

## **option4 Update #132**

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### **Creating an over-arching body for recreational fishing interests**

A hot topic over the past month has been the initiative by several South Islanders to create an over-arching body to represent all marine recreational fishing interests. Their proposal was presented to a meeting of selected, national representative organisations held at Bucklands Beach Yacht Club in late March.

No decision was made from the meeting about support, or otherwise, for the proposal. It was left to Nelson Cross, Alan Key and Laurel Tierney to determine their next moves. These could include presenting the proposal to the Minister of Fisheries to seek his support.

Two representatives attended the invitation-only meeting on behalf of option4, the NZ Sport Fishing Council, the Hokianga Accord and the Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of New Zealand. Trish Rea and Jason Foord joined with Kim Walshe to report on the meeting. That report is now online and is highly recommended reading. Visit

[http://www.option4.co.nz/Your\\_Rights/documents/Overarching\\_fishing\\_body\\_meeting\\_report\\_410\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.option4.co.nz/Your_Rights/documents/Overarching_fishing_body_meeting_report_410_FINAL.pdf).

### **Smart-card key to success**

Top priority of the proposal is to establish a united body to speak on behalf of all recreational fishing interests, by developing a database of recreational fishers and fishing.

Key to this initiative's success is the adoption of a photo ID smart-card that would contain each fisher's details and catch records. Access to this information database could be on-sold to retailers for a monthly fee and limited access provided to the Ministry of Fisheries for management and, possibly, compliance purposes.

A membership/licence fee would be charged. Participation in the organisation would be voluntary, however, the intention was that all marine recreational fishers would join the new body.

### **Your feedback is critical**

Every New Zealander has a right to fish to feed their families and sustain themselves.

Since the Soundings debate in 2000/01 option4 has been strongly opposed to licencing of amateur fishers. At that time over 100,000 New Zealanders supported the principle of no licencing. We do not believe the public's attitude has changed much since that time.

There are a multitude of other questions arising from this proposal. Those are still being debated.

option4's view is that it is not lack of a single 'peak' body that is the problem. The core issue is a lack of fish in the places we normally fish.

This has happened because of a loosely worded 1996 Fisheries Act, a poorly implemented quota management system and the creation and monopolisation, of private property rights in the public's fisheries.

Highly efficient corporate interests are now vying for access to the same fisheries that local commercial and non-commercial fishers target. Management of many popular inshore fisheries relies on 'science' funded by these corporate interests.

Therefore, creating an over-arching representative body is a distraction. We should be addressing the need for more abundant fisheries.

Long-term benefits for the public will arise from remaining focused on fixing fundamental flaws in the quota system and the Fisheries Act, to enable the Minister to be more precautionary when setting catch levels for commercial exploitation.

option4 would appreciate your feedback on this issue. Email [feedback@option4.co.nz](mailto:feedback@option4.co.nz) or call Trish Rea on 09 8186205.