



**Hauraki Gulf Forum**

Tikapa Moana

Te Moananui-ā-Toi

*Hon. Kiritapu Allan  
Associate Minister of Transport*

*CC: Ministers of Conservation, Oceans & Fisheries, Defence, and Māori Development  
CC: Renny Vandervelde and Mike McMurtry, Maritime NZ*

### **Investigating the RMS Niagara**

*He waka kōtuia kāhore e tukutukua ngā mimira.  
A canoe that is interlaced will not become separated at the bow. In unity there is strength.*

20 June 2023

Tēnā koe Minister,

At our board meeting on Monday 12 June at Maraetai, the Hauraki Gulf Forum was briefed on the state of the wreck of the Royal Mail Ship (RMS) Niagara, and the fact that it continues to tick away in one of the most beautiful parts of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, close to the Tai Tokerau border.

There was strong support around our board table for Maritime NZ's previous work on this issue and for the stance taken by previous Ministers, who called on Cabinet to fund an investigation. There was also a real sense of urgency, and a feeling of disbelief that we are not doing more to avert this potential disaster.

We also polled on this. A poll of a representative sample of the New Zealand population conducted in recent weeks shows that an overwhelming 73% of people want the government to fund the investigation of the wreck, while only 8% oppose this. With a margin of error of just 3.1%, the poll, conducted by Horizon Research for the Hauraki Gulf Forum, gives you a strong sense of the support you and your colleagues will receive from taking a proactive stand on this potential threat to our moana and the interests of mana whenua and communities around the Gulf. A copy of the poll is attached to this letter.

We know you share a deep love of the ocean and our indigenous biodiversity. We need you to take this to Cabinet and get funding approved so that Maritime NZ can coordinate a full non-invasive survey of the wreck. This will in turn enable much more accurate cost-benefit and risk assessments. We also need to meet with you to discuss this as soon as possible. The Forum's CE would be happy to facilitate such a gathering at your earliest convenience ([eo@haurakigulfforum.org.nz](mailto:eo@haurakigulfforum.org.nz)).

With your leadership we can avert a potential crisis of national and international significance.

Ngā mihi nui,

***Nicola MacDonald Co-Chair  
Tangata Whenua & Mayor  
Toby Adams, Co-Chair,  
Hauraki Gulf Forum***

***Nyze Manuel, Chairwoman,  
Te Runanga Papa Atawhai o  
Te Taitokerau, Northland  
Conservation Board***

***Nicola MacDonald,  
Chairwoman, Te Papa  
Atawhai o Tāmaki Makaurau,  
Auckland Conservation Board***

***Jack Craw, Deputy Chair,  
Northland Regional Council***

***Cr Geoff Crawford, Chair of  
Biosecurity and Biodiversity,  
Northland Regional Council***

***Alan Cockle, Chair, Te Papa  
Atawhai o Te Rohe o Tainui,  
Waikato Conservation Board***