

Submission to : Whakatane District Council Meeting 04 December 2025

From : Whakatane Yacht Club Inc.

Subject : Whakatane Harbour Navigation Channel Dredging

Presenters: Christine Bowering, Barry Cutfield for Whakatane Yacht Club Inc.

Submission Outline:

The Whakatane Yacht Club (WYC) requests the Whakatane District Council (WDC) to dredge the navigable channel between Otuawhaki (Green Wharf) and the Yacht Club marina poles. The length of channel which requires dredging is 200 metres, and the approximate volume of dredging required is 6,000 cubic metres cut measure.

This dredging work is essential in order to restore safe navigational access to the marina.

Key Points:

1. Historical Context

- The Whakatane Harbour Management Development Plan (1988) and Ports Operational Plan (POP 2011) both support dredging to maintain safe navigation within the Harbour Development Zone.
- WYC marina was built in 1997 based on assurances that channel access would be maintained.
- WDC has dredged this channel multiple times over the last 20 years, including a major cutter-suction dredging operation in 2005.
- This is an established course of conduct and has been relied upon by WYC.
- WYC is responsible for dredging its marina basin. As far as has been practicable, since 2011, WDC and WYC have conducted their respective dredging operations concurrently, using the one contractor. This approach has yielded significant cost saving for both parties

2. Current Situation

- WYC provides 18 marina berths; WDC provides 25 wharf berths and 35 swing moorings in the Whakatane Harbour.
- WYC members' vessels are grounding in the marina and are unable to safely access navigable water in the Whakatane Harbour navigation channel
- WYC members' vessels are sustaining damage as a result of repeated groundings.

- WYC executes dredging inside its marina poles, approximately 4-yearly. Last done May 2020. A dredging operation scheduled for November 2024 had to be cancelled because there was insufficient depth in the adjacent Harbour Navigation Channel for the dredging plant to access the facility.
- WDC historically has executed dredging in the navigation channel, approximately 4-yearly since 2011.
- WYC does not hold resource consent for navigation channel dredging; WDC does.

3. Policies & Obligations

- **WH2 Policy (POP 2011):** Maintain a safe navigable channel from the harbour entrance, upstream to WYC, for all tides for vessels up to 25m length and 2m draft.
- WDC has an annual Ports Operational budget. Harbour investment portfolio income is applied to the Ports Operational budget, in order to fund the majority of harbour maintenance and development expenditure. This funding mechanism reflects the legacy provisions of the previous Harbour Board/TA amalgamation legislation (1977 Order in Council)

4. Risks if Channel is Not Dredged

- Boats risk grounding, capsizing, and marina function is compromised further.
- WYC cannot dredge its own basin without channel dredging.
- The Yacht Club marina facility will not survive, with the loss of 18 berths. There has been a demonstrated need in the district for more vessel berths as evidenced by past plans for new marinas.

5. Community & Strategic Benefits of Channel Dredging

- Supports WDC's vision for vibrant, sustainable ports.
- Maintains safety, public access, and community wellbeing.
- Aligns with historical commitments and operational plans and policies.

Summary Conclusion

WYC requests that WDC proceed with dredging the channel because:

- It is consistent with past practice and operative council policy.
 - WYC lacks resource consent authority and capacity to do so.
 - Dredging ensures safety, supports community outcomes, and aligns with WDC's obligations and vision.
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