

Marsden Port Expansion: Protecting our Environment and Community

Statement of intent

I intend to show the perspective of an indigenous 24-year-old marine biologist/environmental scientist in disagreement/opposition of the applicant, Northport, on the Marsden Point port expansion at Te Poupouwhenua.

Tēnā koutou katoa, harae mai o tūpuna whare,

Ko Manaia te maunga, ko Te Renga Parāoa te moana, ko Pukekauri te awa, Ko Ngāpuhi te iwi, ko Patuharakeke te hapū, ko Rangiora te marae, Nō Takahiwai ōku tūpuna, ko Waipū Primary rāua ko Bream Bay College te kura, E noho ana au ki One Tree Point, No Takahiwai ahau, ko Kereopa toku whānau, ko Hollie toku ingoa.

Welcome to everyone,

- My name is Hollie Kereopa and this is the place that I call home. I attended the local schools, Waipū Primary school and Bream Bay College, I have grown up in and around Te Renga Parāoa, it inspired me to pursue a science degree majoring in Marine Biology. I would like to be clear about my perspective and where my values lie as an indigenous 24-year-old who has moved back to her home. I care, first and foremost, about about the Patuharakeke rohe moana, protecting it, its rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems, and the mana it provides for the whānau and community that occupy and utilise the rohe moana.
- We have a unique ecology and coastal landscapes in our rohe moana which deserve to be cared for with respect. How I see environmental respect being upheld is through the monitoring, preservation and restoration efforts that our kaitiaki in the Patuharakeke Taiao unit undertake. The Māori perspective and holistic approach to environmental management that the Patuharakeke Taiao kaitiaki implement is world-leading, it reconnects our people to te ao mārama – our natural world, and it enhances the mauri and mana of our hapū.
- The proposed port expansion *feels/is* disrespectful to our exercise of kaitiakitanga, the people who are on the ground doing the work, exhausting their physical and mental capacities to ensure the longevity of our biodiversity. Our kaitiaki value a healthy natural world over economical gain, and I want to highlight the difference in values here today that i can see as a rangatahi.
- One major concern for me with the proposed port expansion is the additional loss of habitat for our taonga species, specifically shellfish, manu (birds) and Aihe / dolphin and other marine mammals. We are lucky enough to have a pod of residential bottlenose dolphin, alongside the abundance of common dolphin that visit and reside in Te Renga Parāoa. In August 2023, we had a stranding of 6 common dolphin, directly in front of the refinery at Poupouwhenua, resulting in all 6 of them passing away. My concern with the expansion at this site of significance is that there will be an increase in strandings of marine mammals that we, as kaitiaki, are first responders to. Whangārei harbour is already one of the four major hotspots for marine mammal strandings, alongside Hawkes Bay, Farewell Spit, and the Chatham Islands. It makes me wonder what amount of strandings in the same location would it take for the applicant to take this issue seriously.

- Another concern of mine is in relation to the in water traffic and the effects this will have on the larger coastal marine mammals. Over the last year, the Patuharakeke Taiao Unit have lead a joint research project with NIWA and Far Out Ocean Research which aims to enable/empower kaitiaki to implement marine mammal monitoring methods and gain understanding of how our local marine mammal species utilise this area. Throughout the duration of this project, we have had many encounters with our diverse range of taonga species, including Brydes whales, kororā / little blue penguin, kekeno / fur seals, ūpokohue / false killer whales, blue whale etc. These significant species should be thriving in our coastal waters and encouraged to return.
- When going diving in the channel recently to assess the state of the pipi beds, I was disheartened by the lack of living organisms and ecosystems. I expected to see some hope, but what I saw was a bank of empty shells weaved together holding up the pipi beds, it made me upset that it has got to this point. This made me worry how much pressure a system can take before its collapse, before the system is overloaded and no more life is present in the system at all. To me, this feels like a very real scenario that threatens our cultural values, our kaitiakitanga, on a daily basis. Although most life has been eradicated from this location, we have an opportunity to restore this area and restore the mana and mauri of our harbour, but it needs to start now without additional pressure being added to the system.
- The vision I see for the Patuharakeke Rohe Moana is to continue to restore our natural landscapes, freshwater spaces and marine spaces, something I would like to continue to work towards until we once again see the abundance of marine life. We used to be able to see the biodiversity, but now I only hear about it in kōrero and stories from our whānau / elders. Rehabilitating and restoring the harbour should be at the forefront of everyones mind already, not only to restore our mana as a community, but to remedy the environmental impacts from the port, the refinery, all of the farms that border our freshwater bodies, all of the forestry that surround our catchments, and all of the commercial and recreational fishing that takes place in our rohe.
- The idea proposed by the applicant, Northport, is to fund restoration efforts in the Whangārei harbour as a reaction to the potential expansion, is inconsistent with my vision of the Patuharakeke Rohe Moana. To cause further damage and then react to said damage is a backwards way to examine environmental impacts. We should be focusing on restorative measures, first and foremost, regardless of this expansion. The restoration should already be taking place in response to the industrialisation of our vulnerable coastal areas. What I mean by marine restoration is working closely alongside partners such as NIWA to understand our taonga species lifecycles, understand what is needed for them to thrive and survive, understand their nutrient and temperature tolerances to reinstate a natural environment that they are accustomed to.
- For me, and for many other kaitiaki around the motu, I know that the feeling of unease and the unrest is very real, when industry can come into your rohe and take the mauri of your area, and consistently continue to push the boundary by taking land and resources from us. In return, we are obliged to assess the cultural and environmental impacts that this has, which we already know to be countless. This is not the way forward for environmental management, this is not a Māori world view on managing our issues that we face today, and this is not the best practice that we should be implementing as a country.
- In conclusion, my unwavering commitment to the well-being of the Patuharakeke Rohe Moana, its unique ecosystems, and the values of kaitiakitanga drives my opposition to the

proposed port expansion. The significance of this issue goes beyond just environmental concerns; it's about preserving the cultural and ecological heritage of our region. We must prioritize restorative measures, not reactions, and work collectively to ensure the preservation of our taonga species. Let us move forward in a manner consistent with our Maori worldview, one that respects and safeguards the mauri of our lands and resources for future generations to come. For my generation, for my children's generation, and for the generations to come after them.

























































INVASIVE

FIRE EXIT



