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# CONSULTATION WITH PAPTIPU RUNANGA

ASSISTING RUNANGA TO ACHIEVE DESIRED OUTCOMES THROUGH FACILITATING A STRUCTURED CONSULTATION PROCESS

The 18 Papatipu Runanga (regional assemblies) of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu have established management bodies responsible for ensuring provision of a range of support services and initiatives to Runanga members. There are two key management bodies established for each Papatipu Runanga. They are the Incorporated Society and the Holding or Limited Company. The purpose of the Incorporated Society is defined within its Constitution and can be described as the administrative body which manages the various initiatives and services to support the Runanga.

The Incorporated Society is presided over by an Executive Committee. Each Runanga also has established a charitable organisation, known as either the Holding Company or Limited Company. This organisation owns the assets of the Runanga and is responsible for managing their investment interests. The purpose of the Holding or Limited Company is defined within its Constitution, and is presided over by a Board of Directors.

Examples of the initiatives and services provided by the Runanga management bodies include:

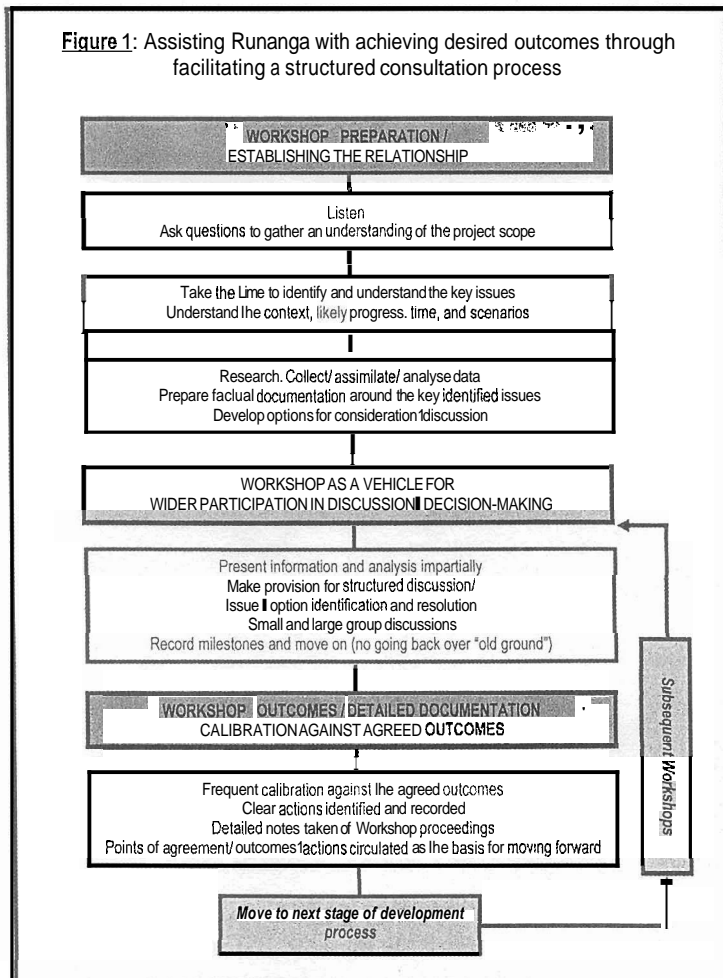
- Social Development services including health, employment and education
- Natural Resource Management
- Economic Development
- Financial and Investment Portfolio Management
- Culture and Identity
- Marae Development.

Opus has a long history of project involvement with Maori, predominantly through infrastructure provision such as water or wastewater schemes and roading projects. To date many of these project relationships have been with Runanga representatives as part of a wider team which is consulted and involved in progressing projects.

Often the scope and nature of recent projects has required a dedicated process of discussion and decision-making at Runanga level to progress the project outcomes and Opus has successfully assisted a number of these. This has involved an increasingly diverse and multidisciplinary team which has brought with it an emphasis on the facilitation of stakeholder consultation and public participation. Over the last 12 months Opus has developed structured processes to assist various Incorporated Societies and Holding/ Limited Companies in achieving their desired outcomes through interactive consultation.

The following comments and flow chart (see Figure 1) summarises a key part of the process we have successfully used to develop an understanding of what the Runanga wishes

Figure 1: Assisting Runanga with achieving desired outcomes through facilitating a structured consultation process



to achieve, define the key milestones of how we reach these in pursuit of desired project outcomes and implement agreed tasks. Through these projects, a number of key ingredients have been involved and beneficial outcomes achieved. These include:

- Gathering wide participation and engagement of Runanga members through interactive, meaningful consultation.
- Following structured processes which prevents ad hoc decisions being made. Also, we seek to gain the commitment of all participants to identify issues, discuss and develop options, agree preferred proposals, define actions and milestones and move forward.
- A commitment to research, gather and analyse all relevant information and present this in an impartial way. This is an important feature of our involvement as we are able to draw on Opus' extensive technical resource base to assimilate and extract data and turn it into meaningful information. This information is typically presented to participants in a Workshop situation, ensuring stakeholders are informed and empowered to make a positive contribution. The use of Workshops in this manner is a key element in this consultation process. Before each Workshop, careful planning is essential to ensure wide

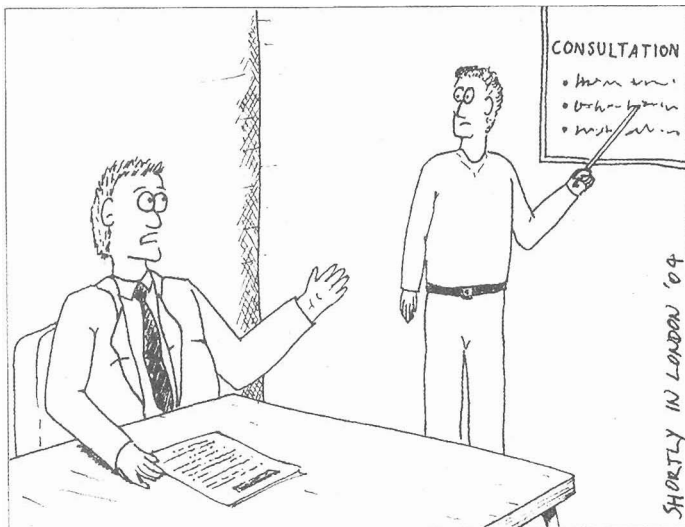
participation and involvement and to maximise the outcomes from the relatively short time available (recognising that participants are committing their own time and resources in taking part in the Workshop).

- The development of a close working relationship with the Runanga is essential to both fully understand their objectives and to enable a clear and transparent process to be devised and followed.
- Facilitating opportunities to listen, question, challenge, draw-out ideas, consider and test options through the involvement and participation of the wider Runanga membership.
- Recognising the importance of achieving and maintaining strong alignment with the Runanga's strategic intent, policies and procedures, constitution etc. Communication of the importance of alignment is vital for all participants as it sets the sound foundation from which the project can progress as well as acknowledging the roots from which ideas have originated and evolved.
- It is vital that a Communication Plan is prepared and followed to keep stakeholders informed and on-board, when the project moves beyond consultation and into implementation.

## CONCLUSION

We have found that when engaging in this form of consultation there is no prescribed process. Our approach to the facilitation is best described as a pragmatic response to identified Runanga need which uses key elements or building blocks as part of a robust structured framework, but which are combined and applied in a flexible manner. It is proving to be very effective in terms of producing clear and appropriate outcomes, through a transparent process, which has generated a great deal of commitment and support from participants. We believe it is important to remember in projects of this type that it is the Runanga members who possess the knowledge, skills and wisdom, and we are merely facilitators of a process of distillation to assist them in achieving **their** desired outcomes.

*"The five months of our involvement with (Opus) has been a tremendous learning experience for the members of our Runanga in terms of the methods used to ensure that all people are involved in achieving our vision of the building of a Marae on the West Coast".*  
Ned Tauwhare, Chairman, Te Runanga o Ngati Waewae Executive Committee.



"What? We actually ask the public what they think? But how will they know what we want them to say?"



"Don't worry. I've thought of a way to phrase the question to give a positive result regardless of the answer."