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New \$20-million freshwater trust launched

Te Ohu Kaimoana has formally established a new trust dedicated to advancing Māori interests in freshwater. Te Wai Māori Trust will receive \$2-million over the next 5 years in operational funding before receiving \$10-million capital by October 2009 and an additional \$10-million in installments following that.

Chairperson Archie Taiaroa says the formation of a freshwater trust will ensure fisheries issues relating to freshwater are not overlooked in the future.

Archie says, "There was a strong representation during the fisheries allocation debate, particularly from the lake and river iwi such as Te Arawa, for a specific fund to be set aside for freshwater fisheries."

The Trust could support things such as research and development or education related to Māori interests in freshwater fisheries and the enhancement of the water itself.

"Every iwi has freshwater in their rohe and a very strong association with it", says Archie. "It is important that iwi Māori are fully informed about the implications associated with policies that affect our freshwater fisheries and that iwi Māori have an input in determining those policies."

The establishment of Te Wai Māori Trust is another important component of the overall allocation model for distributing assets from the Māori fisheries settlement. Te Ohu Kaimoana has also appointed Morrie Love and lawyer Prue Kapua.