

Press release:

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KAIKOURA COASTAL MARINE GUARDIANS ANNOUNCE DECISIONS

Wide ranging measures to protect the Kaikoura coast were announced today by Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura - the Kaikoura Coastal Marine Guardians.

Incoming Guardians Chair Larnce Wichman said “Every submitter that we had an address for should receive an 135 page summary of submissions and decision document today. Its been a long haul this year working our way through comments from all over New Zealand. The job has taken longer than we expected, but we wanted to do justice to the wide range of thoughtful comment and to find solutions that all of the Guardians could support. At the end of last year we received 169 submissions on the proposed Strategy. There were almost 1000 individual ideas put forward, and we are confident that the resulting Strategy will be a stronger and more widely supported plan for the future as a result. We hoped the proposed Strategy would be about 80% right when we launched it last year, and in the event that has proved to be true. Most of the improvements we will need to make in the final Strategy will be matters of detail rather fundamental changes to the approach. We had to be very careful to keep an open mind on every point, while accepting that in seven years of development we had pretty well understood what was needed.”

The proposal that attracted most submissions was for a marine reserve over the Kaikoura Canyon. “There were strong views in favour of a marine reserve, and those that wanted the reserve wanted it to be bigger and have simpler boundaries. At the same time, while there was little opposition to a marine reserve in deeper water, many locals were concerned about the effects on recreational and commercial fishing inshore. This issue took the most time for the Guardians to resolve. We had to get expert advice on enforcement, and more information from the most affected commercial fisher, to come to a conclusion. We found that accepted wisdom on marine reserve boundaries in new Zealand did not work for the Kaikoura Canyon. These ideas, developed elsewhere in New Zealand, have been formed in a context of long, relatively narrow marine reserves along the coast. Our proposal is very different taking in water depths of 800m to 1200m. Any fisher, commercial or recreational, that can operate at these depths will have modern GPS systems, and can manage more complex boundaries with relative ease. Inshore, there are a lot of small vessels that are not equipped electronic position fixing, though some do have it, and here simple straight-line boundaries are important. Submitters will find that we have made small adjustments to the proposed boundaries inshore to reduce effects on the commercial rock lobster fisher operating in this area, and to achieve boundaries that are enforceable and link better to pull-off areas on the State Highway” said Wichman.

“The current debate out petroleum exploration and fracking drew quite a lot of attention and these are clearly important for a lot of people at the moment. We sought advice from both the Department of Conservation and from the Petroleum Exploration Association of New Zealand to help us understand the issues and options. People will find that we have held to the proposed boundaries for the marine mammal sanctuary, but have developed detailed ideas about zones and conditions for seismic survey that link with current best practice. We were advised that the Kaikoura marine area has low prospectivity for oil and

gas and is not the sort of environment where fracking would be used. We have taken a cautionary approach, however, as Kaikoura is the premier marine mammal hotspot in New Zealand and is internationally important” said Wichman.

The other issue that drew a lot of submissions were proposals to adjust recreational fishing limits. “Working through the fishing submissions has reinforced for us the value of a comprehensive Kaikoura Fishing Accord. Recreational, customary and commercial fishing work under very different codes, but all draw on the same resource of fish and we needed to find a way forward that will allow us to make “fishing for abundance” more than a noble aspiration. Working through the practicalities has resulted in a three part approach. The cornerstone is developing a suite of voluntary agreements with all the commercial fishers operating in the area. This will mean that a critical part of our work over the next year will be detailed engagement with the wide range of commercial interests that fish the Kaikoura Coast but do not have a local presence. The approach for recreational fishing will have two main parts - first, detailed changes to the recreational fishing limits, and second, a clear code of practice for local charter fishers backed by certification and compliance checks by the Guardians. For customary fishing we have confirmed our intent to support the formation of taiapure and mataitai for areas important to sustaining the cultural identity and way of life for Ngati Kuri. This was the subject where we found the greatest lack of understanding, and, I am sad to say, some deep seated prejudices in our community. Education about these tools will be a vital part of implementation of the Strategy” said Wichman.

The Guardians are now turning to re-writing the Strategy to match the decisions they have announced and hope to be ready to present it to Government around the end of October. “We know that our decision document is a bit of door-stop in size, and we hope people will take the time to read the parts that interest them. The next step is to prepare the Strategy for presentation to Government and we are inviting Government Ministers and other decision makers to Kaikoura to accept it. We want the dialogue to keep going in the community, and, although its been a big haul, we know that completion of the Strategy is a milestone rather than the end point. We don’t expect everyone will be happy; there was just too much divergence of opinion for that. However, if everyone can see we have listened, considered carefully, and can understand why we came to particular conclusions we will feel well satisfied” said Wichman.

For more information see www.teamkorowai.org.nz/. For further comment contact Larncé Wichman Chair of Te Korowai on Wk 03 575 6877 or after hours 03 575 6879, or Peter Lawless, Te Korowai Facilitator 03 539 1074.

A copy of the letter sent to submitters and the full text of the submissions analysis and decision document are attached.