

Submission to Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill

1 November 2023

Committee Secretariat
Environment Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

On behalf of the Hahei Residents and Ratepayers Association, we wish to make the following submission in relation to the Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill.

Our submission relates solely to the proposed expansion of Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve as this will directly affect the residents and ratepayers of Hahei.

This submission is based on an intense debate held at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 22 October 2022. The meeting was attended by 32 residents and ratepayers of our community.

1 Executive Summary

Our community was instrumental in setting up Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve and we view it as a very important part of our village. Indeed, the land section of Cathedral Cove was donated to the people of New Zealand in 1972 by Vaughan Harsant a prominent resident of Hahei.

Hahei residents have enjoyed the benefits of Cathedral Cove for many years. We have a strong connection to it and support the expansion, subject to the following:

- **Hahei Beach Encroachment** - we do not wish to see our beach divided and would like the current location, at the northern end of Hahei Beach retained
- **Location of Hahei Beach to Mahurangi Island Boundary** – a large majority of our residents would prefer the current boundary from Hahei Beach to the northern end of Mahurangi Island retained.
- **Extension into Mercury Bay** – we all strongly support the proposed extension of the reserve into Mercury Bay

We will now discuss each item in detail.

2 Hahei Beach Encroachment

We discussed the proposed location of the marine reserve boundary on Hahei Beach at our AGM and could find no support. Our members recommend that the existing boundary is retained for the following reasons:

- ***Right to Catch Fish from Hahei Beach*** – We strongly feel that residents and visitors, particularly children should be able to catch fish and pick up shells along the entire length of Hahei Beach.
- ***Dog Walking*** – Many residents and bach owners of Hahei love to walk their dogs on Hahei Beach. TCDC has range of dog walking restrictions on the beach and dog owners feel it is unreasonable to add more.
- ***Administrative Challenges*** – As with the existing beachfront carpark, there are challenges when DoC and Council have an interface. Who is in charge when it comes to enforcement, signage and management of a busy beach in the summer? On Summer mornings the most beautiful view in Hahei is filled with camper vans in the DoC section of the Hahei beachfront carpark, with no enforcement taking place. Even though freedom camping in Hahei is prohibited by the Council's freedom camping bylaw. The two agencies rarely mesh in their approach, and we anticipate the same on the beach itself.

3 Mahurangi Boundary

The current boundary was agreed by Hahei Residents when the Marine Reserve was created in 1992.

It was felt important to provide a safe, sheltered area to allow very small boats, i.e fishing kayaks and small dinghies (sometimes with small children on board) to fish, whatever the weather conditions. Even in fine conditions these craft can be too small to go further out "through the gap in the rocks" where the swell can be significant.

A large majority of our member still support this view and so we recommend that the current boundary, running from the end of Hahei Beach to the Northern End of Mahurangi Island, be retained.

4 Extension into Mercury Bay

Our members support the proposed expansion into Mercury Bay. Indeed, we would support further expansion towards Cooks Beach, if appropriate. It is vital however, that with a much larger area, DoC increases staff to control fishing by both recreational and commercial fishers.

5 Community Involvement

Going forward, we strongly recommend that any final decisions relating to Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve, are discussed with our community. Our community has a lengthy and emotional connection to Cathedral Cove, and we are sure many of our residents would participate. We would be happy to organise a workshop at any time convenient for DoC

We look forward to working with you to implement the expansion of Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve

Yours faithfully



John Jonassen

Chair

Hahei Residents & Ratepayers Association