***For: Independent Herald***

***From: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust***

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**Call for Urgent Action to Improve Porirua Harbour**

The Porirua Harbour Trust is making a call for urgent action to maintain and improve the Porirua Harbour environment from the continuing effects of pollutants, such as sediment and nutrients.

The call for action follows a recent report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) that has highlighted continuing degradation of the Porirua Harbour in common with several other estuaries looked at by the Commissioner.

Helen Sligo, Porirua Harbour Trustee and Northern Suburbs resident says “The Porirua Harbour acts as a waste trap for all sorts of pollution including sediment from subdivisions and the Transmission Gully construction, contaminants from roads and rail, and nutrients from paddocks on farms and lifestyle blocks.

“What is frustrating is there are a huge number of documents and research telling us how the harbour is degrading, the issues that are causing it, and how to potentially fix the issues.  What is missing are the urgent actions to fix the problems.”

The PCE report identified two pathways forward including estuaries as part of freshwater management units within the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, and robust monitoring to support decision making.

Helen Sligo says the Porirua Harbour Trust agrees with the Commissioner’s recommendations to link what is coming off the land from the wider catchment to the management actions required to improve the estuaries.  She says: “The Harbour Trust is calling on the regional and local councils to focus on actions to manage the catchments from both rural and urban areas. There are currently several funding opportunities being offered by central Government to create jobs and leave a legacy of an improved environment, and these opportunities need to be eagerly taken up.”

“The worry is that economic issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic have distracted our councils from focussing on the harbour.

“Whatever approach is taken by the councils, action is needed and it is needed now.”

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