



Newsletter May 2022

Dear Comrades in Arms,

our newsletters contain information about ourselves, the latest development in our fight against NRC and sometimes important links.

On our website www.russellcommonsense.com you'll find everything you need to know about our group, the projects we are dealing with and other valuable information. Under *Breaking News* for instance you can always get our latest major updates.

In our newsletters however we want to let you know what is recently happening, how you can (always appreciated) participate and/or contribute etc. At the beginning as always we post:

Urgent News

First of all, we would like to address the writing of NRC, which has caused some of you some headaches:

From: Maree Attwood <mareea@nrc.govt.nz>

Hi.....

The marine biosecurity charge helps partially cover the cost of our marine biosecurity programme, which includes diver surveillance, education, and research, and is integral to the protection of Northland's unique and high-value marine ecosystems. The charge, and the ratio of the charge apportioned to mooring holders/marina berths and commercial ports was set by full council after due consultation processes were followed. The annual user charges and fees policy is reviewed annually and is conducted in tandem with the relevant annual or long term plan consultation process, which takes place in March/April each year. If you would like to be involved, our next round of consultation will occur in March next year. I must also note that Council debt collection processes are applied to any outstanding debt regardless of any disputes.

If you would like further information about our programme, please feel free to contact us at marinebiosecurity@nrc.govt.nz or check out <https://www.marinepests.nz/>

Ngā mihi

Maree Attwood

Finance Officer
Northland Regional Council

The following reaction and inquiry of one of our members should stand for all those who feel affected:

“Hi Klaus.

Attached is this years correspondence with NRC.

What is troubling, you will note, is that they have changed the definition of the purpose of biosecurity from specifically "Fanworm" to a general expense.

And: the last line in fine print: *"any outstanding debt regardless of any disputes."* This matter was specifically covered by the ombudsman and also confirmed by the debt collection agency.

So where do we go from here??”

Our reply was:

“Good Morning,

Thank you for your message. Yes, I agree, NRC is once again trying to influence the existing situation in their favor (they practiced exactly the same thing about a year ago with similarly little success). However, only a week ago I had a lengthy telephone conversation with Maree Attwood (she is new to office) and explained to her the situation, especially that it is now an established practice of debt collectors not to do anything *(see below) in such cases as ours until the dispute is resolved. She understood this and agreed to include this fact on her file. So the bureaucracy can now ruminate more paper but everything will go its course, just like before.”

* Credit Consultants New Zealand Account Enquiries
Mon, Feb 15, 10:40 AM

Good morning,

The information that you provided has been noted on this account. It is now on hold – until we receive further information regarding this dispute.

Regards Fiona

Credit Consultants New Zealand

Account Enquiries Call Centre Support T: 0800 500 630

www.creditconsultants.co.nz

By the way: NRC has never changed the definition of the purpose of biosecurity from specifically "Fanworm" related to a general expense. Their MPMP has always been related to marine pests in general, but mooring/boat owners have been singled out as a particular threat of distributing mainly the Med.Fanworm. Hence the direct 65% funding charge. But if the council wants their fee understood as funding their marine biosecurity activities across a wider range of perceived marine pests this would make our specific argument as being grossly unfairly charged even more valid and justified!

While we all want ideally a maritime environment as pristine as possible that should not stop us opposing any council measures which are ineffective, contrary to scientific findings, unfair or defy common sense.'

In addition, an appeal to all of you:

Do not be intimidated. Our complaint to the Ombudsman is far (years!!! at the current processing speed of up to 6 months) from reaching any possibly negative decision for us. So be also patient and see it the old fashioned way: "Good things take time!"

Secondly we want to ask you:

What do you think of an advertisement campaign in Northern Age, Northern News or Northern Advocate before the new biosecurity fee invoices are sent out in June?

Just to give you an idea of the prices, here are a few details:

Northern Advocate :		½ page	⅓ page	¼ page
	Mon.-Fri	\$ 693	\$ 550	\$ 368
Northern Advocate:				
	Thursday	\$ 728	\$ 578	\$ 385
Northland Age:				
	Tue & Thur.	\$ 693	\$ 550	\$ 368

Here we want to point out once again the waste of public funds, denounce the incredible violation of their own code of conduct by our elected representatives and show ways to really effectively protect our marine environment, which ultimately concerns us all.

Of course, we also want to present our organization and recruit new members on this occasion.

Please let us know asap your thoughts and also how much you are willing to donate. Thank you.

Furthermore:

Our complaints about the NRC conduct to the Northland MP, W-J Prime, and our reminders to her to speak to councillors reminding them that they are obliged to confer with their constituents about their concerns directly have remained unanswered since middle of last year. Our complaint to the

Minister of Local Govt., N.Mahuta, has likewise remained without a response now for well over a year.

Accordingly we directed a complaint about those “great” Labour Party office bearers' lack of response to the Labour Party President, C. Szabo . The response from an underling was to direct it to the Prime Minister's Office instead. We queried the appropriateness of this advice but since no further reply was received have directed the same complaint, incl. the exchange with C.Szabo's office, to the Prime Minister's Office. So far we only received a pre-fabricated acknowledgement. We shall follow up.

We have also approached Mike Hosking trying to interest him in our on-going efforts and told him " we need a bigger gun ".

This included. our recent approaches to Labour's Wellington top hirarchy. But so far, instead of a first reminder, no response. We will keep at him .