

Inventory of coastal areas of local or regional significance in the Taranaki region

Summary and discussion

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Executive summary

- The purpose of this report is to summarise key facts on the 'state' and pressures affecting public use of and access to areas identified in the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region* ('the Inventory'). National issues and initiatives of relevance to coastal use and access are also discussed.
- The Inventory identifies coastal areas in Taranaki that have local or regionally significant values. The Inventory describes these values, presents information on land tenure and provides a rating of the status of public access to these sites as excellent, good or poor.
- The Taranaki region has a long 263-kilometre coastline comprising of stunning vistas with beautiful sea and landscapes, beaches and sites of natural, historical or recreational interest.
- Sixty-nine sites have been identified in an *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance* as having local or regionally significant values including scenic, amenity, recreational, ecological, cultural and historical values. Collectively these areas represent 33% of the Taranaki coastline.
- Over 95% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance identified in the Inventory are wholly or partly publicly owned.
- Forty (or 58%) of the coastal areas of local or regional significance identified in the Inventory have good or excellent public access while 29 (or 42%) of the sites were rated as having poor public access.
- Four factors are identified as limiting coastal public access. These being physical constraints, the need to safeguard associated values, lack of legal access and poorly defined legal access.
- For two of the limiting factors – physical constraints and areas where public use can degrade the values associated with the site – little can or should be done to promote coastal public access. Six (or 21%) of the coastal areas of local or regional significance having poor public access fall within these two categories.
- For the two remaining limiting factors, these being lack of formal access or poorly defined public access, more could be done to improve public access. Twenty-three (or 79%) of the coastal areas of local or regional significance having poor public access fall within these two categories. Poorly defined legal access is the single most significant limiting factor (represents almost 45% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance having poor public access), followed by a lack of legal access (represents almost 35% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance having poor public access).
- Taranaki, with its low overall population numbers and exposed coastline, has few development pressures threatening amenity and natural values. However, there is

increasing interest in residential and lifestyle development along parts of the Taranaki coastline particularly in and around Okato, Oakura, Omata and Bell Block.

- There is often a perception that public access to the coast has diminished in recent times due to coastal subdivision. Changes in social conventions, ownership and landuses may have contributed to a loss of informal access (public access which is reliant upon the permission of the landholder) to the coast over time. However, coastal developments are often the means of providing legal access to the coast through the creation of esplanade strips and reserves.
- There are currently a number of national issues and central government initiatives of interest to this Council in relation to coastal use and access. These include the promulgation of legislation relating to the ownership of the foreshore and Maori custodian rights to the coast, the review of public access to the coast (and other waterways), the review of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement*, the development of an Oceans Policy, and aquaculture reform.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise key facts on the 'state' and pressures affecting public use of and access to areas identified in the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region* ('the Inventory'). National issues and initiatives of relevance to coastal use and access are also discussed.

This report should be read in conjunction with the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region* ('the Inventory').

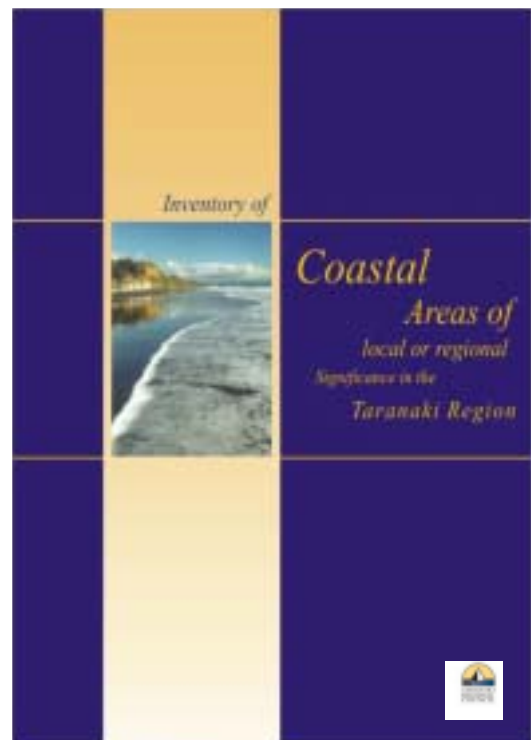
1.2 The Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance

Interest in the coast, generally, is increasing. The coast is valued and treasured by most New Zealanders not just for its recreational values but also because of its amenity and natural values. That is the physical or natural qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

Because the coast is so treasured, around different parts of the country it has come under increasing pressure from subdivision, use and development – not all of which is necessarily in keeping with the amenity, natural and heritage values associated with those parts of the coast. Public access to the coast is also becoming quite an issue.

In Taranaki, as elsewhere in the country, there is a lack of reliable and accurate information on location and type of access to the coast. To address this issue and to facilitate management of the coast, the Taranaki Regional Council, with the assistance of the New Plymouth District Council, South Taranaki District Council and Department of Conservation, has prepared an Inventory that:

- (a) Identifies all coastal areas in the Taranaki region with local or regionally significant or outstanding values;
- (b) Describes the recreational, ecological, cultural, historical, and amenity values in relation to each site;
- (c) Presents information on land tenure, subdivisions and the location of public roads, reserves, esplanade strips and margins; and
- (d) Evaluates the current status of public access to these areas.



Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region.

The Inventory is based on a wide variety of information sources and community input associated with the development of the *Proposed New Plymouth District Plan*, the *Proposed South Taranaki District Plan*, the *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki*, the *Conservation Management Strategy*, the *Coastal Resource Inventory*, *Sites of Special Biological Interest*, the *New Zealand Duneland Inventory* and the *Sand Dune and Beach Vegetation Inventory of New Zealand*.

The Inventory identifies a total of 69 sites as locally or regionally significant. These areas collectively make up 86.3 kilometres of the 263-kilometre Taranaki coastline. A list of all 69 sites and a summary of the assessment of values, land tenure and public access to each site is contained in Appendix I. A sample page from the Inventory is contained in Appendix II.

1.3 Scope and structure

This document is divided into six sections.

Section 1 introduces the purpose, background and structure of the report.

Section 2 presents a brief description of Taranaki's coastal environment and outlines statutory responsibilities in relation to the preservation of the natural character of the Taranaki coast and the maintenance and enhancement of public access.

Section 3 provides an overview of the 'state' (ie, the quality) of the coast. This overview is based on an evaluation of those areas identified in the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region* and addresses not only the values associated with these areas but also land tenure and public access.

Section 4 outlines potential and actual 'pressures' on the coast that may impact on the natural character of and public access to the Taranaki coast. This section recognises that it may not always be appropriate to encourage public access to some areas or that public access and development may need to be carefully managed to protect the values present.

Section 5 outlines various national initiatives that may impact or impinge on coastal use and public access. These include the government's proposals for the foreshore and seabed, the review of public access to the coast, the review of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement* and the Marine Reserves Act, aquaculture reform and the development of an Oceans Policy.

Section 6 presents a summary of the report.

2. Background

2.1 Statutory responsibilities for managing the coast

There are a number of statutes relevant to the management of the coast. In accordance with those statutes, agencies such as the Taranaki Regional Council, the New Plymouth and South Taranaki district councils and the Department of Conservation have quite different responsibilities.

2.1.1 Resource Management Act

First and foremost is the Resource Management Act 1991 – the purpose of which is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Of particular significance is a requirement for all persons exercising functions and powers under the Act to provide for the following matters of national importance:

- (a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and its margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- (b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers; and
- (d) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga (refer section 6(a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Act).

The Resource Management Act provides for a hierarchy of policies and plans and other statutory powers to enable central and local government to carry out their functions.

At the national level, the Minister of Conservation has prepared the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement* (1994), which contains policies addressing the preservation of the natural character of the coast and the maintenance and enhancement of public access to the coast. Regional policy statements, regional and district plans prepared under the Resource Management Act can not be inconsistent with the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement*.

Under the Resource Management Act, responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area when assessing any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including subdivision of land lies with **district councils**. District councils have prepared district plans, which, amongst other things, outline objectives, policies and methods to ensure provision is made for public access to and along the coastal area.

Through their respective district plans, the New Plymouth District Council and the South Taranaki District Council also outline objectives, policies and methods to protect natural values from the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development. The *Proposed New Plymouth District Plan* identifies a Coastal Policy Area where it is considered appropriate to control activities to ensure the natural character of the coastline is preserved. Similarly the *Proposed South Taranaki District Plan* contain policy and rules relating to land use and development in a Coastal Protection Management Area.

Under the Resource Management Act, the **Taranaki Regional Council** also has management responsibilities in the coastal marine area, ie, that area from the mean high water (spring) mark out to 12 nautical miles offshore. The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area has been identified in both the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* and the *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki* as being a matter of regional significance. The *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki*, in particular, outlines the Taranaki Regional Council's objectives, policies, methods and rules relating to public access in the coastal marine area.

Policy One in section 3.5.3 of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* states:

"Public access to and along the coast marine area will be maintained and enhanced except where restrictions on public access are necessary to:

- Protect the natural character of the coastal environment and areas of significant conservation value;*
- Protect the cultural and spiritual values of Tangata Whenua;*
- Protect human health and safety; and*
- Provide for the safe operation of Port Taranaki and other infrastructure and utilities."*

The *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki* also contains policies to protect the natural character of the coastal environment and from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Guidance is provided on what is considered to be appropriate development in the coastal environment.

The *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki* contains further policies to maintain and enhance public access in the coastal marine area. Again, policies recognise that restrictions in public access may be necessary to protect natural or cultural and spiritual values. The Plan identifies eight areas of outstanding coastal value for added protection from development and proposes 'buffer areas' around these areas to provide further protection.

Under the Resource Management Act, the Minister of Conservation also has responsibilities as a consenting agency in the coastal marine area involving restricted coastal activities.

2.1.2 Conservation Act and Reserves Act

The **Department of Conservation** has responsibilities as a manager of land under the Reserves Act 1977, the National Parks Act 1980 and the Conservation Act 1987. The *Conservation Management Strategy - Wanganui Conservancy* outlines objectives and implementation methods.

In relation to public access and use, Objective 37.1.1 of the *Conservation Management Strategy - Wanganui Conservancy* applies:

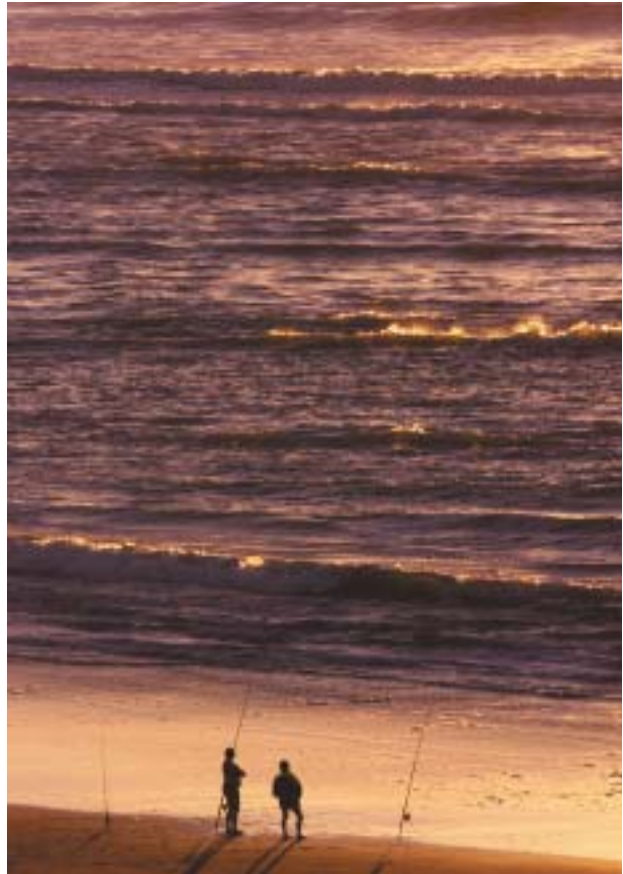
- (i) To maintain and improve free public access to areas administered by the Department.*
- (ii) To restrict public access and use, when it is necessary to protect natural and historical values, or for public safety.*

District councils are also a significant manager of public reserves and parks under the Reserves Act.

2.1.3 Local Government Act

Under section 10(b) of the Local Government Act 2002 the purpose of local government is “...to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future.” To achieve this a local authority has wide ranging powers to undertake any activity, business, act or enter into any transaction.

The Local Government Act 2002 has substantially replaced many of the provisions in the Local Government Act 1974. However the Part XXI provisions in the 1974 Act relating to roads remain. Under the Local Government Act 1974, district councils are a roading authority for all roads with the exception of state highways. This is of particular relevance in terms of access to the coast and involves both formed roads and unformed roads. Issues relating to public use and knowledge of unformed roads are discussed in section 3 below).



Fishing at dusk.

3. The state of the coastal environment

The 'state' of the coastal environment in terms of its values (eg, natural character), land tenure and public access – with a particular focus on the coastal area of local or regional significance – are discussed below.

3.1 Natural, amenity and heritage values

The Taranaki region has a 263-kilometre coastline, comprising of steep cliffs, rocky shores and sandy beaches, a marine protected area, subtidal reefs, river mouths and estuaries. The rugged nature of the Taranaki coastline has meant that much of the coastal area has retained its distinctive natural character. Most stretches of the Taranaki coastline are untouched by significant developments, which might have a detrimental effect on the natural character of the coast.



Ohawe Beach, south Taranaki.

The Taranaki coastline also offers an extensive and important recreational resource for fishing, diving, swimming, surfing, windsurfing, walking and boating. Near or adjacent to the coast are many locally or regionally significant heritage sites, recreation sites, landscape and amenity areas, waahi tapu, wetlands, lakes and flora and fauna. For the purposes of this document these areas are also considered to be part of the wider coastal environment and are addressed in this document.



Swimming at Fitzroy Beach, New Plymouth.

As part of its state of the environment reporting the Taranaki Regional Council undertook a telephone survey of general environmental attitudes in Taranaki in 2001. Respondents were asked to indicate what they liked most about where they lived.



Seal basking at the Sugar Loaf Islands.

Respondents identified a wide range of matters about what they like about where they live, which included views of or proximity to beaches and the coast. Note was also made of the recreational and fishing opportunities.

While the Taranaki coast is highly valued by most people, some parts are more valued than others are. Higher values may be attached to a particular locality for a variety of reasons. For example, some parts of the coastline are particularly prized for their scenic and amenity values (particularly in areas of significant natural character, often associated with beautiful sea and landscapes). Some parts, due to the quality of the beaches, fishing or surfing conditions, are prized for the recreational experience or values that they offer. Other parts of the coastline contain areas or sites of special cultural, historical or ecological significance (eg, waahi tapu sites, shipwrecks, nesting and breeding areas for marine life).

Sixty-nine coastal areas, representing approximately 33% of the Taranaki coastline, have been identified as having features or qualities of local or regional significance (Table 1).

To be identified as a coastal area of local or regional significance, an area had to be ranked as 'high' in relation to one or more of the following:

- **Amenity values:** includes unique areas with significant natural, scenic, aesthetic, visual or rural amenity values (landscapes, seascapes, landforms and associated processes).
- **Recreational values:** includes areas of high passive and/or active recreational use (eg, swimming, walking, fishing and boating) **or** areas unique and highly valued for a particular recreational experience (eg, scuba diving or surfing).
- **Cultural/historical values:** includes places, sites and areas of special cultural or historical significance (eg, archaeological sites and/or areas or features of special significance to Tangata Whenua).
- **Ecological and scientific values:** includes places, areas or features of scientific interest, important or unique coastal environment ecosystems and/or spawning, nursery or feeding areas for marine mammals or birds.

Of the 69 coastal areas or sites identified as having local or regionally significant values, 48 sites (or 70%) were identified as being of local or regional significance based upon high amenity values. Forty-eight sites (or 70%) were also identified as being of local or regional significance for their high cultural or historical values and 41 sites (or 59%) were identified as being of significance based upon high ecological or scientific values. High recreational values were identified at 27 sites (or 39%). Of note is that most sites ranked highly in two or more attributes.

Appendix I identifies the values associated with each of the 69 sites.

Table 1: Values ranked as high in relation to coastal areas of local or regional significance

| Values | Coastal areas of value | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage |
| Amenity | 48 | 70% |
| Recreational | 27 | 39% |
| Cultural/historical | 48 | 70% |
| Ecological/scientific | 41 | 59% |

3.2 Land tenure

The **foreshore and seabed** is deemed to be owned by the Crown, except where there is a surveyed title (around New Zealand, it is estimated that less than 1% of the New Zealand foreshore is privately owned¹). However, Crown ownership of the foreshore and seabed has been disputed in some quarters and in June 2003 the Court of Appeal ruled that South Island Iwi could take a claim for the foreshore and the seabed heard in the Maori Land Court. This decision generated considerable debate around New Zealand regarding ownership and public access to the foreshore and seabed and the protection of Maori custodian rights. To address these concerns, the Government has released its proposals for public consultation (refer section 5.1 below).



View from the Umukaha Point Recreation Reserve, overlooking the 'Three Sisters' and the Tongaporutu coastline.

In Taranaki, ownership of land on the **land-ward side of the high water mark** is largely in private ownership but can also lie with the district council and the Crown.

Land tenure relating to the coastal areas of local or regional significance and nearby public access was identified in accordance with the following categories:

- Crown land (eg, Department of Conservation land, the seabed, state highways).
- District council land (includes parks and reserves managed by the district council, formed and unformed district roads, and district council land leased by a private land occupier).
- Private land.

Appendix I identifies land tenure associated with the 69 sites, while Table 2 summarises the land tenure of coastal areas of local or regional significance. As shown in Table 2, an evaluation of land tenure confirms that 66 (or 95.6%) of the 69 coastal areas identified as being of local or regional significance are managed in whole or in part by the Crown or by the district councils. Most of these

Table 2: Land tenure of coastal areas of value

| Land tenure of site | Number | Percentage |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Crown or district land in whole or in part | 66 | 95.6% |
| Private-land only | 3 | 4.4% |
| Total | 69 | 100% |

¹ *Public Access New Zealand (2003): 'Improving public access to the outdoors'. A strategy for implementing Government's election policy, pg 31.*

involve the foreshore or the seabed (which is the responsibility of the Crown). Above the mean high water mark, other areas had some form of 'reserve' status (refer Appendix III for a description of the various types of reserves).

In relation to coastal areas of local or regionally significance that are owned or managed by the Crown or district councils, public use and access is generally permitted unless the land has been leased or such access would threaten ecological, historical, scientific or cultural values associated with that land. In addition, on some privately owned land public access has been provided for through esplanade strips etc.

A number of coastal areas of local or regional significance contain both public and private-land eg, the Tongaporutu coastline.

While most of the coastal areas of local or regional significance are publicly owned and protected, public access to these areas is not necessarily assured. Public access to the coast often involves adjacent land, which is generally privately owned.

3.3 Public access

Access to the coast is reliant upon both formal access (ie, via public lands and roads) and informal access (ie, via private land where there is no public right of access).

In Taranaki, people expect to have relatively unrestricted access to the coast. Generally, there is very good public access to most parts of the coast in Taranaki. However, public access to the coast may be difficult or disjointed due to the variety of landforms and land tenure. There are also increasing pressures on coastal land from use and developments along the coast. These pressures may affect public access to and enjoyment of the coast.

Formal public access to the 69 coastal areas of local or regional significance was evaluated having regard to the following matters:

- Is there a need to exclude or discourage public access (eg, to safeguard natural or cultural values or for occupational health and safety reasons)?
- Ease of access (eg, clearly defined roads or pathways, car parking facilities, short walk).



Fitzroy Beach has excellent roads and carparking facilities adjacent to the beach with clearly defined pathways leading down to the beach.

- Safety of access (eg, accessible at high tide, low lying area).
- Knowledge of access (eg, signs, and brochures).

Appendix I identifies the quality of public access to the 69 coastal areas of local or regional significance while Table 3 summarises the different levels of public access to coastal areas of local or regional significance.

In relation to the coastal areas of local or regional significance these sites, 29 (or 42%) were evaluated as having excellent public access.

Most of the main recreational beaches in Taranaki, or areas close to New Plymouth and other coastal settlements (eg, Oakura, Opunake) were identified as having excellent public access. For public access to be ranked as 'excellent' the sites had to be a short distance from a formed

public road, easily accessible at high and low tide, and with reserves and public access clearly defined and identifiable.

Table 3: Public access to coastal areas of value

| Quality of public access | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Excellent | 29 | 42% |
| Good | 11 | 16% |
| Poor | 29 | 42% |
| Total | 69 | 100% |

A further 11 (16%) coastal areas of local or regional significance were identified as having good public access. For public access to be ranked as 'good' the sites had to be a short walk from a formed public road, along a clearly defined and traversable track, access is only sometimes constrained by tides, and reserves and public access – while not always signposted – are reasonably identifiable.

The remaining 29 coastal areas of local or regional significance (or 42%) were rated as having poor public access. For public access to be ranked as 'poor', access to the sites usually involved a long walk from the nearest formed road, pathways were generally unclear or involved rough or difficult topography, or involved the need to obtain a land owner's permission to cross land.

It is noted that the above 'rankings' are an assessment of public access to a particular coastal area of local or regional significance, they are not a measure of whether it is practicable or appropriate to improve access. Such matters need to be considered on a case-by-case basis as in some cases topography might make it impracticable to improve public access or the values associated with an area or site could be degraded by increased public access and it would be inappropriate to improve that access. There are four factors restricting coastal access to the 29 coastal areas of local or regional significance with poor public access (Table 4) – these are:

- Physical constraints;
- To safeguard ecological, historical, scientific or cultural values;
- Lack of formal (legal) public access; and
- Poor defined public access (ie, public knowledge of coastal public access).

Table 4: Factors contributing to poor coastal access at 29 coastal areas of high value

| Factor | Coastal areas of value | |
|--|------------------------|-------------|
| | Number | Percentage |
| Physical constraints or health & safety considerations | 4 | 13.8% |
| To safeguard ecological, historical, scientific or cultural values | 2 | 6.9% |
| Lack of formal access | 10 | 34.5% |
| Poor public knowledge | 13 | 44.8% |
| Total | 29 | 100% |

Table 4 shows that for four of the 29 (14%) coastal sites identified as having poor public access, public access is constrained by topography (eg, high cliffs) or tidal patterns, or lie offshore. For a further two (7%) sites identified as having poor public access, public access is deliberately restricted due to the need to protect the ecological, historical or cultural values associated with those sites. For most of the 29 sites identified as having poor access, the reasons for this were either a lack of formal access or poor public knowledge of access.

Each of these factors is discussed below.

3.3.1 Physical constraints

Almost the entire Taranaki coastline is subject to varying rates of erosion from waves and wind. This has resulted in a predominantly cliffed coastline characterised by boulder cliffs and offshore reefs derived from erosion of lahar and other volcanic material. In north and south Taranaki, the erosion of marine sediments has resulted in a coastline of almost continuous papa cliffs.

Four of the coastal areas of local or regional significance have poor public access due to physical constraints or health and safety considerations. These areas represent 14% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance with poor public access and 6% of all sites.

Physical constraints occur where there is a significant natural impediment to public access to an area (or part of an area). It applies to areas offshore (eg, reefs, islands and the Alexandra shipwreck), surrounded by high cliffs or accessible only at low tide (eg, the Tongaporutu coast is only accessible via the estuary two hours either side of low tide). In such areas, the provision of public access may not be practicable or appropriate. Indeed, the relevant agencies may wish to discourage public access



Papa cliffs

because of public health and safety considerations, for example, along erosion-prone cliff faces.

3.3.2 The need to avoid diminished values arising from public access

In some localities, an area or site is designated as a reserve for the purpose of protecting the values associated with that area from human interference. In such areas restrictions on public access are appropriate.

Two of the coastal areas of local or regional significance have poor public access and for which there is a need to avoid diminished values arising from public access. These areas represent 7% of the sites with poor public access and 3% of all sites.

One of these areas, the Sugar Loaf Islands is a conservation area with diverse and abundant marine and bird life and underwater habitats. The islands also include several archaeological sites.

The second area is Te Kawau Island. Te Kawau Island is a small (one hectare) flat topped, steep sided island. Once an island pa of Ngati Tama, Te Kawau is now protected as a historic reserve and archaeological site and public access is prohibited.

In addition to these two areas, which are formally protected, there are undoubtedly other areas or sites that are ecologically or culturally sensitive but which are either not protected or there is good to excellent public access. For example, the Oeo cliffs contain unprotected coastal herbfields, which is the habitat of the indigenous moth, *Pimela urvilleana*. Private and public land within the coastal environment may also contain unprotected areas or sites that are important to Maori for cultural or spiritual reasons (eg, waahi tapu sites) or which contain other taonga (treasures). For such areas, public access needs to be managed and, in some cases, may need to be restricted.



Te Kawau Island, north Taranaki coastline

The Queen's Chain

Public 'rights' to access the coast are complicated and often poorly understood by the public.

Public access to the coast is principally provided for through reserves (such as esplanade reserves, and marginal strips) and roads, which are commonly referred to as the 'Queen's Chain'.

The concept of the Queen's Chain (introduced to New Zealand in 1841) was designed to protect in perpetuity, a 100 foot wide strip of public land alongside waterways and there is often a mistaken assumption that the Queen's Chain applies to all areas adjacent to any waterway. Unfortunately, as a result of the early surveying process, this did not always happen, resulting in the now fragmented pattern of publicly owned land alongside rivers and the coast. It is estimated that the Queen's Chain applies to approximately 70% of land adjacent to waterways in New Zealand.

3.3.3 Lack of formal access

Public roads (formed and unformed) offer the greatest degree of public access to the coast. Roads, along with the creation of reserves and strips, provide formal access to the coast and effectively constitutes what is known as the 'Queen's Chain'.

There is a perception that subdivisions and other types of use and development have 'alienated' large stretches of the coastline – reducing the quality of public access to the coast. However, New Plymouth and South Taranaki district councils both have in place policies and methods to set aside land for public access purposes or to negotiate public access arrangements with developers or coastal land occupiers. In most circumstances, district councils, at the time of subdivision, consider the creation of esplanade reserves and esplanade strips to ensure continued public access to the coast. Accordingly, public access through the provision of esplanade reserves or esplanade strips is believed to have increased over time.

Notwithstanding that, the patchwork of public roads and reserves providing public access to the coast are a historical accumulation rather than a logical network. There has never been a strategy or agency responsible for overseeing the implementation of the various mechanisms available for enhancing coastal public access. As a consequence, the right of access to the coast is often discontinuous along the coast with private land interspersed, which effectively prevents continuous legal access.

In relation to coastal areas of local or regional significance, 10 areas were identified as having poor public access due to no formal (legal) access (Table 3 above). These areas represent 35% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance with poor public access and 15% of all sites. In such situations public access to the coast is reliant upon obtaining the permission of the landowner to cross private land.

Informal public access (ie, where access is over privately owned land) is an important part of providing access to the coast. Generally most private landowners are happy to allow people to cross their land. However, changing social conventions, increased responsibilities on landholders in relation to occupational health and safety and changes in land uses and recreation al patterns means that informal public access to previously accessible beaches, surfing or fishing spots is becoming increasingly restricted.

Informal public access over private land will remain an important part of continuing public access to the coast. However, much depends on landholders and the public understanding each other's needs and rights and agreeing on suitable terms and access arrangements.

Informal access – private rights

For large parts of the coastline, access is reliant upon the goodwill of adjacent landowners.

Most landowners are happy to allow people to cross their land. However, problems can occur when the landowner's property rights are not respected (eg, failure to obtain the permission of the landowner, close gates or when livestock is disturbed). Reasonable and responsible access is desirable.

There is a need to respect private rights – if this is done fully and properly, informal access can remain an important part of continuing public access to the coast where other methods might not be practicable or cost effective. Both landowner and public awareness and education is the key.

3.3.4 Poorly defined access

The single most significant constraining factor contributing to poor public access to coastal areas of local or regional significance was found to be poorly defined public access. This refers to areas where formal public access has been provided for but the access is so poorly defined or difficult to identify (eg, there are no signs or formed roads) that it is difficult to distinguish public from private access. Thirteen or 45% of the coastal areas of local or regional significance (or 19% of all sites) were identified as having poor public access due to poorly defined access.

The survey of access to the coastal areas of local or regional significance found that while some of the larger reserves are signposted, smaller reserves – especially marginal and esplanade strips, which could give access to the coast are often unmarked and their existence not well known.

The survey also noted problems with poorly defined public access associated with unformed [paper] roads. Unformed roads refer to lands set aside and owned by the relevant district council for roading purposes, but not maintained by the council. Because unformed roads are identified only on survey maps, their existence is often not well known, and the actual pathway can be difficult to ascertain from the adjacent privately-owned land. For example, the Stony River mouth has unformed roads providing for public access along both the left and right banks but the actual pathway of the roads is unclear.



Unformed road, indistinguishable from surrounding privately owned land, leading to the Mimi Estuary.

In addition to the above, there are many cases where legitimate public access using unformed roads is impeded by the landowner – sometimes deliberately, sometimes through a lack of awareness. Both formed and unformed roads have the same legal status – that is, the public has the right to pass along the road without hindrance. While adjacent landowners are generally permitted to graze the area, they are required to get the permission of the local district council to erect a swing gate or cattle stop across the road. They are further required under section 344 of the Local Government Act to display a sign 'Public Road' on each side of the gate. However, these requirements are not always complied with, and there are a number of examples of adjacent landowners putting up gates and 'private property' signs to deter the public from using this access (as shown in photo).

4. Potential and actual pressures on the coast

This section outlines actual or potential pressures that impact or impinge on the natural character of or public access to the Taranaki coast.

4.1 Urban and industrial development

Taranaki with its low overall population numbers and exposed coastline does not face the same environmental pressures on its coastline as some other regions. Taranaki has generally good coastal water quality and high quality coastal landscapes and seascapes with the coastline retaining much of its natural and/or rural character.

The number of direct discharges to the sea is a useful indicator of any increase or decrease in environmental pressures on the coast. Over the last decade (as shown in Figure 1) the number of direct discharges to the sea have dramatically reduced and strict environmental standards have been applied through the resource consents process. Consequently, discharges are unlikely to adversely affect the natural character of the coast.

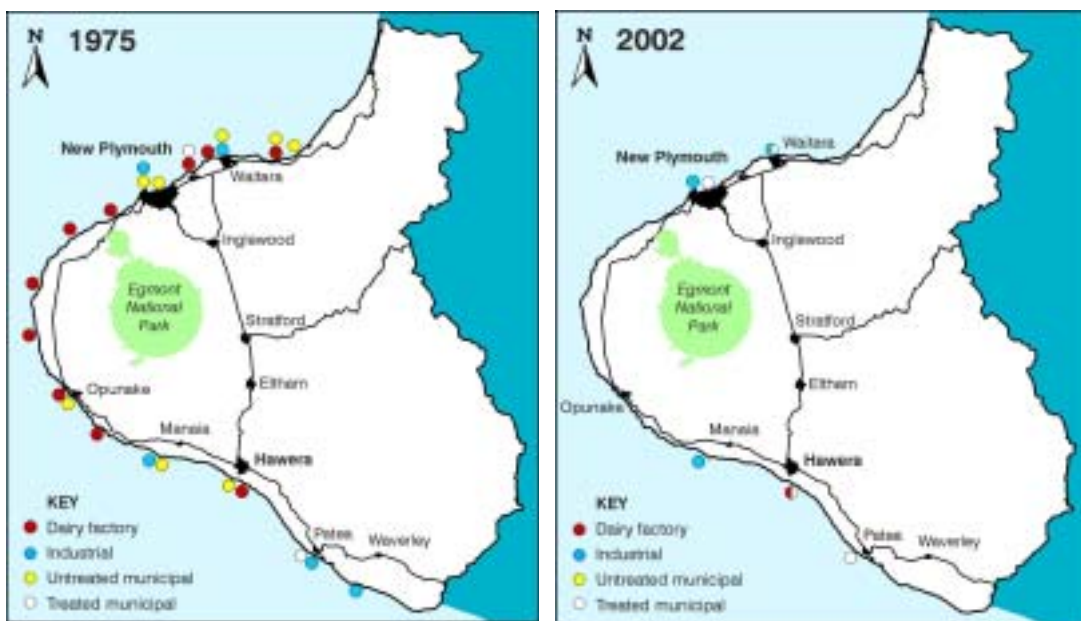


Figure 1: Decline in coastal discharges between 1975 and 2002

The effects of urban and industrial development on the coast are not significant at present. The most modified parts of the coastline in terms of natural character are in and around the city of New Plymouth. There are also some restrictions in public access, for example, to Port Taranaki and to the New Plymouth Power Station for health and safety reasons. However, the provision of an extensive network of parks and reserves, beaches, coastal walkway and other works along the New Plymouth foreshore has enhanced, not only public access, but also amenity and recreational values associated with that part of the coast.

In the future, however, while the effects of urban and industrial development on the coast may become more significant. Some parts of the coast are more vulnerable to

urban development that may be of a type or scale that leads to a gradual loss in the natural, scenic and amenity values that attracted people and development to the area in the first place. This particularly applies to smaller coastal settlements such as Oakura and Omata, which are becoming increasingly popular for residential living.

In terms of land use and subdivision controls around the coast, both the New Plymouth and South Taranaki district councils have a regime that allows use and development subject to specified terms, conditions and standards addressing any environmental effects. District councils, when implementing those rules, have regard to policies in their district plans that address the consolidation of existing urban settlements, the protection of the natural character and the avoidance of inappropriate subdivision, use or development.



Port Taranaki. Heavy development and modification of the Taranaki foreshore is mainly confined to in and around New Plymouth.

4.2 Subdivision

Since the adoption of their proposed district plans, both the New Plymouth District Council and the South Taranaki District Council have reported increasing interest in coastal subdivision. Typically, between three and five coastal subdivisions are created each year (Figure 2) resulting in the creation of one or two extra parcels of land (ie, lots).²

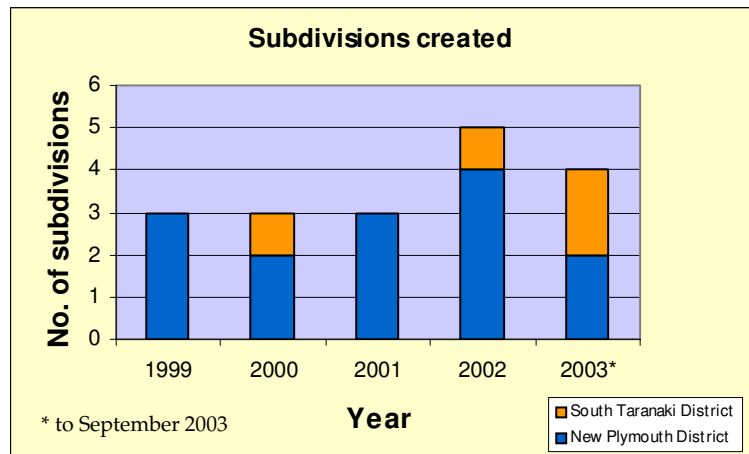


Figure 3: Number of coastal subdivisions over time in Taranaki

² Note that Figure 2 excludes 16 subdivisions over the last two years (14 in the New Plymouth District and 2 in the South Taranaki District) for which a consent has been granted but for which a survey plan has yet to be deposited.

The increasing popularity of living near the coast mean that on some parts of the coastline, specifically those adjacent to low lying areas, there is increasing pressure to subdivide. Since 1 January 1999, 34 subdivisions have been created or proposed on the coast. As indicated in the Figure 3, the coastal subdivisions are particularly apparent in north Taranaki – 28 of the 34 subdivisions (or 82%) occurred in the New Plymouth District. These 28 subdivisions involve the creation of 82 additional lots of land. The largest subdivisions in north Taranaki, in terms of separate lots created or proposed, have occurred in and around Oakura, Omata, Bell Block, Urenui and Pukearuhe.

In south Taranaki, there appears to be less pressure to subdivide on the coast. Since 1999, there have been six subdivisions created or proposed, which have resulted in 32 additional lots of land. Most of the demand for coastal subdivision occurs south of Okato.

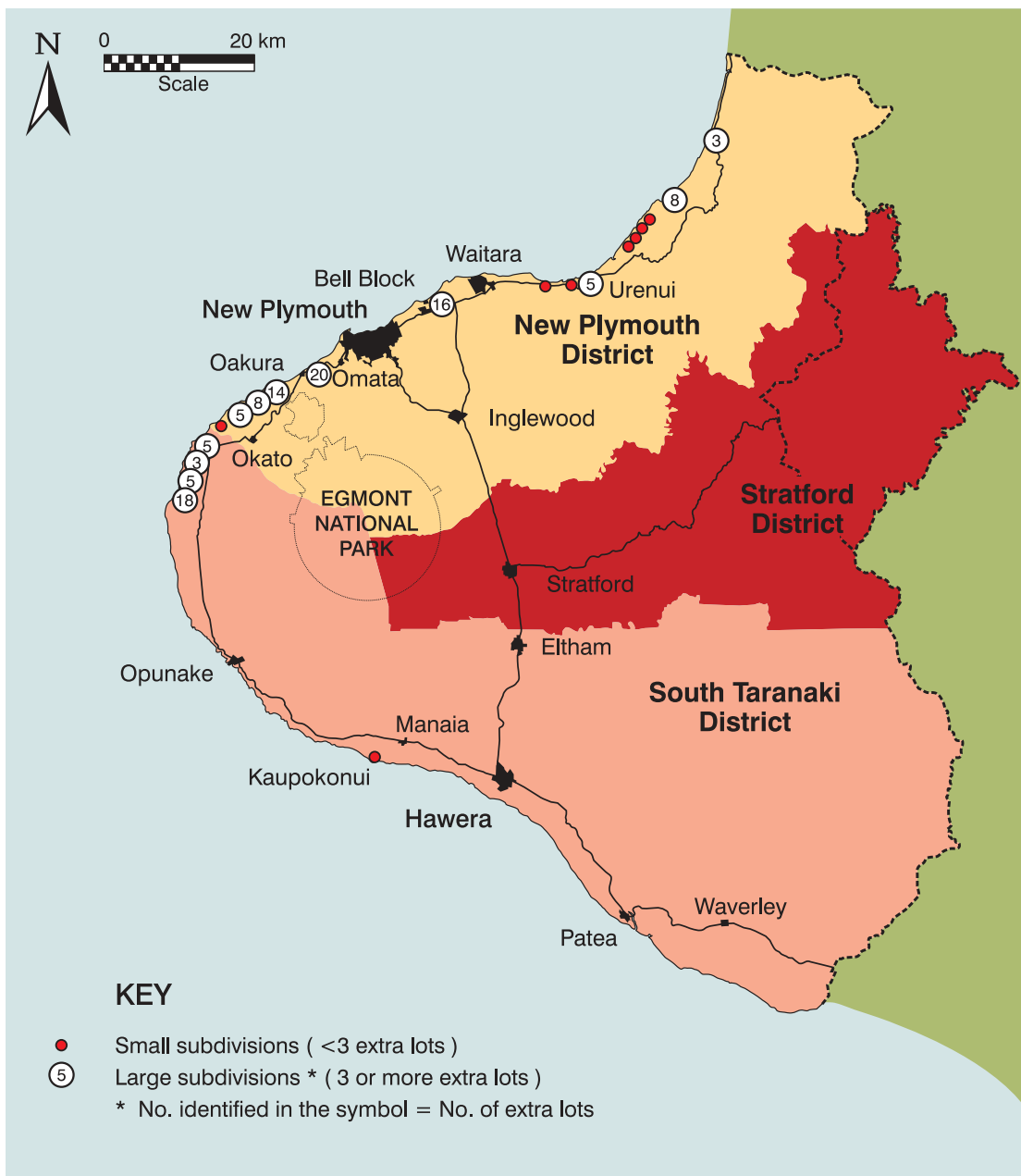


Figure 4: Coastal subdivisions in Taranaki since 1 January 1999

Subdividing coastal properties may impede or restrict traditional 'informal' access across land to the coast, for example, to favourite beaches, fishing or surfing spots, and may therefore give the impression of restricting public access. However, public access to the coast may be maintained through esplanade reserves or strips set aside at the time of subdivision.

There are, however, broader questions as to whether coastal subdivision should be concentrated more in some areas than others – both to provide for more planned development at appropriate locations and to prevent development in other areas.

4.3 Coastal structures and occupation

Coastal structures and the occupation of the foreshore or on the seabed, through coastal reclamation, the construction of structures, loss of vegetation or alteration of landforms, may adversely impact on the coastline's natural character and public access.

In 2002, the Taranaki Regional Council carried out a review of coastal permits granted by the Taranaki Regional Council³. That review showed that there were 167 coastal permits current in the Taranaki region, most of the coastal permits (107 or 63%) were to license various structures. Structures that can be found on the foreshore and seabed range from pipelines, intake structures and stormwater outlets to boat ramps, jetties and coastal erosion protection structures.

Overall, the number of coastal structures in Taranaki is relatively small and many, such as coastal protection structures, pipelines and boat ramps provide wider benefits to the community. A review of coastal permit conditions identified only three consents that restrict public access to the coast – two of these relate to boat ramps at Middleton Bay and Warea while the other relates to Port Taranaki.⁴



Urenui Beach – coastal erosion protection works

4.4 Conflicting recreational use

The Taranaki coastal environment offers a unique and widely varied recreational resource for the people of the region involving fishing, diving, swimming, surfing,

³ Taranaki Regional Council: 'Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki'. Interim Review Report on the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki, Stratford, November 2002.

⁴ Taranaki Regional Council: Op cit.

windsurfing, walking, and boating – not all of which are necessarily compatible, particularly at the more popular spots.

Recreational use at particular parts of the coast, depends upon a number of factors such as an area's physical characteristics, its uniqueness, its recreational values and qualities, its proximity to urban area or rural communities and the quality of public access. For some areas there is a demand and expectation that facilities and infrastructure will be provided to enhance use and access to the area (eg, seating, walkways, shelter, boat ramps and car parking) or safeguard the area from the effects of that use (eg, toilet and rubbish collection facilities). Any development of the coast may adversely affect other recreational experiences (eg, walkers preferring solitude or the 'wilderness' effect) and, in some cases, may lead to a gradual loss of the scenic, amenity and natural character of that part of the coast.

For some areas and recreational experiences, poor public access that detracts large numbers of people from coming to an area may be a good thing – for example at a popular surf break where surfers do not have to compete with swimmers for space.



Surfing off the Taranaki coast

Some coastal areas may be subject to greater use than other areas. This may be due to the nature of the values attached to that area (eg, a popular beach near a city versus an isolated reserve of high ecological values) but it might also be because of issues of access (eg, formal access versus informal access involving the crossing of private land).



5. National initiatives

The following national issues and central government initiatives impact or impinge on coastal use and access in the Taranaki region.

5.1 Government proposals for the foreshore and seabed

In recent times there has been considerable public controversy and debate regarding ownership and public access to the foreshore and seabed. Briefly, the issue was triggered by the release of a decision by the Court of Appeal in June 2003 that the Maori Land Court could hear claims to Maori ownership of the foreshore and seabed based on customary rights.

This decision raised concerns that as a result of claims for customary rights there was the possibility of new private titles being created over parts of the foreshore and seabed, which would give owners the power to sell those spaces and to exclude other people from them. To address these concerns, central government, amongst other things, has proposed to introduce legislation to that the foreshore and seabed should be 'public domain', ie, an area with open access and use for all New Zealanders. The government's proposals are based on four principles:

- **Principle of access:** The foreshore and seabed should be public domain with open access and use for all New Zealanders;
- **Principle of regulation:** The Crown is responsible for regulating the use of the foreshore and the seabed on behalf of all New Zealanders;
- **Principle of protection:** Processes should exist to enable the customary interests of whanau, hapu and Iwi in the foreshore and seabed to be acknowledged and specific rights to be identified and protected; and
- **Principle of certainty:** There should be certainty for those who administer the foreshore and seabed about the range of rights that are relevant.

This is a central government issue and, at this time, there are still many questions of detail that still need to be worked through in terms of implementing the proposals.

5.2 Land Access Ministerial Reference Group

In January 2003, the Minister for Rural Affairs established the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group to review and report back on:

- The extent and nature of the problems of access to waterways and public land;
- Existing sources of information relating to public access and making it more readily publicly available; and
- Mechanisms for ensuring responsible public access to waterways and private rural land while providing for private land use.

In August 2003, the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group reported back to the Minister. The Group's findings were set out in the document entitled *Walking Access in the New Zealand Outdoors*. In brief, the report notes that access arrangements and

associated conventions in New Zealand are under threat and recommends that action is taken to address the problems and promote opportunities for access.

In particular, the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group proposes a broad strategy to promote, encourage and where necessary, direct better public access by foot to rivers, lakes, the countryside and the coast. The Strategy will have five objectives:

- Strengthen leadership by the establishment of an independent access agency responsible for providing direction for, and coordinating access arrangements throughout New Zealand;
- To provide greater clarity and certainty of access by locating and publicising what is acceptable and where it occurs;
- To affirm the validity of the Queens Chain by providing mechanisms for its promotion and enhancement;
- To encourage negotiated solutions that will support and strengthen traditional conventions (such as access by negotiation with the landowner); and
- Find ways to improve current legislation provisions for access.

The availability and updating of the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region* is a positive starting point in addressing work being undertaken by the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group, ie, the need to collate reliable and accurate information on location and type of access.

5.3 NZ Coastal Policy Statement

The Department of Conservation has commenced its review of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement* although the review process still needs to go through the full procedures under the Act including the preparation of a proposed change, establishment of a Board of Inquiry, public submissions and hearings etc. It is expected that the review will be completed before the Council undertakes a full statutory review of its *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki* in 2007.

5.4 Review of Marine Reserves Act

Central government is currently reviewing the Marine Reserves Act 1971 in order to streamline the process for establishing marine reserves and increase the number of marine reserves. The new legislation had its first reading on 15 October 2002 and has been referred to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. There is still pressure on government to broaden the narrow focus of the current Marine Reserves Act.

Over the next 12 months, the Department of Conservation plans to process five marine reserve applications under the current legislation. One of the proposed reserves covers the North Taranaki Paranihi/White Cliffs area. Presently, this area has the highest protection afforded by the *Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki* (ie, it has been classified as a Coastal Management Area A).

5.5 Aquaculture reform

Central government, through the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Fisheries, is currently considering proposals to promulgate legislation for the purpose of promoting better integration between coastal planning, aquaculture development and fisheries management. Central government already has in place a nation-wide moratorium on the granting of coastal consents for further marine farming proposals under the Resource Management (Aquaculture Moratorium) Amendment Act. It is now considering the Resource Management (Aquaculture Reform) Amendment Bill. Under that Bill, which has yet to be introduced to Parliament:

- Regional councils are to restrict aquaculture to clearly defined 'aquaculture management areas';
- Regional councils will have greater powers to manage and control aquaculture development;
- Development approvals within these areas will be streamlined by providing a single-permit process;
- Regional councils will be responsible for considering both environmental effects and fisheries matters in providing for aquaculture under coastal plans; and
- Individual sites within an 'aquaculture management area' will be tendered under the Act.

5.6 Oceans Policy

Currently, there are 14 government departments involved in the marine environment, with at least 18 pieces of domestic legislation governing the ocean and various other marine policy initiatives are still being promulgated. To promote better integrated management of the marine environment, central government established a Ministerial Group – the Oceans Policy Secretariat – to oversee the development of an Oceans Policy. In particular, central government is seeking to develop an Oceans Policy that will provide a clear statement of what New Zealanders, individually and collectively, value about the sea and coastline and what relative priority should be attached to different options at different times and in different places.

Amongst the matters to be addressed is provision of public access, use and enjoyment of both the ocean and the coastal environment. The objective of the Oceans Policy is to safeguard these values against unreasonable erosion by other activities.

6. Summary

This report, and the preparation of the Inventory, is timely given growing public debate and concern over use, development and access to the coast, as demonstrated by the debate on who owns the foreshore and seabed and the plethora of national initiatives of relevance to coastal management.

The report has highlighted a number of key points:

- There is a plethora of statutes and agencies responsible for governing different aspects of the coastal environment;
- The Taranaki region has a long 263-kilometre coastline comprising of stunning vistas with beautiful sea and landscapes, beaches and sites of natural, historical or recreational interest. Sixty-nine sites, representing 33% of the Taranaki coastline, are identified as having local or regionally significant values;
- There is poor public access to large parts of the Taranaki coastline;
- The major constraining factors to good public access to the coast are poorly defined public access and a lack of legal access;
- Taranaki, with its low overall population numbers and exposed coastline, has few development pressures threatening amenity and natural values. However, there is increasing interest in residential and lifestyle development along parts of the Taranaki coastline particularly in and around Okato, Oakura, Omata and Bell Block; and
- A number of national issues and central government initiatives have been identified that may impact or impinge on the future management of coastal use and access in the Taranaki region.



The Taranaki coast at dusk

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Appendix I
Summary of coastal areas of local or regional significance

Summary of Coastal areas of local or regional significance

| No. | Site name | Values* ranks highly in terms of | | | | Land tenure of site | | | Public access | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | Amenity | Recreation | Cultural/historical | Ecological/scientific | Crown land | District council land | Private land | Excellent | Good | Poor | Constraining factors (if any)** |
| 1 | Mokau-Mohakatino (Epiha Reef) | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ | No formal access |
| 2 | Mohakatino Estuary | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 3 | Te Kawau Pa | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Protection of values |
| 4 | Te Puia | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | None | No formal access |
| 5 | Rapanui | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 6 | Tongaporutu Estuary | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 7 | Tongaporutu Coast | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Physical constraints |
| 8 | Whitecliffs (Parininihi) | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | N/A |
| 9 | Pariokariwa Reef & Opourapa Island | √ | | √ | | √ | | | | | √ | Physical constraints |
| 10 | Pukearuhe | √ | | √ | | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 11 | Waiti Beach | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | N/A |
| 12 | Mimi Estuary | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 13 | Urenui Estuary & Beach | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 14 | Onaero Estuary & Beach | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 15 | Buchanans Bay | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | No formal access |
| 16 | Motonui | | | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 17 | Waitara Estuary | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |

| No. | Site name | Values* ranks highly in terms of | | | | Land tenure of site | | | Public access | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | Amenity | Recreation | Cultural/historical | Ecological/scientific | Crown land | District council land | Private land | Excellent | Good | Poor | Constraining factors (if any)** |
| 18 | Waitara, Waiongana & Airedale Reefs | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | Physical constraints |
| 19 | Waiongana Estuary | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 20 | Bell Block Beach & Waipu Lagoons | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 21 | Waiwhakaiho Estuary | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | | | √ | | N/A |
| 22 | Fitzroy Beach | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 23 | East End Beach | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 24 | New Plymouth foreshore | √ | √ | | | | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 25 | Kaweroa Park | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 26 | Ngamotu Beach | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 27 | Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | Protection of values |
| 28 | Paritutu/Back Beach | √ | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | | N/A |
| 29 | Lloyds Ponds (Tank Farm Ponds) | | | | √ | √ | | √ | | | None | No formal access |
| 30 | Tapuae Stream Mouth | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 31 | Oakura Beach | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 32 | Ahuahu, Weld and Timaru Road Beaches | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 33 | Tataraimaka | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 34 | Leith/Perth Road Beaches | √ | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 35 | Stony River | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | N/A |

| No. | Site name | Values* ranks highly in terms of | | | | Land tenure of site | | | Public access | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | Amenity | Recreation | Cultural/historical | Ecological/scientific | Crown land | District council land | Private land | Excellent | Good | Poor | Constraining factors (if any)** |
| 36 | Komene Road Beach | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 37 | Puniho Road Beach | √ | | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 38 | Paora Road | | √ | | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 39 | Stent Road | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | N/A |
| 40 | Bayly Road | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | | N/A |
| 41 | Cape Egmont | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 42 | Kina Road & Oaonui Beach | √ | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | | N/A |
| 43 | Arawhata Road Beach | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | N/A |
| 44 | Middleton's Bay | √ | | | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 45 | Opunake Beach | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 46 | Mangahume Beach | √ | | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | No formal access |
| 47 | Julian's Pond | | | | √ | | | √ | | | √ | No formal access |
| 48 | Puketapu Road End | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | No formal access |
| 49 | Oeo Cliffs | | | √ | | √ | | √ | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 50 | Rawa Stream Mouth | | | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 51 | Otakeho Beach | | | | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 52 | Kaupokonui Stream | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 53 | Sutherland/Normanby Road ends | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |

| No. | Site name | Values* ranks highly in terms of | | | | Land tenure of site | | | Public access | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | Amenity | Recreation | Cultural/historical | Ecological/scientific | Crown land | District council land | Private land | Excellent | Good | Poor | Constraining factors (if any)** |
| 54 | Inaha Beach | | | | | √ | √ | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 55 | Waingongoro River Mouth (Ohawe Beach) & Four Mile Reef | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 56 | Waihi Beach | | √ | √ | | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 57 | Rifle Range Road Lakes (Nowell Road Ponds) | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | | √ | No formal access |
| 58 | Manawapou-Tangahoe rivermouths & cliff tops | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | N/A |
| 59 | Manawapou Road Coastal Lagoon | | | | | √ | | √ | | | √ | No formal access |
| 60 | Lake Kaikura | √ | | | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 61 | Kakaramea Beach | | | √ | | √ | | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 62 | Patea Beach & River Mouth | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | N/A |
| 63 | Waitore Swamp | | | √ | | √ | | √ | | | √ | No formal access |
| 64 | Whenuakura Estuary | | | √ | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 65 | North & South Traps | | | | √ | √ | | | | | √ | Physical |
| 66 | Waipipi Dunelands | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | | | | √ | Poor public knowledge |
| 67 | Waverley Beach | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |
| 68 | Waitotara Estuary & Dunes | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | N/A |
| 69 | Waiinu Beach & Reef | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | | N/A |

* Note that other values might also be associated with these areas. For a fuller description and explanation of these areas the reader should refer to the *Inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region*.

** N/A Not applicable (ie, there is good or excellent public access).

Appendix II
Sample sheet from the Inventory
(Epiha Reef)

Mokau-Mohakatino (Epiha Reef)

Number: 1

GPS: 2649936E
6274891N

General description

Epiha reef is a large intertidal reef system between Mokau and Mohakatino Rivers, just north of the Waihi Stream. It is the most extensive intertidal reef system in North Taranaki.² The coastal cliffs along this section of the coast are of varying height, and have communities of native flax-shrubland and native herbs.⁵

Location

2 km south of Mokau, between Mokau River and Mohakatino River.

Land tenure

Site: - Crown Land: seabed (administered by Department of Conservation)

Site access: - Crown Land: on the northern bank; State Highway 3 (administered by Transit New Zealand) and Mohakatino Swamp Conservation Area (administered by Department of Conservation)
- Private Land: no formal access

Values

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|---|
| Amenity | High | - within an area of outstanding coastal value ¹ |
| Recreational | Moderate | - access limits recreational use - fishing and shellfish collecting ⁴ |
| Cultural/ Historical | High | - important traditional fishery for local hapu ⁴ - midden and pa site in the area ^{3,4} |
| Ecological/ Scientific | High | - herbfields on cliffs ^{3,5} - the reef supports encrusting organisms including mussels, limpets and barnacles ² - coastal cliffs are a significant natural area ³ |

Public access

Poor - The reef can be accessed via the beach at low tide from the Mohakatino Swamp Conservation Area on the northern bank of the Mohakatino River. The reef is located approximately 2km north of the Mohakatino River. Private land is located immediately adjacent to the reef however there is no direct formal access (in the past informal access could be achieved through Mohakatino Station).

MOKAU-MOHAKATINO (EPIHA REEF)



Appendix III

Types of reserves

Reserves

Reserves are usually administered and owned by the Department of Conservation or the district council and are set aside to give the public freedom of entry and access to an area, or to preserve historic or ecological sites. They and include the following:

- (a) **Recreation Reserves:** Administered by a local authority or the Department of Conservation for the purpose of providing areas for recreation, sporting activities, physical welfare and public enjoyment and/or protecting of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities.
- (b) **Historic reserves:** Administered by a local authority or the Department of conservation for the purpose of protecting (in perpetuity) places, objects, and natural features that are of historic, archaeological, cultural, educational, and other special interest.
- (c) **Scenic reserves:** Administered by a local authority or the Department of Conservation for the purpose of protecting and preserving (in perpetuity) areas of scenic interest, beauty, natural features or landscape for their intrinsic value and for the benefit, enjoyment, and use of the public.
- (d) **Local purpose reserves:** Administered by a local authority or the Department of Conservation for the purpose of providing and retaining areas for such local purpose or purposes as are specified in any classification of the reserve.
- (e) **Esplanade Reserves:** Administered by a local authority or the Department of Conservation local purpose reserves for the purpose of protecting conservation values as well as enabling public access to or along the sea, river or lake and for recreational use; where this is compatible with conservation values. Esplanade reserves can be up to 20 metres wide, and are vested in the territorial authority or the Crown. Esplanade reserves are usually created as a result of subdivision of private land.
- (f) **Esplanade Strips:** (sections 229-235 RMA, 1991) Similar to esplanade reserves. They are created through subdivision or by agreement, but they are not surveyed and the strip moves with erosion or accretion. Esplanade strips are recorded on the title of the land, and ownership remains with the landowner.
- (g) **Marginal strips:** Administered for conservation purposes, to enable public access to, and recreational use of any adjacent watercourses or bodies of water, including the foreshore. Marginal strips are usually created on the sale of crown land. They exist along the foreshore, waterways greater than 3 metres, and lakes. Marginal strips are 20 metres wide (unless a reduction of width has been approved by the Minister of Conservation).⁵
- (h) **Access strips:** Easements, which are a negotiated agreement between a local authority and land owner, with the landowner retaining ownership. They are surveyed and remain in the same place. Access strips are similar to a walkway under the NZ walkways act 1990.

⁵ *Newly created marginal strips move with erosion or accretion.*

