

## **Speech for Seachange Tai Timu Tai Pari Launch**

**Viaduct Events Centre, Auckland, 6 December 2016**

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Tēnā Koutou Katoa

I'm thrilled to be here, with you tonight, to celebrate the launch of the Seachange Tai Timu Tai Pari marine spatial plan.

This plan has been some time in the making. It was three years ago, around this time of the year, just before Christmas, when 14 people, nominated by their tribal and sectoral groups, first sat round a table to contemplate the future of the Hauraki Gulf.

This group of Stakeholder Working Group members was diverse. There were kaumātua, recreational and commercial fishers, marine famers, dairy farmers, environmentalists, community and marine infrastructural interests.

We were tasked, through a collaborative process, with reaching agreement on a plan to guide the future management of the Gulf. Agreement was by consensus, meaning that every single person on the group had to either support, or not actively oppose, the contents of the plan. I remember looking around the room, at that first meeting, wondering how on earth this disparate group of interests would ever agree on anything.

But we got down to work. It soon became evident, that despite our different backgrounds and life experiences, we all shared something very important, a deep connection with the Hauraki Gulf and a heartfelt wish to see it thrive once again; to be healthy, productive and abundant and to support the communities living around its shores.

We clearly did not have all the answers, so we soon sought wider input. We heard from top New Zealand scientists, about what they had learnt through their research of the Gulf. Our Mana Whenua members convened a Matāuranga Māori Representative Table and held hui around the region. We sought public input through Listening Posts, online surveys, 'Love Our Gulf' message boards and Hauraki 100 Forums.

All this input emphasised the extent of change that had occurred in the Gulf, the ongoing loss of resources, and the need for strong action to turn the situation around.

We also engaged more broadly through the establishment of Round Tables. These harnessed a wider skill-set, to focus on specific issues such as fish stocks, water quality and catchments, biodiversity and biosecurity, aquaculture, accessibility and infrastructure. The groups were tasked with, not only clarifying the issues, but also, more importantly, identifying solutions.

Because that's what this plan is about, it's identifying and implementing solutions, to address the systemic problems that are driving down the health, productivity and abundance of the Gulf.

But it's not only about that. The plan also seeks to strengthen our relationships with the Gulf through supporting cultural, social and economic opportunities. Only if people are connected with the Gulf, will they be inspired and motivated to look after it better.

So what are some of the key elements of the plan?

At the heart of the plan is the need to restore healthy habitats and water quality to support abundant marine life including fisheries as well as taonga, such as seabirds and marine mammals. The plan includes several initiatives to achieve this, including:

- Firstly, **transitioning trawling, dredging and Danish seining out of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park**. These fishing methods can cause additional damage to seabed habitats, they remobilise sediment, and they prevent recovery from historic loss.
- Secondly, setting **catchment-based sediment and nutrient limits** and deploying a range of tools to modify land use and re-engineer natural systems so that they can be met.
- Thirdly, **removing harvest pressure** from some areas through the establishment of Type 1 MPAs and **seabed-damaging activities** from additional areas through Type 2 MPAs.
- Fourthly, scaling up efforts to **actively restore marine habitats** including through shellfish and seaweed restoration, habitat creation and the like.

The plan also supports increased abundance of marine life through a series of actions such as reviewing harvest levels of priority species, protecting vulnerable species from over-harvesting, decreasing mortality of under-sized fish, reducing pressures on threatened species and addressing marine biosecurity risks.

The plan provides support for marine-related industries including **Aquaculture**, through the provision of suitable marine space for growth; **Commercial Fishing**, through support for a high value, low impact industry; and **Tourism and Recreation**, through improved abundance, access, place-based management and visitor strategies. In particular, the plan supports **Recreational Fishing** through increasing the abundance and local availability of fish.

The plan also seeks to inspire local communities through engaging hearts and minds, embracing volunteering and expanding marine education.

Underpinning the plan is the need for strengthened management and governance arrangements. These include:

- Firstly, the establishment of **Ahu Moana** local management areas, jointly managed by mana whenua and local communities.

- Secondly, the establishment of a **Fisheries Management Area** for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park and a **Multi-stakeholder Fisheries Advisory Group** to provide recommendations directly to the Minister.
- Thirdly, establishing a new overarching **Governance Entity** that embraces co-governance and will champion the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park and the implementation of the plan.

I have briefly outlined some key features of the Plan, but there is much more and I would commend you to read it. The Plan is wide-reaching and ambitious. It sets out a roadmap for what needs to be done to restore the Gulf to a healthy state. It is a plan that has the backing of a broad range of stakeholders. It provides a robust basis on which we can move forward.

I would like to thank the numerous people, who have put in extraordinary effort, to ensure that the plan reached its successful completion. It's a great achievement and worthy of celebration.

But after celebrating this success, we need to collectively get on with implementing the plan. This is not a small task, but it is achievable, if we work together. And the prize is well worth the effort. A healthy, thriving and abundant Hauraki Gulf for us, our children and our grandchildren to enjoy.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa