

To: Hauraki Gulf Forum

From: The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council

Date: 12 August 2021

Background

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) has engaged in discussions with the Hauraki Gulf Forum about restoring fish abundance since 2011. Our team was involved in the early stages of the [Sea Change planning process](#) and working groups from 2014 onwards.
2. In 2015 the Sea Change Stakeholder Working Group was directed to produce a bold plan without fear or favour. In 2016 the Working Group signed off on their agreed Plan and this was released to the public in 2017. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council lent its [support and endorsement](#) to the *Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari* plan. We had real hopes of a restored Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.
3. A NZSFC representative was appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee in 2019. The Government's response to the Sea Change marine spatial plan, '*Revitalising the Gulf*', was released on 22 June 2021. The NZSFC immediately sought, under the Official Information Act, the report to Ministers from the Ministerial Advisory Committee and officials. The NZSFC has analysed and compared the various papers.

Submission

4. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council rejects the Government's *Revitalising the Gulf* proposal on the basis that it does not go far enough.
5. The vision and purpose of the *Sea Change* plan has been lost. A series of *State of the Gulf* reports chronicles a steady loss of abundance and diversity, and describes an emerging crisis that threatens the very functionality of the marine ecosystem within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.
6. The *Revitalising the Gulf* plan is a compromised and biased proposal, an insult to all who gave so freely of their time over the years to contribute to a comprehensive plan.
7. One of the key aspects agreed by the Sea Change contributors was that the plan was not to be cherry picked. The *Revitalising the Gulf* proposal does just that, thus destroying any good faith, goodwill achieved at the collaborative, negotiated and consensus driven Stakeholder Working Group process. A process that enjoyed widespread trust and support. The only major aspects that made it through the officials' vetting process is a series of 'high protection' areas lacking any ancillary management measures that would give them a chance of success. The Government would be wise to do nothing if that response is all that can be managed.

8. This entire exercise confirms that Government agencies are unable to work in concert for the benefit of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The tension between fisheries and conservation holds the Hauraki Gulf to ransom. Fisheries giving up some areas but not any catch, which simply exacerbates the depletion and habitat loss in the remainder of the Marine Park.
9. The *Revitalising the Gulf* plan is not about restoring the historic mauri of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park or addressing future climate change. It is about clinging to fishing practices long known to destroy habitat while maintaining catches at historic levels, the same levels that have brought us to this point of depletion and degradation.
10. Large public investments were made in crafting a spatial plan that would reverse the decades-long trend of biodiversity loss. This investment has been squandered.
11. Sadly, the Government's proposal is long on rhetoric, short on action and even shorter on logic. If *Revitalising the Gulf* proceeds, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park will remain gridlocked with its governance via three Acts of Parliament and no effective management.
12. The *Revitalising the Gulf* plan is contrary to the clearly defined purposes of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act, including the need to sustain in perpetuity the life-supporting capacity of all the natural systems in the Gulf.
13. The *Revitalising the Gulf* plan is a win for industrial fishing interests and a loss for the people of the Hauraki Gulf and the marine ecosystem.

Reasons for rejection

Our reasons for rejecting the Revitalising the Gulf plan include but are not limited to the following -

14. Failure to fulfil the purposes of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.
15. Failure to remove bottom trawling and Danish seining.
 - a. Failure to acknowledge the need to limit the effects of climate change by reducing the carbon emissions attributed to trawling and dredging in the Gulf.
16. Failure to remove scallop dredging.
17. Failure to remove purse seining.
18. Failure to create a separate Fisheries Management Area (FMA) for the Hauraki Gulf so precautionary catch limits can be applied and adjusted in a reasonable and responsible timeframe.
19. No attempt to address the need for improved management of recreational fishing in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

20. Failure to take a holistic approach to marine protection, with no integrated, meaningful fisheries management changes alongside the 'high protection areas'.
21. Failure to acknowledge the tension that will arise if Māori customary food gathering is permitted in 'high protection areas' while public fishing is prohibited.
22. The short sighted 'protection at all costs' bias that sees the far-sighted Special Management Area (SMA) concept discarded. The economy of such high value, low extraction fishing activity that currently occurs at the Mokohinau and Alderman Islands, and that would be permitted under the SMA concept, has been dismissed by officials "because it focuses on the management of use".
23. There is no provision for an Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) of the *Revitalising the Gulf* plan.
24. There is no provision for an assessment of the social and cultural impacts of the *Revitalising the Gulf* plan.
25. Failure to consider the effects of fishing on the marine ecosystem -
 - a. While the Gulf snapper stock may be slowly rebuilding, the prospects are not good for crayfish, pāua, scallops, mussels, tarakihi, John dory, gurnard, kahawai, trevally, pōrae and all the 'red fish' that have attracted [so much attention](#) recently.

Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000

Part 3

Section 32 – Purposes of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

The purposes of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park are—

- a. to recognise and protect in perpetuity the international and national significance of the land and the natural and historic resources within the Park;
- b. to protect in perpetuity and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the people and communities of the Gulf and New Zealand, the natural and historic resources of the Park including scenery, ecological systems, or natural features that are so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important to be of national significance, for their intrinsic worth;
- c. to recognise and have particular regard to the historic, traditional, cultural, and spiritual relationship of tangata whenua with the Hauraki Gulf, its islands and coastal areas, and the natural and historic resources of the Park;
- d. to sustain the life-supporting capacity of the soil, air, water, and ecosystems of the Gulf in the Park.

He herenga waka he whitiwhiti whakaaro he whitiwhiti korero e u ko te marama

Whenever canoes are tied up together, thoughts are exchanged, dialogue is exchanged and enlightenment comes forth.