Submission to the Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Proposed Long Term Plan 2015-2025

Dr Phil Shoemack
Medical Officer of Health
Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service

April 2015
Introduction – Toi Te Ora
Toi Te Ora1 – Public Health Service (Toi Te Ora) is funded by the Ministry of Health and is the public health unit for the Bay of Plenty and Lakes District Health Boards. Toi Te Ora’s purpose is to improve and protect the health of the population in the Lakes and Bay of Plenty District Health Board districts, with a focus on reducing inequalities in health.

Many of the crucial underlying factors that contribute to population health and wellbeing are directly influenced by the decisions and activities of councils. For this reason, Toi Te Ora welcomes the opportunity to (a) provide feedback to the Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC) on its proposed long term plan for the district; and (b) assist WBOPDC to achieve its goals and deliver on its vision.2 Toi Te Ora’s vision, purpose and goals are closely aligned. (Please refer to Appendix 1 for Toi Te Ora’s Strategic Plan Overview.)

Four of the five Toi Te Ora goals have informed the scope and content of this submission:

Social Determinants of Health
As a public health unit, Toi Te Ora places a great deal of emphasis on the social determinants of health, or what has been referred to as:

“...the social, economic and environmental conditions that influence the health of individuals and populations. They include the conditions of daily life and the structural influences upon them, themselves shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. They determine the extent to which a person has the right physical, social and personal resources to achieve their goals, meet needs and deal with changes to their circumstances. There is a clear link between the social determinants of health and health inequalities...”

Essentially, health starts where we live, learn, work and play. Individuals often have little control over the social determinants of health, but these determinants can either constrain or support the choices we make, as well as the lifestyle we lead. The most effective illustration of this approach comes from the 1992 work of Dahlgren and Whitehead:4

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1 Toi Te Ora represents the ideal of the ultimate and enduring wellbeing. ‘Toi’ is the name of a celebrated ancestor in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and ‘Ora’ is to be alive, well and healthy.
3 http://www.local.gov.uk/health/-/journal_content/56/10180/3511260/ARTICLE
4 http://www.local.gov.uk/health/-/journal_content/56/10180/3511260/ARTICLE
Local government has a great deal of influence over the determinants of health, which is why it is important we work together to make a difference. Toi Te Ora encourages WBOPDC to take a “health in all policies” approach\(^5\) that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions, in order to improve population health and health equity.

Three specific priorities for WBOPDC which have a major impact on health outcomes for the population are the Tauranga Moana Coastal Cycle Trail, the quality of existing housing stock, and smokefree outdoor spaces. These issues are excellent examples of the importance of our organisations collaborating to achieve similar outcomes. It is far preferable that together we use a preventive approach, building robust fences at the top of the cliff, rather than picking up the pieces at the bottom.

This Submission
For ease of reference, Toi Te Ora’s responses in the following tables are linked to specific pages in the following key documents:

- “Setting the Pace for the Next 10 Years – Your District Council Long Term Plan 2015-2025 Consultation Document” (LTP)
- Supporting Documentation – Chapter 2: Informing Our Planning (IOP)
- Supporting Documentation – “Planning for the Future” (PF)
- Supporting Documentation – “Building Communities - Community Building” (CB)
- Supporting Documentation – “Building Communities - Recreation and Leisure” (RL)
- Supporting Documentation – “Building Communities – Transportation” (T)
- Supporting Documentation – “Building Communities – Water Supply” (WS)

A symbol has been used to confirm Toi Te Ora’s position on each of the issues to which it has responded, as defined in the following key:

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<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Toi Te Ora’s Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Support and endorse</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>Recommend further consideration</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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Key Priorities

Priority 1
Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s goal to maintain or increase the quality of the services provided. Many of the crucial underlying factors that contribute to population health and wellbeing are directly influenced by the decisions and activities of councils.

Priority 4
Toi Te Ora endorses Key Priority 4 –WBOPDC “will plan for the needs of our ageing population when making decisions”.

However, it will be at least as important to invest in the wellbeing of children and young people which will contribute to:

- Healthier older people, as benefits accrue across the whole of the lifespan
- A sustainable and productive society, as today’s children are tomorrow's labour force.

See this youtube clip for an explanation of the 8 to 80 concept which is based on the premise that if we build environments for eight year olds and 80 year olds they will be suitable for everyone:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQWWhnjNUtc

Toi Te Ora supports the ongoing provision of housing for older people and asks to be kept informed of the results of investigations into implications of the recent legislative changes.

Our Approach to Making Decisions on Spending and Funding
Toi Te Ora endorses WBOPDC’s decision to “transition from user pays to a standard charge to fund” some services. Toi Te Ora supports rating systems which spread costs over all communities in the district. Public works or services (eg water, waste management, stormwater, sewerage) aim to protect the health of the community and are for the greater good of the entire district, not only those who are connected to a water supply or wastewater scheme. Toi Te Ora also favours rating systems where those with a greater ability to pay do pay higher rates.

Balancing the Books
Toi Te Ora disagrees with WBOPDC’s view that option 2, which seeks to reduce the rates impact on high value properties, is a fairer alternative. A uniform annual general charge is less affordable for a low wealth household than a high wealth household. Toi Te Ora maintains that it is more equitable for property owners with a greater ability to pay to pay higher rates.

Toi Te Ora supports option 1 – that the WBOPDC fund the
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<td>shortfall based on capital value.</td>
<td>LTP7</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>Rates – General Rate</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s proposal to spread the cost of stormwater and community swimming pools over more ratepayers.</td>
<td>LTP8</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora suggests WBOPDC includes complementary activities to be funded by a general rate, such as aquatic centres, parks, reserves, sports fields and recreation, and disaster mitigation.</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora encourages WBOPDC to extend activities funded from the general rate and allocate a higher percentage for core public health infrastructure. Some parts of the community have more limited stormwater services than others. Toi Te Ora supports changes to how WBOPDC funds core infrastructure, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthy, particularly those who may struggle financially.</td>
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<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora commends WBOPDC for its efforts and progress to upgrade water treatment, storage and reticulation.</td>
<td>LTP12</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora looks forward to continuing to work with WBOPDC and the communities of Ongare Point and Te Puna West, to provide safe and effective sewerage solutions which will provide these communities, as well as the wider population, with the best health protection.</td>
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<td><strong>Stormwater</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s decision to provide incentives to property owners to lower their risk of flooding.</td>
<td>LTP13-14</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>However, small communities often do not have the ability to pay for infrastructure improvements which creates situations of health inequality – an unequal risk of their homes being flooded. To provide all homes with a low level of risk for flooding is a long term investment in the health of a community. Toi Te Ora encourages WBOPDC to explore other mechanisms in addition to waiving consent fees.</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s efforts to improve stormwater networks in growth communities.</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora endorses WBOPDC’s proposal to change funding for stormwater to 90% from the targeted rates and 10% general rates.</td>
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<td>The targeted rate focuses on projects that are specific to a particular community or area. Stormwater services have a district wide benefit which are a ‘public good’ that supports healthy communities. On that basis Toi Te Ora recommends that WBOPDC move to allocating a greater proportion of</td>
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<td>stormwater costs being funded by general rates in future years.</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora encourages WBOPDC to develop and implement a strategy to raise awareness in the community of the risks of contact with stormwater. For example, children should not play near stormwater discharges and everyone should avoid contact with any recreational water for 48 hours after heavy rainfall. Contamination occurs with run-off from farmland, as well as urban areas, after any significant rainfall.</td>
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<td>For the reasons stated above, Toi Te Ora does not support option 1 as this does not lower the risk of flooding. Toi Te Ora supports options 2-4, as these will enable WBOPDC to progress the necessary flood prevention work. Toi Te Ora remains neutral on which of options two to four is selected.</td>
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<td><strong>Tauranga Moana Coastal Cycle Trail</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora commends the commitment of WBOPDC to building its section of the Tauranga Moana Coastal Cycle Trail. The planned trail will help to connect communities, and in doing so provide a safe and attractive opportunity for people of all ages to become more physically active on a daily basis. Every person riding a bike to get to where they're going is one less person in a car meaning less congestion and improved road safety, a more connected community, as well as a more physically active and healthy population. The coastal trail should be seen as the start of a comprehensive network of trails connecting communities throughout the district and which provide every day transport options. Toi Te Ora is available to assist with developing a plan for such a network&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s preferred option – option three.</td>
<td>LTP16</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>Changes to the Way We Fund Swimming Pools</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora agrees that funding swimming pools through a District-wide General Rate is fairer.</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora supports WBOPDC’s proposal.</td>
<td>LTP17</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>Financial Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;While Toi Te Ora remains neutral on “investment protection”, it encourages WBOPDC to consider ethical investing or socially conscious investing. Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC selects investments which support a sustainable environment and a healthy future for its community, and avoids investments in alcohol, tobacco, unhealthy food, gambling, and industries with a poor environmental record.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC:&lt;br&gt;  ▪ develops an ethical investment policy (or position statement) which identifies both the investments it will actively support; as well as those it wishes to avoid; and&lt;br&gt;  ▪ researches specific investments that comply with its ethical investment policy (or position statement).</td>
<td>IOP35</td>
<td>∗</td>
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<td><strong>Special Housing Areas (SHAs)</strong></td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora notes that WBOPDC has “invested substantial infrastructure to cater for a future population capacity of 12,000” at Omokoroa and this has been a deciding factor for selecting this as a Special Housing Area site. Toi Te Ora also notes that WBOPDC intends to “ensure quality development in Omokoroa”.</td>
<td>PF88</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Quality development from a public health perspective means SHAs are well connected with the existing residential areas of Omokoroa and to all modes of transport. For instance SHAs should be connected with the rest of Omokoroa with direct walking and cycling paths, which are completely separate from roads. It also means that the SHAs are themselves user friendly for people walking and riding bikes rather than just being designed around people in cars.</td>
<td>FP87</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC work with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to ensure the provision of improved public transport connections within Omokoroa, and between Omokoroa and other parts of the Western Bay and Tauranga. This aligns with WBOPDC’s 10 year vision, sustainable development approach and transportation goals.</td>
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<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora supports and encourages WBOPDC to explore the concept of equity and consider levels of deprivation when making decisions about service and facility provision. For example, areas of high deprivation should have priority for new parks and other recreational facilities.</td>
<td>CB107 &amp; 110</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>By considering equity, the WBOPDC can support building strong, resilient communities and reducing the social gradient in health (where poorer people experience worse health outcomes).</td>
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<td><strong>How we will Track our Progress - Levels of Service</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC adopts a performance measure for neighbourhood parks that takes into account their location and the level of access.</td>
<td>RL161</td>
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<td>One source of guidance is the Australian Healthy Places and Spaces(^6) website which recommends all homes have access to neighbourhood parks within 400m or a five minute walk for a pocket park, and up to 800m or a 10 minute walk for playing fields.</td>
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<td><strong>What we are doing to Improve Levels of Service</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora commends and supports the district walking and cycling project to improve public safety around marae and schools.</td>
<td>T209</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>How we will Track our Progress - Levels of Service</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC adopts a performance measure that monitors perception of safety.</td>
<td>T204</td>
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<td>For example, the Tauranga City Council is undertaking a community perceptions survey, monitoring the percentage of residents who feel safe when cycling, walking or driving around the city against set targets. Safety in this context is considered in its broader sense, to include personal safety and security.</td>
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<td><strong>Water Supply</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toi Te Ora commends WBOPDC on its progress to date to improve the safety and security of water supplied to its population.</td>
<td>WS215-217</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC amends its LTP by removing all references to drinking water ‘grading’. WBOPDC will comply with the New Zealand Drinking Water Standard (revised 2008) by achieving its stated goal of providing potable water. Water grading is not a component of the Health Act or the NZDWS.</td>
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Additional Commentary
Toi Te Ora offers the following additional commentary:

Smokefree Outdoor Spaces
Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in New Zealand and causes considerable personal, social and economic cost. Cigarette smoke, including secondhand smoke, is unsafe at any level of exposure and is a known cause of ill health in infants and children.

WBOPDC introduced its Smokefree Public Spaces Policy for reserves, playgrounds, skate parks, sports fields, gardens, beaches, parks and Council owned enclosed spaces in 2009.

While smoking rates in the Western Bay of Plenty district have decreased, 15% of residents still smoke regularly, with rates highest among Maori and young adults:

The Government’s goal is that New Zealand will be a smokefree nation by 2025, with less than five percent of the population who smoke.

Over 300 smokers in the Western Bay of Plenty district will need to quit each year to meet the 2025 goal. (This figure does not include any new smokers or children under 15 years who already smoke regularly).
WBOPDC can help to achieve the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal, its own smokefree goal\(^7\), and improve the health and wellbeing of its residents, by increasing the range and number of smokefree outdoor spaces. Toi Te Ora recommends that WBOPDC extends its smokefree public spaces policy to include town centres and alfresco dining areas. Auckland City Council has already decided to adopt this approach and Toi Te Ora is advocating that all local councils follow suit.\(^8\) Extending WBOPDC’s smokefree policy will contribute to two elements of WBOPDC’s vision, “people enjoy a healthy and safe lifestyle” and “the environment is valued, cared for and improved”. Please also refer to Appendix 3.

Toi Te Ora is keen to work with WBOPDC and its staff to develop the detailed wording of such a policy.

**Housing**

The WBOPDC’s Dangerous, Earthquake-prone and Insanitary Buildings Policy 2011 was due for review in 2014. This policy is significant for the protection of public health and promotes wellbeing in the community. There are many New Zealanders who struggle financially, including many who work for a living. A shortage of suitable, affordable and healthy accommodation increases the utilisation of garages, basements and sleep-outs. As a result accommodation which is intended for temporary habitation, or which was not intended for accommodation, is used for long term occupation.

Good health and wellbeing are directly linked to the condition of the dwelling in which a person lives, works, or plays. Cold, damp and mouldy buildings contribute to a range of poor health outcomes. Mould and interior dampness are conducive to mites, cockroaches, respiratory viruses, and bacteria; all of which play a role in the development of asthma and other chronic respiratory diseases. An unsafe water supply, or an inadequate wastewater system, can lead to gastrointestinal disease, vomiting and diarrhoea.

A dwelling needs to be warm, dry, well ventilated, supplied with sufficient potable water for sanitation and drinking, and with the means to remove wastewater without contaminating the environment or exposing the inhabitants to the risk of infectious disease.

Toi Te Ora commends the approach WBOPDC is taking to address dangerous and insanitary housing in Maketu and the continued support for the ‘A Healthy Whare Project’.

Toi Te Ora believes that further monitoring and research into dangerous and insanitary housing in Western Bay of Plenty is required to identify other communities that have a high concentration of such buildings.

Toi Te Ora recommends WBOPDC:

- Reviews the Dangerous, Earthquake-prone and Insanitary Buildings Policy 2011 and consults with the medical officer of health as part of the review.
- Increases its commitment to improving the quality of housing in its district, by actively identifying insanitary buildings or living situations, in addition to responding to complaints.

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\(^7\) The WBOPDC “will role model and demonstrate leadership by promoting a smokefree lifestyle as being both desirable and the norm in the Western Bay of Plenty district”.

- Expands and adapts its Maketu housing model to suit the needs of each individual community.
- Devises an indicator framework to assess the current level of insanitary buildings. Toi Te Ora is keen to support WBOPDC with this work.

**Food Policy Council**
Toi Te Ora endorses WBOPDC’s decision to be part of the Bay of Plenty Food Policy Council currently being established by Toi Te Ora. This is a great opportunity for WBOPDC to engage with the community on issues related to food.

**Further Information and Oral Submissions**
If WBOPDC requires any further information on this submission, please contact Robyn Woods, Management Support Officer, Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service who will direct any enquiry to the most appropriate person. Robyn’s contact details are as follows:

- **Email:** Robyn.Woods@bopdhb.govt.nz
- **Ph:** 07 577 3769

Toi Te Ora thanks WBOPDC for the opportunity to provide feedback on its proposed long term plan, and confirms it wishes to present by way of oral submissions during the hearings on 9-13 May 2015. We would appreciate being allocated an appropriate amount of time to cover the range of public health issues raised. As Toi Te Ora will be presenting to a number of councils, it would also be appreciated if Toi Te Ora could present on 11 May 2015, if at all possible.

**Dr Phil Shoemack**

**Dr Phil Shoemack**
Medical Officer of Health
Appendix 1: Toi Te Ora’s Strategic Plan Overview

PURPOSE
“Improve and protect the health of the population in the Lakes and Bay of Plenty District Health Board districts with a focus on reducing inequalities in health.”

VISION
Bay of Plenty District Health Board:
Healthy Thriving Communities - Kia Momoho Te Hapori Oranga
Lakes District Health Board:
Healthy Communities – Mauriora

GOALS

- To reduce childhood admission to hospital from acute rheumatic fever, respiratory infections and skin infections, each by 2/3 in five years.*
- To reduce the proportion of year 10 students smoking by 2/3 in five years.*
- To reduce childhood obesity by 1/3 in 10 years.*
- To rate within the top 5% of staff satisfaction results within the Bay of Plenty DHB.

VALUES
CARE
Compassion – show compassion
Attitude – have a “will-do” attitude
Responsiveness – be responsive
Excellence – strive for excellence with diligence

PRIORITY POPULATIONS
Māori, Children (including maternal health), and Youth

*From 2013
### Appendix 2: Smokefree Outdoor Policies – Supporting Information

**Why have smokefree outdoor policies?**
- They de-normalise smoking, meaning children grow up seeing smokefree environments as the norm so they may be less likely to start smoking
- Support smokers to give up and stay smokefree
- Reduce second-hand smoke for others
- Reduce litter and fire risk.

**What are the benefits of a smokefree outdoor policy?**
- Creates a healthy and clean environment
- Less smoking
  - Protects youth from starting smoking
  - Improves productivity
  - Improves health equity
  - Prevents cultural loss from premature death

**How do smokefree outdoor area policies work?**
- They are educational so do not require enforcing
- Signage at each designated smokefree area
- Media to inform public

**How much support is there for smokefree outdoor policies?**
A 2012 survey of Lakes and Bay of Plenty residents found:
- 68% support smokefree bus stops*
- 73% support smokefree sports fields and stadiums
- 73% support smokefree public events


An earlier (2008) survey of Lakes and Bay of Plenty residents also found:
- 93% support smokefree children’s playgrounds.