

## **Hokianga Accord Update #14**

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### **Sweet and sour hui reception for Ministry's Chief**

Wayne McNee, Chief Executive for the Ministry of Fisheries, received a controversial but warm welcome when he visited the Bay of Islands for his first Hokianga Accord hui in early September. Originally scheduled for Waitangi, the two-day fisheries hui moved to Paihia's Scenic Circle Hotel after objections to having the Crown's representatives at Te Tii Marae.

Four MFish staff joined their leader and more than 40 customary and amateur fishing representatives from Northland, Auckland, the Manawatu and Great Barrier Island (Aotea).

This was the twelfth meeting of the Accord, the mid north iwi fisheries forum, and included representatives from Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua, Ngati Hine, option4, the NZ Big Game Fishing Council and local fishing clubs.

Chairman for Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi, Raniera (Sonny) Tau welcomed the Ministry team to the mid north while signalling a continuation of the forum's objective of working together with amateur fishing interest groups to achieve a healthy marine environment and abundant fisheries.

"We have tried working with the Ministry of Fisheries for the past three years to establish a forum to discuss non-commercial fishing interests. This has been unsuccessful due to the Ministry's reluctance to have both customary and amateur fishing representatives in the same room. Despite that, we are determined to continue discussion amongst ourselves because our non-commercial interests in having plenty of fish in the sea extends to both Maori and Pakeha."

A range of issues was discussed during the hui, including the contentious proposal to amend section 13 of the Fisheries Act 1996 (as covered in Update #13). No satisfactory resolution was forthcoming so discussion soon moved onto how low fish stock levels in Area 1, from North Cape to East Cape, affects local fishermen and their ability to catch enough fish to provide for their social and cultural wellbeing.

It is important to clarify what stock levels are required to satisfy both the environmental and food-access needs of the local population because the Minister of Fisheries has a statutory obligation to 'allow for' these non-commercial interests, both customary and recreational, before he sets commercial catch limits in any fishery.

Accord co-chairman, Judah Heihei, is also the leader of Taiamai Ki Te Marangai Roopu Kaitiaki. They are kaitiaki/guardians of the northern Bay of Islands, from Kerikeri north to coastal Takou Bay. He explained the group's frustration over the past twelve years in attempting to have meaningful local fisheries management and a mataitai established in the northern Bay area.

"Our fourteen hapu have faced local racism and a dictatorial attitude from Ministry staff in trying to get the mataitai underway. We look forward to having the support of the Ministry when we have our local, public meetings soon to discuss the plans."

Wayne assured the hui he would do his best to ensure Ministry staff would implement the correct mataitai process. A public meeting to discuss the mataitai proposal was set down for Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, at Whitiora Marae, Purerua Peninsula, Kerikeri.

A full report of the hui will be posted online on its completion. Visit [www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz](http://www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz).