

Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan

1. Goals, engagement and information base

The Hauraki Gulf is one of New Zealand's most valued and intensively used spaces. Its national significance was formalised in 2000 with the creation of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 recognises the life-supporting capacity of the Gulf in providing for the historic, traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship of indigenous communities with customary authority over the area and the social, economic, recreational and cultural well-being of people and communities of the Hauraki Gulf. The Act further states that the Gulf should be managed for several specific objectives including the protection and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the life-supporting capacity of the environment and the natural, historic and physical resource of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments. This includes resources with which indigenous people have an historic, traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship and those resources which contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the communities of the Hauraki Gulf and New Zealand.

The long-term and widespread decline in the health of the Gulf was highlighted in the latest *Tikapa Moana – Hauraki Gulf State of the Environment Report* published in 2011. In order to integrate management across the Gulf and develop options for the Gulf's future local indigenous communities and statutory agencies (Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, the Hauraki Gulf Forum, the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for Primary Industries) became partners and established the Hauraki Gulf Marine spatial Plan (HGMSP) process. The plan aims to secure the Hauraki Gulf as a healthy, productive and sustainable resource for all current and future users while resolving conflicting demands for resources and space and reversing environmental decline. The marine spatial planning process will incorporate international principles of ecosystem-based management, and result in integrated management of all sectors using or impacting the marine environment of the Hauraki Gulf. The process will follow an inclusive and collaborative bottom-up approach. Public participation will be sought at different stages of plan development.

The HGMSP process is proposed to cover 'all of Gulf' issues including matters relating to marine protection, fisheries management and resource management (including the catchments). No over-riding legislative framework for the plan is in place however it is expected that the resulting HGMSP will be implemented through existing legislative tools. Possible ways of implementation include land use plans in the catchments that drain in the Gulf to control sedimentation and pollution as well as coastal plans and any relevant policies, rules and regulations under the Resource Management Act. Further, it is expected that the plan will be used to develop sustainability measures under the Fisheries Act, such as aquaculture plans, as well as identify areas of recreational and social value. About 0.3% of the Hauraki Gulf is currently protected under the Marine Reserves Act and key habitats within the Gulf need protection in order to develop a representative network of marine protected areas in fulfilment of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. The plan will also sit side by side with customary management plans.



The geographic extent of the HGMSP is defined by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park as established in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000. The park covers the whole of the eastern territorial sea of the Auckland and Waikato regions and amounts to 1.2 million hectares.

Information used in the development of the HGMSP includes best available scientific information and indigenous customary knowledge (mātauranga Māori) of the natural and physical resources of the gulf. Further information includes uses and activities (e.g. tourism, commercial and recreational fisheries, shipping, including land use) and ecosystem services provided by habitats.

2. Plan development

The HGMSP was formally launched in September 2013 with the establishment of a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) tasked with developing and drafting. The SWG comprises 14 people and an Independent Chairman and is made up of leaders with multiple connections to places, sectors, organisations and shared-interest groups. All SWG members have a strong personal connection to the gulf in common. The composition of the group was decided by more than 130 people from a range of groups, from industry bodies to conservationists. The SWG will establish specific outcome objectives of the HGMSP and develop the plan collaboratively seeking advice when necessary and finding tangible solutions to issues. The development of the HGMSP is scheduled to be finished by September 2015.

A project steering group (PSG) provides leadership during the HGMSP process and will ultimately recommend to relevant local, regional and national agencies how the plan can be implemented through statutory processes. The PSG has representatives of indigenous people and all statutory agencies involved in the process.

The marine spatial planning tool SeaSketch (www.seasketch.org) will be used during various stages of the plan development. The SWG will use SeaSketch in a collaborative manner to design management plans. Further, the tool will also be used to allow the public to participate in the process at various stages.

3. Plan Adoption

Process ongoing. It is envisioned that the Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan will guide and inform future statutory processes relevant to the management of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

4. Implementation

Process ongoing. The Project Steering Group will ultimately recommend the plan to relevant councils and agencies for implementation through their respective legislative tools.

5. Assessment of Outcomes and adaptive management

Unknown at this stage as project ongoing.