

Hokianga Accord Update #16

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Mountains to sea management approved

Ministerial approval has finally been granted for the Kaimoana Regulations to apply to fresh-waterways as well as the sea. A decision was made in early November but its announcement has been delayed because of the elections and the appointment of a new Fisheries Minister, Phil Heatley.

Approval was expected by April this year and it is unclear at this stage what has caused the lengthy delay.

In November 2007 the mid north iwi fisheries forum, the Hokianga Accord, submitted in support of the Ministry of Fisheries' proposals to extend the regulations. This was in recognition that land use affects water quality in both freshwater and marine environments.

Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua and other northern non-commercial fishing interests endorse a fully integrated mountains-to-sea management approach.

Until recently the Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998 only applied to the moana, the sea.

While the Accord is pleased with the outcome of this process it will be waiting with interest to see if any of the concerns raised in the submissions have been addressed.

One outstanding issue is the Ministry's lack of recognition and failure to meaningfully support the forum, despite three years of in-depth discussions and overnight hui.

As we noted in the submission,

“MFish's behaviour towards the Hokianga Accord is unacceptable. As a Crown agency MFish does not have the right to be selective about who they apply resources to when dealing with Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 appropriated funds. Those funds are to better provide for Maori's involvement in fisheries management. When Cabinet approved the \$17.045 million in the Vote Fisheries Bid 2004, it was given on the basis that MFish would apply those funds to fulfil agreements and provide a broad base for engagement of Maori in fisheries management processes.

“The longer MFish continues to ignore their (and the Minister's) responsibilities to mid north iwi, the greater the grievance will be when a settlement is finally reached.”

Management roles, the long-winded process to establish customary area tools for the benefit of the whole community and water access rights are other issues that need to be addressed.

In the meantime, the Hokianga Accord will continue to work with other iwi/hapu, option4 and the NZ Big Game Fishing Council to achieve better fisheries management outcomes for all people by advocating for “more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai”.

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