# Tasman and Golden Bay Guardians / Kaitiaki Moana o Te Tai-o-Aorere
# "Conservation, education and collaboration"

*This document is an initial framework to be modified and built upon through discussion and collaboration*.


## Overview

**Vision Statement**

Our community and treaty partners working together to restore a healthy, thriving marine environment in Tasman and Golden Bays to sustain connection, use, and enjoyment by present and future generations.

**Mission Statement**

Facilitate stakeholders to collaboratively address environmental issues so that the marine environment of Tasman and Golden Bay are regenerated.

**Key themes**

Ecosystem based management, ecosystem services, community collaboration, education, marine restoration, social licence, grass roots, mobilizing communities, action.

**Scope**

Our area is the estuaries, intertidal, and marine ecosystems of Te Tai-o-Aorere (Farewell Spit to Takapourewa/Stephen's Island), with strong interest in the connectivity of the catchments and rivers leading into the bays.

**Introduction**

There has been wide scale ecological decline to the marine environment in Tasman and Golden Bays, with the apparent failure of the relevant authorities to act. We propose forming a group of motivated citizens focusing on reversing degradation of habitat, biodiversity, and fisheries in our aquatic spaces. Our aim is ensuring abundant life in our oceans for the future, abundant fisheries, and maintaining resilience of our marine life to climate change and other stressors. We intend to future proof this ethos by gaining mandate from authorities to effect change, and by providing educational programs to the wider community.

**Background**

The Tasman Bay has had a history of ecological decline due to a wide variety of factors, both anthropogenic and environmental, land based and marine. The Bay is valued culturally, recreationally, and commercially with significant fishing, aquaculture, tourism and shipping industries located here. In the busy summer months, the area is heavily used by recreational, tourism and fishing boats, this can often lead to hazardous or frictional situations. In amongst all this, our wildlife and environment that is a huge drawcard to most users must be considered. Scientific data and local knowledge indicates a significant degradation of the ecosystems in The Bay since European occupation, through a mixture of land use, pollution, fishing pressure, and habitat damage. These factors are cumulative pressures. As a community, we should be working together to minimize these, to assist in the resilience and future health of The Bay and its' communities in the face of ongoing pressures such as population growth, climate change and ocean acidification etc.

Some protection measures are in place, riparian plantings, restorations, seasonal fishing closures, coastal management plans, taiapure, marine reserves etc. with generally positive results.

From interactions with the community, and personal experience, it has become clear that sharing marine areas can breed mistrust amongst users. It is difficult to understand the needs and motivations of other groups without engagement. We have found that organizing events such as clean-ups has helped to connect users in a common goal, thus strengthening our ability to work together towards other goals. In November 2016, a discussion arising from a marine ecology presentation to a variety of users highlighted the need for a group that engaged in these conversations, Tasman Bay Guardians was conceived.

Stew Robertson is the initiator of this process and author of this strategy, living in Motueka since 2002. Previously a water taxi skipper, retrained as a marine biologist and then founded Abel Tasman Eco Tours. He is also a keen diver, photographer, and recreational fisher.
This strategy has been reviewed and co-edited by Peter Lawless, Aneika Young and Megan Wilson.

## Goals

**Conservation**
Protect and regenerate key marine ecosystem services and biological abundance and diversity for the future wellbeing of the environment, our communities, and our economy.
Foster kaitiakitanga through community engagement, education, and action.

**Education**
Inform stakeholders with scientifically robust research about the current state of the marine environment and possible solutions to issues.
Support the development and delivery of environment education resources, and activities.

**Collaboration**
Engage effectively with all interested parties and community groups associated with Tasman and Golden Bays.
Provide a forum for stakeholders to collaborate, where they will identify issues and mitigate these by developing and actioning initiatives.

## Stakeholders
We wish to engage with the following stakeholder groups (and any other interested party) to create tangible solutions to identified issues.
Iwi, Landowners, Tourism operators, Recreational users (non-fishers), Recreational Fishers, Commercial Fishers, Aquaculture Industry, Conservationists / ecologists, Educational groups, Forestry.

## Limitations and hurdles
The complexity of ecosystems and user groups will lead to seemingly unsolvable issues. The vastness of some issues may make us feel ineffective, however maintaining a stance on these issues is valuable. Financial and legal obstacles.

## Strategies
1. Identify and map the current 'state of affairs', rules, bylaws, closures, projects, protections.
2. Identify marine environment issues that can be worked on collaboratively by stakeholders.
3. Identify areas of conflict between stakeholders that can be resolved.
4. Provide a forum for interested parties to collaborate on resolutions, new ideas and initiatives, that benefit all stakeholders but foremost the environment.
5. Support stakeholders to foster kaitiakitanga by actioning their initiatives.
6. Communicate the science, initiatives and actions with the community.

**Timeline (to be developed)**

1. Nov 2016 - Inception of 'Tasman Bay Guardians'
2. Nov 2016 - Start Facebook Page and promote the idea.
3. Feb 2017 - Organize beach and dive cleanups in the Abel Tasman National Park, practically involving community in positive action.
4. May 2017 - Discuss strategy with facilitator.
5. May 2017 - Engage with key stakeholder representatives, inviting them to meet together to map out key issues.
6. First Meeting, introductions, forum, map marking, current state of affairs, what other organisations we can collaborate with.
7. Form Trust involving motivated individuals, investigate funding avenues, appoint administrator.
8. Deliver ongoing education programs (Experiencing Marine Reserves and Whitebait Connection) and support resultant actions.
9. Gain a mandate from TDC, Fisheries etc. to proceed with conversations, actions and decision making.
10. Prioritize issues and identify common ground for action.
11. Find solutions to conflict areas.
12. Educate and promote issues and gains within the community.

**Identified Threat Types to the coastal marine environment. (to be added to)**

Habitat Loss, Overexploitation, Sedimentation, Eutrophication and Hypoxia, Pollution, Invasive Species, Sedimentation, Climate Change, Ocean Acidification, Disease

**Threats and inconveniences to stakeholders (to be added to).**

Cultural insensitivities, speeding / boat wake, rubbish / pollution, conflict of commercial and recreational interests in shared use areas.

# Identified issues, threats and Solutions (to be added to)

1. ***Continued destruction of the nursery and near shore benthic habitats. Rhodoliths, Bryozoans, Mussel Beds etc. and associated re-suspension of sediments, toxins and carbon deposits.***

**Threat Type**
Habitat Loss, Overexploitation

**Cause**
Commercial bottom trawling, dredging and recreational scallop dredging.

**Solution Pathway**
Communicate with agencies to identify areas of high benthic diversity, fragile and productive nursery areas. Consult with stakeholders to agree on restrictions / exclusions from bottom damaging fishing under the fisheries act or local bylaws.

Educate public through seminars and Experiencing Marine Reserves program.

**Possible outcomes**
Recovery of benthic life, breeding areas, and repercussions up the food chain, including recreational and cultural fishing opportunities.

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Conservation, science, recreational users and fishers, commercial from overspill effect

**Stakeholders Affected**
Commercial, customary and recreational fishers

**TBG Current Position**

Talks with fisheries managers have identified current closures and indicated they are willing to negotiate exclusions with hard scientific proof of nursery and fragile areas. Tasman Bay Guardians has been invited to attend Sustainable Seas Science challenge to see where our strategies might fit in with the Challenge. Temporary closure of scallop fishery in force due to collapse of stocks indicates issues in benthic environment and gives a reprieve from damage in the short term.

2. ***Nutrients and fine sediments modifying benthic habitats, threatening suspension feeders, and exacerbating algal blooms resulting in declining ecosystem health and resilience in the bay.***

**Threat Type**
Eutrophication, hypoxia in the benthos, sedimentation.

**Cause**
Disruptive land use, forestry, roading, urban sprawl, agriculture, ageing sewage treatment systems.

**Solution Pathway**
Liaise with other groups to establish what is being done terrestrially and gain knowledge on the scope of riparian plantings, wetland restorations, planting native trees, sustainable logging practices, water treatment improvements. Effectively communicate this to other marine users. Provide education through Whitebait Connection programme, to back up these initiatives and provide long term solutions to water quality issues.

**Possible outcomes**
Less sediment loss to the sea, cleaner rivers, recovery of benthic life, more fertile land. More productive fisheries and healthier ecosystems.

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Aquaculture, landowners, conservationists, fishers, recreational users, tourism, iwi

**Stakeholders Affected**
Engineers, forestry, agriculture, iwi

**TBG Current Position**

Have established this as a primary threat to fisheries from a fisheries management perspective. Their position is that they are reluctant to make any sacrifices until this issue is solved. We intend to bring together information on the combined efforts of the community to present to fishers.

3. ***Environmental degradation and unpleasant experience associated with processing of commercial fish offal in the sea area adjacent to the Abel Tasman National Park.***

**Threat Type**
Amenity

**Cause**
Unregulated activity

**Solution Pathway**
Push relevant fishing industry and council to ban processing fish in park waters, under the Fisheries Act, Resource Management Act, or Abel Tasman Foreshore management plan.

**Possible outcomes**
Reduced vilification of the fishing industry. More pleasant user experience for national park users and operators.

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Tourism, cultural, recreational, and commercial fishers.

**Stakeholders Affected**
Commercial fishers

**TBG Current Position**

Have started conversation with Southern Inshore fisheries, sent in photo's. They are aware of the situation and have talked to the fishers concerned, who refuse to comply with requests. Next step is consult AT foreshore management plan and push for bylaw.

4. ***Pressurized fish stocks and benthic communities from recreational fishing activities resulting in trophic cascades and reduced biodiversity values.***

**Threat Type**
Overexploitation

**Cause**
High recreational fishing pressure in the summer months. Over-generous catch limits. Fishing culture (catch limit, not limit catch). Limited protected areas. Mussel farms potentially acting as Fish Attraction Devices, enabling fishers to target certain fish species more easily than if the structure wasn't present.

**Solution Pathways**
Start conversations with concerned stakeholders around identifying areas in need of protection through rahui, marine reserves, species specific protected areas, seabed protected areas and recreational fishing areas. Also consider the value of local quotas and size restrictions, seasonal closures.

Align commercial closures and exclusions with comparative recreational ones. i.e. ban recreational scallop dredging from areas where commercial is already banned.

Explore the viability of habitat restoration through the provision of hard substrates by way of artificial reefs, monitoring different treatments i.e. protected and non-protected for recovery and protection of ecosystems into the future.

Education seminars and delivering Experiencing Marine Reserves Program.

**Possible outcomes**
Recovery of predatory fish stocks and associated trophic cascades, recovery of biogenic habitats leading to increased diversity and increased ecosystem services.
Recovery of fish stocks, protected baskets of biodiversity creating overspill and fisheries benefits, increased diving opportunities, tourism, better recreational fishing opportunities.

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Tourism, dive companies, recreational users and fishers, science, conservation

**Stakeholders Affected**
Recreational and commercial fishers.

**TBG Current Position**

Currently delivering education programs and seminars with a view to increasing capacity. Starting conversations with the aim of facilitating a forum for marine spatial planning in the Bays. Liaising with the scientific community via the Sustainable Seas Science Challenge, to identify areas of high ecosystem services.

### *5. Decreasing whitebait stocks and associated decline in ecosystem services as a result.*

**Threat Type**
Overexploitation

**Cause**
Habitat loss, riparian grazing, sedimentation, commercialized fishery, introduced trout.

**Solution Pathway**
Engage with wetland restoration groups and establish what work is being done in this space. Push for whitebaiting to be restricted to certain rivers and excluded from the Abel Tasman NP. Lobby for revised whitebaiting regulations. Deliver education through seminars and Whitebait Connection education program.

**Possible outcomes**
Protection of galaxiid populations and enhanced ecosystem services. Security of recreational and customary whitebait catches into the future.

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Tourism, science, education, conservation, iwi

**Stakeholders Affected**
Bach owners, whitebaiters

**TBG Current Position**
Awaiting funding, training and formation of Whitebait Connection program for Top of the South.

6. ***Marine debris, hazard to wildlife, diminishing ecosystem services and toxic modification of marine food chain.***

**Threat Type**
Pollution

**Cause**
Population growth, lack of education, lack of connection to the marine environment, irresponsible alcohol consumption, fishing, land based littering, offshore vessels.

**Solution Pathway**
Education through seminars, EMR and WBC, social media, organize coastal and dive cleanups.

**Possible outcomes**
Less marine debris, fewer wildlife deaths and less plastic and toxins in the environment

**Stakeholders Benefited**
Everyone

**Stakeholders Affected**
Litterers

**TBG Current Position**
Have organized beach and dive cleanups and will continue to do so. Communicate through seminars and presentations. Support EMR action plans to combat marine debris.

## Seminars

We deliver seminars with the intention to educate, inform and instigate discussion with the wider public through delivery of seminars focusing on aquatic ecology and conservation and local history and current state of affairs.
We intend to deliver (5?) per year and will seek funding for their delivery so that we can offer these as free public events.

## Education

Tasman Bay Guardians will act as a local partner for the delivery of Experiencing Marine Reserves and Whitebait Connection. We have been given the go-ahead from Mountains to Sea Trust to pursue this however the structure of this is still to be finalized.

## Opportunities for collaboration and mentorship

Mountains to Sea Trust
Tasman Environment Trust
Sustainable Seas Science Challenge
Cawthron Institute
Nelson Biodiversity Forum
Project Mohua
……more to be confirmed.

## Funding and Support

Relationship with TET to be established.
DoC have offered encouragement so far, we can investigate further with them for financial support.
TDC Community Grants (Environment).
We need to look at relevant funding avenues to enable the formation of an entity and further fund the support of facilitator Peter Lawless who has agreed to support this on a p*ro bono* basis at the start to help us get this off the ground.
Have received some private philanthropic assistance and will push for more.
Corporate sponsorship.

## Founding Members

**Stew Robertson** – ***Spokesperson and main contact, 022 186 1165, stew@abeltasmanecotours.co.nz***

- Founder of TBG and co-director of Abel Tasman Eco Tours.
- Science communicator, diplomacy, strategy writer, education advice, technical support.
- Experiencing Marine Reserves coordinator and potential Whitebait Connection coordinator.
- Organising community actions, cleanups etc.…
- Liaising with stakeholders and organisations at a planning level.

**Helen Forsey** –

- Financial administration (cash flow projections, management, wages, reporting back to Trust)
- Potential for training to be able to deliver the Whitebait Connection Programme.
- Working with TDC, Cawthron, land owners etc to source areas for restoration. Make plans regarding the correct plants to use, how these should be planted (ie distance from bank), any

habitat adulterations (meandering stream). Community science- gathering data and reporting back to community as well as TDC, Cawthron etc.

- Ensure projects are not left to fail, that areas are recognized as being managed by Tasman Bay Guardians.

**Jude Heath** –

- Coordinator for Experiencing Marine Reserves, Whitebait Connection and Papa Taiao
- Liasing with Mountains to Sea Trust and Papa Taiao
- Collaborate with schools and agencies.
- Connections with Iwi and implementing cultural language within the programs
- Support Tasman Bay Guardians.
- To develop a pathway with Tamariki and their prospects within the community.
- Community engagement- education about Marine Reserves.

**Fay McKenzie** –

- Conservation and terrestrial specialist.
- Whitebait Connection.

**Megan Wilson** –

- Original Nelson EMR co-ordinator and now ambassador.
- Potential trustee for TBG

**Scott Keen –**

- EMR and WBC co-ordinator
- Potential TBG trustee

**Eric Lander** –

- EMR, WBC and Papa Taiao co-ordinator (Golden Bay)

**Peter Lawless** -

- Facilitator and technical advisor.