



The Mari-Times

NORTHLAND MARINE DEVELOPMENT GROUP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER: June 2006

Welcome to the fourth edition of our newsletter, designed to keep you up-to-date with our activities.

So what's been happening since the last edition?

Water Access and Town Basin Development

This has been, by a long stretch, the major focus of the group over the past three months. Just to recap, in late 2005/early 2006 we had met with both the NRC and WDC about the issue of Hatea River silting up unless some action was taken urgently.

Our next step was to talk to a range of business groups - not in the marine sector - but who stood to be affected by the degradation of the river. At the same time, the group prepared its own submission to the Annual Plans of both the Whangarei and Northland Regional councils.

As a result of this, both councils received submissions from us, the Whangarei Marine Promotions Group, the Whangarei Marina Management Trust, the Chamber of Commerce, the Whangarei Economic Development Group and the Tourism Development Group.

Clearly, our efforts were successful because both councils have agreed to work jointly to scope out this issue and come up with a solution. An important aspect of this decision is that they want members of the marine sector to be part of the Working Group. Although nothing has yet been finalized, we will suggest the following people be part of that group – myself, Ian Gray and Brian Keene.

One thing we're very clear on is that writing a submission and forming a Working Group is the start of the process not the finish!! We expect it could be a little while before we see any concrete action – however, at least the issue is “on the radar screen”.

Infrastructure Development

Trevor Mallard, Minister for Industry & Regional Development, recently visited Whangarei and met with local business people, including Grant Willis of Specialist Marine Interiors.

Grant's comments to Mr Mallard, when asked about possible central government involvement needed to realize the sector's potential, were: "The biggest problem is getting the boats out and we need a covered building area. We need an in-the-water refit berth that could take yachts up to 70m. If we had that facility we could bring in boat after boat after boat. We are competing with overseas that have infrastructure provided for them by the state and federal governments and that puts us miles behind in the starting blocks".

Even though a private investor has expressed interest in investing in a refit centre, Mr Mallard would give no firm commitment regarding government involvement however he did agree to request a report on the refit proposal and arrange a meeting to discuss it. Officials from the MED will be in Whangarei during mid-July to gather information for this report, including meeting with members of the Whangarei marine sector.

So, that's our second edition for 2006. Contact me if you wish to discuss the group's activities in more detail – 021 364 235 or henk@mcraes.co.nz.

Cheers



Henk Eilering
Chair
Northland Marine Development Group