



NGAATI TE ATA

“Ka whiti te raa ki tua o rehua ka ara a Kaiwhare i te rua”

To: Karl Ye / Joel McKinlay

29/10/2026

Pokeno Developments Limited

Subject: Fast-Track Referral Request – Pokeno Tourism and Development Project

Teenaa Koutou,

Pokeno is an area of traditional interest to Ngaati Te Ata. This also includes Te Awa o Waikato (and its many tributaries and associated wetlands. Ngaati Te Ata has a traditional history in this area through our ancestor Tapaue (Rangatira Waikato).

Ngaati Te Ata has a long association with development that has occurred over the last 20 years in Pokeno. Our ultimate goal has always been to achieve best cultural and environmental outcomes.

Summary of the Proposal

The applicant is proposing a large-scale housing and tourism development in Pokeno under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 called “The Pokeno Housing and Tourism Project”.

Pokeno needs a wastewater solution.

A centralised wastewater treatment system within the land holding is also proposed, featuring a Membrane Bioreactor type (MBR) plant. Treated wastewater will be disposed of via land-contact devices and designated outfall areas, with potential reuse options. This wastewater solution will service all of the Yes Valley resort and tourism activities and the urban development at Pokeno West and Pokeno South and potentially the wider community.

The project will unlock stalled development in Pokeno, which has been constrained by the refusal of new wastewater connections by Watercare Services Limited (WSL) and Waikato District Council (WDC), which would likely mean no new development in Pokeno for 10 to 20 years.

Infrastructure and Environmental Considerations

Ngaati Te Ata acknowledges the critical infrastructure challenges facing Pokeno, particularly the halt in development caused by wastewater constraints. We agree that reliance on council-led solutions is no longer viable.

For Ngaati Te Ata, we see that development in Pookeno creates significant opportunities—not only for housing and employment but also for expressing our culture, traditions, and stewardship of the environment.

We encourage the use and implementation of a high tech MBR type system. Ngaati Te Ata have been actively involved in other projects utilising this technology and can affirm that this technology offers superior wastewater treatment outcomes compared to what would be provided by WSL or WDC infrastructure. Ngaati Te Ata is familiar with MBR type technology and endorses its use as a best-practice, innovative solution.

Ngaati Te Ata's experience with this type of technology (including when it is paired with land contact methods) gives us confidence that an MBR type system will maintain the ecological integrity of the site and the receiving environment, including recreational and cultural values.

Notably, we are yet to see the detail around the proposed MBR type system including ancillary treatment measures and potential effects/impacts on the receiving catchment.

Conclusion

We view this project as a vital step toward unlocking development in Pookeno, delivering tangible benefits for our people and the environment. We remain committed to working alongside the applicant to resolve infrastructure challenges and achieve high-quality, culturally aligned development outcomes.

Recommendations

1. That a high-level cultural memo is prepared in the first instance.
2. That a full CIA report is eventually prepared to help further inform our issues once vital technical matters are known.

Heoi naa,

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Te Pou Taiao Manager

Ngaati Te Ata

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