



B24-0431

Tēnā koe,

Introduction of a new special permit purpose under section 97 of the Fisheries Act 1996

I write to inform you of the decision I have made on the proposal to introduce a new special permit purpose.

Kina barrens are a significant concern across parts of New Zealand (particularly in north-eastern New Zealand) where high densities of sea urchins can consume most, or all, of the vegetation (kelp and other macroalgae) on a rocky reef. The result of this over-grazing by kina is not just a loss of kelp forests, but also the loss of coastal productivity and biodiversity.

I am taking an integrated approach to address kina barrens and recognise the need for urgent action. This integrated approach includes various measures aimed at restoring kelp forests, with the introduction of a new special permit purpose being a key element in this wide-ranging strategy.

In making my decision, I have considered feedback and submissions received from tangata whenua and stakeholders on the initial proposals. I also considered final advice from Fisheries New Zealand, relevant legislative provisions, and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996 (the Act). I would like to express my thanks to all those who provided their views on this fishery. Your feedback and submissions have been crucial in informing my decisions on its management.

As the special permit purposes currently available do not provide for habitat restoration and/or the prevention of urchin barrens, I have decided to approve the new special permit purpose under section 97(1)(c) of the Act. This will allow Fisheries New Zealand to receive, assess and where appropriate, issue special permits under the new purpose:

‘To allow persons or organisations to take and dispose, cull, or translocate sea urchins for the purpose of habitat restoration and/or prevention of urchin barrens’.

This special permit purpose will apply to both the New Zealand sea urchin (*Evechinus chloroticus*; kina) and the long-spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*). The establishment of this dedicated special permit purpose will allow large scale removals of urchins to become a key component of future efforts to manage and/or prevent urchin barrens formation and restore biodiversity on coastal reefs.

The decision document that informed my decision is available on the Fisheries New Zealand website here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/enabling-the-removal-of-sea-urchins-kina-for-the-management-or-prevention-of-urchin-barrens/>

Review of the use of an Underwater Breathing Apparatus (UBA) for commercial kina fisheries

During the wider consultation on the new special permit purpose, some submitters also called for the removal of the regulation prohibiting the use of UBA for commercial kina harvest.

As this review aligns with the proposed Commercial Fisheries Reform Work Programme being developed in collaboration with the fishing industry, I have agreed to initiate consultation. Kina stocks are generally in good health, with commercial catch capped under the Quota Management System.

My officials will commence consultation following seeking the input of tangata whenua.

Nāku iti noa, nā,

(signed)

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries