

Speech: Hauraki Gulf Marine Park 10th Anniversary

27 February 2010

Auckland

I am delighted to be here with you all today to take part in celebrations to acknowledge the many great achievements in the Marine Park over the past 10 years.

It is particularly an honour as a National Minister of Conservation to be here a decade on since the last National-led Government introduced the legislation that came to create this park. The Hauraki Gulf is one of New Zealand's many iconic outdoor playgrounds and holds great importance to the community.

There is always room for improvement and thanks to the many contributions you have all made, we have a really exciting package of initiatives that collectively make up the Anniversary celebrations that I am privileged to be able to launch today.

Auckland is always a dynamic place and the 10th anniversary of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park is a milestone worth celebrating. We have an opportunity to position the marine park as a key asset for Auckland.

There is increased understanding and support for the importance of protecting, enhancing and promoting the marine park's unique features. There is a lot of work involved and I would like to acknowledge the significant achievements of the Hauraki Gulf Forum under the leadership of John, Mike and the recent chair, Laly Haddon. The Forum has championed co-ordinated and integrated management of the Hauraki Gulf and this work is delivering real benefits. The Forum's role

facilitating co-operation and integration is also well demonstrated by the fantastic programme of initiatives we are recognising today.

We heard earlier from Mike Lee about the fantastic success of both mainland and island restoration in the Marine Park and how many of our rarest species are now thriving in the safe havens created when we undertake to maintain sanctuaries free of introduced pests. These achievements would not have been possible without the ongoing dedication of many community restoration trusts and volunteers and I thank you all for your commitment.

Waitakere City Council recently applied to DOC to include all reserves in the Waitemata Harbour and bordering reserves - approximately 55 separate reserves in total – in the marine park. I am delighted to announce this application has been approved and will be gazetted shortly.

This is the first addition of public land to the marine park and Waitakere City Council is to be congratulated for enabling this significant contribution. I also acknowledge the role of the Forum in facilitating discussions and the desire of DOC to encourage further council land to be included.

DOC has also received a letter from Forest and Bird signalling the intent to vest three of their reserves on Waiheke Island into the marine park. Reports on this to the Hauraki Gulf Forum and Conservation Board are expected in March.

This is the second time the opportunity for private land to be vested in the Marine Park has been progressed, which is fantastic and a credit to Forest and Bird. I would also like to acknowledge Rob Fenwick for

vesting the first area of private land (also on Waiheke Island) into the marine park in 2009.

It is fitting that we are celebrating the 10th Anniversary here on Motutapu Island, which, combined with neighbouring Rangitoto Island, is well on the way to becoming our largest pest free island sanctuary - and only 30 minutes from downtown Auckland.

There is so much to offer out here and from my perspective I really enjoy initiatives that are focused on getting more New Zealanders involved in conservation and out enjoying the conservation estate. I'm a firm believer that the more often people see and experience our natural landscapes and wildlife the more they come to care about it and get involved in preserving it.

This is why the marine park concept, the role of the Forum and the collective efforts of iwi, agencies, communities, trusts, organisations and business are so important. By continuing to pool our collective experience and efforts to inspire support and involvement in making the marine park concept a reality, the next 10 years promise to be really exciting.

Thank you.