition. In the dedication act of building the rock wall, people were able to physically participate in an activity that was directly connected to restoring the wellbeing of the lake. The action was also a form of protest at the perceived lack of inaction from local government authorities. As a result, the construction of the rock wall became a symbol of action that affirmed and embodied the emotion portrayed in the fantasy themes of the death and salvation of the lake. Essentially, the dedication event created a critical mass because the wider local and national community became aware of the situation of Lake Omapere in a new way through the media. Publicity of the event gave voice to the emotions of frustration and desperation and desire to act portrayed in the fantasy themes.

As the rhetorical vision matured and was shared by the Northland Regional Council, the principle of dedication operated through the planting days at Lake Omapere. The planting days were first initiated in 2004 after the establishment of Lake Omapere Project Management Group. These are an example of people “actively join[ing] in the drama” (Bormann, et al., 1996, p. 11) of *saving the lake*. The principle of dedication operates with the critical mass principle. In terms of converting a critical mass to the vision, the establishment of Lake Omapere Restoration Project Management Group (Lake Omapere Project Management Group) appears to be a significant turning point in the development of shared rhetorical vision. As the development of a plan was agreed on, consciousness-raising communication was again evident in the substantial consultation. There were many *hui*²⁸ to launch the strategy and share the vision with the community. The new initiative to create something new outside the old structures gave fresh hope to the situation. The representation of each interest group meant that the different voices had opportunity to have a say in the management of the lake.

²⁸ Meeting



Figure 6.3: Planting days

Creating new social order: Sustaining the vision

During the sustaining consciousness phase, the guiding principles of reiteration and re-dedication ensure that people are inspired and remain committed to the rhetorical vision (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996). The planning document contains the overall vision for the restoration of the lake's wellbeing and correlates with the consciousness-sustaining phase of the construction of the rhetorical vision (Bormann, et. al., 1996, p. 12). Both the reiteration and rededication principles are evident in the case of Lake Omapere. For instance, the launch of the strategic plan, two years after the Memorandum of Understanding was signed, was a rededication event that enabled the people to recommit to rhetorical vision. The principle of rededication is also evident in the events such as the planting days. Through the plan, the rhetorical vision governs and sustains the interaction with the lake through regular meetings, actions and goals.

The principle of reiteration is important to sustaining the rhetorical vision through a re-articulation of the shared consciousness in symbolic ways that continue to connect meaning to the vision (Bormann et al., 1996, p. 16). Throughout the strategic plan, the rhetoric frequently refers to the *health and wellbeing of the lake*. In this way, the strategic plan reiterates the rhetorical vision of restoring the wellbeing of the lake and provides fresh vision and direction to the vision. Although the death of the lake played a significant role in raising consciousness, it now plays a more implicit undertone to the drama. Essentially, the rhetorical cues focus more heavily on the salvation fantasy theme, while the fantasy theme of the lake's death is less prominent. The possibility of the lake's death is inferred by the need to restore the *mauri* of the lake. The rhetoric of keeping the lake alive implies that life needs to be preserved and also suggests the possibility that life could be lost. In this way, the rhetorical vision is reiterated. The plan is constructed to organise and make sense of people's interactions within the material world (Cohen & March, 1974; Popper, 1962; Weick, 1979; 1995). The plan sets out mutually agreed boundaries in the rhetoric. Essentially, the strategic plan has provided the framework that creates the order and value for the rhetorical community to make sense of their interaction regarding the lake.

Reasons for sharing vision

It is difficult to ascertain the level to which people buy into a particular rhetorical vision. The symbolic convergence theory operates on the assumption that people share fantasies because they adequately explain the emotional and rational aspects of their lived experience (Bormann, 1983). However, the theory does not completely take into consideration the possibility that people utilise specific forms of discourse pertaining to a specific rhetorical vision in order to achieve their goals without emotionally engaging with the fantasies (Gunn, 2003). In other words, people may use the language to get what they want because it is the only way to get people to listen to them. Even if this was the case, at a macro level of environmental decision-making, individual desire or motive is superfluous. In any case, the fantasy theme explains the experience, even if it is just the experience of being associated with that rhetorical community. Although it is difficult to ascertain motive, it is evident from the data that the rhetorical vision of the restoration of Lake Omapere's wellbeing has been officially documented and is shared by the rhetorical community.

Roles, responsibilities and collaboration

The issue of ownership and authority has been a matter of contention for Ngapuhi for many years (White, 1998). The roles and responsibilities connected with the management of the lake were significant concerns raised in the fantasy themes. It is evident that the strategic plan aims to address this issue. The clear boundaries of Northland Regional Council and Trustees' roles are beginning to become evident in structure. Responsibilities and roles of the parties are designated in the plan. The issue of the future of the lake is clearly distinguished as the Trustees' responsibility. The lake level is designated decision for the Trustees but the strategic plan acknowledges the need for assistance in receiving adequate information to make an informed decision (p. 56). The Northland Regional Council role is to assist with informing and equipping the Trustees to make informed decisions but the final decision lies with the Trustees. Evidence suggests that the Northland Regional Council is

Action 12. Information Sharing

The Lake Omapere Project Management Group (LOPMG) that was established to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Management Fund may not remain when the funding ends in 2006. However, it is vital to maintain the momentum and strategic links that have been formed by LOPMG and its strength as a group that brought together different stakeholders to discuss the future of the Lake. There is also a need to bring together other groups and include them in the decision making process, including those downstream of the Lake.

The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for maintaining links between people and groups once the Sustainable Management Funding has been completed. Such actions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing regular meetings of a group such as LOPMG. 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop any Memoranda or protocols necessary. 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the best ways to keep people informed (for example website, radio, mail outs, one on one discussions) and prepare a procedure for ongoing information sharing in 2006 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure information is provided at least twice a year to the community on Lake Omapere using the methods identified above including annual 'stakeholder meetings or monitoring forums where the community is invited to participate. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate current 'points of contact' for people wanting to know about Lake Omapere, including reports, information on issues about Lake Omapere and whether or not there are alternative options for a centralised contact point. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a strategy for involving schools in activities such as planting days and monitoring work. 	By December 2006
The Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Far North District Council to establish a system that ensures when land ownership around the lake changes that the new owners are aware of the Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the lake to the Trustees, The health of the lake, and The actions being undertaken to improve the health of the lake, including any relevant Environmental Farm Management Plans. 	March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Far North District Council to ensure the information listed above is placed on LIM reports so that it is given out when people make enquires. 	July 2006

Text 6.16: Information sharing, action 12: Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

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supporting a model of *kaitiaki* and thereby, indirectly involved in the process of *kaitiakitanga*.

The rhetorical vision of the restoration of the wellbeing of the lake is a powerful symbol of collective action. As a consequence, Northland Regional Council and trustees are finally working together and the plan has established long term relational structures. Both parties are displaying good faith and the desire to work with other affected and interested parties to restore and manage the lake. The existence of the strategic plan is significant in itself, regardless of whether the aims will be achieved as stated. In order for the plan to be achieved, its application will be reliant on both parties maintaining good faith and continuing to share in the rhetorical vision of the restoration of the wellbeing of the lake. The establishment of a shared vision between the Northland Regional Council and the Trustees has instituted a timely shift in progress towards working towards something together rather than against each other. The document frequently makes reference to the working together of all parties and focus is made on the roles Northland Regional Council and Trustees take in the process.

Considering the long drawn out ten-year history to arrive at the point of working together in constructive way, the strategic plan is a powerful symbol of the future. The project holds promise, and the focus on the wellbeing of the lake forms an authoritative view for the future of the lake. Because the vision is still reasonably new, it is too early to determine if the rhetorical vision will decline in the same way Bormann, Cragan and Shields (1996, p. 19-24) identified. There are no data to suggest that the rhetorical vision has progressed beyond the phase of sustaining the vision; therefore discussion of the decline extends beyond the scope of the research focus and data.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the fantasy theme analysis using the elements of Burke's (1966) "hexed pentad". The death and consequent fight to save the lake personified the polluted state of Lake Omapere. Evidence showed that symbolic convergence for the restoration of Lake Omapere's wellbeing amongst different

Action 8. Knowledge Base

Gathering and sharing of knowledge is required including both cultural and scientific knowledge. Actions can be undertaken to build up the knowledge base about Lake Omapere as well as make information accessible to the whole community.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote Wananga, including face to face meetings, and visiting local schools.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collate all information on Lake Omapere into one source or database as a resource that can be used by the whole community.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate the development of a Lake Omapere website.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure regular updates occur on the Lake Omapere section of the NRC website.	At least twice a year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate how to transfer scientific knowledge back to Trustee's for example on Torewai, Pipi, Kuta, Raupo and Tuna.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate how to transfer cultural knowledge back to Trustee's for example on Torewai, Pipi, Kuta, Raupo and Tuna.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Undertake an education and awareness campaign on the spread of weeds that affect Lake Omapere, the waterways feeding into and out of it and the adjacent land. (refer to Action 4. Aquatic Weed Management)	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initiate relevant new Trustee Orientation programmes in relation to the Lake Omapere Restoration Strategy	As required

Text 6.17: Knowledge base, action 8: Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy

rhetorical communities had occurred. In this chapter I also discussed the dynamics of the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere through the three streams of consciousness identified by Bormann, Cragan and Shields (1996). The data are congruent with the principles that guide the creation, raising and sustaining phases of construction of shared consciousness (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 3). The resulting rhetorical vision formed the basis for planning collaborative action between the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council concerning the lake.

Kaitiakitanga is the central focus of the rhetorical vision for the Lake's restoration. The implementation of this shared vision for *kaitiakitanga* has the potential to significantly alter the approaches of environmental decision-making processes instituted by the communication channels within the Resource Management Act (1991). The ramifications of the resulting shared vision are far-reaching and pivotal to future bicultural development in Aotearoa New Zealand. These implications will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The Final Act: Making Sense of Meaning

Introduction

The purpose of my research was to examine how different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment. The intention of this study was to gain understanding of the communication process within the Resource Management Act (1991) that would enable different worldviews to be accounted for in the decision-making processes. The underlying premise of my research was that shared understanding amongst different rhetorical communities is important for the future holistic bicultural development of Aotearoa New Zealand. My contention is that shared understanding is necessary for the Resource Management Act (1991) to achieve its stated aims. I was interested in how shared stories could help facilitate shared understanding in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand's environmental decision-making process. Specifically, my research investigated the application of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory to the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere. My research has found that different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment through sharing fantasy themes that explain the emotional reality of their lived experience.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the wider implications for the study of shared consciousness in application to the Resource Management Act (1991) and holistic bicultural development in Aotearoa New Zealand. The first section contains a summary and discussion of the principles for the creation of a rhetorical vision for Lake Omapere. I will then discuss the implication that construction of shared vision amongst different rhetorical communities has in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The third section contains final thoughts and concludes by offering recommendations for further research.

7.1 Summary of research question findings

The focus of this research was on the process by which different rhetorical communities construct shared vision. My investigation explored the process of constructing shared vision as a means to address the observed disparity between rhetoric and action evident in the practice of the Resource Management Act (1991) (Nelson, 2004; Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995; Palmer, 1992; 1995). I perceived the necessity for environmental decision-making approaches to involve shared understanding. Environmental law in Aotearoa New Zealand recognises the responsibility of *tangata whenua* for *kaitiakitanga*. The rhetoric of the Resource Management Act (1991) states that *kaitiakitanga* must be taken into account in the decision-making and managing process (section 5). In this way, rhetorically, *kaitiakitanga* must be made a priority. Consequently, the concept of *kaitiaki* is assumed in the Resource Management Act (1991) as a symbol that must be engaged with. However, the duty of the exact way to “take in account and make provision for” (Resource Management Act, 1991) is placed on regional governing bodies. Effective approaches that incorporate indigenous perspectives of spiritual responsibility of natural resources and account for varying conceptions of the material world worldviews raise the question of how different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment

The central focus of my research was the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere between the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council. The guiding research question for this research was primarily addressed in the previous chapter, which contained data and specific discussion. In this section, I will summarise the significance of the findings in relation to the primary research question: *how do different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment?* In the study of Lake Omapere, Bormann’s (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory provided a useful explanation of the way different rhetorical communities construct shared vision. Bormann (1983, p. 14) asserts that people share fantasy themes that explain their lived experience in dramatic ways. The rhetorical vision unifies aspects of various fantasy themes into a particular way of viewing the world (Bormann, 1983, p. 114). Ultimately, the rhetorical vision effectively makes sense of people’s lived experience in the material world.

The data supported the theoretical premise that the use of language constructs and defines people's vision for the environment (Dryzek, 1997; Escobar, 1996; Milton, 1996). As I alluded to earlier, this study shows that different rhetorical communities construct shared vision by sharing fantasy themes. The analysis for rhetorical cues portrayed that the fantasy themes of the death and salvation of Lake Omapere resulted in a rhetorical vision of the restoration of the lake's wellbeing, which provides a powerful explanation of the rhetorical communities' experience.

It is evident that the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere revolved around the value of the lake and its consequent worthiness to be rescued. In accordance with Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory, I found that the construction of shared vision for Lake Omapere between different rhetorical communities involved three forms of communication: creating, raising and sustaining consciousness (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996, p. 2). Each phase that constructed the rhetorical vision was guided by operative principles (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996; Cragan & Shields, 1992). These phases and operating principles answer the research question of how different rhetorical communities come to share a rhetorical vision. In summary, this research shows that different rhetorical communities construct shared vision for the environment as people participate in a shared dramatic portrayal of the situation they encounter. Commitment to the shared vision is facilitated and maintained through rhetoric and actions that embody the emotions present in the fantasy themes.

Kaitiakitanga as the emerging vision

The most significant finding to emerge from my research was the role of *kaitiakitanga* as the driving force of shared vision for Lake Omapere. *Kaitiakitanga* has become the focus of and perceived answer to the lake's condition. It encapsulates the rhetorical vision for restoring the wellbeing of the lake. The rhetorical communities have begun to refer to *kaitiakitanga* in multiple ways. The collection of a range of understandings of the term evident in the data, suggests there is movement in the consciousness of the word. In

regards to symbolic convergence theory terms, *kaitiakitanga* has become a fantasy type that represents the salvation of the lake (Bormann, 1983; 1985; Cragan & Shields, 1992). The rhetorical vision asserts the restoration of Lake Omapere's wellbeing relies on the balance of the four elements: *ki uta ki tai*, *mautauranga*, *rangatiratanga* and *kotahitanga*, all of which refer back to *kaitiakitanga*. The vision for *kaitiakitanga* prioritises the connection of the wellbeing of the lake with the wellbeing of the people. In the case of Lake Omapere, there were many conflicting views on the problem and no clear answers to the exact cause of the current situation. The data show the rhetorical vision of *kaitiakitanga* gaining predominance the resource management and restoration of Lake Omapere. The emergence of such a singular shared vision is remarkable. This extraordinary outcome illustrates the resulting phenomenon of the construction of shared vision amongst different rhetorical communities. Essentially, this study revealed a redefinition of the way the lake is viewed. In order to plan and assign meaning in effective ways, new meaning has been created (Weick, 1979; 1995).

The dominance of the *kaitiakitanga* symbol is a very important concept with many implications for future environmental decision-making processes. This phenomenon has the potential to have a profound impact on the social order and fabric of society in Aotearoa New Zealand regarding environmental decision-making and beyond. The goal of preserving traditional knowledge and protecting sites of cultural significance has resulted in the incorporation of *kaitiakitanga* in Western planning models. Implications of the resulting shared vision for *kaitiakitanga* extend far higher and beyond the investigation of my research question. In spite of this, I consider it to be significant to the wider issues environmental decision-making in Aotearoa New Zealand. My perception is that discussion and further consideration of the emergence of shared vision of *kaitiakitanga* are important for future efforts to promote the construction of shared vision. The following discussion outlines the importance of this concept.

7.2 Kaitiakitanga and consequences

Shared vision for the environment is generally considered a desirable goal. The utility and benefit of shared vision has formed the basis of my investigation for how different rhetorical communities can construct shared consciousness. As this study has revealed, however, the product of shared vision is a new reality and an altered worldview. The restoration of the wellbeing of Lake Omapere through establishing *kaitiakitanga* is now an accepted rhetorical reality for addressing the lake's condition. This research is based on theoretical perspective that the material world is known through language (Booth, 2001; Burke, 1966; Chambers, 1994; Dryzek, 1997; Escobar, 1996; Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Milton, 1996; Popper, 1962; Spangle & Knapp, 1996). On this basis, the rhetorical shift in usage of *kaitiakitanga* and Māori words and concepts as well as English denotes a change in the way people make sense of the material world.

The shared vision for *kaitiakitanga* is now embodied in the strategic plan that governs the decision-making processes of the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council. Thus, the rhetorical vision has become an artefact that defines the manner in which the lake will be known. The cultural concept of *kaitiakitanga* has been incorporated in the plan for Lake Omapere with the aim to preserve the *taonga*. The implications for future understandings of *kaitiakitanga* are significant. Consequently, the combination of worldviews evident in the vision for *kaitiakitanga* has altered all aspects of the future management and restoration of Lake Omapere. This significant shift could ultimately redefine indigenous spirituality in the context of environment decision-making in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to Popper (1962), the meaning people ascribe to the material world is expressed through decisions. From this perspective, the Lake Omapere Restoration strategic plan will guide the decisions that give meaning to the process of managing and interacting with the situation at Omapere.

The sense of authority, control and responsibility that rhetorically is being addressed in this document could potentially elevate *kaitiakitanga* to a level where it is beyond question, it is assumed. The collection of meanings and aspects of *kaitiakitanga* – could be an indication of the elevation of the term in a logological sense (Booth, 2001; Burke, 1966; Teo-Dixon & Monin, 2007). The document presents the overview of the solution to the problem as being re-establishment of *kaitiakitanga*. Therefore, the term has become a symbol in the Burkean sense of the word. According to Burke's (1966) theory of logology, as summarised by Teo-Dixon and Monin (2007), the symbolic use of language tends to lead to a hierarchy of meaning a certain symbol (in Burkean terms) comes to define the way people identify with and order their social world. The notion of Māori stewardship is an example of such a symbolic use of language.

The symbolic notion of *kaitiakitanga* incorporates the fantasies of the death and salvation of the lake. This symbolic use of language as a drama of participation is crucial to the sharing of rhetorical vision for Lake Omapere. As a consequence, it is likely that rhetorical reality of *kaitiakitanga* will continue to gain prominence as the solution to environmental problems, such as Lake Omapere. The dominance of a *kaitiakitanga* as a symbolic reality has ramifications in the way the material world is conceived and decisions are made. Thus, the future application of the Resource Management Act (1991) requires careful consideration concerning matters of *kaitiakitanga*. It is important to investigate the occurrence of this phenomenon before it becomes a rhetorical reality that is assumed in societal consciousness to a level where it is unquestionable. The question of how the role and function of *kaitiakitanga* rhetorical vision is implemented is a crucial concern for the future bicultural development of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Knowing the material world

One of the main findings of this research is that the Trustees and iwi have maintained the rhetorical vision regarding the nature of their *taonga* and the need for its restoration. In doing so, they have effectively won the recognition of the Northland Regional Council and the Crown to be the driving force in the

management and preservation of Lake Omapere. This has resulted in the emergence of *kaitiakitanga* as an overarching rhetorical vision for the lake. The strategic plan is an official acknowledgement of the Trustees and the owners as primary keepers of the lake. Future interaction regarding the lake will be in reference to this shared understanding. By implication, this rhetorical vision recognises the indigenous perspective and relational spiritual conceptions of the material world. The focus of the plan on *kaitiakitanga* is significant for the future of the lake and also future conceptions of interaction with the lake.

The emergence of symbolic convergence portrays a rhetorical community that is open to other ways of knowing. Both Northland Regional Council and the Trustees display a willingness to share knowledge and work together for the sake of Lake Omapere. The plan shows conscious effort to be explicit about the meaning and in use of the words. The data display a willingness of the Northland Regional Council to work with the Trustees in facilitating the re-establishment of *kaitiakitanga*. The rhetorical vision also demonstrates the Trustees' openness to including the expertise and support of Northland Regional Council in facilitating their *kaitiakitanga* of Lake Omapere.

In order to effectively share knowledge, shared understandings of rhetoric used are necessary (Bormann, 1983; Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997; Pearce, 1989). For this reason, I perceive shared understanding to be important because people cannot share knowledge required to solve problems if there is no common rhetorical understanding. The potential issue present in this symbolic portrayal of collaborative action is the possibility for a reality gap to occur. It appears that there is agreement that information and knowledge need to be shared to find a better understanding and more informed decision-making processes. Common to Māori understanding, knowledge is considered sacred (Durie, 1998; Marsden, 2003). Arcane knowledge, regarding such things as, *kaitiakitanga* and *mana*, is sacred and past, in trust, from one generation to the next (Durie, 1998; Kawharu, 2005; Love, 2004; Marsden, 2003). To share specific knowledge of such a *tapu* nature is rare and potentially violates the socially accepted order of the Māori world. In the case of Lake Omapere, therefore, it is rare that both parties are willing to share knowledge and

information. Even with this unusual willingness to share sacred knowledge, the process is not yet complete, and for Māori, will require ongoing negotiation about what knowledge is made available and by whom.

Collective action

Another key finding of this research was that the construction of shared vision portrayed the willingness of both parties to work together. The creation of shared vision is embodied in the order of the plan. *The Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere* portrays the shape of the future of the lake. The rhetorical vision is signified in the symbolic power of this rhetorical artefact. It contains the spirit of co-operation and combined action.

Simultaneously, the implementation of the plan relies on both parties maintaining good faith and relationship in the process of achieving the desired action. Ultimately they need to continue to share consciousness in ways that encourage people to participate in agreed collaborative action for the sake of the lake's future.

Alternative structures: A catalyst for change

In this thesis, I have argued that the construction of shared vision by different rhetorical communities (and ultimately, holistic bicultural development) requires the democratic dialogue of discourses (Goulet, 1986; Sen, 1999). Essentially, shared meaning requires different groups to listen and talk to each other in ways that engender common understanding. This study found that new decision-making structures, such as the Lake Omapere Project Management Group, could serve as catalysts for change. Previous organisational studies showed that a rhetorical community could exist across organisational structures (Bormann, 1983; Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 1996; Bormann, Knutson, & Musolf, 1997). The process of constructing shared rhetorical vision amongst different rhetorical communities is effectively the creation of a combined rhetorical community from the two parties. In order for the rhetorical vision to develop in both rhetorical communities, each party would need to make the

resulting shared vision a priority. This would require a critical mass from each of the previous rhetorical communities.

The approach of instituting alternative structures to facilitate shared vision has wider application for the implementation of the Resource Management Act (1991). In situations similar to Lake Omapere, shared vision could be facilitated by adopting alternative structures that contain representatives of all interested parties. In other cases where different rhetorical communities hold extremely contradictory and conflicting views innovative action groups could enable positive communication processes to be initiated. This approach could possibly enable the construction of shared vision and ensure equitable environmental decision-making processes allow for different worldviews to be taken into account and participate in decision-making processes (Goulet, 1986; Sen, 1999).

Creating shared understandings of justice

The process of constructing shared vision in environmental decision-making necessitates the sharing of conceptions of justice. This is particularly pertinent for applying the Resource Management Act (1991), which contains the implicit promise of justice. It arises in the fact that the Resource Management Act (1991) incorporates sustainability as its foundational philosophy, while also aiming to honour the Treaty by accounting for the indigenous perspective. Insights gained from my research suggest that there could be potential for implementation of *kaitiakiatanga* to facilitate the process of making development sustainable. As Bird-David (1999) argues, conservational approaches could benefit from the approach inherent in the “relational-epistemology” perspective of many indigenous peoples. The prioritised emergence of *kaitiakitanga* in official decision-making processes contains exciting possibilities to incorporate more relational and conservational approaches to resource management in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Arguably, *kaitiakitanga* and sustainability contain conflicting values that arise from different understandings of the material world (Barber & Dickson, 1995; Beck, 1997; Bird-David, 1999; Donaldson, 2003; Escobar, 1996; Graham, 1997;

Hughes, 1986; Lewis, Willing, & Mullan, 1995; Marsden, 2003; Rixecker, 1998; Ross, 1996; Simmons, 1995; Suzuki & Dressel, 1999; Ward, 1991). The inherent preservation of *taonga* for future generations is a core aspect of both *kaitiakitanga* and sustainable development as articulated in the Resource Management Act (1991). Perhaps the concept of intergenerational justice could be the shared rhetorical common ground could be built upon. The study of construction of shared vision in the case of the Lake Omapere Restoration Project.

7.3 Concluding statements

The research recorded in this thesis offers a significant original contribution to the field of environmental communication research. The research methodology demonstrates an original application of Bormann's (1972, 1983) symbolic convergence theory to investigate the construction of shared vision for the environment. Not only did my research utilise Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory in a groundbreaking area, but also I adapted a unique approach for the fantasy theme analysis specifically for this research. My innovative approach combined Burke's (1966) method of communication analysis with Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory. Burke's (1966) "hexed pentad" provided a useful framework for analysing the fantasy themes. The utility of combining this useful tool in the analysis of symbolic convergence is proposed for researchers embarking on similar investigations of construction of shared vision. I found Burke's (1966) holistic perspective and allowance for the interconnections between the elements of the fantasy themes combined well with Bormann's (1972; 1983) approach. The "hexed pentad" also provided a solid foundation of analysis for the confirmation of symbolic convergence.

Further research

The Resource Management Act (1991) allows for justice to occur thorough consultation. Goulet (1986) proposes that justice cannot occur in environmental decision-making unless there is the democratic dialogue of discourses. However the consultation process has not always been effectively representative of the community's wishes (Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995; Sneddon, 2005). In the case of Lake Omapere, it appears that rhetorical vision was shared because extensive consultation and communication of the vision were administered. Considerable time and effort have been taken to produce a shared vision that all interested parties can participate in. The effect of the construction of shared vision in the case of Lake Omapere is that true consultation has occurred. Justice happens because people's voices are heard and their feelings and interests are taken into account (Goulet, 1986; 1993; Grey, 2003). This study shows that the democratic dialogue that is produced from sharing stories can result in justice.

The symbolic convergence theory could be applied to other localities, where councils are approaching similar situations regarding environmental issues. This research's methodology could be utilised in the area of consultation and inclusive decision-making processes. The principles of the rhetorical vision life cycle could be applied to establish strategies for increased community involvement in the environment decision-making process. The focus of Bormann's (1972; 1983) symbolic convergence theory is on the emotive rhetorical realities people share to explain their experience. The theoretical principles could be usefully applied to considering processes that enable the diverse opinions of multiple rhetorical communities in Aotearoa New Zealand to be heard in the environment decision-making process. The central concern of this research was the communication between local government and iwi. Further research using symbolic convergence theory could be undertaken to focus on some of the other cultural groups that make Northland demographically diverse. There is the potential danger that the representative collective voice denies the reality of the diversity within the collective. For instance, arguably the amalgamation of all Māori as one group reduces the

extreme diversities of the different *iwi* and *hapu* and the range of views that inevitably arise (Blackford & Matunga, 1995; Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995).

The concept of cultural inclusion intended by the Resource Management Act (1991) raises issues of how specific cultural concepts, such as *kaitiakitanga*, are represented in the process of engendering shared meaning and understanding. Such matters emerging through the consultative process concerned with representation of cultural values and concepts could also benefit from symbolic convergence theory study. In particular, further research could explore the possibility that representation of *kaitiakitanga* in legislation could have similar outcomes to representation of nature (Escobar, 1996; Figlio, 1996). By this I mean, that when environmental planning processes include indigenous cultural values and concept, such as *kaitiakitanga*, they are often placed outside of their original cultural context (Nuttall & Ritchie, 1995, p. 1). Thereby, the process of accounting for indigenous perspectives could in fact conflate and significantly alter these previous understandings. Also, the matter of sharing knowledge about the material world that is considered sacred is another issue to be negotiated as *kaitiakitanga* continues to emerge as central concern for construction of shared vision for the environment. Further symbolic convergence theory research into the role of *kaitiakitanga* in application to environmental decision-making would be useful to determine the future of construction of shared rhetorical vision of different rhetorical communities. The implications of incorporating the indigenous spiritual relational perspectives in legislation is a crucial concern for environmental decision-making both locally and internationally and worthy of further research.

In conclusion, my research topic emerged from an observation that different groups have different ways of talking about the material world that impact on environmental decision-making processes. This is particularly pertinent in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, where the recognition of indigenous Māori cultural perspective is embedded in environmental law (Austin, 2006; Blackford & Matunga, 1995; Donaldson, 2003; Grundy, 1995; Kawharu, 2005; McHugh, 1991; Meleisea, 1991; Palmer, 1995). This study shows how interested parties

with differing perspectives construct shared vision for environmental problems through sharing stories.

In a world where environmental decision-making processes often provide more occasions for shared horror than shared hope, the case of Lake Omapere Restoration Project is extraordinary. In the face of an ecological disaster and despite the many conflicting opinions, the Lake Omapere Restoration Project is a situation where the interested parties have constructed a shared vision for Lake Omapere full of *manawa ora*²⁹ (hope). The transliteration for this Māori word for hope is “healthy heart”. In a lyrical sense then, the vision for *waiora* for the lake aims to restore the health and life to the heart of Ngapuhi. Thus, the rhetorical vision to restore the wellbeing of the lake by establishing *kaitiakitanga* offers hope to a previously bleak situation. Significant time and money have been spent in order to achieve agreed understanding and action for Lake Omapere. However, it is impossible to put a price on the fact that a *taonga* of such significant cultural and material importance to Ngapuhi and the wider Northland community has been preserved for future generations.

²⁹ Hope

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Appendix

Restoration & Management Strategy for Lake Omapere

Excerpts and photos from the strategic plan can be found throughout the thesis on relevant facing pages. The entire document follows as an appendix.



Restoration & Management Strategy for Lake Omapere



He Whakatauki mo Omapere

“Ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua”

Because the wellbeing of this land resides at Omapere, so it is in everyone's interest to protect and take care of it.

The Ngāpuhi tell of Nukutāwhiti bringing to Omapere the remains of Wāhioroa “hei uto patu i te tapu o te whenua hōu”. Once that was done it was thought safe for people to live here.

Omapere was always considered of strategic importance by Ngāpuhi throughout its history. It was there that the tribes of Tai Tokerau met to forge a treaty among themselves. There too the might of the colonial army was challenged at Puketutu.

Foreword

It is with much satisfaction and pride that the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council present this Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere.

The development of this Restoration and Management Strategy for Lake Omapere has a lot of history and is the result of a huge commitment of time and resources by the Trust and the Regional Council.

Together we have accessed resources and funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund and established a Lake Omapere Project Management Group. This project team has drawn together expertise from the Trustees and the Regional Council, as well as assistance from the Far North District Council and the Department of Conservation.

This Restoration and Management Strategy focuses on putting in place structures and processes that enhance the management of Lake Omapere in the long term, including working closely with adjacent landowners. The focus is on Lake Omapere, with the knowledge that as the Lake and its catchment improves, the outlet and harbour will also benefit.

We wish to thank all those who have been involved in this project and look forward to continuing to work together to keep this Restoration and Management Strategy a living and evolving document.

Mike Kelleher
Chairman
Lake Omapere Trust

Mark Farnsworth
Chairman
Northland Regional Council

Vision:

Ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua

Waiaora

The protection of the Mauri of Takauere.	A healthy lake that sustains the people.	A return of native species of plants and animals to Lake Omapere.	Increased understanding of factors that affect water quality.	The community working together to protect and enhance the Lake.	Sustainable long-term management for the Lake and the catchment.
Ki uta ki tai	Matauranga	Rangatiratanga	Kotahitanga		
Ki uta ki tai actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water Quality Monitoring• Environmental Farm Management Plans• Aquatic Weed Management• Enhancement of Native Plants and Animals• Pest Fish Management Strategy• Addressing Downstream Impacts	Matauranga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge Base• Health and Wellbeing	Rangatiratanga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation into Lake Level• Outlet structures	Kotahitanga actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information Sharing• Hapu Involvement Strategy• Public Access to the Lake		
Actions that address all four elements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Funding and Support 2004/2005• Funding and Support 2006 onwards• Review of this Strategy• Regulatory Bodies Understanding of Process					



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1. About Lake Omapere

History of the Lake

Te Taniwha o Omapere

Ko tēnei Kaumātua a Tākauere he tino tapu. E kīa he Tohunga . I noho ia, ko ia anake i roto i te ngahere kauri. He kauri anake ngā rākau o Omapere. Kātahi ka pā te aitua ki a Tākauere, ka toro i te ahi ngā kauri me ngā kāpia, me ia katoa.

Koia i tīmata ai te roto waimāori o Omapere. E hara i te roto i te tuatahi, he ngahere kauri ke i ōna rā.

No te paunga o ngā kauri me nga Kāpia i te ahi, Kātahi ka puta ake te wai i te whenua, a, ka huri hei roto.

Ka huri te kaumatua nei a Tākauere hei taniwha. I mua noa atu i te taenga mai o tauwi ka kitea te tūporo nei e teretere ana i runga i te wai. I ētahi wā ka huri hei wīwī e teretere haere ana.

E anga ake ana te wai, e tere kē atu ana te wīwī. Pērā anō te tū poro, e ahu runga kē ana te tūporo, e ahu raro kē ana te wai, e ahu kē atu ana ki roto i te hau.

I ē tahi wā ka karawhiu te hiku ki Hokianga, ki te Waimate, ka karawhiu ano hoki ngā roto o te Ngāwhā. Ko ngā tohu, ko nga tumutumu o ngā tumutumu o ngā kauri kei reira tonu anō tae noa mai ki ēnei rā.

There once lived a very sacred old man called Tākauere. He was a Tohunga, with a deep knowledge of the children of Tane. He lived alone in a forest where there grew only huge kauri trees that produced kāpia gum.

One day this great forest of kauri trees caught fire and burnt to the ground. All of these magnificent kauri trees perished and Tākauere with them. Tākauere transformed himself into a taniwhā and where the great kauri trees once stood, Lake Omapere was formed.

Tākauere still lives in the Lake to this day, sometimes travelling through the underground waterways and hot pools to other watery places, including the Hokianga, the Waimate and Ngāwhā.

The stumps of these trees can also be seen today in the depths of the Lake. When a clump of wood or a log is seen floating in the opposite direction to the flow of the water, it is said that a well-known Rangatira from Ngapuhi has passed on.

The Importance of the Lake

Maori oral tradition illustrates that the Lake has had a varied history. Historically, the Lake was swampland covered in forest. About 700 years ago a fire removed the forest cover and drainage, in what was an already a swampy area, forming the Lake. Ngapuhi tradition refers to the Taniwha, Tākauere, who is the Kaitiaki for the Lake and the various underground systems that link it to Ngawha and the surrounding areas. For centuries, Lake Omapere has been an important place of habitation and an important fishery for many hapu. Various pa were located on or near the shores of the Lake. In the history of Ngapuhi, the Lake has had a high profile both in times of war and times of peace.

Scientific research confirms the geological history of the Lake and is consistent with Maori oral tradition. In the early 1900s, pakeha settlers moved into the area harvesting the kauri gum resources, flaxes and timber and also establishing farms around the Lake.

Lake Omapere is important to Ngapuhi as a source of torewai, tuna, raupo, kuta and harakeke. It is an important icon for Ngapuhi and the mauri of the Lake is linked to the well-being of the people. The Lake has considerable potential as an environmental, economic and recreational resource. It is also important to the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the people.



Photo: Historical Photo of Lake Omapere

Ownership of the Lake

These ancestral lands are of great importance to Ngapuhi who fought to retain the rights of ownership to this area and challenged the Crown to protect their customary ownership of the Lake through the Native Land Court. This process started in 1913 and after many attempts by the Crown to thwart the Maori case, the Court found in their favour in 1929. The Crown continued to block the process until 1955, when the ownership of Lake Omapere was finally vested in 17 Trustees representing the various hapu interests. The ownership of the land and the water of Lake Omapere was vested in trustees on behalf of the Ngapuhi tribe.

In tandem with the ownership of the Lake was the issue of Lake level. This remains an issue today. Legal and illegal moves to lower the Lake have punctuated the last 100 years. The level was lowered to reduce flooding and increase land use capacity of some properties surrounding the Lake and to provide for the railway line to Okaihau.

About the Lake

Lake Omapere is an important taonga to the hapu and iwi of Ngapuhi and has an important amenity value to the wider Kaikohe community. Situated between Kaikohe and Okaihau, it is the largest Lake in the Ngapuhi rohe and in the past was an abundant source of food and other resources.

The Lake is around 1200 hectares in area, has a fluctuating water level that is on average two metres deep, and approximately 4.7 kilometres across at its widest point.



Photo: Aerial Image of Lake Omapere

The Catchment and the People

Compared to the size of the Lake, the catchment is relatively small at 1700 hectares, however it is thought to be connected to a series of underground waterways. Springs and run-off feed into the Lake from the surrounding catchment.

The primary hapu with manawhenua around Lake Omapere are Te Uri-o-Hua, Ngatikorohue, Te Popoto, Te Ihutai, Honehone, and Ngatikuri. As the main outflow of the Lake runs to the Utakura River and on to the Hokianga Harbour, the Lake is vital to many other hapu communities, for their food and water supplies, and the associated environment.

The main land-uses of the catchment are a mix of dairying, drystock and lifestyle properties.

There is currently no formal public access to the Lake, however in the past the Lake was used for boating and rafting races. The Lake is often the subject of study by local schools and polytechnic students.



Photo: Tuna fisherman

2. Issues

Lake Omapere is Polluted

Lake Omapere is at serious risk of total environmental collapse with the water quality of the Lake being very poor. It has become nutrient enriched as a result of runoff from surrounding land over a long period of time and has recently been reclassified as being in a hypertrophic¹ state. The Lake was further degraded by the invasion of equally damaging oxygen weed in the 1970s that thrived in the highly enriched water of the Lake, smothering out native species.

The weed collapsed in Lake Omapere in 1985, causing severe blue-green algae blooms. Silver carp released in 1986 were unsuccessful at controlling both the oxygen weed and algal blooms. The oxygen weed re-infested the Lake covering 100% of the Lake by 1999. However, the weed died off again and algal blooms returned in 2001/2002.

Algae reduces water clarity, forms surface scum, reduces oxygen, alters water colour, creating unpleasant odours and toxins. Large numbers of grass carp were introduced into the Lake to control the oxygen weed in 2000 & 2002 which led to the complete eradication of oxygen weed. However, this was only a short-term solution and while there is no more oxygen weed in the Lake, algal blooms are still occurring.

The condition of the Lake poses serious threats for the Lake outflows, including the Utaura River and the Hokianga Harbour. Due to the poor quality of the water, it is no longer safe for people or animals to drink the water from the Lake. The water quality has also affected recreational uses such as swimming, waka ama and boating.



Photo: Mawhe Pa site

1. Hypertrophic state means the lake has high nutrient levels, water quality is poor, and the lake has frequent occurrences of algae blooms and/or weed problems.

Loss of Native Plants & Animals and Spread of Exotic Species

In 2004 & 2005, surveys found no submerged exotic or native plants currently growing in the water of Lake Omapere. However, in the remaining wetlands areas around the Lake's edge there are some native plants including raupo and kuta.

The grass carp and silver carp that were introduced to control the oxygen weed remain in the Lake. Goldfish, bullhead catfish and mosquito fish have historically been recorded in the Lake. Goldfish are still abundant in the Lake. In addition to the weed species in the Lake, other species such as alligator weed and parrots feather are found in the waterways within the catchment and around the Lake margins.

While native plants have disappeared, native species of tuna, torewai, planarians (flatworms), two snail species, dragonflies, damselflies and sponges are found in the Lake. The nationally endangered Northland mudfish has been recorded at eight wetland locations within the Lake Omapere catchment. Historically, a variety of other fish and invertebrate species were known to have lived in the Lake. These included common bullies, smelt, fresh water cockles and pipi. However recent surveys have not found evidence of these species. Food supplies from the Lake, Utakura River, and the Hokianga Harbour are regularly rendered unusable including tuna, kanae, karehu and inanga.

The Lake supports a diverse habitat for bird species. Twenty-one species of birds have been observed within the catchment area with the most dominant species being the native kawau and the introduced black swan. Other species of birds include kotuku, kotare, and spur-winged plover.

Note: Appendix 3 contains a list of the common and scientific names for plants and animals referred to within the Strategy.



Photos: Pest goldfish, freshwater mussels, tuna

Research and Knowledge Gaps

While a lot of research has been undertaken on the Lake, there are still knowledge gaps that need to be addressed. Some examples are the effects of underground waterways on the Lake and its effect on downstream catchments, the Hokianga Harbour and the health of the people.

Also of importance is providing advice on the effects of the Lake level the implications of raising the water level or maintaining its current level. Such information will assist the Trustees in decision making on the future of the Lake.

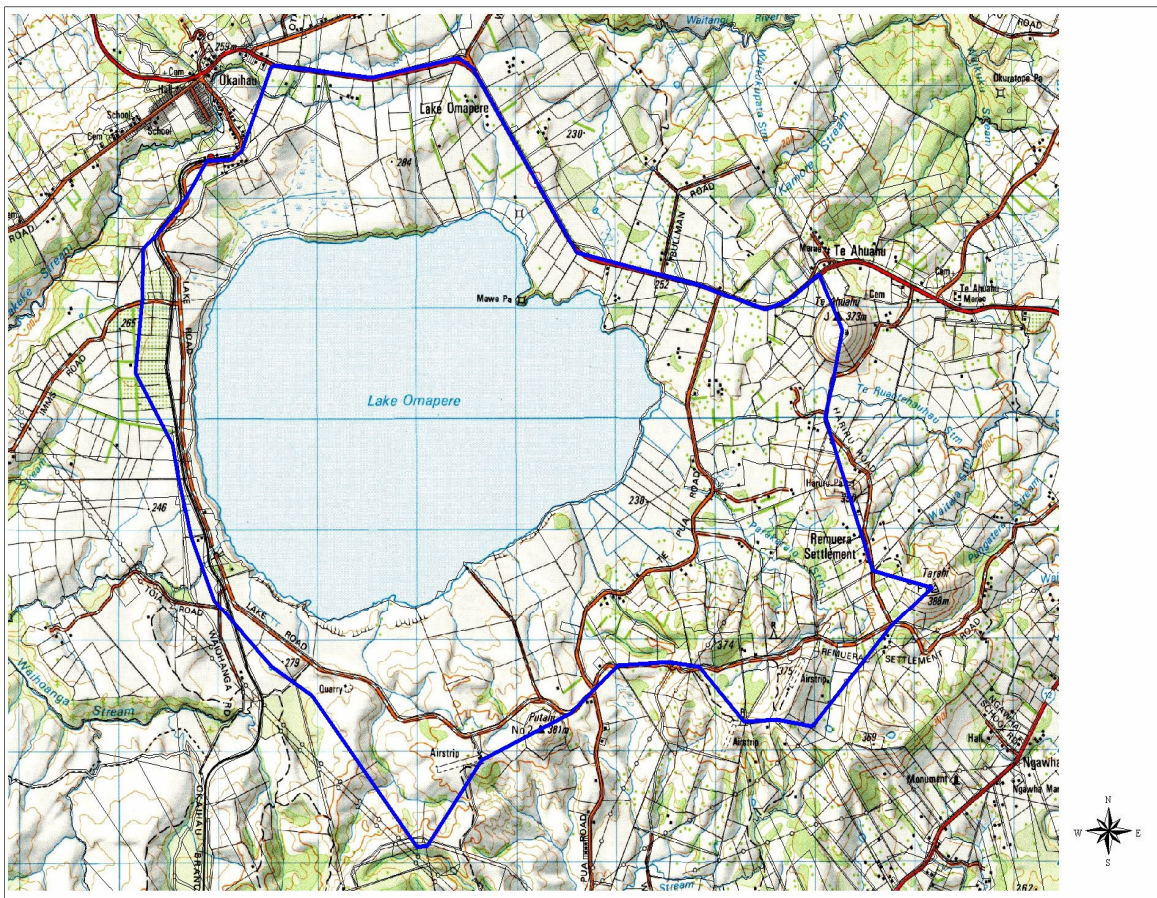


Image: Lake Omapere Catchment - shown in blue



3. Managing the future of the Lake

This Strategy is about putting in place the structures and processes that enhance the management of the Lake. This includes the need to develop a long term vision and Strategy for the Lake. An integrated management approach is necessary to ensure that processes are not fragmented and piecemeal.

The health of the Lake will not be improved by the actions of a few; it is necessary to engage stakeholders to make a difference. There are big opportunities to work together. While the exercising of Kaitiakitanga can only be undertaken by Maori, it is recognised that the future of the Lake is dependent upon many individuals and agencies working together². Any actions to protect the Lake require adequate and coordinated regulatory systems that assist the Trustees. Collective action also requires effective communication and information sharing.

This is a voluntary Strategy that works towards improving the health of Lake Omapere by strengthening the Trustees to exercise Kaitiakitanga. The Strategy provides actions and desired outcomes under four elements: Ki uta ki tai, Matauranga, Rangatiratanga and Kotahitanga. When all these elements are in balance the Lake will be returned to a healthy state and again it will be able to sustain the people and the environment.



Photo: The Lake in Use

2. Appendix 1 contains a description of the community involvement in Lake Omapere and their roles and interests in the Lake.



4. *Waiora*

Waiora is a term that we have agreed to use to describe the life giving element and the successful outcome. When all the contributing factors are in balance, the Lake will be restored to a healthy condition and the people and the wider environment will benefit.

Waiora is the end product or the vision that is to be achieved, and will result in the following:

A healthy Lake that sustains the people

- The ability to use the Lake and downstream water as a source for drinking water.
- The use of the Lake for recreational activities such as swimming, waka ama and boating.
- The ability to harvest shellfish and other food sources from the Lake.
- The Lake doesn't have an adverse effect on the ability to harvest food sources from the rivers which feed into and out of the Lake and the Hokianga Harbour.
- Being able to use the Lake for economic gains by Lake Omapere Trustees.
- Supporting the land use surrounding the Lake so that the effects are reduced.

A return of native species of plants and animals to Lake Omapere

- Return of raupo, kuta, harakeke, torewai and tuna to the Lake and its margins.
- Restoration of wetlands surrounding the Lake.
- Pest plants and animals are controlled so that native species can return.

The protection of the Mauri of Tākauere and Lake Omapere

Increased knowledge and understanding of the Mauri of Lake Omapere and everything within it

- Access and sharing of up-to-date information on the Lake.
- Increased knowledge of the effects of the wider catchment on Lake Omapere.
- Increased knowledge of the effects of Lake Omapere on the wider catchment.

Everybody working together to protect and enhance Lake Omapere.

Sustainable long-term management for Lake Omapere and the wider catchment

- An informed decision on the long-term Lake level.



5. Kaitiakitanga

Ma te mauri kei Omapere ka ora te whenua

Because the well-being of this land resides at Omapere, so it is in everyone's interest to protect and take care of it

Tiaki, its basic meaning is to guard, depending upon the context in which it is used. It also means to preserve, to keep, conserve, nurture, protect and watch over. The prefix 'kai' denotes the agent of that action of 'tiaki'. Therefore 'kaitiaki' is the preserver, the keeper, conserver, nurturer and protector. The addition of 'tanga' denotes preservation, conservation and protection.

The kaitiaki is the tribal guardian who can be spiritual such as those left behind by deceased ancestors to watch over their descendants and to protect sacred places or wahi tapu. They are also mediums between the spiritual realm and the human world. There are many representations of kaitiaki but the most common ones are animals, birds, insects and fish. In many cases taniwha are the guardians of water ways or specific areas and their role is one of protection.

Tikanga Whakaaro Key Concepts in Maori Culture, Barlow C (1994)

As the Lake is physically connected to the lands and waterways that stretch from its catchment to the sea and beyond, numerous hapu have an interest in the Lake. Each hapu has a responsibility to exercise Kaitiakitanga over its natural environment.

Kaitiakitanga can be viewed as a range of inter-connecting concepts that feed into each other and provide a cultural framework for the management of the natural environment and its resources. The view is based on whakapapa; genealogies of creation, the interwoven network of ancestry, and the ways that the people have ordered their lives through the centuries. It is part of the overall picture of Maori as tangata whenua.

Environmental knowledge was fundamental to the survival of whanau, hapu, and iwi as collectives. Tohunga had vast knowledge about the land and its resources, and the myriad of place names bind the history to the land. This knowledge governed tribal resources, provided control mechanisms, and helped to create social order. It also influenced the way relationships with other iwi were conducted. This was reinforced by the Declaration of Independence and the Te Tiriti/ Treaty of Waitangi signed by Tai Tokerau Rangatira at Waitangi, Waimate North, and Mangunu. Article Two of the Treaty guaranteed undisturbed possession of lands, forests and fisheries. It is difficult to separate the land and its natural resources from the people.

Ways to Achieve Waioira

In terms of developing this Strategy, four elements have been identified as important to achieving Waioira. These elements are:

- Ki uta ki tai;
- Matauranga;
- Rangatiratanga; and
- Kotahitanga.

Ki uta ki tai

Describes the total connectedness of the natural environment. It refers to the continuum between the inland environment right through to the coast and beyond. Kaitiakitanga is driven by the notion that nothing can be considered in isolation from its total environment. From a strategic point of view, Lake Omapere needs to be placed into a broader environmental and cultural context rather than just a focus on the Lake itself.

Ki uta ki tai Focus

Lake Omapere will not be restored through isolated initiatives or a narrow focus on the immediate problems within the catchment. The causes of the deterioration of the Lake are diverse. The Lake's condition and the impacts and problems that this causes are felt by many and not just within the immediate catchment.

Matauranga

Can be broadly viewed as knowledge or teachings that underpin Kaitiakitanga. There is important knowledge that relates to the Lake itself, the catchment both above and beneath the ground, the whole eco-system and microclimate connected to the Lake, and the people and their histories. From this knowledge, a better understanding of Lake Omapere can be gained and sustainable practices can be developed.

Matauranga Focus

There is an urgent need to focus on knowledge about Lake Omapere and its context environmentally, historically, and spiritually. Gathering and sharing of knowledge is required. This will enhance the cultural indicators that are appropriate for the long term monitoring of the health of the Lake and its environment.

Rangatiratanga

Conveys the sense of authority, control and responsibility inherent in the exercising of Kaitiakitanga. There is a need to ensure appropriate structures and practices are in place to support the long-term restoration of the Lake. These need to be supported by relationships that support the Trustee's to fulfil their responsibilities.

Rangatiratanga Focus

It is important to make sure that the Trust has the necessary blend of skills, experience, and knowledge to underpin the exercising of Kaitiakitanga.

Kotahitanga

Refers to a unity of purpose in relation to Lake Omapere. It is essential the collective strength of all those with an interest in the Lake are brought together. Setting out clear roles and identifying the contributions different stakeholders can make will achieve this. If relationships are developed and maintained, a sustained improvement will be made in the long term.

Kotahitanga Focus

The most important ingredient for the successful restoration of the Lake is unity of purpose. A successful Strategy process will do a lot to encourage kotahitanga through bringing people and interested groups into the project.

6. *Actions*

This action plan focuses on the key things that need to happen for the health of Lake Omapere to be improved. Some of the actions are short and medium term initiatives, while others are long term or ongoing. This part of the Strategy is organised around the kaitiakitanga framework headings of Ki uta ki tai, Matauranga, Rangatiratanga, and Kotahitanga.

Ki uta ki tai

1. **Water quality monitoring programme**
2. **Environmental Farm Management Plans**
3. **Aquatic Weed Management Plan**
4. **Enhancement of native plants and animals**
5. **Pest Fish Management Strategy**
6. **Addressing downstream impacts**

Before



After



Photos: "Before" and "after" shots of restoration and planting work at the Lake outlet

Action 1. Water Quality Monitoring Programme

This action promotes the continuation of water quality monitoring that is currently being undertaken and also looks at the identification of new monitoring initiatives. It is important that the results of the monitoring are made available to all stakeholders.

The Northland Regional Council with support from the Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Northland Regional Council to continue to monitor water quality. This currently includes: temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and water clarity from five routine sites (106460 – 63 and 100501), and to take samples for laboratory analysis of suspended solids, chlorophyll α, pH, nitrogen, phosphorus and algae identification. 	Monthly when above 15000 cells/ml then reduce to bi-monthly. To be reviewed annually.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make this monitoring information available twice a year on: http://www.nrc.govt.nz/about.us/special.events/lake.omapere. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the option of carrying out a survey of groundwater inputs into Lake Omapere. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve Trustee's in monitoring processes of water quality in Lake Omapere 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the opportunity for other groups (for example schools) to undertake studies and/or monitoring. 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Cultural Health Index to assist in monitoring water quality in Lake Omapere. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate information held by the Regional Council on the cumulative effects of farming on the lake, including discharge consents, water takes etc. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify long-term funding and support sources if required for continued monitoring of the water quality of the lake. 	As required

Action 2. Environmental Farm Management Plans

These are voluntary plans developed where the Lake Omapere Trustees and the Land Management staff from the Northland Regional Council are working with individual landowners to:

- Provide information to the landowner or manager making environmental decisions for their property; and
- Integrate environmental planning with other on-farm objectives, industry best management practices, as well as wider catchment goals; and
- Achieve the landowners' property goals by tailoring the Environmental Farm Management Plan (Farm Plan) to individual property needs.

A copy of the table of contents for the Farm Plans is contained in Appendix 2.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with support from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a process for meeting with farmers and developing farm plans, including identification of landowners. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact all landowners adjoining the Lake explaining project, outcomes and the intent of farm plans. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake initial property visits. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up of site visits with those farmers not available during the initial property visits. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have ready a summary of farm visits prepared – revision if necessary of approach. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and undertake second round of farm visits to start farm mapping. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with fertiliser suppliers the preparation of nutrient models for specific farms. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop farm plans for specific farms. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, assist landowners to undertake recommendations in farm plans, including investigating funding and support. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least twice yearly updates to landowners on actions from this Strategy, including monitoring results. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and undertake a celebration of success and promotion of the work achieved by landowners on their properties. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake, with landowner's permission, a yearly follow up visit to discuss success and concerns with farm plans. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop future partnership and consultation structure. 	December 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage landowners to report any major changes to farm practices to ensure that their farm plan remains relevant. 	Ongoing

Action 3. Riparian Planting and Wetland Restoration Programme

Through working with landowners on the development of Environmental Farm Management Plans, there are areas where replanting and restoration work can be undertaken. Two very successful community planting days were undertaken in 2005 and the momentum and enthusiasm to undertake planting days in the future has been set. By developing planting and restoration plans, support can be given to the landowner for planting and ongoing maintenance of the restored areas. It could also provide for things such as ensuring that sufficient plants can be sourced.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with support from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a planting and wetland restoration programme for land surrounding the Lake including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When properties will be planted• What plants will be used• Maintenance of land once planted• Develop a plan/scheme for weed control in riparian areas.• Develop a plan/scheme for pest animal control.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Generic plans due Sept 06. Ongoing for specific sites.</p> <p>Generic plans due Sept 06. Ongoing for specific sites.</p>

Action 4. Aquatic Weed Management Plan

Northland Regional Council staff, Lake Omapere Trustee's and other volunteers carried out a detailed survey of all significant farm drains and streams in November 2004. The length of all the waterways was walked and all aquatic plants found were documented.

The Aquatic Weed Management Plan contains options for managing other potentially invasive weeds in the catchment such as alligator weed. This includes the costs, successes and impacts of each control or eradication method. Work has been undertaken by the Regional Council to remove the pest plants, swamp lily and alligator weed from waterways within the catchment.

The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake a survey of aquatic weeds within Lake Omapere.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake an aquatic weed survey of all waterways leading into or out of the lake.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an aquatic weed management programme to manage the aquatic weeds identified from the survey.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the benefits and costs of certain aquatic weed control methods.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the aquatic weed management programme.	Five yearly or if weed status changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake or direct to undertake aquatic weed control activities as recommended in the aquatic weed management programme.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake follow-up aquatic weed survey of the aquatic weeds in the Lake	Every two years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake follow-up survey of the waterways leading into and out of the lake and lake margins	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public awareness and education via radio and other media on spread of aquatic weeds	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs on main entry points to lake on stopping the spread of aquatic weeds	Completed Updated at least every five years after
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For training of whanau and hapu in aquatic weed control and identification refer to Action 15. Training.	

Action 5. Enhancement of Native Plants and Animals

As water quality improves, the ability to enhance biodiversity within the Lake increases by allowing the re-introduction of species to the Lake that historically existed.

Actions can also be undertaken to improve biodiversity on the Lake margins, within the wetlands and on land within the catchment. Monitoring of species is also important as a means of ascertaining the health of the Lake.

Animal Species	
The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with NIWA, undertake a survey of freshwater mussels in Lake Omapere. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a report on the freshwater mussel populations in the Lake and make recommendations to enhance the population. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issues such as traditional reseeding techniques, Matauranga Maori and mussel survival. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake experimental trials of freshwater mussels in the lake to determine the success of reseeding. 	Completed by 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Omapere Trust to decide whether or not mussel reseeding occurs and if so, in what way. 	Late 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake freshwater fish surveys. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of the investigations to date on birdlife and invertebrate life in Lake Omapere. 	Completed
Plant Species	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with NIWA, undertake sediment samples to determine the potential for regeneration of native submerged species within Lake Omapere. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with NIWA, undertake germination experiments of aquatic native plants. 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options of where aquatic plants can be held and maintained at Lake Omapere. (refer to Action 15. Training) 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement options for growing and maintaining aquatic plants at Lake Omapere until such time as the water quality is improved in the lake sufficient for replanting. (refer to Action 15. Training) 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify future lake and catchment enhancement projects/ requirements and possible funding sources, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research projects Monitoring projects Plant and Animal enhancement and protection 	Ongoing
The Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a native plant nursery and undertake native seed collection. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use plants propagated for restoration work on the margins of the lake. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for students of local polytechnic to undertake research work. 	Ongoing

Action 6. Pest Fish Management Strategy

Presently the only exotic fish species confirmed as existing in Lake Omapere are goldfish, silver carp and grass carp. In 2001, several bullhead catfish were found in Lake Omapere, however they have all been eradicated. Catfish can have a significant detrimental effect on a lake ecosystem.

It is important that fish surveys are continued in the future. This will identify any exotic species that have been introduced to the Lake, ensuring appropriate management action is implemented and if possible eradication.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with advice as required from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan carp removal process.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain permit from Ministry of Fisheries.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake pest fish surveys	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a Pest Fish Management Strategy.	As required

Action 7. Downstream Impacts

Improving the health of the water in Lake Omapere is a long term project. It is recognised that the water quality in the Lake has effects downstream of it. Whilst the focus is on improving the health of the Lake which will improve the downstream waterways, there are possible interim solutions that may assist in improving the quality of water leaving the Lake.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In conjunction with NIWA, prepare a report on the management options that can be used to reduce impacts downstream of Lake Omapere.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the above study to identify those options that are feasible including the means to undertake them (funding requirements, people required etc).	December 2006

Matauranga

- 8. Knowledge Base
- 9. Health and Wellbeing



Photo: Involvement in the Lake

Action 8. Knowledge Base

Gathering and sharing of knowledge is required including both cultural and scientific knowledge. Actions can be undertaken to build up the knowledge base about Lake Omapere as well as make information accessible to the whole community.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Wananga, including face to face meetings, and visiting local schools. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate all information on Lake Omapere into one source or database as a resource that can be used by the whole community. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the development of a Lake Omapere website. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure regular updates occur on the Lake Omapere section of the NRC website. 	At least twice a year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how to transfer scientific knowledge back to Trustee's for example on Torewai, Pipi, Kuta, Raupo and Tuna. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how to transfer cultural knowledge back to Trustee's for example on Torewai, Pipi, Kuta, Raupo and Tuna. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an education and awareness campaign on the spread of weeds that affect Lake Omapere, the waterways feeding into and out of it and the adjacent land. (refer to Action 4. Aquatic Weed Management) 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate relevant new Trustee Orientation programmes in relation to the Lake Omapere Restoration Strategy 	As required

Action 9. Health and Wellbeing

Monitoring of the Lake is only one means of assessing the health of Lake Omapere and its wider catchment, it can also be assessed through investigating the health of the people. and ensuring that these are not dealt with as separate identities or in isolation.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate the Memorandums of Understanding that exist between the Councils and Northland Health on notifiable illnesses and investigate similar agreements with the Lake Omapere Trust.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inform and bring onboard health Trustee's working in the vicinity of Lake Omapere, to ensure that they are aware of the work being undertaken on the lake. Also ensure the Lake Omapere Trustee's are aware of work being undertaken by the health Trustee's.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate, in conjunction with Northland Health, information on illnesses that could be a result of the poor water quality in Lake Omapere.	September 2006



10. Investigation into Lake Level

11. Outlet structures



Photo: Lake outlet

Action 10. Investigation into Lake Level

The decision on the desired water level of Lake Omapere is not the aim or intent of this Strategy. It is one that is to be made by the Lake Omapere Trust and its beneficiaries. However, it is recognised that knowledge of the historic levels of the Lake and the quality of the water within the Lake is a critical consideration in decision-making. This is important where changes in water level may effect any remedial work undertaken on the land surrounding the Lake and restoration work on indigenous wetlands surrounding the Lake.

The Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider implications of the report from LOPMG on lake level rise (see below)	
The Lake Omapere Project Management Group will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research and collate information on historic levels from<ul style="list-style-type: none">Oral history,Surveys/maps,Level changes/works,Archives and native land court minutes.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Undertake mapping and modelling of the lake level - modelling of seasonal and raised levels: map produced with raised levels in half metre increments and showing property boundaries of landowners and the aerial photo of the lake.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If necessary to confirm certificate of title boundaries, investigate and secure funding and undertake surveys.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Northland Regional Council and/or Lake Omapere Project Management Group to prepare a report outlining the implications (including legal and any resource consent requirements) of lake level rise and the necessary considerations of raising the level of the lake.	November 2006

Action 11. Outlet structures

Maintenance and repair of the rock walls on the outlet from Lake Omapere is not specific to the matter of water quality, however it must be considered in terms of the ongoing health of the Lake.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with advice from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss maintenance of rock wall and further action required.	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use monitoring checks of the staff gauges in the lake and the river to check whether the wall requires maintenance.	At least monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify contractors for rock wall maintenance.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repair rock wall	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain from NIWA a proposal to investigate ways of improving water quality downstream of the lake. For example, containing the water in summer when the algal bloom is at its worst and only releasing it from the lake when the algal levels are lower. (refer to Action 7. Downstream Impacts)	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the cost and construction of an alternative to the rock wall.	September 2006



Kotahitanga

- 12. Information Sharing
- 13. Hapu Involvement Strategy
- 14. Public Access to the Lake



Photos: Involvement in the Lake

Action 12. Information Sharing

The Lake Omapere Project Management Group (LOPMG) that was established to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Management Fund may not remain when the funding ends in 2006. However, it is vital to maintain the momentum and strategic links that have been formed by LOPMG and its strength as a group that brought together different stakeholders to discuss the future of the Lake. There is also a need to bring together other groups and include them in the decision making process, including those downstream of the Lake.

The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for maintaining links between people and groups once the Sustainable Management Funding has been completed. Such actions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing regular meetings of a group such as LOPMG. 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop any Memoranda or protocols necessary. 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the best ways to keep people informed (for example website, radio, mail outs, one on one discussions) and prepare a procedure for ongoing information sharing in 2006 	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure information is provided at least twice a year to the community on Lake Omapere using the methods identified above including annual 'stakeholder meetings or monitoring forums where the community is invited to participate. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate current 'points of contact' for people wanting to know about Lake Omapere, including reports, information on issues about Lake Omapere and whether or not there are alternative options for a centralised contact point. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a strategy for involving schools in activities such as planting days and monitoring work. 	By December 2006
The Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Far North District Council to establish a system that ensures when land ownership around the lake changes that the new owners are aware of the Lake Omapere Restoration and Management Strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the lake to the Trustees, The health of the lake, and The actions being undertaken to improve the health of the lake, including any relevant Environmental Farm Management Plans. 	March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Far North District Council to ensure the information listed above is placed on LIM reports so that it is given out when people make enquires. 	July 2006

Action 13. Hapu Involvement

This Strategy aims to build up the knowledge base about Lake Omapere and make it accessible to whanau, hapu and the wider community. There are also great opportunities to get interested whanau and hapu involved and committed in the long term.

The Lake Omapere Trust will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify hapu across the whole catchment and create or continue to communicate with them on the lake as required.	Ongoing

Action 14. Public Access to the Lake

Currently public access to the Lake is restricted and only possible by gaining permission to cross private land. The use of Lake Omapere is at the discretion of the Lake Omapere Trustee's. Investigation into the long term options for public access and the effects need to be explored. This is particularly important with the potential for risk to human health until such time as the Lake's water quality is improved.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with support from Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate options for public access to the Lake, including use of Far North District Council/ Department of Conservation land, purchasing of land or use of paper road.	September 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate types of access and use of the lake (for example walking, picnics and waka ama) and how these are affected by the current health of the lake.	September 2006

Actions that Address all four elements of kaitiakitanga

- 15. Training**
- 16. Regulatory Bodies Understanding of Process**
- 17. Funding and Support 2004/2005**
- 18. Funding and Support 2006 onwards**
- 19. Review of this Strategy**

Insert photo

Action 15. Training

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
• Undertake training in aquatic weed control and identification.	As required
• Undertake training in OSH requirements	As required
• Undertake training in aquatic plant germination including identification of appropriate locations at Lake Omapere to nursery plants until such time as the water quality improves sufficiently for replanting (refer Action 5)	As required
• Lake Omapere Trustees to pass on the knowledge and training gained above as appropriate	As required

Action 16. Regulatory Organisations Understanding of Process

Inclusion and involvement of regulatory organisations such as the Department of Conservation, Far North District Council and Northland Regional Council is dependent on these groups having a good understanding of Lake Omapere, its history and its people.

There is also a need to investigate the ways and means that the Trustee's of the Lake can be involved in any decision making on activities or actions that would affect Lake Omapere.

The Lake Omapere Trust, with assistance from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Korero at meetings with Far North District and Northland Regional Councillors (for example through the Landcare Committee at the Northland Regional Council), the Department of Conservation etc.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get involved in planning and regulatory processes that affect the lake, for example through submissions.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that new staff to the Far North District Council, Northland Regional Council and the Department of Conservation that will be working on activities within and around the Lake Omapere catchment are informed of the history and importance of the Lake to Ngapuhi.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council and Department of Conservation to investigate options for databases such as GIS and LIMS being tagged with an advisory note to contact the Lake Omapere Trustees when activities are being undertaken that may affect the lake.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council and Department of Conservation to ensure that the Trustees of the lake are informed early on of planning or regulatory decisions that may affect the lake.	As required

Action 17. Funding and Support 2004 / 2005

The Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund provided financial resourcing for the 2004 / 2005 period with the funding ending in July 2006. The Lake Omapere Trust, Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council, Department of Conservation and Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi provided in-kind resourcing.

The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allocate funding towards achieving requirements set out in Sustainable Management Fund.	As required until July 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information on deliverables and costs of deliverables to MFE in format required. Also provide this information to LOPMG members.	As required until July 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly review the costs to date against the deliverables and revise budget as necessary.	As required until July 2006

Action 18. Funding and support 2006 onwards

The identification of future/ongoing funding sources and resources is essential before the MFE Sustainable Management Funding ends. This is because alternative resourcing for ongoing protection and enhancement of Lake Omapere is necessary to ensure the project's continuation and success. This is likely to be derived from continued voluntary work, funding based on specific projects and other sources.

Any budgeting provisions by the NRC for activities within the catchment of Lake Omapere will be made through the annual planning round of the Long Term Council Community Plan for Northland (LTCCP).

The Lake Omapere Trust, with support from the Northland Regional Council, will:	Action:
• Decide upon priority action areas in this Strategy where funding/ resourcing is required.	July 2006
• Identify funding sources to address funding and make applications in accordance with funds requirements.	July 2006
• Identify resourcing requirements (people, information etc) and what is required to obtain these.	July 2006

Action 19. Review of this Strategy

The preparation, implementation and review of this Strategy is important to ensure that the vision and actions are current and relevant.

The Lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council will:	Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Annually review the strategy, and in particular the actions, to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the strategy.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Upon request of either party, review all or part of the strategy.	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update and amend strategy as required.	As required

Lake Omapere Project Management Group

The Lake Omapere Trustees and the Northland Regional Council made a joint application to the Ministry for the Environment's (MfE) Sustainable Management Fund in 2003. With the funding granted, the Lake Omapere Trust (LOT) and the Northland Regional Council (NRC) jointly established the "Lake Omapere Project Management Group" (LOPMG) in July 2003. The Group comprises of the following members:

- Three appointees from the LOT and a consultant; and
- Three appointees from the NRC; and
- A member of Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi; and
- A representative from the Far North District Council.

Other members can be co-opted by LOPMG to ensure that the necessary skills and experience is available throughout the project to achieve the projects goals.

The scope of the LOPMG is to develop and implement a voluntary Strategy that will lead towards the improvement of the health of Lake Omapere (this Strategy) and assist LOT in its role as kaitiaki. All projects are undertaken with the intention of improving water quality and then ultimately, the overall health of the Lake will improve.

Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi

Ngapuhi is the largest Iwi with 103,000 members. The Ngapuhi Iwi takiwa boundaries cover the middle far north district from South Hokianga through to Mangakahia, across to the Bay of Islands to the south-western Whangarei district. While this area is the 'home' of Ngapuhi, 78% live in other parts of the country, mainly around the Auckland region, the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi (TRAION) has a simple vision – 'kia tu tika te whare tapu o Ngapuhi' - 'that the sacred house of Ngapuhi stand firm', to become a body that all Ngapuhi can participate in and be proud of. TRAION is the representative body that speaks and works for Ngapuhi – to make sure that their collective interests and aspirations are looked after.

Lake Omapere is considered a Ngapuhi Taonga and lies in the heart of the Ngapuhi Rohe. Hence the vested interest of the Runanga as the iwi Authority for the hapu and beneficiaries that own the Lake.

Far North District Council

In addition to the Far North District Council being a voluntary member of the Lake Omapere Project Management Group, the Council also has vested interest in the Lake in terms of any possible impacts the Strategy, and other projects, may have in relation to the Council's role and responsibilities under the Resource Management Act.

Other Stakeholders

The following groups or individuals are considered to have an important part to play if the long-term vision for Lake Omapere is to be achieved. Their expertise and interests are provided in brief.

Who	Expertise	Interest
Adjoining land owners	Farm management Planting Riparian management Fencing	Water use Lake level Pest management Amenity
Department of Conservation	Ecosystem management and enhancement Pest control	Maintenance and enhancement of indigenous ecosystems
Fish and Game New Zealand	Recreation management	Public recreation access Amenity Landscape
Research Institutes e.g. the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)	Scientific Natural processes	Research
Ministry for the Environment	Scientific Natural processes and policy	Provision of sustainable management funding Enhancement of regionally and nationally significant or unique habitats and ecosystems
Te Puni Kokiri	Principal advisor to government of Maori interest	Promote and represent Maori and their interests at central government level
Land Care Trust	Facilitating, brokering, information sharing, developing networks, collaboration, scientific	Sustainable land management through community involvement Promoting biodiversity
QEII Trust	Promoting open space covenants (a legal agreement between QEII and landowners)	To protect in perpetuity. Biodiversity on private land
Schools	Environmental education	Educational
General Public	Planting/ monitoring programmes	Educational Amenity Landscape

Appendix 2 Table of Contents of an Environmental Farm Management Plan

The preparation of Environmental Farm Management Plans is farm specific and prepared in agreement with the property owner. As such, these have not been reproduced within this Strategy. As a general guide, the following is the table of contents for each plan prepared.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Property Summary

Property Map

Section 1

Land Resource Assessment

1. What is a Land Use Capability Assessment?
2. Land Use Capability Units (LUC's) for farm.
3. Summary of farms Land Use Capability Units and map.
4. What are Land Management Units (LMU's)?
5. Land Management Units for farm.
6. Land description.
7. Present land use.
8. Management factors.
9. Limitations to land use.
10. Recommended land Use.

Section 2

Land & Water Resource Management

Environmental considerations on farm:

1. Water quality.
2. Soil health.
3. Planting – riparian, erosion control, shade and shelter.
4. Plant and animal pests.
5. Biodiversity.
6. Agrichemical storage and use.
7. Fertiliser Code of Practice.
8. Environmental challenges with minimum requirements.

Appendices

- a. Maps – aerial, soils, LUC's & LMU's.
- b. Recommended works and action plan.
- c. Soil and Water Plan – rules related to farming activities.
- d. Advice pamphlets on relevant plant and animal pest control.

Appendix 3 Scientific and Common Names

	Common Name	Scientific Name
Raupo	Bullrushes	<i>Typha orientalla</i>
Harakeke	Flax	<i>Phormium tenax</i>
Kuta	Freshwater rush	<i>Eleocharis sphacelata</i>
	Swamp lily	<i>Ottelia ovalifolia</i>
	Alligator weed	<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>
Tuna	Long fin eel	<i>Anguilla dieffenbachia</i>
Tuna	Short finned eel	<i>Anguilla australis</i>
Kanae	Grey Mullet	<i>Mugil cephalus</i>
Karehau	Freshwater cockle	
Inanga	Whitebait	<i>Galaxias maculatus</i>
	Northland Mudfish	<i>Neochanna heleioides</i>
Torewai	Freshwater mussels	<i>Hyridella menziesi</i>
	Planarians (flatworms)	
	Snail species	<i>Potamopyrgus antipodarum</i> <i>Lymnaea tomentosa</i>
	Dragon flies	Odonata
	Damsel flies	Odonata
	Mosquito fish	<i>Gambusia affinis</i>
	Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus</i>
	Brown bullhead cat-	<i>Amieurus nebulosus</i>
	Sponges	Porifera
Kawau	Native black shag	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>
Wani	Black swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>
Kotuku	White faced heron	<i>Ardea novaehollandiae</i>
Kotare	Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon sancta vagans</i>
	Spur winged plover	<i>Vanellus miles novaehollandiae</i>
	Blue-green algae	Cyanobacteria
	Common Smelt	<i>Retropinna Retropinna</i>
	Common Bullies	<i>Gobiomorphus cotidianus</i>