

# Our Fishing FUTURE

- *a healthy marine environment enjoyed by all*
- *taking pride in an abundant and healthy marine environment where our community extends manaakitanga over our fisheries and oceans*
- *unity and inclusion within the recreational fishing community*
- *equity of access through stakeholder engagement*
- *understanding and valuing our marine environment and its resources so we can all be responsible for a better future*

## President's Report 2017

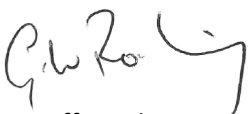
As I get older physical movement slows a little but time appears to be speeding up! Another year has flown by and Our Fishing Future progress seems to have matched MPI progress on the same issues I reported on last year. We are seeing out another electoral cycle with Government and its agencies still stuck in the same old model. This situation of running a process as creating the illusion of change is wearing very thin for us. Despite us having made several approaches to the decision makers asking for results on issues like Marine Protected Areas, Fisheries Act Review or when will the Marlborough Sounds Recreational Fishing Area be finalised, little changes. Instead we see Government and MPI making not so subtle changes to environmental and marine farming legislation resulting in various industry sectors making gains. Our rights and access are being eroded before our eyes and we seem powerless to stop it.

Our Fishing Future was set up in good faith with inclusive and collaborative goals. Unfortunately we seem to face increasingly high hurdles to progress resulting in difficulties reaching targets. Others in the recreational sector have nailed their colours to the mast of protest, gaining some support along the way. While throwing bricks may not be the best form of fisheries management, it does bring money and catches the attention of the more nervous politicians. Recent international political changes show the old methods are losing favour with direct communication via social media being favoured. Our Fishing Future hasn't made the most of this opportunity.

Once again your executive members have shouldered the responsibilities of running the organisation and continue to explore ways forward. An example is the work done in an effort to gain charitable status. Despite our best efforts we haven't managed to achieve this, something that would certainly help with raising funds. Contemplate why is it that all lobbying, law change development, public relations, etc done by the fishing industry is tax deductible, while public involvement doesn't enjoy the same?

There are two possibly brighter lights on the horizon. One is a general election with it being anyone's guess as to the outcome. The other is building relationships with other groups with an interest in the marine area. I refer to The Nature Conservancy, who are setting up in New Zealand, and the work being progressed by the NZ Initiative. The latter is about to head into a round of public discussion following up on a series of reports on recreational fishing. I took part in a fisher exchange in Perth with the working of RecFishWest being centre to the discussion. The progress being made in Western Australia resulting from political recognition and access to secure funding is the game changer. I am committed to following the roadshow and it will be very interesting to see the outcome.

Thanks again to all who have helped.



Geoff Rowling  
President

“Without money we are but well-meaning fools” (Frank Procop, RecFishWest )