

option4 Update # 78

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“Shared Fisheries” Will Affect All Recreational Fishers

The Government is currently consulting on wide ranging changes to the way recreational fisheries are managed and the definition of the right every New Zealander has to fish in the sea. Whichever way it goes everyone who tosses a line in the brine will be affected be affected by the outcome.

To the uninitiated it appears the Shared Fisheries document suggests it is recreational fishing that is the problem. The part commercial fishers have played in the demise of many inshore stocks doesn't even rate a mention. The worst aspect of the document is that it fails to properly explain the repercussions that will flow from the proposed changes. To assist recreational fishers we have had a team of experts review the Shared Fisheries document, and form a Preliminary View, so that all recreational fishers have an opportunity to better understand what the proposals really mean and have their say. This input will be used to assist in compiling a submission that all are welcome to endorse.

"The People's Submission"

The Preliminary View document includes the MFish Shared Fisheries public discussion document in its original form with the footnotes representing our initial analysis and critique comments. We are working hard to ensure as many people as possible read it in its entirety - quite contrary to the rather bleak dismissal expressed by MFish in their article in the December Fishing News where they stated *“There are those who will tell you that you don't need to read it because they've already done that and decided what you should think – we think you should ask yourself for a second opinion ”*

We believe the MFish document is a gross over simplification and omits some of the main issues recreational fishers have. In contrast to the thorough process option4 is using please note that, apart from a handful of answers to “Frequently Asked Questions”, there are no timely reference resources being made available by MFish for further background reading on any of these policy proposals. The only other reference point is the Cabinet Paper (December 2005).

Our document “Shared Fisheries – A Preliminary View” can be found on www.option4.co.nz/sharedfisheries/preliminaryview.htm Please go there to find out what is happening and to have input into “The People's Submission”

Compiling "The People's Submission"

We have not undertaken the task of compiling the Peoples Submission lightly, it is an immense task and we are committed to due process and best practice. All recreational fishers can have input without having to be a fisheries manager or scientist.

Developing the Preliminary View document has been a crucial first step and generated much thought provoking debate already. It can only be enriched by your participation and feedback. We will produce a powerful submission that actually addresses the main issues recreational fishers have complained of for decades.

The compilation of the first draft of "The People's Submission" is being undertaken right through the Christmas and New Year holiday period. We are committed to produce a 1st draft for your review **by January 22nd**. This allows one and a half weeks for further input and polish before **"The People's Submission" is released on 1st February**.

"The People's Submission" will definitely not be limited to responding to the Ministry's suggestions. It will be rich with positive, constructive, affordable and achievable solutions to the issues, much of which can be achieved by observing the present fisheries laws.

Process going forward

The release of "The People's Submission" will be accompanied by a booklet designed to help people more fully understand what is at stake. The booklet will include the submission itself, an index of appendixes referenced in the submission (all of which will be available on the web site), and a summary of the process that was adopted/followed to generate the submission. In addition there will be pages for "champions" to encourage their friends and family to sign their support and endorsement.

Commencing in February a series of public meetings, hui and club meetings will be organised to present "The People's Submission", answer questions, and hopefully earn your support and endorsement of "The People's Submission." A submission which is the result of best practice process designed to capture and incorporate as many viewpoints as possible – as has been our practice/process since 2000 when "Soundings" was released. With your support we aim to set a new benchmark in public consultation, a highly refined submission endorsed by tens of thousands of non-commercial fishers committed to protecting their rights and achieving more fish in the water.

The relevance of the Kahawai Legal Challenge

Shared Fisheries is all about changing how the Fisheries Act allows for recreational fishing. The Kahawai Legal Challenge seeks to clarify current law. We are very disappointed that the Government has decided to steamroll ahead with the Shared Fisheries process before this very important Judgment on how recreational fishing is supposed to be allowed for now is available. Surely a prudent Government would wait and find out first, then if it isn't broken, don't fix it!

"The People's Submission" will benefit immensely from the high level work that has gone into the KLC – the legal team of Stuart Ryan (Hesketh Henry) and Alan Galbraith QC were formidable in their research, analysis and conclusions. We are extremely grateful for their contribution.

STOP PRESS – The Kahawai Legal Challenge court hearing was finally concluded on Monday 11th December – the Judge reserved his opinion and committed to doing his best to issue his Judgment in February. This urgency is much appreciated.

Who are we?

The principal authors of the Preliminary View are (in alphabetical order):

- Richard Baker – Vice President New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council (NZBGFC), Hokianga Accord original
- Paul Barnes – option4 project team leader, Hokianga Accord original
- John Chibnall – life member of both New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council and New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council, Hokianga Accord original
- Bruce Galloway – legal advisor to option4 and the Hokianga Accord
- Naida Glavish – Chairperson of Te Runanga o Ngati Whatua, Hokianga Accord original
- John Holdsworth – fisheries science consultant to option4, NZBGFC and the Hokianga Accord
- Scott Macindoe – option4 spokesperson and Hokianga Accord supporter
- Trish Rea – coordinator, analyst and researcher for both option4 and Hokianga Accord
- Jeff Romeril – President of New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council, option4 spokesperson and Hokianga Accord contributor
- Sonny Tau - Chairman of both Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi and the Hokianga Accord
- Kim Walshe – fisheries management advisor to option4, Hokianga Accord and NZBGFC - member of the Recreational Fisheries Ministerial Advisory Committee

Please, go to the www.option4.co.nz website, read the Preliminary View and offer your input and/or encouragement.