



Akaroa Harbour Marine Protection Society Inc.

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19th June 2012

The Minister of Conservation
Hon K Wilkinson
Private Bag 18041
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

LETTER RELEASED TO THE MEDIA

Dear Ms Wilkinson

Re: Proposed Akaroa Marine Reserve

Our Society welcomes the judgment of the High Court clarifying that the wider countervailing benefits of the proposed Akaroa Marine Reserve must be taken into account when considering recreational use under s. 5(6)(d) of the Marine Reserves Act.

Akaroa is primarily a recreational harbour, extensively used by local residents and visitors for fishing and the enjoyment of its wildlife and scenic beauty. It is a prime nature tourism destination for New Zealanders and international visitors, with Hector's dolphins being the principal attraction. Therefore the interpretation of s.5(6)(d) is of particular importance to the Akaroa Marine Reserve application.

The many benefits of the Akaroa Marine Reserve were assessed (at 43 & 44 of your letter of 20th August 2010) in your decision in relation to customary use and the public interest under s.5(6)(e) and were documented by the Maori Land Court Taiāpure Tribunal. The Court has directed you to undertake a similar assessment under s.5(6)(d).

The well documented 'spillover' benefits of marine reserves are described in the 2009 DG Report under s.5(6)(e) and referred to under s.5(6)(d) in the 2006 and 2007 drafts of that report. The Society's application is supported by the evidence prepared during the Judicial Review. This evidence shows that any adverse effect on fishing of a no-take regime being applied to 12% of the Harbour will be outweighed by the overall benefits to fishing in the balance of the Harbour.

The NZ Marine Sciences Society (letter attached) has continually supported the application since its inception for the value to science. They observe that *"There are no other MPAs offering full no-take protection within this large biogeographic region which extends the length of the South Island's eastern coast from Cape Campbell to Timaru."* Canterbury does not have a formal 'Marine Protected Areas Forum' where new applications may be investigated.

Now that the wider benefits are to be taken into account we ask you to approve the Akaroa Marine Reserve. The Society remains willing to engage in any useful way with you, the Department of Conservation and other stakeholders in the future management of Akaroa Harbour.

Our Society would appreciate advice as to the process and timetable for reaching a decision in light of the High Court's findings.

Yours sincerely

Brian Reid
President