



A K A R O A H A R B O U R RECREATIONAL FISHING CLUB (INC)



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C H R I S T C H U R C H

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Supporting fishers' rights Conserving fish stocks Protecting the marine environment

17 June 2006

Marine Technical Support Officer
Department of Conservation
Private Bag 4715
Christchurch

Dear Sir

Submission opposing a marine reserve in Akaroa Harbour

Our Club opposed the proposed marine reserve when it was first applied for. Our original reasons for objecting remain and have not changed. However, since then there are many additional reasons why the proposed marine reserve should not go ahead.

Better Procedures

Government policy now recognises that there should be integrated planning to protect the marine environment rather than the *ad hoc* procedures of the past. It is now government policy that sites for marine reserves should be selected after scientific appraisal so that they are representative of different types of habitat around our coast. It is also policy that the community, in particular those known as stakeholders, should be consulted properly before any decisions are made. The policy also provides for different types of protection in addition to the total closure and passive management applying to marine reserves.

We consider it as a major achievement of our Club that we were ahead of our time in proposing and successfully achieving the establishment of the Pohatu Marine Reserve. We used the very principles which have now become government policy. The area was selected for its intrinsic scientific value, range of different habitats, and abundance and diversity of marine life. Our Club consulted with all known groups who had a direct interest, and more widely by delivering an information leaflet to every mailing address in Banks Peninsula. The support we received made the whole process trouble free and it easily proceeded through all administrative and legislative stages. As a result we now have a marine reserve appreciated and supported by the whole community.

Unfortunately the proposed reserve at Dan Rogers has been the complete antithesis of this. It is a classic case of how not to do things.

Conservation

Our Club has actively supported our friends in the local Maori community who wished to establish a taiapure in Akaroa Harbour. We are delighted that after their long period of hard work this has now come to pass. There is now in place the ideal vehicle to provide for the

future conservation of the harbour. Not only will this give the opportunity to assess and manage the living resources of the harbour it can also be a catalyst for improving environmental factors such as the disposal of sewage into the harbour. Management of the fish resources of the harbour will only be effective by treating the harbour as a whole.

If the Dan Rogers area is closed to fishing it will inevitably result in greatly increased fishing pressure on the western side of the harbour. This will deplete the fish, shellfish and rock lobster stocks in this area. It is far better to disperse effort over all available fishing grounds. That does not rule out closing certain parts for defined periods or for particular species. All of these could be achieved as active management under the taiapure. In this way regulations can be adjusted to changing abundance of species or circumstances. It is a flexible method as used on a much wider scale by the Ministry of Fisheries through the quota management system.

As well as its direct responsibilities to manage the resources of Akaroa Harbour we see the taiapure, through its representative committee, as an example of how the community can work together. In this way it could be a shining example to the rest of New Zealand. If the Dan Rogers proposal is accepted, the heart will be ripped out of this whole endeavour.

Public Interest

It is not in the public interest to declare a reserve in a location where it will cause ongoing conflict with stakeholders and customary users. The distress it will cause to the local runaka is now apparent to all those who have been involved in this issue. In addition to the problems which will arise in policing the Dan Rogers area itself, any vessel entering the harbour from the east will have to pass through the proposed reserve. In summer time when larger boats go outside the harbour to fish other bays, they will risk prosecution on their return if they have fish legitimately caught elsewhere.

Effects on Fishing

Akaroa Harbour is the most popular recreational fishing area in Canterbury. The Dan Rogers area is the most popular reef fishing area in the harbour. It also includes the most abundant stocks of greenlip mussels, paua and rock lobster occurring within the harbour. It is right next to the marae at Onuku. **It would be hard, if not impossible, to select an area whose closure would have a greater detrimental and permanent effect on recreational and customary fishers.**

Yours sincerely

James Crossland
Vice-President