



MEDIA RELEASE

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**CUSTOMARY, RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHERS JOIN FORCES IN OPPOSING
GOVERNMENT SHARED FISHERIES PROPOSALS**

Maori leaders and representatives from New Zealand's recreational fishers today joined forces in opposing the Government's proposed "Shared Fisheries" plans.

At a meeting held in Auckland today, iwi representatives, Te Ohu Kaimoana (the Maori Fisheries Trust) and Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd met with the presidents of the New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council, the New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council and the project leader for the option4 group representing other recreational fishers.

All of the groups at today's meeting agreed the discussion process over the Shared Fisheries proposals were "woefully inadequate", that the document published by the Ministry of Fisheries was "divisive" and that the Ministry's submission form was "disgraceful".

"What is agreed by all sectors of New Zealand's fishery – customary, commercial and recreational fishers – is that there is insufficient information on the status of the recreational catch for the Government to go ahead with the Shared Fisheries proposals, and the Government should withdraw it," they said. The groups called on the Government to abandon the proposals in favour of a process of gathering more information on the full extent of fishing activity on New Zealand's valuable fishing resources.

Ngati Kahungunu Chairman and Te Ohu Kaimoana Director Ngahiwi Tomoana said there were "deep and serious concerns" with the shared fisheries proposal from all sectors of the fisheries system. "This was a meeting where all sides of the debate discussed common issues with the Government's proposals. We are pleased that the recreational representatives are committed to protecting the Deed of Settlement for Maori fisheries and acknowledged the potential adverse effect on the Maori fisheries agreement with the Crown."

The President of the New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council, Jeff Romeril, said the meeting with Maori interests and recreational representatives was long overdue. "Working closely with these groups was definitely a worthwhile prospect. We are all committed to ensuring a sustainable fishery so that all New Zealanders can enjoy the benefits of fishing."

Project Leader of option4, Paul Barnes, said there were obvious deficiencies in the way New Zealand's fisheries resources were managed, "but the 1996 Fisheries Act was not one of them."

The Chief Executive of Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, Robin Hapi, said, "There are many issues all sectors have in common and it is incumbent on us to build on that to ensure sustainable utilisation of New Zealand fisheries. The fact that the meeting was prepared to acknowledge the importance of the Deed of Settlement to Maori and to New Zealand was an extremely good position from which to start."

For more information, contact

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