

# **Te arotake i te whakahaeretanga o ngā wai ariki i Te Moana a Toi** **Reviewing the management of geothermal in the Bay of Plenty region**

Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council is reviewing how geothermal in our region is managed. We are doing a regional plan change to the geothermal chapter of the Regional Natural Resources Plan (Plan Change 11).

We are in the early stages of the plan change process and want to know what you think is important, where changes are required and whether we are heading in the right direction.

This summary provides an overview of the Geothermal Plan Change, our process and broad timeframes.

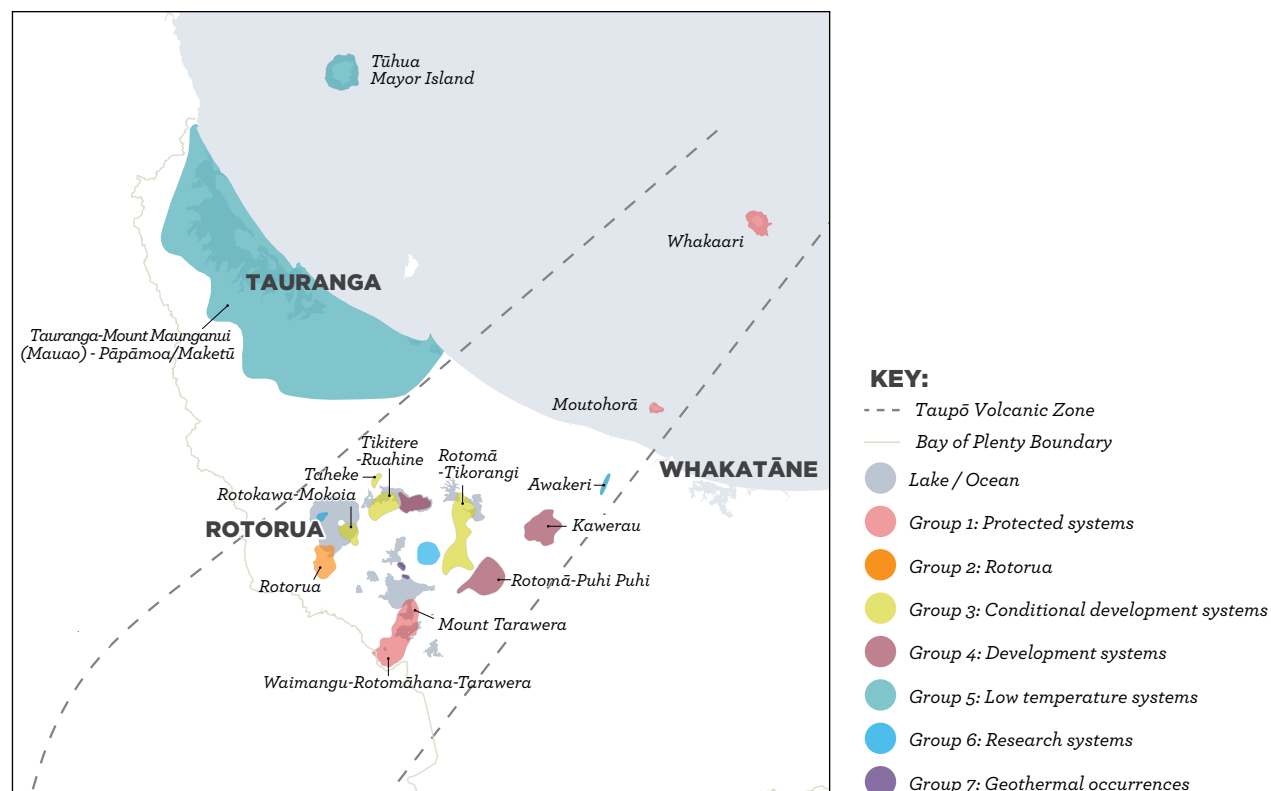
For more information visit  
**[boprc.govt.nz/geothermal](http://boprc.govt.nz/geothermal)**



# Ngā wai ariki i Te Moana a Toi

## Geothermal in the Bay of Plenty

The geothermal resource in the Bay of Plenty region is made up of many geothermal systems – most are in the Taupō Volcanic Zone (TVZ).



Science plays a big part in informing the way we manage geothermal. You can find out more about our current understanding of the different geothermal systems in the Bay of Plenty Geothermal Systems Science Summary report. While we have lots of data and information already, we are continually adding to our kete of knowledge – the more we know, the better decisions we can collectively make.

# Te arotake i te whakahaeretanga: Te Panonitanga o te Mahere Wai Ariki Reviewing management: The Geothermal Plan Change

The Regional Council manages takes and use of geothermal water, heat and energy, and geothermal discharges under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Water over 30 °C is considered geothermal water under the RMA.

Regional plans include objectives, policies and rules for resource allocation and consenting. Geothermal policies and rules for all geothermal systems in the Bay of Plenty are currently included in the Regional Natural Resources Plan (RNRP) and Rotorua Geothermal Regional Plan (RGRP). Regional Council is reviewing the geothermal provisions in both regional plans and combining these into a single geothermal chapter in the Regional Natural Resources Plan through Plan Change 11.

## What's changing?

Many of the changes proposed are to tidy up and streamline existing provisions. Some bigger changes include:

- The integration of the Rotorua Geothermal Regional Plan into the Regional Natural Resources Plan.
- Amendments to guiding policy for geothermal management groups to incorporate the existing Regional Policy Statement direction and provide clear guidance to plan users and decision-makers.
- A new rule for the protection of Significant Geothermal Features (SGF).
- A new policy on the use of bonds for some geothermal wells.
- Changes to implement Ngā Wai Ariki o Rotorua He Mahere Whakahaere Pūnaha - Rotorua Geothermal System Management Plan. Specifically, the inclusion of allocation limits, identification of values-based allocation priorities and establishment of sensitive management areas.
- The adoption of an integrated approach for low temperature geothermal systems and freshwater policies and rules.

## Other relevant changes to geothermal policy

### LOW TEMPERATURE GEOTHERMAL SYSTEMS

The Tauranga Geothermal System (extending from Waihi Beach to Maketū) is a low temperature geothermal system, with temperatures generally ranging from 30°C to 70°C. It is the warm parts of the interconnected groundwater system. This means that geothermal takes and discharges could affect non-geothermal groundwater, and vice versa.

For this reason, we are integrating their management by including low temperature geothermal policies and rules (i.e., take, use, damming, diversion, discharge, and drilling) in the freshwater chapter of the Regional Natural Resources Plan.

The freshwater chapters of the Regional Natural Resources Plan are currently being reviewed. For more information visit [www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwater](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwater).

### SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLANS

A system management plan (SMP) is an operational document that lays out how we intend to manage an individual geothermal system. It identifies specific actions and includes operational guidelines.

| Kawerau SMP                                            | Ngā Wai Ariki o Rotorua SMP  | Tauranga SMP                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Adopted 2018</a><br>Currently under review | <a href="#">Adopted 2024</a> | Draft developed<br>Currently open for feedback |

The content included in the Rotorua and Tauranga system management plans will help inform changes to the geothermal and freshwater chapters of the Regional Natural Resources Plan. For more information on system management plans visit [www.boprc.govt.nz/geothermal](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/geothermal).

# Ko te aha te tukanga me te angawā? What's the process and timeframe?

We've released Plan Change 11 as a draft and want to hear what you think. You can submit your feedback through our Participate web portal: **[participate.boprc.govt.nz/draft-pc-11](https://participate.boprc.govt.nz/draft-pc-11)** until 31 January 2025.

We're still in the early stages of this process, and there will be several chances for people to tell us what they think before we get to the end.

We will publicly notify a formal proposed Regional Plan Change for submissions and hearings under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act later in 2025.

## **OCTOBER 2024**

*Plan Change 11 draft released for feedback*

## **31 JANUARY 2025**

*Feedback period closes*

## **EARLY 2025**

*Analysis of feedback and follow up discussions as required*

## **MID 2025**

*Summary of feedback and recommended amendments released*

## **LATE 2025**

*Notification of proposed Plan Change 11 under schedule 1 of the RMA*

## **2025-2026**

*Submissions on proposed Regional Plan Change*

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