



Office of Hon Kate Wilkinson

Minister of Conservation
Minister of Labour
Minister for Food Safety

Associate Minister of Immigration

- 8 JUN 2011

Pupils
Paihia School
School Road
PAIHIA 0200

Dear Reece, Regan, Alex, Hine, Jessica, Jack M., Dylan, Bobbi, Megan, Sekola, Sophia, Kaine and Jack H.

I was delighted to receive your letters. You have all taken such care and time to let me know how passionate you are about the sea, the creatures and plants that live in it and how very important it is for us to protect this wonderful gift of nature.

I was very impressed with your knowledge of our marine environment and how, as the future generation, you are all so well aware of the need to nurture and protect our natural environment and how, if we do not, what a huge loss this will be.

Your noting of the importance of tourism to our country and the way the natural environment fits into this was pleasing to read. We need to continue to protect our natural environment so that New Zealand's attraction for tourists who come here specifically to enjoy the abundance of natural features we have is maintained.

I too am a great supporter of ensuring the long-term protection of our marine environment. As Minister of Conservation, I have been very lucky to have visited most of our key marine sites, including your beautiful Bay of Islands, and have been able to discuss the importance of protecting this with my government colleagues.

I agree that marine reserves are an important status to give to our unique marine environment and you can be assured that I and the Department of Conservation do what we can to achieve as many marine reserves in New Zealand as is possible and practical. It is, however, very important that we have the full support of all the local communities to make this possible. Sadly, the lack of broad support has been a problem with a number of marine reserve proposals in the past. Your support is a very important step in this process.

I understand your concerns about how to stop people polluting the marine environment and to make everyone understand and accept responsibility for the decline in our marine biodiversity. It is the young people, such as you, who are leading by example and who will have the most impact on how things should be done.

I have noted your kind invitation for me to visit your school and have asked my staff to consider this when next I visit in your area.

I want to thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention and to assure you that I and the department will continue to work on ways to stop the decline in fish life in our oceans and to set in place protection mechanisms for the future. You can also be assured that the Bay of Islands will be high on my list, in this regard.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kate Wilkinson'.

Hon Kate Wilkinson
Minister of Conservation