

Surfers like the Pipi are inhabitants of the inter tidal-zone, where the fresh and salt waters mix. This zone is dynamic environmentally, economically and politically.

What happens in the oceans outside this habitat affects eg. sediment transportation, sand mining aquaculture and algae blooms, which in turn is related to what affects the inter-tidal zone from what has happened inland (sometimes from miles away), including consented and non-consented municipal waste-water plants, urban storm water, large and small industrial discharge both rural and city, dairy-farm discharge, dairy factory discharge, intensive farming run-off, both over land or sub-terrain. Creeks, streams, rivers diverted, dammed or excessively drawn on for farm irrigation and urban water supply.

There is no doubt our waterways are being used to transport waste to the sea, unfortunately corporate and councillors think "that the ocean has vast purifying capabilities" Dave Stewart Montgomery-Watson, member IPENZ.

This shows the ignorance and arrogance of society to our habitat as everything passes through the inter-tidal zone to the open sea. This puts us in a precarious position and groups/ sub-cultures like ours have to be vigilant and active in many ways in order to support the social, environmental and economic needs of 250,000 plus surfers (figures SPARC) keeping this zone, our habitat, in its true natural dynamic equilibrium.

According to an accord signed between Waikato Regional Council (WRC) water scientist Bill Vant and Water scientist Jason Rendel, representing Whangamata Boardriders, all contaminants are contributing to the inter-tidal zone by way of freshwater. The Freshwater wedge (with its contaminants such as viruses, bacteria, nitrates and phosphorous, these last two nutrients create the phenomena of algal blooms, red-tides and mats of phytoplankton which can be harmful to life. Cyna-bacteria can cause death in animals, skin and respiratory ailments in humans) The Freshwater wedge travels across the saltwater as it has a lower density. In a study of Whangamata estuary of the 100% of the water that leaves the estuary 80% returns so if there is any contamination it returns and compounds, if pollutants are still entering on the freshwater conveyer belt.

So, our health and incomes are subsidizing the profits of farmers, coastal developers, utility-corporations and the arms of Governments they are contracted to. This has to stop. I thought Government policy was user pays, not subsidises. The practices that have (sometimes been deviously) employed must stop.

This area that inter-faces between land and sea is one of our greatest assets to our Tourist Industry and this Board must recognize the contribution these waters make to the national economy now and in the future (not just Hydro-power, irrigation and urban discharge). One only has to look at the rivers of the Queenstown area to see the alternatives provided to make income from freshwater and its flow to the sea.

Surfing is a rapidly growing sport/ pastime along with Kayaking (noted in the WRC navigational by-laws as the greatest sector increase in boating). This is because of improved technologies such as wetsuits, cheaper and greater variety of boats, waka ama and boards. This means longer time in the water per day and days per year. Now there is no such thing as a surfing season.

Another fine example of new technologies unheard of in the recent past is snowboarding (frozen-water) which has made a huge impact on the Queenstown economy this year. This will be the effect surfing, windsurfing, kite surfing, wakeboarding, kayaking and snorkelling will have on the economics of the inter-tidal zone in the near future. Instead of spending millions on a cycle-way, we should be investing in up-grading our inter-tidal zone with much more stringent standards and monitoring regimes.

There has been dissent over the last decade because of the way district and regional councils have dealt with our habitat due to loyalty to the traditional money streams.

Rivers like the Hurunui, Wairoa and Motu produce good surf when floods blow open the shingle banks and push solid shingle sediment into the ocean for the waves to peel along. If these rivers are dammed or slowed we will lose valuable surf breaks. In the case of first class surf breaks such as Raglan, Whangamata, Piha, Wainui and Waikanae Beaches in Gisborne, the freshwater that passes over or by must be hygienic otherwise its more surf breaks down the drain.

What do we propose:

Standards not guidelines.

Higher Standards

Review of all intensive farming practices – moderate if we can't mitigate, to the highest standard.

More and better riparian planting along all open waterways.

Porous paving swales instead curbing enviro-pods in drainage systems.

More monitoring – recognise the inter-tidal zone & test it's two waters and review and grade all waste water plants, upgrading them to high standards

Water-testing -the acceptance of the Australian water standards are a cop-out by our authorities, safe contact should be a minimum standard eg. that which is safe for edible shellfish, not more than 14 faecal coliforms 35 entrococci with no higher nitrate and phosphate readings than what is normally in the natural environment.

There must be a national measure of hydro carbons eg in Whangamata where the Te-Wairoa river enters the Moana anu anu estuary, Bio Researchers Ltd gave a hypothetical grading-measure of one, but by the time you travel a kilometre to the greater harbour area and pass by 8 urban stormwater pipes, the grading is 27.

Whatever the stringent numbers are in relation to what pollutant, these must be National Standards, not guidelines that are open to abuse or ignored

In my experience councils should have been prosecuting themselves for the shit they have let happen, especially over the last decade.

What to test? The national guidelines say one must test at a certain depth, approx 8-12 inches below the water surface. This might be ok in Lake Taupo or off the shores of Kapiti Island, but at or in a estuary- harbour situation it should be the testing of both water bodies - the tidal saltwater (8 inches plus below surface ) and the freshwater wedge that is on the surface and holding all the contaminants that make for a miserable life. This is imperative if we are to advance the "100% Pure NZ" message. Councils and contractors have exploited this anomaly and called clean readings when it was far from the truth. The putting up of signs such as "Shellfish are unsafe to eat" or "this area is unsafe to swim because of pollution" is not mitigation; it's an insult to human intelligence.

We have devised laws, processes and systems for the growth and development of our country's land and waters, (fresh and salted) supposedly for the benefit of all and we are about to streamline this machine but I have my doubts what the end result is likely to be. This was highlighted by Bruce Jesson in his book "Only Their Purpose is Mad" as Greider wrote

"Imagine a wondrous new machine strong and supple, a machine that reaps as it destroys its huge and mobile, something like the machines of modern agriculture but more complicated and powerful. Think of this awesome machine running over open terrain and ignoring familiar boundaries. It ploughs across fields and fence-rows with a fierce momentum that is exhilarating to behold and also frightening. As it goes the machine throws off enormous mows of wealth and bounty while it leaves behind great furrows of wreckage. Now imagine that there are skilful hands on board, but no one is at the wheel. In fact this machine has neither wheel nor any internal governor to control the speed and the direction. It is sustained by its own forward motion guided by its own appetites and it is accelerating."

It is our job as one of the vested interest groups and this Board to harness this machine and bring some rational direction, for if not, we will eventually lose big time and that's not just with the E.U. or loads of foreign tourists but our own sustainability. This is why I was perplexed after a private audience with Environment Court Commissioner Mr McIntyre (Judge Bollards right-hand man) when I told him that my generation and our children's generation were now learning Environmental law and Planning to cope with what was going down, he smiled and with a light laugh said, "ah tell them to learn folk-law", was he mocking our efforts?.

It is true, we the people must show guardianship Kaitiaki and consider " for what purpose it is being used. If you have a Pipi bed, for example, you cannot talk about kaitiaki until you know about all the concepts and life of the Pipi. So you need to know how to keep the Pipi safe but you keep it safe for the Pipis benefit, not for yours because the job is to keep all things of creation safe. The return from this relationship, you get knowledge and learning that comes from that. For us this does not mean being in charge of things but to ensure sure all things are respected. So, for example you don't go and tell the Pipi how to live, you allow it to have the opportunity to live the way it knows best, so its about knowing the place of things in the world. The Pipi needs protection and a place to live just like we do".

So we wish the Board to expand its vision and not be short sighted with our future and it's potential

"Good water, good life, bad water, bad life, no water, no life" Sir Peter Blake

"So the greatest gift we can give our grandchildren is clean water" Sir Edmund Hillary