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05 October 1999



Surfing New Zealand (Inc)

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The Chairperson Whangamata Community Board Thames Coromandel District Council Private Bag Whangamata

Hello

Re: Proposed Marina in Whangamata Harbour

Surfing New Zealand is the national governing body of the sport (including long boarding, kneeboarding, bodyboarding, bodysurfing and skimboarding) and has been established since 1966. It has 62 affiliated clubs nation-wide including the Whangamata Boardriders Association and a membership of 5,500 including the Surfing NZ Executive, Surfrider Foundation and Industry Members

Surfing New Zealand understand a marina is proposed for the Whangamata Harbour and this would involve dredging of the area surrounding the harbour entrance and the Whangamata Bar. Also the placement of a ski lane across the immediate area of the Whangamata bar and a serious increase in traffic flow across the bar and throughout the associated channel into Whangamata harbour.

Whangamata is a world class surfing break and a cradle of the sport in this nation. It has been host to many local, regional, national and international surfers and Surfing competitions (most recently the highly successful Billabong Summer Series)

It is the venue of the annual Surfing New Zealand Junior Development Squad Camp, which is held prior to the National Junior Squad departing to the World Junior Champs in Bali every year. (Held in memory of Mary Davies - local Whangamata surfing icon and founder of Scholastic Surfing in New Zealand in the 1980s)

The loss and/or manmade modification of the Whangamata Bar as a result of any dredging of the Whangamata harbour mouth and the bar itself will be highly detrimental to the sport nationally and internationally. It is one of the most pristine surfing breaks in the South Pacific Ocean. It is in light of this fact that Whangamata has produced numerous National Champions and New Zealand Squad members over the years and world-renowned surfers and surfboard manufacturers such as Al Byrne, Rodney Dahlberg and Bob Davies.

In addition it is the source of and vital to the success and growth of Whangamata's long standing surf tourism, manufacturing and retail industry and therefore a major contributor to the economic wellbeing of the town. According to Hillary Commission figures (1996 Life in New Zealand Survey, Otago University) 180, 000 people in this country participate in the sport of surfing. The Whangamata Bar directly supports the recreation, sport, health, mental and physical wellbeing of a great majority of New Zealanders especially in view of the crowds it attracts over summer from all over the country including but not limited to Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington.

Many surfers are also boaties and keen fishers and yachties so understand the desire of the boating community to have a marina in Whangamata harbour. In this instance moored craft users could perhaps be considered a minority group and it would be unfair for their activities, which already have a far greater impact on the harbour than any other, to supersede those other recreational users and sports people. Surfing New Zealand is also concerned for windsurfers and the loss of their current amenities as a result of this proposed marina complex.

Additionally we are aware of the Whangamata Boardriders current problems with sewage pollution in the harbour and at the Bar. We foresee more pollution problems with the new marina increasing pressure on an already severely over taxed sewage system and other public utilities; especially at the peak of summer.

Affiliated with: I.S.A. INTERNATIONAL SURFING ASSOCIATION

Affiliates:

Kneeboard Surfing New Zealand

Bodyboard Surfing New Zealand

Women's Surfing New Zealand

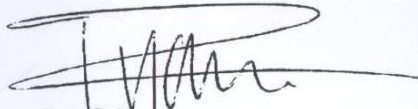


Surfing New Zealand is concerned that the following points need be met before the proposed marina can progress any further:

- A in depth scientific study on the effect of such actions (dredging) on the Whangamata Bar, beach, foreshore, tidal estuary and benthic community
- Greater consideration placed on the economic and social significance of the Bar and surfing to the wider community and nation
- Greater consideration given to safety issues arising from the increase in maritime traffic and potential loss of use of the Bar and channel to surfers
- Substantial improvement in already overtaxed public amenities (ie. Clean up the sewage problem)

Surfing New Zealand trusts that these points will be given full and serious consideration in the deliberation of this matter.

Kind regards



Ryan Craig
Secretary
Surfing New Zealand