

19 August 2019

Consultation: Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan  
Department of Conservation  
P O Box 10420  
Wellington 6143  
Via email: [dolphintmp@doc.govt.nz](mailto:dolphintmp@doc.govt.nz)

Dear Sir/Madam:

**RE: Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan Review**

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is the peak industry body representing the tourism industry with around 1600 members. For more on our organisation, please refer to Appendix 1.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan Review.

As we know, Hector's and Māui dolphins are unique marine mammals found only in New Zealand waters. These species live close to the coast, making them particularly vulnerable to human activities. Their numbers have been dwindling. There are estimated to be only between 57 and 75 Māui dolphins over the age of one year left in existence. They are classified as Nationally Critical under the New Zealand Threat Classification System. There are around 15,000 Hector's dolphins and they are classified as Nationally Vulnerable.

We have been working with our members around how to best support the Hector's and Māui Dolphin populations in New Zealand. These members provide tourism services that allow people to view both marine species, but predominantly Hector's dolphins. Therefore, while our comments tend to be specific to Hector's dolphins, we believe the wider points around caring for the environment also apply to Māui populations.

We would like to reiterate the value of Hector's dolphins to tourism, and therefore to the wider economy.

As noted in Market Economics' report of December 2018 on Hector's Dolphin Eco-Tourism Economic Impact Assessment:

"In today's terms, Hector's eco-tourism and economic impact [encompassing tour operators and tourist spend] is estimated as being the equivalent of \$19.5 million in value added which sustains the equivalent of 416 jobs in the Canterbury economy. The national value of Hector's eco-tourism is estimated as being the equivalent of \$24.5 million in value added which sustains the equivalent of 476 jobs in the national economy."

We also note that in the Department of Conservation's review of the economic findings, these findings were found to be sound but didn't account for the value of Hector's dolphins in the cases where:

- Hector's dolphins were not marketed as the main attraction, but were part of other whale watching/eco-tourism operations in other parts of New Zealand (e.g. the Marlborough Sounds);
- Hector's dolphins generated tourism in other parts of New Zealand where there are no tour operators (e.g. the resident population of Hector's dolphin attracting tourists to Curio and Porpoise Bays in the Catlins).

Therefore, Market Economics' estimated economic impact of \$24.5 million in value added is conservative.

Tourism takes the lead in promoting New Zealand to the world. The brand positioning built by a vibrant tourism industry has become an important source of national confidence and identity and a front window for "Brand New Zealand". Indeed, the unique and pure offering that is synonymous with New Zealand tourism has been widely adopted and used to promote New Zealand exports in a range of other industries as well.

We place a huge emphasis on the importance of our environment. Our unique flora and fauna plays a large role in the decision making of visitors coming to New Zealand. How the natural environment is managed is inherently tied to the economic success and well-being of the New Zealand tourism industry. Data from the International Visitor Survey conducted for the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) shows that the top factor for influencing visitors to choose New Zealand is our natural landscapes and scenery, while New Zealand's environmentally friendly image is also an important influence.

Recognising the importance of the environment to tourism, TIA initiatives undertaken in recent years have included *Tourism 2025 & Beyond – A Sustainable Growth Framework Kaupapa Whakapakari Tāpoi (T2025)* and the *New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment He Kupu Taurangi Kia Toitū Ai Te Tāpoitanga (TSC)*. These initiatives have established clear frameworks that tourism businesses can use to become more sustainable, and thereby playing their part in making a sustainable tourism industry. Implementation of the TSC programme is proceeding strongly, with nearly 1200 businesses currently participating.

In light of the importance of caring for the environment, and the value it adds to New Zealand, TIA disagrees with the Department's acceptance of allowing 79 Hector's deaths annually as a result of fisheries-related activities. We fail to see how allowing 1.5 deaths of one of our endangered species per week is a tenable position, or reinforces general principles of kaitiakitanga.

Finally, we endorse the Department's proposal to extend the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary north to the southern boundary of the Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha / Kaikōura Whale Sanctuary, south to Timaru, and offshore to 20 nautical miles throughout, as per Figure 11 in the consultation document. We do, however, wish the Department to give consideration to Black Cat Cruises' submission, and their comments around the creation of a 'death zone' near Akaroa. As per their comments we would endorse further extensions to Option 3 to include all areas in the marine mammal sanctuary.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Roberts', is written in a cursive style.

**Chris Roberts**

Chief Executive, Tourism Industry Aotearoa

## **APPENDIX 1: About TIA**

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) is the peak industry body representing the tourism industry with around 1600 members. The primary role of TIA is to be the voice of the tourism industry, including advocacy, policy, communication, events, membership and business capability. Our purpose is to shape tourism for the ongoing benefit of Aotearoa and our people, and our vision is “Leading the world’s most sustainable tourism industry” or “Kokiritia nga mahi Tapoitanga ki te Ao”.

Tourism is New Zealand’s largest export sector, earning \$16.2 billion in foreign expenditure, contributing 20.6% of New Zealand’s total export of goods and services (YE March 2018). Tourism in New Zealand is a \$107 million per day industry, and despite being New Zealand’s number one export earner, the visitor economy is in fact dominated by domestic tourism (59% total expenditure). New Zealanders recreating away from their home areas, whether under their own steam or using the support of commercial operators, are a critical part of the tourism industry.