

Submissions on rāhui roll in

Feedback is flooding in in response to Ngāti Pāoa's request that the Minister of Oceans and Fisheries impose a temporary closure to ban the harvesting of scallops, mussels, crayfish and pāua from around Waiheke.

A Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) spokesperson says more than 50 submissions on the proposed temporary closure, which covers waters within one nautical mile of Waiheke, have been received.

"People are passionate about our fisheries, so naturally there will be a range of views from across all interests and we encourage anyone with an interest to submit online before the consultation closes on Monday 22 March," says Emma Taylor, Director Fisheries Management.

"We respect and value the feedback of anyone that takes the time to provide us with their insights through the consultation process. As such, we consider all submissions to be the genuinely held belief of the person providing it."

Ms Taylor says MPI staff will work through all of the submissions once the consultation closes and analyse them against the criteria in the Fisheries Act. A copy of the submissions, with personal information redacted, also will be provided to the requestor, Ngāti Pāoa, to seek their comment.

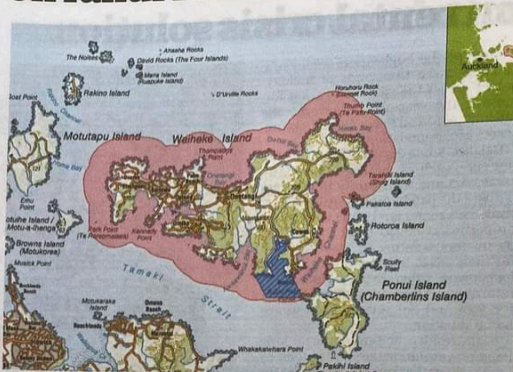
"We will also seek input from tangata whenua who have non-commercial interest in the species or the effects of fishing in the area concerned, having particular regard to kaitiaki tangata."

Following this, Fisheries New Zealand will provide advice to David Parker the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries before he makes a decision. If the minister imposes a temporary closure under the Fisheries Act, officers will be able to enforce the proposed no-take restrictions.

Although support for the rāhui is widespread, with organisations such as Forest and Bird Hauraki Gulf Islands submitting in favour of a temporary closure, one petition created on change.org by a man who does not want to use his real name has already been sent to MPI demonstrating some opposition.

The petition's originator "John Douglas" contacted *Gulf News* to say the petition was initially created to block an attempt by the Waiheke Collective Marine Project to implement Ahu Moana, but he had since updated it, advised signatories of the rāhui and invited people to take their signature off if they now disagreed with it.

"I believe this information will show



If David Parker, Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, imposes a temporary closure under the Fisheries Act, officers will be able to enforce the rāhui's proposed no-take restrictions for scallops, mussels, crayfish and pāua within one nautical mile of the island.

you that claims that there is unanimous community support for the rāhui are wrong," he says.

"My opinion is that most signatories are supportive of greater marine protection, such as no-take reserves. But they are concerned that the rāhui action is long term, will cover the entire coast of Waiheke and subverts the democratic process."

Mr Douglas says he believes the process of implementing the rāhui was too fast and undemocratic, and marine reserves were the best option for marine protection.

"I don't see anything wrong with the rāhui ... Environmentally I think it's a good thing and I think most fishers see it as good. My issue is the way in which it was brought about."

Emma Taylor, Director Fisheries Management says when a petition is received with multiple names, each name is considered as a submission.

"The important thing to note is that public consultations of this sort should not be seen as a 'vote'. Instead, we are seeking to understand the range of viewpoints and experiences of the people affected by the proposals," says Ms Taylor.

"This information is considered alongside the science, and any other relevant

Making a submission

The closing date for submissions is 5pm on 22 March 2012.

Email your submission via FM-Submissions@mpi.govt.nz or post your submission to:

Spatial Planning and Allocations
Fisheries Management
Fisheries New Zealand
PO Box 2526 Wellington 6140. •

facts to develop advice for the minister who will make the final decision."

Waiheke local board Chairperson Cath Handley says the rāhui is a statement to David Parker, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries.

"The Government needs to get protections in place way beyond the waters of Waiheke. This rāhui is a statement to David Parker - it's time he makes some changes around marine protection."

"What the rāhui is setting out to do has real merit," Ms Handley told the *Gulf News* late last month.

"The Government has been slow to recognise the dire need for protection and stocks. I expect to see the minister step doing." • Sophie Boladeras