

## **Hokianga Accord Update #41**

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### **A hotbed of issues at next hui**

On May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> the Hokianga Accord, the mid north iwi fisheries forum, will meet overnight for the fifteenth time. This hui is open to the public and will be held at Oturei Marae on the Pouto Peninsula, at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour.

A wide range of topics will be discussed, from the contentious approval for 200 underwater turbines at the Harbour entrance through to national policy issues. The Accord is anticipating the attendance of several Ngai Tahu representatives so the korero [discussions] will have the added bonus of a South Island flavour.

### **Accord chairmanship**

At the last hui Sonny Tau stepped down as Chairman of the Hokianga Accord. This was necessary due to work commitments. The hui agreed George Riley of Ngapuhi was a suitable replacement. Since that hui George has been appointed acting Chief Executive of Te Runanga A Iwi o Ngapuhi, so there will be discussion during the hui on who will step into this pivotal role for the forum.

### **Fishing rights reform**

Discussions designed to reform non-commercial fishing rights and representation are underway with the release of two separate proposals; one from a South Island group, the other from the New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council.

Both proposals seek to generate support by scare mongering, by emphasising the ability of Maori and commercial fishers to promote their interests, at the supposed expense of recreational fishers.

What they fail to add is that more than half the adults fishing within the amateur fishing regulations are of Maori descent and that their catch is most often taken home as food for the whanau.

Time and again at Hokianga Accord hui this issue has been raised, and every time the response from both Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua has been the same: where there is tension between commercial and non-commercial interests, commercial will give way to enable people to feed their families.

Also, it is the Minister and Ministry that bear the brunt of any collective action by Maori and commercial interests, because the Minister, Phil Heatley, is the final fisheries management decision-maker.

The reformers' proposed solution is to have the government give statutory authority to a body to make decisions on behalf of all recreational fishers, including Maori.

But let's be clear. Only Ngati Whatua and Ngapuhi will determine who is to represent their interests in any forum, including any statutory bodies.

### **Abundance key to success**

Throughout the Hokianga Accord's 5-year tenure we have sought to work with a variety of fishing and environmental organisations to understand our common ground and identify our differences.

We are now working on the issues of highest priority, to achieve our common goal of "more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai".

Our alliance will continue to strive for success, abundant fisheries and a healthy marine environment for the benefit of all New Zealanders. And the Hokianga Accord will vehemently resist any attempts, by the NZRFC or others, to limit our collective ability to put food on the table for our babies.

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