

Competition or Collaboration – do we have a choice?

The idea behind marine spatial planning is that in the big blue sea there is room for everyone – *allocate space correctly and everyone will be able to do what they want*. That's true until there is competition between users for the same area, or one use excludes or diminishes the existing rights of others. Then the debate gets tough and it's harder to find a win-win outcome.

If you have a long established and lawful use like commercial fishing – and you are prevented from continuing, then rightly you want compensation. Compensation in New Zealand is inherently difficult to squeeze out of governments or councils – not that we shouldn't try. But because it's uncertain and going to court is expensive, the most fruitful way to resolve competition for water space is by trying to sort it out around the table.

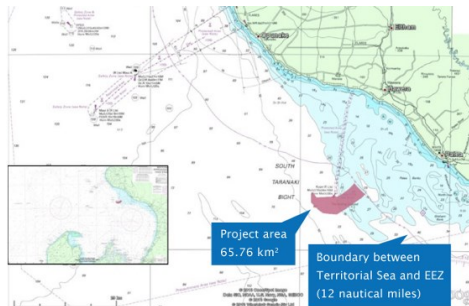
Negotiation tables

There is no choice; we have to have the tough conversations. Over the next while Fisheries Inshore will set out our position on four areas of New Zealand where we're involved in protecting the property rights of finfish quota owners and fishers.

In this edition we look at the Trans Tasman Resources proposed iron sand mining in FMA8, over the next few editions the Te Korowai proposal in Kaikoura (FMA3), the just started Hauraki Gulf marine spatial plan process (FMA1) and the Marlborough Council coastal planning zoning (FMA7). We'll also look at the tricky issue of aquaculture, the UAE test and the model that the Ministry uses to value 'lost fishing opportunity'.

TTR in South Taranaki

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently considering Trans Tasman Resources (TTR) proposed iron sand mining application that is seeking consents to mine the ocean floor between 22km and 35km offshore in the South Taranaki Blight (FMA 8 and Stat Area 040) in an area known to the locals as the Rolling Grounds.



Many that fish this area have very long and well established fishing grounds including trawl paths – their catching presence is well known and the value of their quota significant. They are not small players. Yet, these fishers were not consulted.

The first many heard about the TTR proposal was when the EPA called for public submissions. A review of their ¾ meter stack of technical reports and expert papers shocked. The proposal, which is to remove 50 million tonnes of the seafloor every year over a 20 year period (sucking up a million tonnes of sediment a week - extracting 10% of iron sand product and returning 45 million tonnes to the seafloor as tailings), is almost silent on their impact on our commercial fishing rights.

Already fishers in the FMA8 water space are being pushed out of fishing grounds – petroleum mining and precautionary conservation initiatives have seen large tracts of water space regulate out commercial fishing.

Both fishers and quota owners are concerned about the potential for adverse effects of TTR mining on fish stocks. Side by side with recreational fishers we worry about reductions to our access rights, restrictions on vessels transiting and the suggestion that all vessels may have to install extra navigational aids at their own cost.

Fisheries Inshore is also concerned about the risk to the catch-ability of finfish and skipjack tuna and a general decline in fish stock biomass (or stocks shifting elsewhere).

Read our submission [here](#). If you want to get involved by joining us when we meet with TTR consultants or participate at the hearing under our umbrella, please get in touch by emailing info@inshore.co.nz.

Members voice:

Keith Mawson from Egmont Seafood's says, 'the TTR is worrying because after being beaten up by maui dolphins and having a whole lot of restrictions put on us, I am astounded that government is now considering opening up the areas of the Taranaki coastline to seabed mining.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of consistency in their approach and fishers are getting the rough end of the stick.

The commercial fishing industry is contributing about \$15 million a year into the local economy (calculated by Venture Taranaki) so we are in no ways a small player.



Keith Mawson - Egmont Seafoods