

# IWI CHAIRS FORUM

## Summary of Paper

The Iwi Chairs Forum has been operating since 2005 as a vehicle for kotahitanga amongst Iwi and hapū. Over time, certain practices have become customary, such as; holding regular national Chairs hui on an approximately quarterly basis, forming ILG's as required on matters of strategic importance to engage directly with government and supporting nationwide hui to discuss those issues. The Forum is important and timely, and is arguably making significant contributions to inter-Iwi kotahitanga and the continued improvement of the recognition of the Treaty partnership by government. It may be constructive to consider any improvements that could be made to the way the Forum is supported, including increasing the use of the Iwi Chairs website, improving communications around Iwi and hapū and related matters.

## Recommendations

The paper recommends that the Iwi Chairs discuss potential improvements to the way in which the Forum is supported by technology, communications, and any other matters.

## Introduction

Since 2005, the Iwi Chairs Forum has, objectively, achieved the following;

- Confirmed objective: kotahitanga to enhance the ability of Iwi to work together where we have commonalities and share our experiences for the benefit of those who wish to participate with the objective that striving towards kotahitanga will contribute to strengthening and enriching the cultural, social, economic, environmental and political development of our people;
- Formation of kaupapa groups to engage directly with government on strategic issues including; climate change, freshwater, foreshore and seabed, Whānau Ora;
- Development of an Iwi Chairs website to serve as a central hub for information about strategic issues and the Forum itself;
- Communications network, largely through email, to exchange information with Iwi katoa.

From a more subject perspective, it appears that the Forum has enabled stronger and more proactive relationships with the Crown, the most significant benefit of which has been opening the policy development process so that the rights, interests and values of Iwi and hapū are considered at senior Ministerial levels earlier in the process. This has enabled greater scrutiny of policy earlier, with a structured way of scrutinising the work of government, contributing to the nature and direction of policy development and as far as is possible, improving the outcome of policy development for whānau, hapū and Iwi.

The way in which the Forum operates could, naturally, be improved, particularly in the areas of successfully communicating across the motu and delivering timely information to Iwi katoa. There are also some who would like the Forum to extend the nature of work, particularly to include new kaupapa groups, such as for RM II and constitutional reform where there is perceived benefit in securing senior Ministerial relationships and more structured engagement with officials.

It may be therefore be timely to discuss the way the Forum is operating. This paper therefore identifies some potential matters for discussion.

## Background

The work of the Iwi Chairs Forum over the last five years has been in two main areas;

□ **National Iwi Chairs Hui**—convened to discuss strategic issues. These hui have been convened on roughly a quarterly basis to discuss strategic issues and at particular hui, to present agreed positions to Ministers. There are a number of items which have appeared regularly on the agenda, and are typically the matters that kaupapa ILG have formed in response to (i.e. climate change, freshwater, foreshore and seabed, Whānau Ora). Economic development has also featured regularly, with a particular emphasis on PPPs and inter-Iwi co-investment. These hui are reported, by attendees, to be a valuable way of sharing information amongst Iwi, identifying strategic issues and working collaboratively toward an outcome that is in the interests of all Iwi;

□ **Kaupapa ILG** – convened to engage directly with government. These groups operate in similar ways, in that the group engages directly with government, endeavours to hui with Iwi and hapū across the country, and report back to each Iwi Chairs Forum. The groups are also firmly based on the position that the engagement with government does not usurp the mana of Iwi and hapū and similarly, does not replace the direct Treaty relationship between the Crown and Iwi/hapū. The role of these groups is to endeavour to improve the way in which the rights, interests and values of Iwi/hapū/whānau are recognised in policy development through direct engagement with the Crown at early stages in the policy development programme. The status of each of the established kaupapa group work programmes is broadly as follows;

○ **Freshwater:**

Stage of Work Programme

Policy Development— focussing on nature and direction of policy development that will have significant impact on Iwi and hapū

Structured Engagement with Government



Implementation phase – solid work programme and arrangements for policy development across government

Constructive relationship with government



Relationships positive with senior Ministers, no concerns regarding access and good faith


Regional and National Hui Programme





Occurring on a six monthly basis or as appropriate

- **Climate Change:**  
 Stage of Work Programme


Policy Implementation --- major policy development completed in November 2009, now focussed on supporting inclusion Māori in implementation and supporting work


Structured Engagement with Government  During policy development- solid arrangements, however, engagement is now less intensive due to implementation phase of work


Constructive relationship with government  Relationships positive with senior Ministers, no concerns regarding access and good faith

Regional and National Hui Programme  During policy development, successive hui on periodic basis. Less intensity now, but will need to continue to disseminate information
  
- **Foreshore and Seabed;**  
 Stage of Work Programme


Policy Development— focussing on nature and direction of policy development that will have significant impact on Iwi and hapū


Structured Engagement with Government  Some matters warrant discussion with Iwi Chairs


Constructive relationship with government  Some matters warrant discussion with Iwi Chairs

Regional and National Hui Programme  Regional hui in Nov 2009, further communications to Iwi katoa in December 09 and Mar 2010
  
- **Whānau Ora;**  
 Stage of Work Programme

Policy Development and Implementation— in early phase

Structured Engagement with Government  Some matters warrant discussion with Iwi Chairs

Constructive relationship with government  Some matters warrant discussion with Iwi Chairs

Regional and  In early stage, so limited

National Hui Programme		communication and no hui as yet
○ PPPs/Infrastructure Stage of Work Programme		Capability building within Iwi, transitioning into Policy Development— work with government will focus on policy and facilitating commercial transactions
Structured Engagement with Government	●	Structured in part by MET umbrella
Constructive relationship with government	●	Relationships positive with senior Ministers, no concerns regarding access and good faith
Regional and National Hui Programme	●	Presentation of this national forum, and will be further engagement with Iwi katoa

## Observations

There are a range of observations that could be made of the last five years, including areas of strength and areas for improvement;

### □ Strengths –

- **Kotahitanga** – the most significant contribution the Forum has made is in facilitating kotahitanga amongst Iwi and hapū;
- **Engagement with government** – the Forum has enabled structured engagement with government, which appears to have materially improved Iwi contributions to policy development at Ministerial levels and earlier in policy development;
- **Early Information to Iwi and Hapū** – the Forum has enabled more rapid and comprehensive information distribution amongst Iwi katoa;
- **Evolution of Treaty Partnership** – the Forum has also, arguably, contributed to government more actively engaging in working with Iwi and hapū as partners, cognisant of the growing number of Iwi near or in the post-Settlement phase.

## □ Improvements –

- **Mandate and Mana** – the various hui across the country regularly have some individuals that question the mandate of the kaupapa ILG and the Iwi Chairs Forum. While each of the kaupapa groups has been explicit in not usurping the mana of Iwi and hapū, and not being in a negotiators role with government, there appears to be some residual concerns about how mandate, accountability and transparency are demonstrated. It may be that some improved communications practices could assist;
- **Communications** – there is always a challenge in transmitting information to as many people as possible, and there are real improvements that could be made to the email distribution lists and the like. It may be that the website could be a useful aide;
- **Website** – the website was created some time ago, but it is not regularly accessed and has limited information on it. The following could be possible improvements to consider; uploading more information, considering a newsletter facility, uploading further information from Iwi, exploring interactive media options and the like;
- **Media Management** – the Iwi Chairs Forum and kaupapa groups have also become noticed by the media, and there is limited infrastructure to support co-ordinated media responses and engagement;
- **Technical support** – technical support typically occurs through Iwi kaimahi contributing on an as required basis, as a result the technical work tends to concentrate on the immediate policy issues that kaupapa groups are driving. It may be that the technical support is not providing a comprehensive strategic issues support function at this stage, as well as not co-ordinating engagements closely enough and therefore not getting the benefit of cross kaupapa leverage as well as not maximising efficiencies for Chairs on the kaupapa groups;

## **Matters for Discussion**

The following matters are merely suggestions, and are not-exhaustive in nature.

### *Kotahitanga*

- How could the Forum do more to support kotahitanga amongst Iwi?

### *Strategic Issues Management*

- Are there further strategic issues that should be actively on the Iwi Chairs Forum work programme;
- What improvements could be made to the way the Forum and kaupapa groups operate in this respect?

### *Co-ordination – Communications, Website and Technical Support*

- Should there be more sharing of information amongst Iwi? How could the website play a role in this?
- Are there better ways to co-ordinate and support the Forum?