

# STATE OF OUR GULF 2014



## Responses

Ehara taku toa i te toatakitahi engari he toa  
takitini – It's not the work of the individual that creates success but  
the work of the collective.

# ASSESSMENT CONTEXT



- Scope specified under the HGMPA
  - Progress towards integrated management
  - Progress on addressing the strategic priorities identified by the Hauraki Gulf Forum
- **R:** (A) Regenerating network of marine protected areas and island sanctuaries.
- **E:** Enhancement of fisheries with improved environmental outcomes.
- **M:** Mana whenua relationships reflected in resource management practice.
- **A:** Active land management to minimise inputs of sediments, nutrients and contaminants.
- **K:** Knowledge utilisation within an ecosystem-based management framework.

# REGENERATING NETWORK



- Ongoing progress protecting and restoring the islands, little progress on creating new marine protected areas.
- Reserves to protect marine biodiversity cover around 0.3% of the Gulf.
- History of ad hoc and highly contested processes.
- Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan released in 2005 – no new reserves to date.
- Recent initiatives:
  - Great Barrier Local Board: Aotea, Great Barrier Island.
  - Friends of the Hauraki Gulf: northern coast of Waiheke Island.
  - Government plans to revise MPA regulation

# ENHANCED FISHERIES



- There is broad alignment between MPI's overarching policy for managing fisheries (*Fisheries 2030*) and the objectives of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act
- HGMPA has to be considered in fisheries decisions, but no legal requirement to give effect to it.
- Alignment not reflected in fisheries management decisions since 2011.
- Little consideration of broader ecosystem effects when setting targets: no criteria established for assessing ecosystem effects.
- Fisheries Act (1996) provides for discretion when setting targets, but in most cases, the lowest acceptable target (BMSY) allowed for under Section 13 has become the default.

# ENHANCED FISHERIES

- Snapper stocks have improved from historical lows (11% of unfished biomass), but the current biomass (19%  $B_0$ ) remains well below the interim target of 40%. Range of measures introduced in latest management decision, but TAC increased (c.f. >54% reduction required to conform with the Harvest Strategy Standard).
- Increased scallop harvests have been provided for, even though dredging is known to reduce habitat heterogeneity and biological diversity. Dredging (and bottom trawling) occurring areas known to contain sensitive marine habitats.
- For crayfish, catch limits were reduced to increase crayfish biomass, however, the ecosystem functions of crayfish were not considered and provided for when the new biomass target was set.
- In September 2014 it was announced the National Government would, if re-elected, introduce a recreational fishing park covering areas of the inner Hauraki Gulf as part of a wider reform of marine protection legislation.



# MANA WHENUA



- Seven deeds of settlement have been signed between tangata whenua and the Crown in the area covered by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.
- An agreement in principle has been signed between Hauraki iwi and the Crown.
- Co-governance arrangements have been instituted or signalled for the maunga, moana, awa and other taonga of the region, and in steering group arrangements for the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari project.
- Iwi have growing ownership interests in aquaculture, fishing, dairy farming and infrastructure assets around the Gulf.
- Ngati Whatua Orakei's Okahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan and Whai a te Mahere Taiao a Hauraki have articulated iwi visions for the environment, introduced matauranga Maori and shaped relationships with management agencies.

# ACTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT



- Major changes to regulatory frameworks for resource management implemented, initiated or signaled at both the central and regional government levels.
- Proposed changes to the RMA would reduce the level of alignment between and the objectives of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act
- The NPSFM seeks to maintain or improve the overall quality of fresh water within a region.
  - Provides regional councils with the flexibility to offset deterioration in one area by improving another (most relevant to Hauraki Plains and urban Auckland).
  - The national bottom lines for freshwater quality set a particularly low benchmark.
- Additional nitrogen loads provided for under the 2011 aquaculture reforms could allow nutrient effects to worsen in the Firth of Thames
  - Already experiencing nutrient-related oxygen sags and acidification.

# ACTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT



- Proposed changes to the PWRPS and PAUP seek to reduce the effects of land based activities on freshwater and coastal systems.
- Both plans include objectives, which provide general direction for how those effects will be managed.
- Both propose to classify water bodies and set environmental standards for them.
- At present, specific standards, targets or bottom lines are not provided.

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



- Considerable knowledge is available now to inform important management decisions about the Gulf.
- Significant additional investments since 2011
- Important emerging areas:
  - recognising matauranga Maori,
  - accounting for ecosystem services,
  - balancing societal values,
  - managing for resilience, and
  - improved dialogue with fisheries management.

# STAKEHOLDERS



- Large part of the problem
  - Develop coastal land, marine farms, marinas etc.
  - Catch the fish
  - Generate sediments, litter and contaminants
  - Introduce and spread invasive species
- Increasingly involved in the solutions
  - Farmers improving their practices, but many challenges remain.
  - Fishers seeking to reduce by-catch, wastage, and bird kills, but more needs to be done on ecosystems and processes.
  - Thousands of volunteer hours and significant funds, from central and local government and philanthropists, are transforming islands and coastal parks.
  - Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari is a bold step, building on collaborative processes elsewhere.

# THE CHALLENGE



- Addressing the combined effects of suppressed environmental state, multiple and cumulative impacts, and high and increasing pressure is technically and politically challenging
- Legislative and institutional impediments exist for the achievement of integrated, ecosystem-based management.
- Significant leadership will be required to progress these initiatives and achieve the objectives of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.