

# Press release

## MARLBOROUGH MARINE FUTURES WORKSHOP 8 MARCH 2015

The Marlborough Marine Futures project kicked off with a workshop attended in Picton by 70 people on Sunday, and has deferred its second workshop until after Easter after hearing concerns from some of the participants.

Eric Jorgensen, Chair of the Marlborough Integrated Management Trust said “It was great to have such a good turn out and such a wide range of interests represented on Sunday. My sense is that there is a real appetite to improve the way we care for our marine environment and resolve conflicts of use and protection.

Everyone found it easy to agree that the broad vision could align around “*A rich and healthy marine environment that meets the economic, recreational, social and cultural requirements of our community*’. At the same time there was vigorous feedback on the best way to go about developing local leadership and how to get the best possible Stakeholder Working Group. Some people want to push ahead and feel frustrated that progress over the last decade has been so limited. Others want to take more time and create wider connections with their interest groups before we go much further.

There is also concern about the size of the proposed Stakeholder Working Group. Some see that a smaller group of around a dozen might be more cohesive and make faster progress. Others want a bigger group of 20, 30 or even 50 people to represent the range of interests in our diverse marine environment.

As Trustees responsible for the process we have said we will take all the feedback on board, consider it carefully and decide on next steps. A specific request from some people was for more time to activate their networks so, to enable them to do this, we have decided to defer the workshop we had planned for 22 March in Picton to after Easter.

In the interim we will provide people with more information so they can work out how to best participate. We are really keen to make progress. Every day opportunities are lost to better care for our marine environment and sustain its ecological integrity.

Scientists that presented at the workshop showed us images of damage that occurring to reef forming communities that they call “ecosystem engineers”. This is ongoing and some of these important structures may not recover. However, we want to bring everyone in the community along with us. Our commitment is to doing something that works and engages as widely as possible.

We will meet later this week and then let everyone know what is being offered. It’s hard to change logistics that have already been put in place so mid to late April or even early May will be considered for the workshop to form the Stakeholder Working Group.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed so far and for their faith in us to develop something that will work for all sectors.”

For further information ring Peter Lawless, Coordinator, on 021894363.