

Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents Association Inc

Marine Committee Report - 2024

Another very busy year for the Marine Committee. Our focus continues on maintaining and enhancing the amenity of the central sounds marine environment – and the challenges on this front keep coming.

Scallops

AS reported last year, Andrew Caddie has, for some years now, been working tirelessly on behalf of KCSRA on the Southern Scallops Working Group (SSWG) - looking to both protect the resource from further demise and to bring a more balanced public/industry resource governance model into play. Andrew addresses this further in his Presidents report.

Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP)

This year saw the release by the Council Hearing Panel of its decision on what is called Variation 1. This is a new regime to go into the Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) dealing with the management of aquaculture in Marlborough. This is largely about how much and where aquaculture is appropriate in the Sounds. As such it is a critical piece of the MEP.

KCSRA had made comprehensive submissions and presentations to the Hearing Panel and as a consequence gained some valuable ground in some areas, including around the management of plastic pollution and the management of ecological effects. In order to protect these gains and to prevent any dilution of the Hearing Panel's decision in other areas, KCSRA has joined as an interested party in a number of appeals filed by aquaculture interests with the Environment Court. KCSRA has also lodged an appealed with the Environment Court, this seeking a policy to review how aquaculture consent rights are managed, a policy requiring regard to be had to how good an area is for growing aquaculture before it is determined as appropriate for aquaculture, and challenging some of the aquaculture areas that are proposed in eastern Kenepuru that are in low flush and very shallow water.

We have also made submissions on a number of aquaculture resource consent applications that stand to perpetuate what is potentially inappropriate aquaculture under these new aquaculture rules.

We have been in mediation on these Environment court issues since February and this is expected to continue for a few months ahead. A time consuming process and we are grateful for the time being given to this by the Marine committee members.

ESMS Appeal

We have also joined with other local resident associations and environmental groups in supporting the formal identification and protection of several new Ecologically Significant Marine sites (ESMS) in the Sounds, as well as upgrading the Status and

buffer zones of existing sites. We supported Guardians of the Sounds and the Marlborough Environment Centre in putting a good case to the Hearing Panel (including using an expert marine ecologist) highlighting the puzzling oversight of Council in not including the ESMS and popular fishing destination McMannaways Rock in its review. We are awaiting the Panel's decision.

Marine Committee
April 2024