



Paul Beverley  
Buddle Finlay

6 October, 2015

Dear Paul,

Thank you for requesting the Council's view on a potential replacement for Alan Proctor on the Sea Change Stakeholder Working Group. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council has been involved in the Sea Change process for 18 months and committed substantial resources to helping achieve a successful outcome. After 18 months of professional attendance we would have expected something tangible – a report of some description – but nothing has been received.

As you will no doubt be aware the Minister of Primary Industries has initiated a review of our fisheries management systems. Preliminary advice sets a tight timetable - October, November and December are for engagement and submissions. We have yet to receive details of process and timeline. Suffice to say, all of our resources are committed until 2016 and, as such, the Council is not able to continue engaging in the Sea Change process.

Moreover, the Council is not in a position to comment on anyone outside of our organisation that may be a potential replacement member.

#### **Sea Change comment**

As a way of background, we share the following observations regarding the Sea Change process. Sea Change is tasked with writing a Spatial Plan for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. This process is led by Auckland and Waikato Councils and is a direct response to the 2013 State of the Gulf Report prepared for the Hauraki Gulf Forum. The declining ecological state of the Hauraki Gulf described in that Report required a response. That response has been the Sea Change process.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) has contributed fulsomely to two Sea Change Roundtables, Fish Stocks and Biosecurity/Biodiversity. In these Roundtables many experts presented detailed information on matters spanning introduced invasive marine creatures, fish stock science, habitat importance, pollution etc. These two Roundtables joined all the others at a function in Whitianga where a short report-back session was held. The overwhelming impression was of a group of lobby groups vying for advantage by skewing the deliberations of the Roundtables to avoid any impact. It was shallow and trivial in nature.

The NZSFC has not been convinced that a Spatial Plan is what is needed to improve the ecological health of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Current legislation has the tools necessary and only needs to be applied as intended by those who passed the laws. The vast majority of problems can be separated into two categories: Those that result from land use, and those that result from fishing.

**Land management impacts**

Our expertise is not about contaminated run off from pastures being used for intensive agriculture. This is being addressed by others. However, we do have a long and detailed experience in fishing matters.

**Fisheries management impacts**

The Fisheries Act 1996 is the legislation giving effect to fishing, both commercial and non-commercial, including recreational and customary interests. Customary fishing is made possible under the Fisheries Act and other legislation.

The Fisheries Act sets total limits on catch, and prescribes what will be made available for commercial use and what is set aside for non-commercial use. The Minister has wide discretion when setting catch limits. They can be set at zero.

Overfishing is addressed through the Fisheries Act 1996, primarily using s. 13 when a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is set. Setting the TAC controls the state of the fish stock - if it is being fished down, is stable, or being rebuilt to more abundant levels.

The Hauraki Gulf is part of the wider Fisheries Management Area 1 (FMA1). The Hauraki Gulf (and the rest of FMA1) does not need a Spatial Plan with more endless discussions about MPAs that do not yet have proper supporting legislation.

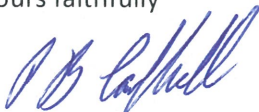
In our view, what is needed are significant reductions in almost all fishing related mortality, including reductions to TACs. Only this will enable the stocks to rise and reach a new equilibrium, significantly higher than current levels. Without a stock rebuild plan in place for all of the Hauraki Gulf fish stocks no Spatial Plan can have any real healing contribution to the Hauraki Gulf.

Furthermore, we believe there is a proposed Marine Protection Bill tabled with Cabinet, but are unaware of any details. It seems others have a better understanding of the proposed legislation. Further discussions regarding marine protection for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park will be useful when we are all well informed of the proposed legislation.

As discussed above, the Council's focus is now firmly on the review of the Fisheries Act announced on 19<sup>th</sup> August by the Minister. This review presents a prime opportunity for us to promote change to ensure more abundant fisheries in the future, not just for the Hauraki Gulf, but nationwide. More abundant fisheries means growth, jobs and wealth for our nation. We are committed to doing our best in that process.

We appreciate your correspondence and are always happy to meet and further discuss these matters.

Yours faithfully



Peter Campbell

Chairman

**NZSFC Fisheries Management Committee**