

New Zealand Fishing News

Response to Article (January 2008) “Where has \$17 million gone?”

Contrary to the question posed in your article in the January edition of the *Fishing News*, there is no riddle to answer! The funding approved by Cabinet in 2004 has been spent on what it was intended for. Namely, the creation and operation of regional iwi forums around the country, and the employment of additional staff within the Ministry of Fisheries to implement the Deed of Settlement Programme.

The programme’s aim is to increase the capacity and capability of tangata whenua in order for them to have effective input and participation into fisheries management. The programme has two key objectives, namely:

- to build effective working relationships with tangata whenua
- to address my statutory duty under the Fisheries Act to provide for the input and participation of tangata whenua into a range of sustainability processes.

An update on the programme was provided to those who attended the November meeting of the Hokianga Accord. In summary, the meeting was told that:

- ten regional iwi forms have been established including five sub-regional clusters
- eight new areas / rohe moana have been established under the kaimoana customary fishing regulations in the North Island since 2006
- 204 Tangata Kaitiaki in the North Island have had their appointments confirmed under the kaimoana customary fishing regulations
- Tangata Tiaki appointments in the South Island remain relatively constant at 110
- progress is being made on processing applications for mātaimai reserves and temporary closures
- an NZQA approved training package has been developed and is being delivered to Tangata Kaitiaki.

Currently there are six mātaimai reserves, eight taiapure-local fisheries and six temporary closures in place around the country. As well as sixteen applications for mātaimai reserves being progressed, changes to the appointment of Tangata Kaitiaki / Tangata Tiaki and new notifications require significant resourcing from the programme.

The Ministry has employed additional staff, as approved by Cabinet in 2004, to implement the programme: specifically, twelve Pou Hononga (relationship managers), eleven Pou Takawaenga (extension officers), four Managers and other significant resources from within the Ministry’s inshore teams located around the country.

These staff have been hard at work providing assistance to iwi and hapū—helping design customary research projects; assisting with submissions on fisheries management proposals; building knowledge of fisheries management systems and processes; and effective engagement with government. This work is not always visible to the wider public, but it is happening and from what I have seen it is achieving excellent results.

With these dedicated resources an opportunity has been created that allows tangata whenua to have a much larger input into fisheries management, both locally and nationally. As always, there is more that can be done to meet the Crown's obligations to tangata whenua. But, I believe, when I look at the work that has been achieved, it is money well spent. Contrary to claims in the article, the money has been spent on initiatives that, in partnership with tangata whenua, will enable coastal communities to achieve better managed and more abundant fisheries.

Jim Anderton

Minister of Fisheries