

Hon Jim Anderton

Minister of Agriculture, Minister for Biosecurity
Minister of Fisheries, Minister of Forestry
Associate Minister of Health
Associate Minister for Tertiary Education

Progressive Leader



15 May 2008

Media Statement

Minister of Fisheries declines application for marine reserve at Great Barrier Island (Aotea)

Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton today rejected the proposal for a marine reserve covering 495 square kilometres on the northeast coast of Great Barrier Island in the Hauraki Gulf.

Jim Anderton said he had flown over the proposed reserve, and met with residents and the local hapu, Ngati Rehua, and the iwi, Ngatiwai on Great Barrier Island itself.

"I agree that it is a magnificent area that many value for different reasons. However, I don't believe the interests of the public would be best served by creating such a large no-take marine reserve in this relatively remote area where access to the sea is a large part of life on the Island.

"Great Barrier Island is isolated with few shops and limited services. Many residents rely on the sea for food. Many also rely on fishing-related tourism, either directly or indirectly.

"While further marine protection could benefit eco-tourism in the area, a large no-take marine reserve may have negative effects on the local lifestyle and economy. I also carefully considered the effects on recreational and commercial fishers who use the area."

Jim Anderton said that for Ngati Rehua, the marine reserve would have excluded them from some of their traditional fishing grounds and many important wahi tapu sites.

He said the size of the marine reserve would have limited the ability of Ngati Rehua to decide which areas to manage by traditional means.

"It is my responsibility to carefully consider this proposal and the Crown's obligation to uphold customary fishing rights under the Treaty of Waitangi and the 1992 Fisheries Settlement.

“Balancing marine protection and these varied interests requires careful consideration. The way forward is to use the Marine Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan (MPA Policy) to explore further protective measures around Great Barrier Island and the northeast bio-geographical region that extends from the tip of the North Island to East Cape.”

Jim Anderton said many views expressed at his meetings with Great Barrier Island residents, hapu and iwi made it clear there was support for marine conservation.

“However, they want this balanced with their uses, interests and aspirations for Great Barrier Island. I believe the MPA Policy approach will have their support.”

Background

- The marine reserve application was submitted by the Department of Conservation in 2004.
- In 2005 the former Minister of Conservation approved the application.
- As required under the Marine Reserves Act 1971, the former Minister of Conservation sought the agreement of the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Fisheries.
- The Minister of Transport agreed in 2006.
- The Ministry of Fisheries undertook further consultation in 2007, and the Minister of Fisheries visited GBI in September 2007. The Minister also met with Ngati Rehua in Auckland.
- The Ministry of Fisheries provided the Minister with advice in late 2007.

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