Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan

Minute of the Hearing Panel

Minute 16

1. In the course of hearings as to effects of moorings on the seabed, issues have arisen as to the asserted adverse effects disturbing the seabed as a result of the heavy chain movements which are typically utilised with mooring block systems. One solution commonly advanced has been the utilisation of 'bungy' style mooring ropes avoiding the disturbance arising from the use of heavy chain.

2. However, other evidence has been given to the Panel of an asserted issue in severe wind conditions in the Sounds environment, particularly as a result of the swirling katabatic wind effects, known colloquially as 'willy-whorls', meaning that wind directions can very rapidly change as to their source direction.

3. The assertion in evidence was that in such severe changeable wind conditions a smaller runabout style vessel using the 'bungy' rope mooring system is highly likely to be flipped because its bow is secured tightly in one position facing upwind, leaving the vessel exposed if the wind suddenly shifts to a beam-on position, which it was asserted can and has flipped vessels in the Sounds.

4. The Hearings Panel wishes to be better informed on the following matters:

    i. How long has the 'bungy' system been in use - in the Marlborough Sounds in particular, but also generally how widespread is its use in NZ waters?

    ii. Do you have records of any flipping of vessels in the Sounds which has been shown to be definitively caused by the 'bungy' system; and

    iii. If so, on how many occasions and when, and have any improvements led to a reduction in frequency?

    iv. If not, do you have any concerns as to the suitability and practicality of the use of the 'bungy' system of securing vessels to moorings in the Sounds?

    v. Is there any other mooring system available which would avoid use of the heavy chain system?

Dated 24 April 2018

Councillor Trevor Hook

Chair of the MEP Hearing Panel