

### **Proposed Panel visit to the FMA.**

The Fiordland Marine Guardian's (FMG), see no benefit for the panel in visiting Dusky and Doubtful Sounds through the invitation extended to them by RealNZ. This is because we are aware that many of the Surface Water Activity (SWA), consent holders will not be operating at this time for several reasons.

These include,

- vessels away for survey
- some operating outside of the FMA
- one vessel has sustained fire damage and has reportedly been written off and,
- the reduced demand from clients for SWA vessel trips in the winter.

A visit in August could therefore give a distorted picture of the actual activity these fiords experience through the busy summer/autumn season. Further to this many of the anchorages that are commonly used by the SWA holders whose vessels are smaller in size than RealNZ's, are not the areas that the RealNZ vessels typically overnight in.

As stated in our verbal submission at the hearing, a trip into this area by the panel at this quiet time of the season would clearly not provide a clear representation of the actual level of SWA vessel activity and would therefore serve no useful purpose other than to possibly give the panel a false sense of the actual vessel utilisation in these areas of the FMA.

### **Plan Change 5 Legal Submissions on behalf of Real Journeys Ltd (trading as RealNZ).**

The FMG's would also like to take the opportunity to address the legal submission made on behalf of RealNZ by Maree Baker-Galloway and Laura McLaughlan to the Hearing Panel.

#### **Para 4**

*"There is no reliable evidence to demonstrate that surface water activities (SWA) are adversely affecting the internal waters of the Fiordland CMA, or that the proposed changes are justified and/or necessary."*

While there is no documented evidence of the possible adverse effects of surface water activities on the values of the FMA that can be supplied to the panel, this does not mean that SWA's have not had a serious and detrimental effects on the internal waters of Fiordland. The local and institutional knowledge and experience of the FMG's has allowed us to identify that there has been a sustained damaging effects on various iconic fish species throughout the internal waters.

Further to this, key species throughout the internal waters of the FMA have been seriously impacted. These include the depletion of scallops, paua, blue cod, hapuka, sea perch and terakihi stocks in the last 10 years, to the point where the FMG's have lobbied for changes to the daily limits fishers can legally take from the internal and coastal waters of Fiordland. The extent of the damage on these key fish stocks requires not just stopping further decline, but

an active rebuilding of these key stocks to prevent more draconian measures from being implemented that could result in the complete closure of these fisheries.

Proposed comprehensive reductions to recreation bag limits for the key species listed above and other fish species, is currently sitting with the Minister of Fisheries for his endorsement. After two years of consultation about these proposed changes to the amateur fishing regulations which has been led by the Guardians and MPI fisheries staff and supported by most of the recreational fishers and SWC holders that operate throughout the FMA. Ironically it was concerned SWC holders that demanded that the Guardians pursue changes to the fishing bag limits in order to halt further damage to fish stocks throughout the internal waters of Fiordland.

**Para 6**

- (a) *“PC5 should recognise the importance of public access to the outdoors for peoples’ physical, mental, emotional, cultural and economic wellbeing as articulated in the statement of evidence of Paul Norris on behalf of RealNZ.”*

We note that public access to the CMA has been expressly provided for in Section 16 of the current Regional Coastal Plan.

**Para 8**

- (a) It states, *“anecdotal information suggests that for some people the cumulative effect of surface water activities is eroding natural character, natural features, landscape, remoteness and wilderness values”*.

Respectfully, anecdotal information provides limited assistance to decision-makers, and should not be used as an excuse to not progress PC5.

The reality is that all human activities impact on the natural character, natural features, landscape, remoteness and wilderness values of the FMA.

So as human activity increases so does its impact.

**Para 18**

*“PC5, in its current form, does not appropriately recognise the 'benefits' of commercial surface water activities, including the benefits of accessing the outdoors to people’s physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, increasing the public's conservation awareness, and commercial surface water activities operators involvement in conservation initiatives.”*

Ironically it is precisely because of our concerns regarding the possible adverse effects on the natural character, natural features, landscape, remoteness and wilderness values of the FMA being caused by an increase in SWA’s that the Guardians approached Environment Southland about initiating this Plan Change. If these values continue to be eroded then the objective of meeting people’s *‘physical, mental and emotional wellbeing’* will become less likely.

