



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NGAPUHI OPPOSES FLAWED DOLPHIN PLAN**

A plan to manage potential threats to the Hector's and Maui's dolphins is extremely flawed, Te Runanga a Iwi o Ngapuhi, which represents the largest iwi in the country, said today.

“As an iwi, we take an active role in management of the marine environment in Tai Tokerau. We do not believe that the proposals in this document will provide any greater protection to Maui's dolphin than the existing protection methods,” said Ngapuhi chairman Sonny Tau.

Mr. Tau said Ngapuhi has provided a substantial submission, through the Hokianga Accord Mid-North Iwi Forum on the proposed threat management plan put forward jointly by the Ministry of Fisheries and the Department of Conservation. The proposed plan is for further measures beyond the current controls on fishing as well as four marine sanctuaries under the Marine Mammals Protection Act.

“The fishing industry itself has implemented extensive voluntary and regulatory controls to eliminate risk to dolphins from fishing operations. Since those controls have been introduced, not one Maui's dolphin has been killed from fishing-related activities. The more severe measures proposed in the document, however, will have huge effects on fishers, both commercial and recreational. This punitive action on an industry that is not responsible for the problem may make some bureaucrats feel good but it is not responsible action from government.”

“There is not enough justification for massive country wide closures of inshore fisheries proposed in this document. The research is questionable. Maui's dolphin does not come into harbours, has never been seen inside a harbour and yet, this document proposes stopping all harbour set netting to help save it. It doesn't make sense,” Mr. Tau said.

“We all know the Maui's dolphin is mauiui (sick) – stopping fishing that has not been killing dolphins won't save them when the major threats are disease and predation.”

Mr. Tau said today that the majority of the 300-page proposal set out detailed controls to apply to the fishing industry even though the document reported that there were no recent deaths resulting from fishing.

“It is very disturbing to see the shallowness of the analysis by bureaucrats in drawing up these proposals. Given that the industry is not causing the problem, it is difficult not to

conclude that this is simply an attack on New Zealand fishing. For a sustained long-term strategy, a comprehensive set of proposals that address all the factors affecting these dolphins is needed – the document does not do this. An attack on an industry not responsible for the problem must be of concern to all businesses that rely on managing sustainably our natural resources.”

Fishing related threats are currently managed through measures such as the Banks Peninsula marine mammal sanctuary, Fisheries Act closures and restrictions on set netting and trawling in the North and South Islands, voluntary trawl exclusion zones, industry codes of practice and use of “pingers” on nets.

**For more information, contact Sonny Tau on 027 530 9191 or 09 4015542**