

# Bach pioneer's family fight marina development

by Simon O'Rourke

The family of Whangamata's first bach-owner are taking on the Thames Coromandel District Council over a \$10 million marina plan, saying the project tramples over promises made 20 years ago to protect the waterfront.

Auckland man Michael Hudson, who wants to stop a 205-berth marina at the north end of the beach, met Conservation Minister Chris Carter at the weekend to discuss his grievance.

It centres on the use of land formerly owned by Mr Hudson's grandparents, Fred and Joan Aickin. Mr Aickin was the first property owner to build a bach on Whangamata's beachfront.

He died in 1962 and 17 years later, Mrs Aickin sold some of their land to the council.

Mr Hudson maintains that she sold the property on condition that it remained reserve land, to be enjoyed by the community.

However, council records relating to the sale cannot be found and zoning on the land now

permits high-density housing and marine activities on the waterfront.

Mr Hudson, as a surfer and a boatie, is afraid the marina and its associated draggings will change the nature of the sand bar, which has given the beach a top reputation for surfing.

He said he should have been consulted about the project.

The process had left him and his wife, Trish, feeling "incensed, irate and distraught".

"If we had been iwi and were treated like that, how would you feel?"

The couple said the weekend meeting with Mr Carter had gone well. The minister had been sympathetic to their cause and had encouraged them to continue with their campaign.

Mr Carter told the couple that he had received a huge amount of feedback since a recent Herald article outlining surfer concerns.

He planned a personal visit to Whangamata before the end of the year to discuss concerns with a cross-section of the community.



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**BATTLE MODE:**  
Michael Hudson, with wife Trish, is angry the council is considering a marina development on Whangamata land he says it promised to keep as a reserve.

PICTURE / GREG BOWKER