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Media Release

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New report highlights major deficiencies in New Zealand's marine management



EDS today released the results of a major investigation into New Zealand's oceans management that concludes there are serious deficiencies that need urgent attention.

Titled *Safeguarding Our Oceans: Strengthening Marine Protection in New Zealand*, the report was co-authored by EDS Senior Oceans Researcher Kate Mulcahy, EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart and planner Abbie Bull.

"New Zealand has one of the largest marine jurisdictions in the world. This is a key strategic asset for the country," said Ms Peart.

"It is therefore crucially important for the future welfare of all New Zealanders that we manage our oceans wisely. That means protecting our hugely important marine biodiversity whilst still enabling economic use of the marine area.

"Our research found that although New Zealand became a world leader in marine protection in 1971 with the promulgation of the Marine Reserves Act, today we have fallen far behind other comparator countries. Marine reserves can only be created out to the 12 mile limit under our present law. This means that management of the EEZ is heavily skewed towards exploitation.

"Marine protection around the mainland coast is still at miniscule levels, with less than one per cent being fully protected. At the same time, pressure on the marine area is increasing, with new aquaculture, mining and petroleum projects in prospect.

"We investigated the marine protection initiatives undertaken for Fiordland, the West Coast of the South Island and the Sub-Antarctic Islands. Although there were some successes, we found major problems with the current approach including a lack of consensus, duplicated processes and low levels of marine protection resulting.

"We also looked at the recent experience in England, California and Australia where much more has been achieved.

"We concluded that New Zealand urgently needs updated legislation which reflects contemporary thinking and practice on oceans management and creates a framework for marine protected areas in our EEZ. The report sets out 16 recommendations on how this can be achieved.

"The report is particularly timely, given the government's current initiative to revise the Marine Reserves Act. We look forward to working constructively with government on the reform process," concluded Ms Peart.

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