

Final decision on interim Aquaculture Management Areas



MFish's final decision on interim Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs) in Tasman and Golden Bays leaves the way clear for a negotiated agreement between fishers and marine farmers.

In December 2008 MFish made a final decision on the application for 2,109 hectares of interim AMAs in Tasman and Golden Bays.

"This was an important decision that required careful and thorough analysis. The potential impacts on the environment and the area are highly valued by both commercial fishers and marine farmers," says MFish Aquaculture Manager, Dan Lees.

Eight hundred and fifty hectares was approved as new aquaculture space, with development to start immediately. Because of the undue adverse effect on commercial scallop fishers, 1,151 hectares of potential space was reserved. This meant a voluntary agreement between scallop fishers and marine farmers could be reached that would allow for aquaculture development in the future.

One hundred and eight hectares was declined because of the potential impacts on the sustainability of fisheries in the area and on shorebirds living in the internationally important Farewell Spit wetlands.

The ability for affected quota holders and aquaculture interests



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to reach voluntary agreements was introduced in 2004. The Tasman interim AMAs will allow the voluntary agreement provisions to be used for the first time. Scallop quota owners and marine farmers can now try to reach an agreement on the 1,151 hectares of the reserved interim AMA.

"The reserved decision will leave the way clear for the marine farmers who want to develop the Tasman Bay site to negotiate directly with those scallop fishers who would be impacted, and potentially arrive at an agreement that is acceptable to both groups. This could allow some or all of the reserved space to be developed," Dan says.