

Hokianga Accord Update #25

NZ Fishing News October 2009 edition
August 2009

Minister to “fix” skewed Fisheries 2030 proposals

Anticipation was high as representatives from the non-commercial alliance flew into Wellington to discuss the Fisheries 2030 project with Phil Heatley, the Minister of Fisheries.

It was an historic occasion for the Hokianga Accord representative, Paul Haddon, to sit in the Minister’s office alongside other alliance contributors.

The group left the meeting with a renewed sense of optimism.

After listening to the collective concerns about how the Ministry’s Fisheries 2030 strategy was skewed towards economic outcomes Phil advised that he would be seeking to “fix” that.

There are serious risks for our taonga, our fisheries and environment, if the project is given effect. New Zealanders do not want bigger piles of dead fish or increasing degradation of our moana purely to satisfy demands for more quota from commercial fishers.

To address these concerns the Minister was offered an alternative management strategy that seeks to achieve "more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai".

Having more abundant and healthy fisheries will satisfy environmental interests, commercial, customary and amateur fishing aspirations. It will also simplify the Minister’s task of managing our fisheries sustainably while providing for the needs of future generations.

Following the August meeting another letter was sent to the Minister confirming the alliance’s resolve to assist him in achieving successful implementation of the alternative strategy.

This strategy offers a range of cost-effective solutions to improve harvesting techniques, reduce unnecessary wastage, and recognise kaitiakitanga/guardianship. These will help us to reduce our impact on the marine environment while providing food and jobs for New Zealanders.

Contorted 2030 process

Later we learnt, from Primary Production Select Committee discussions, that the aim of the Fisheries 2030 project is to get “the best value possible to the fishing quota holders by lowering costs and thus allowing them to catch more fish and employ more people”.

Since when did the interests of 1,592 quota owners take precedence over four million New Zealander’s right to have access to kaimoana to feed their whanau?

This is just another twist in the Fisheries 2030 tale, and certainly not in the interests of our environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being.

The alliance fired up again and this time wrote to the Select Committee expressing its concerns, copying the earlier correspondence to the fisheries Minister, and reiterating support for the alternative management strategy. Their response is awaited with interest.

This initiative is unprecedented and is a direct outcome of the June Accord hui, held at Whitiara marae, Te Tii. To understand why this alliance is striving for “more fish in the water” please visit http://option4.co.nz/Fisheries_Mgmt/2030.htm.

Contributors to the alliance include the Hokianga Accord, Greenpeace New Zealand Aotearoa, Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa New Zealand, the NZ Big Game Fishing Council, the NZ Recreational Fishing Council, Guardians of Hawke Bay Fisheries, the NZ Angling and Casting Association, the Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ, Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association, the Wellington Recreational Marine Fishers Association and option4.