

Herearoha Skipper
Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust
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Tuesday, 26 January 2021

ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSED WAIHEKE RĀHUI ON TAONGA SHELLFISH

Tēnā koe Herearoha,

I write as Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the largest sustainable business network in Aotearoa. SBN brings together more than 600 investing organisations nationwide for collective action on climate, waste and water. This includes a major programme of work with businesses, local authorities, government and community groups to help protect and restore the mauri of Tikapa Moana/Te Moana-nui-a-Toi/The Hauraki Gulf.

I commend and endorse the Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust, Trust Board and its supporters and collaborators on the proposed rāhui.

A ban on the removal of taonga shellfish - paua, kūtai, kōura and tīpa – in these waters is vital. It marks an early step towards the active regeneration of this coastline.

Successive *State of Our Gulf* reports have highlighted the parlous state of these key species in the Gulf. They have also detailed the growing issues resulting from pollution and sedimentation in these waters. For decades lack of leadership has meant that the appropriate action has not been forthcoming. Despite this, there has been a huge amount of work done by various community groups, volunteers and partnerships over the years to make change happen.

The science and evidence is clear. Regenerating this declining system must begin now. Hence we absolutely support this much needed courageous leadership from a community and tangata whenua collective.

It is also fitting that the proposal seeks to apply Section 186a of the Fisheries Act 1996. My team includes staff with considerable experience of marine conservation, both in New Zealand and abroad. Extensive research and application demonstrates that restrictions like this trigger rapid and dramatic improvements in both the size and availability of species of fish, aquatic life and seaweed, as demanded by the Act. It is also clear from the nature of this intervention by tangata whenua that the current state of these fisheries around the coastline of Waiheke is having an adverse effect on the use and management practices of tangata whenua in the exercise of non-commercial fishing rights, as stipulated in the Act.

The activation of this clause will send an important signal. It's an opportunity for this Government to demonstrate how seriously it is taking the tragic state of this nationally signification treasure and globally important body of water. It will also create a much needed platform for public participation, education and commitment for marine restoration nationwide.

The Hauraki Gulf is the life of New Zealand's largest, most populous and most economically important city. The health of these waters is absolutely crucial to the health and resilience of Auckland and its 1.7 million people, a third of New Zealanders. Our economic future relies entirely on the state of our land and waters. We view the proposed rāhui as acting in harmony with our own aspirations for the Gulf, and its needs.

We wholeheartedly support this move and stand ready to assist in any way that we can.

Nga mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RB', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rachel Brown ONZM
Founder and CEO
Sustainable Business Network