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To: Greater Wellington Regional Council

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From: Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

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Submission on the Local Water Done Well consultation

The purpose of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust (Porirua Harbour Trust) (PHACCT)

The Porirua Harbour Trust (PHACCT) exists to promote the sustainable management of the Porirua Harbour and its catchments by advocating for the sustainable management of the harbour's ecosystem and its catchments and fostering understanding of ecological and environmental issues associated with the harbour and its catchments through education and community awareness

The purpose of Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI) is:

Consistent with its ecological values, encouraging, protecting, fostering the natural, historic and cultural values of the Pāuatahanui Inlet.

Our position on the two proposals

PHACCT support's the Greater Wellington Regional Council's preferred option for a multi-council owned new water organisation.

Networks are intertwined

The most compelling reason for a multi-council owned new water organisation is that the current networks providing potable water, waste water processing and storm water management are intrinsically joined. We believe more efficient and effective management of all three waters can only be achieved under the asset ownership and stewardship of a single organisation which has the resources and mandate to run and improve services across the board. For example, drinking water is sourced and transported from catchments in the Hutt Valley and beyond. The Porirua Wastewater plant not only serves the residents of Porirua City but Wellington City's northern suburbs.

Similarly, the Porirua Stream carries storm water and any attendant pollutants from the northern suburbs of Wellington City to the receiving waters being Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour. Cross connected waste and storm pipes also pollute catchments and ultimately the harbour itself.

Preferred model has access to more finance

While the Trust is wary about the accuracy of modelling showing future water charges being less than the modified status-quo option, a new entity would have access to larger loans than territorial local authorities or the Regional Council. Given the size of the current infrastructure deficit, solutions will entail significantly more expenditure than is currently available from ratepayer and territorial local authority loans.

Commitment to Te Mana o te Wai supported

The Trust fully supports all the outcomes sought by iwi/Maori. These include a commitment to Te Mana o te wai. The outcomes sought in Te Mana o te Wai endure beyond changing political cycles and direction.

Pledges in Harbour Accord must transfer to any new entity

If the five councils can agree on a multi-council approach, PHACCT urges that the pledges of GWRC, WCC, PCC and Ngāti Toa Rangitira in the Te Awarua o Porirua Harbour Accord signed on 6 February 2025 be retained and that the commitments made on behalf of Wellington Water be transferred to the new entity. It has taken too long and a huge effort to get the Accord in place to see it abandoned through organisational change.

We request that GWRC reinforces its commitment to the Harbour Accord by ensuring it is included in any statement of expectations that the Council will have with the new entity.

GWRC should continue to play its part in improving the quality of stream and harbour water quality

Creation of a new water company, taking over assets and liabilities of the Councils for the three waters systems, should in no way be seen as an abrogation of the commitment made by the GWRC to work for restoration of healthy catchments and harbours.

Whichever model is adopted for a new water entity, GWRC has indicated its intention to remain as a significant land-owner of water catchment areas and parks. Work on pest control and planting of erosion prone slopes and stream sides will continue to be a valued environmental contribution by the Regional Council. This includes providing support for rural landowners to undertake erosion control through planting and fencing.

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