

LABOUR PARTY'S RESPONSE TO THE 10 'ASKS' FOR THE OCEAN 2023

1. Commit to protecting at least 30% of New Zealand's ocean territory by 2030 through a representative network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – and to delivering the legislative reform and implementation funding needed to achieve this.

- **The science is clear. Expanding and effectively managing networks of protected areas is critical to healthy oceans and reversing global biodiversity loss.**
- **The Labour Government has already demonstrated its commitment to 30-by-30 by signing New Zealand up to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and advancing an ambitious marine protection programme.**
- **This year, we've got legislation nearly tripling the amount of marine protection in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park and creating 19 new marine protection areas through its first reading in Parliament; created nine new mātaimai (including one that effectively shuts Lyttleton Harbour to commercial fishing) and significantly advanced the south-eastern South Island marine protected areas project.**
- **We also put a substantial proposal for the Kermadec Marine Sanctuary on the table that would extend the existing marine reserve to 620,000 square kilometres and go a long way toward meeting the 30-by-30 target. Ultimately, it wasn't accepted by iwi, but we are committed to continuing to work on this project and finding a way forward.**

2. Ensure that Aotearoa's marine management regime upholds the rights of tangata whenua and recognises indigenous approaches to ocean conservation.

- **Labour is committed to upholding the rights of tangata whenua, including meeting our obligations under the Māori Fisheries Settlement, and recognising indigenous approaches to ocean conservation.**
- **Labour worked closely with tangata whenua in developing the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan – the first fisheries plan in the country to take an ecosystems-based approach to fisheries management.**
- **This year we also created nine new mātaimai reserves, recognising traditional Māori fishing grounds that are important for customary food gathering, bringing the total number of mātaimai to 66.**

3. Commit to restoring our declining marine biodiversity by implementing an effective ecosystem-based management system, which also provides for the effective control of invasive species like caulerpa.

- **We absolutely agree that healthy oceans are essential for the future of life on Earth. From regulating the weather, producing oxygen and storing vast amounts of carbon dioxide, to feeding billions of people, we simply can't exist without them.**
- **Our decision in 2020 to bring the health of the oceans and the management of fisheries together in one portfolio, serviced by an Oceans Secretariat, shows how serious we are about getting it right.**
- **Historically, we've treated each fishery as separate, but of course they're not. The Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan, which the Labour Government unveiled in August this year, is the country's first ecosystems-based fisheries plan. It's a sensible approach, and Labour is committed to looking at it in other areas.**
- **Internationally, we've supported the new global treaty on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, which will help to protect biodiversity within the high seas.**
- **Invasive species like Caulerpa are a serious threat, and something we will see more of as the climate changes. We've already put \$3 million into combatting Caulerpa and are committed to supporting the outstanding work being done by communities in the Hauraki Gulf and Northland.**

4. Ensure the protection of ecologically significant or particularly vulnerable marine habitats, including through the creation of a Kermadec / Rangitāhua Ocean Sanctuary and new MPAs in the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana.

- **Labour will continue our work to protect ecologically significant or particularly vulnerable marine habitats.**
- **As above, Labour introduced the Hauraki Gulf/Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill in August 2023, and it has passed its first reading. The Bill nearly triples marine protection in the 1.2 million hectare Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, with 19 new marine protection areas to help safeguard and restore its marine ecosystems for future generations.**
- **We've also introduced the first ecosystems-based, area-specific fisheries plan in the Gulf, and it includes banning destructive bottom-fishing methods in the vast bulk of the gulf.**
- **Labour will continue work to establish a Rangitāhua / Kermadec ocean sanctuary, although Te Ohu Kaimoana in June voted against a proposal we had worked closely with them on. The proposal included re-naming the sanctuary to recognise the area's significance to Māori, and Crown funding for a new 20-year scientific research plan to inform decisions about the**

future management of the sanctuary. This would have been overseen by a new Crown/iwi body, Te Kahui. Labour is committed to returning to the table with iwi on establishing the ocean sanctuary.

5. Reform the Quota Management System to require our fisheries stocks to be managed for abundance and resilience, and to safeguard them for future generations.

- **Labour believes in the importance of sustainably managing our country's fisheries stocks and will continue to monitor and review their sustainability. This is particularly important as the impacts of climate damage affect our oceans and marine life.**
- **Labour will build on the recently released Fisheries Industry Transformation Plan, which supports our fishing industry to become world leaders in sustainable fishing, working with nature and communities to protect our oceans while increasing the value we gain from fishing and making future generations can do the same.**
- **An important part of this is finding ways of adding value to what we catch and harvest, instead of just trying to catch more. Labour is backing this, through the industry transformation plan that's looking at how to make more medical, cosmetic and nutraceutical projects. And we're also supporting new industries with funding, such as the Nelson project that's growing microalgae as a protein source.**

6. Ban bottom-impact fishing methods and seabed mining on vulnerable and highly biodiverse marine ecosystems, including seamounts and similar features.

- **Labour has already demonstrated its commitment to getting rid of bottom-fishing methods across the vast bulk the 1.2-million-hectare Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, with proposals to ban it from between 74 per cent and 89 per cent out for public consultation now.**
- **We are also looking at what happens across the rest of New Zealand's waters. This term the Labour Government convened a multi-stakeholder forum to develop recommendations on managing the impacts of bottom trawling on the benthic environment in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Currently, bottom trawling is banned in 31 per cent of our EEZ (out to the 200-mile limit) and 21 per cent of our territorial waters (to the 12-mile limit). We are committed to progressing this work.**

7. Improve protection for our endangered, threatened, and protected marine species – including by mandating the use of best practice mitigation technology to reduce fisheries bycatch to a target of zero by 2030.

- **Labour is serious about protecting our special native species, including dolphins and birds.**
- **We've got threat management plans in place for Maui and Hector's dolphins, and last year we brought in new measures to reduce the number of Hector's dolphin accidentally killed as a result of commercial fishing, giving the Minister of Oceans and Fisheries the power to take immediate action if the number of deaths exceeds limits set for certain areas. The South Island Hector's Dolphin Bycatch Reduction Plan has already seen commercial fishing voluntarily stopped this year around the Otago Peninsula.**
- **We've changed the Fisheries Act to make it mandatory for commercial boats to land everything they catch, so there will be no more dumping at sea. We've just finished public consultation on how to protect seabirds from being caught by longlines and we're looking at new technologies like hookpods, which keep the hooks covered until they're too deep for seabirds to be diving.**

8. Implement fully transparent and traceable fisheries management through the use of monitoring systems (e.g. cameras or observers) across all commercial fishing fleets, and by making captured data publicly accessible.

- **In a world first, we're regulating and installing AI on-board cameras on the inshore fishing fleet, so fisheries officers can monitor what's going on at sea in real time.**
- **Up to 300 inshore commercial fishing vessels will be fitted with on-board cameras by 2025 as part of the current Labour Government's commitment to protect the natural marine environment for future generations. The first group of 23 boats has already gone live and we'll have around 70 more boats operating cameras by the end of the year. We continue to be committed to this roll-out.**
- **On-board cameras provide independent, accurate information about commercial fishing activity. This provides greater certainty and more evidence on which to base decisions about policy and regulation, scientific research, and fisheries management.**
- **Cameras work together with the digital tracking and reporting already in place to provide an important layer of transparency.**
- **The roll-out is being staged to prioritise those vessels that pose the greatest risk to protected species such as Hector's and Māui dolphins, black petrels and Antipodean albatross. When complete, cameras will record**

activity on vessels responsible for about 85 per cent of the inshore catch by volume.

9. Address the land-based impacts threatening our coastal and marine ecosystems, including sedimentation, forestry slash, plastic pollution, and nutrient runoff.

- **For too long, we have failed to recognise that what we do on the land affects the sea.**
- **The Natural and Built Environment Act, and the Spatial Planning Act, give us the tools to up our game, manage land properly and cut the amount of sedimentation that is washing into the sea. They will also enable green infrastructure and protect urban trees and maintain the urban tree canopy.**
- **As well as resource management reform, the changes we've made to keep livestock out of waterways, to limit the amount of nitrogen other synthetic fertilisers that can be applied on farms, and to control stock on steep slopes are already showing results.**
- **Nitrogen fertiliser use is dropping, winter grazing practices have improved, and farm-related greenhouse gas emissions are coming down.**
- **We're also looking at how water entities can include provisions that make it clear how stormwater networks should be managed on private land and are backing international negotiations for a global treaty on plastics.**

10. Prioritise the uptake of conservation initiatives and nature-based solutions to improve our ocean's resilience to climate change and to prevent and reverse biodiversity loss.

- **We are the first government to really take climate change seriously, passing the Zero Carbon Act that commits us to being carbon-neutral by 2050, setting the country's first carbon budget, implementing a whole lot of measures that are bringing New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions down, and putting in place the first climate change National Adaptation Plan.**
- **We've signed up to a new international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond our national jurisdiction, and put in place a new biodiversity strategy here at home that puts climate change at the centre of our work.**
- **In 2020, the Labour Government launched the Jobs for Nature programme which manages funding across multiple government agencies to benefit the environment, people and the regions.**
- **The funding is being used to create nature-based employment, including:**
 - **vegetation planting for freshwater and biodiversity restoration**
 - **fencing waterways both on public and private land**
 - **pest and plant control (including wilding pines and wallabies)**

- **fish passage remediation**
 - **skills training to support career development in environmental management.**
- **All of these projects are helping to improve our ocean's resilience to climate change as well as preventing and reversing biodiversity loss.**
- **While in government, we have continued to fund the likes of Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge - which continues to develop high quality insights and research, such as the role of seaweed in supporting thriving ecosystems and biodiversity.**