

## **Hokianga Accord Update #4**

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### **Where has \$17 Million gone?**

In 2004 Cabinet approved funding exceeding \$17 million for the Ministry of Fisheries to improve 'interactions' with Maori on fisheries management. So far there has been little evidence of where this money has been spent. Ask one of your Maori mates if they have seen any of that money, what's the bet their reply will be no?

Answers to this riddle were sought from MFish prior to the mid-November Hokianga Accord hui. MFish senior managers declined the invitation to engage with the mid-north iwi fisheries forum. Instead, their written response was read out to all those at the Accord's tenth hui, hosted by the Auckland University.

In-depth discussions were held regarding the multi-million dollar Deed of Settlement Implementation Plan. It seems the Vote Fisheries Bid 2004 emerged not long after the Foreshore and Seabed debate in 2003/04. Approximately \$4 million per annum was to be spent on enhancing the Crown/Maori relationship, and honouring the statutory obligation to provide for the input and participation of tangata whenua into fisheries management.

While details are sketchy, it appears MFish may have spent most of this money internally. Several projects have been directed towards establishing and supporting iwi forums. However, the absence of MFish support for the Hokianga Accord and implementing customary management tools such as rahui, taiapure and mataitai seems to demonstrate the approved funding has gone elsewhere; and not been spent on initiatives that will allow coastal communities to work together to achieve more abundant fisheries and localised management of valuable inshore waters.

Credit goes to Peter Douglas, Chief Executive of Te Ohu Kaimoana for attending the hui and speaking on this contentious topic. While his role is to protect Maori commercial fishing interests, he has a big whanau who like to catch and eat fish too.

A list of questions arising from the hui has been sent to MFish for further feedback.

Just as interesting was the political panel discussion that followed.

The Minister, Jim Anderton and the Greens sent their apologies prior to the hui. Adam Gifford put the pre-prepared questions to Phil Heatley (National), Hone Harawira (Maori Party) and Pita Paraone (NZ First).

Adam is a veteran at interviewing and managed to keep alive the three politicians' debate about what they will do to direct MFish after next year's election and how their parties will give effect to the our fisheries laws, to achieve sustainable fishing.

Phil, Hone and Pita expressed their views and encouraged the Accord to forward any information to assist them to ensure non-commercial fishing issues receive adequate attention in parliament.

Also discussed at the hui was the innovative trawling gear being trialled off Napier by Richard Burch. A proactive proposal to increase kahawai numbers was hotly debated, as was the participation in the North Island West Coast Fisheries Plan process.

Following the hui a collective submission from the Accord, option4 and the NZ Big Game Fishing Council was lodged with MFish supporting their proposals to include freshwater into the Kaimoana Regulations.

Visit [www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz](http://www.HokiangaAccord.co.nz).