



## Concerns raised on ship safety in Cook Strait

Mayor Nadine Taylor and Greater Wellington Regional Council Chair Daran Ponter have written jointly to the Minister of Transport, Michael Wood, raising their concerns about the lack of support for out of port vessels in Cook Strait.

The letter follows recent ferry breakdowns which have reinforced the issue of both shipping and passenger safety in the vital sea corridor that borders both council areas.

Mayor Taylor said the last of three tugs that were commissioned following the tragic sinking of the Wāhine in 1968, left port in 2014 having been found to be too low-powered for larger ships.

“Similarly, Port Marlborough’s tug is suited to work within Picton Harbour but not Cook Strait,” she said.

A change in focus to the commercial aspects of operating ports following the move from harbour boards to port companies in 1989 also meant safety management outside of the Port itself, such as supporting seagoing vessels, was not relevant to CentrePort or Port Marlborough’s tug replacement business cases.

Fast forward to today, together the Interislander and Bluebridge ferries carry around one million passengers across Cook Strait each year. Over 250,000 cruise ship passengers are also visiting each summer with that number increasing. Other shipping is either passing through the Strait (including large bulk carriers between Australia and South America) or passing by adjacent coastlines.

“Despite this level of traffic, and the legendary winds and tidal currents, there is neither the legislative requirement nor any physical resource to provide support for vulnerable or disabled shipping,” Mayor Taylor said.

“Daran Ponter and I believe this is an inadequate situation. Cook Strait is a vital part of New Zealand’s national infrastructure, being effectively the marine section of State Highway 1,” she said. “Just as the government oversees safety on the state highways, we agree that it should support safe shipping in one of our busiest marine corridors.”

Mayor Taylor said a meeting with the Minister of Transport would be a welcome opportunity to discuss this matter.

“This is an opportunity for local and central government, ship and port operators to come together and work towards an enduring and sustainable outcome,” she said.

## Speed restriction in Waikawa Bay extended

The five knot speed limit area in Waikawa Bay has been extended in an effort to improve the safety of everyone on the water.

Harbourmaster Captain Jake Oliver said it became apparent over summer that some boaties and jet ski users were going too fast given the increased number of vessels in the bay.

“The development of the new Waikawa Marina extension has seen more people using the bay especially over the summer. This is great but we need to ensure we mitigate potential risks and extending the five knot area is one way of achieving this,” Captain Oliver said.

“One of the key concerns identified was the speed of vessels heading to the new marina entrance. Coupled with wake and visibility issues there was the potential for problems.”

The new five knot restricted area runs in line with the north eastern corner of the new breakwater across Waikawa Bay to the five knot markers off Wharetukura Bay. All vessels travelling in this area must follow the five knot rule.

“From this line out into the Sounds boaties are still required to adhere to the general speed rules outlined in the navigation bylaw,” Captain Oliver said.



The yellow line marks the extent of the new five knot area in Waikawa Bay



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Contact the Harbourmaster’s Office if you need advice or information about Marlborough’s harbours.

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