

10 May 2017

Mr R Graham
Hawke's Bay Regional Council
PO Box 6006
Napier 4142

Dear Mr Graham

**COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED HAWKES BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN
PROPOSAL 2017/18**

1. These comments are provided by Fisheries Inshore NZ Ltd in respect of the draft Annual Plan Proposal 2017/18 released for consultation on 12 April 2017.
2. Fisheries Inshore NZ Limited (FINZ) represents 80% by value and volume of the inshore finfish, pelagic and tuna fisheries of New Zealand. Its role is to deal with national issues on behalf of the sector and to work directly with and on behalf of its quota owners, fishers and affiliated Commercial Stakeholder Organisations (CSOs). As part of that work it will also work collaboratively with other industry organisations and Sector Representative Entities (SREs), Seafood New Zealand, Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and Department of Conservation.
3. FINZ has a mandate from the Area 2 Committee to work directly with and on behalf of its quota owners for the management of fisheries within the region. The Area 2 Committee is a committee representing the interests of Area 2 quota owners and fishers. The focus is on stock-specific and regional issues that impact on the local fisheries they represent.
4. We provide comments on both the annual plan 2017/18 and the six environment hot spots.

ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18

5. In principle, we support a rate increase that would provide additional funds to support management and associated research of the marine environment and further development of integrated coastal management.
6. We support option three: a 9.88% (\$1,719,821) rate increase to enable the HBRC to fast track environmental projects in the region.
7. We consider that any rates increase should be reflected by the Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC) committing resources to achieve tangible benefits for improving the Hawke's Bay environment.
8. The Council's proposed kickstart environmental fund should align and complement existing national and regional documents (e.g. New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, HBRC Environment Plan and the upcoming 2018 HBRC Long Term Plan).
9. Additional information and cross referencing of objectives and performance targets from existing documentation, such as the Hawke's Bay Regional Coastal Environment Plan, would help support the rationale for the rates increase. The information provided for the proposed kickstart environmental fund does not provide adequate information on the connection with existing legislation.

10. Information provided for the six environmental hot spots identifies – ‘what do we want to fix’ and ‘what do we want to do’, but the information provided for the Annual Plan 2017/18 does not provide details on the proposed research areas that will utilise the additional funds from the rates increase.
11. There is no guidance as to the allocation of the proposed kickstart environmental fund both in terms of allocation between environmental hot spots or specified costs for work within an environmental hot spot.
12. Benefits of the Council’s proposed kickstart environmental fund should emphasise the value of developing collaborative relationships that can empower stakeholder and provide them with the skills to positively change behaviour. Notably there are synergies between the goals outlined for the environmental hot spots. Cross programme cost efficiencies should be identified and built on to ensure that the region benefits from the increase funding.

IDENTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL HOT SPOTS

13. We provide comments on the projects grouped according to those we would support, additional projects we would support and those projects we do not support. While project reports have yet to be presented on some of the related earlier projects, we have provided comments on those projects based on our assessments of eligibility.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

14. We consider the Marine Environment to be the most important environmental hotspot. However, we recognise that to effectively conserve and manage the marine environment we must be cognitive of the importance of the inputs into the coastal environment.
15. The Hawke’s Bay Biodiversity Strategy 2015 – 2050 acknowledges that the marine environment in Hawke’s Bay is subject to heavy sediment inputs and that one of the major threats to the marine biodiversity is sedimentation and pollution. This is supported by the Marine Environment consultation factsheet that states ‘there is data on the impact of sediment on estuaries and lagoons but its wider effect on marine habitats and species is unknown.’
16. Any proposed rates increase and the subsequent allocation of resources should reflect the importance of the marine environment to the region and the need for further research into sedimentation impacts on the region.
17. The allocation of resources should also reflect the positive work of the Hawke’s Bay Marine and Coastal Group (HBMAC) to date, providing a valuable proactive forum for stakeholders to collaborate to identify key issues and determine appropriate management solutions for managing the important interface between the land and sea.
18. Whilst we support additional funding for research into the marine environment this must be conducted in a structured framework with peer-reviewed science to support evidence based decision making.

LAKE TUTIRA

19. We recognise the work that has been conducted to date and support the continuation of interventions and the development of long-term options for improving the lake water.
20. Our support recognises the potential beneficial synergy between identifying solutions for reducing the sediment flowing into the lake, with the sedimentation issues for the region as a whole.

AHURIRI ESTUARY

21. We recognise the importance of the Ahuriri Estuary as a special wetland area and the role that this estuary has in the wider Hawke's Bay ecosystem and are concerned with the level of contamination which has resulted in a 'legacy' of chemicals in the estuary muds.
22. We support the objectives for this research namely the goal to return the estuary to good health and the reduction of anthropogenic impacts resulting from land use, such as sedimentation and storm water discharge.
23. We believe that continued work to improve the state of the Ahuriri Estuary will provide indirect benefits for the wider marine environment, with regards to improved water quality inputs and reduced sedimentation.
24. The potential allocation of funds for work in the Ahuriri Estuary should complement that current work and support the TANK working group for Wetlands /Lakes. Any allocation should detail where the additional funds will be used.

WHAKAKI LAKE and WAIROA RIVER

25. We support the continued work of stakeholders including the Whakaki Lake Trustees, landowners and the HBRC land management team as part of an integrated coastal management approach to mitigate the sources of sedimentation and reduce the amount of sediment in the Wairoa rivers and lakes.
26. The Wairoa River & Streams Scheme for river control is already in existence at an estimated rates revenue cost of \$185,679¹, an increase from \$182,038 in 2016/17. It is unclear what the anticipated allocation of additional costs would be following a rate increase.

LAKE WHATUMA and TUKITUKI CATCHMENT

27. We support the continued work of HBRC and landowners within the catchment area.
28. Our support for this work recognises the scale of the Tukituki catchment and the positive collaborative work conducted to date.
29. Noting the current Tukituki Catchment & Plan Change 6 Project and the associated Resource Management Plan², we highlight the importance of specifying any allocation of funds from a rate increase.

KARAMU STREAM

30. The key focus of the project is to improve water quality and ecology of the stream through the reduction of anthropogenic impacts.
31. We support work to improve the state of New Zealand's waterways. The improvement of water quality flowing into the Hawke's Bay coastal region is a positive approach recognising the integrated nature of integrated coastal management.

¹ HBRC (2017) 2017/18 Annual Plan 1st Draft Financial Info 9 <http://hbrc.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Plans/Annual-Plans-and-LT-Plans/Annual-Plan-2017-2018/2017-18-Annual-Plan-Financial-Info-for-Consultation.pdf>

² HBRC (2015). Plan Change 6 to Hawke's Bay Regional Resource Management Plan Tukituki River Catchment (<http://www.hbrc.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Tukituki/Tukituki-Plan-Change-6.pdf>)

SUMMARY

32. In summary, we support a 9.88% (\$1,719,821) rate increase to enable the HBRC to fast track environmental projects in the region.
33. We support the rates increase for the purposes of increased funding for research into the following environmental hot spots. In order of preference these are:
 - a. Marine Environment;
 - b. Ahuriri Estuary; and
 - c. Whakaki Lake and Wairoa River.
34. We believe that to strengthen the rationale for a rate increase, information should be provided on the proposed allocation of resources between and within the six environment hotspots.