

BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the **Act**)

AND

IN THE MATTER Submissions on the Proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KEN HINDMARSH

Dated: 17 April 2025

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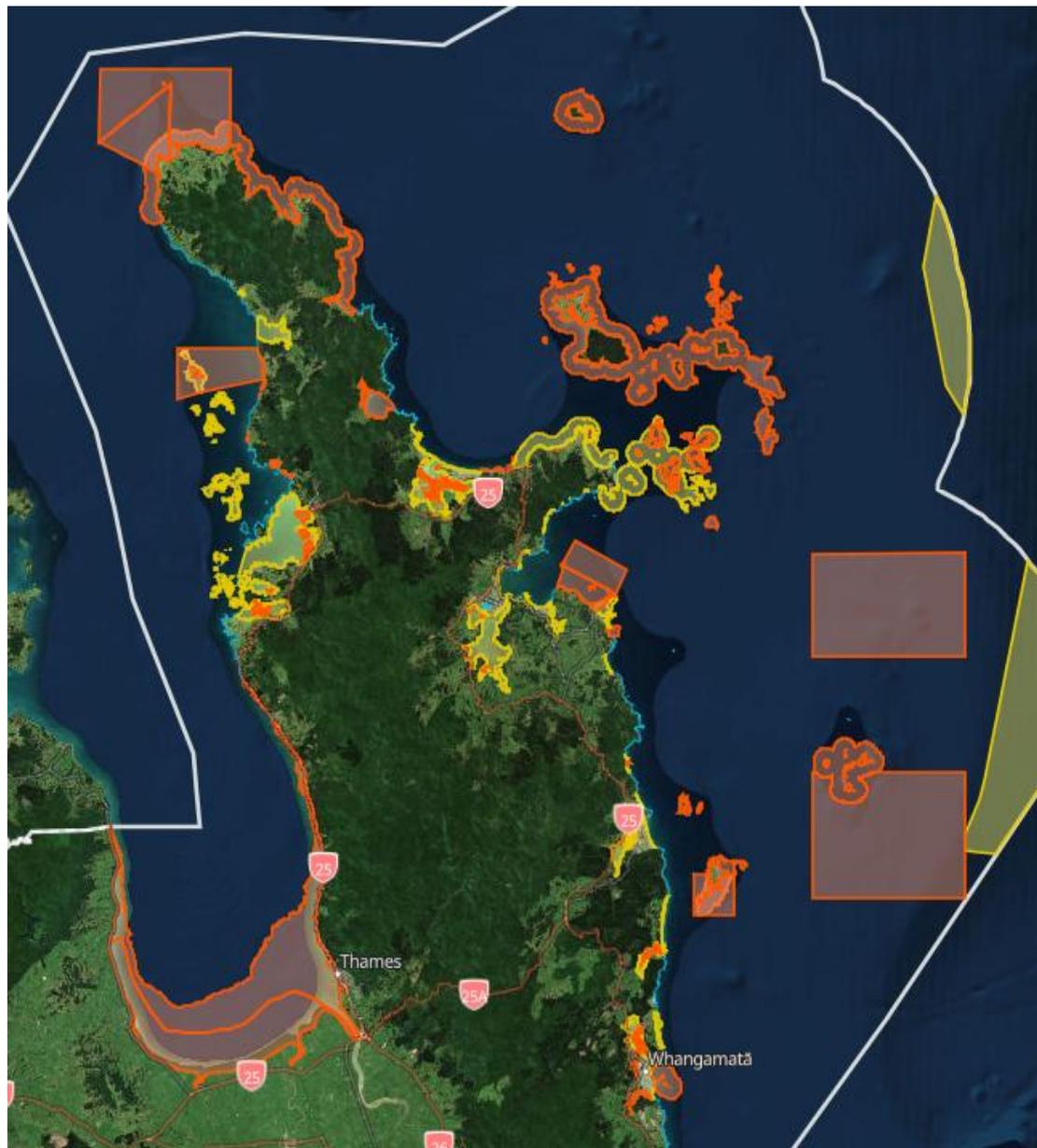
BROOKFIELDS
LAWYERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Ken Hindmarsh and I am a member of the executive committee of the Mercury Bay Business Association (**MBBA**).
- 1.2 I represent 142 members of the Mercury Bay Business Association, and have been asked by the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council to give this evidence in support of its submission. All our members are local business owners in the greater Mercury Bay area involved in all aspects of commerce in a tourist town by the sea. These include (but are not limited to):
- (a) Commercial fishing
 - (b) Charter Fishing
 - (c) Tour boats
 - (d) Scenic tours
 - (e) Hospitality – food, accommodation land-based entertainment
- 1.3 In discussion with our membership and other businesses here in the above fields, it is consensus that a closure as draconian as the map outlined in orange, will have an enormous cost to our community. I see no details from the Environmental Defence Society (**EDS**) of a cost analysis to businesses in the Coromandel area on such a massive change.
- 1.4 My evidence addresses the practical consequences of closed areas both on recreation, sport fishing and the flow on effect to businesses in the Mercury Bay and Coromandel district.

2. EFFECTS ON RECREATIONAL FISHING FROM EDS PROPOSED CLOSURES

- 2.1 We understand that EDS is seeking to make all fishing a prohibited activity in the red/orange areas below (some of which are existing or proposed Marine Reserves or High Protection Areas):



- 2.2 Included in the exclusion areas proposed, are most of the structural features (Islands) of the region, which are not only the areas to which the fish are attracted, but also the safe anchorages that are regularly used. The proposed restrictions are significant, if areas within this large are closed off from all boating it will increase the danger for vessels that need safe anchorage. It will lead to unsafe boating, and all these will affect cash flow to the rest of the local economy.
- 2.3 There are already protected areas both within the proposed exclusion and to the south and east of the above, as well as in the inner Hauraki Gulf.
- 2.4 Respectfully, EDS have not spent the time canvassing local vested interests and understanding the recreational fishing values that they are proposing to restrict. They have totally ignored the many years of work put in by the various parties who came

up with Spatial Plan developed by the Hauraki Gulf Working Group – a body of varied interests and approaches, including mana whenua, commercial interests, recreational and local body representation. Their recommendations (frustratingly) took many years of discussion, but above all, compromise was the key to reaching an ultimate agreement. The EDS proposal seems to have a singular approach to the issue to the disregard of other stakeholders.

3. EFFECTS ON LOCAL ECONOMY FROM EDS PROPOSED CLOSURES

- 3.1 Should the proposed EDS closure of local fishing areas proceed we believe this will have an adverse impact on the economy in our catchment area, along with other areas on the eastern seaboard of the Coromandel Peninsula.
- 3.2 Our members have not been able to accurately identify a value of this impact but have based their feedback on recent events. Occurrences such as main highway closures and significant weather episodes had the effect of reducing the number of people, local and visitors alike, that undertook recreational fishing in the areas proposed to be closed.
- 3.3 The economic effect on all businesses, not just those listed in paragraph 1.2, was devastating and resulted in financial stress for the business and mental health stress for the individual owners and managers. Many have not yet recovered to a position before these events.
- 3.4 We believe a closure as proposed by EDS will have a similar effect.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 We are extremely concerned by the proposal which has largely omitted consultation and work in the business community affected. We do not believe that fully closed areas are practical or workable over large areas. We look forward to the opportunity to address this evidence in person. Thank you for your consideration.

Dated 17 April 2025

Ken Hindmarsh