Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tīkapa Moana
Te Moananui-ā-Toi

PĀNUI PĀPĀHO | MEDIA RELEASE
18 o Pipiri | 18 June 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hauraki Gulf Forum welcomes rethink on fisheries reform

The Hauraki Gulf Forum (the Forum) welcomes news that any progress on the Fisheries Amendment Bill will be delayed until after the election.

“It demonstrates that the concerns regarding the Bill have been heard, and we can focus on a more considered approach to fisheries reform,” says Ms Nicola Rata-MacDonald Co-Chair of the Forum.

“We have consistently advocated for reform that supports long-term ocean health and resilient fish stocks. This decision creates some space to progress this work properly, she said.”

When addressing the Primary Production Committee in May, the Forum said the Bill did not adequately address the most pressing challenges facing marine ecosystems and risked rebalancing fisheries management away from long-term sustainability outcomes.

Instead, the Forum recommended the Bill be rejected in favour of a comprehensive review of the Fisheries Act 1996, grounded in an ecosystem-based approach.

“Resilient fish stocks depend on healthy functioning ecosystems where marine life exists in balance. The effects of overfishing are being keenly felt in the Marine Park where ecosystems are tipping out of balance,” says Co-Chair Cr Warren Maher

The Forum emphasises that current fisheries management tools are often reactive, with closures and interventions occurring only after significant depletion has occurred. The submission also highlighted that ongoing pressures such as overfishing, habitat degradation, climate change, and cumulative impacts are continuing to undermine ecosystem health in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

“We owe it to all New Zealanders to design a fisheries management system that is fit for the future, that restores ecological balance and supports abundance. We can get

it right if we take the time to get clear on a shared direction that balances a range of views," concluded Ms Rata-MacDonald.

The Forum's submission on the Bill can be read online.

ENDS

Contact:

Beth Rose
Executive Officer
Hauraki Gulf Forum
EO@haurakigulfforum.org.nz
021 082 05547

About the Hauraki Gulf Forum

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory governance board established under the HGMPA 2000 to promote the conservation and management of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and communities of the Hauraki Gulf and New Zealand.

The Forum consists of representatives from tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands; the Ministers of Conservation, Oceans and Fisheries and Māori Development; and elected members appointed by the Auckland Council, Hauraki District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Thames-Coromandel District Council, Waikato District Council and Waikato Regional Council.

The Forum is required to present triennial reports regarding the state of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. More information on the Forum and the Marine Park is available at www.haurakigulfforum.org.nz.

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park is New Zealand's first marine park, established by the HGMPA in February 2000. At 1.2 million hectares (20 times the size of Lake Taupō) it stretches from Te Arai in the north to Waihi in the south and includes the Waitematā Harbour, Gulf Islands, Firth of Thames and the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula. The Park is the seabird capital of the world, and a whale superhighway, but as successive State of the Hauraki Gulf reports have shown, it is a shadow of its former self.