

Whakatupu ngātahi *Growing together*

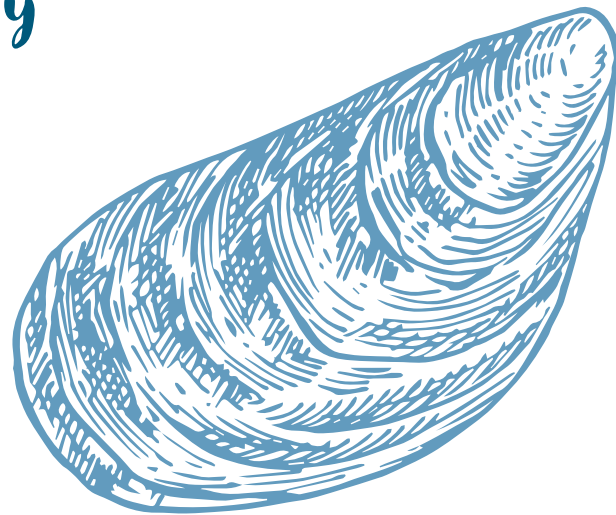
Waikato Regional Aquaculture Strategy
March 2024

Ngā hua ahumoana *Aquaculture opportunity*

Mō te rautaki ahumoana
About the aquaculture strategy

Growing together – *Whakatupu ngātahi* is our region-wide strategy developed in partnership with iwi, industry, local and central government and other stakeholders to create a bright, sustainable and resilient future for the industry and the Waikato region.

The strategy is a blueprint for managing and enabling aquaculture in the region. It takes a directive approach to enable aquaculture growth with an economic lens balanced by community, cultural and environmental wellbeing.



Te angitūtanga What does success look like

Our vision for the Waikato is to be world-class in sustainable and innovative aquaculture management with a doubling of our export growth by 2044.

Vision

The Waikato has a world-class sustainable and innovative aquaculture industry.

Goal

Doubling the value of aquaculture exports from the Waikato region over the next 20 years to \$180 million.

Our vision is bold and is underpinned by partnering with industry, iwi and local communities as well as science and innovation organisations to achieve it.

He hira te ahumoana Aquaculture is important to the Waikato

Growing together – *Whakatupu ngātahi* promotes a growth pathway for aquaculture to become a more productive industry that continues to support regional and local prosperity. Innovation underpins this growth – both through improving the value from existing farming space and exploring opportunities for new farming on land and in the open ocean.

The growth pathway also sets objectives of a sustainable, resilient and inclusive aquaculture industry. This means aquaculture will lead in environmental practices across the value chain; be strong and protected from external risks of pests, disease and climate change; and work in collaboration with iwi and communities to realise meaningful jobs, wellbeing and prosperity.

The strategy also recognises the importance of partnering with iwi to ensure their values and aspirations, commercially, culturally and as kaitiaki are provided for.

Te takune a te rautaki What the strategy intends to deliver

- Identify the means to grow, enable and manage sustainable aquaculture in the region.
- Sustainable infrastructure that supports the needs of the aquaculture industry, such as processing facilities, wharves, boat servicing and storage facilities.
- Iwi and mana whenua are able to assert their tikanga and are a key player in the region's aquaculture industry.
- Improved environmental quality and maintained coastal water quality from marine farm operations.
- Address water quality from land-based sources of pollution and sedimentation, in particular in the Firth of Thames catchments.
- More opportunities for employment and economic growth in the region's communities.
- Better and more equitable access to social and economic opportunities.



Aquaculture in the Waikato region - at a glance, 2024

The Waikato region produced \$91.6 million in aquaculture exports in 2023 and is 17% of the total export value of the Aotearoa New Zealand aquaculture industry (source: Aquaculture New Zealand).

Oyster farming

in Coromandel Harbour



300ha

finfish consented in Coromandel Marine Farming Zone



Mussel and spat farming

in Aotea Harbour



Oyster farming

in Kāwhia Harbour



Produces **23%** of New Zealand's oysters



Produces **26%** of New Zealand's mussels



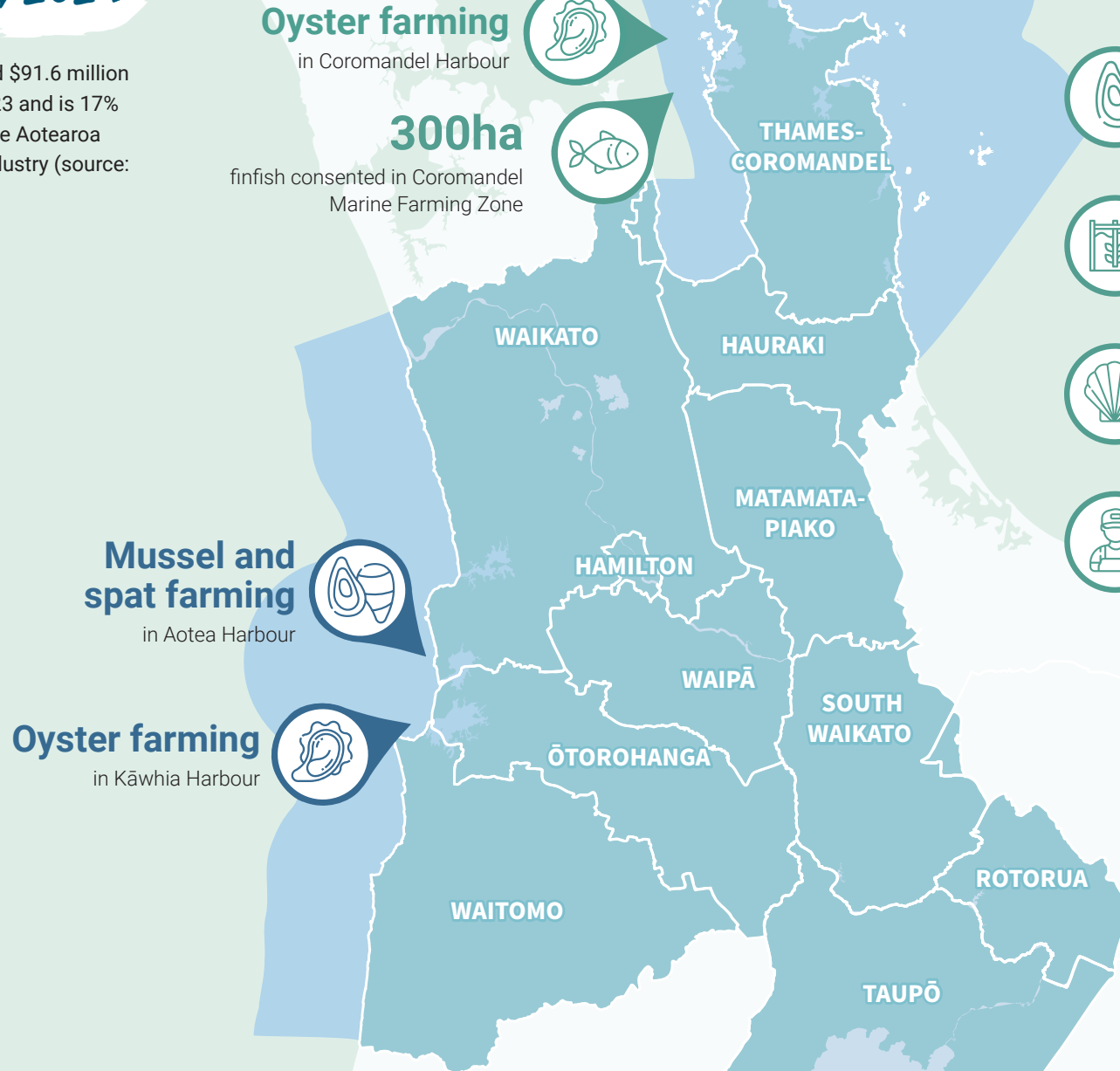
Over **450** marine farms in the Waikato region



1572ha consented for shellfish



Directly employs **400** people in Thames-Coromandel district



Te rautaki ahumoana

The aquaculture strategy

Ngā putanga a te rautaki

Our strategy outcomes

Growing together – Whakatupu ngātahi provides those organisations with an interest in aquaculture with guidance on potential opportunities and risks, and identifies actions to achieve the following four outcomes for aquaculture in the Waikato region.



Outcome

1

Leadership with industry, iwi and our communities.

2

Ensuring a sustainable environment and a prosperous and resilient industry.

3

Provide opportunities for aquaculture development, including new species, technology and products.

4

Investment in infrastructure, people and services to enable aquaculture.

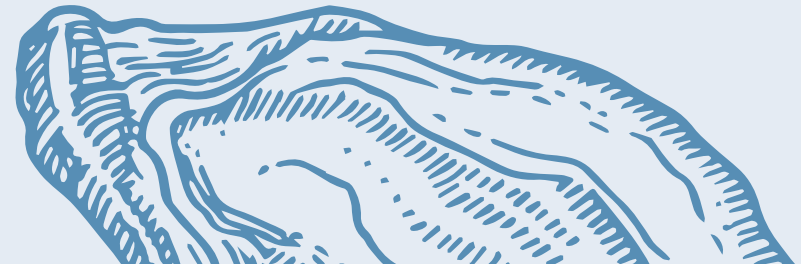
Ngā whakaarotau

Our priorities

To achieve our goal of doubling export value will require building on current successes and enabling new opportunities. This includes a lift in current productivity from existing marine farms, the establishment of new farms, growing new or additional species and other market value increases. Our priorities will inform and guide implementation of the strategy.

Actions will be identified through an implementation plan that sits alongside the strategy as a living document, flexible and regularly reviewed. *Growing together – Whakatupu ngātahi* priorities include:

- Enabling more aquaculture space to be allocated while ensuring resource consenting requirements are met.
- Providing for diversification of species farmed, including seaweeds.
- Allowing for research and innovation to address needs and challenges.
- Minimising biosecurity risks and adapting to climate change and environmental impacts.



Ngā hua *Our opportunities*

Opportunity 1: Maximising existing aquaculture

What this will look like:

- The industry's spat requirements for current production and growth will be met by locally sourced spat supplies and nursery/hatchery infrastructure, that is resilient to changes in the environment.
 - Wharf infrastructure will be upgraded and facilities will not be a constraint on aquaculture growth.
 - Consented but undeveloped farm space will have been developed and will be farmed to its productive potential.
 - Processing infrastructure will meet increased production volumes, including for high value products, and automation of processing.
 - Infrastructure and research systems will support development and commercialisation of new products, enabling diversification and building resilience across export markets.
- ✓ Whauwhau spat farm operational alongside Aotea and other West Coast sourced spat.
 - ✓ Te Ariki Tahi/Sugarloaf wharf redevelopment completed to enable the landing, processing and transport of aquaculture products from across the Hauraki Gulf and Firth of Thames.
 - ✓ Oyster farming transformation project to adopt flip-farm technology in Coromandel to revolutionise the oyster industry, lift productivity and create jobs.

Opportunity 2: Innovation and investment in new opportunities

What this will look like:

New opportunities extend beyond our existing green lipped mussels and oyster species currently farmed in the region. Investments in new opportunities will grow over time in response to changes in the climate, markets and social demands and will likely include:

- Farming of kingfish and other fin fish species suited to our warming coastal waters.
- Offshore aquaculture developments, potentially in conjunction with offshore wind farm infrastructure on the west coast of the region.
- A thriving regional seaweed growing industry providing a range of high value products.
- Support for opportunities for iwi, hapū and marae to develop their aquaculture aspirations for their rohe moana.
- Appropriate planning provisions which support off water aquaculture industry needs.



Te ara tutuki

How we will achieve this

Delivery of the strategy will be through the annual work programme undertaken by the Waikato Regional Aquaculture Group.

Those involved include:

- **Aquaculture industry** – Coromandel Marine Farmers Association, Aquaculture New Zealand.
- **Mana whenua** – Pare Hauraki, Waikato-Tainui, Te Nehenehenui.

- **Local government** – Waikato Regional Council, Thames-Coromandel District Council, Hauraki District Council, Waikato District Council, Ōtorohanga District Council, Waitomo District Council.
- **Central Government** – Fisheries New Zealand (Ministry for Primary Industries), Te Ohu Kaimoana, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
- **Others** – Te Waka (Waikato Economic Development Agency), local economic development agencies, science and research providers and innovation organisations.



Te mahi ngātahi

How we will work together

- Coordinate our collective resources in a way which adds value towards meeting the goal of the strategy.
- Work alongside industry and iwi on the ground to maximise the benefits of aquaculture growth to our communities.
- Ensure actions are delivered where they will make the biggest contributions to our outcomes.
- Be accountable for implementation of the strategy by measuring and reporting on effectiveness.

Developed by Waikato Regional Council in collaboration with the Waikato Regional Aquaculture Group.

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