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Three more Iwi receive fisheries assets

Three more iwi were recently approved as mandated organisations and will receive their share of the Maori Fisheries Settlement. Seventy percent of all iwi are now mandated and \$385 million of fisheries assets have been allocated.

“We’re on the downhill slope for completing allocation,” Te Ohu Kaimoana chief executive Peter Douglas said. “These approvals have provided us with good impetus to ensure we complete the year with most, if not all, iwi through the allocation process.”

Directors of Te Ohu Kaimoana, the Maori Fisheries Trust, approved Ngati Tuwharetoa and two iwi from the top of the South Island, Te Atiawa and Rangitane as Mandated Iwi Organisations (MIOs). Te Atiawa and Rangitane are to receive assets to the value of \$1.1 million and \$730,000 respectively. Ngati Tuwharetoa receives approximately \$19.9 million in assets.

Each iwi will receive their share of the fisheries settlement as outlined in the Maori Fisheries Act 2004. They initially receive ownership of the majority of their deepwater quota, income shares in Aotearoa Fisheries Limited and cash. However, the inshore, harbour, remaining deepwater and freshwater fish stocks would be allocated once agreements have been reached with adjacent iwi. These agreements can be concluded when those adjacent iwi have also been recognised as MIOs. These approvals mean that the three new MIOs can take advantage of their new status for the upcoming fishing year, commencing 1 April.

The Chairman of Ngati Tuwharetoa, Te Kanawa Pitiroi, said Tuwharetoa looks forward to receiving their fisheries assets. “We are pleased that our organisation has met the requirements of the Maori Fisheries Act and we look forward to receiving our fisheries assets. We have many challenges ahead. This settlement presents a unique opportunity as it will be the first formal entity which all of Ngati Tuwharetoa will be involved in. We look forward to growing the asset for the benefit of Ngati Tuwharetoa.”

Rangitane Chief Executive Richard Bradley said it was very pleasing to have the iwi through the Act’s requirements and expressed thanks for the assistance of Te Ohu Kaimoana. “We have made no decisions yet on how we plan to use our quota. We would like to now sit down with all our neighbouring iwi to get through the inshore quota agreements so we can access our full settlement.”

Similarly, Te Atiawa Chairperson Harvey Ruru and Deputy Chairperson Sue Buchanan said they were extremely pleased that Te Atiawa has been approved and they would now develop the best way to use their assets. “We go along with Shane Jones’ view that it’s necessary to get this settlement out to iwi for our further development. We’ve instructed our asset holding company (AHC) to store the quota and we’ll probably sell the annual catch entitlement (ACE) until we’ve thoroughly developed our strategy. However, it’s important that the inshore quota is passed to us as soon as possible so we’ll be looking to develop agreements with neighbouring iwi to deal with that.”