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MEDIA RELEASE

Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board Investigation

Trust Board Chairman Robert Edwards welcomes the investigation into the Trust Board's affairs and the 2017 Triennial elections of the Board. *"We have been waiting a response since January of this year, and it is a relief to receive this finding from the Minister"*.

The Trust Board is a large organisation that oversees a number of commercial and fishing assets and is a major provider of education, GP, health, and social services. More recently the Trust Board has been at the forefront of progressing the growth of an aquaculture industry in Ōpōtiki and has supported the progress of the Whakatōhea treaty settlement.

Mr Edwards stated *"the Trust Board has undergone an enormous transition period over the last ten years and our focus has been on building our vision of where we want to be in the future. We have set a brave path, where we must put the interests of our people ahead of our own personal views. I believe in the integrity of our organisation and we are committed to being open and transparent while this investigation takes place."*

Mr Edwards acknowledged the decision of Minister Mahuta to appointment Mr Heron QC to complete the investigation. *As a Board we will be pleased to work closely with Mr Heron QC and will provide full access to all information that he will require. We are committed to working through the complaints from some of our beneficiaries and are very pleased an independent and highly respected person has been appointed.*

Mr Edwards indicated that he looks forward to the next steps and the meeting with Mr Heron QC.

End