

Coastal Resources Ltd Marine Dumping Consent: Verbal Presentation on behalf of the Aotea Great Barrier Local Board representing the community of Aotea Great Barrier Island Monday 03rd December 2018

Proposal Number: EEZ 100015

Good Afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I shall take it that our written submission has been read, I will comment on some aspects of that submission.

I'm Izzy Fordham, chairperson of the Aotea Great Barrier Local Board and am presenting on behalf of the local board and the community of Aotea.

As our written submission stipulated, we are the closest community to the current and proposed dumping sites and as you can imagine we are aghast that this proposal to increase the current volume of dredged material sourced from Auckland and Waikato has even come before you. That is perhaps evident in the number of submissions received from our people to this application, 31 out of the 76 received.

I'm not going to comment on the science nor the legal aspects around the application presented by Coastal Resources Ltd, that has well and truly been covered off by people more apt in those fields. What I am going to comment on is the potential impact on an island community that is at one with the land, the sea and the sky.

As a community we pride ourselves in the fact that our land is protected with 60-70% of it being under the guardianship of the Department of Conservation, numerous hectares of private land encased with QEII Covenants and mana whenua holdings. We are home to many endangered species including being one of only two breeding grounds for that majestic seabird the Black Petrel whose other breeding habitat is Hauturu Little Barrier Island.

Our island's night sky, has protection and conservation for future generations with our International Dark Sky Sanctuary Accreditation, the only island community in the world to achieve this. We became aware that, on a global scale, the visibility of the night sky and the milky way was rapidly disappearing as artificial light pollution was taking over. We saw the need to protect our pristine night sky for our future generations before it was too late.

So, why would we want to see our ocean degraded? Why wouldn't you want to protect it from the pollutants of marine dredging just as we had done for our night sky in protecting it from artificial light pollution? Why would anyone think it is acceptable to dump not only 50,000m³ annually until 2032 BUT to increase that fivefold to dump 250,000m³ annually for a further 35 years. What an earth are we thinking about here? Why aren't we thinking of and considering our future generations and seeking to protect our oceans from the potential pollutants of marine dredging, as it smothers and suffocates the ocean floor. Isn't it up to us here and now to be erring on the side of caution and not be so short sighted that we can only think of the convenience of today. We are yet to see the impact of the current consent that has another 14 years to run and we are discussing the possibility of a massive increase over the next few decades, we find that unbelievable and quite frankly, intolerable.

With the current consent held by Coastal Resources Ltd we are not aware of any monitoring what so ever that occurs around the shores of Aotea or our outlying islands and rocky crows. We weren't even invited to submit to their original proposal it was literally taken for granted that it would be acceptable. Interesting that the community of Aotea finds itself in the same situation again whereby the applicant chose not to inform us of their intentions for a new application. It was the Environmental Protection Authority that brought it to our attention and we thank them for doing so.

Our community believes that we need to behave smarter in how we treat our ocean environment. We need to take responsibility for what we do. We need to take responsibility for the waste we create and what we do with it, it is no longer acceptable to just "chuck it in the sea and hope for the best." We need to be thinking of our future generations. It is up to us to take that step and protect our oceans so that those vulnerable creatures without a voice, who live in them and depend on them, can continue to thrive.

Our community is truly concerned about this application and more so should it be granted. We are very anxious about potential bio-security risks to our waters and shores. Our island stands as the gatekeeper and guardian of the inner gulf within the realms of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. We run the risk of being the place where any pollution from the current and proposed sites will end up and my community is not at all happy about that. We believe that in 2018 there has to be a better way.

We are told that the people making the decision about an application for a marine consent must consider certain effects, risks and benefits of the proposed activity and that it must be based on the best available information. I ask the decision makers how can you base any decision on certain effects when the current consent still has 14 years to go, that's another 700,000m³ of dredged material? How is it possible to gauge effects and impact at this stage?

We remind the decision makers that the importance of protecting rare and vulnerable ecosystems, the habitats of threatened species, the importance of protecting biological diversity and integrity of marine species, ecosystems and processes, the effects on the environment, cumulative effects and effects beyond our ocean borders be paramount in your decision making. If it's not, there's no going back should a disaster occur. With the changing weather patterns and sea currents a "whoops-a-daisy" is quite on the cards and who then is going to be accountable?

You are being asked to do the impossible. To foresee the future and set conditions today that will prevent any possible damaging effects on the environment, without anyone ever being able to review and make changes to the conditions, regardless of what happens over the next 35 years, as long as the conditions are met. You cannot reasonably be expected to do that if you are being cautious and care for the environment.

We implore you, as the decision makers, to err on the side of caution with this travesty of an application and to regard the sanctity of our ocean and coastal environment as your guiding factor before it becomes too late.

*Izzy Fordham
Chairperson
Aotea Great Barrier Local Board*