

## Our Fishing Future – Press release 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014

### Recreational fishing is a whole country concern

Yesterday's announcement that if re-elected a National Government would introduce two recreational fishing parks in the Hauraki Gulf and the Marlborough Sounds highlights two fundamental issues facing one of our country's most popular pastimes. One is the lack of positive legislation to provide public fishing space and the lack of capacity recreational fishers have to influence and add value to managing New Zealand's marine environment.

Geoff Rowling President of Our Fishing Future welcomes National's recent announcement as a timely recognition of the importance of recreational fishing to New Zealand's future. He believes that the proposed compensation for commercial fishers needs to be accompanied by resources to build the capacity of recreational fishers to participate in the proposed reform.

This is a bold yet complex step of National and has implications for the whole country, not just the Hauraki Gulf and the Marlborough Sounds. The proposal recognizes that fisheries in New Zealand are shared yet there is no positive mechanism for protecting and promoting responsible recreational fishing.

Given the complexity of the proposed reform, Our Fishing Future believes the only way to progress it is through collaborative means. The Government must ensure that recreational fishing stakeholders are properly resourced to participate in such a collaborative process. It is also important to link this work with currently running collaborative work in the Hauraki Gulf and the Marlborough Sounds.

The experience of Our Fishing Future shows that the number of potential tangles in the proposed reform could prevent the line from even hitting the water let alone catch the desired fish of New Zealand being a world leader in the responsible use, management and conservation of our marine environment. Even so, Our Fishing Future is committed to collaboration and looks forward to being part of the proposed marine reform process.

Governments talk of 'the recreational fishing sector' but there is really no such thing. People with interests in recreational fishing are as heterogeneous as the entire country's population. Extrapolating a single voice out of this diversity is possible but not easy.

This challenge was embraced last February in Nelson when a cross section of Kiwis interested in the marine environment and recreational fishing came together to discuss the future of recreational fishing in NZ. Out of this national conversation came the incorporated society Our Fishing Future, whose principles can be found on the website [www.ourfishingfuture.org.nz](http://www.ourfishingfuture.org.nz)

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