

Draft Marine and Harbour Facilities Strategy

Vision

The Coromandel peninsula is a destination of choice for safe, sustainable and accessible marine and harbour facilities that are fit for purpose to meet the needs of our communities, visitors and businesses.

Opportunity/Problem statement

This strategy provides a decision making framework for how Council will manage and enhance new and existing marine and harbour facilities around the peninsula.

The Thames-Coromandel District has a unique coastline with a variety of fish habitats and other seafood resource. At present, the infrastructure facilities to service the range of commercial, recreational and tourism activities in the area are of varying quality; and in many cases require significant maintenance or need to be replaced. Many existing facilities are congested and not scalable to cope with future demand.

In response, Council needs to consider a prioritised approach to ensuring our marine and harbour facilities are fit for purpose; and in doing so to be mindful of the need to cater for a range of industries. Aquaculture, recreational fishing and charter fishing provide a strong contribution to the region's economy with marine farming projected to grow.¹

Growth in recreational fishing and associated marine activities continues to put pressure on communities where coastal open space is being utilised to cater for additional parking and associated facilities such as toilets. We need to apply a managed approach to this growth that will ensure there is the right balance between ensuring provision of appropriate facilities while not detrimentally affecting the wider community's ability to enjoy the coastal amenity and other recreational activities.

In recognition of not only the cost of establishing facilities, but also in ongoing maintenance and renewals, we need to identify, engage, and partner with private and public organisations to deliver long term, sustainable solutions to the delivery of commercial, mixed use and recreational boating facilities. We also need to ensure that the burden of these facilities does not fall entirely on the ratepayer. This will require frank conversations about funding avenues (including user charges) to ensure that users of these facilities pay "their fair share". These solutions will not necessarily align with our community board boundaries so Council and Community Boards need to determine how

¹ See: Thames Coromandel District Council and Coromandel Marine Farmer Association (2017) *Aquaculture in the Coromandel - The contribution of marine farming to the Thames-Coromandel District*

they will provide for marine and harbour opportunities that meet the needs of multiple communities across these boundaries.

Context

Thames-Coromandel District has a diverse marine and harbour environment. With over 400km of coastline Council provides a range of supporting coastal infrastructure. Locals and visitors are attracted to the recreational activities our coastal area provides - fishing, boating, diving, water sports, kayaking, shell fishing activity to name a few. A range of commercial operators are also operating around our coast, undertaking aquaculture, ocean farming, commercial/charter fishing and water sport type activities.

This strategy covers Council and community (privately owned and maintained) marine and harbour assets including boat ramps, wharves, docks and marinas. It also includes infrastructure and services that are directly related, such as roading and parking.

There are seven major wharves around the Peninsula: Thames, Tairua, Te Kouma (Sugarloaf and Hannaford's Jetty), Whitianga, Port Charles, Coromandel Wharf and Whangamata. Various charges for the use of these wharves are set by Community Boards under our Maritime Facilities Bylaw 2015. The bylaw applies to all Council owned or managed slipways, jetties, wharves, boat ramps, maintenance grids, quays, piers, pontoons, jetties and reclamations. It regulates how different parts of our community, like recreational boaties, commercial operators and the aquaculture industry, use and interact with Council owned or managed maritime facilities. This includes restrictions on animals on facilities, rules around hazardous substances and unpleasant odours, and rules for how long different users can tie up at our maritime facilities.

Twenty three boat ramps are available in our district for recreational use (the majority of which do not have all tide access.) Most of our smaller boat ramp facilities do not require a permit and are free for the public to use. Facilities including Sugarloaf, Purangi Reserve, Coromandel, Whitianga Wharf floating pontoon and Whangamata require a permit. Council will need to continue to explore alternative funding mechanisms and partnerships that reduce the burden on the ratepayer to establish or undertake upgrades to existing facilities. Increasing the services available at some currently free ramps may justify those ramps moving to a user pays or membership model.

Notwithstanding the need to upgrade and undertake significant maintenance of many of our facilities, Council also needs to consider a range of influencing factors, including:

- The need to plan and cater for aquaculture expansion
- The contribution of recreational fishing to the Coromandel economy
- Health and safety concerns around incompatibility of mixed use activities on particular infrastructure (eg boat ramps)
- Challenges around satisfying a demand for all-tidal access while balancing environmental considerations
- Harbour contamination (Coromandel) and restoration
- Land ownership
- Consenting and legal implications

- Challenges around how to pay for new developments and maintain existing facilities
- Meeting demand for associated infrastructure including parking
- The impacts of sea level rise and coastal inundation

This document should be read in conjunction with the Thames-Coromandel District Council Coastal Management Strategy.

Strategic Goals

1. Managing growth and demand

Goal 1.1: Environmental sustainability and the health of our coast will be at the forefront of considering any responses to current and future growth and demand of the harbour and marine based activities

- Any proposals to develop new facilities must demonstrate the ability to reduce and/or mitigate environmental effects in line with the provisions of the district plan

Goal 1.2: Facilities will be fit for purpose with mechanisms for responsible management

- New boat ramps will be constructed in strategic locations based on demand and following a full assessment of infrastructure requirements, public health and safety and potential adverse effects on the coastal environment
- Facilities will be provided on the basis of a "district wide" network (rather than on the basis of community board boundaries). Opportunities to rationalise existing facilities will be investigated accordingly.
- Council will identify management structures that are appropriate to each marine/harbour site and be responsive to issues as they arise.
- Ensure our network of marine and harbour facilities is responsive to growth and demand by educating marine and harbour users of the range of alternative facilities in order to "spread the load" and reduce congestion during peak periods.

2. Safety and access

Goal 2.1: Roads will service commercial and recreational requirements and support business, tourism and connectivity

- Improve, extend and promote the use of public transport including buses, ferries, shuttles and park and ride services
- Where they are owned by Council, roads leading to marine and harbour facilities will be maintained to ensure safe access

Goal 2.2: Parking will be positioned with consideration to safety, avoiding congestion, practicality and amenity

- User pays "premium" parking and adjacent facilities will be provided where the calibre of the facility/partnership model merits this
- Trailer parking and associated facilities will be positioned to ensure safety of all and ensuring coastal amenity is maintained

Goal 2.3: Reduce conflicts at multiple purpose facilities and responsibly manage health and safety risk

- Recreational and commercial activities will be separated wherever practical
- Provide informative signage at all facilities which includes important management issues/health and safety information
- Ramp surfaces and associated structures will be maintained to provide for safe use
- Work with industry to monitor and improve health and safety regularly

3. Funding and Partnerships

Goal 3.1: Recognise tangata whenua, their kaitiaki role and as a key stakeholder (including as landowner) in the development of marine and harbour facilities

- Council will engage with tangata whenua in the development of new marine and harbour facilities and seek partnership opportunities, where appropriate.

Goal 3.2: Council will actively seek and facilitate partnerships to provide a range of funding avenues (private, public, commercial) that reduce the amount procured from rates

- When developing new facilities/undertaking significant renewals; Council will identify and pursue potential partnership and funding opportunities
- Ongoing operation and maintenance of facilities will be funded from user pays wherever practical.
- Facilitate development of the Coromandel harbour with private investors

4. Realising economic benefit

Goal 4.1: Council will support the retention and expansion of the aquaculture industry and related commercial activity that it attracts to the District.

- Council will work collaboratively with representatives of the aquaculture industry and ancillary services to identify ways they can best support its growth
- Council will work with local businesses to facilitate growth as opportunities arise

Goal 4.2: Promote the Coromandel Peninsula as a "destination of choice" for marine tourism activities

- Council will work with Destination Coromandel to ensure this is a core tenet in fulfilling their vision - to ensure Coromandel is a rated as New Zealand's must-visit destination

Action plans

Action/Activity	Stakeholders (including Council, Community Boards and Community)	Timeframe
Stocktake the condition of all facilities on a district wide basis and develop a 20 year work programme that:	Waikato Regional Council Iwi Aquaculture Industry	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritises the upgrading of facilities from a district wide perspective - Identifies the most appropriate initial and ongoing funding mechanism for each facility (e.g. user pays, partnership model etc.) - Clearly provides for choice of facilities where appropriate (e.g. providing the choice of high quality all tidal access ramp (user pays) or a standard tidal boat ramp. 	Recreational Fishing Industry
Develop a funding strategy, which creates opportunities for specific commercial investment and joint ventures in order to minimise the burden on the general ratepayer	Investors Developers
Work with private owners, government organisations and iwi to resolve and clarify ownership and consenting anomalies in relation to existing marine facilities (including boat ramps)	Private owners DoC Iwi NZTA Waikato Regional Council
Work with interested parties on appropriate marine/harbour facility development at Coromandel Harbour as a continuation of the Expressions of Interest process undertaken in 2016.	Investors Developers Central Government NZTA Waikato Regional Council
Work with NZTA to ensure roading and access to key facilities are fit for purpose	NZTA