

## **Paua Industry Accepts Outcome of Government Decision on Southern Paua Beds**

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Commercial paua divers in Otago and Southland say they can live with the Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy's decision to retain the status quo in regard to the proposed lifting of restrictions on commercial harvest for paua areas currently closed by regulation.

These had been originally closed for public health reasons, which no longer apply. The prospect of commercial paua fishing in these areas had led to a public campaign in the region earlier this year to exclude commercial access.

PauaMac5 Chairman, Storm Stanley, says the industry is disappointed.

“But we accept that there will not be any change to the current access. The extended consultation made it apparent that there seemed to be a much higher level of customary and recreational take from these areas than at first thought, and so the Minister has made his call accordingly,” he says.

“Going forward, we will continue to work on maintaining and improving the health of this shared fishery. We see that it is important to continue to get along with recreational and customary paua harvesters, as we have done for many years. Cooperation amongst the different sectors with a stake in the fishery will be important over the next few years as the Otago Marine Protected Areas process rolls out, and we will be looking to initiate that,” Storm Stanley says.

*For more information contact:*  
Storm Stanley on 027 653 1073